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Formerly Incarcerated Students Returning to School

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College of Education

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Robert E. Gaines

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Formerly Incarcerated Students Returning to School

by

Robert E. Gaines

MA, Arkansas State University, 2002

BS, Crichton College, 1996

BS, Lane College, 1979

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2020

Abstract

Formerly incarcerated Grade 10–12 students in an urban high school in the Southern United States were dropping out at an elevated rate from August 2010 through May 2017. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain an understanding of teacher, parent, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 students who had been incarcerated and then returned to a traditional school environment and support services and resources needed to assist with these challenges. Hirschi's social control theory guided this study, which describes 4 elements missing from individuals participating in criminal activity: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. The 3 research questions addressed (a) parent, teacher, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges faced by former incarcerated students returning to school, (b) support services and resources needed for those students, and (c) suggestions for administrators to better help those students. Data were collected from 6 teachers, 6 parents, and 6 Academic Advisors, through semistructured interviews and analyzed using Hatch's 9-step typology. The findings indicated that students who had been incarcerated struggled due to issues such as (a) poor academics, (b) peer influence, (c) lack of interest in school, (d) drug and gang involvement, (e) poor communication with the school, (f) mental illness, and (g) behavior problems. The resulting project led to the development of a policy recommendation with supporting white paper focusing on specific interventions to resolve the challenges faced by incarcerated students transitioning back to a typical school environment experience. The study promotes positive social change through increased graduation rates for formerly incarcerated students.

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Dedication

I dedicate my project study to my wife Bobbie and my son Torman (both deceased), as well as my daughter Tashley and my son Tarvin. All were/are beacons of light that led me to the end of my journey. I also dedicate this study to Dr. Zella McDonald, Marshall Bryant, and my many colleagues, whose shoulders I leaned on in times of need.

Acknowledgments

To all of my committee members, I give a special thank you for their knowledge and valuable time. A special thanks to the late Dr. James Schiro, former chair, Dr. Howard Moskowitz, new chair and methodologist, and Dr. Joe Ann Hinrichs, for their perseverance throughout the total process. I would like to acknowledge my school district for allowing me to conduct my research and providing all the assistance needed to complete this project. Finally, I would like to thank all the teachers, students, and administrators who assisted me with this project. Lastly, I will like to give a heartfelt thank you to Latoya Beale for her continued support throughout my doctoral journey.

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The Local Problem

10th through 12th-grade students who were incarcerated and returned to high school dropped out of an urban high school in the Southern United States at an elevated rate from 2010 to 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). To address the issue of student dropout, district superintendents are exploring opportunities and strategies to support students to stay in school. Understanding teachers, academic advisors, and parents' perceptions could aid the school district in developing intervention plans to increase graduation and student retention rates. According to data retrieved from eSchool Plus, the population of Yellowtail High School (pseudonym) is approximately 1,200 students, with 70% African American, 25% Caucasian, and 5% Hispanic. Nationally, Yellowtail High School ranks 12,570 out of 17,245 ranked high schools in graduation rate, and has a dropout rate of 16%, compared to the county rate of 20% and the United States dropout rate of 13% (TownCharts, 2018). In 2017, Yellowtail High School had a graduation rate of 84%, according to reports generated by eSchool Plus, with 16% of the student body demonstrating an inability to complete high school. Yellowtail High School has increased its graduation rate by about 18% from academic years 2013 to 2017. However, compared to the state mean graduation rate of 87.97%, Yellowtail was lagging by about 14% in 2017 (Ginder, Kelly-Reid, & Mann, 2017).

The United States has a record incarceration rate, including juveniles, higher than any other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nation. Among nations with the highest prison population rate (based on the number of prisoners

per 100,000 of the national population) are the United States (655 per 100,000), followed by El Salvador (604), Turkmenistan (552), U.S. Virgin Islands (542), Thailand (526), Cuba (510), Maldives (499), Northern Mariana Islands (482), British Virgin Islands (470), Rwanda (464), Bahamas (438), Seychelles (437), Grenada (435), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (426), Guam (404), and Russian Federation (402). However, more than half of all countries and territories (53%) have rates below 150 per 100,000. The world prison population rate, based on United Nations estimates of national population levels, is 145 per 100,000 (Walmsley, 2018).

In 2014, the number of juvenile detainees in the United States stood at 974,900 with 53% of those detainees under the age of 16 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016). Table 1 describes Grade 10–12 students who have been incarcerated, who are dropping out of school at an elevated rate over the past 9 years compared to the entire state rom 2010–2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Evidence on what works to reduce the involvement of the juvenile justice system and to enhance youth outcomes has grown significantly; however, evidence and implementation gaps remain. Current juvenile statistics are not always accessible to professionals and program partners who work directly with, and could benefit most from, community-involved youth. Many institutional, organizational, and systemic barriers may prevent these stakeholders from accessing and implementing the principles of research and best practice in their day-to-day work. This study addresses the gap in school district practices to keep students returning to school after experiencing incarceration in school and eventually to graduate.

Table 1

Adjusted Cohort Graduation Percentage Rates, 2010–2017

School year ending	United States	Study state	Yellowtail High School
2010	76.00	81.90	71.0
2011	79.00	82.70	72.0
2012	80.00	83.30	n/a
2013	81.40	83.70	66.0
2014	82.30	84.30	78.8
2015	83.00	84.80	n/a
2016	83.20	85.20	82.0
2017	84.10	87.97	84.0

Note. From "Americas Public Schools" by National Center for Education Statistics, 2018. (https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data_tables.asp#Keyword:Adjusted%20Cohort%20Graduation%20Rate%20(ACGR)

Rationale

On any given day, nearly 53,000 youth are held in residential facilities away from home as a result of juvenile or criminal justice involvement. Incarceration and imprisonment in residential facilities are appropriate for a small percentage of offenders; long-term custody experiences appear to do more harm than good, often contributing to increased crime and recidivism (Underwood & Washington, 2016). Public opinion on the U.S. juvenile justice system is moving from a punitive approach to a rehabilitative treatment model, reflecting the change in juvenile justice in recent years (Underwood & Washington, 2016). Nevertheless, instead of concentrating on the delivery of community-based services, there has been a rise in the reliance on youth correctional systems for

mental health care or other specific needs of young offenders (Underwood & Washington, 2016).

States should consider juvenile crime and justice from a global perspective because many youthful offenders are also victims. The United Kingdom and other high-income countries, such as the United States, have established forensic child and adolescent psychiatry, a multidimensional specialty that incorporates legal, psychiatric, and developmental fields of psychiatry together (Young, Greer, & Church, 2017). Acceptance of an evidence-based method of therapeutic intervention philosophy is associated with more significant reductions in reoffending compared with punitive approaches dominant in other countries, making it a notable approach to dealing with problematic juvenile delinquency (Young et al., 2017).

In a life-cycle framework, incarceration during the teenage years usually leads to students dropping out of school and could interrupt human and social capital growth, leading to reduced future earnings and amplified criminal activity. While the total number of juvenile arrests and detentions has decreased, the racial and ethnic differences between non-White youth and White youth remain profound as it relates to the number of juveniles imprisoned by gender and those juveniles who received felony charges as a result of being deprived of their rights (Rovner, 2015). Table 2 compares the total corrections population in the study state and United States from 2014 through 2017.

Table 2

Total Corrections Population (2017, except 2013)

	United States	Study state
Imprisoned by Gender (2017)	Men in prison – 1,334,775 Women – 105,033	Men in prison – 15,617 Women – 1,411
Juvenile Life Without Parole	2,310	55
Felony Disenfranchisement (2016)	Disenfranchised Population (% of population) 6,106,327 (2.47%) Disenfranchised African Americans (% of population) 2,228,118) (7.74%)	Disenfranchised Population (% of population) 66,705 (2.93%) Disenfranchised African Americans (% of population) 26,106 (7.83%)
Juvenile in Custody (2015)	Total Juveniles in Custody 48,043 Committed – 31,487 Detained – 15,816 Diverted – 564 Juvenile custody rate (per 100,000) 152 Juvenile life without parole 2,310	Total Juveniles in custody – 555 Total Juveniles in custody – 342 Detained – 210 Diverted – 0 Juvenile custody rate (per 100,000) 175 Juvenile life without parole 55
Imprisonment by Race/Ethnicity (2014)	White imprisonment rate (per 100,000) 275 Black imprisonment rate (per 100,000) 1,408 Hispanic imprisonment rate (per 1000,000) 378	White imprisonment rate (per 100,000) 443 Black imprisonment rate (per 100,000) 1,665 Hispanic imprisonment rate (per 100,000) – 251

Note. From "Prison Population Counts" by Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017 (https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=131)

When a student drops out of school, they experience academic and cocurricular activity deficiencies, but they also suffer from emotional, physical, mental, and social development problems, and the local community is negatively impacted (Ginder et al., 2017). To address the dropout epidemic, districts should consider a four-step strategic plan to address the dropout problem: (a) develop a clear understanding that a dropout crisis exists, (b) provide strategic dropout intervention and prevention strategies, (c) establish recovery dropout plans that focus on reform at critical intervals in the student's educational journey, and (d) bring together individual and monetary resources to implement a complete and prolonged movement (Ginder et al., 2017). This four-step dropout plan can assist states in finding ways of reaching those at-risk students emotionally, physically, mentally, socially, and developmentally, possibly elevating the graduation rate to an acceptable range of 90% by 2020 (Balfanz, Bridgeland, & Moore, 2013). States should create alternative programs for students in Grades 9–12 to engage students in meaningful education by encouraging them to participate in, or graduate from, a college or specialized vocational training program (G. J., personal communication, October 19, 2019).

Three key components that drive improved graduation rates are (a) consciousness of the issue and highlighting the problems; (b) culpability, higher expectancies, and data-driven decision making; and (c) communities responding to the cry for help, with escalations in quality public, private, and not-for-profit provisions for young people (J. C., personal communication, October 23, 2019). At-risk students should be identified early in high school so that intervention services can be targeted before those students fall

behind (J. C., personal communication, October 23, 2019). To date there has been a lack of literature supporting the connections with previous incarcerated teens that return to school and the justice system. Most researchers have focused on youth arrests. Relatively recent research studies in criminology have found an adverse relationship between justice system connections and academic outcomes (Siegel, 2016). Bloomberg, Cullen, Carrlson, and Jonson (2017) and Peace (2016) found a noteworthy adverse association between educational attainment and involvement in the court system beyond arrest, but the research did not specify the different types of interactions, such as court appearance, conviction, and incarceration. However, there are avenues through which an individual's dealings with the justice system can impact educational outcomes. In this study, I focused on ways to retain those students who return to school after experiencing incarceration, to remain in school and eventually graduate from high school. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain an understanding of teacher, parent, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges experienced by Grades 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment and perceptions of support services and resources that can assist with those challenges. Identifying the contributing factors could assist schools in developing strategies to improve student retention. Understanding teacher, academic advisor, and parent perceptions could lead to improved retention through implementation of intervention programs that focus on returning incarcerated students, more opportunities for student success, and multiple possible pathways for graduation.

Definition of Terms

Dropout: A student who withdraws before completing a course of instruction; a student who withdraws from high school after having not reached the legal age to do so (McFarland & Rathburn, 2018).

Drop-out factories: High schools that graduate less than 60% of their student population on time, as compared to their ninth-grade cohort (Balfanz et al., 2013).

Event dropout rate: The percentage of 15-to-24-year-olds in Grades 10 through 12 who left high school between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next without earning a high school diploma (McFarland & Rathburn, 2018).

Incarcerated students: Students are considered incarcerated if they are serving a criminal sentence in a federal, state, or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, or similar correctional institution (Crittenden County Sheriff Office, personal communication, June 14, 2018).

Juvenile detention: A prison for people under the age of majority, often termed *juvenile delinquents*, to which they have been sentenced and committed for some time or detained on a short-term basis while awaiting trial or placement in a long-term care program (Crittenden County Sheriff Office, personal communication, August 14, 2019).

On-campus suspension (OCS): The OCS program is a disciplinary action and is intended to provide an alternative to off-campus suspension and to attempt to modify disruptive behavior by isolating disruptive students from their classmates (Cooper-Neary & Harber, 2017).

Recidivism: The act of a person repeating an undesirable behavior after they have either experienced negative consequences of that behavior or have been trained to extinguish that behavior. It is also used to refer to the percentage of former prisoners who are rearrested for a similar offense (Dressel & Farid, 2018).

Significance of the Study

This qualitative study is important to educational professionals, students who are at risk of dropping out of school, and society overall. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain an understanding of teacher, parent, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and returned to a traditional school environment and the support services and resources that can assist with those challenges. Identifying the contributing factors could assist schools in developing strategies to improve student retention. Research into the dropout dilemma has the potential to address school efforts on preventing drop out with regards to (a) effectiveness of a school-wide student engagement program, (b) facilitation of student engagement, (c) a review of school issues, (d) leadership intervention strategies, (e) impact of dropout prevention programs, (f) implementation of professional development as well as follow-up strategies for dropout prevention, and (g) the impact of socioeconomic programs that help students to graduate. Economically, society suffers when students leave school before obtaining a high school diploma (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013).

Students dropping out of high school could face a depressing economic and social forecast compared to their counterparts who graduated from high school. Students who

dropout are less likely to attain an occupation with suitable wages and are more inclined to become destitute, experiencing an assortment of unfavorable impacts on their health (Ballantine & Roberts, 2017). This project study is significant because it addresses the challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and returned to a traditional school environment. Identifying the contributing factors could assist schools in developing strategies to improve student retention. Gaining an understanding of teacher, parent, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and returned to a traditional school environment experience could support schools in (a) improving educational attitudes, student behaviors, and school grades; and (b) supporting students' career goals in an endeavor to attain the educational and psychological needs of students before they drop out (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013).

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain an understanding of teacher, parent, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and returned to a traditional school environment and the support services and resources that can assist with those challenges. The following research questions guided this qualitative descriptive case study:

RQ1: How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and then returned to school?

RQ2: How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of support services and resources to assist with challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and then returned to school?

RQ3: What suggestions do teachers, parents, and academic advisors have for school administrators about ways to better help Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and returned to school?

Review of the Literature

In this subsection, I present (a) the conceptual framework of the study, (b) literature review search strategy, (c) and implications for the exploration of the perceptions of being incarcerated and continued education. 10th through 12th-grade students who were incarcerated dropped out of school at the study site at an elevated rate when compared to the entire state from 2010–2017. The literature review is comprised of numerous journals and books obtained from databases. The databases accessed include ERIC, EBSCO Host Research Databases, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, and Walden Dissertations. Throughout this review, there was a focus on causes that contribute to students dropping out of high school. Peer-reviewed articles published within the past 5 years were also included in this review. Some of the keywords used when searching databases, and the search engine were *(a) high school dropouts, (b) at-risk students, (c) dropout prevention, (d) juvenile justice system, (e) juvenile incarceration*, and *(f) high school dropout and crime.*

Conceptual Framework

The social control theory by Hirschi guided this study. In social control theory, Hirschi (1969) referred to four elements: (a) attachment, (b) commitment, (c) involvement, and (d) belief. *Attachment* refers to the mutual linkage between a person and society. Individuals with strong and stable attachments to others in society are presumed less likely to violate societal norms. *Commitment* refers to the investment an individual has in social activities and institutions. Hirschi's commitment construct is based on the premise that there is an association between level of commitment and susceptibility for deviance. *Involvement* is the third element of Hirschi's concept of social bonding and alludes that large amounts of structured time spent in socially approved activities reduces the time available for deviance. Hirschi's last element of social bonding relates to an individual's level of *belief* in the moral legitimacy of shared social values and norms. In U.S. society, certain values are adopted as norms. Hirschi suggested that persons who strongly believe in these norms are less likely to deviate from them. However, those who question or challenge the norms have a greater tendency to behave in a deviant manner (Hirschi, 1969).

Social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) suggests that an increase in criminal behavior is a consequence of dropping out of school because social bonds subdue the natural predisposition to criminality. For a teenager, school is among the most important providers of social bonding relationships. Nonetheless, dropping out of school would result in decreased social ties and criminal behavior would be likely to increase. As such,

social control theory posits that crime occurs when such bonds are weakened or are not well established.

Criminal participation and relationships with the justice system can interrupt an individual from the process of education, which can eventually lead to reduced academic results and, in turn, dropping out of school. Second, criminal property accumulation can substitute the need for an individual to invest in education and the learning process. In addition, stigma due to criminal participation may have a negative impact on academic results. Educators and families may spend less time and energy on, for instance, criminally engaged students (Rud, Van Klaveren, Groot, & Van De Brink, 2018). Education teaches individuals to be more patient, therefore discouraging crime (Hahn & Truman, 2015). From a societal perspective, the education process (from the Latin *ducere*, "to lead" and "out of, "yields education, "to lead out") deliberately engages the receptive capacity of children and others to entrust them with intelligence, reasoning skills, beliefs, socioemotional awareness and control, and social interaction, so they can emerge as committed, efficient, imaginative, and self-governing members of society.

High School Dropouts

The term *dropout factories* were created to refer to high schools that graduate less than 60% of their students (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013). These dropout factories yield 50% of the country's dropouts and two thirds of ethnic minority dropouts (Layton, 2014). In Layton's study he found the following:

Nationally about 80% of students in the U.S. graduate on time with a regular diploma, but for Hispanic and African American students, the proportion rate

drops to about 50%, and sadly, dropouts lack the academic skills needed to gain

entry into high-skilled and white- and blue-collar jobs, all too often this leading

many of them to a life of poverty, prison, and homelessness. (p. 18)

The national high school dropout crisis deserves attention because large numbers of

dropouts are interconnected to devastating social costs with significant consequences to

society (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). Students who fail to finish high school may experience

many adverse results when they become adults, such as greater levels of incarceration,

unemployment, health implications, and ongoing economic hardship (Wilkins & Bost,

2016). These facts together with school reform warrant educators to investigate ways to

improve graduation rates (Ecker-Lyster & Niileksela, 2016).

Research has shown the correlation between juvenile justice system involvement

and educational outcomes. During ninth grade, being arrested dramatically increases the

risk of a student dropping out and substantially lowers attendance and grades (Farn &

Adams, 2016). The adverse consequences of arrest are magnified for youth who spend

time in detention or who are arrested multiple times, while measures of available social

support following arrest inconsistently blunt the effects of arrest; poor school

performance is a significant indicator of delinquency and vice versa (Farn & Adams,

2016).

Students from low-salary families dropped out of high school at a rate five times

higher than students from high-wage families (Ginder et al., 2017). Researchers

examined 15 rural high schools in the southern and southwestern United States to

determine the dropout factors that lead to students dropping out of high school (Johnson,

Simon, & Mun, 2013). The high schools were in districts that are among the 800 rural areas with the most elevated student poverty rates across the United States. In the 15 schools the student enrollment consisted of an extremely high number of financially burdened students (Delaney, 2013). Eighty-seven percent of all the student learners in 15 southwestern states are living in poverty (Delaney, 2013).

Results of a survey conducted by the Office for Civil Rights show that six million public school students (13%) do not attend school regularly (Balfanz, 2016). Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing more than 10% of school for any reason, has been negatively linked to many key academic outcomes, such as enrolling in credit recovery, retention, or dropping out. An estimated 1.1 million high school graduates in 2012 did not receive a diploma (Young et al., 2017). However, evidence shows that students who exhibit chronic absentee status can recover. One of the most effective strategies for closing the achievement gap is a concerted effort to ensure that high-poverty students attend school regularly from pre-K through 12th grade, thereby keeping students on track to graduate and not drop out (Balfanz, 2016).

Dropouts can be described in four categories: (a) life event, (b) fade-outs, (c) push outs, and (d) failing to succeed (Balfanz, 2007). Life events refer to those students who leave because of anything outside of school, such as pregnancy, imprisonment, or the need to work to help support the family. Fade outs are those students who have progressed from grade to grade and could be achieving above grade level, however, for some reason, they become confused or fatigued and stop seeing a reason to attend class. Balfanz (2007) contended that once students reach the lawful age to drop out and leave

school, students may be willing to accept a general education degree (GED). Additionally, students who are seen as troublemakers and impede the success of the school may feel pushed out. Students who are pushed out are coached to withdraw, go to another school, are dropped from the roll for failing to obtain the proper number of credits, or miss an excessive amount of days (Balfanz, 2007). Students failing to succeed in school and who go to schools that do not provide the environment and support needed to be successful may drop out. For some students, failure early in their education is the result of poor academic preparation; for others, the situation is established in the lack of an excellent social-emotional curriculum (Balfanz, 2007). Few students drop out after their first experience with failure. Dropping out after falling so far behind appears to be unheard of to the student; nevertheless, some just become tired by constant failure and eventually leave school (Balfanz, 2007).

Because of the great emphasis placed on the role of self-control, or lack thereof, in causing criminal behavior, social programs are stressed at an early stage of development aimed at intervening in the lives of young people (Hirschi, 1969). Interventions included projects to improve parenting abilities, and to assist parents to instill self-control in young kids. Self-control strategies were driven by the concept that little can be achieved, beyond early intervention, to reduce crime later on.

The current dropout crisis is often referred to as a *silent crisis*. The primary causes of students dropping out vary but originate from the absence of parental involvement and effort, a deficiency in professional skills among educator to work with young males of color, and the unyielding challenges to cling to high stakes testing (Visser, 2016).

Dropouts make up a high level of the country's jail populace and death-row detainees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Statistics demonstrate that 82% of America's detainees are individuals who did not finish their high school education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Students who decided to drop out of school face social stigma, fewer job opportunities, lower salaries, and higher probability of involvement with the criminal justice system (L. J., personal communication, October 23, 2019).

Another dropout factor to consider is that students are accruing absences from their regular schools while they are processed through the justice system. Dropout clusters exist in disadvantaged schools because local institutions and residents jointly struggle to create the incentive and support structures required for ensuring high graduation rates (Dupere et al., 2019). The human capital accumulation theory introduced by Becker (2010) claim that the wealth of a nation is vested in its people. Education is a factor that contributes to the formation of human capital: It not only helps in increasing individual's productivity but also stimulates innovation and creates ability to absorb new technologies. It enhances the present economic condition and improves the future prospects of a country.

Incarceration introduces a real possibility for one to distract from the accumulation of human capital. Being arrested or imprisoned, distracts from academic achievement, disrupts a pupil from gathering the abilities, expertise, or other intangibles that can be used to generate future economic value for that person, their prospective employers, or their society (Becker, 2010). Young adults subject to enhanced local

violence receive considerably less education, are less inclined to finish compulsory education, and are more likely to be unemployed (Brown & Velazquez, 2017). Failing to adhere to the human capital theory may cause students to fall behind their class, repeating a grade, and eventually dropping out (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). To meet the complex needs of these populations of students, school psychologists and other support staff should be more conscious of students' academic needs and take a leadership role in collaborating within and across systems in order to meet those needs (Stone & Zibulsky, 2015).

Juvenile Justice System

Juvenile incarceration hurts high school completion and raises the likelihood of future criminal activity through two potential channels: changing the skills or actions of the juvenile student *a behavioral channel* and changing how the institution regards and treats the student a *deviant labeling channel* (Crossman, 2020). The labeling theory is most commonly associated with the sociology of crime. Labeling theory of deviance states that people come to identify and behave in ways that reflect how others label them, therefore labeling and treating someone as criminally deviant can foster deviant behavior. Labeling someone as a criminal, for example, can cause others to treat them more negatively and the response to being treated more negatively can be in turn for that person to act more negatively (Crossman, 2020).

Respectively, incarceration can hurt the students' mental health, which may lead to behavioral problems at home and in the school environment (Allen & Flanagan, 2015). Once detained an adolescent is probably not going to ever come back to class, proposing that even generally brief periods of incarceration can be exceptionally problematic and

have extreme long-haul results for this populace. The adolescents who do come back to school were named as having a disability because of a social or behavioral issue, decreasing the probability of graduation, and conceivably increasing the possibility of future criminal conduct (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Students who were exposed to high-risk peers while in jail, leads to increased aggression, impulsivity, and anti-social attitudes (Stevenson, 2017). Antisocial students who experience incarceration within the juvenile justice system early in life (i.e., before the age of 14) are at risk for chronic and severe delinquency later in life (Chamberlain & Reid, 1998).

The following child and adolescent groups have been known to be disproportionately involved in the school to prison pipeline: (a) impoverished, (b) black students, (c) maltreatment victims, (d) students with particular education disabilities, and (e) lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (Mallett, 2017). Young individuals engaged in the youth justice system experience a number of obstacles to effective re-entry into their societies including (a) mental health problems, (b) substance addictions, (c) unstable community and peer networks, (d) inadequate housing and economic assets, and (e) restricted education and abilities. All of these variables are probable to have an impact on previous educational experiences and hinder re-engagement in education (Morrow & Villodas, 2017). Those adverse childhood experiences are associated with elevated internalizing problems, which inversely increased the risk for school dropout (Morrow & Villodas, 2017).

Juvenile Incarceration and Returning to School

Almost 90% of justice-impacted students' express interest in returning to school, however, only one third re-enroll (U. S. Department of Education, 2016). Students have often been turned away because of lost records or other miscommunication between the school and the facility (U. S. Department of Education, 2016). When students are allowed to re-enroll in their primary school after being incarcerated, they are often treated differently, being classified as special-education students, alternative education students, and students with behavioral issues.

The criminal justice system may also look at past juvenile offenders differently. Police may be more likely to suspect and arrest past juvenile offenders for new crimes; rather, the offender committed them or not. Dependent upon the juveniles' previous convictions, some judges may be more likely to sentence past offenders more harshly for subsequent crimes. Approximately 23,000 delinquent youth was referred to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. These referrals were childhood trauma, neglect, criminal behavior and other criminological factors, increasing the risk of becoming a dangerous, violent, and a chronic juvenile offender by age 35 (Fox, Perez, Cass, & Baglivio, 2015).

Researchers assert that incarceration of students of abuse, neglect, and criminality could be very unsettling, significantly reducing the likelihood of ever returning to school and significantly increasing the likelihood of being classified as having an emotional or behavioral disorder for those who do return (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Estimates based on over 35,000 juvenile offenders over 10 years (1990-2000) from a large urban county in the United States suggest that juvenile incarceration results substantially in lower high

school completion rates and higher adult incarceration rates. (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

Aizer and Doyle (2015) also implied that juvenile offenders that were assigned to a judge

with a high incarceration rate were considerably less likely to complete high school and

had a significant likelihood of being incarcerated as an adult.

Juvenile incarceration decreases the likelihood of high school graduation by 13 to

39 percentage points, compared to the average public school student living in the same

area (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Aizer and Doyle noted that, although incarceration of

juveniles is intended to be short-term, it can be very troublesome. Aizer and Doyle (2015)

suggested that substitutes to incarceration, such as electronic monitoring or enforced

curfews for juvenile offenders and policies that address the low rates at which juveniles

return to school upon release instead of procedures that make increased contact with

police inevitable.

Labeling theory alludes that people's behavior is influenced by the label ascribed

to them by society (Besemer, Farrington, & Bijleveld, 2017). Results of a study

conducted by Kim and Lee (2019) imply that schools with an open-minded atmosphere

may serve as a safeguard against labeling effects and highlight the importance of schools

and their personnel in shaping delinquent behavior in juveniles. The way teachers

perceive their students returning from the juvenile system can influence student

relationships and student engagement, both of which play a vital role in decreasing their

chance of reoffending (Sinclair, Unruh, Griller Clark, & Waintrup, 2017).

Schools make an enormous contribution to the number of juveniles referred to the

juvenile justice system annually, and usually for less severe offenses than outside sources

(May, Barranco, Stokes, Robertson, & Haynes, 2018). Recent increases in the number of youths arrested for non-violent offenses in schools have led some jurisdictions to explore resolutions to the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Fader, Lockwood, Schall, & Stokes, 2015). Suspension by the age of 12 has direct and indirect associations with students being involved in the juvenile justice system (Novak, 2019). Directly, juveniles are more likely to self-report justice system involvement at age 18; and indirectly, they are more likely to have deviant peers as their companions in adolescence, therefore, increasing their odds of justice system involvement (Novak, 2019). Research shows that black students who disobey school rules are more often prone to out-of-school suspensions, which increase their threat of arrest and increase the odds that once suspects of delinquency, they are detained, formally processed, and institutionalized for probation violations (Hirschfield, 2018).

Barnert, et al., (2015) completed a qualitative study including 20 student interviews of incarcerated youth in a Los Angeles juvenile hall. The students expressed a need for love and attention, discipline and control, and role models and perspective at home and school. Youths perceived that when home or school failed to meet these needs, they spent more time on the streets, leading to incarceration. These incarcerated youths contrasted the path through school with the avenue to jail, reporting that the passageway to jail felt easier. All of them expressed the insight that they had made bad decisions and that the more difficult way was not only better but also still potentially achievable. They concluded, to break cycles of juvenile incarceration; the public health community must partner with legislators, educators, community leaders, and youths to determine how to

make success, rather than detention, the more straightforward path for disadvantaged

adolescents (Barnert et al., 2015).

Connections Between Being Incarcerated and Dropping Out

The observed correlations between arrest and school dropping out may be

explained by alternative unmeasured factors such as (a) muffled self-control, (b) a lack of

parental supervision, (c) divergent peers, or (d) neighborhood disadvantages may inflate

the estimated connection between the arrest and educational attainment in these studies

(Fernandez-Suarez, Herrero, Sanchez, Juarros-Basterretxea, & Rodriguez-Diaz, 2016).

The connection might be consequential; guessing in a sensitivity analysis that the

observed relation between arrest and high school graduation would all but disappear

because of unobserved factors that influence both graduation and detention. The

challenge in unraveling the connection amongst arrest and educational achievement is to

gather an information vault that contains data on the numerous individual, peer, family,

neighborhood and school factors that together foretell juvenile arrest and educational

achievement (Kirk & Sampson, 2013). Dropping out of high school has significant

unfavorable ramifications for youth, including the increased probability of being jobless,

living in poverty, carrying on with an unhealthy way of life, and expanded likelihood of

being imprisoned (Fader et al., 2015).

Societal Risk Factors for Dropping Out

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the developed world and

well-documented racial/ethnic disparities throughout the criminal justice system (Wagner

& Walsh, 2016), resulting in substantial social, economic, and health burdens on families

and children of color (Neal & Rick, 2014). The widespread belief that dropping out of

school can cause financial hardship, rest on unsubstantiated evidence (Campbell, 2015).

Many societal risk factors exist when students drop out of school. Employers may be

reluctant to hire them, thereby increasing their likelihood of future criminal activity and

becoming a high school dropout (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

      Dropping out of high school also has negative consequences for earnings. Young

African American males are incarcerated at inexplicably higher rates as compared to their

white counterparts and other minority groups, and this trend spreads into adulthood

(Cobb, 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that young black males between the ages of

20 and 24 who do not have a high school diploma or a GED typically have a higher

chance of being incarcerated than being employed (Neal & Rick, 2014).

      Recent research by Rumberger (2013) that high school dropouts, compared to

high school graduates, face extremely uninviting economic and social projections. It is

further noted that dropouts are more likely to rely on public assistance, engage in crime,

and generate other social costs supported by taxpayers. High school dropouts are less

likely to find a job and earn a decent living wage, more likely to be below the poverty

level, and more likely to suffer from a variety of adverse health outcomes (Hickman, et

al, 2017). According to the 2017 Current Population Survey, median annual earnings for

individuals at least 25 years of age with no high school was $27,800 (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2017). Median yearly earnings for high school dropouts was $18,445. For high

school graduates, including GED holders, the median annual income was $36,700, almost

$19,000 more than that of dropouts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Inadequacies in

education alone significantly hamper potential financial opportunities. Adults across the country without a high school diploma face the greatest rates of poverty and earn average salaries 27% lower than high school graduates (Wheeler, 2017). When teenagers are locked up by the juvenile justice system at a young age and fail to finish their schooling, the experience affects future income and potential earnings throughout their lives (Notar, 2019).

Juvenile incarceration is expensive. The average cost of incarcerating an American prisoner varies from state to state (Notar, 2019). Some states, like Indiana, have managed to keep room and board prices low, at about $14,000 per inmate; meanwhile, states like New York pay around $60,000 to keep one inmate behind bars (Notar, 2019).

The average annual cost of an incarcerating a juvenile in the United States exceeds $88,000 (Li, Wu, Lam, & Gao, 2016). Rather than juvenile incarceration enhancing the human capital collection or stopping future wrongdoing and imprisonment, it is found that for adolescents on the edge of detainment, such confinement causes a drop in the high school fulfillment rate and an expansion in the likelihood of detainment as an adult (Li et al., 2016). In investigating the components behind these impacts, we find that once detained; an adolescent is probably not going to ever come back to class, proposing that even generally brief periods of incarceration can be exceptionally problematic and have extreme long-haul results for this populace (Li et al., 2016).

Returning to school after dropout significantly reduces the crime-inducing effect of dropout among men (Backman, 2017). However, the males who do come back to

school are named as having a disability because of a social or behavioral issue, decreasing the probability of graduation, and conceivably increasing the possibility of future criminal conduct (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Earning a high school diploma has been strongly linked to less violent and drug-related crimes, lowering incarceration rates, and the costs invested by society in the criminal justice system (Attardo-Maryott, 2015).

Implications

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to gain an understanding of teachers', parents', and academic advisors' perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges. Identifying the contributing factors assist schools in developing strategies to improve student retention. Dropping out of school has become a significant problem at the study site, and the possible reason may be attributed to the high number of Grades 10-12 students who have been in the juvenile justice system. Educational leaders should acquire an awareness of the dropout crisis within their community. The importance of professionals in the education system to identify risk and protective factors of juvenile delinquency, link at-risk youth to preemptive services, swiftly re-involve delinquent youth in educational or vocational programs after their release, and offer support and referrals as needed (Farn & Adams, 2016). In a qualitative study conducted by Slaten, Zalzala, Elison, Tate, and Morris (2016) participants described their increased understanding of vocational opportunities available to them as increasing their desire to

stay out of trouble and to pursue future careers in the entertainment, computer programming, and construction and design industries.

Many research studies focus on the dropout problem from a perspective of educators, administrators, and the political sectors. The challenge this study focuses on is that it is not known what teachers, parents, and academic advisors perceive are the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to school experience. A study of enrollment trends at public schools showed a sharp increase in the number of Grade 9 students enrolled in school over the past 30 years (Campbell, 2015). The pattern showed the number of students being held back expanding, a phenomenon known as the ninth-grade swell. The rate which students dwindle between the ninth and 10th grade tripled over the same 30 years, interposing the 10th-grade plunge (Campbell, 2015).

Students who drop out of high school are much more likely to result in students growing up to be unemployable, live in a poor quality of life, receive municipal support, be incarcerated, be sentenced to life in prison or death, become ill, become single parents through separation or divorce, and become parents of students who drop out (Campbell, 2015). Our communities and country in general experience the unpleasant effects of the dropout epidemic due to the loss of gainful employment, and the amazingly high costs combined with expanded imprisonment, social administrations, and health-related services (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006). The overall goal for this project is to reduce the number of students who drop out of high school. By implementing

intervention strategies, policies and plans within the district that focuses on former incarcerated youth, more students have the opportunity to advance their education.

The final study is a result of examining the perceptions of parents, teachers, and academic advisors on the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated students who return to school. If implemented, the FIRST program will help students returning from jail to school re-enter school with the support needed to overcome their obstacles. The program will provide them with the academic assistance they need, as well as therapy and other elements to help them cope with the personal problems that many of them face daily.

Summary

Although many schools have adopted policies in order to stem increases in violence, misbehavior, or drug use, some schools have adopted non-punitive approaches to deal with these problems. These programs emphasize social, behavioral, and cognitive skill-building; character education; or targeted behavioral supports for students who are at risk for violent or illegal behavior, thus avoiding contact with the juvenile justice system. (Boccanfuso & Kuhfield, 2011). The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to gain an understanding of teachers, parents, and academic advisors perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges. In Section 1, the study problem was defined, key terms and definitions were identified, and research evidence was provided from professional literature. Section 2, discussed research design and methodology, describing a justification for the research design used, how sample groups were selected, and how the

researcher protected participants' confidentiality and obtaining informed consent, as well as, describing how data was collected and analyzed. Section 3 provides a description of the project based upon components that were found to be most effective in addressing the challenges of previous incarcerated youth. Section 4 describes the project's strengths and limitations as well as an analysis of the researcher's development throughout this process. This project study shed light on how teachers, academic advisors, and parents perceive are the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain an understanding of teachers, parents, and academic advisors perceptions of the challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and returned to a traditional school environment and support services and resources to assist with those challenges. Identifying the contributing factors can assist schools in developing strategies to improve student retention. By distinguishing the minor impacts of arrests, charges, convictions, and detainments on high school graduation rates and the unfavorable factors that impact a person's odds of graduating and their odds of being arrested—e.g., state spending on public services—schools can evaluate intervention approaches and better analyze students' career goals to meet the educational and psychological needs of the students before they drop out.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

For this study, I chose a qualitative design since qualitative research is exploratory and is used to answer questions and understand phenomenon and perspectives of an individual or individuals in various social settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is generally more explorative and dependent on the collection of verbal, behavioral, or observational data that can be interpreted in a subjective manner (McCarthy, Whittaker, Boyle, & Eyal, 2017). For qualitative researchers, there are many research designs to employ, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, and narrative (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I reviewed all the qualitative methods before selecting a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative research is about understanding people and the meanings they have put together (Rule & John, 2015). Qualitative research is an examination approach in which the inquirer looks through a focal wonder or central phenomenon, asks members the full range of questions, and gathers exhaustive perspectives of members as images or words (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is used to represent the perspectives of individuals (Yin & Gao, 2016). Also, qualitative research is about the observer of the world and is about practices that bring the world to the forefront (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

A qualitative descriptive study is regularly coordinated toward discovering the who, what, and where of events or encounters or their basic nature and shape; researchers conducting qualitative descriptive studies typically stay close to their data when providing interpretations and explanations (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative descriptive studies have as their goal a comprehensive summary of incidents in the regular everyday terminology of those events, and a qualitative descriptive approach is the method of choice when the researcher wants to present a straightforward portrayal of the phenomena (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Qualitative research lacks rules and agreement about what is an acceptable sample size. However, sample size depends on what one wants to find out, what has credibility, and what is beneficial to the researcher (Patton, 2002).

In qualitative research, a variety of different theories and concepts can emerge when it comes to interpreting the data (Lin, 2013). A case study is a logical analysis that investigates a modern phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context (Yin & Gao,

2016). Distinct from a case study, however, similar in logical analysis and investigatory techniques, a qualitative descriptive design was selected because only one data collection method was used.

A mixed-method study was not considered because mixed-method research can sometimes be three times as difficult as using a single method. A researcher must perform solid research using two different methods, and it can also take just as much effort to integrate what you learn from these different methods (Yin & Gao, 2016). Quantitative research was never considered for this project study because quantitative research is a structured way of collecting and analyzing data obtained from a variety of sources. Quantitative inquiry can include the use of computational, statistical, and mathematical tools to derive results. Quantitative inquiry is conclusive in its purpose as it tries to quantify the problem and understand how prevalent it is by looking for projectable results to a larger population, according to McCarthy et al. (2017). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on words rather than numbers. For this reason, I selected qualitative research to make known the opinions, thoughts, and feelings of the participants and answer the research questions:

RQ1: How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of challenges experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and then returned to school?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and academic advisors regarding support services and resources that could assist with addressing the challenges

experienced by Grade 10–12 high school students who have been incarcerated and then returned to school?

RQ3: What suggestions do teachers, parents, and academic advisors have for school administrators about ways to better help Grade 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and then returned to school?

Participants

Purposeful Participant Selection

Yellowtail School District was the site of this qualitative study. A variety of options were provided to gain access to participants. For the interviews, teachers and academic advisors had the option of meeting with me privately in the school's office (conference room), at the local public library in a private reading cubicle, or over the phone. Parent participants were allowed to choose a time that was convenient to them, and we met at the public library or over the phone to conduct each interview. The participants for this study were carefully chosen by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling of primary studies for inclusion in the synthesis is one way of achieving a manageable amount of data (Ames, 2019). The selection criteria for parents, teachers, and academic advisors included educators (teachers and academic advisors) who have been in the educational field for over 10 years and have had experience dealing with students involved with the juvenile justice system. Parents were selected based on the coding data of attendance from the district's student information system. A total of six parents, six teachers, and six academic advisors from Yellowtail School District were selected who met the criteria. In regard to the use of sampling in a qualitative descriptive design, any

purposeful sampling technique may be used that meets the purpose of the study (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The purposeful sampling technique is a type of probability sampling that is most efficient when one wants to study a specific cultural field (Ames, 2019). Purposive sampling suggests that the researcher chooses people and locals for study because they persistently enhance comprehension of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I selected this number of participants because it provided a considerable enough sample size to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. While the number of participants might be considered low, these participants have experience in interacting with or parenting with this particular student population. Samples in qualitative research tend to be low to support the depth of case-oriented evaluation essential to this mode of investigation. In addition, qualitative samples are purposeful—that is, chosen for the phenomenon under inquiry because of the ability to provide richly textured data (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thrope, & Young, 2018). Table 3, 4, and 5 display the demographics of all the participants, parents, teachers, and advisors, respectively.

Table 3

Demographics of the Parent Participants

	Gender	Race	Single Parent	Interview date
Participant 1	Male	African American	No	February 26, 2020
Participant 2	Male	African American	No	February 27, 2020
Participant 3	Female	African American	Yes	February 28, 2020
Participant 4	Female	African American	Yes	March 2, 2020
Participant 5	Female	Caucasian	No	March 2, 2020
Participant 6	Female	Caucasian	Yes	March 4, 2020

Table 4

Demographics of the Teacher Participants

	Gender	Race	Experience (years)	Position	Interview date
Participant 1	Female	African American	50	Teacher	March 3, 2020
Participant 2	Male	African American	27	Teacher	March 4, 2020
Participant 3	Male	African American	12	Teacher	March 5, 2020
Participant 4	Male	African American	25	Teacher	March 6, 2020
Participant 5	Female	Caucasian	10	Teacher	March 10, 2020
Participant 6	Female	African American	10	Teacher	March 11, 2020

Table 5

Demographics of the Academic Advisor Participants

	Gender	Race	Experience (years)	Position	Interview date
Participant 1	Female	African American	10	Asst. Principal	March 12, 2020
Participant 2	Female	Caucasian	15	Asst. Principal	March 13, 2020
Participant 3	Male	African American	30	Principal	March 16, 2020
Participant 4	Female	Caucasian	20	Facilitator	March 17, 2020
Participant 5	Male	Caucasian	18	Guidance	March 18, 2020
Participant 6	Male	African American	27	Guidance	March 19, 2020

Setting. The setting for this study is a rural high school in the Southern United States. Yellowtail School District is located in Yellow County in the heart of the Delta and is the largest school district in the Delta region. The population of the city of Yellowtail is approximately 28,259, with 56% African American, 42% Caucasian,1% Hispanic, and the remaining 1% other (TownCharts, 2018). The Yellowtail School District student population is just over 5,300 enrolled in seven elementary schools (Grades K–6), three junior high schools (Grades 7–9), and one high school (Grades 10–12). Yellowtail High School is 70% African American, 25% Caucasian, and 5% Hispanic. Yellowtail High School ranks nationally at 12,570 out of 17,245 ranked high schools in graduation rate and has a dropout rate of 5.6% (TownCharts, 2018). According to the school district website, the current enrollment/population at the study site high school is 1,200 students.

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

The interview in qualitative research should acknowledge the key and vibrant position the investigator performs, not only in accessing and understanding the personal experiences of the participants, but also in adding to the data collection method itself. The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants (Harvey, 2017). The researcher-participant connection is a human relationship in which information is gathered (Harvey, 2017). Researchers should be neutral and facilitative in order to avoid over-influencing the way participants react. The participants capture various elements of the researcher's character from his or her way of life, physical appearance, and visible features. Thus, the researcher-participant relationship and human relationships operate within the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious levels of both the participant and the researcher (Harvey, 2017). A distinct characteristic of the researcher-participant relationship is that it is a working coalition.

The goal of this working relationship is for the researcher to collect the participant's story of a particular phenomenon. Equilibrium needs to strive for between the dangers and benefits of being too close or too distant from participants. As with most human relationships, the researcher–participant relationship is an interpenetrative, intersubjective one; each person influences the other on various levels throughout their relationships (Harvey, 2017). The procedure, in turn, has a direct impact on the interview process and nature of data that is collected. The interview process should be one in which your participant's opinions are valued and appreciated. Strategies used to build rapport and support 'good' interviews can include preamble and chat relating to the home and

family environment. This could take place prior to the interview and as a useful

distraction technique during the interview if needed (Sivell, et al., 2019). Walden

University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number for this study is 02-24-

20-0148166.

The research site for this study is Yellowtail High School. Permission from the

superintendent and principal of the school was requested. Written permission must be

granted to conduct research at this site prior to data collection. The superintendent and

principal provided a letter of cooperation, and that letter was then being forwarded to

Walden's IRB in order to receive approval to conduct research. After receiving approval,

letters of invitation were sent out to potential participants. All participants completed and

signed an informed consent.

Protection of Participant Rights

Researchers must guarantee participants are aware of the intent of the study and

of all foreseeable hazards and discomforts (if any) to the participant (McLeod, 2015). The

school principal signed a letter of cooperation, and all participant must sign an informed

consent form prior to being interviewed. These include not only physical injury but

psychological possibilities as well (McLeod, 2015). The danger of damage must not be

greater than in ordinary life, i.e., participants should not be subjected to higher or higher

hazards than those found in their regular lifestyles (McLeod, 2015). Participants and the

information obtained from them must remain anonymous unless they offer their full

permission to disclose. If they feel awkward, participants should be prepared to quit a

survey at any moment. They should be permitted to remove their information as well. At

the beginning of the research, they should be informed of their right to cancel. If they do not want to, they should not be pressured to proceed. Participants even have a final chance at the end of the study to remove the information they supplied for the studies (McLeod, 2015).

Data Collection

Semistructured Interviews

I collected data from a total of 18 semistructured interviews with six parents, six teachers, and six academic advisors from Yellowtail High School selected via purposive sampling. The school principal signed a letter of cooperation, and all participant must sign an informed consent form prior to being interviewed. Interviews were conducted for 60 minutes. My role as a high school assistant principal at another high school, not directly connected with Yellowtail High School, prevents all parties from having any preconceived individual biases or conjectures that could have an unjustifiable impact on the interpretation of the information, and the conclusion. In order to elicit honest responses, assurances were provided orally and in writing indicating that no one other than the researcher would know the participants' responses, and no one besides myself had knowledge of any of the participants of the study. I conducted interviews with some of the participants within the school setting, the public library, or another mutually convenient private, public location.

Before beginning data collection, permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval was secured. Semistructured interviews were the only data gathering source (see Appendix B, C, and D). Using a Nexux7 tablet,

audio recordings were made of the interviews conducted. A writing journal was used during interviews to take notes of important information. Using a journal provided a means to monitor personal reactions during face-to-face interviews (Hatch, 2002).

Data triangulation was used to facilitate validation through cross verification from multiple sources, and it allowed me to check and establish validity in the study by analyzing the research questions from multiple perspectives. The three-stage sampling and data collection process allowed triangulation of parents' perspectives with teachers' and academic advisors' perspectives. The design of the study and the focus of the interview protocols allowed professionals who was interviewed to provide a direct response to the experiences and expressed needs of parents. This triangulation through the sampling and data collection procedures reduced the bias and errors that might be introduced had only one of the samples been used.

Parents. The semistructured interviews of the six parents consisted of parents of students who had been detained for nonviolent offenses, during the 2018- 2019 academic year. The sample identified families of students who had been incarcerated and returned to school, teachers who had or are working with students who have been incarcerated, and academic advisors who monitored students, who had been incarcerated. The attendance reports were generated using eSchoolPlus, and the filter word *incarcerated* was used to sort out students who had issues due to incarceration.

The Study Statewide Information System (SIS) is a web-based system developed by the Study State Department of Education's Research and Technology Division to enable school districts to submit and certify data to the State. The system is used by

school districts using eSchoolPlus software. eSchoolPLUS is a comprehensive student information management solution that provides powerful tools for teachers, administrators, parents, and students. This information was used to select the student's parents for the study. Permission was obtained from the school/district to identify and interview participants.

Academic advisors and teachers. Semistructured interviews of academic advisors and teachers consisted of six purposefully selected academic advisors, and six teachers, from Yellowtail High School. In addition, for credibility and to safeguard any preconceived biases or conjectures that could have an unjustifiably impact on the interpretation of the information, and ultimate conclusion, informal dialogue took place with three academic advisors and three teachers from a neighboring high school with similar demographics, who have had direct contact with students who had been detained or incarcerated. Parents were selected from Yellowtail High School. Yellowtail High School parents were more open to talk because of familiarity feeling comfortable discussing personal matter. Openness may not have existed with parents from another school.

I provided an array of options to gain access to participants. Parents were selected based on coding data of attendance from the district's student information system. The times available to all participants were before school, after school, and on weekends. Participants were granted the option to interview in the school conference room, at the public library or in a private study room. To separate the relationship with the participants as an administrator and a researcher, the nature

of research was explained, and assurances were given to all participants, that their participation would not affect the working relationship with them as teachers, parents, and colleagues.

Member Checking

After the interviews, the audio tapes were transcribed and provided back to that interviewee to member check by reviewing the transcription for accuracy. Member checking is an essential technique for establishing credibility. This technique allowed the participants an opportunity to assess intentions, correct errors, and to voluntarily give any additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). After transcribing the recordings, copies were delivered to participants via email. Participants were asked to read transcriptions and provide edits or comments to verify that what was there is what they stated. If need be, the participants were able to make appropriate changes to transcripts and initial them to verify the accuracy (Woodside, 2010). After participant's interviews and member checking were completed, responses were analyzed using an interpretational analysis method, allowing the researcher to determine themes within the interview to explain perceptions of dropout prevention (Saracho, 2015).

The records of this study will be kept private. All paper copies, records, and digital media will be stored at my place of residence in locked cabinets, while all web-based and computer records will be password-protected. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university. After that period all data will be shredded or digitally erased.

All information provided will be kept confidential. The use of personal information was not used for any purposes outside of this research project. The records of this study will be kept confidential. All paper copies, records, and digital media will be stored in a secure residential area in locked cabinets, while all web-based and computer records will be password-protected. Data will be kept for at least five years, as required by the university. After that period, all data will be shredded or digitally erased.

Moreover, no information was included that make it possible to identify any subject or school in any report subsequently published. The real name of the school was stored, and the name of the district remained confidential. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants, both orally and in writing.

Role of the Researcher

Researchers must prevent having any preconceived individual biases or conjectures that could have an unjustifiable impact on the interpretation of the information, and conclusion. Researchers must recognize his or her role and biases related to research. Case study researchers should aggressively attempt to identify and moderate the effects of their biases and prejudices in order to ensure the objectivity of their conclusions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016). Any predetermined point of views or prejudices can result in assumptions that are not reflective of the phenomenon that is being examined. When conducting a qualitative study, the researcher must identify their biases, values, and personal background (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

During this research, my task was to manage and balance my professional and educational duties successfully. As a researcher, I built working relationships with all

participants for productive analysis. It was also my duty to always remain professional and ethical to ensure a successful result for this project. My role was to collect data, analyze data collected, design a student re-entry program, and develop an implementation process for former incarcerated students transition back into school. During this process, I had to be open-minded and set aside personal attachment and prejudices to concentrate on the data collected.

Data Coding and Analysis

Data was coded based on patterns, themes, and categories in the NVivo software program. The program makes instruments available that enables the researcher to find, code, and annotate discoveries in essential information material, to weigh and to assess its' significance, and to envision relations between them. Analysis of data took place by using Hatch's nine-step typology (Hatch, 2002). Hatch (2002) indicated that data analysis is a search for meaning that is systemic and complete

Hatch (2002) labeled five types, typological, inductive, interpretive, political, and polyvocal. Typological is the model that was used in this study because it is suitable for interview studies. Typological analysis, described by Hatch (2002), consists of the following nine steps:

1. Identifying the typologies to be analyzed

2. Read the data, marking entries related to the typologies

3. Read entries by typology, recording the main ideas in each entry on a summary sheet

4. Look for patterns, relationships, and themes within each typology

5. Read the data, coding entries according to patterns identified; keeping a record of which entries go with each element of the patterns

6. Decide if data support the patterns, and search for non-examples of the patterns

7. Look for relationships among the patterns identified

8. Write profiles as single sentence generalizations

9. Select data excerpts that support each generalization (p.153).

The process of data analysis began with reading the first interview transcript, the first set of field notes, the first document collected in the study, and the first set of observational field notes. The assumptions obtained from the examination of records occurred through analyzing the participants' accounts, categorizing similar accounts into themes, and deciphering the implications of these themes, as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018).

Patterns, relationships, and themes. Through the process of open coding, data was read, labeling concepts, defining and developing categories, based on common properties. Relationships were established through axil coding, going through the entire transcript, focusing on notes and comments, grouping the comments and notes that go together, searching for similar elements of the subject's narratives that were placed into specific captions according to themes. The process was achieved by using tinted markers to categorize the perceptions effectively. Using this course of action accurately sorted the remarks of the participants that were considered significant in the analysis of the event.

After recognizing the themes, the participant's accounts were transcribed using the precise comments of the participants. The researcher concentrates on what the

participants' experiences were like by creating a textual description from the participants' point of view. Quotes were particularly significant, as only the participants can truthfully articulate their experience (Lin, 2013). A structural description was written. A structural description is a narrative that identifies the setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Direct quotes were used in order to capture the thoughts and feelings of the participant. Lin (2013) noted that the words of the participants gave powerful meaning to their experience of the phenomenon.

Generalizations. Generalization is a process in which the researcher features significant explanations, single sentences, or direct quotes keeping in mind the end goal to provide a thorough understanding of how the participants perceived the phenomenon. The research findings were simplified to the general population, and results explained in the research articles used in the study, so that readers could carefully interpret the results for the purpose of replicating the study in similar and/or other settings. After I analyzed and considered the data, from transcripts of interviews, an inventory of noteworthy accounts was developed. Notes and comments were written in the margins, making notations next to the data of anything that strikes as potentially relevant for answering research questions (coding).

The essence of the phenomenon. Extracting the spirit of the experience was achieved by writing a combined account of the event that expresses both textural and structural components. This procedure permitted the researcher to ascertain the necessary make-up of the experience. The description of the participants allowed the reader to

better comprehend, by reading the exact words of the participants, expounding on critical elements, depicting how they experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Evidence of Quality

   Credibility. Credibility is seen as the most critical aspect or criterion in establishing trustworthiness. This is because credibility essentially asks the researcher to link the research study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research study's findings. To ensure the highest possible quality and reliability of this project's results, I used bias analysis and peer debriefing to remove inconsistencies. Bias analysis requires the researcher's self-reflection. This process creates an open narrative for potential readers. During bias analysis, I was able to self-reflect and indicate any personal prejudice I had about the issue of student incarceration. Peer debriefing requires an individual examining the qualitative research. This method is a form of peer review that includes asking an associate to search the study and decide if the data-based findings are fair. During peer debriefing, I had three administrators from a nearby high school reading some of the data and offering input on the details they saw.

   The use credible sources in my Project Study was important, because the audience assume statements were supported with credible evidence. Safeguarding any preconceived biases or conjectures that could have an unjustifiably impact on the interpretation of the information, and conclusion. Perceptions of bias and untrustworthiness are distinguishable and have independent effects. There is a conceptual distinction between bias (skewed perception) and untrustworthiness (dishonesty). Source bias can have a negative effect on persuasion and source credibility beyond any parallel

effects of untrustworthiness, lack of expertise, and dislikability (Wallace, Wegener, & Petty, 2019).

Trustworthiness. Unlike quantitative researchers who apply statistical techniques for building valid, reliable, and consistent quality of research discoveries, qualitative researchers expect to plan and consolidate methodological techniques to guarantee the 'trustworthiness' of the findings. For this very reason, the following strategies were used:

1. Accounting for personal biases which may have influenced findings;

2. Acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis;

3. Meticulous record-keeping, demonstrating a clear decision trail and ensuring interpretations of data are consistent and transparent;

4. Establishing a comparison case/ seeking out similarities and differences across accounts to ensure different perspectives are represented;

5. Including costly and thick verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts to support findings;

6. Showing clarity as far as manners of thinking amid information analysis and resulting interpretations;

7. Collaborating with different researchers to diminish researcher bias;

8. Respondent validation: incorporates welcoming participants to remark on the transcript from their interview and whether the final subjects, themes, and ideas satisfactorily reflect the phenomena being explored;

9. Data triangulation, whereby unique techniques and points of view, help deliver a more comprehensive set of discoveries and findings (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 4).

I reduced reliability threats by triangulating data. I established an audit trail by describing how data were obtained, themes derived, and how decisions were reached during the inquiry. For my study to be trustworthy, my findings should be credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable.

Assumptions. Although the rate of juvenile incarceration is high in the United States to date, there are few qualitative studies that would support this study. This study addressed a gap in the practice by including parents in the methodological design, as they are often absent. In a life-cycle framework, incarceration during the teenage years usually leads to students dropping out of school, interrupting human and social capital growth, thus leading to reduced future earnings and amplified criminal activity (Sweeten, Bushway, & Paternoster, 2009).

Discrepant Cases

The complexity of the data is to be welcomed because it allows for subtler and nuanced analysis. Contradictions in the data can give rise to unexpected findings, which ultimately strengthen the study. Qualitative researchers actively look for "negative cases" to support their arguments. A "negative case" is one in which respondents' experiences or viewpoints differ from the main body of evidence. For example, you were studying students who dropped out of school in the last year of high school. In negative case sampling, you could choose to study teenagers who graduated high school on time. In discrepant case sampling, you could study students who dropped out of high school in the

ninth-10th grades, or perhaps those who went on the graduate at age 20 or 21, or who obtained their GED at a later date. When a negative case can be explained, the general explanation for the typical case is strengthened (Hackett, 2015).

I compared the responses of the parents of the students who were detained and returned to school to the teachers' and academic advisors' responses, and the responses were quite close. Some of the same reasons' parents gave teachers and academic advisors identified the same for students incarcerated and returned to school encountered. The replies had one difference. Teachers and academic advisors agreed that low parental participation was a significant factor that led to the problems of these students, but none of the parents included it as a justification for the students' struggles.

I also found that the reasons these students suffered could be interpreted differently, but they reflect a common theme. Families said their child did not want to come to school, for example, because school was boring or they did not like school, but teachers and academic counselors mentioned that students are not interested in learning and lazy and did not care. Such comments are two separate viewpoints, the school climate.

Data Analysis Results

Tenth through 12th-grade students who were incarcerated and return to high school are dropping out of an urban high school in the Southern United States at an elevated rate from academic years 2010 through 2017. The research questions addressed three areas: (a) parent, teacher, and academic advisor perceptions of the challenges faced by former incarcerated students returning to school, (b) support services and resources

needed for those students and (c) suggestions for administrators to better help those

students. Information was collected through semistructured interviews, and then analyzed

using Hatch's nine step typology. Eighteen participants were chosen by purposive

sampling.

Interviews With Parents

Six parents of students who had been incarcerated and returned to school at

Yellowtail High School were interviewed to gather data to arrive at an understanding of

the experiences faced by these students from the perception of parents. Topics related to

the experiences faced by those previously incarcerated students who returned to school

developed (see Appendix H). The parents biggest concern was lack of communication,

peer pressure, and the lack of remediation provided after their students return to school

after being incarcerated.

Interviews With Teachers

Six teachers from Yellowtail High School were interviewed to gain insight into

the difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated students upon return to school. Teachers

provided information about why students struggled and feedback on what they

considered the right strategies to address the needs of those students who return to school

after incarceration. Teachers gave responses such as acceptable behavior, peer pressure,

parental involvement, remediation, juvenile justice involvement, counseling, mentorship,

psychological, mental health, and changes in the educational system. The teachers

interviewed provided suggestions that they felt were most important in addressing the

issues faced by formerly incarcerated students upon return to school. Below is a description of each topic and suggestions from teachers. (see Appendix H)

Interviews With Academic Advisors

Six academic advisors from Yellowtail High School were interviewed to gain insight into the difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated students upon return to school. Academic advisors provided information about why students struggled and feedback on what they considered the right strategies to address the needs of those students who return to school after incarceration. Academic advisors gave responses such as promote acceptable behavior, peer pressure, parental involvement, remediation, juvenile justice involvement, counseling, mentorship, psychological, mental health, and changes in the educational system. Below is a description of the topics that relate to the experiences faced by those previously incarcerated students who returned to school from the viewpoints of the academic advisors. (see Appendix H)

Emerging Themes

Findings in this segment was explicitly grouped by research issues. Each question was structured and correctly matched with each question.

Emerging Themes

Parents

Advisors

Juvenile Justice Involvement

Counseling

Mental Health Providers

Communication
Remediation
Behavioral Issues

Mentorship
Parental Involvement
Peer Pressure
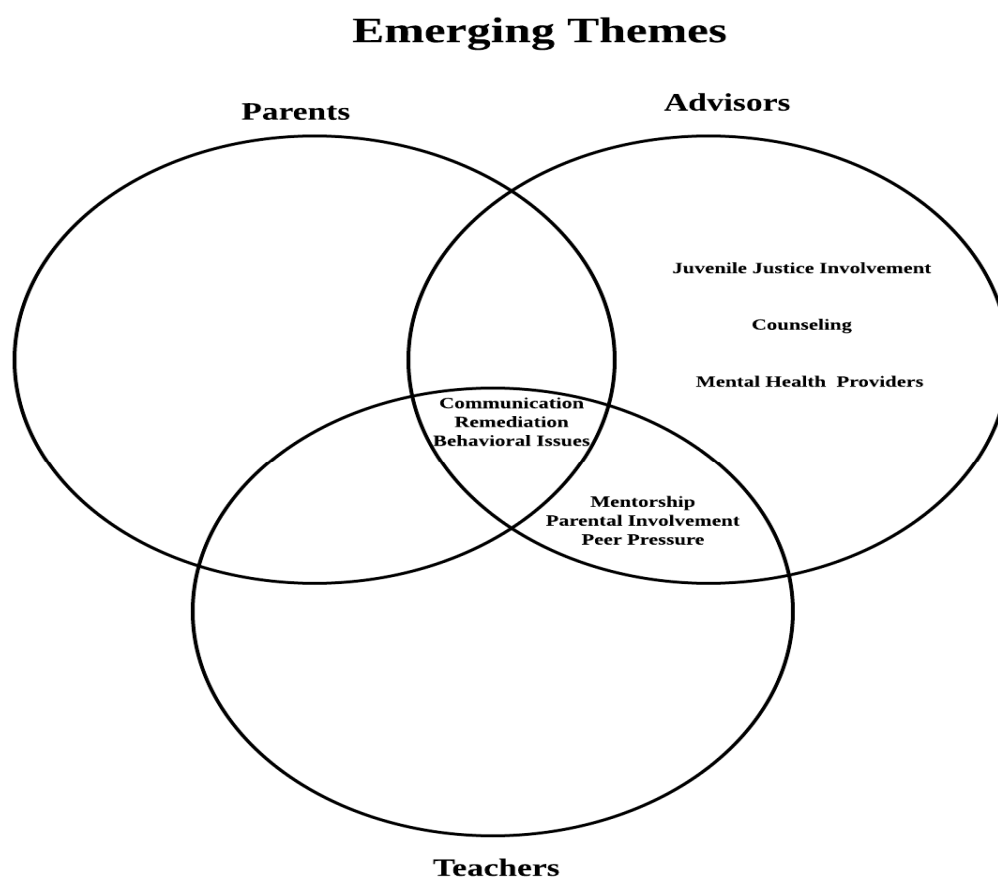
Teachers

Figure 1. Emerging themes.

The following general themes emerged during interviews with parents, teachers, and advisors that addressed RQ1: (a) behavioral issues, (b) peer pressure, (c) communication, and (d) parental involvement.

Behavioral issues. This topic relates to delinquency, drug use, and negative attitude. Participants who gave responses relating to this topic stated that their child dropped out due to behavioral issues that were causing him/her to get suspended frequently and exhibiting bad attitudes towards teachers and others in authority.

Most of the parents felt like their children would eventually drop out because of the way they behaved not only at home, but at school as well. PI 5 said, "All he did was

get in trouble. His ongoing disruptive behavior caused him to get suspended and eventually expelled." Five of the six parents interviewed revealed that many of their child's behavioral issues at school dealt with fights, being disrespectful to teachers or administrators, cutting classes, or being caught with items that are prohibited on school grounds. PI 2 explained, "Other students would pull up her mug shots and post it on social media. When she would tell the teacher, they would not say or do nothing." It was noted by all six of the parents that Facebook and other social media devices created an environment that led to their children to get into fights with their peers for talking about each other or feeling disrespected.

Teachers and advisors agreed that behavioral issues were a problem. T1 stated "Facebook is a big reason my girls get into trouble and eventually fight, get suspended and arrested" T2 added "I think the administration is enabling many of the students by letting them get away with little things which eventually add up to big thing, especially athletes". T3 stated "I think we need to put more students in alternative school so maybe the good students can learn without being distracted". AA1 stated, "Several of my students have been incarcerated for various reasons. Some were arrested for breaking and entering, some for possession of gun or weapon, possession of marijuana, and fighting, to name a few. Often times the offenses were committed outside of the school setting with the exception of fighting on campus during school hours." Some of the offenses are due to peer pressure. They fight because their friends are fighting.

Peer pressure. Four of the parents felt that peer pressure, gang-related activity, or other influences, led to their children getting involved with the juvenile justice system. Parent statements were as follows:

PI 2 - "Something happened during the 9th/10th grade year that students make the incorrect choices that lead them to go down the wrong path."

PI 6 said,

The principal's trying to say my son is in a gang, I know he is not. He is just

hanging out with the wrong people. With that gun thing, that was not his gun. I

think teachers are just picking on him, just because he has been in trouble before.

Those parents who gave responses that related to this topic stated that this kind of behavior surfaced around the ninth and 10th grade years

Two teachers who gave responses that related to this topic stated that their student's incarceration was due to gang-related activity, peer pressure, and criminal matters, which allowed them to make fast money and began to attract their attention more than school. From the perspectives of teachers and academic advisors, the people they were involved with was a significant influence. TI 1 stated, "A lot depends on who they are hanging out with, who their buddies are, who they run around with. They have not learned from their mistakes."

TI 5 added,

I believe that many students who have the ability to complete school still dropout

because of the following reasons. Some have no goals. shallow goals, or

unrealistic goals which do not include having a diploma. Some students are

caregivers, and they have difficulty getting to school. Some students lack exposure to other environments, people, and cultures. For example, they have only been in Yellowtail, and they mimic only the people in their neighborhoods who may have dropped out of school.

None of the academic advisors suggested peer pressure as being one of the areas of concern faced by previously incarcerated students upon return to school, however, they agreed that the lack of communication was a problem.

Communication. During interviews, four parents gave lack of communication and remediation reason for their children falling behind when they returned to school from the juvenile detention centers. PI 5 stated, "I really thought the teachers knew why my son was missing so many days of school." Many teachers are unaware of many of the instances of students' problems with the juvenile justice system and are insensitive to their plights. There is no system in place to notify teachers when students are institutionalized or incarcerated.

Teachers and advisors agreed communication was a problem. TI 2 stated,

By no means do I think they are doing enough. And again, like I said, because of this, this Privacy Act, we many times are not even aware of the things that are taking place within the school system regarding our students. I mean, I understand the idea of security and privacy. But sometimes I think that there may needs to be advocacy that's taking place, even within the school because we do not know necessarily that these individuals have been under the, you know, that they have been in the juvenile system. We do not know that because we ca not, we literally

cannot know. So, it puts the teachers at a disadvantage because we do not realize

that they are in the juvenile system. So, I think that's a problem. I think we need

to do something about it.

AA 1 also added,

Sometimes we are looking for students and find out later, sometimes when they

return that they have been in jail. Parents are either ashamed or just protective of

their child to inform us, so the child starts back at a disadvantage.

AA2 said, "It is very important that everyone work together for the benefit of the

students to reach their highest potential/goals. It's not about us; it is about the students!"

In addition, AA2 added, "It is imperative. However, often teachers aren't aware of

students' specific difficulties outside of school and aren't sure how to assist."

Teachers and advisors both thought there should be a better system for sharing of

information between all parties involved in the social, emotional, and educational well-

being of the student. Communication could possibly be improved by an increase in

parental involvement.

Parental involvement. This topic refers to an increased level of involvement

from parents and the community in school-related activities involving parents in their

child's education. All six teachers believe that when parents are involved in their

children's lives and education, those children do better in school and make the right

decisions. TI 1 said, "You know back in our day. We had our parents, but we were self-

motivated, and a lot of today's students are not self-motivated, motivated to do better." TI

2 added,

Students are unable to read, influenced by gang's, no one at home who cares, parents not involved positively, and they have too many responsibilities outside school…Dysfunctional families. Babysitting younger children, terminally ill parents, student sometimes is the only breadwinner.

Data collected from teachers revealed that they believed that parental involvement is essential and can be a determining factor in whether or not those students returning from incarceration are successful upon return to school. Only one of the six advisors mentioned parental involvement as being a major concern. AA 3 said,

The impact is different for each student. I feel it hinges on the support system the student has in place. The students with a good support system are more successful moving forward and are less likely to commit a second offence. The students that don't have adequate support are much more likely of violate again.

In contrast, none of the parents of formerly incarcerated students who interviewed stated that parental involvement was a determining factor.

The data concluded the following strategies have a significant impact on the success of students returning to school after detention or long-term incarceration: (a) ongoing counseling services, (b) psychological and mental and behavioral health providers on campus, (c) mentorship program at school, (d) remediation programs, and (e) increased juvenile involvement after release.

Counseling. This topic refers to offering some form of therapy to students who have personal or social issues. Two of the six advisors responded to this topic. AA1 stated,

I think we could, we could do a little more. We do, we do some, some home visits

we do some counseling with, with the students. One on One counseling, our

counselors counsel with the students. But I think we probably should try to do a

little more with the parents. Some of them 18 years old and living on their own if

the ones that are not, we still need to reach out to the parents.

AA3 said,

It is of the utmost importance. Teachers are the source that allows a school to

obtain success. It is what teachers do in their contact with students on a daily

basis that allows a school to have success. This contact is not limited to the

classroom. Teachers are the ones that convince students that they can do that

which they had been convinced they could not.

Their statements stressed the importance of building relationships with students,

especially those who have been incarcerated. Building relationships with students also

nurtures their psychological and mental health.

Psychological and mental health. The topics focus on addressing the trauma that

incarceration has on students. AA1 stated,

It's like this, like I said before we do what we can, the counselors council with the

student. Students are homeless we provide them clothing through Title I. Some

are living with other students; some suffer from environmental mental illness.

Coming from certain environments in which they live they are handicapped by

their environment, and we don't have anyone or a program on campus that can

address this issue. I feel that when these students return, they don't feel like they

belong, so we have to do a better job of getting them engaged in school activities.

AA2 asserted,

> Negative yields negative, and positive yields positive, therefore I believe that
>
> being incarcerated creates a negative environment where children are forced to
>
> learn survival skills in an unpleasant manner. They pick up bad habits while
>
> incarcerated and that behavior sometimes continue even after they have been
>
> released from the cell… incarceration often causes a student to be more calloused.
>
> Incarceration pins a reputation to a student that negatively identifies the student to
>
> his or her peers and teachers and even to himself or herself.

AA4 expressed, "Once incarcerated, juveniles are unlikely to ever return to school."

Further, they are "more likely to be classified for special education services due to

behavioral/emotional disorders rather than a cognitive disability." AA6 acknowledged, "I

think these students feel isolated, and are in a period of catch up or give up." As related to

funding AA4 asserted, "Funding can help because students need daycare for kids or

mental health issues." It also helps if the students are assigned a mentor upon return to

school from being incarcerated.

Mentorship. This concept relates to offering a form of support to students who

meet particular requirements. Only one of the six teachers interviewed elaborated on

mentorship as being a concern. T3 stated,

> We are currently working on a male mentoring program to assist us with keeping
>
> our young men on tract to graduate on time as well as preparing them to be ready

for success after graduation. This program will be on a volunteer basis. The men

in this program will be from the community where our students live. They will be

equipped with strategies and techniques to assist our young men moving forward.

AA3 suggested the implementation of the following programs or strategies,

Mentoring/male book club with the SRO, a 9th grade teacher formed a book clubs

on campus, the implementation of the House System, CHAMPS Program which

stands for Champs Have and Model Positive Peer Skills, blocked literacy   classes

where the first part of the class has been designated as 20 minutes of sustained

reading each day.

In response to mentorship AA1 added, "Again the mentoring piece. We have to

build relationships with our students, and some students will accept it, and some won't,

but I think its relationship building. Mentoring from teachers, administrators and

counselors alike." With a mentoring program already in place AA3 stated,

We are currently working on a male mentoring program to assist us with keeping

our young men on tract to graduate on time as well as preparing them to be ready

for success after graduation. This program will be on a volunteer basis. The men

in this program will be from the community where our students live. They will be

equipped with strategies and techniques to assist our young men moving forward.

AA3 went on to add,

 I would like to see a "Big Brother"/" Big Sister" program from outside sources

partnering with our schools to build a positive relationship student. A

representative from the organization would select one child that they would bond

with and follow up with even into their adulthood to ensure that that child becomes a productive citizen in society.

Parent and teachers realized the importance of having mentors accessible to student upon re-entry to school from jail. Although students do have school while incarcerated it is still important for schools to provide remediation; and mentors can help encourage the previously incarcerated students to attend tutoring sessions.

Remediation. This topic refers to providing some form of tutorial or remedial services for students who have academic concerns. P 4 said,

My son was locked up for six months, when it was time to come back to   school, they put him back in the 9th grade. I told them that he was taking classes while locked up, but they told me that they did not have any grades. When I told him this, he became very angry. He had already gone through a lot while being locked up, and I feel the school did not help the situation.

Parents felt that retaining students is discouraging and makes them not want to finish school.

Three teachers responded although tutorial sessions are available to all students, the students who need the tutorials and remediation did not come to the provided sessions. Teachers believe the sessions would help the students if they would attend.

T 2 stated, "Most students cannot read well. This causes them to not care about their education. Perhaps due to embarrassment. One on one tutoring with a teacher helps." T 2 went on to say, "Embarrassed, absent, struggle to close academic gap when they were in jail." Based on association with previous incarcerated students TI 5 stated:

"I have had students who have been incarcerated. It is often difficult for them to complete the requirements to graduate."

Four of the six advisors agreed remediation was an issue of concern. Their concern wasn't that lack of offerings, but student participation. AA1 described the following programs that are in place to address academic concerns for those students, "We offer credit recovery, after school tutoring, Saturday tutoring, after school attendance recovery, summer school credit and attendance recovery. After assessment student, we provide timely feedback to them so they can set new goals to be accomplished."

AA 4 added,

> In our school we have attendance recovery so if students have missed over ten days, it is possible for them to recoup some of those hours as long as they are passing in the subject. We also have credit recovery for students if they fail a subject. Teachers work in collaborative planning teams to examine critically and discuss standards-based learning expectations for students. Teams select evidence-based instructional strategies for meeting the standards.

Teachers and advisors both saw a need to revise the remediation programs in order to get buy in from the students re-entering school after incarceration. The revisions should include components for the juvenile justice system.

Juvenile justice involvement. This topic involves juvenile justice communication with parents, counseling services, and schools. Parents, teachers, and

academic advisors all agreed on the need for the juvenile justice system to keep all parties informed on the status of students who are detained or incarcerated.

AA1 stated, "sometimes we are looking for students and find out later, sometimes when they return that they have been in jail. Parents are either ashamed or just protective of their child to inform us" "So the child starts back at a disadvantage." AA 3 spoke about what the school has in place to bridge the gap in communication, "I deal with students that have been incarcerated on a daily basis. I help make sure students are coded correctly while incarcerated as well help the students in the process of returning to school after their incarceration."

Three of the six participants spoke on the role the juvenile justice system plays in students' lives. Academic advisors can help facilitate buy in from all stakeholders in order to get the juvenile justice system more involved on the school level during the students' transition back to school. Parents, teachers, and academic advisors all agreed on the need for making changes in the school's educational program to raise graduation rates and inspire students to remain in school. Those changes included (a) communication between juvenile justice agencies and education agencies, (b) remediation before and after school and on weekends, (c) mentoring services on campus, (d) Counseling on campus and off, (e) parental involvement opportunities, and (d) mental health providers and specialists on campus.

Changes in the educational system. This topic relates to the school administration team making improvements in the school's educational program to raise graduation rates and inspire students to remain in school. When asked the question on

should there be changes to assist formerly incarcerated students in the transition back into the school, the advisor responses stood out the most, AA2 maintained,

> We plan to continue to keep the programs that we have in place. We will assess our students to see if they are meeting their goals. As a leadership team, we will meet weekly to listen and discuss changes/progress made or need to be made by each department coach (literacy, math, science, and social studies) as well as the discipline report by administrators.

When questioned about what schools are doing to address at-risk students, AA3 asserted,

> Yes, I feel that the educational system has a major impact on dropout rates. There are a number of state and federally funded programs available to specifically address dropout rates. Schools and districts are implementing new interventions every year to address this issue.

AA3 maintained,

> Funds are always welcome. Public educators have become so a custom to being effective with limited funds. We often go into projects knowing that we will have to make our interventions and programs effective without a lot of money. Funding cannot be the reason we fail our students.

All participants suggested changes had to be made in schools in order to keep students who have been incarcerated from dropping out of school. Schools systems must be proactive about making changes, and can do this by regularly reflecting on policies, processing, procedure, and feedback received from all stakeholders.

Evidence of Quality

Before successful data analysis could occur, there was a need to make sure a consistent attitude was maintained so that no skewed opinion interfered with the process, making sure the focus is concentrated on the phenomenon. All biases were put aside and focused solely on results. Prejudices, biases, or assumptions can contaminate research and data analysis; thus, I made sure to look at data with an open mind to ensure that no emotions or personal experiences interfered with the data analysis method. Putting aside personal beliefs open an appreciation to the potential challenges faced by formerly incarcerated students while reading and analyzed every transcript. The process included reading each transcript three times to make sure a good understanding of what was said to establish accurate interpretations. The first reading was to get an update on what every participant said. The second reading was to make notes and write down any vital comments from transcripts relating to the interaction students had after returning from prison and returning to high school. Upon writing down all essential statements, all redundant or related statements were grouped. The third reading helped in going back, checking notes and transcripts, making sure no critical material is omitted. The horizontalization process allowed me to begin to see commonalities in the experiences of former incarcerated students coming back to school from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and academic advisors. The horizontalization process let me see that some participants noticed similar features from returning students. From the participants' viewpoint, many of these returning students suffered because of common factors such as parental participation, lack of remediation, behavioral problems, lack of adequate

therapy, communication deficits, lack of a mentoring program, on-campus social or mental health services, the need for improvements in the education system, and cynical peers. I started finding these similarities in the details, and I prepared to start coding this information using creative variations. Imaginative variations allowed comparing and contrasting data to indicate similarities and differences from participant statements. In this method, I used open coding to do this effectively. Open coding helps a researcher to identify, categorize, and arrange correlations, or to validate a hypothesis. To do this, transcripts were saved as Word documents after all member checks were performed and checked and downloaded them to the NVivo data analysis program.

While reading each interview transcript, I color-coded and categorized each segment based on responses similarity to identify and refine understanding. The color-coded sections presented important information on the critical research question; how do teachers, parents, and academic advisors characterize their perceptions of difficulties faced by grade 10-12 high school students who were incarcerated and returned to school? Student behavioral problems were illustrated in blue, peer behavior factors in green, family concerns in yellow, school or motivational problems in purple, academic concerns were coded red communication issues in pink and juvenile issues in orange.

I used color-coded information to build a category tree by coding different terms or phrases in the NVivo system that began axial coding. A category tree is a tree with a category structure, and branches have subcategories. The subcategories contained all related claims from color-coded transcripts. A category tree allowed me to display a specific theme and see all the related responses to that theme. The trends that arose from

my research were parental involvement, lack of remediation, behavioral problems, lack of

adequate treatment, communication disparities, lack of a mentoring program, on-campus

clinical or mental health provider, need for improvements in the school system, negative

peer impact, and lack of constructive intervention in juvenile justice. I used these specific

themes to explain the form of data used in those particular sections. I used the

triangulation technique until I coded and ordered interview transcripts. The technique

helps a researcher to compare and contrast information from other sources. I compared

data from teachers, career counselors, and parents to indicate correlations on the

difficulties facing formerly incarcerated students after returning to school.

As a result, I used qualitative data interpretive analysis to improve understanding

within interview transcripts. I was able to explain and appreciate why formerly

incarcerated youth dropped out at Yellowtail High School and the challenges they

experienced, leading up to their decision. The educators interviewed provided

information on the challenges students faced after returning from jail, incarceration, or

long-term imprisonment at Yellowtail High School, and included that information in the

category tree mentioned above. From the viewpoint of parents and educators, I saw

relationships and similarities. Educators have responded to potential strategies. I

established themes covering those strategies. Such subjects included behavioral

problems, peer control, lack of communication, mentorship, therapy, remediation,

parental support, psychological, mental health, participation in criminal justice, and

reforms in the education system.

Overall, parents, teachers, and academic counselors expressed the need for more significant contact with parents, students, and criminal justice staff. Teachers and academic advisors shared the need for ongoing therapy. These participants improved communication to assist in the transition from incarceration to returning to school, through parental participation, campus clinical and mental health services, and mentorship programs to resolve behavioral problems, remediation, and enhanced participation in student re-entry. Participants concluded that using these specific techniques was essential to assist students returning to school after detention or long-term incarceration.

Summary

Collecting and analyzing the perception data from parents, teachers, and academic advisors allowed an understanding of what student's experience upon returning to school after incarceration. The research questions were addressed by allowing participants (parents of students who had been incarcerated, teachers, and academic advisors) to provide responses that provided details about their personal experiences with formerly incarcerated students. The first research question for this study was, "How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school." Through the findings, I was able to interpret that parents of students who had been incarcerated felt that their child's struggles were due to issues such as poor academics, peer influences, lack of interest in school, drug and gang involvement, poor communication with the school, bad teacher, bad students, and behavior problems.

I compared the responses of the parents of the students who were detained and returned to school to the teachers' and academic advisors' responses, and the responses were quite close. Some of the same reasons' parents gave the reasons teachers and academic advisors identified for students incarcerated and returned to school encountered. The replies had one difference. Teachers and academic advisors agreed that low parental participation was a significant factor that led to the problems of these students, but none of the parents included it as a justification for the students' struggles.

I also found that the reasons these students suffered could be interpreted differently, but the reasons reflect a common theme. Families had a different viewpoint of the school climate than that of teachers and academic advisors. Families said their child did not want to come to school because school was boring or they did not like school, but teachers and academic counselors mentioned that students are not interested in learning, are lazy, and did not care. I found that formerly incarcerated students returning to high school fail for many reasons, not just bad academics. The knowledge that failing was not only due to academics was vital in order to build successful strategies.

When focusing on the second research question, "What are teachers, parents, and academic advisor's perceptions of support services and resources to assist with challenges Grade 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school?" Through the data, I concluded the following strategies have a significant impact on the success of students returning to school after detention or long-term incarceration:

- Ongoing counseling services

- Better communication between parents, school, and juvenile justice

- Increase parental involvement

- Psychological and mental and behavioral health providers on campus

- Mentorship program at school

- Remediation programs

- Increased juvenile involvement after release

Finally, the third research question concluded that parents, teachers, and academic advisors all agreed on the need for making changes in the school's educational program to raise graduation rates and inspire students to remain in school. Those changes included: (a) collaboration between juvenile justice agencies and education agencies, (b) Remediation, tutoring, (c) mentoring services, (d) counseling, (e) parental and civic engagement, (d) mental health providers and specialists, and (e) alternative options. This option is for students who ultimately decide to drop out of high school.

Description of the Project

Through the findings, I was able to interpret that parents of students who had been incarcerated felt that their child's struggles were due to issues such as poor academics, peer influences, lack of interest in school, drug and gang involvement, poor communication with the school, bad teacher, bad students, and student behavioral problems. I compared the responses of the parents of the students who were detained and returned to school to the teachers' and academic advisors' responses, and the responses were quite close. Teachers and academic advisors identified some of the same reasons

parents gave for their students who had been incarcerated and returned to school struggling during the transition. Teachers and academic advisors agreed that low parental participation was a significant factor that led to the problems of these students, however, none of the parents included it as a justification for the students' struggling

I also found that the reasons these students suffered could be interpreted differently, however, they reflect a common theme. Families said their child did not want to come to school, for example, because school was boring or they did not like school. Conversely, teachers and academic counselors mentioned that students are not interested in learning, they are lazy, and did not care about school. Such comments are two separate viewpoints about the school climate. I found that formerly incarcerated students returning to high school fail for many causes rather than just poor academic performance. That specific knowledge was vital because of the need to understand these factors to build successful strategies. Findings from the semistructured interviews with teachers, parents, and academic advisors identified the need for the development of a policy recommendation for students, parents, and administrators to support students formerly incarcerated. Section 3 describes a policy recommendation and supporting white paper as the project for this study. Creating a policy for Yellowtail High School that includes the design of an intervention program that focuses on specific interventions will address and help to resolve the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated students that transition to a typical school environment experience. Additionally, the policy and white paper will offer needed support services and resources required to assist with those challenges faced by formerly incarcerated students. The purpose of this High School Juvenile Student Re-

entry Policy is to assist at-risk students who have been incarcerated and return to school, while offering supporting programs and resources to assist teachers, counselors, administrators, school district leaders, and parents. Section three will also include recommendations to implement and support the FIRST program in schools.

Section 3: The Project Study

Introduction

In Section 3, I offer a summary of the project study policy recommendation and white paper. The aim of the white paper was to recommend the development of the Former Incarcerated Reentry Student Transition (FIRST) program. Based on the findings from the semistructured interviews with teachers, parents, and academic advisors, I determined that the best option was to develop a high school juvenile student reentry policy for Yellowtail High School that includes an intervention program that focuses on specific interventions that address and help resolve the challenges faced by incarcerated students who transition to a typical school environment. Additionally, the white paper provides recommendations for support services and resources required to assist with the challenges described through the data collected. This policy plan focuses on designing and implementing specific programs to increase the number of formerly incarcerated students who graduate high school by providing the resources they need to be successful. As a means to evaluate successful prevention approaches, several programs were researched: (a) mentorship and instructional services, (b) social justice prevention, (c) parental engagement assistance, (d) counseling, (e) GED alternatives, and (f) alternative schooling elements. The ultimate aim of this project was to provide resources and motivation to formerly incarcerated students to enable them to be able to graduate high school.

Background of the Problem

To date, there are currently no approaches at Yellowtail High School addressing incarcerated students returning to regular education, and only conventional environmental mitigation programs are in place at Yellowtail High School that assist students with academic issues. Students drop out for reasons other than academic problems. Some formerly incarcerated students drop out due to parental participation problems, lack of remediation, behavioral concerns, lack of adequate therapy, communication deficiencies, lack of a mentoring program, lack of psychiatric or mental health services on campus, need for improvements in the school system, negative peer impact, and lack of constructive participation in juvenile justice. Developing a juvenile justice reentry program requires a means to tackle the numerous obstacles that cause students to drop out at Yellowtail High School.

Recommendations

New program: FIRST. The FIRST reentry program is designed to address the identified needs among this special population of students and could be implemented in other schools if successful. FIRST would allow other schools to raise graduation rates and increase the number of students attending college or entering the workforce. This reentry program could also improve national graduation rates in communities across the United States. The overall project goal is to decrease high school dropout rates by providing students who return to school after being incarcerated the resources needed to stay in school and graduate.

Alternative approaches. An alternative approach to the FIRST program would be for schools to revamp the alternative learning environment (ALE) on their campuses. The ALE could be revised into a campus that provides a self-paced accelerated curriculum designed for students who may be deficient in their credits or meet one or more of the state at-risk criteria factors. Previously incarcerated students are at risk of dropping out of school and not graduating on time.

The revised ALE would give students the option of attending school 4 hour in the morning or 4 hours in the afternoon. Instead of having to deal with all the stress of returning to a large school, students would be allowed to reenter school in an ALE. These students would be provided with an individualized graduation plan so they can move forward toward postsecondary education, a trade/industrial career track, or enlist in the military.

Proposed FIRST Project

Nearly 53,000 youth are kept in residential facilities away from home due to participation in juvenile or criminal justice on any given day (Underwood & Washington, 2016). Although incarceration and detention are acceptable for a limited percentage of criminals, Underwood & Washington (2016) find that long-term jail experiences tend to do more harm than good, often leading to increased crime and recurrence. Public opinion on the U.S. criminal justice system shifts from a punitive approach to a model of therapeutic care, reflecting improvements in juvenile justice in recent years; however, instead of relying on community-based programs, reliance on youth intervention systems

on mental health care or other unique needs of young offenders has increased

(Underwood & Washington, 2016).

Criminal participation and relationships with the justice system can interrupt an individual from the process of education, which can eventually lead to reduced academic results and, in turn, dropping out of school. Criminal property accumulation can substitute the need for an individual to invest in education and the learning process. In addition, stigma due to criminal participation may have a negative impact on academic results. Educators and families may spend less time and energy on criminally engaged students (Rud et al., 2018). Education teaches individuals to be more patient, therefore, discouraging crime (Hahn & Truman, 2015). From a societal perspective, the education process deliberately engages the receptive capacity of children and others to entrust them with intelligence, reasoning skills, beliefs, socioemotional awareness and control, and social interaction, so they can emerge as committed, efficient, imaginative, and self-governing members of society.

Tenth through 12-grade students who have been incarcerated and then returned to high school were dropping out of an urban high school in the southern United States at an elevated rate from 2010 through 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The purpose of this high school juvenile student reentry plan project is to assist at-risk students who have been incarcerated and are returning to school. The plan is designed to provide support programs and resources to assist teachers, counselors, administrators, school district leaders, and parents.

Goals of the Proposed FIRST Plan

The purpose of this high school juvenile student reentry plan project is to assist at-risk students who have been incarcerated and are returning to school and to support programs and resources to assist teachers, counselors, administrators, school district leaders, and parents. This initiative focused on designing and implementing programs needed to increase the number of formerly incarcerated students graduating high school by providing the resources they need to be successful. Collecting and analyzing the perception data from parents, teachers, and academic advisors allowed an understanding of what student's experience upon returning to school after incarceration. The research questions were addressed by allowing participants (parents of students who had been incarcerated, teachers, and academic advisors) to provide responses that provided details about their personal experiences with formerly incarcerated students.

This project was planned to use approaches that tackle various issues facing students. My task is to fulfill the required criteria to incorporate this reentry program at Yellowtail High School. From 2010–2017, the number of students dropping out of Yellowtail High School was a problem for the district. My goal was to create a high school reentry plan (former incarcerated re-entry transition program) that would include approaches that could assist students at risk of dropping out of high school. Strategies used in this program are components to help students achieve this aim.

This FIRST initiative would support at-risk students by encouraging them to engage in programs that help them stay in school and stay on track with graduation. Components of this re-entry program were selected based on data obtained during this

review. The data collected provided insight on the difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated students after returning to school, and why many dropped out of high school, and these elements were developed to support students in their particular risk area. The following information lists the components of the proposed high school dropout program, together with a summary of the purpose of each component.

Rationale for the Project

Juvenile incarceration as it relates to the dropout problem was the chosen project due to the number of previously incarcerated 10th to 12th-grade students who dropped out at a high rate from August 2010 to May 2017. The high dropout rate raises academic and economic problems for the school district and stakeholders. Students face academic and social obstacles in education, causing them to drop out at Yellowtail High School. To date, there are currently no approaches at Yellowtail High School, addressing incarcerated students returning to regular education, and only conventional environmental mitigation programs are in place at Yellowtail High School that assist students with academic issues.

Incarceration during teenage years typically causes students to drop out of school and may disrupt human and social capital development, leading to decreased potential earnings and increased illegal activity. Some of my former high school students were dropping out after their ninth-grade year, which caused concern about the dropout problems facing Yellowtail High School. I decided to help solve the problem and help establish a possible solution.

Through the findings, I was able to interpret that parents of students who had been incarcerated felt that their child's struggles were due to issues such as poor academics, peer influences, lack of interest in school, drug and gang involvement, poor communication with the school, bad teacher, bad students, and student behavioral problems. I also found that the reasons these students suffered could be interpreted differently, however, they reflect a common theme. Families said their child did not want to come to school, for example, because school was boring or they did not like school. Conversely, teachers and academic counselors mentioned that students are not interested in learning, they are lazy, and did not care about school. Such comments are two separate viewpoints about the school climate. I found that formerly incarcerated students returning to high school fail for many causes rather than just poor academic performance. That specific knowledge was vital because of the need to understand these factors to build successful strategies. Findings from the semi-structured interviews with teachers, parents, and academic advisors identified the need for the development of a policy recommendation for students, parents, and administrators to support students formerly incarcerated.

I used the findings from this study to design and develop the High School Juvenile Student Re-entry Policy and supporting FIRST program to help students boost their grades, provide counseling, mentoring and other elements to discuss and assist students with personal problems, as well as include alternative educational approaches for students exposed to the juvenile justice system.

Review of the Literature

The additional literature review, provides a concentration on seeking information on the various approaches targeting dropout prevention and juvenile incarceration. The topics used to describe my study for this literature review included remediation, parental participation, high school mentoring services, therapy, dropouts from high school, at-risk students, dropout prevention, youth justice system, youth incarceration, dropout and crime, and alternative education choices. Using such themes as a guide, enabled the collection of details about various categories 'usage or effectiveness. In addition to the Walden University library, additional resources included the use of, EBSCO Host Research Repositories, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, and Walden Dissertations to access the ERIC database. Under the ERIC database, keywords such *as remediation, parental participation, high school mentoring services, therapy, alternative education choices, high school dropouts, at-risk students, dropout prevention, juvenile justice system, juvenile probation, dropout, and crime reduction strategies and dropout* searches were used. With this index, I could scan several peer-reviewed sources relevant to my research. These sources gave me details on each theme.

Incarceration of Students

Nearly 53,000 youth are kept in residential facilities away from home due to participation in juvenile or criminal justice on any given day. Although incarceration and detention are acceptable for a limited percentage of criminals, long-term jail experiences tend to do more harm than good, often leading to increased crime and recurrence. Public

opinion on the U.S. criminal justice system shifts from a punitive approach to a model of therapeutic care, reflecting improvements in juvenile justice in recent years. However, instead of relying on community-based programs, reliance on youth intervention systems on mental health care or other unique needs of young offenders has increased (Underwood & Washington, 2016).

Young people participating in the criminal justice system frequently have unique needs and usually encounter adverse outcomes from their traditional peers. There is growing evidence that when transitions back to the community are well organized, individualized, and assisted by the resources required, the recurrence rate decreases. A successful transition requires cooperation between all stakeholders. Collaborating partners form a collaborative network as 'one made up of organizations dedicated to working together to promote positive results for youth and their families (Strnadova, Cumming, & O'Neill, 2017).

About 50,000 youth under the age of 21 are confined in juvenile justice institutions every day across the United States. After being released from those facilities, over one-fifth of youth re-entering the public school setting drop out of school within six months, and in four years, just 15% of released ninth-graders graduate from high school. About half of those released return to the juvenile justice system within three years. The United States has made considerable progress reducing the number of youths committed to juvenile justice facilities, however, we are still incarcerating far more youth than our international peers. Throughout the United States., states have been actively committed to promoting state and local efforts to discourage youth from being active in the justice

system and offering better assistance to those youth participating in the youth justice system. Together with the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued a school discipline and constructive advice package to assist states, districts, and schools in implementing school environment improvement policies and strategies while maintaining compliance with federal law. In December 2014, DOJ and ED partnered to supplement the guidance package to issue recommendations for providing high-quality education to youth imprisoned in secure facilities. Consequently, the U.S. is exploring the day-to-day reality of moving youth from detention and the obstacles they encounter when returning to their schools and communities.

Programs for Previously Incarcerated Students Reentry to School

Evidence has shown that effective diversion programs improved the probability of high school graduation and minimized recurrence for youth engaged injustice (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Unfortunately, less than half of the states monitor after release for incarcerated youth. Just 11 states have personnel committed to promoting reentry into a public school environment previously incarcerated adolescents. Children graduating from criminal justice institutions are immediately enrolled in alternative schools in many states, many of which have lower graduation rates and student achievement than non-alternative schools. Such problems, among others, must be resolved to ensure that incarcerated youth leaving juvenile justice institutions will not become dropouts due to insufficient resources and opportunities to excel while moving to community schools (Strnadova & Cumming, 2015).

Reentry preparation for adolescents with or without disabilities begins as soon as they arrive at a juvenile detention facility and address developmental problems, including personal, job and educational goals, as well as include educational and career programs for students to begin preparing them for the difficulties they may face when released from custody. While transition preparation and interagency coordination during the transition process are especially necessary for this population, a lack of communication and cooperation between the different agencies has been identified as one of the critical barriers to successful transitions. This population's diverse needs, such as disability, poverty, health problems, and drug and alcohol addiction, frequently require multiple organizations and programs. The needs can include criminal justice, mental health services, drug abuse treatment, healthcare, housing, out-of-home care, and vocational / employment support. Collaboration between these structures is crucial if young people are to experience a positive return to school and community (Strnadova & Cumming, 2015).

Pre-release training is an integral part of the transition process, including moving information from criminal justice facilities to appropriate organizations (e.g., schools, vocational, educational, and social services). Pre-release training must include all participants, including juveniles, families, criminal justice administrative organization, receiving group, and all other organizations that assist with post-release juveniles. Post-release programming is typically a joint initiative between education and criminal justice fields. Until admission, a pre-release visit to reception school is recommended as good practice. The appointment includes the child, family member(s), and a representative

from the juvenile justice facility or transfer specialist, which allows young people to meet teachers and the school leadership team and learn the school's expectations and disciplinary procedures. Inventory shortages can directly lead to organizational difficulties. Health practitioners, for example, cannot attend strategic planning meetings due to time and financial constraints, posing an obstacle to teamwork, as good teamwork allows positive working relationships to evolve and cases. Time, as a tool, can also be an issue in criminal justice transitions, as offenders can be released from detention with no advance notice (Strnadova, et al., 2017). This may result in the exclusion of significant stakeholders from exit case conferences.

High School Dropouts

The term *dropout factories* were created to refer to high schools that graduate less than 60% of their students (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013). These *dropout factories* yield 50% of the country's dropouts and two-thirds of ethnic minority dropouts (Layton, 2014). Layton found the following:

> nationally about 80% of students in the U.S. graduate on time with a regular diploma, but for Hispanic and African- American students, the proportion rate drops to about 50%, and sadly, dropouts lack the academic skills needed to enter high-skilled and white and blue-collar jobs, all too often this leading many of them to a life of poverty, prison, and homelessness (p. 18).

The national high school dropout crisis deserves attention because large numbers of dropouts are interconnected to devastating social costs with significant consequences to society (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). Students who fail to finish high school may

experience many adverse results when they become adults such as greater levels of incarceration, unemployment, health implications, and ongoing economic hardship (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). These facts together with school reform, warrant educators to investigate ways to improve on-time graduation rates (Ecker-Lyster & Niileksela, 2016).

Research has overpoweringly exhibited the correlation between juvenile justice system involvement and educational outcomes. During ninth grade, being arrested dramatically increases the risk of dropping out, and substantially lowers attendance and grades (Farn & Adams, 2016). The adverse consequences of arrest are magnified for youth who spend time in detention or who are arrested multiple times, while measures of available social support following arrest inconsistently blunt the effects of arrest; poor school performance is a significant indicator of delinquency, and vice versa (Farn & Adams, 2016).

Students from low-salary families dropped out of high school at a rate five times higher than students from high-wage families (Ginder et al., 2017). Fifteen rural high schools in the southern and southwestern United States examined the dropout factors that lead to students dropping out of high school (Johnson, Simon, & Mun, 2013). The high schools were in districts that are among the 800 rural areas with the most elevated student poverty rates across the United States. The 15 states student enrollment consisted of an extremely high number of financially burdened students (Delaney, 2013). 87% of all the student learner's in these 15 southwestern states are living in poverty (Delaney, 2013).

Juvenile Incarceration and Returning to School

Almost 90% of justice-impacted students' express interest in returning to school, however, only one-third re-enroll (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Students have often been turned away because of lost records or other miscommunication between the school and the facility (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). When students are allowed to re-enroll in their primary school after being incarcerated, they are often treated differently, being classified as special-education students, alternative education students, and students with behavioral issues.

The criminal justice system may also look at past juvenile offenders differently. Police may be more likely to suspect and arrest past juvenile offenders for new crimes; rather, the offender committed them or not. Dependent upon the juveniles' previous convictions, some judges may be more likely to sentence past offenders more harshly for subsequent crimes. Approximately 23,000 delinquent youth was referred to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. These referrals were childhood trauma, neglect, criminal behavior and other criminological factors, increasing the risk of becoming a dangerous, violent, and a chronic juvenile offender by age 35 (Fox, Perez, Cass, & Baglivio, 2015).

Research asserts that incarceration of students of abuse, neglect, and criminality could be very unsettling, significantly reducing the likelihood of ever returning to school and significantly increasing the likelihood of being classified as having an emotional or behavioral disorder for those who do return (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Estimates based on over 35,000 juvenile offenders over 10 years (1990-2000) from a large urban county in the United States suggest that juvenile incarceration results substantially in lower high

school completion rates and higher adult incarceration rates. (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

Aizer and Doyle (2015) also implied that juvenile offenders that were assigned to a judge

with a high incarceration rate were considerably less likely to complete high school and

had a significant likelihood of being incarcerated as an adult.

Juvenile incarceration decreases the likelihood of high school graduation by 13 to

39 percentage points, compared to the average public school student living in the same

area (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Aizer and Doyle noted that, although incarceration of

juveniles is intended to be short-term, it can be very troublesome. Aizer and Doyle

suggested that substitutes to incarceration, such as electronic monitoring or enforced

curfews for juvenile offenders and policies that address the low rates at which juveniles

return to school upon release instead of procedures that make increased contact with

police inevitable (2015).

Labeling theory alludes that people's behavior is influenced by the label ascribed

to them by society (Besemer, Farrington, & Bijleveld, 2017). Results of a study

conducted by Kim and Lee (2019) imply that schools with an open-minded atmosphere

may serve as a safeguard against labeling effects and highlight the importance of schools

and their personnel in shaping delinquent behavior in juveniles. The way teachers

perceive their students returning from the juvenile system can influence student

relationships and student engagement, both of which play a vital role in decreasing their

chance of reoffending (Sinclair, Unruh, Griller Clark, & Waintrup, 2017).

Schools make an enormous contribution to the number of juveniles referred to the

juvenile justice system, and usually for less severe offenses than outside sources (May,

Barranco, Stokes, Robertson, & Haynes, 2018). Recent increases in the number of youths

arrested for nonviolent offenses in schools have led some jurisdictions to explore

resolutions to the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Fader, Lockwood, Schall, & Stokes, 2015).

Suspension by the age of 12 has direct and indirect associations with students being

involved in the juvenile justice system (Novak, 2019). Directly, juveniles are more likely

to self-report justice system involvement at age 18; and indirectly, they are more likely to

have deviant peers as their companions in adolescence, therefore, increasing their odds of

justice system involvement (Novak, 2019). Research shows that black students who

disobey school rules are more often prone to out-of-school suspensions, which increase

their threat of arrest and increase the odds that once suspects of delinquency, they are

detained, formally processed, and institutionalized for probation violations (Hirschfield,

2018).

Barnert et al. (2015) completed a study including 20 student interviews of

incarcerated youth in a Los Angeles juvenile hall. The students expressed a need for love

and attention, discipline and control, and role models and perspective at home and school.

Youths perceived that when home or school failed to meet these needs, they spent more

time on the streets, leading to incarceration. These incarcerated youths contrasted the path

through school with the avenue to jail, reporting that the passageway to jail felt easier.

All of them expressed the insight that they had made bad decisions and that the more

difficult way was not only better but also still potentially achievable. Researchers

concluded, to break cycles of juvenile incarceration; the public health community must

partner with legislators, educators, community leaders, and youths to determine how to

make success, rather than detention, the more straightforward path for disadvantaged

adolescents (Barnert et al., 2015).

Connections Between Being Incarcerated and Dropping Out

The observed correlations between arrest and school dropping out may be

explained by alternative unmeasured factors such as (a) muffled self-control, (b) a lack of

parental supervision, (c) divergent peers, or (d) neighborhood disadvantages may inflate

the estimated connection between the arrest and educational attainment in these studies

(Fernandez-Suarez, Herrero, Sanchez, Juarros-Basterretxea, & Rodriguez-Diaz, 2016).

The connection might be consequential; guessing in a sensitivity analysis that the

observed relation between arrest and high school graduation would all but disappear

because of unobserved factors that influence both graduation and detention. The

challenge in unraveling the connection amongst arrest and educational achievement is to

gather an information vault that contains data on the numerous individual, peer, family,

neighborhood and school factors that together foretell juvenile arrest and educational

achievement (Kirk & Sampson, 2013). Dropping out of high school has significant

unfavorable ramifications for youth, including the increased probability of being jobless,

living in poverty, carrying on with an unhealthy way of life, and expanded likelihood of

being imprisoned (Fader et al., 2015).

Societal Risk Factors for Dropping Out

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the developed world and

well-documented racial/ethnic disparities throughout the criminal justice system (Wagner

& Walsh, 2016), resulting in substantial social, economic, and health burdens on families

and children of color (Neal & Rick, 2014). The widespread belief that dropping out of school can cause financial hardship, rest on unsubstantiated evidence (Campbell, 2015). Many societal risk factors exist when students drop out of school. Employers may be reluctant to hire them, thereby increasing their likelihood of future criminal activity and becoming a high school dropout (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

Dropping out of high school also has negative consequences for earnings. Young African American males are incarcerated at inexplicably higher rates as compared to their white counterparts and other minority groups, and this trend spreads into adulthood (Cobb, 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that young black males between the ages of 20 and 24 who do not have a high school diploma or a GED typically have a higher chance of being incarcerated than being employed (Neal & Rick, 2014).

Rumberger (2013) discussed that high school dropouts, compared to high school graduates, face extremely uninviting economic and social projections. It is further noted that dropouts are more likely to rely on public assistance, engage in crime, and generate other social costs supported by taxpayers. High school dropouts are less likely to find a job and earn a decent living wage, more likely to be below the poverty level, and more likely to suffer from a variety of adverse health outcomes ((Hickman, et al, 2017). According to the 2017 Current Population Survey, median annual earnings for individuals at least 25 years of age with no high school was $27,800 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Median yearly earnings for high school dropouts was $18,445. For high school graduates, including GED holders, the median annual income was $36,700, almost $19,000 more than that of dropouts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Inadequacies in

education alone significantly hamper potential financial opportunities. Adults across the country without a high school diploma face the greatest rates of poverty and earn average salaries 27% lower than high school graduates (Wheeler, 2017). When teenagers are locked up by the juvenile justice system at a young age and fail to finish their schooling, the experience affects future income and potential earnings throughout their lives (Wheeler, 2017).

Juvenile incarceration is expensive. The average cost of incarcerating an American prisoner varies from state to state (Notar, 2019). Some states, such as Indiana, have managed to keep prices low at about $14,000 per inmate; meanwhile, states like New York pay around $60,000 to keep an inmate behind bars (Notar, 2019).

The average annual cost of an incarcerating a juvenile in the United States tops $88,000 (Li, Wu, Lam, & Gao, 2016). Rather than juvenile incarceration enhancing the human capital collection or stopping future wrongdoing and imprisonment, we find that for adolescents on the edge of detainment, such confinement causes a drop in the high school fulfillment rate and an expansion in the likelihood of detainment as an adult. In investigating the components behind these impacts, we find that once detained; an adolescent is probably not going to ever come back to class, proposing that even generally brief periods of incarceration can be exceptionally problematic and have extreme long-haul results for this populace (Li et al., 2016),

Returning to school after dropout significantly reduces the crime-inducing effect of dropout among men (Backman, 2017). However, the males who do come back to school are named as having a disability because of a social or behavioral issue,

decreasing the probability of graduation, and conceivably increasing the possibility of future criminal conduct (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Earning a high school diploma has been strongly linked to less violent and drug-related crimes, lowering incarceration rates, and the costs invested by society in the criminal justice system (Attardo-Maryott, 2015). Young people participating in the criminal justice system frequently have unique needs and usually encounter adverse outcomes from their traditional peers. There is growing evidence that when transitions back to the community are well organized, individualized, and assisted by the resources required, the recurrence rate decreases. A successful transition requires cooperation between all stakeholders. Collaborating partners form a collaborative network as 'one made up of organizations dedicated to working together to promote positive results for youth and their families (Strnadova, Cumming, & O'Neill, 2017).

About 50,000 youth under the age of 21 are confined in juvenile justice institutions every day across the U.S. After being released from those facilities, over a fifth of youth re-entering the public school setting drop out of school within six months, and in four years, just 15 percent of released ninth-graders graduate from high school. About half of those released return within three years. As a country, we have made considerable progress in reducing the number of youths committed to juvenile justice facilities, but we are still incarcerating far more youth than our international peers. Throughout the U.S., it has been actively committed to promoting state and local efforts to discourage youth from being active in the justice system and offering better assistance to those youth participating in the youth justice system. Together with the U.S. Justice

Department (DOJ), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued a school discipline and constructive advice package to assist states, districts, and schools in implementing school environment improvement policies and strategies while maintaining compliance with federal law. In December 2014, DOJ and ED partnered to supplement the guidance package to issue recommendations for providing high-quality education to youth imprisoned in secure facilities. Consequently, we are exploring the day-to-day reality of moving youth from detention and the obstacles they encounter when returning to their schools and communities. Evidence has shown that effective diversion programs improved the probability of high school graduation and minimized recurrence for youth engaged injustice (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Unfortunately, less than half of the states monitor after release for incarcerated youth. Just 11 states have personnel committed to promoting reentry into a public school environment previously incarcerated adolescents. Children graduating from criminal justice institutions are immediately enrolled in alternative schools in many states, many of which have lower graduation rates and student achievement than non-alternative schools. Such problems, among others, must be resolved to ensure that incarcerated youth leaving juvenile justice institutions will not become dropouts due to insufficient resources and opportunities to excel while moving to community schools (Strnadova & Cumming, 2015).

Reentry preparation for adolescents with or without disabilities begins as soon as they arrive at a juvenile detention facility and address developmental problems, including personal, job and educational goals, as well as include educational and career programs for students to begin preparing them for the difficulties they may face when released from

custody. While transition preparation and interagency coordination during the transition process are especially necessary for this population, a lack of communication and cooperation between the different agencies has been identified as one of the critical barriers to successful transitions. This population's diverse needs, such as disability, poverty, health problems, and drug and alcohol addiction, frequently require multiple organizations and programs. This can include criminal justice, mental health services, drug abuse treatment, healthcare, housing, out-of-home care, and vocational / employment support. Collaboration between these structures is crucial if young people are to experience a positive return to school and community (Strnadova & Cumming, 2015).

Pre-release training is an integral part of the transition process, including moving information from criminal justice facilities to appropriate organizations (e.g., schools, vocational, educational, and social services). Pre-release training must include all participants, including juveniles, families, criminal justice administrative organization, receiving group, and all other organizations that assist with post-release juveniles. Post-release programming is typically a joint initiative between education and criminal justice fields. Until admission, a pre-release visit to reception school is recommended as good practice. The appointment includes the child, family member(s), and a representative from the juvenile justice facility or transfer specialist. It allows young people to meet teachers and the school leadership team and learn the school's expectations and disciplinary procedures. Inventory shortages can directly lead to organizational difficulties. Health practitioners, for example, cannot attend strategic planning meetings

due to time and financial constraints, posing an obstacle to teamwork, as good teamwork allows positive working relationships to evolve and cases. Time, as a tool, can also be an issue in criminal justice transitions, as offenders can be released from detention with no advance notice (Strnadova, Cumming, & O'Neill, 2017). This may result in the exclusion of significant stakeholders from exit case conferences.

Project Description

Former Incarcerated Re-entry Student Transition Plan

The FIRST Plan consist of seven components involving Transition Specialist, School Attendance Officers, Psychologist, Administration, School Counselors, Teachers, Special Education (SPED) Specialist and School Board members. The seven components of the FIRST plan are:

1. Collaboration between the Educational and Juvenile Justice Systems

2. Onsite Mental Health Providers

3. Remediation and Tutoring

4. Mentorship Programs

5. Counseling Services

6. Community and Parental Involvement

7. Alternative Options

This FIRST plan support s at-risk students by encouraging them to engage in programs that help them stay in school and stay on track with graduation. Components of this re-entry program were selected based on the data analysis.

Potential Resources, Existing Supports, Barriers, and Future Direction

The purpose of this white paper is to describe the FIRST program that was created to assist students who have been in the criminal justice system through incarceration or detention. FIRST differs from Yellowtail High School's current approach, which is to move students to Alternative School that focuses on and provides assistance and solutions for different problems that formerly incarcerated students face when returning back to school. The FIRST re-entry program involves coordination with public schools, transition-focused employees, youth community programs released from juvenile justice, and their families, as well as cooperation between youth justice agencies. By focusing on the comprehensive and planned support programs outlined in the FIRST youth re-entry program, school districts can ensure positive results for students and the school community. The following section describes the transition process and job description of all stakeholders involved.

Needed resources and existing supports. Support from all levels will be required to make this FIRST program plan successful. Teachers and educators, mental health professionals, psychologists, criminal justice personnel, educational facilities, and education experts must be able to offer extra assistance to at-risk students. Teachers and criminal justice staff play vital roles in supporting students as they are the people who see the students most, and they can help to resolve and report any problems. Educational leaders help these teachers and enable neighborhoods and parents to be part of the process. They ensure that all services are used correctly and efficiently. Parents/guardians and families also have to spend time to see changes and success levels for students. Their

presence is imperative to assist where appropriate. Parental and community engagement helps and inspires students to excel.

Potential barriers and solutions to barriers. There are possible obstacles that could create difficulties in designing and executing a student re-entry program successfully. For example, financial resources may not be available to execute such a comprehensive program. Every year, budget cuts in the education sector have increased and funding such an ambitious program could be difficult. The financial support and assistance needed to make this program work successfully would be minimal, and many of the resources are already available. Therefore, the support network may not be as powerful as it needs to be, which could create a significant barrier for the program's success. To overcome this potential barrier, motivational factors or rewards should be developed, and the city and the school district must buy-in to support the program.

Implementation and Timetable

Implementing FIRST will require time to ensure that all the elements or components used in the strategy are appropriate and achievable. First, the proposal must be submitted to the school system superintendent and school board for system approval. In this initial phase, adjustments may be needed to meet district requirements. Once approval is granted, resources will need to be collected for each program item. Funding may also be required to incorporate other components in the program.

First, there is a proposal to enforce the program in schools. When introduced, the assessment process takes place over several years to assess the success rate, regression, or make changes. The school district superintendent and school board must approve each

portion of the program, but each portion may have specific procedures for implementation. When the district wants to employ a professional to administer the program, that person is responsible for implementing every aspect and tracking progress.

Implementing each district-approved portion takes place the year after approval. The following information explains how each portion is incorporated into the school system per the student re-entry program. No unique number is denoted for this project. All individuals who meet the basic requirements of each portion are eligible to participate (with parental consent in some areas). The more participants, the more data that can be gathered for the assessment process. The following elements of the dropout prevention program are listed below, along with the requirements or characteristics to be met for a student to participate in that specific component, as well as the implementation process for each component.

Component 1: Collaboration between the Educational and Juvenile Justice Systems

Participants: Students who are scheduled to be released from juvenile detention and to return to school, transition specialists, school attendance officers, and psychologists.

Implementation process: Prepare records and transcripts and all education records, including IEPs, assessments, and data obtained during entry, and credits, courses, certificates, and work products/portfolios obtained while in residency. This material is given to the transition team or specialist and shared with the youth, his or her family, and the school.

Timeframe: Before releasing from detention or if a pattern of repetitive involvement in the juvenile justice system, ongoing.

Component 2: Onsite Mental Health Specialist

Participants: Mental health providers are the individuals participating in this component.

Implementation process: Mental Health staff perform risk assessments, in addition to working with staff about any concern that surface, to reduce the student's risk of re-offending. The Mental Health Specialist is responsible for conducting relapse prevention programs. The district establishes a mental health person on the high school campus to administer counseling or therapy for the benefit of the student and his/her family during the reentry period, by using multiple resources of influence including families, peers, school, and neighborhood to empower the youth and their families.

Timeframe: Daily or as needed.

Component 3: Remediation and Tutoring

Participants: Students who are at risk academically (such as those students who are currently failing two or more classes, behind two or more grade levels, or have not passed state test) are chosen to participate in this component. This component allows them to receive extra assistance in their work or their studies. Emphasis is placed on core subject classes such as English, science, mathematics, and history because those classes are stated tested areas and are needed in order for students to graduate.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of three parts.

1. To implement this component, counselors identify students who are struggling academically using eSchool. eSchool is tracking software that is used to record and track students' grades, absentee, discipline, and other academic components. A list of student names is compiled detailing which subject area(s) a student needs remediation. That compiled list also determines how many teachers are needed in order effectively remediate students with a small teacher to student ratio.

2. Once students are identified, their parents or guardians receive notification about their child's academic issues along with a detailed summary of the remediation sessions that are being provided. Parents are informed of what areas students are struggling in, the graduation requirements related to that subject area, and the goals of the remediation sessions. Parents must grant permission for their child to participate because remediation sessions are held before or after school, and students may need transportation to and from sessions.

3. Remediation takes place before or after school, depending on the time set by the administration. Teachers responsible for remediation are subject area teachers also selected by the administration. During remediation, students cover objectives that they have not mastered or skills that they need to know for state test purposes if a student needs tutoring for multiple subject areas, they l alternate weekly between those different remediation sessions.

Timeframe: Students receive remediation for one hour, three times a week. It ends once their grades have improved or state test is passed.

Component 4: Mentorship Programs

Participants: Students with reoccurring behavioral issues are involved in this component of the high school dropout prevention plan.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of seven parts.

1. First, school leaders collaborate with individuals or institutions such as Big Brother Big Sister, fraternities, and sororities or the Boys & Girls Club in order to develop a working relationship with them. Administration and the school board determines which institute they want to collaborate with for mentorship services. With assistance from these organizations, the school is better equipped to enroll students who need stability in their life.

2. The school and the specific organization work together to set up a system where students with behavioral issues can enroll in the program through the school system.

3. The administration chooses students who have behavioral or other stability issues to participate in this program. They make their decision by using eSchool to search for all students with an extensive behavioral record. The most focus is placed on students who continuously receive detentions or referrals each month.

4. Parents receive notification about the mentorship program. They are given information about the purpose of the mentorship program, the goals surrounding this component, and an explanation about why their child was chosen to participate. The parents or guardians must grant permission for the student to participate before they can be enrolled in the program.

5. Once permission is granted, the student talks with the counselor or transition specialist to discuss information about the mentorship program, student expectations, and requirements.

6. Next, the enrollment process takes place. The counselor or transition specialist enrolls the student into the organization that the district chose (for example Boys & Girls Club).

7. The student then participates in the organization's program in order to gain structure and stability. The student is required to participate in all the activities mandated by that organization and meet all required goals.

Timeframe: Students remain in that program until they reach the maximum age limit or until the parent decides to remove them.

Component 5: Counseling Services

Participants: Students with behavior, family, or emotional issues are involved in the counseling sessions.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of three parts.

1. The counselors identify students who are chosen to participate in this component in one of the following manners: Students with reoccurring behavior issues, students who personally make counselors aware of their issue, and students who have issues that are identified through the personal assessment known as BASC-2 (behavioral and emotional screening system), which is an assessment that is given to every student throughout the year during homeroom to identify students who may have personal or

emotional issues. The students identified are chosen to receive counseling sessions throughout the week.

2. Parents receive notification about the counseling sessions. They are informed of procedures used in selecting their child, of the purpose of the counseling sessions, and are provided a list of goals set for the student. Parents or guardians must give written permission for the student to receive counseling.

3. Counseling sessions take place at the school during school hours in the counselor's office or the conference room. Counselors must create rotation schedules to denote when and whom they see each day. Because counselors do have other job duties, if the district does hire a specialist, the specialist will also assist in this area when needed.

Timeframe: Counseling sessions will be at least 30 minutes long and completed twice a week. Each student will continue their sessions until their specific goals, which are set by the counselors, are met.

Component 6: Community and Parental Involvement

Participants: All community members and parents or guardians are encouraged to participate in this component of the high school student reentry plan.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of four parts.

1. At the beginning of the school year, the school will host a community conference explaining the importance and benefits of having the community and guardians involved in the school system. School leaders explain the different ways that the community and parents can be involved within the school throughout the year. This

first meeting is an informal meeting to let the community and parents know the higher level of involvement that is needed and expected from them.

2. After that initial meeting, the school host at least one meeting each month for the community and guardians (this meeting can be in conjunction with the Parent-Teacher Conference). Within these monthly meetings, the school outline its agenda for that month and discuss specific ways that the community and parents can assist with different functions going on at the school. School leaders have to create different projects that the community and parents can be involved in at the school. Projects can include but are not limited to things such as assisting at sporting events or raising funds for school resources. Community members and parents are then allowed to sign up for the specific task that they want to assist with during that month

3. School officials will also allow community members to give feedback and suggestions during these monthly meetings, so they can express ways they would like to help or changes they would like to see.

4. Communication between the school and the community must be ongoing throughout the entire school year.

Timeframe: Meetings will be held once a month at the school.

Component 7: Alternative Options

Participants: Any student who chooses to drop out will participate in this component. This component is a part of the exit procedure, and students receive information about other alternative educational options.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of seven parts.

1. Students who come to the counselor's office to drop out of school are given information on the GED program, Job Corp, Teen Camp, trade school, and military options (Information is not be limited to just these specific options. Other options are added as they become available). These students are provided with detailed information about each of these programs, including each program's purpose, enrollment requirements, the criteria, the benefits, and expectations.

2. Students are given a choice of choosing to want to participate in one of the alternative options or to withdraw without partaking in any of them.

3. Students who decide they want to participate in one of the programs listed above are given contact and enrollment information by the counselor.

4. The counselor will assist that student in the enrollment process to ensure the student does everything that is required.

5. It will be that student's obligation to meet the requirements or criteria of that program.

6. The counselor contacts that student quarterly to get information on the student's progress and get updates on the student's wellbeing.

7. In the future, the school district needs to make sure its vocational or technical school in the district is equipped to provide students with the opportunity to receive a certificate in specific trades or skills.

Timeframe: The timeframe for this component is based on the program that the student chooses.

Roles and Responsibilities

The project was to develop the former student re-entry program. Developing the program required building elements or approaches to assist these at-risk high school students. The task was to systematically capture and analyze data to assess what barriers caused formerly incarcerated students to drop out. My obligation was to present this proposal and ensure successful implementation. Anyone involved in the re-entry process must be accountable for their role. Educational leaders must ensure the resources required to make this transition a success. Teachers must be available to provide support and remediation for students. Counselors and mental health services would have to provide students with an opportunity to seek more comprehensive therapy or partner with other agencies to refer to students. Parents, youth workers, and community members must be able to play an active role in the lives of students so that students can have support at home and school. The role of students is also very critical. Students need to be accessible and able to accept the assistance they receive, but not only need to accept the assistance, but they also need to make a concerted effort to use the services provided.

There are numerous other stakeholders across diverse sectors that are involved in the FIRST program, in transitioning incarcerated youth back to the school and community. Personnel within the Juvenile Justice Center also have a range of roles in the transition process, from the collection of information that informs exit plans, to the coordination of services post-release.

Transition Coordinator (must be hired by district)

- Coordinates the entire transition

- Conduct pre – post-testing

- Contact student's home school, and outside support agencies such as their Juvenile Justice officers, to make sure that planning is holistic

- Complete paperwork and attend case conferences

- Acts as admission officer, interview student, then pass that information on to relevant stakeholders

- Make referrals to services such as health or mental health

- Enroll young person into school

- Organize the exit conference with all the stakeholders

- Listen to young people and offer advice

Community Case Worker

- Responsible for and provides support to the young person, in custody and the community

- Has regular contact with the young person and the family during custody and at school

- Supervises young person's adherence to plan in the areas of the school, health, and employment.

Tutors

- Communicate with students one-on-one about future goals

- Work on literacy and numeracy skills with students

- Assist with PLP

Learning Support Staff

- Assist teaching staff within the classroom, partnering with the classroom teacher in terms of behavior management, curriculum and organization

School Curriculum Specialist

- Negotiates with the student to create a personalized learning plan (PLP) that includes the student's goals and aspirations.

- Consult with the student each week to review plan and progress

Special Education (SPED) Specialist

- Locate and facilitates placement for students with disabilities

- Meets with all stakeholders and attends placement meetings

Attendance Officer

- Request all records from Juvenile Justice Facility

- Process student re-enrollment

- Monitors student attendance

Counseling Services

- Touches base with the young person on a daily basis, to make sure that he or she is ready to engage

- Resolves any issues that might trigger the student

School Counselor

- Contact student's previous schools, or any major stakeholder that were involved

- Contact Community Case Worker

- Assesses and review student files

- Generate access request forms

- Coordinate the completion of forms by relevant stakeholders

- Meet with student if needed to discuss any problems or concerns

Mental Health Specialist

- Perform risk assessments

- Work with staff about any concern that surface

- Works on reducing the young person's risk of re-offending

- Conduct relapse prevention programs

Psychologist

- Attend the initial discharge interviews

- Assesses counselling needs and provide counselling

- Attends the case conferences

- Identifies risk factors for the young person

- Provide unit staff and school with information about things the young person is interested in terms of further education and provides them with contact details for those options.

As essential members of a transition team, facilities need to regularly work and communicate with community agencies to recognize and provide access to the services required to help youth and families after exit and improve youth reentry outcomes. Services consist of but is not limited to academic support, career preparation and work training, community service, mental health, social events, recreation, and mentoring programs. Implementing this imprisoned student reentry program is complicated, and

schools need to employ extra staff to achieve these specific goals, but students benefit greatly. Students must receive support to help them succeed.

Collaboration between juvenile justice agencies and education agencies. Several events take place immediately before and during a youth exit from detention. Such activities concentrate on improving youth skills and services after release.

One critical role of the transition team is to determine the student's correct educational placement in the setting that will best meet the needs of the student. Furthermore, the placement of each student should be viewed on the basis that a young person has been rehabilitated, not compulsory placement in treatment programs for students with disciplinary issues.

Compile papers, transcripts. Many youth encounter barriers to re-entering school, including delays in transferring education records; barriers to data sharing; differences in credit transfer policies between the school district and the youth system; and reluctance on the part of school staff to welcome youth back to school. A Transition Specialist is assigned to lead the process as a planner or facilitator. The coordinator works through juvenile justice and education networks to promote juvenile re-enrolment and school reintegration. The coordinator will also serve as a valuable point of communication for youth and families during the re-enrollment process while helping to identify and organize any required support resources.

- All educational documents, including IEPs, tests and data obtained during admission, and grades, classes, credentials and work products/portfolios obtained

during residency, will be compiled and submitted to the transfer team and entered into a facility or national data management system and exchanged with the youth.

- The timely and secure transition of records at exit is as important as at entry. For youth returning to school, the receiving school contacts the Juvenile Justice facility or transfer counselor as soon as the juvenile is enrolled to request their educational records, including, but not limited to, transcripts and credit verification. For youth transitioning to GED training programs, the institution may contact the Youth Justice institution or transfer counselor to receive credits, certification, or certificates in career and technical education. All colleges, career training agencies, should be informed and comply with federal and state legislation on privacy and knowledge sharing. Data-sharing agreements or MOAs / MOUs can help this process.

- Transfer Committee Meetings. (Transition Coordinator, Juvenile Officer, Community Case Worker, Attendance Officer, SPED Specialist (if needed), Counseling Services, Student and Family, Mental Health Specialist (if needed):

- Communication and coordination between school personnel, correction workers, youth, and their families are vital components to help students return to school after confinement.

- Community stakeholders are added to the transition team and participate in meetings, if necessary. A probation or parole officer is a critical part of the team and may depend more heavily on exit. Meeting times and places need to be further changed if team members cannot attend regularly.

- Study transfer plans. (Community Case Worker, Transition Coordinator, Counseling Services, Student and Family)

- The school will consult with the Community Case Worker. This individual is the primary contact person. When the student is released from custody, the detention facility, or state agency where the student is confined, the Community Case worker will remind the school of pre-release arrangements and promptly notify the school.

- The transfer strategy must be flexible enough to adjust without undermining the underlying objectives. Exit situations can occur with placements, colleges, or families that may require plan changes. It is also an excellent time to make sure the program makes sense to the student and the transition team so that the school of the youth can make any necessary modifications

- Activate Transition Training. After departure, (Community Case Worker, School Counselors, SPED Specialist) contact and enroll youth in school or career and technical programs. For youth returning to school, if necessary, a visit to the receiving school and an admission interview should be held just before departure. Supportive schools should provide efficient and acceptable placements and schedules that address youth needs and conform to any required changes or adjustments set out in IEPs or 504 plans for youth. Also, the receiving school arranges an IEP meeting and hold it before the youth is enrolled to address any possible adjustments to the child's IEP and placement, as needed. Supportive

schools can also offer advice, peer mentoring, and academic support to teenagers and families.

- Community Services for youth released from criminal justice and their families, (Transition Coordinator, Juvenile Officer, Community Case Worker) leaving or leading to exit, after release, many youths may experience anxiety about their release and home or school. The following critical activities concentrate on exit youth.

- Increased engagement in the transition and management team (Communicate). (Community Case Worker, Counseling Services, Transition Specialist) On departure, youth should improve contact with the transition specialist and the transition team.

- Mentoring and peer support. (Community Case Worker, Counseling Services) Youth should be encouraged to find a mentor and a peer group that can provide help during exit and once back in the community. Transition counselors or other transition team leaders may help youth pursue a mentor or peer support group.

When adolescents reach this stage of change, family (or guardian) participation is crucial. That is when youth reunite with their families. The effects of decisions at this point, whether positive or negative, directly impact both the youth and family. The following are important family-centered events.

To provide Family Involvement in the Transition Process. (Community Case Worker, Counseling Services) The school will document the process of re-enrollment to share with the adolescent and their families, including the method of granting credits

received while the student was incarcerated, and opportunities for credit recovery. The transition between incarceration and school re-enrollment is not always understandable to parents, and their involvement in this process needs to be understood, especially concerning the steps involved in re-enrolling their child in school

- Families are active members of the transition team at each stage; however, engagement and contact increases as reintegration plans are put into motion. The facility should exchange important information with the family in a language they understand but should also provide resources and programs to meet family members 'concerns and needs. As always, all contact with family members should be culturally and linguistically acceptable.

- Plan Youth Family Return. (Community Case Worker, Counseling Services) Reintegration is complicated. Families need to know how their child has changed while living. Holding discussions with parents about issues like behavioral modification, alcohol and drug use, mental health needs and recovery, healthy recreational behaviors, educational success, study habits, and homework provides families with information about how best to support their child and ensure that good habits continue after leaving placement. The transition advisor or other team member may provide officials 'contact details to the family, including appropriate school staff, as their child moves to community/college.

- Start family counseling or therapy. (Community Case Worker, Counseling Services)

- Counseling or counseling may help youth and their families during the re-entry process, using various powerful tools like friends, peers, schools, and communities to support youth and their friends.

- Help in Reintegration. (Community Case Worker, Counseling Services) Families may need support other than therapy to plan for youth reintegration. The transition team provides information and tools on parenting courses, transportation, and housing. Families also experience incremental transfer.

Project Evaluation Plan

Outcome-based inductive evaluation will be used to assess whether the FIRST re-entry program is efficient. The outcome-based assessment will allow the school system to evaluate the effects, costs, or improvements that have occurred over a limited period (Belcher, Suryadarma, & Halimanjaya, 2017). Ideally, result-based assessment should be used to assess if at-risk students benefit from using the introduced FIRST re-entry program. Result-based assessment also helps decide if each program item or portion is efficient, requires improvement, or needs replacement. The program logic model is used to complete this project's outcome-based assessment (Daugherty & Herman, 2017). The results-based assessment model helps a researcher to identify system inputs, outputs, effects, and impacts (Belcher, et al., 2017). Results-based assessment method was chosen because it is a straightforward way to state and appreciate project priorities and predicted results or outcomes.

The project logic model lists project inputs and outcomes. The inputs are what goes into the project, which involves activities to be performed during the program. The

target results the project wants to accomplish using the inputs mentioned. The sources for this initiative are components of the FIRST re-entry program (remediation and tutoring, mentoring, therapy, community and parental engagement, mental health services, the participation of criminal justice, and alternative solutions). The project's objectives or results are divided into small, medium, and long-term targets. The short-term targets are to maximize attendance, boost grades, and reduce behavioral problems and referrals. Mid-term priorities include increasing civic and parental engagement and raising retention and recruitment rates. The long-term goals of this project include lowering high school dropout rates, raising high school graduation rates, and raising post-secondary enrollment rates.

Formative and summative evaluation should be performed to access the results using the project logic model as a reference. Formative evaluation is a method of assessing a program's content when the program elements are in motion (Stetler, et al., 2006). During this assessment, the short-term targets of the program's logic model are observed. Students involved in the school's FIRST re-entry program are tracked using the eSchool's monitoring system software. This program is used in schools to monitor student attendance, grades, and disciplinary records. Records of students (attendance, grades, and discipline) are reviewed every nine weeks to see if progress is made in students achieving short-term targets. Additionally, any significant changes to be made for the FIRST re-entry program are discussed as the school year progresses.

At the end of each year for the next 5 years, midterm and long-term targets are discussed to assess if progress is being made in these result areas. The advisor or program

manager must maintain a record of how many community members or parents, mental health professionals, counselors, criminal justice workers, and other school administrators engage in regular meetings to track the mid-term objectives. Group members and guardians may also express their support or disapproval of meetings. School workers can also use eSchool monitoring the number of retentions and promotions from year to year. The counselor also monitors long-term goals. eSchool can also maintain track of dropout and graduation rates from year to year. When students collect transcripts, counselors must also report how many students have enrolled in post-secondary institutions. In the meetings held to track mid-term objectives all reports and data obtained are reviewed to see if progress is made towards the project's outcomes. This project's assessment continues for five years. Changes or modifications can be needed during this process if unexpected circumstances prevent proper use of a part.

Project Implications

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community. If a successful re-entry program is developed that significantly reduces dropout rates and raises high school graduation rates, several beneficial results may occur in communities around Yellowtail High School. As more students graduate, college intake in the surrounding universities or community colleges can increase. There is also a possibility of growing the number of active residents within Yellowtail High School populations. With more working individuals, the economy can flourish. Crime also decreases as the number of active people increases. Less community violence means a chance for the next generation to grow up in safer neighborhoods, but

that can only happen if there is progress in designing and enforcing a more comprehensive high school re-entry program, and the resources required to make it work.

Far-Reaching into other Communities. The FIRST re-entry program can be implemented in other schools if successful. FIRST would allow other schools to successfully transition previously incarcerated students back into the school environment, raise graduation rates and increase the number of students attending college or entering the workforce. FIRST could also improves the national graduation rates and all communities across the states.

Conclusion

The project's overall goal is to decrease high school dropout rates by providing students who return to school after being incarcerated the resources needed to stay in school and graduate. Educational leaders must continue to build approaches to help at-risk students meet high school graduation requirements. Developing new high school student re-entry initiatives and implementing innovative curriculum and intervention approaches, in addition to reforms in criminal justice, are ongoing processes to ensure students continue on a positive course. Section 4 describes the project's strengths and limitations as well as an analysis of the researcher's development throughout this process.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

High school dropout rates are a problem that continually affects the education system. Addressing this issue requires determined leaders continually working on until a considerable impact is made. Section 4 includes a reflection on the project's strengths, limitations, and recommendations for future research. In this section, I describe what I learned about scholarship, project development, and leadership and change.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The solution to the problems facing formerly incarcerated students reentering high school was carefully investigated to create and provide a potential solution. Different types of components for a high school student reentry program were discussed, and this program includes only the most realistic components. The reentry program provides elements that support at-risk students in various aspects of their lives. The FIRST program offers academic support, counseling for those who struggle due to personal problems, and alternative approaches for students who plan on dropping out of school regardless of help. This program not only supports at-risk students but also benefits teachers and society. With this project report, teachers can gain feedback and information not just from other educators but from mental health providers, counselors, criminal justice workers, and parents to help recognize and assist at-risk students. The results of this project may also benefit society. When more students remain in school and graduate

it eventually leads to more community involvement. These graduates come back to the community and help develop and sustain their society economically.

Project Limitations

This project has some limitations. Funding can restrict the implementation of this program. Funds would be required to sustain this reentry program for high school students or to employ a transitional specialist or professional to ensure continued successful use of the program within the school. Without these supports in place, alternative approaches to implementation would be needed. Components included in this reentry program were focused on needs at the local setting. If the program is enforced and reviewed, changes or further work may be required to incorporate more comprehensive programs. Using community services to form an interagency collaboration to support the efforts and needs of this issue/program is essential.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to the FIRST program would be for schools to revamp the alternative learning environment (ALE) on their campuses. The ALE could be revised into a campus that provides a self-paced accelerated curriculum designed for students who may be deficient in their credits or meet one or more of the state at-risk criteria factors. Previously incarcerated students are at risk of dropping out of school and not graduating on time.

The revised ALE would give students the option of attending school four hours in the morning or four hours in the afternoon. Instead of having to deal with all the stress of returning to a large school, students would be allowed to reenter school in an ALE. These

students would be provided with an individualized graduation plan so they can move forward toward postsecondary education, a trade/industrial career track, or enlist in the military

Scholarship, Project, and Leadership Change

As school administrator with 26 years of experience, I am always trying to do more than supervise and track students. I try to build relationships with all my students. I made the decision to be an influence on my students, especially those who people thought would not survive in society. I realized my passion was to help the children who are considered troubled improve their lives. During my educational years, I also dealt with children who had severe behavioral issues and were in the juvenile justice system. These students would listen to me before speaking. When I remained a constant figure in the children's lives, making them more trusting, they began to behave differently, not wanting to be disrespectful. When I started to realize this, my urge to work with troubled youth became even more significant, and I realized I might make a difference in their lives if I stayed concentrating on their needs.

Entering this doctoral program at Walden University gave me the first step I needed to make a positive difference in education for students who have been previously incarcerated. Part of the mission of Walden University is to grow academics and the practitioners who generate meaningful social change, and that is my overall life goal. I want to grow continually in life while helping others, primarily young people, develop into successful individuals. I want to help struggling youth make meaningful changes in their lives, so they can be models for others and support someone else in return.

This study helped me to develop scholarly skills. Beginning with an inquiry, scholarship shifts from an inquiry to a study plan that helps an individual to gain knowledge about an inquiry. The analysis is an excellent learning resource. Research is a time-consuming operation, but information on any topic is obtained through study. There are many different ways to study a subject. Throughout my dissertation process, I grew into a professional researcher. Reviewing papers, collecting data, and analyzing data helped me to understand why research is so important.

Through analysis, a person may understand or may not understand an exciting phenomenon. Completing this project study was difficult. I was unsure at the beginning unsure if I would be able to fulfill all the qualifications it took to be a scholarly researcher. Through hard work and dedication, I eventually began to feel productive. I find it much easier to study and understand the data collected because I look at it differently now, and that shows that I have evolved as a scholar personally. The scholarship also involves social reform. Via scholarship, one desires to build or establish positive changes that dynamically affect societies. As a research scholar, I hope to encourage change through projects such as this, in addition to individual actions. The research information provides me new skills to support educating young people. If schools and educators can be more successful in providing support, students become more positively influenced, and then those same students can positively impact others' lives around them.

Project Development and Evaluation

Throughout this doctoral project, the main aim was to learn from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and academic advisors why many incarcerated students came back to school to drop out eventually. This phenomenon helped to devise a strategy for these students to re-enter high school, focusing on more than just academic issues. My ultimate goal has always been to assist students with academic difficulty, gang activity, mental and social problems, or other personal issues that hinder them from doing their best in school. This project helps in assisting students to discover the value of education and guide them in a better direction. The motivation to start designing this project started when the realization surfaced on how many students who had been incarcerated at some point during their K-12 career dropped out of high school at the local and national level.

This problem started to become even more over-whelming, when former students of mine were dropping out. Knowing something had to be done, and wanting to be part of the process, that is when I started wondering why. I started studying drop-out prevention strategies and the criminal justice system to see what schools were doing to keep students in school, and I found most of the drop-out strategies I came across concerned with academics only and not discussing participation in juvenile justice. For more reasons, I thought students dropped out. Therefore, I agreed to let my research concentrate on why students drop out of high school to hopefully build a program that might fix several of those issues. Plan creation is a very dull task, as everyone needs to complete their plan correctly, following all the requirements.

During this project's growth, I began to realize that it is necessary to plan every detail and remain focused on those details. When a researcher outlines and organizes a strategy, the design process goes smoother. When designing this project, I learned to make changes. Often the process will not work as expected so that modifications can be required. It is also crucial for project developers to realize that supporting others can be a bonus. By giving encouraging words or engaging in project creation, others may also make the process less stressful. The rewards make a project developer's hard work worth the effort.

Leadership and Change

To be a great instructional leader, an individual must be able to lead and direct others effectively. In a school environment, strong leadership is imperative for a school to succeed. Leaders set the tone for the success of a company or school. Bad leadership can cause a company or school to fail, while great leadership can make an organization thrive. Leaders must have other characteristics, including communication skills, confidence, dedication, enthusiasm, and reverence. A leader should know when change is required and support the change. School programs often shift from how standardized assessments are conducted to the specifications of methods used to teach students. As a leader, realizing the value of change, recognizing why specific changes are needed, and enjoying the benefits that change can bring. Not all changes at first seem positive, but all changes deserve a chance. I want to be the kind of leader who recognizes the change.

To be an effective leader, one must be open to suggestions and different approaches that may not seem logical to me but may be helpful to students. One

individual does not know anything, which means listening to others 'ideas. As a teacher, it is crucial to prioritize students 'interest in making decisions that positively affect their lives. As a leader, one must always take the time to reflect. Self-reflection helps people to evaluate and focus on their strengths and weaknesses. Self-reflection helps a leader to find opportunities to change himself and become a more influential leader.

Self-reflection offers an opportunity for a person to step back and evaluate the environment and see what works and what needs improvement. I try to make sure I think about myself regularly because I want to learn if I can build on myself to become a better person and administrator. Self-reflection is critical for everyone to do, particularly leaders, as it offers an opportunity for a person to see the past, concentrate on what happened in the past, and then develop a potential action plan.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

Throughout this doctoral project writing phase, I became a more established scholar, becoming able to identify and define an issue, develop a research strategy, collect data, evaluate data, and create an action plan that can bring about social change. The educational experience helped me to acquire information about various research methodologies I was unaware of and how to perform a qualitative analysis. I enjoy this form of research because it is easy to analyze real-world circumstances or phenomena by conducting this study professionally.

Keeping up with educational concerns is essential in order to help the education system grow more robust. I expect to start learning more about the juvenile justice system as well as why students drop out of high school to continue to develop re-entry programs

for high schools. A scholar never stops learning, and my plan is to keep developing year after year in this field to support more students to succeed academically, mentally, and socially. Learning some personal skills during this Walden program has been very rewarding. With this journey, my writing and leadership skills improved dramatically, becoming a better writer. I recognize the value of providing accurate and relevant facts concisely and straightforwardly for the public to understand. My leadership skills evolved during this cycle.

Today, being more eager and available to assume leadership positions than becoming a follower or team member. I am more articulate and have responsibilities I think I can do. Having excellent leadership skills will benefit me as I work further to strengthen the education system and increase graduation rates. Scholars can also make meaningful social improvements in their culture to better society. My goal for my re-entry program is to start locally and expand to other school districts. I want to make sure I can meet as many students as possible. In exchange, I strive to improve the lives of students and their families by helping grow hard-working individuals to contribute positively to society. Overall, a scholar must be able to learn throughout his life. Being a life-long learner is a profound scholar. I am willing to assume the responsibility to ensure that all students receive the necessary resources to enable them to become successful citizens, and continually foster positive social change in their community, particularly in their lives.

Implication, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The aim of this qualitative descriptive study is to gain an understanding of the perception of teachers, parents, and academic advisors of the challenges Grade 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a typical school setting face, and to support programs and resources to deal with these challenges. With this program, I wanted to make a positive impact on communities by creating resources for positive social change by helping at-risk students remain in school. This project is relevant because so many youths drop out of high school and do not lead healthy, successful lives. I developed this study to help students returning from prison to school re-enter school without being subjected to contrary obstacles by providing them with the academic assistance they need, as well as therapy and other elements to help them cope with the personal problems that many of them face from day to day.

Overall, this project's success helps many people. Students who may consider dropping out due to academic, social, and behavioral problems now have a school re-entry program to help them reach out and support them in ways that concentrate on their academic and personal issues. Teachers should be able to identify and support at-risk pupils accurately. Parents should recognize their role in the education system and have incentives for educational activities. More students should graduate and grow into hard-working, active people. I hope that through this project analysis and the creation of a high school re-entry program, many students can benefit from being positively impacted and continue to impact those around them. The overarching aim of this project study is to understand teachers, academic advisors, and parents 'expectations could contribute to

increased retention, introduce intervention services that concentrate on returning incarcerated students, provide more incentives for student achievement, and possibly provide multiple graduation pathways.

This research is very critical to Yellowtail High School educators committed to increasing high school graduation levels and lower dropout rates. Throughout this study, the literature stated that the effects of dropping out of high schools, such as crime or deprivation, impact not only the former students but the society they live in. A successful high school re-entry program would help at-risk students remain in school and ultimately support communities with more students graduating and becoming active citizens of their community.

This initiative can assist community leaders in reaching out to students at risk of dropping out of high school. By holding students in school, graduation rates can increase. Implementing a re-entry program for high school students that can assist students with academic difficulties, family dilemmas, behavioral concerns, and mental disorders, or treatment solutions has the opportunity to reach out to more forms of at-risk students and provide them with the academic remediation or therapy they need. Academic problems typically attract most focus, but it is essential to consider other causes that cause students to struggle with education. With this particular project, the obstacles perceived by the expectations of parents, teachers, and academic advisors made students at Yellowtail High School risk dropping out.

During implementation, outside agencies need to be used, staff have to be hired, community and parental initiatives have to be developed, teachers need to be allocated

time to assist in areas where appropriate, and students involved in the curriculum need to be supported in identifying components. To do this effectively, school leaders must be willing to complete each move and follow-through in each region. Teachers, psychologists, mental and social support professionals, and criminal justice authorities must be able to devote the time required for each pupil. When this project is performed half-heartedly, nothing is achieved, and students will not gain the future advantages of this project. If this project is implemented correctly, at-risk students are recognized, and resources are made adequately for these students, then academic achievement and personal development for the students involved are possible.

Implementing and reviewing this initiative in other schools throughout the state would assist in growing rates of high school graduation. Via ongoing research and changes to this initiative, this incarcerated student re-entry program can help more students and includes more parental participation. Future work also involves models in which elementary and middle school administrators may utilize the components of the re-entry program. Students with behavioral and academic issues often start experiencing issues at an early age and exploring ways to incorporate these mechanisms for younger students to help them as they age. In the future, I expect to explore ways to recognize elementary and middle school students at risk and assist them at an early age. Hopefully, if educators offer the required help to younger students, they will have fewer problems when they begin their high school years.

In this doctoral study method, I only used interviews as a data collection tool, which may have reduced the amount of data collected. I may have been able to gather

more data in various ways to obtain more knowledge on why formerly incarcerated

students fail, and some ultimately drop out of high school to get more people interested in

the process. For anyone who can fix this problem in the future, I would suggest not

restricting resources or data collection methods—using through ways to collect info. For

example, researchers would want to have a round table discussion with teachers,

counselors, administrators, parents, mental and social health professionals, and former

students to discuss the dropout problem of high school and all its components.

As participants provide feedback, ask questions and answer each other, the researcher can

obtain more in-depth knowledge and suggest potential researchers doing work at more

local colleges, if necessary. Through data collection, a researcher may see patterns or

differences between schools and including criminal justice. Ultimately, I would

encourage prospective researchers not to restrict their data collection methods and be

open to using a variety of options as one tool can work, but multiple methods may

provide more useful data.

Conclusion

Education is essential in society. Without an education, a person's life and

lifestyles are reduced. Students must recognize the importance of education and the

opportunities that education offers. If educators, parents, and community continue to

work together, there is a possibility that high school graduation rates will increase.

Educational leaders must continue to build approaches to help at-risk students meet high

school graduation requirements. Developing new high school student re-entry initiatives

and implementing innovative curriculum and intervention approaches, in addition to

reforms in criminal justice, are ongoing processes to ensure students continue on a

positive course. By focusing on the integrated and coordinated supports and services

recommended in this project for re-entry of formerly confined youth, school districts

have the opportunity to ensure successful outcomes for students and their school

community.

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Appendix A: Proposed Juvenile Student Re-entry Plan

Executive Summary

Background

10th through 12th-grade students who were incarcerated and return to high school are dropping out of an urban high school in the Southern United States at an elevated rate from academic years 2010 through 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). To address the issue of student dropout, district superintendents are exploring opportunities and strategies to support students to stay in school. Understanding teachers, academic advisors, and parents' perceptions could aid the school district in developing intervention plans to increase graduation and student retention. The purpose of this high school juvenile student re-entry plan project is to assist at-risk students who have been incarcerated and return to school, and to support programs and resources to assist teachers, counselors, administrators, school district leaders, and parents. This initiative focused on designing and implementing programs needed to increase the number of formerly incarcerated students graduating high school by providing the resources they need to be successful.

As a means to evaluate successful prevention approaches, several programs where researched: mentorship and instructional services, social justice prevention, parental engagement assistance, counseling, GED alternatives, and alternative schooling elements were researched for this report. The ultimate aim of this project was to provide resources and motivation to formerly incarcerated students to enable them to be able to graduate high school. Collecting and analyzing the perception data from parents, teachers, and

academic advisors allowed an understanding of what student's experience upon returning to school after incarceration. The six parents consisted of parents of students who had been detained for non-violent offenses, during the 2018- 2019 academic year. The sample identified families of students who had been incarcerated and returned to school, teachers who had or are working with students who have been incarcerated, and academic advisors who monitored students, who had been incarcerated. The academic advisors and teachers consisted of six purposefully selected academic advisors, and six teachers, from Yellowtail High School. In addition, for credibility and to safeguard any preconceived biases or conjectures that could have an unjustifiably impact on the interpretation of the information, and ultimate conclusion, informal dialogue took place with three academic advisors and three teachers from a neighboring high school with similar demographics, who have had direct contact with students who had been detained or incarcerated. The research questions were addressed by allowing participants (parents of students who had been incarcerated, teachers, and academic advisors) to provide responses that provided details about their personal experiences with formerly incarcerated students

RQ1: How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of challenges Grades 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school?

RQ2: What are teachers, parents, and academic advisors' perceptions of support services and resources to assist with challenges Grades 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school?

RQ3: What suggestions do teachers, parents, and academic advisors have for school administrators about ways to better help Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to school?

The first research question for this study involved," How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school"? The findings interpreted that parents of students who had been incarcerated felt that their child's struggles were due to issues such as poor academics, peer influences, lack of interest in school, drug and gang involvement, poor communication with the school, bad teacher, bad students, and behavior problems.

Comparing the responses of the parents of the students who were detained and returned to school to the teachers' and academic advisors' responses, and the responses were quite close. Some of the same reasons' parents gave the reasons teachers and academic advisors identified for students incarcerated and returned to school encountered. The replies had one difference. Teachers and academic advisors agreed that low parental participation was a significant factor that led to the problems of these students, but none of the parents included it as a justification for the students' struggles.

The identified reasons many of these students suffered could be interpreted differently, but they reflect a common theme. Families said their child did not want to come to school, for example, because school was boring or they did not like school, but teachers and academic counselors mentioned that students are not interested in learning and lazy and did not care. Such comments are two separate viewpoints, the school

climate. I found that formerly incarcerated students returning to high school fail for many causes, not just bad academics. That specific knowledge was vital because of the need to understand these factors to build successful strategies.

When focusing on the second research question, "What are teachers, parents, and academic advisor's perceptions of support services and resources to assist with challenges Grade 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school?" Through the data, the conclusions are that the following strategies have a significant impact on the success of students returning to school after detention or long-term incarceration:

- Ongoing counseling services

- Better communication between parents, school, and juvenile justice

- Increase parental involvement

- Psychological and mental and behavioral health providers on campus

- Mentorship program at school

- Remediation programs

- Increased juvenile involvement after release

Finally, the third research question concluded that parents, teachers, and academic advisors all agreed on the need for making changes in the school's educational program to raise graduation rates and inspire students to remain in school. Those changes included: (a) collaboration between juvenile justice agencies and education agencies, (b) Remediation, tutoring**, (c)** mentoring services, (d) counseling, (e) parental and civic

engagement, (d) Mental Health Providers Specialists, and (e) alternative options. This option is for students who ultimately decide to drop out of high school.

If a successful re-entry program is developed that significantly reduces dropout rates and raises high school graduation rates, several beneficial results may occur in communities around Yellowtail High School. As more students graduate, college intake in the surrounding universities or community colleges can increase. There is also a possibility of growing the number of active residents within Yellowtail High School populations. With more working individuals, the economy can flourish. Crime also decreases as the number of active people increases. Less community violence means a chance for the next generation to grow up in safer neighborhoods, but that can only happen if there is progress in designing and enforcing a more comprehensive high school re-entry program, and the resources required to make it work.

Recommendation for a New Program: FIRST

The FIRST re-entry program is designed to address the identified needs among this special population of students and could be implemented in other schools if successful. FIRST would allow other schools to raise graduation rates and increase the number of students attending college or entering the workforce. This re-entry program could also improve the national graduation rates and all communities across the states. The project's overall goal is to decrease high school dropout rates by providing students who return to school after being incarcerated the resources needed to stay in school and graduate.

Proposed Juvenile Student Re-entry Plan

Proposed FIRST Program

10th through 12th-grade students who were incarcerated and return to high school are dropping out of an urban high school in the Southern United States at an elevated rate from academic years 2010 through 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The purpose of this High School Juvenile Student Re-entry Plan Project is to assist at-risk students who have been incarcerated and return to school. The plan is designed to provide support programs and resources to assist teachers, counselors, administrators, school district leaders, and parents.

Methodology

The purpose of this Project Study is to interpret and propose solutions to the needs of teachers', parents', and academic advisors' regarding the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges. Identifying the contributing factors assist schools in developing strategies to improve student retention. By distinguishing the minor impacts of arrest, charge, conviction, and detainment on high school graduation and the not so favorable factors that impact both a person's odds of graduating and his or her odds of being arrested; e.g. state spending on public services, schools can evaluate intervention approaches and better analyze students' career goals, in order to meet the educational and psychological needs of the students before they drop out.

Nearly 53,000 youth are kept in residential facilities away from home due to participation in juvenile or criminal justice on any given day. Although incarceration and detention are acceptable for a limited percentage of criminals, long-term jail experiences tend to do more harm than good, often leading to increased crime and recurrence. Public opinion on the U.S. criminal justice system shifts from a punitive approach to a model of therapeutic care, reflecting improvements in juvenile justice in recent years. However, instead of relying on community-based programs, reliance on youth intervention systems on mental health care or other unique needs of young offenders has increased (Underwood & Washington, 2016).

Criminal participation and relationships with the justice system can interrupt an individual from the process of education, which can eventually lead to reduced academic results and, in turn, dropping out of school. Second,' criminal property' accumulation can substitute the need for an individual to invest in education and the learning process. In addition, stigma due to criminal participation may have a negative impact on academic results. In specific, educators and families may spend less time and energy on, for instance, criminally engaged students (Rud et al., 2018). Education teaches individuals to be more patient, therefore, discouraging crime (Hahn & Truman, 2015). From a societal perspective, the education process (from the Latin, ducere, "to lead" and "out of, "yields education, "to lead out") deliberately engages the receptive capacity of children and others to entrust them with intelligence, reasoning skills, beliefs, socioemotional awareness and control, and social interaction, so they can emerge as committed, efficient, imaginative, and self-governing members of society.

Review of the Broader Problem

High School Dropouts

The term *dropout factories* were created to refer to high schools that graduate less than 60% of their students (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013). These *dropout factories* yield 50% of the country's dropouts and two-thirds of ethnic minority dropouts (Layton, 2014). Layton's study found the following:

> nationally about 80% of students in the U.S. graduate on time with a regular diploma, but for Hispanic and African- American students, the proportion rate drops to about 50%, and sadly, dropouts lack the academic skills needed to gain entry into high-skilled and white and blue-collar jobs, all too often this leading many of them to a life of poverty, prison, and homelessness (p. 18).

The national high school dropout crisis deserves attention because large numbers of dropouts are interconnected to devastating social costs with significant consequences to society (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). Students who fail to finish high school may experience many adverse results when they become adults such as greater levels of incarceration, unemployment, health implications, and ongoing economic hardship (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). These facts together with school reform, warrant educators to investigate ways to improve on-time graduation rates (Ecker-Lyster & Niileksela, 2016).

Research has overpoweringly exhibited the correlation between juvenile justice system involvement and educational outcomes. During ninth grade, being arrested dramatically increases the risk of dropping out, and substantially lowers attendance and grades (Farn & Adams, 2016). The adverse consequences of arrest are magnified for

youth who spend time in detention or who are arrested multiple times, while measures of available social support following arrest inconsistently blunt the effects of arrest; poor school performance is a significant indicator of delinquency, and vice versa (Farn & Adams, 2016).

Students from low-salary families dropped out of high school at a rate five times higher than students from high-wage families (Ginder et al., 2017). Fifteen rural high schools in the southern and southwestern United States examined the dropout factors that lead to students dropping out of high school (Johnson, Simon, & Mun, 2013). The high schools were in districts that are among the 800 rural areas with the most elevated student poverty rates across the United States. The 15 states student enrollment consisted of an extremely high number of financially burdened students (Delaney, 2013). 87% of all the student learner's in these 15 southwestern states are living in poverty (Delaney, 2013).

Juvenile Incarceration and Returning to School

Almost 90% of justice-impacted students' express interest in returning to school, however, only one-third re-enroll (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Students have often been turned away because of lost records or other miscommunication between the school and the facility (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). When students are allowed to re-enroll in their primary school after being incarcerated, they are often treated differently, being classified as special-education students, alternative education students, and students with behavioral issues.

The criminal justice system may also look at past juvenile offenders differently. Police may be more likely to suspect and arrest past juvenile offenders for new crimes;

rather, the offender committed them or not. Dependent upon the juveniles' previous convictions, some judges may be more likely to sentence past offenders more harshly for subsequent crimes. Approximately 23,000 delinquent youth was referred to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. These referrals were childhood trauma, neglect, criminal behavior and other criminological factors, increasing the risk of becoming a dangerous, violent, and a chronic juvenile offender by age 35 (Fox, Perez, Cass, & Baglivio, 2015).

Researchers assert that incarceration of students of abuse, neglect, and criminality could be very unsettling, significantly reducing the likelihood of ever returning to school and significantly increasing the likelihood of being classified as having an emotional or behavioral disorder for those who do return (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Estimates based on over 35,000 juvenile offenders over 10 years (1990-2000) from a large urban county in the United States suggest that juvenile incarceration results substantially in lower high school completion rates and higher adult incarceration rates. (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Aizer and Doyle (2015) also implied that juvenile offenders that were assigned to a judge with a high incarceration rate were considerably less likely to complete high school and had a significant likelihood of being incarcerated as an adult.

Juvenile incarceration decreases the likelihood of high school graduation by 13 to 39 percentage points, compared to the average public school student living in the same area (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Aizer and Doyle noted that, although incarceration of juveniles is intended to be short-term, it can be very troublesome. Aizer and Doyle suggested that substitutes to incarceration, such as electronic monitoring or enforced curfews for juvenile offenders and policies that address the low rates at which juveniles

return to school upon release instead of procedures that make increased contact with police inevitable (2015).

Labeling theory alludes that people's behavior is influenced by the label ascribed to them by society (Besemer, Farrington, & Bijleveld, 2017). Results of a study conducted by Kim and Lee (2019) imply that schools with an open-minded atmosphere may serve as a safeguard against labeling effects and highlight the importance of schools and their personnel in shaping delinquent behavior in juveniles. The way teachers perceive their students returning from the juvenile system can influence student relationships and student engagement, both of which play a vital role in decreasing their chance of reoffending (Sinclair, Unruh, Griller Clark, & Waintrup, 2017).

Schools make an enormous contribution to the number of juveniles referred to the juvenile justice system, and usually for less severe offenses than outside sources (May, Barranco, Stokes, Robertson, & Haynes, 2018). Recent increases in the number of youths arrested for non-violent offenses in schools have led some jurisdictions to explore resolutions to the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Fader, Lockwood, Schall, & Stokes, 2015). Suspension by the age of 12 has direct and indirect associations with students being involved in the juvenile justice system (Novak, 2019). Directly, juveniles are more likely to self-report justice system involvement at age 18; and indirectly, they are more likely to have deviant peers as their companions in adolescence, therefore, increasing their odds of justice system involvement (Novak, 2019). Research shows that black students who disobey school rules are more often prone to out-of-school suspensions, which increase their threat of arrest and increase the odds that once suspects of delinquency, they are

detained, formally processed, and institutionalized for probation violations (Hirschfield, 2018).

Barnert et al. (2015) completed a study including 20 student interviews of incarcerated youth in a Los Angeles juvenile hall. The students expressed a need for love and attention, discipline and control, and role models and perspective at home and school. Youths perceived that when home or school failed to meet these needs, they spent more time on the streets, leading to incarceration. These incarcerated youths contrasted the path through school with the avenue to jail, reporting that the passageway to jail felt easier. All of them expressed the insight that they had made bad decisions and that the more difficult way was not only better but also still potentially achievable. Researchers concluded, to break cycles of juvenile incarceration; the public health community must partner with legislators, educators, community leaders, and youths to determine how to make success, rather than detention, the more straightforward path for disadvantaged adolescents (Barnert et al., 2015).

Connections between being Incarcerated and Dropping Out

The observed correlations between arrest and school dropping out may be explained by alternative unmeasured factors such as (a) muffled self-control, (b) a lack of parental supervision, (c) divergent peers, or (d) neighborhood disadvantages may inflate the estimated connection between the arrest and educational attainment in these studies (Fernandez-Suarez, Herrero, Sanchez, Juarros-Basterretxea, & Rodriguez-Diaz, 2016). The connection might be consequential; guessing in a sensitivity analysis that the observed relation between arrest and high school graduation would all but disappear

because of unobserved factors that influence both graduation and detention. The challenge in unraveling the connection amongst arrest and educational achievement is to gather an information vault that contains data on the numerous individual, peer, family, neighborhood and school factors that together foretell juvenile arrest and educational achievement (Kirk & Sampson, 2013). Dropping out of high school has significant unfavorable ramifications for youth, including the increased probability of being jobless, living in poverty, carrying on with an unhealthy way of life, and expanded likelihood of being imprisoned (Fader et al., 2015).

Societal Risk Factors for Dropping Out

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the developed world and well-documented racial/ethnic disparities throughout the criminal justice system (Wagner & Walsh, 2016), resulting in substantial social, economic, and health burdens on families and children of color (Neal & Rick, 2014). The widespread belief that dropping out of school can cause financial hardship, rest on unsubstantiated evidence (Campbell, 2015).

Many societal risk factors exist when students drop out of school. Employers may be reluctant to hire them, thereby increasing their likelihood of future criminal activity and becoming a high school dropout (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

Dropping out of high school also has negative consequences for earnings. Young African American males are incarcerated at inexplicably higher rates as compared to their white counterparts and other minority groups, and this trend spreads into adulthood (Cobb, 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that young black males between the ages of

20 and 24 who do not have a high school diploma or a GED typically have a higher chance of being incarcerated than being employed (Neal & Rick, 2014).

Recent research by Rumberger (2013) that high school dropouts, compared to high school graduates, face extremely uninviting economic and social projections. It is further noted that dropouts are more likely to rely on public assistance, engage in crime, and generate other social costs supported by taxpayers. High school dropouts are less likely to find a job and earn a decent living wage, more likely to be below the poverty level, and more likely to suffer from a variety of adverse health outcomes (Hickman, et al., 2017). According to the 2017 Current Population Survey, median annual earnings for individuals at least 25 years of age with no high school was $27,800 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Median yearly earnings for high school dropouts was $18,445. For high school graduates, including GED holders, the median annual income was $36,700, almost $19,000 more than that of dropouts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Inadequacies in education alone significantly hamper potential financial opportunities. Adults across the country without a high school diploma face the greatest rates of poverty and earn average salaries 27% lower than high school graduates (Wheeler, 2017). When teenagers are locked up by the juvenile justice system at a young age and fail to finish their schooling, the experience affects future income and potential earnings throughout their lives (Wheeler, 2017).

Juvenile incarceration is expensive. The average cost of incarcerating an American prisoner varies from state to state (). Some states, like Indiana, have managed

to keep prices low at about $14,000 per inmate; meanwhile, states like New York pay around $60,000 to keep an inmate behind bars (Notar, 2019).

The average annual cost of an incarcerating a juvenile in the United States tops $88,000 (Li, Wu, Lam, & Gao, 2016). Rather than juvenile incarceration enhancing the human capital collection or stopping future wrongdoing and imprisonment, we find that for adolescents on the edge of detainment, such confinement causes a drop in the high school fulfillment rate and an expansion in the likelihood of detainment as an adult. In investigating the components behind these impacts, we find that once detained; an adolescent is probably not going to ever come back to class, proposing that even generally brief periods of incarceration can be exceptionally problematic and have extreme long-haul results for this populace (Li et al., 2016),

Returning to school after dropout significantly reduces the crime-inducing effect of dropout among men (Backman, 2017). However, the males who do come back to school are named as having a disability because of a social or behavioral issue, decreasing the probability of graduation, and conceivably increasing the possibility of future criminal conduct (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Earning a high school diploma has been strongly linked to less violent and drug-related crimes, lowering incarceration rates, and the costs invested by society in the criminal justice system (Attardo-Maryott, 2015). Young people participating in the criminal justice system frequently have unique needs and usually encounter adverse outcomes from their traditional peers. There is growing evidence that when transitions back to the community are well organized, individualized, and assisted by the resources required, the recurrence rate decreases. A successful

transition requires cooperation between all stakeholders. Collaborating partners form a collaborative network as 'one made up of organizations dedicated to working together to promote positive results for youth and their families (Strnadova, Cumming, & O'Neill, 2017).

About 50,000 youth under the age of 21 are confined in juvenile justice institutions every day across the U.S. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016). After being released from those facilities, over a fifth of youth re-entering the public school setting drop out of school within six months, and in four years, just 15% of released ninth-graders graduate from high school. About half of those released return within three years (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016). As a country, we have made considerable progress in reducing the number of youths committed to juvenile justice facilities, but we are still incarcerating far more youth than our international peers. Throughout the U.S., it has been actively committed to promoting state and local efforts to discourage youth from being active in the justice system and offering better assistance to those youth participating in the youth justice system. Together with the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued a school discipline and constructive advice package to assist states, districts, and schools in implementing school environment improvement policies and strategies while maintaining compliance with federal law. In December 2014, DOJ and ED partnered to supplement the guidance package to issue recommendations for providing high-quality education to youth imprisoned in secure facilities. Consequently, we are exploring the day-to-day reality of moving youth from detention and the obstacles

they encounter when returning to their schools and communities. Evidence has shown that effective diversion programs improved the probability of high school graduation and minimized recurrence for youth engaged injustice (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Unfortunately, less than half of the states monitor after release for incarcerated youth. Just 11 states have personnel committed to promoting reentry into a public school environment previously incarcerated adolescents. Children graduating from criminal justice institutions are immediately enrolled in alternative schools in many states, many of which have lower graduation rates and student achievement than non-alternative schools. Such problems, among others, must be resolved to ensure that incarcerated youth leaving juvenile justice institutions will not become dropouts due to insufficient resources and opportunities to excel while moving to community schools (Strnadova & Cumming, 2015).

Reentry preparation for adolescents with or without disabilities begins as soon as they arrive at a juvenile detention facility and address developmental problems, including personal, job and educational goals, as well as include educational and career programs for students to begin preparing them for the difficulties they may face when released from custody. While transition preparation and interagency coordination during the transition process are especially necessary for this population, a lack of communication and cooperation between the different agencies has been identified as one of the critical barriers to successful transitions. This population's diverse needs, such as disability, poverty, health problems, and drug and alcohol addiction, frequently require multiple organizations and programs. This can include criminal justice, mental health services,

drug abuse treatment, healthcare, housing, out-of-home care, and vocational /

employment support. Collaboration between these structures is crucial if young people

are to experience a positive return to school and community (Strnadova & Cumming,

2015).

Pre-release training is an integral part of the transition process, including moving

information from criminal justice facilities to appropriate organizations (e.g., schools,

vocational, educational, and social services). Pre-release training must include all

participants, including juveniles, families, criminal justice administrative organization,

receiving group, and all other organizations that assist with post-release juveniles. Post-

release programming is typically a joint initiative between education and criminal justice

fields. Until admission, a pre-release visit to reception school is recommended as good

practice. The appointment includes the child, family member(s), and a representative

from the juvenile justice facility or transfer specialist. It allows young people to meet

teachers and the school leadership team and learn the school's expectations and

disciplinary procedures. Inventory shortages can directly lead to organizational

difficulties. Health practitioners, for example, cannot attend strategic planning meetings

due to time and financial constraints, posing an obstacle to teamwork, as good teamwork

allows positive working relationships to evolve and cases. Time, as a tool, can also be an

issue in criminal justice transitions, as offenders can be released from detention with no

advance notice (Strnadova, Cumming, & O'Neill, 2017). This may result in the exclusion

of significant stakeholders from exit case conferences.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

   The solution to the problems facing formerly incarcerated students re-entering high school was carefully investigated to create and provide the best solution. Different types of components for a high school student re-entry program were discussed, and the creation of this program included only the most realistic components. The re-entry program provides elements that support at-risk students in various aspects of their lives. The program offers academic support, counseling for those who struggle due to personal problems, and alternative approaches for students who eventually plan on dropping out of school regardless of help. The research analysis not only supports at-risk students but also benefits teachers and society. With this project report, teachers can gain feedback and information not just from other educators but from mental health providers, counselors, criminal justice workers, and parents to help recognize and assist at-risk students. This project analysis also benefits society. With more students remaining in school and graduating, there is more community involvement. Such graduates come back, help develop, and sustain their society economically.

Project Limitations

   This project analysis has some limitations in addressing the issue. Funding can restrict the implementation of this program. Funds would be required to sustain this re-entry program for high school students or to employ a transitional specialist or professional to ensure continued successful use of the program within the school. Without these supports in place, alternative approaches to implementation will be needed.

Components included in this re-entry program were focused on local setting needs. If the program is enforced and reviewed, changes or further work may be required to incorporate the more comprehensive spectrum program

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to the FIRST program would be for schools to revamp the Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) on their campuses. The ALE could be revised into a campus that provides a self-paced accelerated curriculum designed for students who may be deficient in their credits or meet one or more of the state at-risk criteria factors. Previously incarcerated students are at-risk of dropping out of school and not graduating on time.

The revised ALE would give students the option of attending school four hour in the morning or four hours in the afternoon. Instead of having to deal with all the stress of returning to a large school, students would be allowed to re-enter school in an ALE. These students would be provided with an individualized graduation plan so they can move forward toward post-secondary education, a trade/industrial career track or enlist in the military.

Policy Options and Recommendations

Proposed Formerly Incarcerated Re-entry Student Transition Plan (FIRST)

High School Juvenile Student Re-entry Plan

Section 1 – District Approval Process

Section 2 – Project Background

Section 3 – Implementation Process

Section 4 – The Evaluation Process

Section 1: District Approval Process

Necessary approval from school administrators, superintendent, and school board must be obtained before implementing the new program. First, a report is developed and presented to the school principal and other school leaders for clarification and justification for the project. I will elaborate on the high school re-entry program developed, outlining its intent, benefit to students, implementation, and the assessment process. After presenting this information, administration and other school leaders' concerns are discussed, making notes of improvements or changes they wish to make. If changes are needed, I will go back and adapt my proposal to their particular feedback or conditions. Once buy ins are secured from the principal and other school leaders, the plan will be presented to the district superintendent for the opportunity to discuss the FIRST program with the School Board to obtain final approval to implement.

School leaders have to decide which outside agencies they want to include in the mentorship program, whether or not they want to hire a transitional specialist, and how much funding they should provide for this program. Once approvals are obtained, I will contact the organizations and individuals involved to work with and create a plan for enrolling students in the program. Student re-entry program implementation begins the following school year.

Section 2: Project Background

Introduction

The purpose of this High School Juvenile Student Re-entry Plan Project is to assist at-risk students who have been incarcerated and return to school, and to support programs and resources to assist teachers, counselors, administrators, school district leaders, and parents. This section presents the FIRST re-entry program components and explains the functions of each person mentioned above The information comes from the perceptions of teachers, parents, and academic advisors of the challenges high school students in an urban school district, who have been incarcerated and returned to a regular school setting. This project was planned to use approaches that tackle various issues facing students. My task is to fulfill the required criteria to incorporate this re-entry program at Yellowtail High School. From 2010-2017, the number of students dropping out of Yellowtail High School was a problem for our district, so I decided to do something about it. My goal is to create a high school re-entry plan (Former Incarcerated Re-entry Transition Program), which would include approaches that could assist students at risk of falling off high school. Strategies used in this program are components to help students achieve this aim.

This FIRST initiative would support at-risk students by encouraging them to engage in programs that help them stay in school and stay on track with graduation. Components of this re-entry program were selected based on data obtained during this review. The data collected provided insight on the difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated students after returning to school, and why many dropped out of high school,

and these elements were developed to support students in their particular risk area. The following information lists the components of the proposed high school dropout program, together with a summary of the purpose of each component.

Collaboration between juvenile justice agencies and education agencies. Many events take place just before and after a youth departure from school to go home. Both programs concentrate on improving youth skills and services after release. All records of education, including IEPs, tests, and data obtained during admission, and grades, classes, qualifications, and work products/portfolios obtained during residency, is provided to the transition team or professional and shared with the individual, his / her family and school.

Remediation and Tutoring. The remediation and tutoring aspect aim to offer remediation and tutoring to students who need additional assistance in failed subjects or help pass the state exam. Remediation can offer a more one-on-one learning atmosphere for students to get extra attention or support in a smaller learning setting.

Mentoring Programs. The mentorship program seeks to offer a mentor to students with behavioral problems. The mentorship aspect is intended to assist in structuring and stabilizing behavioral issues in the lives of troubled youth through partnering with mentorship agencies or individuals to periodically track and direct students.

Counseling. The therapy sessions aim to provide students at risk for social or emotional problems, a trusted individual with whom they can address their issues or concerns. The primary aim of these sessions is to provide students with one-on-one "chat

sessions" to decide what problems affect each student. During therapy sessions, students may discuss specific issues related to their personal and academic development. If a student is an at-risk student, a psychologist can also develop different intervention strategies for that student to help teachers interact with that child.

Parental and Community Engagement. The aim of the portion of the community and parental involvement is to provide the school district with an opportunity to develop ways to engage the community and parents in the education system and to increase engagement in school functions.

Mental Health Providers Specialists. The purpose of mental health providers is to:

- Attend the initial discharge interviews

- Assesses counseling needs and provide counseling

- Attends the case conferences

- Identifies risk factors for the young person

- Provide unit staff and school with information about things the young person is interested in terms of further education and provides them with contact details for those options.

- Perform risk assessments

- Work with staff about any concern that surface

- Works on reducing the young person's risk of re-offending

- Conduct relapse prevention programs

Alternative options. This option is for students who ultimately decide to drop out of high school. This component is designed to provide those students with information that they can use for alternative options. Information is provided on things such as the GED options, Job Corps, and military options.

Section 3: The Implementation Procedure

Implementing each district-approved portion takes place the year after approval. The following information explains how each portion is incorporated into the school system per the student re-entry program. No unique number is denoted for this project. All individuals who meet the basic requirements of each portion are eligible to participate (with parental consent in some areas). The more participants, the more data that can be gathered for the assessment process. The following elements of the dropout prevention program are listed below, along with the requirements or characteristics to be met for a student to participate in that specific component, as well as the implementation process for each component.

Former Incarcerated Re-entry Student Transition Plan (FIRST)

The FIRST Plan consist of seven components involving Transition Specialist, School Attendance Officers, Psychologist, Administration, School Counselors, Teachers, Special Education (SPED) Specialist and School Board members. The seven components of the FIRST plan are:

1. Collaboration between the Educational and Juvenile Justice Systems

2. Onsite Mental Health Providers

3. Remediation and Tutoring

4. Mentorship Programs

5. Counseling Services

6. Community and Parental Involvement

7. Alternative Options

This FIRST plan support s at-risk students by encouraging them to engage in programs that help them stay in school and stay on track with graduation. Components of this re-entry program were selected based on the data analysis.

Component 1: Collaboration between the Educational and Juvenile Justice Systems

Participants: Students who are scheduled to be released from juvenile detention and to return to school, Transition Specialists, School Attendance Officers, and Psychologists.

Implementation Process: Prepare records and transcripts and all education records, including IEPs, assessments, and data obtained during entry, and credits, courses, certificates, and work products/portfolios obtained while in residency. This material is given to the transition team or specialist and shared with the youth, his/her family, and the school.

Timeframe: Before releasing from detention or if a pattern of repetitive involvement in the juvenile justice system, ongoing.

Individuals and Faculty Involved: Transition Specialist, Attendance Officer, School psychologist, SPED specialist when appropriate.

Transition Specialist: Coordinates the entire transition, conduct pre – post-testing.

Acts as an admission officer, interview student, then pass that information on to relevant stakeholders. They also make referrals to services such as health or mental health. They enroll students into the school, organize the exit conferences with all stakeholders,

contact student's home school, and outside support agencies such as their Juvenile Justice officers, to make sure that planning is holistic, complete paperwork and attend case conferences

School Attendance Officer: Request all records from Juvenile Justice Facility, process student re-enrollment, and monitor student attendance,

Psychologist: Attend the initial discharge interviews, assesses counseling needs and provide counseling, attends the case conferences, identifies risk factors for the young person, and provide unit staff and school with information about things the young person is interested in terms of further education and provides them with contact details for those options.

SPED Specialist: Ensure students Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is followed.

Monitoring System: Administration, Transition Specialist provides specific behavioral goals or expectations for students based on their behavior record. These reports give general information about the student's improvements, strengths, and weaknesses, and describes any specific concerns that may have been observed.

Component 2: Onsite Mental Health Specialist

Participants: Mental Health Providers are the individuals participating in this component.

Implementation Process: Mental Health staff perform risk assessments, in addition to working with staff about any concern that surface, to reduce the student's risk of re-offending. The Mental Health Specialist is responsible for conducting relapse prevention programs. The district establishes a mental health person on the high school campus to administer counseling or therapy for the benefit of the student and his/her family during the reentry period, by using multiple resources of influence including families, peers, school, and neighborhood to empower the youth and their families.

Timeframe: Daily or as needed

Faculty Involved: Administration, School Counselors, and Mental Health Specialists.

Administration and School Counselors: Provide on campus resources and support to the Mental Health Specialist

Mental Health Specialist: Responsible for administering counseling, risk assessments, and therapy to returning students.

Monitoring System: Teacher referrals and administrative observations and data help determine which students are most in need of assessment and therapy.

Component 3: Remediation and Tutoring

Participants: Students who are at risk academically (such as those students who are currently failing two or more classes, behind two or more grade levels, or have not passed state test) are chosen to participate in this component. This component allows them to receive extra assistance in their work or their studies. Emphasis is placed on core subject classes such as English, science, mathematics, and history because those classes are stated tested areas and are needed in order for students to graduate.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of three parts.

      1. To implement this component, counselors identify students who are struggling academically using eSchool. eSchool is tracking software that is used to record and track students' grades, absentee, discipline, and other academic components. A list of student names is compiled detailing which subject area(s) a student needs remediation. That compiled list also determines how many teachers are needed in order effectively remediate students with a small teacher to student ratio.

      2. Once students are identified, their parents or guardians receive notification about their child's academic issues along with a detailed summary of the remediation sessions that are being provided. Parents are informed of what areas students are struggling in, the graduation requirements related to that subject area, and the goals of the remediation sessions. Parents must grant permission for their child to participate because remediation sessions are held before or after school, and students may need transportation to and from sessions.

      3. Remediation takes place before or after school, depending on the time set by the administration. Teachers responsible for remediation are subject area teachers also selected by the administration. During remediation, students cover objectives that they have not mastered or skills that they need to know for state test purposes if a student needs tutoring for multiple subject areas, they l alternate weekly between those different remediation sessions.

Timeframe: Students receive remediation for one hour, three times a week. It ends once their grades have improved or state test is passed.

Faculty Involved: Counselors and Teachers

Counselors: The counselors are used to make personal contact with students and parents.

Teachers: Subject area teachers are used to perform remediation. If a prevention specialist is hired, that person will be of assistance as well.

Monitoring System: eSchool is used to monitor students' progress and grades.

Component 4: Mentorship Programs

Participants: Students with reoccurring behavioral issues are involved in this component of the high school dropout prevention plan.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of seven parts.

1. First, school leaders collaborate with individuals or institutions such as Big Brother Big Sister, fraternities, and sororities or the Boys & Girls Club in order to develop a working relationship with them. Administration and the school board determines which institute they want to collaborate with for mentorship services. With assistance from these organizations, the school is better equipped to enroll students who need stability in their life.

2. The school and the specific organization work together to set up a system where students with behavioral issues can enroll in the program through the school system.

3. The administration chooses students who have behavioral or other stability issues to participate in this program. They make their decision by using eSchool to search for all students with an extensive behavioral record. The most focus is placed on students who continuously receive detentions or referrals each month.

4. Parents receive notification about the mentorship program. They are given information about the purpose of the mentorship program, the goals surrounding this component, and an explanation about why their child was chosen to participate. The parents or guardians must grant permission for the student to participate before they can be enrolled in the program.

5. Once permission is granted, the student talks with the counselor or transition specialist to discuss information about the mentorship program, student expectations, and requirements.

6. Next, the enrollment process takes place. The counselor or transition specialist enrolls the student into the organization that the district chose (for example Boys & Girls Club).

7. The student then participates in the organization's program in order to gain structure and stability. The student is required to participate in all the activities mandated by that organization and meet all required goals.

Timeframe: Students remain in that program until they reach the maximum age limit or until the parent decides to remove them.

Faculty Involved: Counselors, or Transition Specialist, Administration, and the School Board members

Counselors: The counselor (or the transition specialist if hired) is used to make personal contact with students, parents, and mentorship organization.

Administration and School Board Members: The school board and administrators are used to decide which organization's mentorship program to use for this specific component.

Monitoring System: Administration or counselors provide specific behavioral goals or expectations for students based on their behavior record. Those goals must be met weekly by the student. The organization provide weekly progress reports to the school about each student's progress and describe whether the students met their goal. To do this, the organization uses behavioral observation data. These data are used to give general information about the student's improvements, strengths, and weaknesses, and describes any specific concerns that may have been observed.

BEHAVIOR OBSERVATION LOG

Student Name: _____

Next to any explicit, observable target or objective, please write in detail whether the student achieved that goal (providing proof of particular instances or facts that allowed the student to achieve that goal or not).

Behavior Goal/Expectation	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Component 5: Counseling Services

Participants: Students with behavior, family, or emotional issues are involved in the counseling sessions.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of three parts.

1. The counselors identify students who are chosen to participate in this component in one of the following manners: Students with reoccurring behavior issues, students who personally make counselors aware of their issue, and students who have issues that are identified through the personal assessment known as BASC-2 (behavioral and emotional screening system), which is an assessment that is given to every student throughout the year during homeroom to identify students who may have personal or emotional issues. The students identified are chosen to receive counseling sessions throughout the week.

2. Parents receive notification about the counseling sessions. They are informed of procedures used in selecting their child, of the purpose of the counseling sessions, and are provided a list of goals set for the student. Parents or guardians must give written permission for the student to receive counseling.

3. Counseling sessions take place at the school during school hours in the counselor's office or the conference room. Counselors must create rotation schedules to denote when and whom they see each day. Because counselors do have other job duties, if the district does hire a specialist, the specialist will also assist in this area when needed.

Timeframe: Counseling sessions will be at least 30 minutes long and completed twice a week. Each student will continue their sessions until their specific goals, which are set by the counselors, are met.

Faculty Involved: School Counselors

School Counselor: The counselor is used to make personal contact with students and parents.

Monitoring System: Counselors monitor students' progress and note what improvements the students are making as they work towards reaching the students' specific counseling goal. The counselor also uses eSchool (the school's data-tracking system) to keep track of student's progress with grades and behavioral reports.

SESSIONS LOG

Student Name:

Setting	Date/Time	Session Notes

<u>**Component 6: Community and Parental Involvement**</u>

Participants: All community members and parents or guardians are encouraged to participate in this component of the high school student reentry plan.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of four parts.

1. At the beginning of the school year, the school will host a community conference explaining the importance and benefits of having the community and guardians involved in the school system. School leaders explain the different ways that the community and parents can be involved within the school throughout the year. This first meeting is an informal meeting to let the community and parents know the higher level of involvement that is needed and expected from them.

2. After that initial meeting, the school host at least one meeting each month for the community and guardians (this meeting can be in conjunction with the Parent-Teacher Conference). Within these monthly meetings, the school outline its agenda for that month and discuss specific ways that the community and parents can assist with different functions going on at the school. School leaders have to create different projects that the community and parents can be involved in at the school. Projects can include but are not limited to things such as assisting at sporting events or raising funds for school resources. Community members and parents are then allowed to sign up for the specific task that they want to assist with during that month

3. School officials will also allow community members to give feedback and suggestions during these monthly meetings, so they can express ways they would like to help or changes they would like to see.

4. Communication between the school and the community must be ongoing throughout the entire school year.

Timeframe: Meetings will be held once a month at the school.

Faculty Involved: Administration, teachers, and counselors

Administration, Teachers, and School Counselors: All assist in creating agendas for monthly meetings as well as developing or choosing at least one school function that the community and parents can assist with each month.

Monitoring System: A record is kept in order to track the number of community members and parents who come to the meetings as well as the number that participate in the school functions. This information is recorded to see if the community and parental involvement increases as well as determine which functions the community members and parents participate in the most. Community members and guardians have the opportunity to take a survey about the effectiveness of school programs

Volunteer Contact Log

Project/School Function	**Month**	**Number of Parental/Community Volunteers in Attendance**

Component 7: Alternative Options

Participants: Any student who chooses to drop out will participate in this component. This component is a part of the exit procedure, and students receive information about other alternative educational options.

Implementation Process: Implementation consist of seven parts.

1. Students who come to the counselor's office to drop out of school are given information on the GED program, Job Corp, Teen Camp, trade school, and military options (Information is not be limited to just these specific options. Other options are added as they become available). These students are provided with detailed information about each of these programs, including each program's purpose, enrollment requirements, the criteria, the benefits, and expectations.

2. Students are given a choice of choosing to want to participate in one of the alternative options or to withdraw without partaking in any of them.

3. Students who decide they want to participate in one of the programs listed above are given contact and enrollment information by the counselor.

4. The counselor will assist that student in the enrollment process to ensure the student does everything that is required.

5. It will be that student's obligation to meet the requirements or criteria of that program.

6. The counselor contacts that student quarterly to get information on the student's progress and get updates on the student's wellbeing.

7. In the future, the school district needs to make sure its vocational or technical school in the district is equipped to provide students with the opportunity to receive a certificate in specific trades or skills.

Timeframe: The timeframe for this component is based on the program that the student chooses.

Faculty Involved: School Counselor and/or Transition Specialist

School Counselor and/or Transition Specialist: Make personal contact with students and parents.

Monitoring System: Counselors contact the former student quarterly to get an update on the student's progress and wellbeing.

Yellowtail School District

"PERMISSION TO TEST"

Date: _____

Regarding:

_____

SSN: _____

DOB: _____

Responsible School District: *Yellowtail*

_____ The above-named student is eligible for ADED services.

The above-named student is not eligible for ADED (Adult Education) services due to:
  _____ Expulsion
  _____ Suspension
  _____ Court system involvement

Responsible School Administrator:

_____

Date of Test: _____ Time: _____

_____ Took the TABE (Test for Adult Education) test, passed, and is scheduled to begin classes on or before_____.

_____ Has taken the TABE test, but has NOT been able to score 8.5 level on all sections of the TABE. Because the student failed to meet the minimum requirements for enrollment, ADED cannot admit him/her into the GED Preparation Program. This student will not be able to retake the TABE until six (6) months from the date of this letter and following further basic academic instruction at the responsible school district.

THANK YOU.

Section 4: The Evaluation

A system logic model to perform an outcome-based assessment of this project was used. The assessment method was chosen because it is a straightforward way to state and appreciate project priorities and predicted results or outcomes. The inputs are what goes into the project, which involves the activities during the plan.

The results the project wants to accomplish using the inputs mentioned. Inputs are components of the student reentry system for this initiative (remediation and tutoring, mental wellbeing, mentoring, therapy, group and parental engagement, and creative solutions). The project's objectives are divided into short, mid-term, and long-term targets. Short-term targets are to increase school attendance, boost grades, and decrease behavioral or referral problems. Mid-term priorities include increasing civic and parental engagement and enhancing retention and recruitment rates.
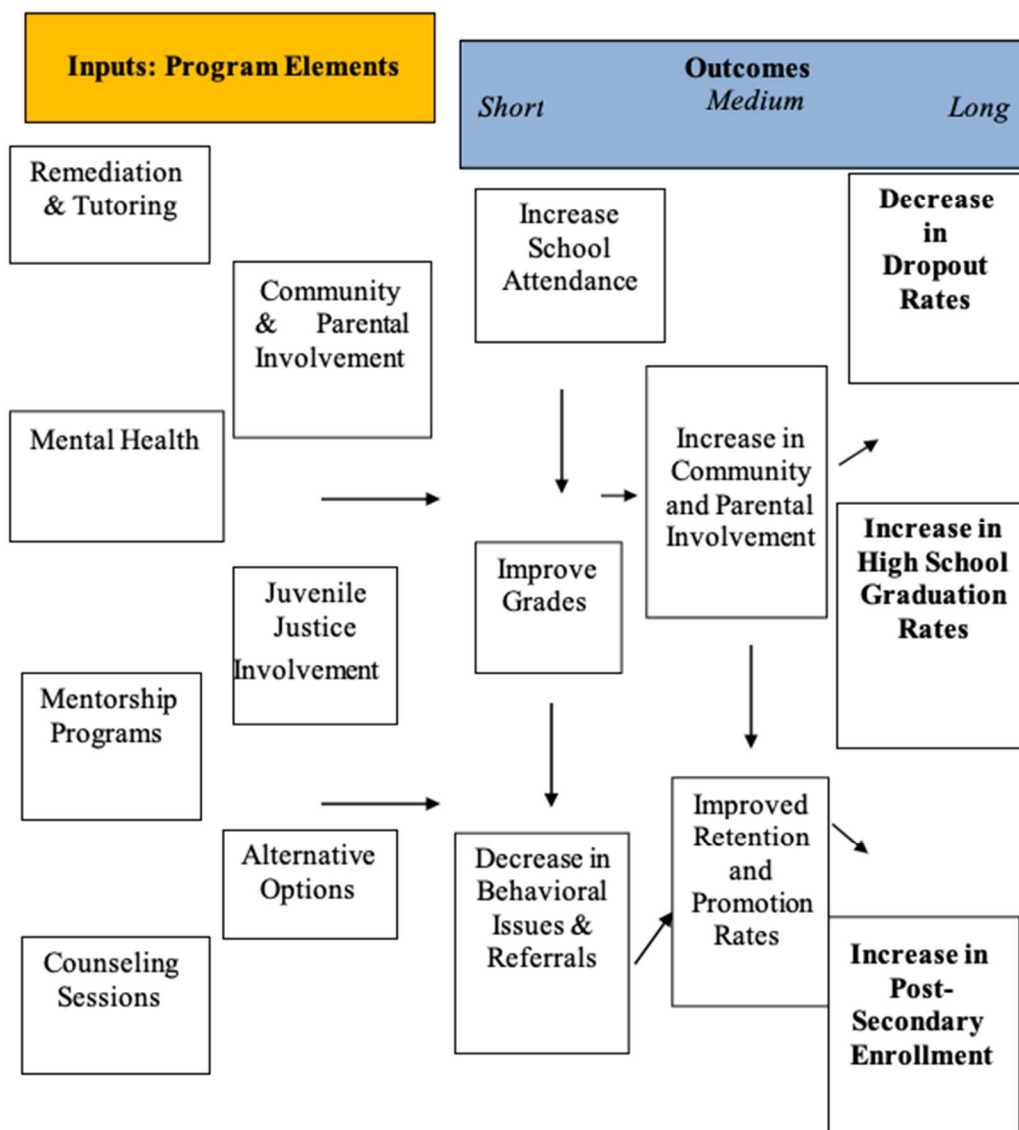
The long-term goals for this project include lowering high school dropout rates, rising high school graduation rates, and rising post-secondary enrollment rates. To assess the results, formative and summative evaluation are performed using the project logic model as a reference. Formative evaluation is a method of assessing a program's content when the elements of the curriculum are underway (Duckor, 2014). During this evaluation, the system logic model's short-term targets are observed. Students involved in the dropout prevention program are tracked using the school's eSchool monitoring system software. Records of students (attendance, grades, and discipline) are reviewed every nine weeks to see whether there is any improvement against short-term goals.

Additionally, any significant changes with the high school student reentry program will be discussed as the school year progresses.

At the end of each year for the next five years, mid-term and long-term targets are being discussed to assess if progress is being made in these result areas. To track mid-term goals, the counselor or transition specialist must keep records of the number of community members or parents attending regular meetings and school projects. They will also use eSchool to monitor the number of retentions and promotions from year to year. The advisor or expert should also monitor long-term goals. eSchool is be used to monitor dropout and graduation rates from year to year. As students collect transcripts, counselors must also keep track of how many are enrolled in post-secondary colleges. With this process, all reports and data collected are to see if progress is being made towards the project's outcome or goals.

Proposed High School Re-Entry Logic Model

Miron & Evergreen, 2008

Implication, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The aim of this qualitative descriptive study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of teachers, parents, and academic advisors of the challenges Grade 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a typical school setting face, and to support programs and resources to deal with these challenges. With this program, I wanted to make a positive impact on communities by creating resources for positive social change by helping at-risk students remain in school. This project is relevant because so many youths drop out of high school and do not lead healthy, successful lives. I developed this study to help students returning from prison to school re-enter school without being subjected to contrary obstacles by providing them with the academic assistance they need, as well as therapy and other elements to help them cope with the personal problems that many of them face from day to day.

Overall, this project's success helps many people. Students who may consider dropping out due to academic, social, and behavioral problems now have a school re-entry program to help the school to reach out to them and provide support in ways that concentrate on their academic and personal issues. Teachers should be able to identify and support at-risk pupils accurately. Parents should recognize their role in the education system and have incentives for educational activities. More students should graduate and grow into hard-working, active people. I hope that through this project analysis and the creation of a high school re-entry program, many students can benefit from being positively impacted and continue to impact those around them.

The overarching aim of this project study is to understand teachers, academic advisors, and parents' perceptions of the challenges that contribute to increased student retention by introducing intervention services that concentrate on formerly incarcerated students returning to school through multiple graduation pathways.

This research is very critical to Yellowtail High School educators committed to increasing high school graduation levels and lower dropout rates. Throughout this study, the literature stated that the effects of dropping out of high schools, such as crime or deprivation, impact not only the former students but the society they live in. A successful high school re-entry program would help at-risk students remain in school and ultimately support communities with more students graduating and becoming active citizens of their community.

This initiative can assist community leaders in reaching out to students at risk of dropping out of high school. By holding students in school, graduation rates can increase. Implementing a re-entry program for high school students that can assist students with academic difficulties, family dilemmas, behavioral concerns, and mental disorders, or treatment solutions has the opportunity to reach out to more forms of at-risk students and provide them with the academic remediation or therapy they need. Academic problems typically attract most focus, but it is essential to consider other causes that cause students to struggle with education. With this particular project, the obstacles perceived by the expectations of parents, teachers, and academic advisors made students at Yellowtail High School risk dropping out.

During implementation, outside agencies need to be used, staff have to be hired, community and parental initiatives have to be developed, teachers need to be allocated time to assist in areas where appropriate, and students involved in the curriculum need to be supported in identifying components. To do this effectively, school leaders must be willing to complete each move and follow-through in each region. Teachers, psychologists, mental and social support professionals, and criminal justice authorities must be able to devote the time required for each pupil. When this project is performed half-heartedly, nothing is achieved, and students will not gain the future advantages of this project. If this project is implemented correctly, at-risk students are recognized, and resources are made adequately for these students, then academic achievement and personal development for the students involved are possible.

Implementing and reviewing this initiative in other schools throughout the state would assist in growing rates of high school graduation. Via ongoing research and changes to this initiative, this incarcerated student re-entry program can help more students and includes more parental participation. Future work also involves models in which elementary and middle school administrators may utilize the components of the re-entry program. Students with behavioral and academic issues often start experiencing issues at an early age and exploring ways to incorporate these mechanisms for younger students to help them as they age. In the future, I expect to explore ways to recognize elementary and middle school students at risk and assist them at an early age. Hopefully, if educators offer the required help to younger students, they will have fewer problems when they begin their high school years.

Conclusion

Education is essential in society. Without an education, a person's life and lifestyles are reduced. Students must recognize the importance of education and the opportunities that education offers. If educators, parents, and community continue to work together, there is a possibility that high school graduation rates will increase. Educational leaders must continue to build approaches to help at-risk students meet high school graduation requirements. Developing new high school student re-entry initiatives and implementing innovative curriculum and intervention approaches, in addition to reforms in criminal justice, are ongoing processes to ensure students continue on a positive course.

Appendix B: Academic Advisors Letter of Invitation

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research

I am interested in Academic Advisors' perceptions and reactions to some of the behaviors you have observed of students who have been incarcerated and returned to school.

Date: _____

Dear_____

I invite you to participate in a research study conducted by Robert Gaines, a student in the Walden University Doctoral program. My Chair is Dr. Dr. Howard Moskowitz.

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of teachers', parents', and academic advisors' perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are an Academic Advisor with at least 10 years of service. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will include questions regarding your experiences with students who have been previously incarcerated and returned to school. Your responses will remain confidential.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate you may choose to discontinue participation at any time.

Feel free to contact me at robert.gaines@waldenu.edu or 901-216-1970 if you have questions.

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call or email:

Walden University IRB
612-312-1210 or <u>irb@mail.waldenu.edu</u>.

Sincerely,

Appendix C: Teachers Letter of Invitation

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research

I am interested in Teachers' perceptions and reactions to some of the behaviors you have observed of students who have been incarcerated and returned to school.

Date: _____

Dear_____

I invite you to participate in a research study conducted by Robert Gaines, a student in the Walden University Doctoral program. My Chair is Dr. Dr. Howard Moskowitz

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of teachers', parents', and academic advisors' perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are a teacher with at least 10 years of service. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will include questions regarding your experiences with students who have been previously incarcerated and returned to school. Your responses will remain confidential.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate you may choose to discontinue participation at any time.

Feel free to contact me at robert.gaines@waldenu.edu or 901-216-1970 if you have questions.

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call or email

Walden University IRB
612-312-1210 or irb@mail.waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

Appendix D: Parents Letter of Invitation

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research

I am interested in Parents' perceptions and reactions to some of the behaviors you have observed of students who have been incarcerated and returned to school.

Date: _____

Dear_____

I invite you to participate in a research study conducted by Robert Gaines, a student in the Walden University Doctoral program. My Chair is Dr. Dr. Howard Moskowitz

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of teachers', parents', and academic advisors' perceptions of the challenges Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to a traditional school environment experience, and support services and resources to assist with those challenges.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are a parent of a child who has been incarcerated and returned to school. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will include questions regarding your experiences with your child who was incarcerated and returned to school. Your responses will remain confidential.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate you may choose to discontinue participation at any time.

Feel free to contact me at robert.gaines@waldenu.edu or 901-216-1970 if you have questions.

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call or email:

Walden University IRB
612-312-1210 or irb@mail.waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

Appendix E: Parent Interview Protocol

Interview #_____

Date_____/_____/_____

Data Collection Tools: Parent Interview Protocol

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I am interviewing parents of

current students who have been previously incarcerated. I am interested in learning about

your experience as a parent of your child and his/her experiences returning back to school

after incarceration. Therefore, I want to know more about your journey.

I have written information for you that gives a full explanation of my study. It is stated in

the information, but I want to emphasize that what you share with me will remain

confidential. To ensure confidentiality, I will assign pseudonyms to participants, focus

on overall study themes and avoid linking any statements to individual names. In

addition, when not in use, related interview documents will be secured (password

protected) in a locked file for five years after the completion of the current research.

I want to be sure to capture all of your responses and also review the interview at a later

time. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Opening Statement

Tell me about your experience as a parent of a students who was incarcerated and

returned to school

Main Questions

Parent Interview Question 1: How would you describe your child as a student, (grades?
and behavior-wise?)?

Parent Interview Question 2: Tell me about when your child first started school. What were those first years like for both your child and you? What were your mornings like? After school?

Parent Interview Question 3: What do you remember about the middle school years?

Parent Interview Question 4: What can you tell me about your child's high school experience?

Parent Interview Question 5: What do you remember about the 1st time your child was incarcerated?

Parent Interview Question 6: How were you involved in your child's education? (examples: volunteering, conferences, phone calls, homework help).

Parent Interview Question 7: Tell me about communication with the school during that time. Do you remember any particular conversations with school staff, phone calls, letters, or parent programs that stand out?

Parent Interview Question 8: Can you tell me about any family issues or challenges at home that might have affected your child's success at school?

Parent Interview Question 9: Do you remember if you were told that your child was at risk of not graduating? What happened? How did that make you feel?

Parent Interview Question 10: After returning to school after being incarcerated, did your child ever discuss how he felt or how others treated him? If so, what did he/she say, and how did you respond to him?

Parent Interview Question 11: What in your opinion should school do to address juvenile incarceration and the re-entry back into school?

Parent Interview Question 12: Is there anything you feel you can do, or should have done to make the incarceration back to school transition better?
Our interview is coming to a close. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

Appendix F: Teacher Interview Protocol

Interview #_____

Date_____/_____/_____

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I have interviewed parents of

current students who have been incarcerated and returned to school. I am interested in

teacher's perceptions and reactions to some of the behaviors you have observed of

students who have been incarcerated and returned to school.

I have written information for you that gives a full explanation of my study. It is stated in

the information, but I want to emphasize that what you share with me will remain

confidential. To ensure confidentiality, I will assign pseudonyms to participants, focus

on overall study themes and avoid linking any statements to individual names. In

addition, when not in use, related interview documents will be secured (password

protected) in a locked file for five years after the completion of the current research.

I want to be sure to capture all of your responses and also review the interview at a later

time. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Main Questions

Teacher Interview Question 1: Tell me about the difficulties if any, in working with

students who have been incarcerated?

Teacher Interview Question 2: What are some common characteristics you see in the

classroom of students who have been incarcerated?

Teacher Interview Question 3: What have been your experiences teaching students who have been incarcerated?

Teacher Interview Question 4: What, if any, changes did you notice in your students after they returned to school after being incarcerated?

Teacher Interview Question 5: What is your opinion of establishing relationships with students who have been incarcerated?

Teacher Interview Question 6: How do you motivate students to complete high school?

Teacher Interview Question 7: In your opinion, why do you think those students who have been incarcerated, and who has the ability to complete school, still drop out?

Teacher Interview Question 8: What do you think needs to be done to prevent so many students who return to school after incarceration from dropping out of school?

Teacher Interview Question 9: Do you have anything else you would like to share?

Appendix G: Academic Advisor Interview Protocol

Interview #_____

Date_____/_____/_____

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I have interviewed parents and teachers of current students who have been incarcerated and returned to school. I am interested in Academic Advisor's perceptions and reactions to some of the behaviors you have observed of students who have been incarcerated and returned to school.

I have written information for you that gives a full explanation of my study. It is stated in the information, but I want to emphasize that what you share with me will remain confidential. To ensure confidentiality, I will assign pseudonyms to participants, focus on overall study themes and avoid linking any statements to individual names. In addition, when not in use, related interview documents will be secured (password protected) in a locked file for five years after the completion of the current research.

I want to be sure to capture all of your responses and also review the interview at a later time. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Main Questions

Professional Interview 1: What personal contact have you had with students on your campus that has been incarcerated?

Professional Interview Question 2: Do you feel that the current educational system has a significant impact addressing the needs of those students?

Professional Interview Question 3: What impacts do you believe incarceration had on these students?

Professional Interview Question 4: What strategies do you have in place to prevent students identified as being at risk, from dropping out?

Professional Interview Question 5: What activities do you organize to improve curricular continuity, offer second chance courses, develop innovative teaching methods in order to cope with the problem?

Professional Interview Question 6: How important is teachers' team work to avoid school failure?

Professional Interview Question 7: What new strategies have you planned to help returning incarcerated students?

Professional Interview Question 8: What do you think needs to be done to prevent so many students who return to school after incarceration stay in school?

Professional Interview Question 9: Does the implementation of this strategy depend on the availability of funding?

Professional Interview Question 10: Can you suggest any other areas of research which may help in addressing this problem?

RQ1: How do teachers, parents, and academic advisors describe their perceptions of challenges Grades 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school?

RQ2: What are teachers, parents, and academic advisors' perceptions of support services and resources to assist with challenges Grades 10-12 high school students face who have been incarcerated and return to school?

RQ3: What suggestions do teachers, parents, and academic advisors have for school administrators about ways to better help Grades 10-12 high school students who have been incarcerated and return to school?

It has been a pleasure talking with you today. Thank you for taking the time to help me out with my research and the possibility of improving teaching and learning in online coursework.

**If participant wishes to discontinue study, ask if they would be willing to share why.

Appendix H: Parent, Teacher, and Academic Advisor Interviews

Interviews with Teachers

Six teachers from Yellowtail High School were interviewed to gain insight into the difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated students upon return to school. Teachers provided information about why students struggled and feedback on what they considered the right strategies to address the needs of those students who return to school after incarceration. Teachers gave responses such as acceptable behavior, peer pressure, parental involvement, remediation, juvenile justice involvement, counseling, mentorship, psychological, mental health, and changes in the educational system. The teachers interviewed provided suggestions that they felt were most important in addressing the issues faced by formerly incarcerated students upon return to school. Below is a description of each topic and suggestions from teachers.

Peer Pressure. Peer influences involved gang-related activities, drugs, or other influences such as work or money. Two teachers who gave responses that related to this topic stated that their student's incarceration was due to gang-related activity, peer pressure, and criminal matters, which allowed them to make fast money and began to attract their attention more than school. From the perspectives of teachers and academic advisors, the people they were involved with was a significant influence.

TI 1 stated, "A lot depends on who they are hanging out with, who their buddies are, who they run around with. They have not learned from their mistakes."

TI 5 added:

I believe that many students who have the ability to complete school still dropout because of the following reasons. Some have no goals. shallow goals, or unrealistic goals which do not include having a diploma. Some students are caregivers, and they have difficulty getting to school. Some students lack exposure to other environments, people, and cultures. For example, they have only been in Yellowtail, and they mimic only the people in their neighborhoods who may have dropped out of school.

None of the Academic Advisors suggested peer pressure as being one of the areas of concern faced by previously incarcerated students upon return to school.

Mentorship. This concept relates to offering a form of support to students who meet particular requirements. T3 stated, "We are currently working on a male mentoring program to assist us with keeping our young men on tract to graduate on time as well as preparing them to be ready for success after graduation. This program will be on a volunteer basis. The men in this program will be from the community where our students live. They will be equipped with strategies and techniques to assist our young men moving forward."

Communication. This topic referred to the communication and the sharing of information between all parties involved in the social, emotional, and educational well-being of the student.

Three teachers expressed that this is an area of great concern that has contributed students struggling with re-entry into the school system.

TI 1 stated, it goes both ways, you know, sometimes we do not know they have been incarcerated right. Okay, yeah. But if we do sometimes, we see one end, they could be like "I'm proud I was jailed for this long." And then on the other side they. Some of them "Well I was jailed. But I'm going to try not to go back again." When asked if schools and the juvenile justice system are doing enough bridge the communication gap with the schools and parents, TI 2 stated,

> By no means do I think they are doing enough. And again, like I said, Because of this, this Privacy Act, we many times are not even aware of the things that are taking place within the school system regarding our students. I mean, I understand the idea of security and privacy. But sometimes I think that there may needs to be advocacy that's taking place, even within the school because we do not know necessarily that these individuals have been under the, you know, that they have been in the juvenile system. We do not know that because we ca not, we literally cannot know. So, it puts the teachers at a disadvantage because we do not realize that they are in the juvenile system. So, I think that's a problem. I think we need to do something about it.

TI 2 also added,

> Do you hope maybe you may not even know the incarceration that okay many times I do not sometimes because that is confidentiality, we're not actually told when they have been incarcerated unless something specific comes up, and especially like a disciplinary action that requires something that will actually give

me access to that information. Okay. No contact or follow up on their academics

while incarcerated. After returning from jail many just don't want to be at school.

Parental Involvement. This topic refers to an increased level of involvement

from parents and the community in school-related activities involving parents in their

child's education. All six teachers believe that when parents are involved in their

children's lives and education, those children do better in school and make the right

decisions.

The teacher statements include:

TI 1- "You know back in our day. We had our parents, but we were self-motivated, and a

lot of today's students are not self-motivated, motivated to do better."

TI 2 – "Students are unable to read, influenced by gang's, no one at home who cares,

parents not involved positively, and they have too many responsibilities outside

school…Dysfunctional families. Babysitting younger children, terminally ill parents,

student sometimes is the only breadwinner."

TI 3 – "Students who are at risk of dropping out tend to have a low attendance rate, their

parents are often difficult to reach. Students' home life usually present uncontrollable

challenges… Students who are at risk of dropping out tend to have a low attendance rate,

their parents are often difficult to reach. Students' home life usually present

uncontrollable challenges. Students are often unmotivated when in class and have no

desire to be in the school environment. Teachers believed that involvement, especially

parental involvement, plays a major role in whether a student performs well in school or

not… I believe the home environment plays a vital role in students who are capable of

completing high school still dropping out. Sometimes there are parents in the home who are not high school graduates, so students are not adequately supported in the home… Providing ways to educate parents so that students see examples of what opportunities having a high school diploma can provide… Honestly, all of this is a moot point if the underlying cause of them being in trouble with the law is not addressed, and that usually starts at home. We cannot legislate good parenting. However, we can let students know that school is a safe place, that education is the key to getting out of a bad situation at home or in their neighborhood, and that there are people who are willing to help them do that. We must have an open dialogue with our students on a one-on-one basis. Speaking to them as a group will not reach them on a personal level, which is what is required after a student's life has spiraled out of control to this extent."

Data collected from teachers revealed that they believed that parental involvement is essential and can be a determining factor in whether or not those students returning from incarceration are successful upon return to school. However, in contrast, none of the parents of formerly incarcerated students who interviewed stated that parental involvement was a determining factor.

Remediation. This topic refers to providing some form of tutorial or remedial services to students who have academic concerns. Three teacher responded although tutorial sessions are available to all students, the students who need the tutorials and remediation did not come to the provided sessions. Teachers believe the sessions would help the students if they would attend. TI 2 stated, "Most students cannot read well. This causes them to not care about their   education. Perhaps due to embarrassment. One on

one tutoring with a teacher helps." TI 2 went on to say, "Embarrassed, absent, struggle to close academic gap when they were in jail." Based on association with previous incarcerated students TI 5 stated: "I have had students who have been incarcerated. It is often difficult for them to complete the requirements to graduate."

  Behavioral Issues. This topic relates to delinquency, drug use, and negative attitude. Participants who gave responses relating to this topic stated that their student struggled due to behavioral issues that were causing him/her to get suspended frequently and exhibiting bad attitudes towards teachers and others in authority. T1 stated "Facebook is a big reason my girls get into trouble and eventually fight, get suspended and arrested" T2 added "I think the administration is enabling many of the students by letting them get away with little things which eventually add up to big thing, especially athletes". T3 stated "I think we need to put more students in alternative school so maybe the good students can learn without being distracted".

  Academic Advisors. Six academic advisors from Yellowtail High School were interviewed to gain insight into the difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated students upon return to school. Academic Advisors provided information about why students struggled and feedback on what they considered the right strategies to address the needs of those students who return to school after incarceration. Academic advisors gave responses such as promote acceptable behavior, peer pressure, parental involvement, remediation, juvenile justice involvement, counseling, mentorship, psychological, mental health, and changes in the educational system. Below is a description of the topics that

relate to the experiences faced by those previously incarcerated students who returned to school from the viewpoints of the academic advisors

Parental involvement. This topic refers to the increased participation of parents and the community in school-related events involving parents in their child's education. AA1- "I think we have to reach out, reach out to the parents to be relationships with the parents, how's the better your relationship is with the parents, the better, better your relationship will be your school students. Because sometimes parents will allow you to provide them with information"

AA3 - "The impact is different for each student. I feel it hinges on the support system the student has in place. The students with a good support system are more successful moving forward and are less likely to commit a second offence. The students that don't have adequate support are much more likely of violate again."

AA6 - "We need research on how to address students home environment."

Remediation. This concept relates to offering tutorial or remedial services to students with academic concerns.

AA2 said, "…many of our children do not learn to read during their foundational years in school. As they get older, they become discouraged which leads them to eventually becoming a dropout." AA1 described the following programs that are in place to address academic concerns for those students, "We offer credit recovery, after school tutoring, Saturday tutoring, after school attendance recovery, summer school credit and attendance recovery. After assessment student, we provide timely feedback to them so they can set new goals to be accomplished." AA3 also suggested the implementation of the following

programs or strategies: Mentoring/male book club with the SRO, a 9th grade teacher formed a book clubs on campus, the implementation of the House System, CHAMPS Program which stands for Champs Have and Model Positive Peer Skills, blocked literacy classes where the first part of the class has been designated as 20 minutes of sustained reading each day. Other advisors made the following statements:

AA1 - "I think we could, we could do a little more. We have tutoring in the morning, tutoring in the afternoon. We have Attendance Recovery and Credit Recovery."

AA3 - "We have attendance recovery to help student recover time missed in the classroom, we also have credit recovery to allow students to recover academics. We have a system of tracking attendance that stays on top of student's days missed in order to prevent failure on days… Attendance Recovery is a major help with preventing dropouts as well as Credit Recovery. We offer after school programs in an effort to give the students an opportunity to become attached to something that helps them to enjoy school."

AA4 - "In our school we have attendance recovery so if students have missed over ten days, it is possible for them to recoup some of those hours as long as they are passing in the subject. We also have credit recovery for students if they fail a subject. "Teachers work in collaborative planning teams to examine critically and discuss standards-based learning expectations for students. Teams select evidence-based instructional strategies for meeting the standards."

Behavioral issues. It is about delinquency, substance use, negative attitude, suspensions, detention.

AA1 stated, "Several of my students have been incarcerated for various reasons. Some were arrested for breaking and entering, some for possession of gun or weapon, possession of marijuana, and fighting, to name a few. Often times the offenses were committed outside of the school setting with the exception of fighting on campus during school hours."

Counseling. This topic refers to offering some form of therapy to students who have personal or social issues.

AA1 stated, "I think we could, we could do a little more. We do, we do some, some home visits we do some counseling with, with the students. One on One counseling, our counselors counsel with the students. But I think we probably should try to do a little more with the parents. Some of them 18 years old and living on their own but the ones that are not, we still need to reach out to the parents." AA3 said, "It is of the utmost importance. Teachers are the source that allows a school to obtain success. It is what teachers do in their contact with students on a daily basis that allows a school to have success. This contact is not limited to the classroom. Teachers are the ones that convince students that they can do that which they had been convinced they could not."

Communication. The topic was contact and knowledge exchange between teachers, parents, students, counselors, juvenile justice workers, and schools.

AA1 suggested, "I think we have to reach out, reach out to the parents to be relationships with the parents, how's the better your relationship is with the parents, the better, better your relationship will be your school students. Because sometimes parents will allow you to provide them with information" AA1 also added, "sometimes we are looking for

students and find out later, sometimes when they return that they have been in jail. Parents are either ashamed or just protective of their child to inform us, so the child starts back at a disadvantage." AA2 said, "It is very important that everyone work together for the benefit of the students to reach their highest potential/goals. It's not about us; it is about the students!" In addition, AA2 added, "It is imperative. However, often teachers aren't aware of students' specific difficulties outside of school and aren't sure how to assist." Two academic advisors voiced similar opinions on the importance of communication by stating:

AA5 - "Teacher teamwork is very important. I believe it can help students by streamlining communication on students who may be having difficulty in courses. Students will also see that teachers are working together."

AA6 – "I feel it is very important. Some teachers have developed strategies that enable them to build relationships, that should be shared with other teachers and administration."

Mentorship This concept relates to offering a form of support to students who meet particular requirements. In response to mentorship AA1 said, "We try to mentor, and I will just say me it's all of the staff that's here on campus we do a lot of mentoring, meeting with those students on a daily basis, we sit down and we have meetings. If we can provide them with the more assistance, we can provide them with think the better off they will be. And the school is way. So, we can. It's about the students been successful. So, the more assistance we can provide the better off the students, students. will try to mentor, and I will just say me it's all of the staff that's here on campus we do a lot of mentor, meeting with those students on a daily basis, we sit down, and we have meetings.

Just find out where they are to provide insight, hoping that they will accept the information that we're providing them, so they can move forward." AA1 added, "Again the mentoring piece. We have to build relationships with our students, and some students will accept it, and some won't, but I think its relationship building. Mentoring from teachers, administrators and counselors alike." With a mentoring program already in place AA3 stated, "We are currently working on a male mentoring program to assist us with keeping our young men on tract to graduate on time as well as preparing them to be ready for success after graduation. This program will be on a volunteer basis. The men in this program will be from the community where our students live. They will be equipped with strategies and techniques to assist our young men moving forward."

AA3 went on to add, "I would like to see a "Big Brother"/" Big Sister" program from outside sources partnering with our schools to build a positive relationship student. A representative from the organization would select one child that they would bond with and follow up with even into their adulthood to ensure that that child becomes a productive citizen in society." In response to the question of what is the school doing to address the needs of those students who have been incarcerated and returned to school, AA1 stated, "I would say day to day, we have students that have been incarcerated, we try to work with them to try to integrate them back into the school. And as well into the classrooms to make sure they have been academically successful." AA2 said, "Encourage students to get involved in extracurricular activities so they will not have an idle mind."

Psychological and Mental Health. The topics focus on addressing the trauma that incarceration has on students. AA1 stated, "It' like this, like I said before we do what

we can, the counselors council with the student. Students are homeless we provide them clothing through Title I. Some are living with other students; some suffer from environmental mental illness. Coming from certain environments in which they live they are handicapped by their environment, and we don't have anyone or a program on campus that can address this issue. I feel that when these students return, they don't feel like they belong, so we have to do a better job of getting them engaged in school activities". AA2 asserted, "Negative yields negative, and positive yields positive, therefore I believe that being incarcerated creates a negative environment where children are forced to learn survival skills in an unpleasant manner. They pick up bad habits while incarcerated and that behavior sometimes continue even after they have been released from the cell… incarceration often causes a student to be more calloused. Incarceration pins a reputation to a student that negatively identifies the student to his or her peers and teachers and even to himself or herself." AA4 expressed, "Once incarcerated, juveniles are unlikely to ever return to school." Further, they are "more likely to be classified for special education services due to behavioral/emotional disorders rather than a cognitive disability." AA6 acknowledged, "I think these students feel isolated, and are in a period of catch up or give up." As related to funding AA4 asserted, "Funding can help because students need daycare for kids or mental health issues."

Changes in the Educational System. This topic relates to the school administration team making improvements in the school's educational program to raise graduation rates and inspire students to remain in school. When asked the question on should there be changes to assist formerly incarcerated students in the transition back into

the school, AA1 stated, "I will say some does. But this mean, we're here as educators. We're here to make a difference. I think will make a difference in the students. We're here to make a difference. Sometimes you have to walk that extra mile to help, you know, as an education you don't always get paid for what you do." AA2 maintained, "We plan to continue to keep the programs that we have in place. We will assess our students to see if they are meeting their goals. As a leadership team, we will meet weekly to listen and discuss changes/progress made or need to be made by each department coach (literacy, math, science, and social studies) as well as the discipline report by administrators." AA2 added, "Paying teachers to tutor after school and on Saturdays, providing profession development by attending state and national conferences, books and materials needed by students, chrome books to take home to complete credit recovery assignments." When questioned about what schools are doing to address at-risk students, AA3 asserted, "Yes I feel that the educational system has a major impact on dropout rates. There are a number of state and federally funded programs available to specifically address dropout rates. Schools and districts are implementing new interventions every year to address this issue." AA3 maintained, "Funds are always welcome. Public educators have become so a custom to being effective with limited funds. We often go into projects knowing that we will have to make our interventions and programs effective without a lot of money. Funding cannot be the reason we fail our students." AA4 adds, "Yes, because if you live in a low income every, they probably don't get a fair share of state and national educational funding, meaning that they get less money to spend on supplies, infrastructure and teachers." AA4 acknowledged, "the professional learning community

model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications for schools." AA4 went on to add, "I think it does because schools have to have the funding to implement the programs necessary to make sure students are successful." AA5 indicated, "I believe the more programs we have the better chance of have a lower dropout rate. So, in short, being able to create programs that will assist in the prevention of school drops however will definitely need funding… I would love to see our district put into place a program for the non-traditional student. This program would be for the students that may be teenage parents as well as older students that are so far behind, they no longer feel that traditional a traditional education is not an option. This program would be made available at times more convenient for the students being served." AA6 concluded that we should "Take a closer look at eliminating out of school suspensions. Upon return conduct conference with parents and students."

Juvenile Justice Involvement. This topic involves juvenile justice communication with parents, counseling services, and schools. Parents, teachers, and academic advisors all agreed on the need for the juvenile justice system to keep all parties informed on the status of students who are detained or incarcerated. AA1 stated, "…sometimes we are looking for students and find out later, sometimes when they return that they have been in jail. Parents are either ashamed or just protective of their child to inform us" "So the child starts back at a disadvantage." AA3 spoke about what the school has in place to bridge the gap in communication, "I deal with students

that have been incarcerated on a daily basis. I help make sure students are coded correctly

while incarcerated as well help the students in the process of returning to school after

their incarceration."

Counseling services, juvenile re-entry program, school to home networking program,

after-school and weekend education were suggested by AA6.

Appendix I: Interview Responses

Components Needed in a High School Student Re –entry program.
According to Parents, Teachers and Academic Advisors

Component Named	Number of times mentioned
Better communication between parents, school, and juvenile justice	13
Ongoing counseling services	3
Increase parental involvement	9
Psychological, mental, and behavioral health providers on campus	7
Mentorship programs at school	7
Remediation programs	11
Increased juvenile involvement after release	3
In district GED program	3
Changes in the educational system	6
Behavioral Issues	9
Peer influence	6

Appendix J: Yellowtail High School Letter of Cooperation

Date

Dear Researcher Name,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Formerly Incarcerated Students Returning to School" within the Yellowtail School District. The school administration gives you permission to interview teachers and administrators. You also have permission to use district records to identify potential parents. You also have permission to use district records to identify potential parents. As part of this study, I authorize you to provide an array of options to gain access to the participants. The times available to all participants will be before school, after school, and on weekends. Participants will be granted the option to interview in the school conference room or the public library in a private study room. To separate the relationship with the participants as an administrator and a researcher, the nature of research will be explained, and assurances given to all participants, that their participation will not affect the working relationship with them as teachers, parents, and colleagues. After the interviews, member checking will be used. After transcribing the recordings, copies will be delivered to participants via email. Participants will be asked to read transcriptions and provide edits or comments to verify that what was there is what they stated. If need be, the participants will be able to make appropriate changes to transcripts and initial them to verify the accuracy. Any information that is provided will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use any personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include any name or anything else that could identify the participants in the study reports. Data will be kept secure. The records of this study will be kept private and stored in a locked cabinet. Moreover, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify any subject or school in any report subsequently published. The real name of the school will be stored, and the name of the district will remain confidential. Confidentiality will be guaranteed to all participants, both orally and in writing. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Granting the options to interview in the school conference room, at the public library or in a private study room. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

By signing below, I agree to give permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging consent and permission to conduct this study at this institution.

Sincerely   Date:

Yellowtail High School

Appendix K: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer: _____

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: "Formerly Incarcerated Students Returning to School.", I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:
1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.

2. I will not in any way divulge information, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.

3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.

4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.

5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.

6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access, and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____