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Students' Participation in an Alternative to Suspension Program

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Yolanda Jordan Stovall

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2016

Abstract

Students' Participation in an Alternative to Suspension Program

at a Midwest High School

by

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MA, Chicago State University, 2002

BS, Chicago State University, 1995

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Black and Hispanic students in the United States are suspended at a higher rate and lag behind White students academically. This project study examined student achievement and behavior in an alternative to suspension (ATS) program at a Midwest U.S. high school. The purpose of this mixed methods, concurrent embedded strategy study was to determine if participation in the ATS program decreased disciplinary referrals and improved student performance. This study was guided by social control theory, which suggests that when students are disengaged in the school environment, student/teacher and peer relationships are damaged and students turn toward delinquent behavior. The study sample included 22 students who were referred to the program in 2012-2013, 12 of whom attended the ATS program and 10 (the control) who did not. Quantitative data were analyzed through inferential analysis, and qualitative data were analyzed for emerging themes. The quantitative results showed no significant relationships between student participation in the ATS program, the number of referrals received, and academic performance, and no significant difference in referrals by ethnicity. The qualitative analysis showed six themes describing the program's structural aspects: program structure, goals and vision, parental involvement, staff support, student gains in behavioral and social skills, and collaborative elements. A curriculum plan was created to proactively support 9th graders as they enter high school. These results and the curriculum plan promote positive social change by informing school personnel of the benefits of being proactive in addressing student achievement and discipline through support programs and other interventions, increasing the graduation rate and reducing the current school-to-prison pipeline.

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Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my husband Derek and my daughters Kennedy, Courtney and Destiny. In addition, I would like to dedicate this to my wonderful parents, Marchel and Charlotte McGehee, as well as all of my family, friends, colleagues, and teachers who have supported me through my academic journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

In this project study, I examined a U.S. public school district's use of the alternative to suspension (ATS) program at one of its high schools. In this section, I discuss the problem that prompted this study and the rationale for addressing this issue. This section includes a list of definitions of key terms; a discussion of the significance of the problem of suspensions, especially for minority students; the four primary research questions that guided this project study; and a review of related literature. This section concludes with implications for future discipline practices.

Definition of the Problem

The local problem that prompted this study is the high number of minority students who are suspended from schools across the country and in a Midwest suburban high school, hereafter referred to as ABC High School (pseudonym). At ABC High School, a disproportionately high number of Black students are suspended each year compared to their non-Black peers. According to the parent school district's disciplinary data for 2011-2012, 41% of students suspended were Black students and 27% were White. This problem is not limited to ABC High School and its school district; disproportionately high numbers of Black male students are also disciplined in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), one of the largest public school districts in the United States (Karp, 2009). Similar problems are found in other racially diverse school districts where Black male students make up a minority of the student body but make up the

majority of students suspended (Karp, 2009). High suspension rates among minority students in the neighboring CPS is a problem because frequent suspensions prime students for entry into what has been commonly known as the school-to-prison pipeline, forcing students out of school and into a life of crime and delinquent behavior (ACLU, 2016). Additionally, rates of suspension are highest in schools that primarily serve Black students and is especially high for Black male students (Sartain et al., 2015).

The local setting for this study was a large suburban school district in the greater Chicago metropolitan area, hereafter referred to as ABC School District (pseudonym). ABC School District's area includes a variety of economic levels, with approximately 65% of the district enrollment coming from low income families (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2011). The student population is diverse, and at the time of the study, was predominantly composed of Hispanic (42%), White (27%), and Black (20%) students (ISBE, 2011). This diversity extends to test scores:

- Only 34% of Hispanic students in the district met or exceeded performance goals on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) in reading, while 37% met or exceeded in math.
- White students' PSAE scores were significantly higher, with 58% meeting or exceeding performance goals for reading and 55% for math.
- Black students' PSAE scores were the lowest of these three categories, with only 31% of students meeting or exceeding performance goals in either reading or math.

The PSAE is a standardized exam used in the State of Illinois to determine if students meet annual yearly progress (AYP) requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) by measuring achievement of Grade 11 students in core subjects (Illinois State Board of Education, 2011). Although there are more White students (41%) than Black students (16%) in this school, Black students are suspended almost 50% more than White students (Illinois Interactive Report Card, 2011).

Disproportionately high suspension rates are of concern to school and district administrators because local and national school districts are seeking to identify ways to reduce the number of external suspensions and keep students in school. These efforts have primarily focused on developing alternatives to suspension and introducing school-wide positive behavior programs to address challenging behavior (Sharkey & Fenning, 2012). One reason that administrators are seeking to reduce suspensions is because external suspensions that were previously restricted for offenses that put the school community in harm or danger, such as violence (e.g., fighting, gang activities, taking or selling drugs, etc.), are now being used more broadly (Losen, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011). U.S. students are now commonly suspended for truancy, insubordination, classroom management, and other attendance-related issues (Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014).

When a student is externally suspended, he or she is not allowed to come to school and is excluded from all school activities. It is a common misconception by administrators, teachers, and parents, that suspensions will cause students to reflect on the

antecedent events, factors, and situation that led to suspension so that they will not get suspended again (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015). However, the results of an Australian study suggested that suspensions are an ineffective disciplinary tool for certain groups of students, including marginalized students (Michail, 2011, p. 158). This finding is significant because external suspensions are issued to students to positively change behavior (Sharkey & Fenning, 2012) and research indicates that they do not (Michail, 2011). Instead of the intended outcome, external suspensions give students who are marginalized an excuse to stay home and miss important classroom instruction time (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015). Suspensions do not work to modify behavior; schools should work more to get the community involved to help address behavior issues with students (Michail, 2011). One way that the district is working with students to address challenging behavior is through the Alternative to Suspension program (ATS).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Blacks suspended at a higher rate. A significant number of students were suspended in ABC School District from 2011-2012. The majority of the students suspended in this district, and many school districts, are Black and Hispanic students. Although White students account for nearly 30% of the number of students in this diverse school district (Illinois School Report Card, 2016), they are suspended at much lower rates than the aforementioned minorities groups —Blacks 41%, Hispanics 32%, and Whites 27%. (Referraltronics, 2012). Black students are externally suspended more than

White students. Because suspensions are disproportionately issued to minority students, some researchers believe that minority students are segregated based on discipline, and are thus denied equal protection under the 14th Amendment (Skiba et al., 2011).

Alternatives. Research suggests that suspensions have a limited effect on the behavior modification and stifles student achievement (Fenning et al., 2012; Michail, 2011; Teasley & Miller, 2011). Based on the research, educators must look at alternative actions to keep students in school while positively modifying behavior because current practice is ineffective and is not applied fairly to all students (Chin, Dowdy, Jimerson, & Rime, 2012; Sharkey & Fenning, 2012; Vevea, 2011). They must look to programs or initiatives that are proactive and that engage students in the school environment (Sharkey & Fenning, 2012). The ATS program at ABC High School was designed to combine school resources with those of the local park district, recreation department, community centers, and counseling agencies, to allow students to complete community service and counseling sessions in lieu of an external suspension. If students are involved in offenses that require 10 days of suspension, they are given the option to participate in a program outside of the school day that will enable them to stay in school instead of being externally suspended. This program is a 30-hour program delivered over 10 days for 3 hours after school each, spread over the course of three weeks. Participants typically meet with a therapist to deal with anger management issues because many of the students are enrolled in the program due to fighting, aggressive behavior, insubordination, disrespect,

theft, noncompliance issues and gross disobedience. The ATS program was designed to address student behavioral issues using a therapeutic approach.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

Administrators and educators must examine ways in which inappropriate behavior is defined. How inappropriate behavior is defined affects the types of infractions, severity of the discipline matter, and consequences for the action. Race, both the students' and the teachers', is significant in determining whether a student is suspended or not (Skiba et al., 2011). Minority students are suspended three times more than white students (Illinois Interactive Report Card, 2011; Karp, 2009). This is attributed to the number of White teachers in comparison to teachers of color in the profession (Skiba et al., 2011). The majority of U.S. public school teachers are White females, including ABC High School (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). There is a difference in what White teachers and minority students perceive as behavior that warrants an office discipline referral and what is a suspendable or expellable offense (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011). Evidence of the difference in the perception of what is referable behavior versus what is not between White teachers and minority students has been observed in office discipline referrals (ODRs) written by ABC High School faculty and staff, as well as issues that occur with students and the majority White staff. School discipline data (as well as qualitative data) show that ODRs at the ABC High School are disproportionately issued to Black and Hispanic students compared to White students, who make up most of the study body (Referraltronics, 2012).

The efficacy of suspensions. Although students commonly receive external suspensions as a way to modify inappropriate behavior, there is no research to prove that suspensions work or that they modify inappropriate behavior (Fenning et al., 2012). On the contrary, researchers have suggested that external suspensions have significant, long-term, negative effects (Carswell, Hanlon, O’Grady, Watts & Patterpan, 2009). The high number of Blacks being externally suspended is documented in the ABC School District and neighboring CPS. According to a report by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, Black male students were most at-risk for suspensions (Sartain et al., 2015). The students who need to be in school the most (minority and special needs students) to help decrease the achievement gap are often the students who are suspended more frequently.

A high frequency of suspensions creates a problem for teachers who are charged with the task of increasing student achievement in their classrooms. Losen (2011) noted that, “removing students from the classroom reduces the amount of instruction they receive and is associated with lower educational outcomes, including risk of dropping out” (p. 16). Dropping out of school causes immediate and long-term effects. According to research and personal experience as an educator, students who are externally suspended and dropout, do not have the opportunity to receive classroom instruction, cannot complete assignments, and are unable to engage in the school community (Chin, Dowdy, Jimerson, & Rime, 2012; Fowler, 2011; Noltemeyer, Ward, & McLoughlin,

2015). This occurs, because some school districts, such as those within the state of Washington, are not required to continue to educate these students (Simmons, 2013). Thus, there is a need for alternative programs and supports for students who struggle with discipline issues, disengagement, and are at-risk for dropping out.

Suspensions have contributed to students academically falling behind (Illinois Report Card, 2011; Karp, 2009). Thus, there is a need for alternative programs and supports for students who struggle with inappropriate behavior and discipline issues.

Gap in practice. There is a gap in practice between the practice of using suspensions as a school discipline policy and the behavior modification of suspended students. The literature contains limited research on the effect of behavioral modification programs such as alternative to suspension (ATS) and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) on reducing the number of referrals, especially for minority racial and ethnic groups (Chin et al., 2012; Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports, 2016; Vincent, Randall, Carteledge, Tary, & Swain-Bradway, 2011). Fenning et al. (2012) stated that, “while most policies across all states tended to be punitive and unlikely to offer proactive alternatives that involve teaching expected behaviors, state differences were found in the degree to which punitive responses were emphasized” (p. 112). The policies that are currently being used to modify behavior are not effective and have had a negative impact on all students but especially minority students. The purpose of this project was to determine if participation in the ATS program decreases office discipline referrals

(ODRs) and improves student performance. In this project I also address the experience of the ATS Resource Provider with the program.

Definitions

The following terms were used in this project study:

Achievement gap: The achievement gap is the difference in performance between the test scores of minority and low-income students and the test scores of their White and Asian peers (National Education Association, 2016).

No Child Left Behind Act PL 107-110 (NCLB): A law that reauthorized and updated the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Under this law, U.S. states were required to test students in reading and math in grades 3–8 and to test them once in high school. Under this law, all students in U.S. public schools were expected to meet or exceed state standards in reading and math by 2014. The major focus of NCLB was to close academic achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. It also included parent options: that increased the choices available to the parents of students attending Title I schools (Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Institution, 2016).

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS): A framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2016).

Prairie state achievement test (PSAE): An assessment designed to measure the achievement of Grade 11 students in reading, mathematics, and science (Illinois State Board of Education, 2016).

Significance

The number of student suspensions/expulsions, especially for Black and Hispanic students can be connected to the achievement gap (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011). When students are not in school due to discipline issues, they are unable to excel in school and cannot connect to the school community (Lee & Shute, 2010). When students are not in school, they are not able to benefit from instruction, which may contribute to low PSAE scores at the ABC High School and nationally. Furthermore, parental involvement has been cited as a critical component and missing piece to increased achievement (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Larocque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011, p. 115) found that parental involvement was positively correlated with an increase in academic achievement. Student attendance and parental involvement are key factors that are essential to improving academic achievement and diminishing the achievement gap (Hazel, Pfaff, Albanes, & Gallagher, 2014; Larocque et al., 2011).

Students engage in delinquent behavior due to lack of connection and engagement with the school community (Sander et al., 2010), a behavioral association supported by social bond theory. This theory states that individuals are connected to society through the bonds that they establish in their family, with their peers, and in school (Unal & Cukur, 2011). Hirschi (1969) described these bonds as attachment, commitment,

involvement, and belief. One way in which schools are applying Hirschi's principles in relation to external suspensions/expulsions is through alternative programs and supports. The ATS program in the ABC School District was initiated in one of the district's high schools in October 2007. The ATS program elicits parental involvement by requiring that parents meet with the ATS Coordinator to complete a contract with the student to indicate their commitment to the program. Students in this program connect and engage with the school community through community service and participation in social and therapeutic groups (ATS Coordinator, personal communication, 2014). The initial meeting involving the ATS Coordinator, parent, and student is a critical component of the program, according to the superintendent who founded the program when he was principal of the high school in which it began (ABC School District Superintendent, personal communication, 2014).

The purpose of this project study was to research the ATS program in the ABC High School to determine its effectiveness in decreasing the number of office discipline referrals (ODRs) for students who participated in the program, especially Black male students. Since the implementation of the ATS program in the ABC High Schools, it has appeared to be successful, based on the observation that students had not received an increase of ODRs. However, the data had not been analyzed to support the success of the program (ATS Coordinator, personal communication, 2014). During the 2011-2012 school year, the program expanded to the other high school and to all of the middle schools within the ABC School District. Each school follows a set of guidelines, but has

autonomy in how the program is implemented. Studying this problem was useful to the local setting because Black male students score the lowest PSAE as compared to all other subgroups. Having an alternative to suspension program allows students to engage in the school community. In this project study, I determined if there is a connection between participation in the program and students' performance. This study was also designed to provide useful information to determine how the programs can be improved in the future or if it should be discontinued.

Guiding/Research Question

Although there is little research on alternative programs, past research shows that alternative programs can be used to reduce discipline problems in school (Fenning et al, 2012; Losen, 2011; Michail, 2011). Programs that have proven to be successful are both academic and therapeutic in nature. The ABC School District has initiated an alternative to suspension (ATS) program to address inappropriate behavior while keeping students in school. I used a mixed methods concurrent embedded strategy research design to answer three quantitative research questions and one qualitative research question (RQ).

Quantitative Questions

RQ1: What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and office discipline referrals (ODRs)?

- H_01 : There is no significant difference between student participation in the ATS program and ODRs.

- H_{A1} : There is a significant difference between student participation in the ATS program and ODRs.

RQ2: What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and student academic performance?

- H_{02} : There is no significant difference between the variables of participation in the ATS program and academic performance.
- H_{A2} : There is a significant difference between the variables of participation in the ATS program and academic performance.

RQ3: What is the difference in ODRs between Black students and other students who participated in the ATS program?

- H_{03} : There is no significant difference in ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the program.
- H_{A3} : There is a significant difference in ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the program.

Qualitative Question

RQ4: What is the experience of the ATS Resource Provider with the ATS program?

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In the review of the literature, I discuss the theoretical framework used for this study which is social control theory developed by Travis Hirschi (Hirschi, 1969). I

explain how this theory supports the ATS program and similar programs that are designed to involve students in the school experience with the ultimate goal of student achievement. An explanation is given as to why schools suspend and the results of suspension. This section concludes with possible solutions to combating suspension and implications for project directions.

My literature search process consisted of conducting searches using the Walden University electronic library catalog and two databases: ProQuest and Academic Search Complete. These databases were selected due to the topic being multidisciplinary, with pertinent literature in the fields of education, sociology, psychology, and juvenile delinquency. My search included the following key words and phrases: *alternative to suspension programs*, *minority students and suspensions*, *positive behavioral programs*, *school suspensions*, and *social control theory*. The literature search focused primarily on literature published from 2009–2016.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework informing this study was based on social control theory (Hirschi, 1969). This theory was first described by Hirschi (1969), who argued that when students are disengaged in the school environment, and school relationships are damaged, students turn toward delinquent behavior. This theory includes four essential elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (Hirschi, 1969). Kuhn (2009) described each interconnected component of social control theory. Attachment refers to how one feels about others, commitment refers to how tied one is to society, involvement

relates to how engrossed or engaged one is with various activities, and belief relates to how vested one is with the values and beliefs of the organization.

Several studies have validated the use of social control theory in school environments. Unal and Cukur (2011) examined high school delinquency in Turkey using social control theory and suggested that the relationships that students form in high school are just as important to student development as the relationships formed within their families and communities. The social context of school, family, and community are interrelated and can impact delinquency (Unal & Cukur, 2011, p. 560). Student perception of school climate has also been identified as a factor contributing to a student's attitude and behavior in school. Fan, Williams, and Corkin (2011) showed that male minority students felt that school rules were not fair and that teacher-student relationships were inimical. Sander et al. (2010) stated that students who are involved and engaged in their school community tend to refrain from delinquent behavior, in alignment with social control theory.

As mentioned in research by Taylor and Parson (2011), when students engage in the learning environment, they feel a sense of belonging and familiarity because they are able to build positive relationships with adults and peers. Students immerse themselves in the school community. They attend school. They exhibit positive behaviors, and they experience success (increased achievement). These actions lead to completing the course requirements for high school and ultimately, graduating.

I selected social control theory because of its prior usage in explaining students' misbehavior in school, and the data supporting it (Fan, Williams, & Corkin; Unal & Cukur, 2011; Taylor & Parson, 2011). It also serves as the basis for developing the ATS program and illustrates the school systems influence on delinquency and the need for alternative to suspension programs. Based on conversations with the ATS Coordinator and school administration, the ATS program incorporates the four components of social control theory (attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief). The program seeks to show attachment by developing positive relationships with peers and adults through successful participation in the programs and therapeutic groups. Students also form strong interpersonal relationships through commitment and involvement by performing community service and attending meetings as a result of the contract that was signed when entering the program (ATS Coordinator, personal communication, 2014).

According to Cristini, Dallago, Nation, Santinello, and Scacchi (2012), students experience positive outcomes when they are helped to form healthy relationships with adults and are taught prosocial norms. Relationship building engages students and they are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems. Similarly, through activities prescribed by the ATS program, students become vested in the school community because they feel valued due to their contribution to the organization. Schoolwide behavioral supports have contributed to positive discipline results (Sharkey and Fenning (2012). A PBIS program contributes to students having a positive perception of school by allowing them to bond to the school community, thus minimizing academic and discipline issues.

Why We Suspend

There are many reasons mentioned in the literature as to why Black students are suspended from school. Bradshaw et al. (2010) cited “higher base rates of behavior problems” (p. 509) as a possible reason for more disciplinary issues amongst Black students. However, Bradshaw et al. (2010) also stated that “the overrepresentation of minority students in office discipline referrals reflects a cultural bias embedded in school discipline practices” (p. 509). Suspensions are overused for minority students and are a detriment to students and the school community as a whole because students become disengaged (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Fenning et al., 2012; Lee, Cornell, & Fan, 2011). Lack of school engagement may lead to an elevated dropout of students, in particular Black students (Lee, Gregory, & Fan, 2011). It is not uncommon for school districts in America to have a significantly high number of Black students suspended and expelled from their districts annually, in comparison to White students (Illinois Interactive Report Card, 2011; Sartain et al., 2015; Skiba et al., 2011). In many cases, this is due to a more subjective interpretation of student behavior regarding Black students by adults in authority (Fowler, 2011).

Black students receive more subjective office discipline referrals (ODRs) than White students (Losen, 2011). For example, Black students were referred for such offenses as disrespect and threatening behavior, and White students were referred for more objective behavior such as using obscenities and smoking (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Sharkey & Fenning, 2012). Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is used in comparison to

the ABC High School because they share regional and geographic similarities. CPS data showed that Black male students accounted for 34% of all suspensions, followed by 13% Hispanic male students, and 6% White male students. Black male students lead all subgroups, only second to Black female students, who accounted for 23% of suspensions in CPS (Sartain et al., 2015). The data show a frequency of inappropriate behavior exhibited by Black students, but other factors contribute to the disproportion in the high suspension rate (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Karp, 2009).

Another reason why Black male students are suspended at higher rates is due to cultural mismatch or racial stereotyping. The vast majority of teachers in the ABC School District, and in most school districts throughout the US, are White women. According to Skiba et al. (2011), “unfamiliarity of White teachers with the interactional patterns that characterize many African America males may cause these teachers to interpret impassioned or emotive interaction as combative or argumentative” (p. 87). This factor contributes to the increased number of office discipline referrals for Black male students. Black and Latino students have consistently been documented as being over represented in disciplinary referrals, which suggests that race contributes to what teachers believe are behavioral issues and how they handle them (Pas, Bradshaw, & Mitchell, 2011). Black and Latino students are suspended at a much higher rate than White students, beginning as early as 5 to 6 years old with Black male students (Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, & Moore-Thomas, 2012). Black female students are also suspended at a higher rate than White and Hispanic female students (Blake, Butler, Lewis & Darensbourg, 2011; Bryan

et al., 2012). Professional development is needed to help teachers and administrators realize this trend and appropriately respond with a keen awareness when they encounter these situations.

Results of Suspensions

Previous research has shown that suspensions are not effective, contributing to other issues for the students who are supposed to be helped by this type of discipline. Black students who engage in school-related misbehaviors have more of a negative impact than their White counterparts and they are usually suspended more often and for longer periods of time (Sharkey & Fenning, 2012; Skiba et al., 2011). Sullivan, Klingbeil and Van Norman (2013) conducted a multilevel analysis of sociodemographics and school characteristics on students' risk of suspensions. The results of the study showed that Black students and those receiving special services were significantly associated with risk of multiple suspensions.

An implication of Black students being overrepresented in suspensions is that, as a group, their opportunities for academic achievement are decreased because they are out of school more frequently than students of other racial groups (Bradshaw et al., 2010). School absences from suspensions contribute to academic problems (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Academic problems, over time, can lead to a determination that special education services are needed (Bradshaw et al., 2010, p. 509). Suspensions are a detriment to academic success for Black students (Skiba et al., 2011).

Bradshaw et al. (2010), Losen (2011), and Skiba et al. (2011) indicated a high number of minority and low-income students being externally suspended. When students are externally suspended, they jeopardize their opportunity for an education by forfeiting the opportunity to engage in classroom instruction. Suspensions marginalize students and affect them academically because they are out of school, which allows them to interact with other delinquent students (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). In fact, in a longitudinal quantitative study of 1,354 juveniles (41.5% Black, 33.5% Hispanic, and 20.2% White) by Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, and Cauffman (2014), they concluded that suspensions “may increase risk for contact with the juvenile justice system” causing students to enter “the school-to-prison pipeline” (p. 1110). In many cases, students return to school displaying the same, or worse, behavior and are repeatedly suspended. As a result, students are not successful academically and socially when they return to school. (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). According to Michail (2011), we must rethink suspension and come up with other alternatives to not marginalize students. When a student is marginalized or made to feel unimportant or insignificant he or she begins to cause disciplinary problems at school and at home. Minority students being externally suspended inadvertently increase the achievement gap (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011).

Solutions

To combat the issue of suspension and low academic achievement, intervention programs are necessary. Elias and Noordin (2011) revealed that, “problem adolescents come from problem homes...in order to help adolescents; the school needs to plan some intervention programs which involve the parents” (p. 426). There are alternatives that can be used to lessen school discipline problems (Sharkey & Fenning, 2012). Some of those alternatives include alternative education programs and school-wide PBIS that address the root of the problem and supports the theoretical foundation that changing the school environment changes student behavior (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young & Young, 2011; Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012; Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, & Swain-Bradway, 2011; Walter, Gouze, Cicchetti, Arend, Mehta, Schmidt, Skvarla, 2011). Approaches that are both academic and therapeutic in nature have been the most successful in changing the behavior of students and are tailored to their individual needs (Michail, 2011). Therefore, any program that seeks to modify student behavior should include academics and therapy when working with students who experience discipline problems.

The ATS program addresses academics by keeping students in school and it offers counseling in the school setting or through a counseling service that the district has contracted. The program involves parents by requiring them to come to school to complete the contract for students who participate in the program in lieu of suspension. Similar programs require parents to attend class with their students to get them involved and instead of out-of- school suspensions (Robinett, 2012). In a study using survey

research methods and a convenience sample of 201 social workers, the social workers believed they could effectively curb school suspensions and undesirable behavior (Teasley & Miller, 2011). Parental support and counseling are important components of the ATS program and essential to the success of the program.

In an effort to reduce the number of suspension in CPS, the Chief Executive Officer changed all out-of-school suspension to in school suspension. Instead of preventing students from attending school due to the typical discipline infractions (aside from the big three-drugs, weapons and fighting), students received in school suspension. This action appeared to lower the number of suspensions; however, external suspensions were not included in the reporting practices. Obviously, this did not produce quantifiable data that is needed to validate the initiative and to prove that in-school suspensions work. More research would need to be conducted to obtain the information that this study lacks.

Critics of suspensions believe that this action did not solve the problem nor modify student behavior (Vevea, 2011). Sander et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study, which included 32 participants (16 juveniles and 16 mothers) who engaged in one hour interviews to obtain a better understanding of the connection between their school experiences associated with their increase risk for delinquent behavior. The results of the study asserted that schools, which rely on suspension and other punitive discipline, have the worst behavior and weak student engagement. Further, the alternate model of zero tolerance, where minor and major offenses receive similar punitive consequences, does not have the evidence to support its efficacy (Curtis, 2014; Martinez, 2009; Skiba et al.,

2011). To lessen discipline problems, it is necessary to develop practices that are effective and equitable based on data that support them.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework used for this study is social control theory. This theory supports the belief that student behavior is influenced by their level or lack of engagement in the school environment or community. When students do not feel engaged they gravitate toward negative and delinquent behavior. This lack of engagement is seen amongst minority students due to a disconnection with teachers and adults and the students feeling that the “rules” are not fair. Following this, students begin to receive referrals at a higher rate, hence leading to more suspensions than other ethnicities. As long as suspensions cause students to miss school, it is critical to offer alternate options to support them so they can experience academic success and stay out of trouble. The solution to this problem is determining alternative programs that are proactive and address the root, of why students participate in activities that warrant suspension.

Implications

Some implications for possible project directions were to use the study to produce a formal evaluation of the ATS program to determine alternatives for discipline for other behaviors or discipline issues that warrant ODRs. If there was a strong association between the ATS program, detentions, and academic achievement, the data collected and analysis of this program can be used to increase student engagement in the school community. This information will be used to make modifications that will improve the

program to meet the specific needs of the participants. This project addresses ways to keep students in school by utilizing therapeutic means to modify student behavior and increase academic achievement.

An evaluation report could be produced to provide senior leadership (superintendent's office) and the board, with the rationale for funding and supporting the continuation of the ATS program in this school and other schools in the District. I could have also used the results of the proposal to rationalize the development of a freshmen support program for students who not only experience discipline related issues, but also as a proactive approach to increase academic achievement for students who need extra support. The program's approach is to give students a second chance and an opportunity to correct inappropriate behavior with an emphasis placed on at-risk students who are vulnerable to academic and discipline risk factors. Academic and discipline risk factors can include: exhibiting behavioral problems at school, being held back a grade, and changing schools (Fan et al., 2011, p. 634). The freshman support program will also bring awareness to community organizations and resources that are available and allow for collaboration between school, families, and these agencies. Finally, it offers evidence of the district's commitment to working with parents to keep students in school so that they can learn and experience social and academic success.

Summary

Section 1 described the problem of suspensions for U.S. high school students, especially Black male students, nationally. To substantiate this project, the rationale for

study is to address the issue of increased number of suspensions impacting Black male students and how inappropriate behavior is defined by educators and administrators who often are predominately White. Section 1 considered whether race contributes to the higher suspension rate of Black male students. Due to the nature of suspensions, students are absent from school. Frequent absences lead to academic problems because students miss out on classroom instruction. There may be a correlation between external suspensions and scores on standardized exams.

Data show that suspensions do not work; therefore, alternatives must be examined. With little research on the success of alternative programs, this project study is critical in determining the future of this program and others like this in the district. It will assist stakeholders in deciding if funding should continue to be allocated for this program and if so, how much. If the program is not providing the outcome expected, resources might be used to seek other programs that will meet the needs of the students that are being externally suspended.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

In this section, I discuss the research method used for this study to examine an alternative to suspension (ATS) program at a Midwestern high school. Section 2 includes a detailed description of the setting and sample size. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Research questions (RQ) are presented with analysis.

- RQ1: What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and office discipline referrals (ODRs)?
- RQ2: What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and student academic performance?
- RQ3: What is the difference in ODRs between Black students and other students who participated in the ATS program?
- RQ4: What is the experience of the ATS Resource Provider with the ATS program?

Research Design

The research design that was used for this study is mixed methods concurrent embedded strategy. This research design was selected because this project involved only one phase of collecting data whereas quantitative and qualitative were gathered at the same time. The mixed methods concurrent embedded strategy allows for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection to take place during the course of the study. The qualitative part of the design is embedded in the quantitative aspect of the design

(Creswell, 2009). The design guides the study, and both components of the design contribute to extracting data that will inform the topic about alternatives to suspension. (Creswell, 2009).

I used qualitative data (an interview with the ATS Resource Provider) to support the quantitative results (extracted ODRs, transcripts, and discipline and attendance records from ABC School District databases) and to provide insight as to whether student participants have shown improvement academically through an increase in grade point average and socially through participation in the program by receiving less ODRs. The integration of both types of data provides more details than what can be measured using only one of these methods. The information gained from this study is intended to assist the stakeholders in determining if the ATS program should be continued, and if so, how it can be improved upon and replicated in the future.

Setting and Sample

Participants

Students. The sample was taken from the population of 1,820 students at the smaller of the two high schools in this school district, which is located in Illinois during the 2012-2013 school year. The study population encompasses male and female students in Grades 9-12 ranging in age from 14-19 years old from various socioeconomic levels and ethnicities, with the majority of students being White (41%), Hispanic (38%), and Black (15%). The sample consisted of 22 students who had been externally suspended during the 2012-2013 school year and referred to the ATS program. Of that number, 12

students successfully completed the ATS program, five of whom were Black students. The control group in this study consisted of the 10 students who did not participate in the ATS program, three of which were Black. I acquired the participant list electronically from the school ATS Coordinator.

Staff. To obtain qualitative data, I interviewed the ATS Resource Provider. The ATS Resource Provider meets with students at a community center three times per week. I used purposeful sampling to select this participant because of their detailed knowledge of the program under study, as recommended by Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegthe (2010).

It was critical to the success of the interview and acquiring honest feedback that a trusting researcher-participant relationship was had between the ATS Resource Provider and myself as the researcher. To ensure that this occurred, I decided to conduct the interview at the ATS Resource Provider's site to make certain that they were comfortable. I also reiterated to the ATS Resource Provider how important their role was in offering information that would ultimately help improve the program. Finally, I offered every opportunity for the ATS Resource Provider to abdicate their participation in the study so as to not put her in an awkward position with their continued participation in the program.

Measures for the Protection of Participants' Rights

In order to protect participants in this research project, all measures were taken. Since secondary data were used, I received permission from the principal of the high school. I obtained approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB

approval #: 10-25-13-0192305, IRB expiration date: October 24, 2014) before beginning the research. I indicated that there is no risk of harm to the participants. Although the students in this study were all under 18 years old and considered minors, I used de-identified participants data from the district-wide database for the quantitative portion of the study. No students participated in the interviews, however I provided a consent form for the ATS Resource Provider that guaranteed their rights and provided them with details of the study. I assured the provider of confidentiality and did not use their name or any other demographic details that would link them to the study.

Data Collection Strategies

The mixed method strategy that was used for data collection was the concurrent embedded data collection method. This method provided detailed information through use of quantitative and qualitative data. Examining quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a better understanding of the research topic (Creswell, 2012). Data could be merged to investigate by quantitative analysis and explore through qualitative analysis to describe the effectiveness of the ATS program while establishing norms.

Quantitative Sequence

The quantitative data in this study included ODRs, transcripts, and discipline and attendance records. The principal of ABC High School (pseudonym) granted me permission to collect data; after receiving this permission, I collected the information from the district's databases. I collected and organized this data using an Excel spreadsheet created by the ATS Coordinator. This spreadsheet tracked student

information, such as his or her offense, number of community service hours, GPA (on a 0.0 to 4.0 scale, with 4 being the highest), ethnicity, and whether or not the student completed the program. These data collection tools are sufficient to address the research questions. These data were scanned and saved as an electronic document and hardcopies were kept in a binder.

In order to answer RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, I collected quantitative data from the district-wide database to provide the number of ODRs, and the frequency of Black male students in the program in comparison to other ethnicities and female students. To measure the variables for RQ1, data from ODRs were used to determine if the relationship between student participation in the program and ODRs. I examined whether there was an increase or decrease in the number of ODRs acquired by the participants. I answered RQ2 by using quantitative data obtained from participants to determine if there was a relationship between those who participate in the program and academic performance. Finally, to answer RQ3, I examined the number of ODRs received by Black students who were suspended in comparison to non-Black students.

Qualitative Sequence

After receiving approval from the Walden University IRB to conduct my research, I called the ATS Resource Provider and made an appointment to conduct one interview at the program site. I followed standard procedures for informed consent to protect the interviewee from harm and to provide the ATS Resource Provider with a detailed description of the study, in alignment with Creswell's (2010) recommendations. To

answer RQ4, I engaged the ATS Resource Provider with open-ended, semi-structured questions (see Appendix B) that I developed for a period of approximately one hour. This data collection tool was sufficient because the interview was designed to answer questions relating to efficacy and the process of the program in regards to student participants from the ATS Resource Providers' perspective. The interview concluded with the ATS Resource Provider offering a summary of her experience with the program.

I collected qualitative data by using an App downloaded on both my cell phone and iPad called Supernote to interview the ATS Resource Provider at the program site. I hired a third-party transcriber to transcribe the interview and send the transcript to me electronically. The notes and transcripts were saved to my hard drive and on a flash drive; I also printed a hard copy that was placed into a binder that I kept track of additional data and emerging understanding.

I established the researcher-participant working relationship by communicating and stressing to the ATS Resource Provider that the purpose of the project was not to evaluate the provider, but to obtain information regarding her experience with the program. After the interview, member checking was employed. In this process, I had the participant check the interview transcripts for accuracy. I conveyed to the participant the value of her honesty and feedback for the future of the ATS program activities.

Qualitative data were analyzed for emerging themes. I employed several strategies to bring validity to the research process. The following procedures, credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirm ability, were used to accomplish this task (Lodico et al., 2010).

Credibility. I brought credibility to the project by using my colleagues and fellow administrators as peer debriefers to provide feedback regarding the research process, specifically the data collection methods and analysis to eliminate bias. After transcribing the interview, the notes were sent to the interviewee to review for accuracy in what are called member checks.

Transferability. Transferability was achieved by using the ATS Resource Provider's interview to provide thick rich descriptions of her experiences. This process enables those reading the study to be able to relate the project to what he or she is familiar with. This was achieved by using purposeful sampling to create a case that is information rich for a detailed study.

Dependability. A colleague knowledgeable in this area was used to conduct an external audit. This person was selected because she works as administrator in a nearby district at the high school level and is also pursuing a doctorate and is familiar with the qualitative research methods. Another way to establish dependability is to code-recode. During this process, I coded data and then waited about a week or two to see if anything changed and then repeated the process. Finally, an App, *Supernote* was used during the interview process to record the interview on my iPad and cellphone. These steps were important to ensuring accuracy and bringing credibility to the study.

Confirmability. I used reflexivity to exercise confirmability. Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). A binder was maintained detailing all aspects of the research experience such as documents and interview notes. An audit trail allows any observer to trace the course of the research step-by-step. Additionally, the shortcomings in the study were acknowledged without prejudice. Qualitative data were gathered from the ATS Resource Provider and were analyzed to determine whether program refinements are necessary and if the program is successful.

To gain access to the participant, I called the ATS Resource Provider and informed her about the study and asked her if she felt comfortable participating in the study. When the ATS Resource Provider agreed to participate in the study, I scheduled an appointment with her and electronically send her the informed consent so she could read it in advance. I was the assistant principal of the high school in the district and was very instrumental in developing the program. Currently, I am the principal at the larger high school. Although I believed that my role could cause some bias toward the project, I was not biased because the program has taken on an identity of its own, in a different building, with a different ATS Coordinator.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Quantitative data were used to address the following research questions (RQ) in the study.

RQ1: What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and office discipline referrals (ODRs)?

- H_01 : There is no significant difference between student participation in the ATS program and ODRs.
- H_A1 : There is a significant difference between student participation in the ATS program and ODRs.

RQ2: What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and student academic performance?

- H_02 : There is no significant difference between the variables of participation in the ATS program and academic performance.
- H_A2 : There is a significant difference between the variables of participation in the ATS program and academic performance.

Quantitative data for answering RQ1 and RQ2 were analyzed using a chi-square analysis and an independent t test. The chi-square analysis was used to identify a difference between two categorical variables. The t tests were used to identify differences between the two groups of participants. These tests were selected to compare groups in

terms of variables so that inferences can be drawn from the sample to a population (Creswell, 2012; Green & Salkind, 2011). Graphs were constructed to show the association between the variables, and the results were evaluated and interpreted. The validity of the data was addressed by making note of human error when entering ODRs, grade information and noting the sample size.

RQ3: What is the difference in ODRs between Black students and other students who participated in the ATS program?

- H_{03} : There is no significant difference in ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the program.
- H_{A3} : There is a significant difference in ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the program.

The data related to RQ3 were analyzed by using a chi square test. This test was appropriate for answering RQ3 because it compared the suspension rates of Black students to other students at this high school. In this study, the independent variable is ethnicity. The dependent variable is the suspension rates of students or number of ODRs written that lead to suspension.

To determine the reliability and validity of the data collected from these instruments, the quantitative data were validated and double checked from the ATS provider, community service resource provider, and paraprofessionals that collected the data by speaking with them to get helpful background information about how the

information was retrieved (Lodico et al., 2010). The quantitative data were presented in tables and figures.

Qualitative

Qualitative data were obtained from a 1-hour audio interview, which was recorded through the use of a software application called *Supernote* and stored on both an iPad and iPhone. The interview was shared electronically through Dropbox to a hired transcriber who transcribed the audio file and sent it back to me. The transcribed interview was saved to my computer hard drive and backed up using an external flash drive. I coded the interview to determine themes that emerged from the interview.

The procedures used to bring validity to the research process were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility of the research was validated by allowing the ATS Resource Provider, the opportunity to give feedback about any issues or concerns regarding the interview. Transferability was achieved through the rich, thick description of the program that was provided from the interview questions asked to the ATS Resource Provider. The transcribed interview provided a very descriptive and detailed interview. Many generalizations were made and illustrated by themes that emerged as a result of coding the interview. In relation to the dependability of the research, one variable that changes from year is the number of students that participate in the program. This number is not predetermined nor can it ever be predetermined. Due to each dean having the discretion of recommending students to the program along with their own personal beliefs about the program, and the change in the

ATS school coordinator, this definitely affected the dependability of the qualitative data collected.

These factors in addition to many others affected the way I approached the study in terms of ease of accessibility and consistency in the research. Through peer debriefing, colleagues provided feedback on the interviews and notes from the data that I provided. This feedback was used to detect the problems in the research, vague descriptions, errors in the data and biases and assumptions made by me. An external audit was conducted to validate the study and examine the data. Confirmability was achieved by conversations with the ATS Coordinator. I engaged in site visits, evaluated documents and followed up with conversations involving the ATS Resource Provider.

Data Analysis Results

The concurrent strategy was used to successfully analyze both the quantitative and qualitative data for the mixed methods approach. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and the primary data or quantitative data (ODR's, GPA) was used to drive the study. The qualitative data were obtained through the interview with the ATS Resource Provider and supported the quantitative data and are considered secondary, but are an integral part of the study.

The data collected from this project was integrated to validate the procedures used in this project. The quantitative data obtained for Questions 1 and 2 were analyzed to determine if the students who participated in the program had fewer ODRs/suspensions and to determine if there was an improvement in grades over the course of the project due

to participation in the program. A chi square test, which was used to analyze Question 3, compared the suspension rates of ethnicities to determine if Black students were suspended at a higher rate than other students. I reflected on what lead teachers to write ODRs for certain subgroups of students and determined if specific professional development relating to cultural sensitivity and education should be taught to the faculty and staff in the high school. The qualitative data addressed the ATS Coordinator's perception of the program's effectiveness as well as its implementation. Upon examination of the data, the hypotheses were validated based on the data obtained from the project. Both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to obtain a better understanding of how this program and alternative ways of discipline can be successful in the school setting. This integration is necessary to understand the impact student performance through an increase in grades and a decrease in suspension reflected through ODRs.

Quantitative Findings

Data collected for the study were organized in an excel database and then input into SPSS for analysis. The data were collected from the district discipline reporting system and the school's ATS Coordinator provided his excel database with de-identified students who participated. The results of the analyses are presented according to the associated research question and hypothesis.

RQ1. What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and ODRs?

- H_01 : There is no significant difference between student participation in the ATS program and office discipline referrals (ODRs).
- H_{A1} : There is a significant difference between student participation in the ATS program and ODRs.

To determine the difference between the number of ODRs and participation in the ATS program, the continuous variable of change in ODRs (pre-ATS period versus post-ATS period) was first divided into four categories, which included (a) no difference (no reduction or increase in incidence of ODRs), (b) a reduction of 1-3 ODRs in the post-ATS period (c) a reduction of four or more ODRs in the post-ATS period, and (d) increased incidence of ODRs in post-ATS period. Figure 1 provides a bar graph of the frequency counts of these categories by group (ATS participation or control). As seen in Figure 1, the ATS group shows similarities with the control group in terms of both categories of reduction in ODRs (a reduction of 1-3 ODRs in the post-ATS period compared to the pre-ATS period) and increases in ODRs in the post-ATS period, but also shows four individuals from the ATS participation group with a larger reduction in ODRs (reduced by four or more ODRs). None of the control group (no ATS participation) members demonstrated this larger reduction of ODRs.

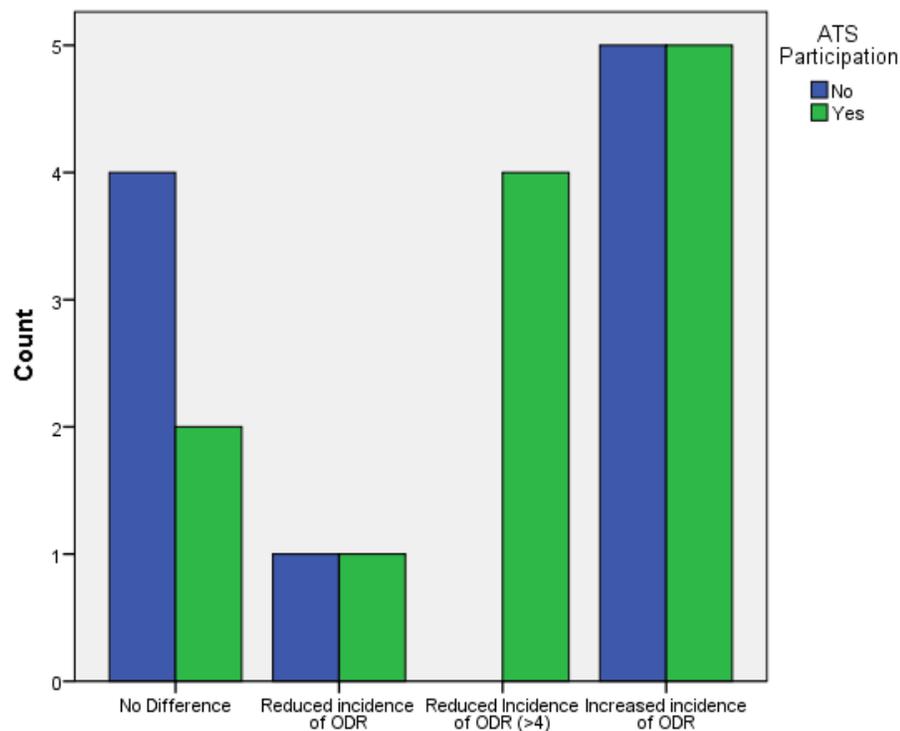


Figure 1. Change in incidence of ODRs post-ATS implementation period

A chi-square cross tabulation analysis was then conducted to examine the variables of ATS participation (versus control) and ODR change category. The cross tabulation results are given in Table 1, with a chi-square of 4.522 ($df = 3$), $p = .210$. This result failed to support any significant difference between the variables.

Table 1

Change in ODR Incidence by ATS Participation

Change	ATS Participation		Total
	No	Yes	
No Difference	4	2	6
Reduced incidence of ODR in post-ATS period	1	1	2
Significant reduced Incidence of ODR (<4 fewer ODRs in post-ATS period)	0	4	4
Increased incidence of ODR post-ATS period	5	5	10

Total	10	12	22
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Note. Chi square = 4.522, $df = 3$, $p = .210$
 The chi square includes 7 cells (87.5%) with expected counts less than 5, minimum expected count is 0.91.

RQ2. What is the difference between student participation in the ATS program and student academic performance?

- H_02 : There is no significant difference between the variables of participation in the ATS program and academic performance.
- H_A2 : There is a significant difference between the variables of participation in the ATS program and academic performance.

Evaluating the post-ATS implementation period GPA scores, data were obtained on a total of 10 control group members ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 0.734$) and 12 ATS participation members ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 0.784$). Again, a Levene's test was used to confirm the equal variance assumption ($F = 0.002$, $p = .966$). An independent sample t -test was conducted to answer this research question. The data indicated improvement in both groups' scores, failing to demonstrate any significance between group differences in GPA ($t(19) = 0.33$; $p = .74$). The null hypothesis was supported. There is no significant difference in academic performance between students who participated in the program and students who did not.

RQ3. What is the difference in ODRs between Black students and other students who participated in the ATS program?

- H_03 : There is no significant difference in ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the program.

- H_{A3} : There is a significant difference in ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the program.

The sample size consisted of 22 students. The ATS group was represented by 12 students (seven non-Black and five Black) and the control group was represented by 10 students (seven non-Black and three Black) that did not participate in the program. Thus for the analyses for RQ3, the participation group included seven non-Black and only three Black ATS participants. Although five Black students participated in the ATS program, two did not complete data on ODRs leaving three who completed the ATS program for the purposes of this analysis.

Similar to the first research question, first I determined the difference between the number of ODRs among the Black subgroup (ATS and control) only. The continuous variable of change in ODR was divided into four categories: no difference; reduced incidence of ODRs in post-ATS period (reduced by 1-3 ODRs); significantly reduced ODRs in post-ATS period (reduced by four or more ODRs); and increased incidence of ODRs in post-ATS period. Figure 2 provides a bar chart of the frequency counts of these categories by ATS participation or control for the Black subgroup. As seen in the figure, the ATS group shows two participants with a larger reduction in ODRs and one increased ODR (this participant went from 0 to 1 ODR). The control group had one student each within the categories of no difference, reduction in ODRs (1-3 fewer ODRs in the post-ATS period compared to the pre-ATS period), and increases in ODRs in the post-ATS period.

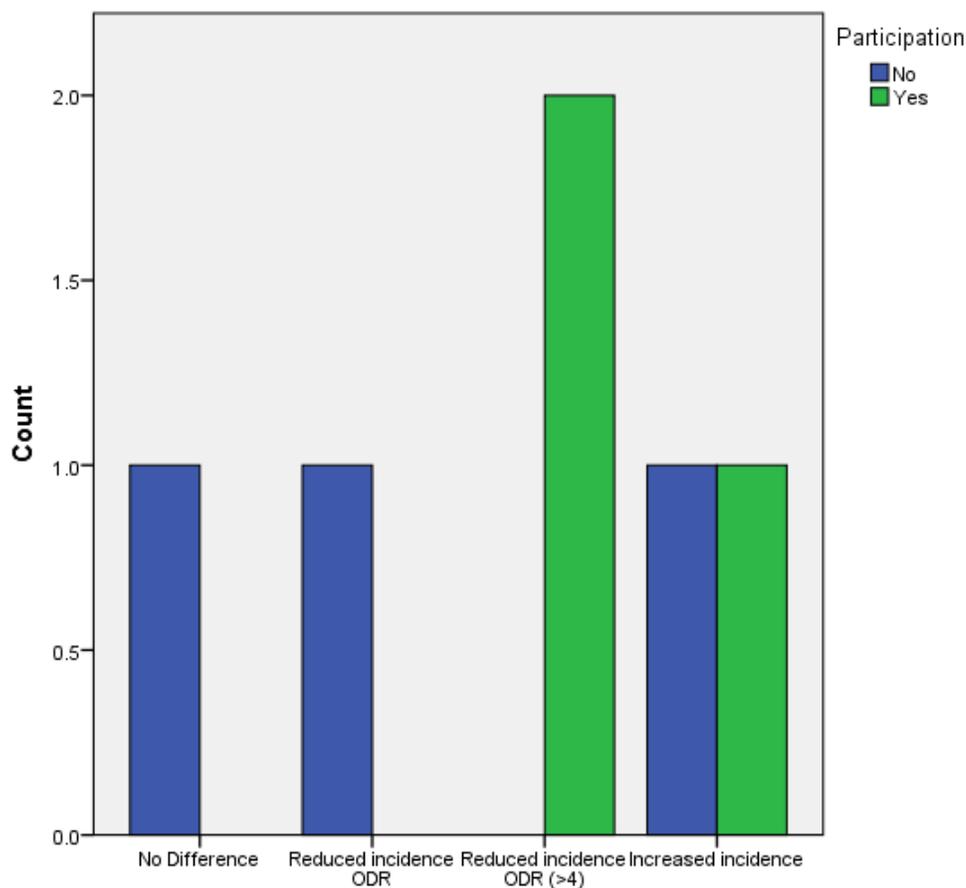


Figure 2. Change in incidence of ODRs post-ATS implementation period for the Black subgroup.

A chi-square cross tabulation analysis was then conducted to examine the difference between the number of ODRs received by Black students ($n = 3$) compared to the other students ($n = 7$) who participated in the ATS program. The cross tabulation results are given in Table 2, with a chi-square of 4.0 ($df = 3$), $p = .294$. This result failed to support any significant difference between the groups; therefore, the null hypothesis was supported. There is no significant difference in the number of ODRs received by Black students compared to other students who participated in the ATS program.

Table 2

Change in ODR Incidence Among Black Students by ATS Participation

[Missing column label]	ATS Participation		Total
	No	Yes	
No Difference	1	0	1
Reduced incidence of ODR in post-ATS period	1	0	1
Significant reduced Incidence of ODR (>4 fewer ODRs in post-ATS period)	0	2	2
Increased incidence of ODR post-ATS period	1	1	2
Total	3	3	6

Note. Chi square = 4.00, $df = 3$, $p = .261$

The chi square includes 8 cells (100%) with expected counts less than 5, minimum expected count is 0.50.

Quantitative Conclusion

The quantitative analysis failed to demonstrate significant differences in both ODRs (disciplinary referrals) and GPA (academic achievement) according to ATS program participation. The marginally significant result of the reduction in ODRs according to ATS participation suggests that a significant result may be obtained in further investigation using a larger sample size. No significant differences in ODRs by ethnicity were evident in this study, suggesting that the Black students in this sample were not likely to be suspended at a higher rate than the other students. Results were limited by the small sample size obtained for the study. Further research is recommended.

Qualitative Findings

I used the qualitative data to address RQ4: What is the experience of the ATS Resource Provider with the ATS program? A qualitative, content analysis of the

individual interview with the program director of the ATS program provided vital information for understanding the program in general and the specific objectives, goals, and anticipated outcomes of the program. Interview responses were coded into themes to reveal key aspects of the program. These six themes included program structure, program goals and vision, parental involvement, staff support, student gains in behavioral and social skills, collaborative elements. These themes are offered in Table 3 with examples of the grouped codes under each theme. Each of these themes is discussed individually to provide enhanced understanding through textual examples from the interview.

Table 3

Themes With Grouped Codes

Program Structure	Program Goals/Vision	Behavioral & Social Gains	Parental Involvement	Staff Support	Collaboration
3 days/ week for 3 hours/ day for a total of 10 days	Social change for children with ethnic backgrounds	People skills / Social skills	Seeking parent participation (may have to mandate)	One-on-one psychological support	Casual police presence
Dress code	Individual gains for students	Anger management skills	To support home-school collaboration	Director's personal experience and connection to program	Camaraderie with HS staff
Letter of restitution	Needed second chance	Dress code	Need parent support for improvement	Group Anger Management	Parental involvement
Certificate of completion	Interactive leadership	Self-respect			

Program structure. During the interview with the program director, the ATS program was discussed to support detailed understanding of the program itself, as well as the benefits, goals, and key features of the program. In terms of program structure, the program was described as incorporating 3 days a week for 3 hours each day, over a period of 10 days total. The program has a dress code, which includes a white shirt, ties for boys, and dark slacks. The director described two benefits of the dress code, one being security and the other in terms of self-respect and self-value through praise. The participant explained:

Looking good from the outside can start to affect the inside. This program has been trained to give a lot of praise when you see them looking good, acknowledge

it, recognize it, and these children love that. They love that recognition that, “Hey you look great!”

For security, the dress code eliminates baggy, loose fitting clothing in which to conceal weapons or other undesirables. The director asserted:

There's no baggy this or that to hide things. Normally, it's going to be visible because the pants aren't saggy. There are no big jackets. There's no hats, no hoodies. So dress code really gives me like . . . , visually, I can look at you and see . . . okay, if there's a gun, I'm going to see it. If there's a knife sticking out, I'm going to see it, because you know with baggies, you can [hide weapons].

The dress code also serves to erase evidence of social class distinctions. She noted:

It does put everyone on the same playing field. You don't know the 'haves' from the 'have nots', and, well, when I started, well, kids were wearing 'colors' in the courtroom, and I knew that first year, that's asking for trouble. I knew immediately, I'ma have to do something, and that's where dress code originally started, because boys were wearing colors.

Another required component of the program was the letter of restitution. This letter is required of all students and explains their personal meaning of freedom. In addition, students must compose an apology letter to their parents. The director read some examples of letters that were written to her in the past:

I can't thank you enough for all you've done to help make me to become a better man. You've been so patient and understanding as you've guided me on this path to success, and not destruction. You brought me in the light when I was in the dark.

I can't thank you enough for all you did, giving me another chance was the greatest thing you did for me. I see you as a real role model. Your approach is the perfect mix of firmness and understanding. I am confident and ready to face the future both socially and academically, thanks to all your efforts. Thank you for all you've done.

Finally, when all aspects of the program have been fulfilled, the student receives a certificate of completion to take back to their high school principal.

Program goals and vision. One main goal for the program was to promote social change in terms of increasing graduation rates for minority students and supporting general positive social change for students with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. She described:

One of the best visions I have cultivated was to add the Alternative to Suspension in my life. Yes. Short, simple, and sweet . . . was to do Alternative Suspension. Had I known years ago that my babies were missing out, had I known, the numbers, I saw the numbers of children, of ethnic backgrounds, not walking across that graduation stage, I'da done this 10 years ago, with our organization, had I known . . . had I known.

Another primary goal of the program is to support student gains, both behavioral and social. The program supports self-respect and self-value, as mentioned previously, as it relates to the dress code, as well as the development of people skills, and anger management skills. These skills are described in the next section of behavioral and social gains of the students. The program was described as needing to assist these children to succeed by providing them with a second chance, offering redirection and a new focus. She detailed:

As children who have done something stupid, weren't thinking . . . Children that need redirection and focus, not criminals. These are children who do stupid stuff, that need that second chance, at all cost, need that second chance.

The program incorporates interactive leadership to accomplish these goals. In this role, the ATS Resource Provider shed light on her philosophy in her role as director, expressing the leadership role as mirroring that of a mother for her children:

I am the Program Director, number one, first and foremost. I am the leader of this program, and not only that, I am a hands-on, interactive, at the door, every time children come in, at the door when they enter, at the door, when they exit, very interactive. I am one of the primary teachers of many of the lessons, and I am just hands-on, involved, Director, role model, mentor, disciplinary, mother, father, big sister . . . to my children.

Behavioral and social gains. The program works tirelessly on aggressively promoting and teaching people skills to support student success. The ATS Resource Provider noted:

Our component of people skills, which we teach adamantly here, that's one of the first things we do. When they hit the door, we go through our people skills series: handshakes, eye contact, how to make conversation, using proper grammar.

Sometimes at the onset, children find it comical, but as we continue to do it, and tell them why these skills are going to be pertinent when they go into the real world after high school is over, they begin to get it, and they like to do it, and we practice with one another, talking what I call proper grammar, our handshakes we do hands-on, we act this out regularly.

In addition, the anger management component of the program was described as perhaps the most memorable portion of the program. The ATS program format pairs anger management with dinner and a movie for program participants. The ATS Resource Provider described the impact of this component:

I feel those diversionary movies about children in jail, children in trouble, and we couple that with the dinner, of course, . . . if you want to get a child's attention, you gotta feed them, so, the Friday night anger management, the Friday night dinner and a movie seems to be the most impressionable on our students.

These people skills and personal management skills are achieved through teaching, psychological assistance, and are felt to be supported through continuous positive feedback and the dress code.

Parental involvement. One key aspect of the success of the program was felt to be parental involvement, although the ATS Resource Provider admitted to little parental support in this way, suggesting that perhaps “less than 5%” of the parents participate in some way or visitation during the program. The parental involvement piece is felt to be so important that they are considering making it a mandatory portion of the program. She explained:

Well, I think as I collaborate more and more with the school, together, we can make it a mandatory part of the 10 day initiative, that a parent must attend a minimum of one class before the child completes that 10 day, Alternative to Suspension Program. Again, we may have to make it mandatory as a part of the alternative suspension for the child . . . A minimum, just two hours, to see what the class lesson is, how we're working the program, how we're working with their child, and just to give them an understanding and an insight as to the message that we're trying to send to their child during these 10 days, what we're trying to accomplish as far as . . . We have found once a person, any person, comes to visit the Alternative to Suspension, they get very excited about our curriculum and our set up.

The element of parental support was described as critical to program improvement. The director noted parental participation as the “number one improvement that I would like to see.” She stated:

A better participation or support from the parents for the students that are there for those 10 days. Even if a parent were to make a commitment of one day a week, or just one time during the duration of the program.

Staff support. The staff involved with the program provides experience and support to the ATS participants. These staff members include psychologists, teachers, and the director herself offering personal experience and connections to the program students. One of the school district staff not only teaches classes on the law and how to make it on their own, but also serves as a psychologist at the ATS program to provide critical one-on-one support sessions when needed. The ATS Resource Provider explained:

[He] is also a part of the school district staff, but by night, he is a psychologist here at Alternative to Suspension, and if there is any one-on-one needed . . . He'll teach a class. He doesn't do group anger management. He'll teach a class . . . 'I know the law' lesson, 'can I make it on my own' lesson, I have a crazy lesson called 'coma consequences of my actions', ah, yeah, my coma lesson . . . he has a knack for that.

Another doctor provides the group therapy option used for the anger management, as described previously.

The ATS Resource Provider herself provides a personal connection to provide a personal experience with the program. On the certificate completion, it says, “For these are all our children, and we as a nation shall pay for or profit back whatever they become.” The ATS Resource Provider takes on the personal challenge of supporting positive social change.

Collaboration. Finally, the last theme related to collaborative efforts, which included the local police, staff at the high school, and parents. The ATS Resource Provider described a casual presence of the police, supporting a nonthreatening, but secure environment. She stated:

Oh yeah, my little cop buddies. Oh girl, you'll see a cop sitting out there any given night. I think they're over there eating and talking on the phone too sometimes, but I like it when they stop by. And just my personal cop buddies, "Hey" they come in and scare everybody.

Another collaboration is with the high school administrative staff (i.e., Dean), creating a sense of camaraderie that supports bringing students into the program and back on track in school. She detailed,

The camaraderie is excellent . . . makes getting students in, super easy, we're all on the same page, same plateau with the guidelines, contact, meet with your Dean. Dean then says, please call this lady; here is a sheet, which I gave to the Deans some time ago; these are the guidelines, which you should expect Mr. and Mrs. X, Y, Z. They in turn, follow that, contact me, I notify the Dean, [let them

know] “he or she is in; we'll let you know when they're done.” Ten days later, whenever the date, [I] notify the Dean [that] so and so is done [explaining], they will be bringing you a copy of their completion certification. It flows, the camaraderie is just excellent. The understanding with the Deans and I is so on point.

Lastly, parental collaboration was seen as critical to the students' success, as noted previously. Parents can support the program by opting to have their child put in ATS instead of being suspended. According to the resource provider,

If the parents say they want their child to have the wonderful option of staying in school versus being out. I don't see where the child would not want to do it if the parent says; yes we're going to do it because of the benefits to this.

Although, she noted that some parents may feel they are not able to commit to participation and regretfully decline the option, as noted by the director:

Yeah, that could be a problem because there are some parents that, number one, may not have the time. Number two; don't want to make the time, Yolanda. And that's a sad fact, they may decline the wonderful option again of having their child remain in school, simply because they don't want to do it, which I find tremendously sad.

However, parental involvement is important to foster because these students in particular lack this support. The ATS Resource Provider indicated the importance of parental involvement many times throughout the interview, with statements such as:

- “Yes, because I know there is no parental support, especially when you've gotten in trouble.”
- “That is why the ATS program clearly invites parents to become a part of the experience, becoming a part of the solution. At the time of enrollment, it is made crystal clear, that as a parent, you can come and visit any time. You don't need permission. This is your child.”
- “All we ask is no small children, no spectators. But we let them know up front, you are more than welcome, at any time you want to visit, you're more than welcome to come.”

According to the ATS Resource Provider, program officials ask parents to commit to minimum requirements, as encapsulated in the comment, “Just to be an observer. Just show up. That's all we're asking.”

Qualitative Analysis Conclusions

The qualitative analysis of the interview data provided an in-depth understanding of the ATS program through the eyes of the ATS Resource Provider. The six themes revealed from the interview provided understanding of the different structural aspects of the program; the goals and vision of the program, which included social change, individual student gains, and a needed “second chance;” behavioral and social gains in people skills, self-respect, and anger management skills; parental involvement; staff support; and collaborative efforts with local police, high school staff, and parents. These six themes address RQ4 by articulating the positive experience of the ATS program

through the eyes of the resource provider in her role as director and the benefits that the students gain through their full participation in the program.

Conclusion

Section 2 provides a detailed account of the mixed methods concurrent embedded research design used for this project study. It includes the setting, sample and the data collection tools and strategies that were used to address the research questions both quantitatively and qualitatively. I gained access to quantitative data after receiving approval from the Walden University IRB. The quantitative data were analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between student participation in the ATS program, student achievement, the number of office discipline referrals and the frequency of Black students suspended. Qualitative data provided data on the effectiveness of the program through the view of the ATS Resource Providers. Also included in the methodology, is a description of how both types of data were analyzed and validated separately as well as how they were integrated. The next section, Section 3, includes a detailed description of a proposed project consisting of a freshman support program for at-risk ninth grade students. This program is grounded in an extensive review of literature, including research showing an association between ATS participation and discipline referrals, discussion of the implications for social change, and a description of its importance to local stakeholders.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

As a result of the research that was conducted, I proposed a project consisting of a curriculum plan. Six themes emerged from my research to support the development of a Freshmen Support Project (FSP). Three of these themes were:

- the high number of discipline referrals from freshman students in relation to the number of referrals that students received as they matriculate through high school,
- low grade point averages, and
- no-to-minimal school involvement.

As students at the study site, hereafter referred to as ABC High School (pseudonym), matriculate from freshman year through senior year, the number of referrals decreases. If interventions are introduced consistently to students at the beginning stage of high school, then the belief is that this will have a positive impact on discipline and academic achievement for each individual student and the entire school.

The FSP was designed to target students who are transitioning from middle to high school and who have a prior disciplinary record and /or academic concerns. Students would be automatically placed in this program unless parents opt out in writing.

Approximately 45–60 at-risk students will be selected based on the following criteria:

- number of office discipline referrals,
- grade point average,
- lack of cocurricular involvement, and

- academic failures in math/English.

The students will meet each semester as a group, but be assigned to a homeroom where an adult staff member (clinician, dean, or teacher) would work with them individually and/or in a smaller group, family-type setting. Each adult will have about 15-20 students in their *family group* and work with those students during their freshman year of high school.

The FSP is a one-year program, designed for freshman only and intended to teach disciplinary, academic, and social and emotional coping skills by connecting students to adults in the building. The structure for this program will consist of daily meetings scheduled through homeroom during the week and two major meetings each semester, once at the beginning of the year (introduction) and once at the end of the school year (celebration/awards ceremony). Students will meet with their family group for a class period/or homeroom every day. Participants will meet as an entire group once at the end of each semester to celebrate their successes in an awards/celebration forum where students will be able to invite their parents/guardians or mentors to share in this moment. If students receive ODRs for suspendable offenses, they will have to participate in the ATS program as an intervention to keep them in school.

The FSP is designed to provide academic support (e.g., study skills, tutoring), counseling (anger management) and work to decrease the number of ODRs or contact with the Dean's Office and improve student achievement. The scope of the program includes academic, reading, social, emotional supports and study strategies:

- *Academic support (Monday and Friday)*: English and math teachers will support students during homeroom. Data show that students experience failure in these classes frequently during freshman year. Interventions in these areas will be implemented daily and content area teachers will serve as tutors.
- *Study Strategies (Tuesday)*: Guidance counselors will go to the homerooms once a week to teach study and organizational skills. They will also teach time management, test taking skills, college and career preparedness, and any other skills that will help students experience success during and after high school.
- *Reading support (Wednesday)*: A reading specialist will meet with students once a week to review reading skills being taught in the college preparation reading classes (freshman level reading classes for students that require additional support). This reading support will enrich students' skills in other content areas such as math, science, and social studies.
- *Social emotional (Thursday)*: A social worker will be assigned to work with students once a week to teach stress/anger management and coping techniques. This individual will also provide case management for students regarding grades, attendance, and discipline along with parent contact.

Program Goals and Rationale

This project's goal is to address the needs of students who are at-risk of being discipline, academic, and social/emotional concerns at the high school level by connecting them to adults in the school who will serve as parent-like figures in a

simulated family structure, in alignment with Chapman, Buckley, Sheehan, and Shochet (2013). These students include those who could be suspended and potentially participate in the ATS program and that struggle academically. Support will be provided to these students through the FSP as a means of addressing root problems prior to students getting into trouble both behaviorally and academically as they transition from eighth to ninth grade.

The research data collected through this study indicated that students who participated in the ATS program experienced the desired positive outcomes. The qualitative data revealed themes that emerged, which included parental involvement, staff support and collaboration. These themes are external factors that are important for student success. The program goals and vision placed an emphasis on at-risk students connecting and bonding with adults, other than their parents to curb problem behavior and increase student success. The quantitative data analysis did not reveal the ATS program having a statistically significant impact on student success due to the small sample size. However, there was a nearly statistically significant difference in the reduction of ODRs due to participation in the program. Further research must be done with a greater sample size to validate these differences. This project will allow us to obtain data using the premise of the attachment (Bowlby, 1969) and life course (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003) theories as the driving force.

The rationale behind these specific goals are based on the outcomes of the research conducted on the ATS program. ATS was designed to be a therapeutic approach

rather than punitive approach to discipline. Although the quantitative data did not show a statistically significant impact from the program due to the limited number of participants, the qualitative data were more telling and impactful in detailing the positive effects the program had on students. With these data and an effort to be proactive with students transitioning from middle to high school, FSP will be offered to students who will be handpicked based on the criteria mentioned above with input from administrators, teachers, deans, counselors, and social workers from the feeder middle schools as well as the high school. This usage aligns with the conclusions of a case study by Chin et al. (2012) involving a student who had discipline problems. The researchers found that proactive discipline strategies that incorporate a learning approach can successfully replace punitive discipline practices (Chin et al., 2012, p. 170). With this in mind, the development of the FSP will have a significant impact on student success academically, socially, and emotionally.

Review of Literature

Introduction

This review of literature focuses on the two theories used to justify the creation of the FSP for at-risk students entering high school: Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and Elder's life course theory (Elder et al., 2003). These theories support the need for such a program by explaining the need for ninth grade transition programs while providing academic, social and emotional support for at-risk students.

To find articles related to the topic, I began the search using the Walden University electronic library. I searched two multidisciplinary databases including: ProQuest and Academic Search Complete. I choose these databases due to the multidisciplinary nature of the topic. Transition programs connect to education, sociology and psychology; therefore, the two databases referenced above allowed me to search many different areas. The search spanned from 2010 through 2015 and included such key terms and phrases such as: *middle to high school transition programs, transition programs, bridge programs, ninth grade programs, and attachment and life course theories.*

Theoretical Framework

Two theories were used to drive the development of this project. The first theory is the attachment theory, which was developed by Bowlby (1969), a British psychologist. This theory purports that behavior originates with evolutionary history and functions as a biological system, just as ingestion and the reproductive system (Kurth, 2013, p. 16). This theory speaks to the long-term relationships between parents or those in a parent-like roles. The attachment formed by parents or a parent-like figure is critical to the social and emotional development of a child. This relationship allows the child to feel secure, which provides the confidence a child or student needs to explore, be resilient and ultimately experience success. When students do not establish these relationships, they will seek them from others outside of the maternal relationships and from individuals who make them feel safe and secure (Maxwell, Spielman, Joel, & Mac Donald, 2013). If students are able to create similar relationships with a teacher or mentor in the school setting, then

students are able to make the necessary connections and receive the similar type of support they need.

The second theory used in the development of this project was Elder's life course theory (Elder et al., 2003), which is applicable to the study of transition programs for schools. Life course theory combines sociology, psychology, and demographics to explain how individuals develop. Benner (2011) commented that the life course theory puts more emphasis on social contexts and processes, reflecting on an individual's personal development and contribution to society. These theories give insight as to the importance of addressing social and emotional issues and provides a rationale for the FSP. An FSP is instrumental in supporting students, especially at-risk students, as they transition from middle to high school.

In Section 1, social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) was the driving force for this body of research. This theory was appropriate for the alternative to suspension because social control theory as it is applied to the ATS program is from the prospective of getting students involved, making them feel attached to the school environment and engaging them in the school culture (Hirschi, 1969). With relation to the ATS program, this intervention occurred when students were already in high school although many of these students exhibited characteristics of at-risk behavior prior to them being involved in the program and entering high school. The attachment theory supports the need to develop programs to assist students who do not feel connected to their mothers from

when they were babies. These children will need to feel this connection amongst other important factors to supports them as they enter ninth grade to help them be successful.

In summary, the ATS program is a solution to assist students who are already in high school and are having difficulty experiencing success (reactive). Conversely, the project in Section 3 uses what we know about students who are at risk for not being successful to participate in a transition program upon entering high school and ultimately preventing them from participating in the ATS program (proactive). The development of this project was an obviously precursor and preventative measure to decrease the number of at-risk students participating in the ATS program.

In today's society, schools are burdened with the responsibility of managing the many negative external factors that affect at-risk students while being accountable for students not achieving in the classroom. These factors include drugs, violence, and socioeconomic status to name a few. Students and families expect schools to provide the support and safety for them to have the ability to engage in school. Students who do not feel engaged may have experienced this type of alienation and disconnectedness from as early as kindergarten. However, this feeling is heightened or intensified during their teenage years (Schulz, 2011). According to Shepard, Salina, Girtz, Cox, Davenport, and Hillard (2012), "positive bonds are crucial in empowering students from challenging backgrounds" (p. 49). These types of bonds must be formed and are imperative for all students, especially those who are at risk.

The Need for Ninth-Grade Transition Programs

One of the most challenging times for students is when they transition from eighth to ninth grade. The transition affects students mentally and emotionally (Rice, Frederickson, & Seymour, 2011). Reports show that students come to school with high levels of aggression and hostility that are caused by various societal factors such as changing family structures, violence, and media (Williams, 2012). Students in this transition period often have poor attendance, lower grades, and begin to exhibit behavioral problems (Rice et al., 2011).

The transition to high school is particularly difficult for many Black students who enter with low achievement and are often seen as *defiant and uncooperative* by their teachers (Gregory & Thompson, 2010). This time is especially difficult for at-risk students. Students usually come from smaller middle schools that offer a better opportunity for them to build relationships with peers and adults (Benner, 2011). Most students are sent to larger high schools where they are expected to quickly learn how to navigate through large buildings (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012). If an at-risk student is unable to establish those bonds and connect at the middle school level, it proves nearly impossible to establish these bonds at the high school level (Royabal, Thorton, & Usinger, 2014). Feeling connected to school is academically more important than the social aspect of school (Beland, 2014). For at-risk students, these bonds must be established and maintained and educators must be strategic and purposeful in creating a structure where this can occur (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012).

The need for establishing transition programs for at risk students was illustrated through a yearlong study of a program in Kentucky (Powell & Marshall, 2011). Powell and Marshall (2011) emphasized the different perception of successful programs from the vantage point of administrators versus student participants. They also found that school administrators were primarily concerned with paperwork and the academic aspects (grades) of transitioning students, while students focused on the significance of building relationships with adults and making personal connections (Powell & Marshall, 2011). Successful programs include a combination of both with an emphasis being placed on the latter (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012).

The Regents Academy, a program for at-risk students in Binghamton, NY is an example of a program that successfully supported ninth and tenth grade students transitioning into high school (Wilson, Kauffman, & Purdy, 2011). This program bases its structure and success on building relationships and connectedness to the group (Wilson et al., 2011). Over the course of a year, students who participated in the academy outperformed their counterparts at other schools in New York. (Wilson et al., 2011). Wilson et al.'s (2011) study used evolutionary science to inform educational practice, which centered around social groups cooperating and working together to achieve shared goals.

Research has also shown that transition programs lead to student success, whether for elementary to middle school, middle to high school or high school to college. Some students need the extra support to be successful. Choi (2012) stated that, "In particular,

there is now a considerable body of research indicating that pupils who make the transition to secondary school may experience declines in academic achievement and attendance” (p. 28). In addition to the aforementioned rationale for creating transition programs, students who had more office discipline referrals in middle school are not well adjusted and have lower achievement in ninth grade (Royabal, Thorton, & Usinger, 2014). Being proactive with high school programs of this type seeks to keep students in school and decrease the number of ODRs through active and committed participation in the program.

Academic Supports

Ninth grade students tend to experience a high failure rate in core classes such as math and English (Bornsheuer, Polonyi, Andrews, Fore, & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Heppen et al., 2013; Roderick, Kelley-Kemple, Johnson, & Beechum, 2014). Tutors in these core subjects can assist in meeting the needs of students both academically and socially (Prince George’s County, 2014). Tutors are able to provide the extra one on one support that at-risk students need and there is evidence to support that tutors improve student retention due to the relationships that can be fostered through the establishment of the bonds and relationships that are necessary for student success (Nelson-Royes, 2013). Tutors provide another parent-like figure, which is a key component in the attachment theory (Prince George’s County, 2014). For this reason, administrators have indicated that a tutor is included in the FSP twice a week for math and English, and additional

support in reading is also provided by a reading specialist (Prince George's County, 2014).

To provide the support that at-risk students need to be successful, educators must work with students to build their capacity for success. This includes their learning capacity and learning experiences. According to Harsh and Mallory (2013), in order to provide the support to the students for success, we must also build and change their mindset to believe that they can achieve and will achieve at a higher level. This occurs well before high school and begins as early as in elementary school. In a 2014 study by Hazel, Pfaff, Albanes, and Gallagher, they identified key factors for a successful transition program that supports ninth graders being on time for graduation. Vertical articulation between the feeder middle schools and the receiving high school is critical in ensuring successful transitions academic and behaviorally. The communication between the schools to prepare students for the transition will pay dividends long term. An emphasis should be placed on addressing behavioral concerns in a manner that is reformative as opposed to punitive. Orientation activities must begin in the spring and continue through the summer just prior to students entering high school. Supports must be provided and sustained after students arrive. A vital component of any successful transition is addressing the belief that a positive change can occur.

Additionally, special education and English Language Learners are found to be less successful in school in comparison to their peers and as a result they need additional supports (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012). These students tend to dropout and fail to

graduate at a more increased rate than general education students. The findings from this study “suggest that educators must invest in supporting students’ academic and behavioral success early on” (Conley, Marchant, & Caldarella, 2014, p. 440). Teachers also need professional development so they can become knowledgeable and understanding how to provide these supports.

Social and Emotional Support

Another contributing factor to the need for ninth grade transition programs is the increase in the number of students who have social and emotional concerns that are impacting their ability to be successful in school (Iizuka, Barrett, Gillies, Cook, & Marinovic, 2014). Research shows that there is a need for mental health services to support students. In a study on mental health services in inner-city public schools, teachers reported that 40% of the student body had social, behavioral, emotional, and concentration problems (Walter et al. (2011). The social and emotional needs of students are having strong influences in school and especially for students with the added pressure of transitioning from middle to high school.

Lack of access to mental health services for student who are at-risk, especially those in urban areas can present a challenge and have an adverse effect on positive student outcomes. Students who struggle with mental health problems tend to be bullied, have suicidal ideations, and engage in risky health behaviors (Waters, Lester, Wenden, & Cross, 2012). A growing body of research shows the advantage of creating preventive school based programs for students who have mental health concerns (Chapman, 2013;

Chin et al., 2012; Sharkey & Finning, 2012). Although it can be challenging in establishing these programs in low-income communities or for students who are at risk, data from active programs provided promising results. In addition, the benefits of establishing such a program provide the connectors that these adolescents need to be successful. School based programs that have proven to be successful include those with increased connectedness and are associated with school retention and emotional health (Chapman et al., 2013).

Connectedness/Relationships

Transitions programs that are considered successful have many aspects of their programs in common. Those include: student engagement, positive school environment, teachers who are kind and considerate and who are aware of the increased amount of student's workload, expectations are communicated and student orientation is embedded in the program. Although these are not the only components to ensuring a successful program, they appear to be the most common themes that contribute to successful programs (Powell & Marshall, 2011; Royabal, Thorton, & Usinger, 2014).

Students who are engaged in their classes and in their school environment tend to want to be at school and excel academically and socially. Teachers play an important role in creating and supporting these types of relationships. Ellerbrock and Kiefer (2013, p. 171) suggested that students are motivated by an intrinsic need to be connected to the school environment, and when a school responds to this need, students develop and increase in motivation to excel in school. When students do not feel as though they are

involved and important to the school environment, it affects the way they feel about school and their achievement in school. Students tend to be truant and dropout due to the lack of connectedness. Conversely, students who were successful during this freshman year of high school felt a sense of belonging and connectedness to their school and adults in the building. Whether it is through co-curricular activities, mentoring, tutoring or other school related activities, all students want to feel that they matter and as a result, they do well and excel (Charles & Alexander, 2014).

Participation in the FSP will provide students with effective supervision through mentoring and it will increase self-esteem and self-concept in students by providing positive reinforcements. In a study by Swinson (2010), students indicated the top five rewards that motivated them and boosted their confidence. These rewards included parents being informed about good behavior, positive comments and whole-class praise, all of which contribute to a student's self-esteem and concept of him or herself.

The review of literature provides the rationale and the necessary elements needed for the creation of a FSP geared toward at-risk ninth grade students. Many schools across the nation have experienced success with the creation of such programs. The key component to a successful FSP includes academic, social and emotional supports. The ability to engage and connect students to help them build healthy relationship is also important aspect of FSP. The remainder of this section will discuss the proposed FSP project.

Implementation

Resources and Existing Supports

There are many resources available to support this project. The school is a part of a unit district that has three feeder middle schools. Since this district is classified as a unit district, which means it serves students from Pre K- 12, it allows a wonderful opportunity for articulation between the middle schools and the high schools. In addition to the logistics, the high school social worker works as a behavioral specialist for the entire student body. This social worker works with students who return from suspensions and expulsions to coordinate groups based on the student body needs. The behavioral specialist has the flexibility with her hours to coordinate the program and work directly with students in various capacities. In addition to these resources, some existing supports are built into the school day. Each freshman student is assigned a homeroom, which allows a designated time for students to meet each day with their family group and support staff members (e.g., teachers, behavioral specialist, and guidance counselor).

Potential Barriers

The potential barrier to this program would be financial. Money will be needed to provide the awards luncheon for the students and their families as well as certificates. It would be ideal to purchase a curriculum to use with the students for the social, emotional and study skills part of the program. The solution to this barrier is to write grants that will fund the project. Each year the district solicits proposals for grants that are awarded to support activities and programs that are created in the district. This project would fit the

criteria to be awarded such a grant and it is an obvious and convenient option to obtain funding.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The project will be implemented at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year; however, students will have a transition meeting at the end of their eighth grade year, which will require them to come to the high school for a mini orientation lasting approximately one and a half hours. During this meeting, students will meet the principal, assistant principal, coordinator, and guidance counselors. They will also participate in an icebreaker with the other students from the middle school so they can become familiar with fellow classmates from the other feeder schools. Students will experience a guided tour by graduating seniors who will talk to them directly with them about their high school experience and concerns.

This plan calls for specific tasks to be performed by different personnel:

- *Principal*: Approve program and delegate to the assistant principal of curriculum and instruction.
- *Assistant principal of curriculum and instruction*: Supervise the development and implementation of the FSP and work directly with the FSP coordinator, teachers, and guidance counselor to coordinate the program.
- *FSP Coordinator (social worker)*: Coordinate the program with the teachers, guidance counselors, and students. Serve as the caseworker for students that participate in the program and provide social and emotional support. Manage and

collect data associated with the program to assist with the evaluation process.

Meet biweekly with the assistant principal to discuss the program needs, concerns and successes. Plan the annual awards ceremony.

- *Guidance counselor:* Meet with students once a week to assist with study strategies, organizational skills, college and career readiness and other supports.
- *Homeroom teachers:* Math and English teacher specifically assigned to work with students in small groups twice a week to reinforce math and English skills being taught in the classroom.
- *Reading specialist:* To review skills being taught in the college prep reading class and promote reading.
- *Students:* To be committed to full participation in the program for the full academic year. Students will sign a contract indicating their level of commitment.

Project Evaluation

The assistant principal will work with the FSP coordinator to collect data from staff, students, and parents of those participating in the program. This data will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The FSP coordinator will collect qualitative data in the form of questionnaires from program participants and parents and data will be collected in the form grades, attendance, and discipline referrals from students. This information will be collected and compared to the data from eighth grade (baseline) and then compared to each semester of ninth grade (Fall 2017 and Spring 2018). This type of program evaluation will be summative because the purpose of the evaluation is to assess

the quality and impact of the fully implemented FSP and will take place at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 school year.

The outcome goal is to enhance student engagement, success, retention, and completion of ninth grade through participation in the FSP. The objective is that by June 2018, 100% of the FSP participants will successfully complete his or her freshman year of high school and be prepared and eligible to begin his or her sophomore year for the 2018-2019 academic year. The key stakeholders for this project include senior leadership, administration and staff at the high school, student participants, parents, and the grant funders.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

The development and success of the FSP could have possible positive social implications. If this program is successful, it could drive changes in all middle schools in the district and revise the way in which students are transitioned from middle to high school. Transition and bridge programs would be more extensive than the current step-up day the schools in this district currently use as a way to prepare eighth graders for high school. This program will be more encompassing and occur over the course of an academic year instead of during one day. It could also impact how freshman students are assigned to homerooms during their freshman year and throughout their high school tenure.

The FSP is important to the local stakeholders because it will be a way to take a proactive approach to influence student positive outcomes in comparison to what has been conventionally used. This program can increase student retention in high school, which will help improve graduation rates. It will also contribute to higher student achievement in such core classes as math and English, which will ultimately improve student GPAs and scores on standardized exams. Finally, if students are experiencing success in school, they will want to come to school and do well, which will also decrease the truancy rate in high school and students will have fewer discipline referrals because they will be engaged in the educational experience. All of the aforementioned will positively impact all stakeholders-district and high school administration, high school staff, students and parents.

Far-Reaching

This research is important in the larger context because it can possibly cause a decrease or eliminate the pipeline to prison. The “pipeline” is the result of students engaging in delinquent behavior as juveniles and not placing an emphasis on scholastic achievement. Since students will be in school, more students might graduate and attain postgraduate careers and degrees because they will further their education. With more individuals advancing their education and work experience, the unemployment may decrease. Supporting students and keeping kids in school may contribute to a positive domino effect for the nation.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In Section 4, I reflect on the strengths and limitations of the project and recommend alternative approaches to establishing the FSP. In addition, this section provides insight into what I learned about myself as a practitioner in regards to scholarship, project development, leadership and change. It also includes a discussion of why this work is important as well as the implications, applications, and direction for future research. A final summation of the project is also included in this section.

Project Strengths

This project has significant strengths in regards to retaining and supporting students that participate in the program. These strengths will benefit the students in the immediate future and have a long-term impact on student success and achievement. The goals of the program are to: (1) increase student retention, (2) increase the graduation rate, and (3) ensure that students are college and career-ready by the end of their senior year. The planned outcomes include supporting students in these three goal areas. When students, especially at risk students are not supported during the first few years of high school, they have a tendency to drop out or are chronically truant. This is reflected in the school data and the school will fall short of achieving the district mission, which is to help students become lifelong learners and responsible adults.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

A limitation to this project is that it will only be implemented in one of the two high schools in the parent school district. Due to the mobility rate in the district, students often move between the two schools that are in two different villages. Therefore, if a student transfers from one high school to the other during their freshman year, they will no longer be able to participate in the program, which will also increase inequality between the two schools. The students at the other high school in the district that does not have the program will not be able to get the additional support.

An additional limitation to this project is the need to secure funding to support and expand the program. The program cost approximately \$ 3,000 per semester to pay the FSP teachers since they are currently volunteering to work with the program. Ideally, 15 teachers are needed to work with the program to increase the number of students who are able to participate in the program. If more teachers do not volunteer or funding is not provided, the number of students who are able to benefit from this support is minimal. Due to this limitation, only 45-60 students can participate in the program this year, which is only about 5-6% of the freshmen class.

In summary, I (the researcher) anticipate that the program will positively impact the students who participate in the program despite only a finite number of students will have the ability to participate in it. My hope is that over the course of the year, the participants will experience significant gains and the dropout rate and number of ODRs will decrease from ninth grade to tenth grade because students will place their focus on

being successful academically and will be engaged in the school environment (co-curricular activities, academics, etc.) Student engagement is a major characteristic in effective and successful high school programs for at-risk students. (Royabal, Thorton, & Usinger, 2014; Wilson, Kauffman, & Purdy, 2011). Their attendance rate will increase and truancy concerns will decrease since students will be engaged in school. Social and emotional concerns will be identified early and proactively addressed during the weekly meetings with the social worker.

Recommendation for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to establishing the FSP for at-risk students is to create a freshman academy for all freshman students entering high school in this district. It would be structured similar to the FSP; however, it would impact all freshman students. Students would work with the same core teachers in order to build a small community environment which is needed, based on students and staff feedback to lessen the feeling of being lost that they encounter after leaving their smaller middle schools (600-1,100 students) and entering a massive high school, which is 13th largest of the almost 900 in the state (Niche, 2016). The program would serve as a school within a school or in a separate building if space were available in the district. An alternative to having a freshman academy would be to build smaller high schools as opposed to the large high school. According to research on class size in Tennessee and Wisconsin, it outlines the benefits of smaller classes for at-risk students regarding student achievement, and

graduation rates (Mathias, 2016). A school with fewer students would mean smaller class sizes, more one-on-one attention, and creating the desired environment (Mathias, 2016).

Being proactive to the needs of the students beginning in elementary school instead of waiting until middle and high school is an approach that is not common in education (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012; Caldarella et al., 2011). Schools should begin early interventions in elementary school when students begin to show academic and discipline concerns and are not experiencing success academically. Rarely are students provided with additional tutoring or are held back during these early stages of education (Nelson-Royes, 2013). Social and emotional support included in the curriculum at this age for students who show these signs or need this type of assistance is essential (Schulz, 2011). School districts should also look into developing transition programs for students as they leave elementary and enter middle school to create supports for all levels as they progress through K-12 (Caldarella et al., 2011).

Scholarship

I learned a great deal about myself and the research process through developing this project. The theme that resonated most through this process for me was the importance of using evidence to show there is a need for a specific programming and using the data to drive the development of a project. Staying current with the literature and conducting research within the school context will empower school leaders and allow them to be proactive in supporting students before issues and concerns threaten the academic futures of the study body. Periodically reviewing recent research findings and

collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating data (from the local-setting) are essential to obtaining a commitment from stakeholders and in most cases, for securing funding for projects.

Project Development and Evaluation

An important aspect of project development is to use research based initiatives to support the development/creation of a program and to evaluate the efficacy of the program in the school environment. Developing projects based on solid research helps those investing time, energy, and finances to feel confident that they are supporting a program that has the potential for success and will accomplish the goal that it sets forth to accomplish. All projects should include an evaluation component to validate the continuation or demise of a program. These components are critical when beginning new programs, especially those that are new to a district or school.

Leadership and Change

Throughout this research experience I have learned it is the responsibility of the person leading a change or developing a program, to prove why a proposed change or new initiative is beneficial to the students in a particular school or district. I can best accomplish this task with the support of senior leadership (senior leadership, district directors, etc.). Using sound credible research to support the changes that I want to occur is key. Without both, it is almost impossible for significant change to occur.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a scholar, I learned that I thoroughly enjoy the research process. I have enjoyed saturating myself with knowledge pertaining to suspension and transition programs and the effect they have on students. I am excited about using this acquired information to develop programs for the students in my school district that will have a positive effect on their future and keep them in school. Helping students achieve and be prepared for post-high school opportunities based on researched best practices is the reason why I am an administrator.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Throughout the research process, I have grown as a practitioner. It is important that as an educational leader, I always exercise best practices. This means incorporating research-based practices into my daily routine and not supporting programs without having a rationale as to why they should be put into place. All practices must be data-driven. There must always be a systematic way for implementing programs. Prior to this research experience, it was not always something that I made a priority, but will do from this point on.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, I have learned to be patient and not rush to administer programs without buy-in from stakeholders. Regardless of how much I believe in a project or the amount of research I have to support its creation. If those responsible for implementing a new program do not appreciate and support the value of the endeavor, then it will not be successful. Sometimes it takes more time and research than expected

for others to see your vision. This happens particularly when a large budget is involved with a project.

The Project's Potential Impact on Society

This work is important because it concentrates on the need for schools to focus on academics, social and emotional concerns as a way to decrease the need to focus on discipline-related issues. Although the project may not eliminate the need for alternative to suspension programs, it is designed to minimize the number of students who participate in such programs because their focus will be on school and academics. The students' goal will be to graduate on time and be college- and career-ready. School districts must be proactive and provide resources before students' discipline concerns cause them to disengage from school completely.

This focus on addressing the social emotional needs of students throughout their academic career is relatively new, but has become a necessity. Students encounter many social and emotional situations throughout school without them having the skills to cope with them. The pressures that students face associated with the demands outside of school has made this aspect of the school experience a priority to address. Incorporating this weekly component into the homeroom experience provides students, who would not normally have social and emotional support, with what they need to be successful. This aspect of the program will have an impact on discipline and take a preventive approach. Students will learn how to manage their social and emotional needs, such as anger, to prevent fights and other aggressive acts that dominate behavior and discipline concerns.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project allows for positive change at individual-, familial-, organizational-, and societal-levels. Individually, it will allow students who are at-risk to stay in school and not get expelled due to disciplinary, academic, and social emotional needs. These students will graduate from college and be prepared for post-high school success that includes attending college, a trade school, or becoming gainfully employed. At the family level, in many cases, these students are first generation high school graduates and the first to have the opportunity to attend college or a trade school. Graduating from high school will have a positive financial impact on a student, and on his or her family, because students who graduate from high school and attend college (or a trade school) earn more money than those who do not; they are able to obtain better employment. From an organizational standpoint, the success of this project will support school districts creating and structuring transition programs for students matriculating from middle to high school. The FSP can potentially engage all students, especially at-risk students in school and deter them from suspensions or expulsions. School districts are responsible for providing a free and appropriate education for all school-age students and that includes those who are suspended and expelled. If the number of students who are frequently suspended or expelled decreases it could potentially decrease the need for alternative schools.

As referenced in studies connecting discipline to crime (Cristini et al., 2012; Fowler, 2011; Monahan et al., 2014; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011), deviant behavior, especially in school, makes students vulnerable to criminal activity. Suspensions can

influence the crime rate in the communities in which students live because suspended students are not in school or involved in constructive activities. Suspended students have an increased amount of idle time compared to students who are not suspended (Pesce & Wilczynski, 2005; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). Suspensions can have an adverse effect not only on the individual student and their community but also society as a whole, as a growing need for police manpower is needed to ensure that communities are safe (Curtis, 2014). For students who engage in inappropriate behavior, suspension may be the precursor for them to enter into the school-to-jail pipeline (ACLU, 2016; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). Jail and prison then becomes a symbolic educational institution in which society pays for through tax dollars over a longer period of time rather than the school age years. (Fowler, 2011) The investment on the front end will outweigh paying for an adult to be incarcerated for years.

Finally, the success of this program may allow FSPs to become the standard for all high school programs with the goal of being proactive instead of reactive. FSPs may be included in the line budget at the state and local level. The reason for the positive changes at each level is due to the anticipated positive results that will occur and that have occurred in similar problems based on previous research conducted and discussed in the review of literature.

Future research should focus on the factors that make FSP programs successful so that money can be used to develop and sustain these programs in all high schools. Based on the research data that was obtained through this study, there was a moderate

significance for those students that participated in the program. However, additional research must be conducted to determine if the ATS program is making a significant difference with modifying inappropriate behavior.

Conclusion

If students are engaged in the school environment and genuinely believe that they will get the support needed to be successful, then they will succeed and rise to the occasion. Discipline problems will decrease and student achievement will increase because students will be in school and will be focusing on learning. This belief system and culture must be established in school districts for freshmen students to experience success and matriculate through high school. School districts must also realize that this should begin in elementary school and continue through middle and high school. Each level of education must incorporate activities and programs that address problems early and quickly and not wait until the last four years of a student's pre-college experience (high school) to change behaviors and address academic and social emotional concerns.

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Appendix A: FSP Curriculum Plan

Purpose: To help support, retain, decrease discipline referrals and ensure students are college and career ready by graduation.

Level: 9th graders entering high school

Learners: Students who experienced difficult in eighth grade academically, socially and in some cases behaviorally. These students will benefit from early intervention and support during their first year of high school.

Units: 25 minutes homerooms daily

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Study Strategies-Organizing Information I</u> <i>Materials:</i> handout, Butcher Paper 2 passages</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To explore different types of note taking</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Practice different types of note taking and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Student notes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Assign passages that are progressively difficult</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Speed Reading</u> <i>Materials:</i> Preselected passages</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The reading specialist will use selected passages to teach students how to effectively speed read.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Timed reading activities, quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress during the course of each semester for most improved student.</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Decision Making & Problem Solving</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Handouts (Kennedy's Decision, Working Through the Decisions, Pros and Cons, Working Possible Pros and Cons)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To explore the process of decision making. To apply the decision-making process to a scenario.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will be asked whether they have</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>

			<p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>ever had to make a difficult decision. The decision making process will be introduced to students and students will be presented with. <i>Kennedy's Decision</i> Students will engage in a discussion and share out answers.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will be presented with another scenario where they will have to explain the decision making process and the outcome.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Make adaptations were needed.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Students will be given a scenario to explain the decision process.</p>	
2	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading</p>	<p><u>Study Strategies-Organizing information II</u> <i>Materials:</i> handout, Butcher Paper 2 passages of text</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To explore different types of note taking</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Practice different types of note taking and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Student notes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Assign passages</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Speed Reading</u> <i>Materials:</i> Preselected passages</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The reading specialist will use selected passages to teach students how to effectively speed read.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Timed reading</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Decision Making & Problem Solving</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Kennedy's Decision, Working Through the Decision, Pros and Cons, Working Possible Pros and Cons</i>)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To explore the process of decision making. To apply the decision-making process to a scenario</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading</p>

	reports & semester grades	that are progressively difficult <i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades	activities and quizzes and exams <i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student. <i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades	<i>Activities:</i> Students will be asked whether they have ever had to make a difficult decision. The decision making process will be introduced to students and students will be presented with <i>Kennedy's Decision</i> . Students will engage in a discussion and share out answers. <i>Assessments:</i> Students will be presented with another scenario where they will have to explain the decision making process and the outcome. <i>Teacher Notes:</i> Make adaptations were needed. <i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Students will be given a scenario to explain the decision process.	reports & semester grades
3	<u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes <i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English. <i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes <i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes <i>Teacher Notes:</i> None	<u>Study Strategies- Three Column Note Taking</u> <i>Materials:</i> Copy of an article, textbook or other reading material. Three-Column Notes Template <i>Objectives:</i> To record notes in a three column format. To differentiate the main idea from the supporting idea. <i>Activities:</i> Review the concept of note taking and prepare	<u>Reading Support-Speed Reading</u> <i>Materials:</i> Preselected passages for <i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension. <i>Activities:</i> The reading specialist will use selected passages to teach students how to effectively speed read.	<u>Social Emotional-Decision Making & Problem Solving</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Kennedy's Decision, Working Through the Decision, Pros and Cons, Working Possible Pros and Cons</i>) <i>Objectives:</i> To explore the process of decision making. To apply the decision-	<u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes <i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math. <i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math <i>Assessments:</i> Math unit exams & quizzes <i>Teacher Notes:</i> None

	<p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>the template. Give the students the pre-selected passage and explain to the students that they will read it and complete the three-column notes as a class.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will be able to demonstrate that they can take three column notes.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Select and adapt this activity according to the needs of the students.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><i>Assessments:</i> Timed reading activities and quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>making process to a scenario</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will be asked whether they have ever had to make a difficult decision. The decision making process will be introduced to students and students will be presented with <i>Kennedy's Decision</i>. Students will engage in a discussion and share out answers.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will be presented with another scenario where they will have to explain the decision making process and the outcome.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Make adaptations were needed.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Students will be given a scenario to explain the decision process.</p>	<p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
4	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Creating Study Plans I</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>The Best Way For Me To Prepare and Sample Study Plan</i>)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To create a Study Plan based on upcoming projects and tests. To free time in order to accommodate time for studying.</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Speed Reading</u> <i>Materials:</i> Preselected passages for</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The reading specialist will use selected passages to teach students how to</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Identifying Learning Strengths</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Finding Your Strengths, What are My Learning Strengths?, My Learning Strengths Profile</i>)</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the basic concept of learning differences. To</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p>

	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><i>Activities:</i> Conduct and open discussion about how students study and introduce creating a study plan</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a study plan for an upcoming test and the results of the test.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>effectively speed read.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Timed reading activities, quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>Understand the basic intelligences found in Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). To complete and an assessment of the individual learning strengths according to MI. To tally their personal learning strengths. To tally responses for the class as a whole.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The teacher will instructor will facilitate a discussion about different ways of learning. Students will distribute and read the handout Finding Your Strengths and then students will take the Learning Styles Inventory. Students will then then work as a group to tally the classroom outcomes and then conclude with a discussion about the results of the inventory.</p>	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
5	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies- Creating Study Plans II</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (The Best Way For Me To Prepare, Sample Study Plan) & Study Plans</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To create a Study Plan based on upcoming projects and tests. To manage free time in order to accommodate time for studying.</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Speed Reading</u> <i>Materials:</i> Preselected passages for</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The reading specialist will use selected passages to teach students how to</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Identifying Learning Strengths</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Finding Your Strengths, What are My Learning Strengths?, My Learning Strengths Profile</i>)</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the basic concept of learning differences. To</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math unit exams & quizzes</p>

	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><i>Activities:</i> Conduct and open discussion about how students study and introduce creating a Study Plan</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a Study Plan for an upcoming test and the results of the test,</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>effectively speed read.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Timed reading activities and quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>Understand the basic intelligences found in Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). To complete and an assessment of the individual learning strengths according to MI. To tally their personal learning strengths. To tally responses for the class as a whole.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The teacher will instructor will facilitate a discussion about different ways of learning. Students will distribute and read the handout <i>Finding Your Strengths</i> and then students will take the <i>Learning Styles Inventory</i>. Students will then then work as a group to tally the classroom outcomes and then conclude with a discussion about the results of the inventory</p>	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
6	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Make Your Own Test</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Test Taking Tips & You Make the Test</i>)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To develop questions that might be on a test. To take a practice test created by peers.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Discuss what type of questions you commonly see on a test, read the</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Comprehension</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student selected novel</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will read and discuss a classic novel to help build comprehension, explore characters,</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Identifying Learning Strengths</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Finding Your Strengths, What are My Learning Strengths?, My Learning Strengths Profile</i>)</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the basic concept of learning differences. To Understand the</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook and student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math unit exams & quizzes</p>

	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>handout (<i>Test Taking Tips</i>) and make a short test using specific testing formats.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a test.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>story structure and meaning</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Discussions and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student progress of during the course of each semester for most improved student and monitor students progress.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports and semester grades</p>	<p>basic intelligences found in Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). To complete and an assessment of the individual learning strengths according to MI. To tally their personal learning strengths. To tally responses for the class as a whole.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> The teacher will instructor will facilitate a discussion about different ways of learning. Students will distribute and read the handout <i>Finding Your Strengths</i> and then students will take the <i>Learning Styles Inventory</i>. Students will then work as a group to tally the classroom outcomes and then conclude with a discussion about the results of the inventory</p>	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
7	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Make Your Own Test II</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Test Taking Tips & You Make the Test</i>)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To develop questions that might be on a test. To take a practice test created by peers.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Discuss what type of questions you commonly see on a test, read the</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Comprehension</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student selected novel</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will read and discuss a classic novel to help build comprehension, explore characters, story structure and meaning</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Verbal/Linguistic</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student Handout-<i>Verbal/Linguistic</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p>

	<p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>handout (<i>Test Taking Tips</i>) and make a short test using specific testing formats.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a test.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><i>Assessments:</i> Discussions and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress during the course of each semester for most improved student and monitor their progress.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports and semester grades</p>	<p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they read for fun, enjoy storytelling and writing essays and do they keep a journal? Students will engage</p>	<p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
8	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies- Analyzing Mistakes I</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (Analyzing Mistakes) & A graded test or quiz</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To reflect on test taking and test preparation strategies.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Review a test or quiz that was graded and discuss how to analyze one's mistakes. Reflect on the mistakes and set a SMART goal.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a test.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Comprehension</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student selected novel</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will read and discuss a classic novel to help build comprehension, explore characters, story structure and meaning</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Discussions and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student and monitor student's progress.</p>	<p><i>Social Emotional- Experiencing Multiple Intelligences- Logical/Mathematical</i></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Student Handout- Logical/Mathematical</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they find problem solving fun? Are you good at reasoning things out? Do you enjoy math? Are you good with numbers?</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>

			Evaluation Plan: 6 weeks grading reports and semester grades	Assessment: Students will make create a code for a peer to decipher. Teacher Note: Evaluation Plan: Students will reflect on the activity to determine which are personally enjoyable and/or challenging	
9	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Analyzing Mistakes</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (Analyzing Mistakes) and a graded test or quiz</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To reflect on test taking and preparation strategies.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Review the test or quiz that was graded and discuss how to analyze one's mistakes. Reflect on the mistakes and set a SMART goal.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a test.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Comprehension</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student selected novel</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will read and discuss a classic novel to help build comprehension, explore characters, story structure and meaning</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Discussions, exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student and monitor student's progress.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports and semester grades</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Visual/Spatial</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Student Handout-Visual/Spatial</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they think in pictures? Do they often imagine things? Do you enjoy completing puzzles? Do you have a good sense of direction? Do you like drawing?</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> Students will complete the rating scale and create original symbols to convey the meaning of these</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>

				<p>ideas: Equality, Intelligence or Regret.</p> <p><i>Teacher Note:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Complete the rating scale.</p>	
10	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies- Analyzing Mistakes III</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (<i>Analyzing Mistakes</i>) & a graded test or quiz</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To reflect on test taking and preparation strategies.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Review the test or quiz that was graded and discuss how to analyze one's mistakes. Reflect on the mistakes and set a SMART goal.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Creation of a test.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Comprehension</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student selected novel</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To teach students how to read faster to improve concentration and comprehension.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will read and discuss a classic novel to help build comprehension, explore characters, story structure and meaning</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Discussions, exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student and monitor student's progress.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports and semester grades</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Kinesthetic</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Student Handout-Kinesthetic</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they like participating in sports? Do they have a good sense of balance? DO you like working with your hands?</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> Ask students to select an occupation they would like to pursue and have them act out their occupation without talking.</p> <p><i>Teacher Note:</i></p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Complete the rating scale.</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>

11	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Tracking Grades</u> <i>Materials:</i> Handouts (Sample Grade Tracker & Grade Tracker)</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To analyze trends in academic performance using grade tracking.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Discuss tracking grades including the advantages and disadvantages. Go over the handout and allow students to track their grades.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students track their grades.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Vocabulary</u> <i>Materials:</i> Academic and ACT vocabulary words</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To build essential academic and ACT vocabulary to teach students how to read faster to improve reading comprehension and writing.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will be provide with a vocabulary list and participate in online vocabulary practice.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Vocabulary quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Musical/Rhythmic</u> <i>Materials:</i> Student Handout-Musical/Rhythmic</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they remember melodies easily? Do they like keeping rhythm? Do they enjoy singing? Have they ever played a musical instrument? Do you like listening to music?</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> Ask students to write the words to a song by changing the words to a song that they are already familiar.</p> <p><i>Teacher Note:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Complete the rating scale</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
12	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Making a Goal Map I</u> <i>Materials:</i> 8 ½ x 11 white paper,</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Vocabulary</u> <i>Materials:</i> Academic and</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Interpersonal</u></p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u> <i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p>

	<p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>Markers and or colored pencils</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To understand the rationale for setting long-term goals. To create a goal map of long-term goals for the academic, social, personal, family ad physical areas of their lives. To prioritize their goals.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> discuss goal setting and model an example of a goal map</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will set goals and create a goal map.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>ACT vocabulary words</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To build essential academic and ACT vocabulary to teach students how to read faster to improve reading comprehension and writing.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will be provide with a vocabulary list and participate in online vocabulary practice.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Vocabulary quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><i>Materials:</i> Student Handout- Interpersonal</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they understand people? Are you a leader? Do you like communicating with others? Do you prefer to work in groups? Are you sensitive to others? Do you learn better when you study with others? Do others come to you with problems?</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> Ask students to complete a social map.</p> <p><i>Teacher Note:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Complete the rating scale</p>	<p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
13	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Making a Goal Map II</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> 8 ½ x 11 white paper, Markers and or colored pencils</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To understand the rationale for setting</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Vocabulary</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Academic and ACT vocabulary words</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To build essential academic and ACT vocabulary to</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Intrapersonal</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Student Handout- Intrapersonal</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p>

	<p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>long-term goals. To create a goal map of long-term goals for the academic, social, personal, family ad physical areas of their lives. To prioritize their goals.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> discuss goal setting and model an example of a goal map</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will set goals and create a goal map.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>teach students how to read faster to improve reading comprehension and writing.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will be provide with a vocabulary list and participate in online vocabulary practice.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Vocabulary quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student’s progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking how they would describe themselves? Are you aware of your own dreams and desires? Do you understand your own feelings? Do you understand why you feel certain ways and how those feelings affect your actions? Do you find setting goals helpful? Do you keep a journal? Assessment: Ask students to select an occupation they would like to pursue and have students act out the occupation without talking.</p> <p><i>Teacher Note:</i> none</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Complete the rating scale</p>	<p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
14	<p><u>Academic Support-English</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in English.</p>	<p><u>Student Strategies-Making a Goal Map III</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> 8 ½ x 11 white paper, Markers and or colored pencils</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To understand the rationale for setting long-term goals. To</p>	<p><u>Reading Support-Vocabulary</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Academic and ACT vocabulary words</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To build essential academic and ACT vocabulary to</p>	<p><u>Social Emotional-Experiencing Multiple Intelligences-Naturalist</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> Student Handout-Naturalist</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To understand the</p>	<p><u>Academic Support-Math</u></p> <p><i>Materials:</i> textbook, student notes</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> To provide additional support for students in math.</p>

	<p><i>Activities:</i> Selected tutor students in English 9 College Prep classes</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> English unit exams & quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 week grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>create a goal map of long-term goals for the academic, social, personal, family and physical areas of their lives. To prioritize their goals.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> discuss goal setting and model an example of a goal map</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will set goals and create a goal map.</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>teach students how to read faster to improve reading comprehension and writing.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Students will be provide with a vocabulary list and participate in online vocabulary practice.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Vocabulary quizzes and exams</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> Keep track of student's progress of the course of each semester for most improved student.</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>	<p>intelligences involved in completing various activities. To reflect on which activities are personally most enjoyable and/or challenging.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Lead a discussion by asking students if they are curious about the world, Do they like to learn about plants and animals? Does their family have a pet? Would you like to have a pet? What type of pet do you have? Do you learn better when you put items in categories? Ask students to share any outdoor learning experience they may have had, such as school nature trips and attending camp.</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> Ask students to arrange the following words into a logical sequence: highway, path, street, lane and boulevard.</p> <p><i>Teacher Note:</i> Point out to students that not all students will select the same sequence</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> Complete the rating scale</p>	<p><i>Activities:</i> Tutor students in math</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Math Unit exams & Quizzes</p> <p><i>Teacher Notes:</i> None</p> <p><i>Evaluation Plan:</i> 6 weeks grading reports & semester grades</p>
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15	Final Exam Prep				
16	Final Exam Prep				

Appendix B: Interview Questions ATS Resource Provider

I. Efficacy

1. Discuss any improvements that could be made to the program to better assist in accomplishing its mission.
2. How could these improvements be implemented?
3. What do you think participants gain most from participation in the programs?
4. Have you seen any behavioral or social changes in the participants? Give an example.

II. Process

5. Describe how your community resource is structured to accommodate the ATS program.
6. Describe your role in relation to the ATS program?
7. How would you describe the students who participate in the program?
8. Describe the process of getting parents involved? Give a specific example.
9. Describe your relationship with the ATS Coordinator and the home school.
10. Discuss the therapeutic component of the program.

III. Summary

11. If you had to sum up your experience with the ATS program, how would you describe it?

Appendix C: 2017-2018 FSP Timeline

When	Activity
March 2017	Work with feeder middle schools to identify students for the program based on specific criteria (GPA, attendance, discipline record, etc.) Identify specific teachers and staff to work with the students in the program. Schedule date for transition meeting at the high school
April 2017	Create a letter to be sent to students and their parents or guardians Send out letter to parents Identify senior students to serve as tour guides for the transition orientation meeting Begin working on the curriculum
May 2017	Host transition orientation meeting at the high school Finalize responsibilities with teachers and staff who will work with the program Continue curriculum work
August 2017	Introduce the FSP to all faculty and staff during Teacher Institute Meet with teachers and staff prior to the first day of school to ensure that everything is ready for the first day of school
December 2017	Host first semester awards luncheon Review end of semester grades, attendance and discipline record.
March 2018	Work with feeder middle schools to identify students for the program based on specific criteria (GPA, attendance, discipline record, etc.) Identify specific teachers and staff to work with the students in the program. Schedule date for transition meeting at the high school
April 2018	Create a letter to be sent to students and their parents or guardians Send out letter to parents Identify senior students to serve as tour guides for the transition orientation meeting Begin working on the curriculum
May 2018	Host transition orientation meeting at the high school for the 2015-2016 SY Finalize responsibilities with teachers and staff who will work with the program Continue curriculum work Host end of program awards ceremony and luncheon
June 2018	Submit year 1 report and evaluation