Spring 2-2019

Effectiveness of Alternative School Interventions in Reducing Incidences of Violence in Schools and Improving Attendance and Graduation Rates

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by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

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This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my dissertation committee for always being available to offer encouragement and answer questions. Thanks goes out to Dr. Jill Hutcheson for her never-ending encouragement and support. Special thanks to Susan Royals and Dr. Kenneth Johnson for encouraging me to pursue the Ed.D., as well as Dr. June Murry for accepting this dissertation committee challenge. I want to thank all of my professors from the very beginning for doing a great job of preparing me for this educational journey, especially Dr. Terry Stewart for also acting as my adviser and keeping me on track throughout the registration process.

I want to thank my sisters Sharon Crockett and Kimberly Oliver for not only encouraging me to continue my educational pursuits, but for constantly checking on my health and well-being. I want to thank my four sons, Dr. Edmondo Robinson, Norman Robinson, Jr., Mitchell Robinson, and Miles Robinson for believing in me and making sacrifices so I could continue this undertaking, as well as my other family members and friends who believed in me and offered on-going encouragement. I also want to thank my parents, Norma J. and Charles E. Robinson, who made major sacrifices during their lifetime to ensure that we continued to pursue our education beyond secondary school.

Abstract

The purpose of this meta-analysis was to determine whether alternative school interventions were effective in reducing the incidences of violence in schools and improving attendance and graduation rates, whether positive behavior intervention supports were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives, and whether parental and community involvements were necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives.

I was concerned about the negative impact violence had on academics, health, the school environment, and within the community. I expected to identify as many problem types as possible and research similar problems in other areas to see what had been done to reduce violence and improve conditions in those schools and communities affected by violence. The presence of violence in schools led to a disruptive and threatening environment, physical injury, and emotional stress. To address this, teachers and administrators implemented programs designed to prevent, deter, and respond to potential violence in schools.

What I found was that it was difficult to assess the effectiveness of individual intervention strategies, because districts applied them in combination with one or more additional interventions. One way to overcome this difficulty and provide more useful data on the success of particular interventions was to begin longitudinal studies that tracked specific students over a long period of time, if those interventions could be studied in isolation. The impact of external factors, such as the neighborhood and home environment, must be considered and factored into each individual case as well, because of the many variations that existed. Generalizations were made in this study, because many of the schools studied had similar demographics. Despite the collateral influences

that negatively impacted student success, the use of the various intervention strategies appeared to have had an impact on school improvement in the United States.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, meta-analysis study was to determine whether alternative school interventions were effective in reducing the incidences of violence in schools and improving attendance and graduation rates, whether positive behavior intervention supports were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives, and whether parental and community involvements were necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives.

Rationale

The rationale for this study was to give schools and school districts a reference tool for alternative violence prevention and intervention strategies, based on documented, historical information related to this topic. This study may show which techniques have been effective historically, with consideration given to demographics. In the view of the researcher, studies current to this writing focused on a specific technique. This study will search previous studies and evaluate various techniques and combinations of strategies to determine which appeared to be the most effective methods. The study will look at what schools were doing, and consider reports of parental input, community organizational input, and whether there was parental follow-up when referrals were made to various community-based help organizations.

Research Questions

Through meta-analysis, this study considered the following questions.

RQ1. Are alternative education programs effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ2. Are positive behavior intervention supports effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ3. Is parental and community involvement necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives?

This paper provides some reasons why violence occurred in schools, how to address it, and more important, how to prevent it. Chapter One introduces the research problem and is organized into the following sections: purpose, rationale, background/historical perspective, definition of terms, discussion of meta-analysis, and limitations to the study.

To establish background knowledge about this research, I examined school environments so that incidents of violence, gang activity, threats against teachers and students, and drug use were known. First, I explored an adequate definition of school violence so that the true impact of school violence could be placed into perspective. The definition should be broad enough to include any activity that negatively affected a student's right to a safe educational environment, which included traveling to school, traveling home from school, and attending school sponsored events. The following paragraphs describe acts and activities which should be included in the definition for contextual purposes.

The chronic victimization of students by other students has been referred to as low-level violence (Larsen, 2003). Bullying was the most common form of low-level violence (Larsen, 2003). Sexual harassment was not a subject that received much attention in the topic of school violence (Larsen, 2003). Gender stereotypes abounded (i.e. girls were verbally abusive; boys bullied more than girls) (Larsen, 2003). Other acts to be included in the definition of violence are "rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon" (Larsen, 2003, p. 2)

Farrell and Meyer (1997) believed that indirect aggression should be examined in addition to the physical violence that was covered the news headlines. Indirect aggression was more likely to be used by girls and could be identified as aggressive acts that were committed, but allow the aggressor to remain unidentified; thereby, avoiding retaliation, disapproval, or punishment (Farrell & Meyer 1997). Also to be considered was electronic aggression, which was aggression perpetrated using technology to harass or bully someone by teasing, lying, ridiculing, making rude, mean, or threatening comments, or spreading rumors through text messaging, e-mail, or social media websites, or posting or sending videos or pictures (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2009).

Background: Historical Perspective

Violence in schools seemed to be a major problem all across America; in major metropolitan school districts and in smaller suburban and rural districts. Violence in schools not only impacted the school affected, but the neighborhood and the community were affected as well. When considering school violence, gang warfare and gun violence often comes to mind. School violence received more attention because of some tragic incidents that made national headlines over the 14 years previous to this writing. School violence interfered with the learning process. The long-range effects of school violence is yet to be determined. According to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2013) National Center for Educational Statistics, school violence could include emotional and physical ridicule or bullying, assaults, threats, sexual offenses, gang activity, trespassing, and acts of graffiti and vandalism. "School violence can make students fearful and affect their readiness and ability to learn," and the threat of violence "detracts from a positive school environment" (USDOE, 2013, p. 74)

The highly publicized shootings at Columbine High School (April 20, 1999) and in New Town, Connecticut (Sandy Hook massacre, December 14, 2012) created a nationwide fear of school violence and resulted in expanded school-based policing and zero-tolerance policies (Fowler, 2011). The *Washington Times* (2016) reported there were 142 school shootings since the Sandy Hook massacre, at the time of the report. The media tended to sensationalize school violence and classified it as extreme acts of violence, but such a classification was unsupported by statistical evidence (Brown & Munn, 2008). School shootings were rare, but they received a great deal of media attention because schools were generally insulated against the violence taking place in the community (Lawrence, 2007)

"Chronic victimization may be the primary antecedent that leads to more devastating" incidents, such as school shootings (Meyer-Adams & Connors, 2008, p. 212). Violence in schools "leads to a disruptive and threatening environment, physical injury, and emotional stress" (USDOE, 2007, p. 1). Teachers and administrators implemented "programs designed to prevent, deter, and respond to potential violence in schools" (USDOE, 2007, p. 1). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 required schools to have a safety plan in place to provide a safe learning environment. Schools differed in their needs and capabilities; therefore, schools implemented a variety of practices designed to prevent and reduce violence (USDOE, 2007).

As a teacher in inner city schools, I saw violent outbursts among students, and I heard about violence occurring between students and teachers, as well as deadly violence that occurred in schools around the country. Fights broke out among the students at the schools. Sometimes those fights were a result of disagreements that occurred away from the school setting and were carried over into the schools. Or, at times, the violence

occurred away from the schools, but the disagreement may have started within the school setting or the violence may have occurred away from the school. In some cases the incident may be a neighborhood disagreement that has nothing to do with the school setting; but, because a student is involved, it is reflected on the school and the schools safety. Despite this, Lawrence (2007) stated that schools provided a safer environment for students and teachers than most other places in society. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2016a, 2016b), no more than 2% of homicides among school age children occurred at school, on the way to and from school, or at school sponsored events. However, children had to walk through neighborhoods that may not have been as safe as they should. The disconnect within neighborhoods and the mobility of people created neighborhoods where the residents did not know one another and often found themselves at odds for various reasons. The police presence in those neighborhoods was minimal or nonexistent, unless something tragic happened to a student in that neighborhood (Weisburd & Lum, n.d.) (Fox 2 News, 2013). Then, the police presence is felt for a couple of days (Weisburd & Lum, n.d.). In some of these neighborhoods, there were vacant houses or empty lots and chronic unemployment, which left young men with nothing to do but hang out in the neighborhood (Shane, 2012)

The boredom caused these young men to engage in illegal activities such as drugs, robbery, theft, and assault (Shane, 2012). These were risk factors associated with youth violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2015). As a way of protection, young men joined gangs and fell into the same type of lifestyle with no hope for the future (CDC, 2015). A person without hope could be a very dangerous person (CDC, 2015). Rival gangs competed for turf and crossed paths with one another (Kelley, 2013). The friction created by this interaction often spilled over into the schools where

these young men had to attend together (Kelley, 2013). There was often talk that one person was after the other for some activity that occurred away from the school (Kelley, 2013). In their efforts to look manly, these young men engaged themselves in violent behavior to settle their differences. However, the violence only opened up the door to more violence as the gang members sought to get revenge for any transgressions (Kelley, 2013)

Within these neighborhoods, the traditional family structure was almost nonexistent. And, children were rejected by parents or brought up in homes run by single mothers, whose only means of support was public assistance or low paying jobs (U.S. Department of Justice, 1993). Without a solid male role model and solid family structure in the home, young men turned to whomever was convenient in their efforts to discover the manhood their mothers could not show them (USDJ, 1993). Some young men tended to be overly emotional and display behaviors they have developed as a consequence of being brought up in their fatherless or unsupportive homes (USDJ, 1993)

Definition of Terms

Alternative education. A public elementary or secondary school that offered nontraditional educational services to students whose needs could not be met in a regular school (Porowski, O'Connor, & Luo, 2014)

Authoritarian policies. Policies designed to compel students to adhere to established values and norms, which may be punitive in nature for those who chose noncompliance (Arum, 2011)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A federal agency that conducted and supported health promotion, prevention, and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health (Wikipedia, 2015)

Chronic victimization. Low-level, continual violence of students by other students (Meyer-Adams & Connors, 2008)

Deindustrialization. "A process of social and economic change caused by the removal or reduction of industrial capacity or activity in a country or region, especially heavy industry or manufacturing industry" (Wikipedia, 2015, p. 1)

Disciplinary climate. The values and norms established to improve students' chances of success (Arum, 2011)

Electronic aggression. Any kind of aggression perpetrated through technology - any type of harassment or bullying (teasing, telling lies, making fun of someone, making rude or mean comments, spreading rumors, or making threatening or aggressive comments) that occurred through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, a website (including blogs), text messaging, or videos or pictures posted on websites or sent through cell phones (Meyer-Adams & Connors, 2008)

Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. The number of students who graduated in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by the number of students who formed the adjusted cohort for the graduating class (USDOE, 2012)

Indirect aggression. "Aggressive acts in which the aggressor can remain unidentified and consequently avoid retaliation" and disapproval from the rest of the community (Brendgen, 2012, p. 1)

Mal-development. Poor economic, human, or social development (Angkaw, 2006).

Microaggressions. Daily brief, verbal behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicated hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group (Henfield, 2011).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. "Federal law aimed at improving public primary and secondary schools, and thus student performance, via increased accountability for schools, school districts, and states" (Dulgnan & Nolen, 2015, para. 1)

Participatory leadership. Using students in decision making to motivate them and develop their ability to face and solve complex problems (Brasof, 2011)

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. A research-based model designed to reduce the number of disciplinary referrals and improve the overall school culture and academics by promoting positive change in staff and student behavior, as a way to prevent disruptive behavior and improve the school climate, by providing systems of support for the school, classroom, and individual (Fowler, 2011)

Protective factors. Anything that prevents or reduces vulnerability for the involvement in violence, either as a perpetrator or victim (Abdulkadiroğlu, Angrist, Dynarski, Kane, & Parag, n.d.).

Psychological force. The psychological impact of school violence (Angkaw, 2006)

Relevant and meaningful learning environment. A classroom environment that encouraged students to practice their skills by employing real-world problems that could keep students interested and academically engaged (Arum, 2011)

Response to Intervention. "A multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs" (RTI Action Network, n.d., para. 1)

Restorative justice. Empowered students to resolve conflicts on their own and in peer-mediated small groups to talk, ask questions, and air their grievances, as a way to strengthen campus communities, prevent bullying, and reduce student conflicts (Democratic Party Platform, 2016).

Risk factor. Any characteristic of a person, such as age, a situation, such as the severity of a traumatic event, or a person's environment, such as family life, that increases the likelihood that that person would eventually become involved in violence, either as a perpetrator or victim (Skiba et al., 2011).

School discipline. "The system of rules, punishments, and behavioral strategies appropriate to the regulation of children or adolescents and the maintenance of order in schools" (Academia.com, n.d., para. 3).

School dropout rate. The percentage of 16 through 24-year-olds who were not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school credential, either a diploma or an equivalency credential, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate (Abdulkadiroğlu et al. n.d.)

School environment. Included school, traveling to school, traveling home from school, and attending school sponsored events (Johnson, 2009)

Surface Behavior Management Techniques. Managed the visible and obvious behaviors of children while providing a variety of intervention strategies for behaviors that negatively impacted intellectual, social, and emotional development (Olive, 2007).

Violence. Physical, verbal, or written acts against others, which may include bullying, sexual harassment, rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon (Arum, 2011)

Zero-tolerance policies. Policies which had severe and punitive predetermined consequences that did not take into consideration the severity of the behavior, circumstances, or the situation (CDC, 2004).

Summary

Chapter One presented the rationale for this meta-analysis study on alternative

school interventions. Included were a rationale and historical perspective concerning the topic. Chapter Two provides a review of then-current literature, with an examination of issues faced by public schools, a review of the types of violence taking place in school settings, and actions taken to prevent and intervene in order to control aggressive acts in the public school setting.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Disparate Discipline Procedures and Practices

A school's disciplinary climate was shaped by how students responded to the authority of teachers and administrators. Students who accepted this authority conformed to the values and norms established to improve their chances of success. Students who had a problem internalizing those values and norms were at increased risk of violence, delinquency, criminal activity, and other antisocial behaviors (Arum, 2011). Teachers were in the best position to develop strategies for use in their classrooms to reach behaviorally at-risk students (Furlong & Morrison, 1994). Also, a U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) study by Cantor et al. (2001) observed that principals who were visible, engaging, and communicative, rather than authoritarian had the strongest school climate relations.

Authoritarian policies were perceived by students as illegitimate and therefore counterproductive and ineffective (Arum, 2011). Fowler (2011) found that although public schools were safe, even in high-crime areas, school discipline had become increasingly punitive. Sherer and Nickerson (2010), citing Limber (2002), found that suspensions and expulsions were not effective forms of discipline. Furthermore, minority males seemed to be targeted at a disproportionate rate in school discipline policies. School discipline often removed Black students from class, causing them to miss valuable class time, which increased academic disparities (Nasir, Ross, De Royston, Givens, & Bryant, 2013). African American males were disproportionately categorized as academic failures and placed in alternative learning environments (Jackson, 2003). Students of color were consistently found to have been suspended at two to three times

the rate of other students and were overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment, and expulsions (Skiba et al., 2011)

African American students were underrepresented in gifted programs but overrepresented in school discipline (Nasir et al., 2013). African American males were at-risk for special education assignments, suspensions, expulsion, dropout, and violent behaviors (Jackson, 2003). Students who struggled in school and were not involved in school activities were at a higher risk for deviant and delinquent behavior (Lawrence, 2007). "Academic engagement and school discipline are significantly related to incidences of school violence" (Larsen, 2003, para. 25). Teachers and administrators implemented "programs designed to prevent, deter, and respond to potential violence in schools" (USDOE, 2007, p. 1). Making their jobs even more difficult was the "lack of cooperation and support from administrators, the lack of basic security, and the physical deterioration" of the schools (Johnson, 2009, p. 452)

Black male students disproportionately encountered the academic and social consequences of school discipline, such as poor academic achievement and involvement with the criminal justice system (Nasir et al., 2013) Decisions to suspend or expel students disproportionately affected African-American and special education students (Fowler, 2011). A more productive alternative could have been to create relevant and meaningful learning environments and institute administrative procedures that sanctioned and encouraged increased professional discretion (Arum, 2011). White youth were more likely to be referred to treatment programs, because they were perceived to have a more stable home environment (Robbins, 2005). Citing Perkins and Borden (2003), Klein, Cornell, and Konold (2012) identified a positive school climate as an environmental asset that reduced the likelihood that students would engage in risky behavior.

Academic engagement and school discipline were significantly related to incidences of school violence (Larsen, 2003). Students who struggled in school and not involved in school activities were at a higher risk for deviant and delinquent behavior (Lawrence, 2007). What do you do about students who spend months in the summer in environments that are unproductive, boring, and physically dangerous? Swain (2013) suggested involving students in enriching and challenging learning programs to help them maintain or increase what they learned during the regularly school term. This could be a viable alternative to suspensions or expulsion. The problem of disparate discipline procedures and practices created an atmosphere of resentment and disconnection for the school community among African American males.

The deindustrialization of American urban communities caused the evacuation of urban job markets, reduced tax revenues, and nearly eliminated social services. Although socioeconomic status seemed to play a role in the disparity in discipline issued to people of color, the overriding factor was that of race (Skiba et al., 2011). Students with a history of discipline referrals at school were at increased risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system (Fowler, 2011). Black male student behaviors were perceived more harshly than non-Black male student behaviors (Nasir et al., 2013). Lack of communication between African American students and their teachers was a problem in many school settings. School authorities "reproduce racist beliefs about who is dangerous and in what environments by permitting teachers to refuse to learn why and how certain groups communicate in ways different from their own" (Robbins, 2005, pp. 8-9)

A comparison of the types of infractions students were disciplined for showed no significant difference in severity of behavior between those of Black students, as

compared to their White counterparts (Skiba et al., 2011) The problem became epidemic when one considered the likelihood that a male would graduate from college and become gainfully employed stagnated, while incidence of incarceration increased (Arum, 2011). Black students may have a different way of showing respect than other ethnic groups. When teachers do not learn the codes by which students communicate, they are unaware of the respect that students are actually displaying. Rather than learn those codes, teachers simply removed the students from the classroom environment because their behaviors were undesirable to the teacher (Robbins, 2005). Cultural mismatch and racial stereotyping may also be a contributing factor to the disproportionate discipline issued to Black male students (Skiba et al., 2011).

Racism in schools had a different face from the days prior to *Brown v Board of Education* (Henfield, 2011). Disciplinary practices varied within school districts. Where a student attended school, not the nature of the misbehavior, may have determined whether the student would face disciplinary action (Fowler, 2011). School districts reacted to the violence that occurred in places like Columbine, Colorado, and Newtown, Connecticut (Darden, 2013). Arum (2011) stated that male students were most at risk of being victimized by violent behavior. However, suspension and expulsion contributed to other risk factors, such as poor academic performance and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Skiba et al., 2011).

Differences in classroom management styles had a negative effect on African American students when certain teacher/student combinations were made, which resulted in higher rates of office referrals (Skiba et al., 2011). Teachers and administrators were better equipped to help students internalize social norms and values (Arum, 2011). Disproportionate school suspensions and expulsions placed African American students at

risk for alienation and delinquency, reduced the opportunity to learn, and weakened the school bond (Skiba et al., 2011). Less explicit forms of racism surfaced and could be described as racial microaggressions, which were daily brief verbal "behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Henfield, 2011, p. 141). Microaggressions occurred in schools where Black students were the minority and could come from teachers, as well as students.

Types of Violence

Research demonstrated that the definition of school violence should be broad enough to include any activity that negatively affected a student's right to a safe educational environment, which included traveling to school, traveling home from school, and attending school-sponsored events. Violence in schools not only impacted the school affected; but, the neighborhood and the community were affected as well. It was understood that school violence interfered with the learning process, but the long range effects of school violence were yet to be determined. School violence made success in the school environment difficult to obtain. It also disrupted the working environment for teachers, because they had to handle behavior problems and maintain a safe environment (Johnson, 2009). The lack of cooperation and support from administrators, the lack of basic security, and physical deterioration of the school were contributing factors for school violence.

Bullying and teasing were also issues that affected students' interest and feelings of safety at school. Students reported skipping school because they of concern for their safety. The chronic victimization of students by other students has been referred to as low-level violence (Larsen, 2003). Bullying was the most common form of low-level

violence. Bullying was defined as "threats or intimidation; cursing, teasing, or both; stealing passively or by force; and physical attacks" (Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008, p. 211). Youth violence affected communities all across America, causing injury, disability, and death. Whether affluent or poor, urban, suburban, or rural, no community was insulated from the damage caused by this epidemic of violence.

Easy access to firearms fueled the epidemic of violence. The Surgeon General requested three agencies to prepare a report on youth violence and the scope of the problem, its causes, and prevention measures (Surgeon General, 2000). The threat of school violence also had a negative psychological effect on teachers, some of whom showed symptoms similar to those of war veterans (Schonfeld, 2005). The psychological approach focused on visible and intentional interpersonal forms of violence and neglected the gender related-violence taking place in schools. Sexual harassment was not a subject that received much attention in the topic of school violence. Gender stereotypes abounded (i.e. girls were verbally abusive; boys bullied more than girls) (Brown & Munn, 2008).

Indirect aggression, such as cyber bullying was also a form of bullying. "Victims and perpetrators of electronic aggression may not know with whom they are interacting," because messages could be posted anonymously or under a fake name (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2009, p. 6). There were 13% to 46% of young victims of electronic aggression who reported not knowing the identity of their harassers (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2009, p. 6). Chronic victimization may be the primary antecedent that led to more devastating incidents, such as school shootings (Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008, p. 212). Strategies needed to be developed that would encourage victims to report electronic aggression and

seek support from teachers and administrators, so that intervention and prevention measures could be considered and implemented.

Risk and Protective Factors

The school dropout rate was an indicating risk factor for school violence and a host of other social problems faced by Americans, at the time of this writing. Charter schools and pilot schools, which were not a major focus of this study, were developed partially in response to the attendance and student achievement problems and to address the Black/White student achievement gap (Abdulkadiroğlu et al. n.d.). Future studies could evaluate the impact of charter and pilot schools on attendance, graduation rates, and the incidences of violence in schools. Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morrison (2006) completed a survey of young people who left school before graduating, even though most had grades of C or better.

The Bridgeland et al. (2006) survey showed there was no single reason for dropping out of school. Much research was conducted that identified factors having an effect on school performance, attendance, and graduation rates. The research showed that dropping out of school was the result of cumulative risk factors over time that included academic difficulty in reading and math, retention, school disengagement, and behavior problems (Randolph, Fraser, & Orthner, 2006; Randolph, Rose, Fraser, & Orthner, 2004; Simner & Barnes, 1991; Woolley & Bowen, 2007; as cited in Hawkins, Jaccard, J., & Elana, n.d.). Watts (2000) cited Hahn (1987) and Barber and McClellan (1987) and stated, “Poor academic performance, financial restraints, teenage pregnancy, and discipline problems are frequently cited as reasons why students drop out of school” (as cited in Watts, 2000, p. 1).

From the survey, Bridgeland et al. (2006) concluded that 47% dropped out because classes were not interesting, 42% spent time with people who had no interest in school, 69% were not motivated to work hard, but most (2/3) would have worked harder if academic standards were more challenging (pp. 3-4). Personal reasons were a major factor. Thirty-two percent needed money and had to get a job, 26% became a parent, and 22% had to care for a family member (pp. 3-4). Thirty-five percent were failing in school, 30% could not keep up with the school work, and 43% missed too many school days and could not catch up (pp. 3-4).

Also, 45% were poorly prepared for high school academically and school supports were not available, 32% repeated a grade before dropping out, 29% did not believe they met graduation requirements, and 59% to 65% missed class often the year prior to dropping out (Bridgeland et al., 2006, pp. 3-4). Thirty-eight percent had too much freedom, not enough rules at home, and low parental involvement in their education (pp. 3-4). Fifty-nine percent of parental involvement was reported and 68% said parents only became more involved when their child was about to dropout (pp. 3-4).

In retrospect, "Parents with less education, lower incomes and children in low-performing schools were the most likely to see a rigorous education, and their own involvement, as critical to their child's success" (Bridgeland, Dilulio, J., & Balfanz, 2009, p. 1). Heppen and Therriault (2008) cited Allensworth and Easton (2005, 2007) and stated that the greatest predictors of whether a student would graduate included course performance and attendance during freshman year. "Therefore, systematic collection of student attendance and course performance data can be used to develop an effective early warning system that can also be tailored to local contexts" (Heppen & Therriault, 2008, p. 1)

"A school disengagement warning index predicts not only dropout but also other problem behaviors during middle adolescence, late adolescence, and early adulthood" (Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012, p. 156). The intent was to reach these students early enough to employ effective intervention strategies (Henry et al., 2012). School data indicated that the problem of school dropout was severe. In Montana, for instance, the dropout and graduation rates had not improved since 2002-2003 (Stuit & Springer, 2010). "Students who drop out of school represent a potential liability to the social and economic stability of our nation" (Watts, 2010, p. 3).

According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE, 2012), the graduation rate for Missouri high school students in 2010-2011 was 79.8% (p. 1). The rate for Black students was 63.9% (MODESE, 2012, p. 1). The USDOE (2012) reported the 2010-2011 rates to be 81% and 67% respectively. In 2011-2012, the USDOE (2012) reported the rates to be 86% for all students and 73% for Black students. According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the graduation rate in Illinois was 84% in 2011, 82% in 2012, and 83% in 2013 for all graduates (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2014, p. 1) The ISBE did not list a racial breakdown of the graduation rate; however, the USDOE showed the rate of graduation for Black high school students to have been 74% in 2010-2011 and 68% in 2011-2012 (USDOE, 2012)

The national high school graduation rate in 2010-2011 was 79% and in 2011-2012 the national graduation rate was 80% (USDOE, 2014a, 2014b). The data showed that the Black student graduation rate was consistently below the national average. Nationally in 2010-2011, the Black student graduation rate was below average at 65%, but higher than that of Black students in Missouri. In 2011-2012, the USDOE reported the rate to be

68% for Black students nationally. In 2010-2011, the method for measuring the graduation rate for states changed.

> The varying methods formerly used by states to report graduation rates made comparisons between states unreliable, while the new, common metric can be used by states, districts and schools to promote greater accountability and to develop strategies that will reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates in schools nationwide. (USDOE, 2012, para. 1)

According to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, "By using this new measure, states will be more honest in holding schools accountable and ensuring that students succeed," (USDOE, 2012, para. 3) The October, 2008 federal regulations required states to transition to a common, adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate (ACGR) and reflect states' efforts to create greater uniformity and transparency in reporting high school graduation data (USDOE, 2012)

> The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. From the beginning of 9th grade (or the earliest high school grade), students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is "adjusted" by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die. 2010-11 was the first year that states were required to use the regulatory cohort rate, so prior year data are not necessarily comparable to the 2010-11 rates. (USDOE, 2012, para. 2).

For this study, comparison rates will begin with the 2010-2011 adjusted cohort graduation rates.

As indicated in Table 2, for some of Missouri's neighbors, according to the USDOE 2012, 2016), the graduation rate in Iowa for 2010-11 was 88% for all students and 73% for Black students. In 2011-12, the rates were 89% and 74% respectively. In Kansas the rate in 2010-11 was 83% for all students and 72% for Black students. In 2011-12, the rate was 85% for all students and 75% for Black students. In Kentucky, the rates were not made available for comparison years. In Arkansas, the rate in 2010-11 was 81% for all students and 73 % for Black students. In 2011-12, the rate was 84% for all students and 78% for Black students. In Oklahoma, the rates were not made available. In Nebraska, the rate in 2010-11 was 86% for all students and 70% for Black students. In 2011-12, the rate was 88% for all students and 74% for Black students. In Tennessee, the rate in 2010-11 was 86% for all students and 78% for Black students. In 2011-12, the rate was 87% for all students and 79% for Black students (USDOE, 2012, 2016, MODESE, 2012).

Table 1

U.S. Graduation rates

State	Year	Overall Rate	Rate for Black Students
U.S.	2011	79%	65%
U.S.	2012	80%	68%
U.S.	2013	81%	71%
U.S.	2014	82%	73%

Note: (USDOE, 2012, 2016, MODESE, 2012, Education Week, 2015, U.S. News and World Report, 2015, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015)

Table 2

Graduation Rates of Selected States

IA	2011	88%	73%
IA	2012	89%	74%
IA	2013	90%	74%
IA	2014	91%	75%
TN	2011	86%	78%
TN	2012	87%	79%
TN	2013	86%	78%
TN	2014	87%	73%
IL	2011	84%	74%
IL	2012	82%	68%
IL	2013	83%	71%
IL	2014	86%	77%
NE	2011	86%	70%
NE	2012	88%	74%
NE	2013	89%	77%
NE	2014	90%	81%
KS	2011	83%	72%
KS	2012	85%	75%
KS	2013	86%	76%
KS	2014	86%	77%
MO	2011	81%	67%
MO	2012	86%	73%
MO	2013	86%	72%
MO	2014	87%	75%

Note: Ranking of Missouri and the states that touch its borders from the highest to the lowest (USDOE, 2012, 2016, MODESE, 2012, Ed. Week, 2015, USNWR, 2015, NCES, 2015).

Another risk factor was demographics. There was a higher incidence of school-related deaths in urban areas than in suburban areas and African-American and Hispanic students were more at risk than White students (Schonfeld, 2005). The possible reasons

for school shootings were as varied as the backgrounds of the shooters. Even if officials could offer a theory of school shootings, the explanation may still be left with little more than an understanding on some level, but no real preventive power (Warnick, Johnson, & Rocha, 2010)

School Shootings since 1983

The following are examples of school shootings since 1983, according to *USA Today* (2009). University shootings have also been included in this discussion. In St. Louis, Missouri, at Parkway South Junior High School on January 20, 1983, an eighth-grade student shot two classmates, then committed suicide. At Goddard Junior High School in Goddard, Kansas, on January 21, 1985, James Alan Kearby, 14, claimed he had been bullied and beaten by students for years. He killed his junior high school principal and wounded two teachers and a student. At Hubbard Woods Elementary School in Winnetka, Illinois, on May 20, 1988, Laurie Wasserman Dann, 30, shot six students at Hubbard Woods Elementary School, killing one. Dann later committed suicide (USA Today, 2009).

At Oakland Elementary School in Greenwood, South Carolina, on September 26, 1988, James William Wilson, Jr., 19, shot and killed two third graders and wounded nine other children and a teacher. At Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, California, on January 17, 1989, Patrick Purdy, 26, opened fire on a playground at Cleveland Elementary School with an AK-47 assault rifle. Five children died, 29 kids and one teacher were wounded. Purdy committed suicide. On November 1, 1991, Gang Lu, a graduate student at the University of Iowa, killed five people and seriously wounded another before killing himself. At Simon's Rock College of Bard in Great Barrington,

Massachusetts, on December 14, 1992, an 18-year-old student killed a student and a professor and wounded a security guard and three others (USA Today, 2009).

In Grayson, Kentucky on January 18, 1993, a teacher and custodian were held hostage and shot by a senior at East Carter High School. At Blackville-Hilda High School in Blackville, South Carolina, on November 12, 1995, a suspended student shot two math teachers with a .32 caliber revolver, killing one before committing suicide. At Richland High School in Lynnville, Tennessee on November15, 1995, a 17-year-old boy shot and killed a student and teacher with a .22 rifle. At Frontier Junior High School in Moses Lake, Washington, on February 2, 1996, a 14-year-old opened fire on an algebra class with a high-powered rifle. He was quoted as telling friends it would be 'cool' to go on a killing spree like the characters in the movie *Natural Born Killers* (USA Today, 2009).

At Bethel Regional High School in Bethel, Arkansas, on February 19, 1997, 16-year-old Evan Ramsey took a shotgun to school and killed the principal, Ron Edwards, and a student, Josh Palacios, and injured two others. Ramsey was found guilty of two counts of murder and two counts of aggravated assault. At San Diego State University in San Diego, California on August 15, 1996, Frederick Martin Davidson killed three professors during his thesis defense. He was given three consecutive life terms for the killings. At Pearl High School in Pearl, Mississippi, on October 1, 1997, a 16-year-old student, who had stabbed his mother to death, killed two students and wounded seven. He received three life sentences for his crimes (USA Today, 2009).

At Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky on December 1, 1997, a 14-year-old killed three students and wounded five others, then used an insanity plea to avoid the death penalty. At Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas on March

24, 1998, two boys, one 11 and the other 13, firing from nearby woods, killed four girls and wounded 10 others. Because of their ages, they would be released at age 21. At Lincoln County High School in Fayetteville, Tennessee on May 19, 1998, an honor student killed a classmate who had been dating his ex-girlfriend. He received a life sentence. At Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, on May 21, 1998, a 17-year-old boy killed two and caused 20 people to be injured when he fired on the school after murdering his parents. He received a 112-year prison sentence (USA Today, 2009).

As reported by History (2016), at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, two boys, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, committed suicide after killing 12 students and a teacher and wounding 23 others. At Deming Middle School in Deming, New Mexico, on November 19, 1999, a 12-year-old boy came to school dressed in camouflage and shot a 13-year-old girl with a .22 caliber weapon as students were returning from lunch (History, 2016). At Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, Michigan on February 29, 2000, a six-year-old girl was killed when a six-year-old boy shot her with a .32 handgun. At Beach High School in Savannah, Georgia, on March 10, 2000, two students were killed by a 19-year-old while leaving a dance sponsored by Beach High School (History, 2016). At Santana High School in Santee, California, on March 5, 2001, a 15-year-old student shot and killed two students and wounded 13 (History, 2016).

At Wallace High School in Gary, Indiana, on March 30, 2001, sophomore Neal Boyd, 16, was killed on the sidewalk of Lew Wallace High School. Police and witnesses said expelled student Donald Ray Burt, Jr., 17, approached a crowd of students in back of the school about 8:15 am and fired once, hitting Neal in the head and killing him instantly. Burt was convicted of murdering Boyd and given 57 years in prison. At Ennis

High School in Ennis, Texas, on May 15, 2001, a student took 17 hostages, then shot and killed himself and his girlfriend. The 16-year-old sophomore had been upset over his relationship. At the Appalachian School of Law in Grundy, Virginia, on January 16, 2002, a dean, professor, and student were killed and three others were wounded by then-recently dismissed student Peter Odighizuwa, 43. At Lake Worth Community Middle School in Lake Worth, Florida, on March 26, 2000, a 13-year-old killed his English teacher on the last day of classes after the teacher refused to let him talk with two girls in his classroom. He was convicted of second-degree murder and was serving a 28-year sentence (USA Today, 2009).

At the University of Arizona Nursing College in Tucson, Arizona, on October 28, 2002, upset that he was failing Nursing school, Gulf War veteran Robert Flores, 40, killed an instructor then entered a nursing classroom and killed two more instructors before committing suicide. At John McDonogh High School in New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 14, 2003, gunmen confronted 15-year-old Jonathan Williams with an assault rifle and a handgun, killing him and wounding three girls in apparent collateral damage while they were sitting in the bleachers. Steven Williams, 21, (not related to the victim) was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. James Tate, 19, pleaded guilty to manslaughter and conspiracy to commit second-degree murder. Tate received a 15-year sentence. Four others also pled guilty in the killing (USA Today, 2009).

At the Red Lion Area Junior High School in Red Lion, Pennsylvania, on April 24, 2003, 14 year-old James Sheets, shot and killed a principal before killing himself. At Rocori High School in Cold Spring, Minnesota, on September 24, 2003, John Jason McLaughlin, 15, shot and killed fellow classmates Seth Bartell, 15, and Aaron Rollins,

17, in Rocori High School. McLaughlin claimed that schizophrenia caused him to hear a voice telling him to shoot Bartell because he was a bully. McLaughlin was found guilty of first and second-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison. At Strawberry Mansion High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 22, 2004, a 16-year-old killed one student and wounded three others outside the school over a $50 debt from a rap contest (USA Today, 2009).

At Red Lake High School in Red Lake, Minnesota, on March 21, 2005, 16-year-old Jeffrey Weise killed five students, a teacher, at the Red Lake Indian Reservation school before killing himself. Earlier, he had killed his grandfather and his grandfather's companion. At Campbell County Comprehensive High School in Jacksboro, Tennessee, on November 8, 2005, a 15-year-old freshman shot and killed an assistant principal and seriously wounded two other administrators. At Essex Elementary School in Essex, Vermont, on August 24, 2006, while looking for his ex-girlfriend at the school, 27 year-old Christopher Williams fatally shot one teacher and wounded another. He also killed his ex-girlfriend's mother and was arrested after shooting himself twice (USA Today, 2009).

At Orange High school in Hillsborough, North Carolina on August 30, 2006, Alvaro Castillo, 19, killed his father and opened fire outside his former high school, Orange High School, wounding two students. Castillo was obsessed with school massacres and sent e-mail to the principal of Columbine High School in Colorado warning of his attack, authorities said. Castillo was quickly arrested, and police found two pipe bombs and two rifles in the van he was driving, authorities said (USA Today, 2009).

At Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, West Virginia on September 2, 2006, during a visit to the campus, Douglas Pennington, 49, killed his two sons, Logan Pennington, 26, and Benjamin Pennington, 24, before killing himself. At Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, Colorado, on September 27, 2006, Duane Morrison, 53, took six girls hostage at Platte Canyon High School. Morrison sexually assaulted them and used them as human shields for hours before fatally shooting one girl and killing himself. At Weston School in Cazenovia, Wisconsin, on September 29, 2006, a 15-year-old, who was upset over being admonished by the principal for having tobacco on campus the day before, shot and killed the principal (USA Today, 2009).

At West Nickel Mines School in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, on October 2, 2006, several people were injured and three girls were killed when a gunman (who took his own life) took several girls hostage at a one-room Amish schoolhouse in Lancaster County. At Henry Foss High School in Tacoma, Washington, on January 3, 2007, Douglas Chanthabouly, 18, fired three shots at point-blank range, killing 17-year-old Samnang Kok minutes before the first period bell rang at the school. After running from the school, Chanthabouly was arrested a few blocks away where he was wandering the streets. In court, Chanthabouly's lawyers claimed he was legally insane at the time. Chanthabouly was convicted of second-degree murder (USA Today, 2009).

At Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia, on April 16, 2007, in the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history, at least 33 people were killed in two separate incidents within three hours, when the suspected gunman shot and killed two people in the first shooting at about 7:15 am, Eastern Time, at a coed dorm, before killing another 31 people, including himself in the second attack. At Success Tech Academy in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 10, 2007, Asa Coon, 14, wounded two teachers

and two students and fatally shot himself. Coon had threatened to blow up the school and stab students (USA Today, 2009).

At Barnard-White Middle School in Union City, California, on December 21, 2007, a 14-year-old student was chased down by a group of youths and shot to death at the doorstep of Barnard-White Middle School. At Hempstead High School in Hempstead, New York, on January 18, 2008, Michael Alguera, 15, was stabbed during an after-school robbery at Hempstead High School and later died at a hospital. Alguera was playing handball with two friends on a court at the suburban school when they were confronted by as many as nine people, some of them masked, police said (USA Today, 2009).

At Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on February 8, 2008, a 23-year-old student killed two other students seated in a classroom of about 20 people before killing herself. At E.O. Green Junior High School in Oxnard, California, on February 12, 2008, police charged a 14-year-old boy with attempted murder and said he committed a hate crime in the classroom shooting of eighth-grader Lawrence King, who sometimes wore makeup, high heels, and other feminine attire. More than 20 other students were in the room at the time (USA Today, 2009).

At Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, on February 14, 2008, Stephen Kazmierczak shot and killed five fellow Northern Illinois University students before turning the gun on himself. Kazmierczak, who was studying for his master's degree in social work, had recently stopped taking medication. Kazmierczak left no note and did not speak to students in the lecture hall where the shootings occurred. No motive was determined. At Central High School in Knoxville, Tennessee, on August 21, 2008, authorities said Ryan McDonald, 16, was fatally shot while in the school cafeteria at

Central High School. A fellow student was taken into custody. At Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Michigan, on April 10, 2009, in an apparent murder-suicide, police discovered the bodies of Asia McGowan, 20, of Ecorse, and Anthony Powell, 28, of Detroit. Police suspected that Powell killed McGowan with a shotgun before turning the gun on himself (USA Today, 2009).

Risk Factors

According to the CDC (2004), risk factors for school violence included prior history of violence, drug, alcohol, or tobacco use, association with delinquent peers, poor family functioning, poor grades in school, and poverty in the community, but could be mitigated by implementing a number of strategies designed to promote good citizenship. Gregg (1998a, 1998b) identified Law-Related Education as a national program that taught students about the law and the Constitution. "Through role-playing, mock trials, debates, field trips, and persuasive-writing assignments, students learn why laws are important and how they relate to everyday life" (Gregg, 1998b, p. 4). The program was shown to lower risk factors associated with violence, decrease delinquent behavior, and improve social behavior (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b)

Nonfatal acts of violence were common on school property, but most acts of fatal and violent crime occurred outside of school (CDC, 2004). These factors affected the probability of violent and delinquent behavior at schools (CDC, 2004). School shootings and other deadly attacks were rare, but they received a great deal of media attention, because schools were generally insulated against the violence taking place in the community (CDC, 2004). Because the incidents were rare, it was difficult to profile students who may be at risk of school shootings and predict the probability of such

occurrences; therefore, schools implemented zero-tolerance policies against weapons, alcohol, drugs, and violence (CDC, 2004)

Homicide rates were significantly higher for males, students in secondary schools, and students in central cities, while violent deaths occurred before and after the school day and during lunch and were more likely to occur at the start of each semester (CDC, 2008). Perpetrators usually gave some type of warning sign, such as making a threat or leaving a note, prior to the act (CDC, 2008). According to the CDC (2008), school-associated violence caused depression, anxiety, and fear and risk factors included "violent history, attention deficits or learning disorders, early aggressive behavior, association with delinquent peers," (p. 1) gang activity, drug activity and other substance abuse, low IQ, poor academic performance, behavior problems, high emotional distress, social rejection, family conflict, and lack of involvement in conventional activities.

Other risk factors were relationship risk factors and community/societal risk factors (CDC, 2008). Prevention was the goal for school violence (CDC, 2008). The drop-out rate showed little improvement over the 50 years previous to this writing, but drop-out prevention programs were thought to possibly be effective at reducing the drop-out rate (Lawrence, 2007). According to Lawrence (2007), school-based prevention programs successfully reduced rates of aggression and violence among students. Parent- and family-based interventions could have substantial, long-term effects in reducing violent behavior when started early, while improved classroom management practices, promoting cooperative learning techniques, teacher/staffing practices, and student supervision were community-level strategies that focused on prevention (CDC, 2008)

Community/societal risk factors may also include the number of deaths caused by police action in recent years. Nierengarten (2016) pointed out that a disproportionate

number of people killed by police in 2015 were Black. Black men between the ages of 15 and 34, who comprised 2% of the population, accounted for 15% of deaths caused by police action (Nierengarten, 2016). According to Nierengarten (2016), that was five times higher than the rate for White males of the same age. Dahlberg and Mercy (2009) said that violence was recognized as a public health concern because the mortality rate from infectious diseases decreased while homicide and suicide rose in the rankings.

During the 1980s, homicide and suicide spiked among members of minority groups. From 1950 to 1990, the suicide rate nearly tripled for young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009). The homicide rate for males 15 to 19 years old increased 154% from 1985 to 1991 (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009). Furthermore, behavior factors were recognized as important in the prevention of disease, because behavior could be modified (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009). Public health professionals believed that behavior modification could reduce the incidences of violence and suicide among young people (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009). Rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system, they took this approach because violence was recognized as a public health concern when it became a leading cause of death among young people (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009)

The Surgeon General (1979) pointed out that "[p]ersonal habits play critical roles in the development of many serious diseases and in injuries from violence and automobile accidents" (Surgeon General, 1979, p. 2). The CDC (2016a, 2016b), which tracked homicide and suicide using a surveillance system, National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) which classified violent deaths into various categories, concluded that violence was a preventable public health concern. The web-based data (NVDRS on-line database), which was easily accessible for state and local violence

prevention practitioners, could be used to develop, implement, and evaluate violence-prevention strategies (CDC, 2016a, 2016b).

Individual risk factors included history of violent victimization, low IQ, and poor behavior control, while family risk factors included harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices, low parental involvement, and poor monitoring and supervision of children (CDC, 2004). Peer/social risk factors included involvement in gangs, lack of involvement in conventional activities, low commitment to school, and school failure, while community risk factors included diminished economic opportunities, high concentration of poor residents, and low levels of community participation (CDC, 2004). The socioeconomic situation for many minorities increased their chances of falling under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system (Brown, 2003). Furthermore, profiling potential school shooters was difficult, because incidences were low and shooters internalized their problems (Schonfeld, 2005)

The more risk factors children were exposed to, the greater the likelihood that they would engage in violent behavior (Hawkins et al., 2000). According to the CDC (2004) and Hawkins et al. (2000), knowing risk factors would help teachers and administrators recognize children who are at risk for violent behavior. Teachers could intervene and provide parents and administrators with recommendations to help children change their behaviors and administrators could recommend community resources that parents could seek out for additional assistance in preventing youth violence (CDC, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2000)

Most of the literature and intervention strategies focused on acts of violence perpetrated by students on teachers, students on students, and students on schools; however, broader conceptualization of school violence would enable a focus that

encompassed the gender nature of school violence and the issue of boys who used violence to prove their manhood (Brown & Munn, 2008). School violence must be defined broadly to include physical or psychological force against oneself, anyone, or a group or community that does or may result in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation (Angkaw, 2006).

A broad definition of school violence forces observers to recognize that perpetrators of violent acts may have been victims of school violence themselves. The common characteristics of those involved with school violence were feelings of being detached, alienated, and rejected by the mainstream. The rejection affected school performance, which further affected the alienated student. The violence at schools resulted from administrators and communities' inability to provide the essential conditions and environment required by schools, at the time of this writing (Angkaw, 2006). Individual/family protective factors may be weak or non-existent; therefore, school safety and student support programs should be implemented within the context of school reform (Furlong, Paige, & Osher, 2003)

According to Cooley-Strickland et al., (2009), large schools that emphasized compliance and control that were preoccupied with grades, competition, and individual success made students feel isolated, alienated, and rejected. Also, the problems facing society, such as poverty, overcrowding, chronic exposure to community violence, and disorganization in communities, contributed to the emergence and increase in school violence, as well as negatively impacted youth development and adaptive functioning (Cooley-Strickland et al., 2009). Robbins (2005) stated that schools may be able to reduce school violence with consistent student governance and rule enforcement, treating

students fairly and equally, creating real-world learning experiences, and having more manageable classroom sizes.

Protective Factors

Protective factors buffered young people against the risk of perpetrating violent behavior, including suicide (Seifert, Schmidt, & Ray 2012). Although protective factors had not been studied as extensively as risk factors, identifying and understanding them was just as important as identifying and understanding risk factors. Resnick, Ireland, and Borowsky (2004) proposed protective factors. Individual/family protective factors included high IQ, high grade point average, and ability to discuss problems with parents. Peer/social factors were commitment to school and involvement in social activities (CDC, 2004). Some research showed that in middle and late adolescence, commitment to school was related to lower levels of violence (Schonfeld, 2005). Appleton, Christensen, and Furlong (2008) and Voelkl (1997) stated that there was a correlation between greater student participation and higher levels of achievement, as well.

Legal Ramifications

Menacker, Hurwitz, and Weldon (1989) contrasted civil rights court emphases in discipline cases. The liberal view was that students had fundamental constitutional rights, administrators did not have absolute authority over them because of the risk of error, and notice and hearing requirements must be met. The conservative view was that students rights may not aligned with that of adults in other settings, the threat of disorder commanded close supervision of students, school rules did not have to be detailed, and searches could be regulated by reasonableness and common sense (Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1989). Teachers from the study were more inclined to support the liberal view

of the court granting more protections to students; even at the expense of losing some control over students (Menacker et al., 1989).

State and federal legislation governed school disciplinary policies but there were many gaps, some of which were dealt with by state and federal court decisions (Boylan, 2004). The ambiguity in school law gave students an expanded view of the rights they were entitled to (Arum, 2011). Some people believed that the problem of violence in schools stemmed from the emphasis on students' rights afforded by courts. Administrators, who were unaware of Supreme Court decisions involving students' First and Fourth Amendment rights were at risk of being sued or having their actions subjected to legal challenge (Lawrence, 2007). Zero-tolerance policies were partially adopted to deal with disciplinary issues that may have exposed teachers to personal liability for disciplining students (Arum, 2011)

Zero Tolerance and School Violence

Schools implemented zero-tolerance policies against weapons, alcohol, drugs, and violence (Lawrence, 2007). With zero-tolerance, punishment, rather than the violation or the cause became the focal point (Robbins, 2005). Zero-tolerance policies had severe and punitive predetermined consequences that did not take into consideration the severity of the behavior, circumstances, or the situation (Reynolds et al., 2008). Gonzales (2011) stated that zero-tolerance policies and other harsh, punitive disciplinary policies of exclusion robbed students of educational opportunities and failed to make schools safer. Although zero-tolerance policies were implemented to deter behaviors associated with violence (alcohol/drug abuse and gang membership), the policies were a failure (Kana'iaupuni & Gans, 2005). Such policies failed to make schools safer, had a negative impact on minorities and special education students, created a negative school climate,

and removed the alternative education option for students disciplined under the policies (Jones, 2013)

Proponents of zero-tolerance policies assumed that removing disruptive students from the school environment would act as a deterrent for others and subsequently improve the school climate for the remaining students (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008). Disconnects in understanding zero tolerance were found between teachers and administrators and between administrators and the community (Robbins, 2005). Zero-tolerance strategies and get-tough policies may have had a collateral effect. In the effort to keep children safe, schools routinely excluded parents from the learning environment by making it difficult for them to visit the school to check on their children.

For example, a student was expelled for violating the rule against cell phone use at school when he was observed talking to his mother. She was a soldier on deployment in Iraq and he had not spoken to her for 30 days (APA, 2008). Schools should balance the need for safety against the beneficial relationship of parental involvement and lessen unreasonable and invasive security procedures for parents (Darden, 2013). Darden stated that while it was nearly impossible to predict parental violence in schools, district administrators should understand the local circumstances and weigh this knowledge against legitimate fears that parents might do harm to students (Darden, 2013)

As referenced by the APA (2008), a 10-year-old girl was expelled from school for possessing a weapon. Her mother had packed the knife in her lunchbox so she could use it to cut up her apple. When the girl discovered the knife, she immediately turned it over to school officials. Proponents of zero tolerance policies rationalized “these cases as

necessary sacrifices if zero tolerance policies are to be applied fairly and are to be effective in creating a deterrent effect" (APA, 2008, p. 852).

Robbins (2005) presented a hypothetical situation in which a student is confronted by other students away from school who intended to fight him. The student had two choices. He could flee, in which case he would suffer the indignity of ridicule and teasing at school for being a coward. He could also choose to fight, or he would be forced to fight because the other students would not allow him to flee. His punishment would be the same as those who confronted him as a result of the zero-tolerance policy in which schools adhered. This student had a real concern for the school community, while the other students did not. He would be faced with the academic problems that followed, because he would not be in attendance (Robbins, 2005). One-size-fits-all punishment, typical with zero-tolerance policies, was not based in common sense (Jones, 2013)

Mental Health America (MHA, 2016) was strongly opposed to zero-tolerance policies, because predetermined punishments were handed out without regard to the seriousness of the infraction, the situation, or whether there were mitigating factors. MHA's position on zero-tolerance stemmed from the inconsistent and overzealous application of consequences that were more severe when applied to minorities (MHA, 2016). The MHA (2016) pointed out the severe negative effect rigid zero-tolerance policies had on students with unmet mental health and emotional needs. Individual consideration of the situation and circumstances would lead to fair treatment for students, especially those with mental health conditions and emotional disturbances who required access to mental health services and reasonable accommodations (MHA, 2016)

Zero-tolerance policies effectively negated an atmosphere of learning, engagement, and opportunity and eventually tracked students out of schools and into

prison and the juvenile justice system (Heitzeg, n.d.). They "provide the illusion that schools are dealing with youth violence, when, in fact, they are simply attempting to shove it outside and lock the door" (Education World, 2016, para.1). Districts use school resource officers (SROs) to facilitate communication and understanding between the schools and the communities, but police presence in schools decreased the likelihood that student infractions would be dealt with administratively and put them at greater risk of arrest to face criminal charges (Sanneh & Jacobs, 2008).

> While the school-to-prison pipeline is facilitated by a number of trends in education, it is most directly attributable to the expansion of zero tolerance policies. These policies have no measureable impact on school safety, but are associated with a number of negative effects such as racial disproportionality, increased suspensions and expulsions, elevated drop-out rates, and multiple legal issues related to due process. (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 1)

Black students and other minorities were more likely to feel the impact of get-tough policies and zero-tolerance policies (Robbins, 2005). Browne (2003) stated that the negative effects of zero-tolerance policies fell disproportionately on minorities and special-needs children. Although zero-tolerance policies could be traced back prior to Columbine, data showed that minorities were suspended or expelled in disproportionate numbers; even for minor offenses (Shah, 2011).

Students whose parents had the flexibility to visit the school were less likely to be dealt with harshly by zero-tolerance policies, but students who already suffered from socioeconomic inequalities and racial stereotypes suffered the most from zero-tolerance policies (Robbins, 2005). Since the zero-tolerance policies began, the number of suspended and expelled Black students mirrored that of those incarcerated in the penal

system in the United States (Robbins, 2005). Zero-tolerance damaged a generation of minority children by criminalizing trivial offenses and forcing them into the criminal justice system (Allen, 2004). Denying them access to public education through zero-tolerance policies perpetuated the civil liability and social isolation for which all Americans eventual had to pay (Robbins, 2005). The civil and social cost was catastrophic when school administrators referred students to the criminal justice system as a result of zero-tolerance infractions, rather than dealing with minor offenses at the school (Robbins, 2005)

The perception of school violence led to get-tough strategies, such as the Crime Control Act of 1990 (PL 101-647) and the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 (PL 101-647 SEC 1702) (Robbins, 2005). While the concentration on severe punishment as a way to prevent student violence became the norm, alternatives for minor offenses disappeared, isolating students from the teachers who were trying to help them become socially productive citizens (Anderson, 2004). Congress attempted to meet President Bush's initiative to eliminate violence and drugs from schools by the year 2000 by passing the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 (PL 103-382, 1994), which allocated funds to school districts to develop substance abuse and violence prevention programs (Robbins, 2005)

The ability of states and school districts to receive federal funds was tied to their compliance with the Safe Schools Act (GFSA, 1994) (Robbins, 2005). Zero-tolerance policies were the tools that schools and districts used to improve their chances to secure federal funding. Schools with zero-tolerance policies forced students into the juvenile justice system by referring them to law enforcement for minor infractions that could best be handled by school personnel or parents (Hurst, 2005). With Bush's initiative, more

resources were set aside for responding to violence rather than preventing it (Robbins, 2005). "Youth violence is a complicated issue that can be addressed only by early intervention and prevention programs involving schools, families, and communities in dealing with the causes of violent behavior -- and prevented with adequate security" (Education World, 2016, para. 17).

The Safe Schools Act of 1994 (PL 103-227, Sec. 701), which intended to produce safe learning environments by eliminating firearms, weapons, drugs, and drug paraphernalia from schools, was built on the foundation from which zero-tolerance policies emerged (Robbins, 2005). However, the report by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2008) found that zero-tolerance policies may have increased bad behavior, negatively affected minorities disproportionately, and forced students into the juvenile justice system. Furthermore, the juvenile justice system was overwhelmed by the additional cases coming from school systems and failed to meet the needs of children (Airey, 1999). Additionally, criminal statutes were designed to control the behavior of minorities; minorities were more likely to experience poverty, and statutes were designed to deal with minority behaviors more harshly (Brown, n.d.). States extended the GFSA of 1994 to include threatening or disruptive speech, drugs, and harassment (Robbins, 2005)

> Schools were best supported by
>
> school board policies that address both prevention and intervention for troubled students; school-wide violence prevention and response plans that include the entire school community in their development and implementation; training in recognizing the early warning signs of potential violent behavior; procedures that encourage staff, parents, and students to share their concerns about children who exhibit early warning signs; procedures for responding quickly to concerns about

> troubled children; and adequate support in getting help for troubled students. (Jones, 2001, p. 219)

The MHA (2016) recommended tailoring zero- tolerance policies to deal with deadly weapons as originally intended by federal law and consider other discipline administratively on a case-by-case basis.

Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation

One of the issues facing America was how to deal with youth crimes. Lawrence (2007) said that the juvenile justice system was inconsistent with its treatment of young offenders. Issues that affected young offenders included chronic unemployment, family problems, living in single parent households, loss of traditional family values, irrational choices, or laws and punishments that were not tough enough (Lawrence, 2007). Boys experienced fewer social controls than girls, which led them to more inappropriate behavior and the consequences that followed, such as disciplinary sanctions and delinquency (Arum, 2011). With zero-tolerance policies, the symptoms within the community and the school that were underlying causes of violent behavior were minimized, because they are never addressed (Robbins, 2005). As a result, violence continued to occur in the school and community (Robbins, 2005). Urban demographics made it easier for law enforcement agencies to target minority children for criminal behavior (Brown, 2003).

Heitzig (n.d.) said, "The school-to-prison pipeline is a consequence of schools which criminalize minor disciplinary infractions via zero tolerance policies, have a police presence at the school, and rely on suspensions and expulsions for minor infractions" (p. 2). New Haven, Connecticut, school officials incorporated the assistance of the SRO with administrators in making decisions related to school discipline and determining whether

to impose criminal sanctions (Sanneh & Jacobs, 2008). New Haven school officials admitted that some infractions could be handled administratively, but many infractions fell into the gray area between criminal (weapons, drugs) and non-criminal (Sanneh & Jacobs, 2008). Students in this gray area who were arrested for infractions that could be better handled administratively were at increased risk for juvenile delinquency and school drop-out (Sanneh & Jacobs, 2008)

The school-to-prison pipeline was the result of police-based discipline and over-crowded, failing schools that were poorly funded and highly segregated (Heitzeg, 2009). The victims of zero-tolerance policies were more often minorities from low socioeconomic backgrounds who suffered from abuse and neglect, or had learning disabilities (Amurao, 2016). Racial minorities and children with disabilities were most likely to end up in the school-to-prison pipeline as a result of zero-tolerance policies that were in place at schools (Elias, 2013).

The link between zero-tolerance and the criminal justice system was especially harmful to Black youth when judges repeatedly referred them to the criminal justice system because of preconceived ideas of race and family stability (Robbins, 2005). Youth violence could be prevented by taking proactive steps, such as providing parents with training on child development and teaching communication and problem solving skills or by using social development strategies, which could be employed to teach youth how to handle tough situations without resorting to violence (CDC, 2010a, 2010b). Use of mentoring programs to provide positive adult role models to help guide young people's behavior could be a useful strategy (CDC, 2010a, 2010b). Furthermore, changes could be made to the physical and social environment to address the social and economic causes of violence (CDC, 2010a, 2010b)

The Democratic Party Platform addressed the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon that threatened the future of our youth.

> We will end the school-to-prison pipeline by opposing discipline policies which disproportionately affect African Americans and Latinos, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, students with disabilities, and youth who identify as LGBT. We will support the use of restorative justice practices that helps students and staff resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully while helping to improve the teaching and learning environment. And we will work to improve school culture and combat bullying of all kinds. (Democratic Party Platform, 2016, p. 33)

Lawrence (2007) said the juvenile justice system focused on decisions that were in the best interest of the child and would provide the least restrictive disposition that balanced the goals of correctional treatment with public safety. However, schools should be able to deal with day-to-day discipline without the fear of legal challenges (Arum, 2011) or without the need to refer students to the juvenile justice system. Placing children who have been suspended or expelled into programs that require completion of school work and provides counseling and other needed services is a less costly alternative (Skiba, Rausch, & Ritter, 2004). Shah (2011) believed that the USDOE should change discipline policies to keep children in school and ensure that school discipline policies do not violate children's civil rights.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

With zero-tolerance policies, punishment rather than intervention was the focus of administrations (Robbins, 2005). Zero-tolerance policies created mistrust and damaged supportive relationships between children and teachers, while simultaneously diverting resources away from counseling and mental health services (Chap & Sullivan, 2013).

Epidemiological studies made by public health professionals contributed to the understanding of school violence, characterization of the problem, identification of modifiable risk factors, and a call to modify zero-tolerance policies to fit school realities (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009)

Violence intervention was the technique recommended to help prevent violence. Intervention could increase students' knowledge about violence and teach them skills that may help reduce violence. Orpinas, Parcel, McAlister, and Frankowski (1995) suggested teaching conflict resolution and anger management skills. Some schools added conflict resolution to their curriculum to help prevent troubled students from resorting to violence (Kids Health, 2015). Kelly (2009) suggested preventive measures, such as providing metal detectors, security guards, school uniforms, and taking a proactive approach with school and community involvement.

Kelly (2009) suggested 10 preventive measures that teachers could practice in the classroom: "Take responsibility both inside your classroom and beyond. Don't allow prejudice or stereotypes in your classroom. Listen to "idle" chatter. Get involved with student-led anti-violence organizations. Educate yourself on danger signs. Discuss violence prevention with students. Encourage students to talk about violence. Teach conflict resolution and anger management. Get parents involved. Finally, take part in school-wide initiatives," such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (Kelly, 2009, paras. 2-10)

Diversity could also be a valuable tool in any effort to prevent violence in the school setting (Robbins, 2005). Recruitment of faculty of color, particularly African American males, should be a priority of school districts across the country (Jackson, 2003). The call for diversity went out long ago. The failure to listen was a denial of the

equality that would give Black students the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school community (Robbins, 2005). The need for diversity in schools was more important at the time of this writing, than ever, because of the destabilization of the Black communities, particularly in urban areas where deindustrialization took away jobs that kept families strong, connected, and productive (Kolesnikova & Lui, 2010) Those communities were no longer stable and residents were much more mobile than in years past, leaving older neighborhoods for better opportunities and conditions (Kaplan, 1981). This mobility was not necessarily of their choosing, but was necessary to get better jobs and housing and had a negative impact on communities and neighborhood stability (Kaplan, 1981)

Black Americans faced obstacles to their economic health that made it difficult for them to experience strong communities, which supported growth and financial stability (Harris, 2010). Pastor Devaughn Johnson of the True Covenant Church "opened a franchised restaurant on the church campus as a way to spread the gospel and to create jobs in a part of the city where unemployment was high and commercial" establishments were low (Barrett, 2010, p. 252). Economic cooperation in the Black community through cooperative ownership could be an important strategy to strengthen the Black community (Nembhard, 2004). Schools could support the community efforts of predominantly Black churches by having high expectations for Black students, promoting self-worth, promoting academic success, and celebrating high achievement (Barrett, 2010). Schools should value Black students for their academic success, as human beings with promise and talents to contribute, and from whom success was expected (Barrett, 2010)

Farrell and Meyer (1997) evaluated the impact of a school-based curriculum designed to reduce violence among urban sixth-grade students. They concluded that the

application of the school-based curriculum would require a major financial commitment to cover the manpower, transition, and material to teach the curriculum (Farrell & Meyer, 1997). This was a decision that would have to be made at the board level. Another concern was what effect the curriculum would have on the broader problem of violence in the community. Studies showed that a school-based violence prevention curriculum had no long term impact when administered without programs that addressed the issue in the community as a whole (Farrell & Meyer, 1997). However, there was strong evidence that universal school-based violence prevention programs decreased violence and aggressive behavior when administered to an entire class, grade, or school (Hahn et al., 2007)

Bullying and teasing were also issues that affected students' interest and feelings of safety at school (Randa & Reyns, 2014). Students reported skipping because they had concern for their safety (Randa & Reyns, 2014). Furthermore, the devaluing of African American youth pushed them toward gangs and gave them a sense of honor when they put their lives on the line for the gang (Barrett, 2010). Children who were exposed to violence saw it as the answer to all their problems (Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2009). The community must listen to all voices, embrace cultural differences, and create an atmosphere of equality and inclusion to overcome the negative effects of exclusion and domination (Robbins, 2005). Academic achievement should take on a sense of moral obligation and those who achieve it should be celebrated while those who do not should be encouraged in a manner that creates a culture of expected academic success (Barrett, 2010)

Jackson (2003) suggested that high school completion rates for Black males could increase if there was greater representation of African American male role models at both

teaching and administration levels of secondary education. Once African Americans gained access, they faced hurdles, such as lack of support and tokenism (Jackson, 2003). Furthermore, "even with present-day rhetoric for greater inclusion, many black men and women have found the road to administration inside the academy to be fraught with numerous contradictions and dilemmas" (Jones, 2003, p. 130). Many minorities who reached administrative levels in education may be perceived as less competent, because of Affirmative Action programs (Jackson, 2003). School districts should actively promote the conditions and structural relations that invite all members of the community to contribute (Robbins, 2005).

Society may need more time to overcome the institutional racism that was so pervasive not too long ago (Jackson, 2003). Discrimination may no longer be institutionalized on its surface, but zero-tolerance policies and safe schools legislation may inherently possess discriminatory procedures and punishments that unfairly target Black males rather than address the social problems that underlie Black male behavior in school settings (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Goldweber, & Johnson, 2013; Jackson, 2003). More emphasis should be placed on school climate and culture in bullying prevention rather than relying on zero-tolerance policies (Bradshaw et al., 2013). Schools should make it clear that students are valued and trusted members of the community by offering public recognition and celebration of academic success (Barrett, 2010).

Integration of the physical and social environment could help provide solid preventive interventions (Reid, Andrew Peterson, Hughey, & Garcia-Reid, 2006). The physical environment could be designed or redesigned to lower the incidences of school violence by using principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (Johnson, 2009). The environment was impacted by space design, space use and

circulation patterns, territorial features, and physical deterioration. The school social environment was affected in a positive fashion when schools were cohesive; members knew each other and had similar goals. Any approach to prevention would have to focus on victims, victimizers, and bystanders if any measure of success was expected (Tremlow et al., 2001). This social capital created a better environment for the transmission of social norms and collective action (Johnson, 2009)

The focus of the USDOE (2007) report was on (1) efforts to involve parents in preventing and reducing violence, (2) safety and security procedures, and (3) allowable disciplinary policies. Teacher support and, to a lesser extent, support of parents, classmates, and close friends was a factor in whether students chose not to carry a weapon to school (Schonfeld, 2005). Theories of social learning suggested that the behavior of children was a representation of their observations. Children had an internal mechanism which allowed them to regulate their own behavior based on those observations, from which they developed internal standards used to judge their own behavior. They learned and modeled their behavior through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Ganis, 2009)

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was a research-based model designed to reduce the number of disciplinary referrals and improve the overall school culture and academics (Fowler, 2011). PBIS was a proven model that trained teachers, administrators, and school staff to promote and reinforce positive behavior and effectively redirect negative behavior (Fowler, 2011). It was a proactive response to the need for practices and strategies that decreased problem behavior, improved safety, and created a positive school culture (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.).

School-wide PBIS was a non-curricular strategy that promoted positive change in staff and student behavior as a way to prevent disruptive behavior and improve the school climate by providing systems of support for the school, classroom, and individual (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008). However, information about research-based programs proven to successfully reduce disciplinary problems and improve academic performance was largely ignored by school districts (Fowler, 2011). Olive (2007) believed that interventions were more effective when adults understood the behavior of children and used that knowledge to teach children how to make different behavioral decisions. Olive said, "Being able to encourage positive behavior in youth is one of the greatest challenges we face" (Olive, 2007, p. 2)

In the Illinois PBIS Network (2008), the Response to Intervention Model (RTI) had four elements, which were also known as the systems approach in school-wide PBIS for supporting social competence and academic achievement:

1) Outcomes: academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators.
2) Practices: Curricula, instruction, interventions, and strategies that is evidence-based.
3) Data: information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions.
4) Systems: supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBS. (Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP], 2017, para. 4-5)

With PBIS, positive behavior was taught, identified, and praised while deviations from positive behavior were met with appropriate data-driven consequences in an effort

to prevent inappropriate behavior (Fowler, 2011). Olive (2007) summarized the tools of Positive Behavior Facilitation (PBF) as:

- Awareness and Management of Self - What motivates us and how do our experiences affect our interactions with children and youth.
- Knowledge of the Dynamics of Conflict - How to recognize and prepare for the dynamics of conflict.
- Understanding the differences between Behavior Management and Behavior Change - Adults need different skills to manage behavior than those that are required to change behavior.
- Healing environment - Structure an environment that will nurture, support, and heal children.
- Surface Behavior Management Techniques (SBMT) - Effective in managing the visible and obvious behavior of children while providing a variety of intervention strategies for behaviors that negatively impact intellectual, social, and emotional development.
- Effective Communication - Adults must be able to attend, observe, decode, listen, signal, and respond to children during times of crisis or conflict. The Listen, Respond, and Teach (LRT) method offers suggestions for effective communication between adults. (p. 9-12)

Participatory Leadership

The participatory leadership model could include students in decision making, which motivates them and develops their problem solving skills (Brasof, 2011). Brasof (2011) cited Morgan (2006) and suggested using students in decision making to motivate them and develop their ability to face and solve complex problems. Morgan's (2006)

double-loop learning distinguished between learning (single-loop) and learning to learn (double-loop). In other words, Morgan (2006) believed that members of an organization could learn, but learning was institutionalized when the members were included in the decision making process, so that they could detect and correct deviations from predetermined norms (double-loop).

Brasof (2011) took Morgan's (2006) institutional model and applied it to the school setting by giving students inclusive participatory leadership to motivate them to strategically plan viable, sustainable solutions to behavior problems. "Democracy in schools is messy, time-consuming, and often contentious, but . . . this kind of authentic participation is one of the only ways to build among the young an appreciation for democracy and the necessary civic virtues it demands" (Cuevas & Kralovec, 2011, para 17). Brasof (2011) suggested that inclusive participatory leadership could reduce behavior problems because student inclusion would yield more successful solutions.

Satchell (1922) said that at Radnor High School in Wayne, Pennsylvania, the Student Council was organized as a way to allow students to share in the school's operation. The council acted as a jury and heard evidence against students who were charged with serious misconduct or violation of rules and then recommended punishment that the principal could approve, disapprove, or modify. Satchell (1922) reported that principals of schools with student participation called it a vital part of the school, because it took care of practically all student discipline outside of the teacher's classroom and aided in developing splendid school spirit. Other principals reported unfavorable comments for various reasons (Satchell, 1922)

Seher (n.d.) said, "Many schools, even those that are civic-minded and that genuinely seek to promote democratic practices and life-long learning, often fail to

provide young people with opportunities to dialogue openly and make decisions regarding the issues affecting their lives" (para 17). Seher (n.d) created space in the classroom to allow for action-oriented inquiry and changed the authoritarian culture from reluctant compliance to democratic participation and genuine engagement. Seher (n.d.) also shifted the teacher-student relationship from authoritarian to egalitarian, which challenged the status quo. Researchers set the stage for policy makers to develop alternative ways to educate American children.

History of Alternative Education

The purpose of alternative education programs was to offer students who were not functioning well in traditional K-12 classrooms an option (Caroleo, 2014). Aron and Zweig (2003) cited the USDOE definition of alternative education as a public elementary or secondary school that offers nontraditional educational services to students whose needs cannot be met in a regular school. "Alternative schools have been developed and organized according to different philosophies and thus differ in their purposes" (Watts, 2000, p. 3). Alternative education programs were designed to provide specialized instruction to students who dropped out of conventional schools because of behavioral problems, truancy, poor performance, pregnancy, or other reasons (Juan, 2005). Youth who may require alternative educational services were usually high school dropouts, those entangled in juvenile justice systems, young mothers, and those in foster care (Wald & Martinez, 2003)

Alternative schools were developed because of people in the progressive education movement who were convinced that one unified curriculum was not a good fit for all students (Kim & Taylor, 2008). For minorities, the institutions that historically discriminated against them were the same ones that influenced the one unified curriculum

(Juan, 2005). Alternative education started in the late 1950s as a private response to the needs of youth who were failing in urban public schools and in suburban areas to introduce innovative approaches to learning (Caroleo, 2014). The organized movement toward alternative education began in the 1960s and 1970s (Sekayi, 2001). The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N, 2014) stated, "The most common form of alternative school operating today to serve youth in at-risk situations is designed to be part of a school district's comprehensive dropout prevention program" (para. 6).

Alternative Education Programs

The alternative education concept existed for more than 40 years previous to this writing. Although the term alternative education was not clearly defined, educators agreed that its purpose was to serve students who were at risk of failing in the traditional classroom setting (Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009). The characteristics of an alternative education school were that it was public (elementary or secondary), it addressed the needs of students that were not being adequately addressed in traditional classroom settings, it provided nontraditional education, and it was not categorized solely as regular education, special education, vocation education, gifted and talented, or magnet programs (Lehr et al., 2009). The NDPC (2014) listed five models of alternative schools as identified by Hefner-Packer (1991):

1) The Alternative Classroom, designed as a self-contained classroom within a traditional school, simply offering varied programs in a different environment;
2) The School-Within-a-School, housed within a traditional school, but having semiautonomous or specialized educational programs;
3) The Separate Alternative School, separated from the regular school and having different academic and social adjustment programs;

4) The Continuation School, developed for students no longer attending traditional schools, such as street academies for job-related training or parenting centers; and
5) The Magnet School, a self-contained program offering an intensified curriculum in one or more subject areas such as math or science. (as cited in NDPC, 2014, para. 6)

According to the NDPC (2014), Raywid identified three additional popular types of Alternative schools:

1) Schools-of-Choice, offering different specialized learning opportunities for students usually in a magnet school;
2) Last-Chance Schools, designed to provide continued education program options for disruptive students; and
3) Remedial Schools, having a focus on the student's need for academic remediation or social rehabilitation. (as cited in NDPC, 2014, para. 7)

"Prior to the charter school movement, the home schooling movement, and privatization, the term alternative education denoted programs for court-adjudicated youth programs for advanced-placement students and special education for disabled students" (Conley, 2002, p. 1). Effective alternative programs shared common characteristics. One characteristic was that alternative programs focused on school climate as a way to get students to view the school environment as less hostile (Sicoli, 2000). Another characteristic was that both students and staff chose to enter the program (Sicoli, 2000). Lehr, Tan, and Ysseldyke (2009) cited Aron (2006) and Lange and Sletten (2002) and said, "Common characteristics of alternative schools identified in a review of the literature include small size, one-on-one interaction between teachers and students, a

supportive environment, student-centered curriculum, flexibility in structure, and opportunities for students to engage in decision making" (p. 20).

Behavior modification programs, vocational preparation programs, and innovative curricula and instructional programs characterized many alternative schools (Watts, 2000). Lehr et al. (2009) found that state legislation and policy had four criteria for student enrollment in alternative education programs: at-risk status, being suspended or expelled from a regular education program, being disruptive in the general education environment, and being unsuccessful in the traditional school setting. Lehr et al. (2009) defined at-risk as having "typically included dropout status, history of truancy, physical abuse, substance abuse or possession, and homelessness" (p. 26). Some risk factors associated with students who attended alternative schools were higher rates of substance abuse, suicide attempts, sexual activity, and pregnancy (Lehr et al., 2009). Placement in alternative schools could be by parental choice or mandatory administrative placement.

School-Within-a-School

The structure of alternative education included separate schools, schools-within-schools, and part-time programs with theme-based, culturally-centered, or religiously affiliated philosophies (Sekayi, 2001). The objective was to provide alternative educational opportunities for students who dropped out or were at-risk of dropping out for various reasons, including school failure (Mitchell & Waiwaiole, 2003). The school-within-a-school provided at-risk students with a separate location within the traditional school utilizing separate staff who were focused on improving academic or social behavior (Reimer & Cash, 2003).

The school-within-a-school was an attempt to address the complaint that schools were too large to effectively provide an adequate education for all students. Raywid

(2002) said that student violence was a threat in large schools, but was negligible in small schools. "The academic and behavioral needs of at-risk students can be accommodated through classes containing fewer students" (Watts, 2000, p. 23). The school-within-a-school was intentionally designed to be small with smaller classrooms so students did not get lost in anonymity, as well as to give the staff a better chance to give each student more individual attention (Sicoli, 2000). "Small class size allows teachers to address individual student needs more effectively" (Watts, 2000, p. 23). The argument for smaller schools was that they were needed to meet the "challenges of educating the growing numbers of minority and limited-English-speaking students" to provide safer and more effective schools (Raywid, 2002, p. 47)

Recovery High Schools

Recovery high schools were "designed specifically to serve students who have been through a professional substance abuse treatment program" and wanted to return to school, but they wanted to avoid the same environment that led them to abuse drugs in the first place, so they work hard to stay away from drugs and alcohol (Vogel, 2009, para. 4). Recovery schools typically served several school districts, were funded by the state and local property taxes, and they could operate as "charter schools, schools-within-a-school, schools that share a building, and stand-alone schools" (Vogel, 2009, para. 4). In the school-within-a-school design, "recovering students are in some or all classes together but share the public high school and the same administration" (Vogel, 2009, para. 4). The school-within-a-school design differed from the shared building design where several schools operated, but each had its own classes and principal (Vogel, 2009). Both designs shared a commitment to provide a safe, drug-free environment to support students learning to deal with addiction (Vogel, 2009)

Class sizes were purposefully kept small to enable staff and students to develop close relationships and a staff counselor devoted part of the day to talk with students about their use of drugs or alcohol or any other issues that students were willing to discuss (Vogel, 2009). Students were required to enroll in a 12-step recovery program for additional support motivation (Vogel, 2009). According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 8.2% of youths between the ages of 12 and 17 may be diagnosed with substance abuse (Vogel, 2009). The first recovery high schools opened to meet this need, but the number of openings was inadequate (Vogel, 2009). At the time of this writing, public and private recovery schools operated to serve students who were recovering from drug and alcohol abuse (Vogel, 2009)

Vogel (2009) said that small class sizes also made it easier for the staff to ensure that drugs and alcohol were not part of the school culture and students' familiarity gave them the incentive to monitor their own behavior and that of their peers. Having a drug and alcohol free school culture was handed down to the next wave of students who graduated from a treatment program (Vogel, 2009). Student commitment was secured through a signed contract with a promise of honesty and continued work toward sobriety and the students had the choice to remain at the recovery school until graduation or return to the traditional high school (Vogel, 2009). Students who relapsed had to leave the school and complete another substance abuse program before they would be readmitted (Vogel, 2009)

Vogel (2009) said that most schools had mandatory random drug testing on a weekly basis and administrators were aware that students at the recovery school had fallen behind academically and may also be struggling with emotional issues. Some schools offered career and technical education (CTE) classes or dual enrollment with the

local community college (Vogel, 2009). Vogel (2009) said that the smaller classes and close relationships with faculty improved the likelihood that the students would attend class. Students who were struggling in the traditional classroom setting commented that they had seen their grades improve since being admitted to the recovery school (Vogel, 2009). James-Burdumy, Goesling, Deke, Einspruch, and Silverberg (2010) predicted that mandatory drug testing may prevent student substance abuse in the following ways:

- Deterrent - The awareness of the possibility of drug testing may cause students to stop using substances or refuse offers from their peers to use substances.
- Detection - School staff can refer students who test positive to the appropriate drug treatment or counseling services.
- Spill-over Effects on Nonparticipants - Non-users may remain non-users when their peers refrain from using substances due to mandatory testing. (p. 3)

Vogel (2009) conducted interviews and drew conclusions based on observations made at high school recovery programs. This report presented no empirical evidence on the success of one or any of the recovery schools in which Vogel (2009) made observations. Future research could take this process further with random sampling, surveys, and observations over a period of time to determine whether the recovery schools positively impacted the graduation rate of students who completed a substance abuse program. Other studies could be conducted to determine whether students who completed a school recovery program continued on to have successful employment or university experiences.

Separate Alternative Schools

Remedial and special education and last chance schools. There were special issues with regards to programming for students with disabilities. Forcing students with

emotional and behavioral disabilities into alternative schools could be especially problematic for them and for educators working in alternative schools who may not be equipped to deal with the challenges that these students may bring. Educators need to be prepared to continue with the Individualized Education Programs (IEP) that students with disabilities received in the regular classroom setting. Special education directors at the state level expressed concern about the availability of staff licensed in special education working in alternative schools. Lehr et al. (2009) said, "A review of enrollment criteria, alternative school definitions, quality of staff, and education programs in alternative schools may begin to clarify whether such concerns are justified" (p. 21).

The concern revolved around whether alternative schools "would be able to meet the requirement to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)" (Lehr et al., 2009, p. 21). Lehr et al. (2009) stated that as a disciplinary measure, school administrators could change the placement of a student with disabilities who violated school rules and safety issues (weapons, illegal drugs, or threat of injurious behavior). The alternative school may act as the appropriate interim alternative education setting (IAES) for up to 45 days (Lehr et al., 2009).

The purpose of Lehr et al.'s (2009) study was to collect data to be used to examine alternative school practices and policies in the United States and the extent to which they addressed various topics. Alternative school legislation and policy was reviewed from state department of education web sites and cataloged. Also, a survey was distributed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to gather state-level information that would improve the understanding of alternative schools across the nation.

The study found that the number of students served by alternative education programs in the United States was significant. However, "determining the impact of alternative schools on students who attend them is difficult, as the population is at risk and measuring academic progress alone may not capture the settings' influence on youth who attend these schools and programs" (Lehr et al., 2009, p. 21). In an attempt to maintain compliance with the accountability provisions of NCLB, administrators were more focused on outcomes for students who were educated in alternative school settings (Lehr et al., 2009). Data from the study showed a trend toward the use of alternative schools as a place to put disruptive students or students who were suspended or expelled (Lehr et al., 2009)

The criteria for enrollment in alternative schools raised the question of whether the schools were being used to house disruptive students or whether they were legitimate educational alternatives offering challenging curricula and instruction that utilized evidence-based best practices (Lehr et al., 2009). Data gathering from alternative schools provided an understanding of how students who were most at risk of school failure were doing in the alternative setting. This study did not provide data on the overall effectiveness of alternative schools. Lehr et al. (2009) said that individual alternative schools should track their progress and make the data available to ensure that alternative schools were not being the 'dumping ground' for unwanted students.

According to Lehr et al. (2009), teachers in alternative schools were often required to teach more than one subject because of the school's small size. The "accountability provisions of NCLB require that teachers be licensed in the subject area they teach," which challenges alternative schools to be flexible and creative to maintain staffing (Lehr et al., 2009, p. 30). "Informal conversations with alternative school

educators indicate a need and desire for more staff that can help to address emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of the students they work with" (Lehr et al., 2009, p. 30)

Future research should be focused on funding issues to help alternative schools provide the professional staff that could address the emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of their students. Alternative schools were faced with the need to provide quality, licensed staff, provisions and quality services, and transitioning procedures for students with disabilities (Lehr et al., 2009). Future research should also look into the role alternative schools played in addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities, since that subgroup made up a large portion of at-risk students (Lehr et al., 2009)

Last chance schools. Last chance schools were created to provide continued education program options for disruptive students who may have behavioral disorders with a focus on behavior modification of students who were suspended or faced possible expulsion (Watts, 2010). Students in last chance alternative programs had no choice in attending these programs (Watts, 2010). Some people believed that last chance schools were used to have a place for students that the system discarded (Watts, 2010).

Golubtchik (2013) said that most schools could not effectively educate students and continue to use the traditional approach of reward and punishment, which had proven to be a failure.

> Behaviorally challenged teens need and deserve an advocate to tell their stories so that our schools can create more effective ways to educate them. These students have been getting a raw deal. When schools' tolerance levels for misbehavior cross arbitrary lines, they resort to punishments. When those punishments fail,

> schools often slap special education labels on these students and discard them. That doesn't seem fair and is simply wrong. (Golubtchik, 2013, para. 3)

According to Watts (2000), who cited Raywid, alternative school programs that were designed to fix the student had been relatively unsuccessful.

Continuation alternative schools. In California, 10% of public high school students were enrolled in an alternative program (EdSource Brief, 2008). Parents and students may choose the alternative program, but many students were placed there involuntarily. California's alternative programs were established to meet the needs of students who were most at-risk of failing or dropping out of school (EdSource Brief, 2008). An EdSource Brief (2008), titled "California's Continuation Schools," summarized an initial research study on alternative education options in California by De Velasco et al. (2008). The continuation alternative program was the largest in the state of California (EdSource Brief, 2008)

The EdSource Brief (2008) summarized the De Velasco et al. (2008) findings regarding the dramatic variations in the quality of California's continuation high school programs and distinguished the most successful ones. There were four main categories of alternative schools in California that served the needs of at-risk students:

- Continuation schools, which generally offer programs that help students with credit recovery when they are behind in earning credits.
- Community day schools, which serve students with serious disciplinary or behavioral issues.
- County-run community schools, which enroll adjudicated or expelled youth.
- Independent study programs, which school districts operate as an educational option. (EdSource Brief, 2008, p. 1)

Data about continuation schools in California was difficult to measure because of the students' mobility (EdSource Brief, 2008). In spite of this data limitation, the authors used the available data to distinguish continuation school students from other students in California. The authors found that Hispanic students represented 55% of all continuation students in California for 11th grade enrollment, African American students represented 11%, and English Language Learners represented 21% (EdSource Brief, 2008). The authors also evaluated survey data designed to examine students' living situations and behavioral issues by accessing information from the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) from 2004-2006 (EdSource Brief, 2008).

Analysis of the data from the survey indicated that 17% of the 11th grade continuation students changed where they lived two or more times in the previous year as compared to 7% of comprehensive high school 11th graders (EdSource Brief, 2008). Forty-seven percent of continuation students reported being enrolled in their then-current school for fewer than 90 days (EdSource Brief, 2008). Eleven percent of 11th grade continuation students reported living in foster care or with someone other than a parent as compared to 7% of comprehensive high school 11th graders (EdSource Brief, 2008). Alcohol and drug use were two times higher among continuation high school 11th graders (EdSource Brief, 2008). Corresponding problems associated with alcohol and drug use was also twice as high among continuation high school 11th graders (EdSource Brief, 2008)

Interviews with principals and teachers in 37 continuation high schools in California conducted by the principle investigators of the research project (Austin, Dixon, Johnson, McLaughlin, Perez, and DeVelasco) indicated that the accountability system left them unclear about expectations, and the funding structure questioned California's

commitment to the success of continuation high school students (EdSource Brief, 2008, p. 1). Administrators were clear that the California Public School Accountability Act and the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) held all students to a minimum set of academic standards to receive their high school diploma (EdSource Brief, 2008). The academic standards requirement for graduation gave teachers and administrators a blueprint from which to design and improve the quality of instruction in continuation high schools.

The NCLB focus on teacher preparation caused districts to hire more fully credentialed teachers (EdSource Brief, 2008). Districts also had the discretionary power to raise their academic standards, but the DeVelasco et al. authors found that more rigorous requirements for students in comprehensive schools, as compared to continuation schools, resulted in ambiguous academic expectations (EdSource Brief, 2008). There was also ambiguity in the accountability system, because California's Alternative School Accountability Model (ASAM) allowed continuation schools to choose indicators other than the California Standards Test for state accountability purposes (EdSource Brief, 2008). The principle investigators found "a lack of consensus among educators and policymakers about how to measure the effectiveness of schools that serve students with special needs, as well as about what ought to be the legitimate expectations" (EdSource Brief, 2008, p. 4)

According to de Velasco et al. (2008), principals and teachers reported that they had to do more for students in the continuation schools than in the comprehensive schools, but the per-pupil funding was the same. California state policy on funding of continuation schools "leaves them ill-equipped to meet student needs and is ultimately one of the most frustrating and unfair constraints with which they must contend" (De

Velasco et al., 2008, p. 7). The De Velasco researchers found that continuation schools received no additional funding to hire the required staff members to support the "small classes and low student-teacher ratios [that] are universally acknowledged by educators and policymakers as essential features of instruction in alternative settings" (De Velasco et al., 2008, p. 7). Furthermore, a portion of continuation schools budget may be spent on facilities (Edwards et al., 2008)

The EdSource Brief (2008) summary of the De Velasco et al. (2008) research reported that the researchers also found that one-third of schools had class sizes only marginally better that the district-wide averages and had no special counseling or vocational educational supports. Also, one-third of the continuation schools had student-teacher ratios that exceeded the average for comprehensive high schools in their district, and only 25% met the California Department of Education recommended ratio of 15 to 1 (EdSource Brief, 2008, pp. 4-5). With the small school concept, continuation schools did not have enough students to qualify for a librarian, nurse, attendance officer, or staff specializing in English Language Learner (ELL) instruction; even though nearly half of the continuation schools had ELL enrollment of 25% or more (EdSource Brief, 2008).

The De Velasco et al. (2008) researchers found that exemplary outcomes in CAHSEE pass rates, attendance, accelerated credit accumulation and other measures were the result of school leaders identifying, planning, and carefully managing the school placement and intake process to stabilize teachers' work environments, applying more rigorous standards to students, themselves, and their faculties than the state or district required, and using student performance data to guide change. Although results varied widely in California's continuation schools, experience and strong leadership seemed to separate the more successful schools (De Velasco et al., 2008).

The data system did not allow comparisons of continuation students and students in comprehensive schools who had similar prior performance and behavioral characteristics due to privacy concerns (EdSource Brief, 2008). Despite that constraint, De Velasco et al. (2008) researchers concluded that continuation schools did "as well, but no better, than comprehensive schools with similar at-risk students" (EdSource Brief, 2008, p. 5). Yet, "this tentative finding suggests a measure of success given the greater documented behavioral and emotional challenges of students in these continuation settings" (EdSource Brief, 2008, p. 5).

EdSource Brief (2008) concluded that the De Velasco et al. (2008) report found that successful continuation schools in California were the exception because (1) the schools were not adequately funded; (2) students were not offered a genuine alternative; and (3) county, municipal, or community-based services failed to support educators' efforts. These factors could guide future research. Future research "should also attend to the relationship between practice and the state/district role in supporting the learning and effectiveness of principals, teachers and counselors" (De Velasco et al., (2008, p. 12)

Magnet schools. The largest system of school choice in the United States was magnet schools, but in 2010 charter schools received $250 million from the federal government, while magnet schools only received $100 million (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). The Obama Administration's requested $10 million increase for magnet programs in its proposed FY 2012 budget was not approved by Congress (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). The 2016 Democratic Party Platform supported high quality, nonprofit charter schools as long as they did not "replace or destabilize traditional public schools, maintain proportionate numbers of ESL, minorities, and those with disabilities as the traditional public schools do" (Center for Education Reform, 2016, p.

1). The GOP Platform supported charter schools as a form of choice (Center for Education Reform, 2016).

Magnet schools, designed to promote innovation and integration, were guided by the Office for Civil Rights in the USDOE and the Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice since 2011, after the 'Parents Involved' decision of the U. S. Supreme Court (551 U.S. 701, 2007) on how to move forward to create racial diversity in schools (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). The political and legal quagmire shifted the original desegregating mission of magnet schools to that of academic excellence and innovation, rather than equity (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (2012) stated that schools with high concentrations of poverty also tend to have segregated school environments, which

> continue to be linked to a variety of educational harms, including diminished academic achievement and depressed graduation rates (citing Linn & Welner, 2007; Orfield, Frankenberg & Garces, 2008). [T]hese trends profoundly impact educational opportunity and outcomes for fast-growing and historically disadvantaged groups of students" (p. 7)

In spite of the legal and political wrangling, magnet schools were able to promote diversity and academic achievement (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) pointed to several reports (Betts el al., 2006; Bifulco, Cobb & Bell, 2008; Gamoran, 1995) which highlighted important academic gains for students attending magnet schools (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). According to Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012), the Gamoran (1995) report found evidence that "support higher rates of student achievement in magnets than in regular public high schools, private or Catholic schools" (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012, p. 8).

The Gamoran (1995) report also found that magnet students made faster achievement gains than high school students in other types of schools in most subjects except math (as cited in Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Lehr et al. (2009) said prior research (Cox, Davidson, & Bynum, 1995; Dugger & Dugger, 1998; Gold & Mann, 1984; May & Copeland, 1998; & Ruzzi & Kraemer, 2006) suggested that students attending alternatives (typically schools of choice) showed an increase in self-esteem, positive peer relationships, commitment to school, and school performance. After reviewing Cobb, Bifulco & Bell (2008), Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) said that an analysis of student achievement in Connecticut's inter-district magnet schools found that magnet high schools had positive effects on students' reading and math scores.

Enrollment data from the National Center for Education Statistics in 2008-2009 indicated that magnet schools enrolled more than twice as many students as charter schools (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). In 2008-2009, Black students represented more than 30% of students attending magnet and charter schools and 15% of students attending regular public schools (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Latino magnet school enrollment was 29%, charter school enrollment was 25.4%, and regular public school enrollment was 21.8%. White students were served in considerably higher numbers in charter schools than in magnet schools, but in a far smaller percentage of both choice sectors than in regular public schools (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012)

Federal data show that in 2008-2009, 35% of Black students and 43% of Latino students attended intensely segregated regular public schools (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). In the same year, 70% of Black charter school students attended schools that were 90 to 100% minority. Fifty percent of Black magnet school students attended schools that were intensely segregated. Enrollment trends pointed to an

accelerated pace of isolation because of poverty for low income students in the charter system (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

> White students experience distinctly lower levels of exposure to low income students in the charter sector compared to the magnet and regular public sector, suggesting that some charters may be serving as places of white flight from poverty in other public schools. (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012, p. 11)

Data for the Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) policy brief was obtained from school leaders who completed a survey with questions that dealt with magnet program demand, "admissions procedures, MSAP funding and outcomes, and policies to address racial isolation" (p. 11). The small sample size limited the researchers' ability to generalize, but they were still able to explore magnet school operations and trends while recognizing the need for further research (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). The survey revealed that the demand for federally supported magnet school programs was greater than availability. Magnet School Assistance Program (MSAP) grants improved the ability of federally funded magnet programs to support heightened academic achievement, although variations in evidence of academic achievement occurred during different funding cycles (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012)

To combat the problems associated with segregated schools, magnet schools and other schools of choice are designed to cross district lines and provide important opportunities to lessen the impact of segregation within the attendance zone (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Other policies were in place to increase inter-district magnet school enrollment and reduce racial isolation (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Diversity goals were established, awareness of choice options were made

available, and transportation was provided; however, districts were cutting back on transportation to save money (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Admissions policies also played a role in reducing racial isolation, such as open enrollment, lotteries, or interviews, which were more likely to achieve diversity than using competitive standards such as testing or GPAs (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

Parental involvement stipulations were tied to admission, but these could be problematic for single parent households or where parents worked two jobs to support the family (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) said that federally funded magnet programs, with their efforts to reduce racial isolation, offered a sharp contrast to charter schools and reported that other studies suggested that charter schools had yet to commit to civil rights standards related to choice (free transportation; community outreach). Choice without civil rights standards could leave White students enrolled in more middle class schools of choice while minority students attend high poverty programs (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) made several policy recommendations based on the findings of the study. Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) stated that more fiscal support was needed to expand and sustain the magnet sector and that "school turnaround strategies promoted by the Obama Administration should absolutely include conversion to a magnet program" (p. 21). Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg (2012) called for more federal support for further research and stated that the

> federal government should continue to provide clear support and guidance for voluntary integration strategies, in addition to offering technical support for magnet program directors in schools and districts. Future grant cycle notifications should sustain the emphasis on reducing racial isolation and finally, civil rights

> standards linked to many federally funded magnet schools should be applied to the charter sector. (p. 21)

Charter schools. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE, 2014) defined charter schools as

> independent public schools that are free from rules and regulations that apply to traditional public school districts unless specifically identified in charter school law. In exchange for flexibility, charter school sponsors are to hold the schools accountable for results. Charter schools are non-sectarian, do not discriminate in their admission policies and may not charge tuition or fees. (para. 1)

The rule in Missouri is that

> any student residing in the Kansas City 33 School District or the St. Louis Public School District may choose to attend a charter school in the city in which they reside. There is no cost to parents for sending their children to a charter school. (MODESE, 2014, para. 2).

As of Fall 2013, there were 17 charter schools operating in St. Louis within 25 buildings and 21 in Kansas City operating within 35 buildings (MODESE, 2014)

Hassel, Hassel, and Ableidinger et al. (2011) stated that the overall contribution of charter schools to U.S. education reform was controversial. Hassel et al. (2011) listed a set of problems that U.S. charter schools were faced with.

> A subset of charter schools has achieved extraordinary results with disadvantaged students. However, relative to the enormous need for quality education, the number of children served by the best charter

> schools is far too low. Numerous growth barriers confront even the best charter institutions. (Hassel, Hassel, & Ableidinger, 2011, p. 1)

Hassel et al. (2011) pointed out that the "top 10 percent of charter schools in the U.S. serve 167,000 children annually while millions of low-income students" are not being reached (p. 1). Osborne (2012) recommended replication of the best charter schools. Improving the quality of charter schools should be the focus of school districts. "Hundreds of school districts have authorized charters then failed to invest in oversight" (Osborne, 2012, p. 2). Osborne (2012) believed that authorizers should improve the quality of their authorizations.

To improve the quality of the charter sector, Osborne (2012) recommended closing failing charters, reviewing authorizer performance, and examining why some authorizers failed to close underperforming charters. Osborne (2012) said that there were many obstacles that stood in the way of closing failing charters. First, too few authorizers collected a robust body of evidence of charter school performance over the term of the charter, too many authorizers lacked adequate staff and funding, authorizers had incentives to keep schools open, too many charters were not performance contracts with meaningful, measurable performance goals, and too many charter terms were longer than five years, so high stakes reviews were infrequent (Osborne, 2012, p. 4)

Furthermore, "Too many authorizers have no clear criteria for renewal and revocation" (Osborne, 2012, p. 4). "Sometimes, closing a charter school would send students to schools that are worse" (Osborne, 2012, p. 4). In some states, appeals to the state board and/or courts reversed and inhibited authorizer decisions or charter operators often make 11th hour turnaround attempts when threatened with closures, and sometimes a poorly thought-out charter law got in the way of a closure (Osborne, 2012). When

seeking to overcome barriers to failing charter school closures, authorizers must take care not to close effective schools that may have low test scores because they educate a high percentage of students with learning or behavior disabilities or former dropouts (Osborne, 2012). Authorizers should recognize the great diversity from state to state when considering school closures and they should carefully consider closures when no viable alternatives exist (Osborne, 2012)

To improve the charter school's chances of success, Osborne (2012) made the following recommendations:

> Invest in better measurement. States should measure student growth, and they should measure more than test scores. Provide adequate funding for authorizers. Require that charters be performance contracts, and enforce them. Require that all charters be for five years, with a minimum of one review in between. Require that authorizers adopt clear policies spelling out the conditions that will lead to a charter's revocation or renewal. Require authorizers to vote on closure if a charter's performance falls below a minimum level. Create at least one politically independent, single-purpose organization dedicated to authorizing charters throughout the state. (p. 4)

Osborne (2012) also recommended that states encourage authorizers to replace "failing charters with new charters run by organizations that have proven track records, take away the right to appeal an authorizer's decision to the courts, and make authorizers accountable for the performance of their schools" (Osborne, 2012, p. 4). In light of the discussion on closing failing charter schools, bear in mind that most charter schools succeeded (Osborne, 2012). High authorizer quality put charter schools in the position to

far outpace their traditional school counterparts (Osborne, 2012). States that were lagging in charter school performance had to be strengthened by improving authorizer quality and funding and management problems also had to be addressed because they were linked to academic performance and accountability (Osborne, 2012)

In order to reach more children, Hassel et al. (2011) recommended that the charter sector pursue sustained, rapid growth. Authorizers and charter management organizations (CMOs) could mimic the distinguishing characteristics of organizations in other sectors that sustained high exponential growth rates (Hassel et al., 2011). Organizations in other sectors that sustained high exponential growth rates had the following characteristics in common:

> They have or bring on board top leaders who commit to growth, generate money to expand, tackle talent scarcity quickly and creatively, use financial and other incentives to fuel growth, reach customers wherever they are, invest in innovation to pursue excellence and growth, develop systems for scale, expand by acquiring other organizations, and form operational alliances with others who are driven to grow. (Hassel et al., 2011, p. 3)

Hassel et al. (2011) also recommended that charter sector leaders who were committed to exponential growth and excellence should use the following blueprint to reach large numbers of customers:

> Commit not just to excellence, but also to reaching large numbers of children with excellence, negotiate performance-based funding in charter contracts, import and induct management talent, extend the reach of the best teachers and leaders, reward charter leaders and staff for reaching

> more children with excellent outcomes, use micro-reach and micro-chartering, enable great teachers and excellent charter operators to reach students in small venues without starting full-size charter schools, use branding to enable innovation. Build a community of rapid-growth seekers, invest in systems for scale, acquire other organizations strategically to reach children in new locations, and pursue operational alliances. (p. 10)

Hassel et al.'s (2011) recommendations provided a starting point for charter schools, CMOs, organizers, and funders to bring the charter sectors' very best schools to far more children. The policy changes could eliminate significant barriers to charter school growth. Ravitch, a vocal critic of school privatization, argued against the politicization of the American educational system (Dodge, 2011). Ravitch did not believe that international test scores were a good predictor of the success or failure of the U.S. economy. "The things that have made the difference for our country are freedom and the encouragement of creativity, imagination, and innovation — things that are not encouraged by our obsession with standardized testing" (as cited in Dodge, 2011, p. 55)

Ravitch (2013) believed that privatization caused social stratification and racial segregation. Ravitch (2013) identified poverty and racial segregation as the root of low academic performance. She made the following recommendations to strengthen American schools:

> Provide universal early childhood education, make sure poor women get good prenatal care so their babies are healthy, reduce class size (to fewer than 20 students) in schools where students are struggling, insist that all schools have an excellent curriculum that includes the arts and daily

> physical education, as well as history, civics, science, mathematics and foreign languages, and ensure that the schools attended by poor children have guidance counselors, libraries and librarians, social workers, psychologists, after-school programs, and summer programs. (Ravitch, 2013, para. 13)

A smaller school concept could be a good strategy to implement the recommendations to strengthen schools as Ravitch (2013) suggested. Smaller neighborhood schools provided a learning environment that improved students' self-worth and increased their accountability and participation (Garber, Anderson, & DiGiovanni, 1998). When charter schools did what they were created to do (serve children with high needs), children benefitted (Dodge, 2011). When they work to compete with and replace the regular public schools, "you lose one of the elements that make a democratic society" (Dodge, 2011, p. 57).

Summary

The literature review included in Chapter Two included discussion of school shootings since 1983, Zero Tolerance towards violence, a history of alternative education and alternative education programs, and intervention measures, such as the School-Within-a-School, Recovery High Schools, and Alternative Schools. Chapter Three reviews the methodology of this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study is a qualitative meta-analysis of research on school violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies. To decide whether alternative school interventions were effective in reducing the incidences of violence in schools and improving attendance and graduation rates, whether positive behavior intervention supports were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives, and whether parental and community involvements were necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives, I considered the following questions:

RQ1. Are alternative education programs effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ2. Are positive behavior intervention supports effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ3. Is parental and community involvement necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives?

Meta-Analysis Methodology

I reviewed and reported on a number of programs designed to address students' needs across the country, including those designed to improve attendance and graduation rates with a focus on the impact of PBIS-structured programs to determine their effectiveness as school violence prevention initiatives. I reviewed the literature regarding the problems of school violence, attendance, and graduation rates and examined the effectiveness of various prevention and intervention strategies, to determine which approach, if any, achieved the desired outcome of reduced school violence and

improvements in attendance and graduation rates. One such strategy examined was alternative school programs.

Some alternative school programs provided effective school violence prevention and intervention and could improve attendance and graduation rates, because the alternative school mission included a component to change the school culture to one that nurtured student growth and development, while also supporting teacher professional development. The question was whether alternative school programs provided effective intervention strategies for violence prevention and improvements in attendance and graduation rates in schools. I examined whether alternative school programs reduced violence and improved attendance and graduation rates.

Next, this study examined whether positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives. This study determined whether parental and community involvement improved the effectiveness for alternative school intervention strategies, supports in school violence prevention initiatives, and efforts to improve attendance and graduation rates. This study also evaluated the parental participation in alternative school intervention strategies and efforts to improve attendance and graduation rates. Finally, this study evaluated the role student participatory leadership and student governance played in violence prevention initiatives and efforts to improve attendance and graduation rates.

The three alternative school programs that may have a definitive impact on school violence are:

1) Separate Alternative School, separated from the regular school and having different academic and social adjustment programs;

2) Last-Chance School, designed to provide continued education program options for disruptive students; and
3) School-Within-a-School, housed within a traditional school, but having semi-autonomous or specialized educational programs. (NDPC, 2014, para. 6 & 7)

Case studies for each category were examined to determine the effectiveness of each program, as reported in Chapter Four. These intervention programs were chosen because they were designed to address the risk factors associated with school violence. First, school violence was examined from an historical perspective with a brief offering of a combination of factors that may lead to potential violence in schools. Next, a more in-depth analysis of the risk factors was reviewed to gain a better understanding of why violence occurred and which protective factors successfully reduced the risk for some students to fall victim to violence or to act as perpetrators of violence themselves.

No study about school discipline would be complete without a review of PBIS and student participatory leadership or student governance. An explanation of PBIS was given as well as the purpose and theory behind positive behavior facilitation. The elements of PBIS were identified and the tools of positive behavior facilitation were outlined. Participatory leadership involved students in decision making, as a way to motivate them and develop their abilities to face and solve complex problems. It was a democratic way to teach students how to strategically plan viable, sustainable solutions to behavior problems. Researchers believed that student participatory leadership could reduce behavior problems because student inclusion would yield more successful solutions (Brasof, 2011; Morgan, 2006).

The history of alternative schools was explored to gain an understanding of the underlying reasoning behind the alternative school concept. The push for school

improvement and schools that responded more to the needs of students was not a new development. Alternative education started in the late 1950s as a private response to the needs of youth who were failing in urban public schools and in suburban areas, to introduce innovative approaches to learning (Caroleo, 2014). The organized movement toward alternative education began in the 1960s and 1970s (Sekayi, 2001). Most alternative schools operated, at the time of this writing, to serve youth in at-risk situations were designed to be part of a school district's comprehensive dropout prevention program (Sekayi, 2001)

In this study, I examined the disciplinary climate of schools, to determine the role certain policies played in students' behaviors and responses to authoritarian policies and procedures. I also examined some forms of discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, to determine the effectiveness and fairness of the implementation of the policies with regard to race and sex. I reviewed the impact of disproportionately administered disciplinary policies against Black males to determine whether they encountered the academic and social consequences of school discipline, such as poor academic achievement and involvement with the criminal justice system, at a higher rate than other groups.

A review of academic engagement, classroom management styles, and school discipline was made to determine whether they were related to incidences of school violence. Changing urban communities, socioeconomic status, and race were also reviewed to determine impact on school violence, as well risk and protective factors. Types of violence, such as bullying, teasing, and sexual harassment were examined to measure the frequency and impact on school violence. School dropout risks and

graduation rates were reviewed to determine impact on risk and protective factors associated with school violence.

A history of school shootings and violent deaths at schools and universities, since 1983, was shown to highlight the impact that school violence had on the community and the potential danger of individual acts of violence. Prevention and intervention strategies were examined to determine the effectiveness of each. The role of state and federal legislation and state and federal case law was also examined to determine impact on students' rights and administrators' and teachers' rights and responsibilities in dealing with students. Zero-tolerance policies and their impact on minority students were examined to determine if they diminished students' educational opportunities or were effective in making schools safer.

The inconsistency of the juvenile justice system and the link between zero-tolerance and the criminal justice system was examined to determine whether issues that affected young offenders, such as chronic unemployment, family problems, living in single parent households, loss of traditional family values, and irrational choices were taken into consideration during the young offenders' encounters with school discipline and the juvenile justice system.

Summary

Chapter Three described the procedures followed for this meta-analysis study. Chapter Four describes the findings for the Research Questions and links each to the case studies examined in the meta-analysis.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, meta-analysis study was to determine whether alternative school interventions were effective in reducing the incidences of violence in schools and improving attendance and graduation rates, whether positive behavior intervention supports were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives, and whether parental and community involvements were necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives.

Research Questions

Through meta-analysis, this study considered the following questions.

RQ1. Are alternative education programs effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ2. Are positive behavior intervention supports effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ3. Is parental and community involvement necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives?

As a society, increased vigilance and excellence from schools and administrators, as it relates to educating our children and keeping them safe, is an expectation. The increasing difficulty in maintaining a safe school environment made it more difficult to improve student performance in many schools and school districts. Much of the violent behavior that occurred in schools was a product of the environments from which students came. Neighborhood expectations may call for violent responses to disputes and insults. According to Gregg (1998a, 1998b), 20% of suburban students found it acceptable to

shoot someone who stole from them, while 8% thought it was acceptable to shoot someone who offended or insulted them.

There was much work for schools to do just to change the mindset of many students from the neighborhoods. Students' attitudes had to change in order to provide a reasonable expectation of safety in the school environment. Once the school culture changed, students could feel safer in the school environment and could be more focused on improved performance. Schools and school districts had to be creative with funding if they really expected to impact the attitudes of students. Districts may have had to allow more autonomy at the school level so alliances with community-based groups that address these issues could be made. Many grass-roots and community-based organizations had funding to tackle these social problems. They had access to funds and social programs while schools had access to students, and parents, who had to take a more active role in the development and behavior of their children.

Parental involvement. Researchers believed that parental involvement may have a positive influence on the level of victims and perpetrators of violence in secondary schools by helping to raise student academic achievement. According to Jeynes (2007) who cited Bauch and Goldring (1995), many researchers believed that parental involvement in urban areas was especially important because of "high family dissolution rates, numerous two-parent working families, and unique sociological pressures on children" (p. 82). Jeynes' (2007) study posed the following questions: How much is parental involvement associated with higher levels of student achievement in urban schools? Do school sponsored parental involvement programs positively influence urban schools? What types of parental involvement is the most successful? Is the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement successful in all racial groups?

The Center for Public Education (CPE, 2011) cited a survey conducted by Public Agenda (2003), which reported that two-thirds of teachers surveyed believed parental involvement would have a positive impact on their child's school performance. According to the CPE (2011), national survey data showed the most common types of parent participation were attending school meetings or events and participating in school fundraising events. Parents of K-8 students participated in PTO/PTA meetings at the rate of 92%, while parents of high school students participated at the rate of 83% (CPE, 2011). The rates for parental volunteering were 52% for parents of K-8 students and 34% for parents of high school students (CPE, 2011)

The CPE (2011) reported the "National Center for Education Statistics' Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey for the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program" found that volunteer involvement for K-8 students was higher among parents of White students, as compared to that of parents of African American or Hispanic students (CPE, 2011, para. 5). The same was true for attending school events or serving on school committees and participating in school fundraising. The CPE (2011) also reported that 82% of White students said that an adult checked their homework while 94% of African Americans and 91% of Hispanic students reported that an adult checked their homework (CPE, 2011, para. 8).

The CPE (2011) also reported that lower income and minority parents had the same level of participation in their students' education, although it may not be reflected in PTO/PTA attendance and school fundraising activities. In fact, the CPE (2011) cited a study of standards-based reform practices by Westat and Policy Studies Associates (2001), which reported that income level had no bearing on parental involvement in a major reform effort at Title I schools. Communication between parents, teachers, and

students would help them understand each other's goals, school expectations, and parental abilities and expertise. The CPE (2011) stated that "[e]ffective parent involvement comes when a true partnership exists between schools and families. Creating that partnership, especially around academics, is what works for student achievement" (para. 9).

According to the CPE (2011), the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL, 2002) concluded that the most effective parental involvement programs were those "[p]rograms and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home [because they] are linked to higher student achievement" (p. 1. The CPE (2001) reported that a study by Catasambis (1998) uncovered similar findings after reviewing National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88) data. The Catasambis (1998) review concluded that techniques employed to enhance learning at home were the most effective, because they focused on enabling parents to convey high expectations to their children and encouraged them to take rigorous college prep courses (CPE, 2011)

Steinberg (n.d.) suggested the greatest number of problems associated with youth antisocial behavior, academic success, personality development, and mental health were due to parents being uninvolved, abusive, or indifferent to the needs of their children. Steinberg (n.d.) said that negative parenting placed children at risk regardless of their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and marital status of the parents. Steinberg's (n.d.) study suggested the common factor in youth violence was usually associated with some type of family dysfunction.

Steinberg (n.d.) said, "There are psychological pathways that connect parental aggression, hostility, and disengagement to violence and other types of antisocial

behavior in adolescence" (p. 33). One pathway was through modeling. Steinberg (n.d.) said when children were exposed to violence in the home, regardless to whom it was directed, violence became acceptable in their interpersonal relationships. Steinberg (n.d.) suggested a second pathway that involved biological factors. Factors such as "poor prenatal care, prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol, exposure to high levels of lead in the environment, and early abuse or neglect can alter brain development in ways that lead some children to have more difficulty controlling aggressive impulses" Steinberg (n.d., p. 34).

A third pathway that connected family dysfunction with youth violence was through the development of mental health problems. Steinberg (n.d.) said children whose families were hostile, punitive, or neglectful were at risk of developing serious mental health problems such as "conduct disorder, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse problems, and anxiety disorders [and] are far more likely than other youngsters to become involved in antisocial and violent activities" (p 34). Steinberg (n.d.) said negative parenting was the fourth link to youth violence, because it had a detrimental effect on personality development. First, hostile parenting may reduce the child's ability to regulate emotions, which may manifest itself in uncontrollable aggressive behavior (Steinberg (n.d.). Second, children who were victims of violence at home may interpret other people's actions as intentionally hostile or malicious and may lash out as a result of their jaded view of the world (Steinberg, n.d.)

The fifth pathway suggested by Steinberg (n.d.) was through the impact negative parenting had on the child's academic performance. Aggressive and antisocial behavior during adolescence may be preceded by school problems, such as academic failure and behavior problems, which may occur because students with behavior problems tended to

associate with children similarly situated (Steinberg, n.d.). This brings on the final pathway connecting family dysfunction to student violence. Steinberg (n.d.) said peer pressure may be a major cause of youth violence, because youth tend to offend in groups. Steinberg (n.d.) suggested that adolescents who had strong and positive relationships at home were better able to resist peer pressure.

In a national study that examined the relationship between parental depression and children's mental health problems and health care utilization, Olfson, Marcus, Druss, Pincus, and Weissman (n.d.) concluded that mental health problems were twice as common among children of parents with depression when compared to children of parents without depression. The study also found that children of parents with depression were significantly more likely to use health and mental health services than children whose parents had no depression (Olfson, Marcus, Druss, Pincus, &Weissman, n.d.). The study concluded that parents who had been treated for depression were more accepting of mental health treatment and were more likely to have their children treated (Olfson et al., n.d.). Also, children of parents who were treated for severe depression were under greater social strain (Olfson et al., n.d.). Common parenting styles of parents with depression included low levels of child monitoring and harsh discipline (Olfson et al., n.d.)

The community in need of major help. Community organizations, businesses, investors, banks, government agencies, hospitals, parents, consumers, and a host of other entities could all play a role in improving the health of communities. An analysis of community-based solutions to the problem of neighborhood deterioration was beyond the scope of this paper. However, some relief could be provided for students at neighborhood schools. One must, however, keep in mind that whatever ills in the

community that affected children would continue to have a negative impact on them until they were made to go way. With this in mind, pragmatic approaches to school discipline and school violence that involve community-based organizations must be taken. Alternatives to zero-tolerance and punitive policies have been recommended by researchers in years recent to this writing. Pollack and Sundermann (2001) said, "Safe schools require broad-based efforts on the part of the entire community, including educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and faith-based organizations" (para. 1).

Case Studies

School-Within-a-School (competitive admissions). It was shown that zero-tolerance and punitive policies had little impact on student behavior. At Humanities Prep High School (Prep Central) in Manhattan, New York, a version of the restorative justice fairness committee model from Scarsdale Alternative School in upstate New York was implemented to give students a voice in all school activities (Davis, 2015; Hantzopoulos, n.d.). Prep Central began as a dropout prevention and academic re-socialization program (Hantzopoulos, 2013). Over 99% of Prep graduates moved on to four-year prestigious universities and private colleges (Wikipedia, 2016). The hope was that the fairness committee (consisting of students and teachers) at Humanities Prep, a school-within-a-school, would mete out some form of restorative justice in an attempt to "inspire empathetic and critical self-reflection and help us determine how best to restore and mend the community in the wake of actions inconsistent with its values" (Hantzopoulos, n.d., para. 5). A fairness committee session was assembled because one member of the community believed that another member violated one of the school's core values (Hantzopoulos, n.d.).

The purpose of each session was to uncover facts that may explain (not excuse) the behavior, while the committee members ask questions and focus on process and real dialogue, rather than product and fixed outcome (Hantzopoulos, n.d.). The violation was discussed and analyzed to determine the effects of the violation on the community, and after discussion, the committee decided what the consequence would be (Hantzopoulos, n.d.). If the violation was serious, the recommendation may be to address it in another venue (through the principal) which is one of the potential consequences of the particular behavior (Hantzopoulos, n.d.).

The Fairness Committee dealt with community concerns by giving students a voice to question discipline and consequences, while also reinforcing a caring community (Hantzopoulos, 2013). Fairness provided a safe place for students to reflect on their behaviors and to accept or reject the school's core values (Hantzopoulos, 2013). Input from teachers and other students raised awareness about student actions and core beliefs (Hantzopoulos, 2013). Fairness provided a positive, democratic, and inclusive process for students to express multiple perspectives on community concerns, such as declining the academic and emotional health of some of their peers (Hantzopoulos, 2013). The Fairness Committee formed an academic advisory plan for one struggling student that involved interventions and checks from his advisor and his friend who brought him to Fairness (Hantzopoulos, 2013)

The demographic composition at Humanities Prep in 2006-2007 was 40% Latino, 38% Black, 12% White, 6% Asian, and 4% other (Hantzopoulos, 2013). According to Hantzopoulos (2013), 12% were mandated special education and 54% qualified for free and reduced lunch, while the school dropout rate averaged 4% since the school opened in 1997, compared to the New York City dropout rate, which stood at 20%. However, it was

difficult to determine whether the Fairness Committee alone had an impact on the dropout rate or school violence at Humanities Prep, because Prep had a competitive admissions process and the Mission Statement of Humanities Prep was built on the philosophy that the school was a democratic community. It was unclear whether there was ever a time when the Fairness Committee at Humanities Prep did not exist, or whether the program was implemented at the school's beginning. The two-year ethnographic study (2006-2008) did not address this issue.

Either way, the existence of the Fairness Committee as a protective intervention strategy at Humanities Prep had a positive impact on the graduation rate, school violence, and school culture. A satisfaction survey completed on the school in 2013-2014 indicated that 95% of the respondents were satisfied with the school culture, as compared to 92% citywide (NYC Department of Education [NYC DOE], n.d.). The Community Asset Development Redefining Education (CADRE, 2010) and Lewis (2009) found when schools adopted a human rights framework which included restorative practices, behavioral incidents that required disciplinary sanctions, such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions, were greatly reduced (as cited in Hantzopoulos, 2013). , Sullivan (2007) found the school's framework was built on the philosophy that teaching essential knowledge and skills, providing a positive school environment, supporting the emotional and behavioral development of students, and encouraging student participation in the development of school policies would have a positive impact on their education (as cited in Hantzopoulos, 2013)

Gregg (1998a, 1998b) said there were three levels of intervention strategies. The first, primary strategies were administered to all students as a protective factor (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b) Conflict management, anger control, and character education were the

typical strategies that fit this category (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b; Davis, 2015). Next, secondary intervention strategies targeted students with antisocial behavior (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). The Fairness Committee and its use of restorative justice would be a secondary intervention strategy. Treatment would include "social skills training, parent training, tutoring, and mentoring" (Gregg, 1998b, p. 3). Finally, tertiary strategies helped students with severe or chronic behavior problems (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). School officials collaborated with families, social service agencies, and sometimes law enforcement agencies (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). These students may need drug or alcohol counseling and may be at risk for alternative school placement or being pushed out into unsupervised environments with maximum exposure to trouble (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b; MHA, 2016)

Old generation alternative schools sought to improve student outcomes through IEPs, personal attention, and a modified or innovative curriculum (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). The newer alternative school legislation attempted to address the seeming prevalence of violence in schools by focusing on student behavior modification as a way to fit the student to the system with the ultimate goal of re-acclimation and reintroduction (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). The focus on the student ignored the probability that there may be weaknesses in the system that should be addressed, for instance, schools may be so large that students got lost in the system and fell behind because they did not get the personal attention that some students required to be successful (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b)

Separate Comprehensive Alternative School

Career academies. The separate alternative schools, last-chance schools, and the schools-within-a-school were all designed with the problem in mind that some students may be lost in the system and needing positive attention. According to Gregg (1998a,

1998b), Patterson High School in Baltimore saw dramatic improvements when it subdivided its student body into five smaller academies focused on personalization and career-centered curriculum, student behavior, attendance, and academic achievement. However, the 2015 graduation rate at Patterson, with a very diverse student population, was 70.65%, while the county rate was 74.93% and the state rate was 88.70% (Baltimore City Public Schools, n.d.). The implication was that Patterson had a way to go to get the graduation rate in line with the county and with the Maryland state rates. The 2015 attendance rate was 79.3%; again lagging behind the county rate (82.4%) and the state rate (92.4%) (Baltimore City Public Schools, n.d.). The Maryland School Assessment (MSA) scores also lagged considerably behind in science, math, and reading (Baltimore City Public Schools, n.d.). These were major indicators of whether the school climate adequately supported student success.

To address the problems that may be inherent in the system, teachers and police officers who patrolled the hallways should be required to receive training in behavior management and instructional strategies for students with disabilities and special learning needs (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b; Heitzeg, n.d.).

> [T]eachers must be empowered to exercise professional judgment in the classroom to attain clearly expressed goals. Professional educators should be given latitude to test individual approaches based on strategic goals and incentive systems. Also, teachers should be provided with training to support them in this expanded role including more time for peer interaction to share views on what is effective. (Williams & Williams, 2010, p. 6)

In 2013, special education students in Missouri graduated at the rate of 73%; 13 points behind their classmates (Education Week, 2016). In 2011-2012, 17% of Missouri

school students with disabilities were suspended, as compared to 9.3% of students without disabilities (Education Week, 2016). The IDEA required personnel to receive adequate and appropriate training to meet the special education needs of students and to develop behavior intervention plans to address the problem behaviors of exceptional children (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b; Sanneh & Jacobs, 2008)

Along with adequate and appropriate training, the school's leadership and organization should define and support high standards of behavior and achievement to help reduce overall student disruptions as effectively as individual treatment programs (Gregg, 1998). Researchers concluded that programs that focused on fixing the student (deficiency model) were largely ineffective (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). Fix the student "approaches fail in meeting the needs of at-risk students over prolonged periods and students typically revert to the behaviors that characterize them as at-risk" (Watts, 2000, p. 4). Furthermore, although there may be a need to separate some students by using alternative settings, schools should start finding ways to adapt to the diverse needs of students (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b).

Separating students into alternative schools marginalized them even further and threatened the equity of the system by segregating poor, disabled, and minority students (Gregg, 1998a, 1998b). Rydeen (2005) argued that the school environment determined whether students would be motivated to learn when that environment created a sense of community and security while stimulating interest and providing motivation to improve performance. Also, "universal school-based efforts to promote students' social and emotional learning (SEL) represent a promising approach to enhance children's success in school and life" (Elias et al., 1997; Zins & Elias, 2006; as cited in Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011, p. 2). Furthermore, alternative schools designed

to change the student's environment and school culture "have demonstrated sustained improvement in student attitudes, behavior, and achievement" (Watts, 2000, p. 4).

Separate Last Chance Schools

At Community Prep, an alternative high school which opened in Brooklyn, New York, for students recently released from juvenile prisons and jails, the untrained teachers and lack of structure failed to improve the students' chances for academic success and graduation. In New York City, up to 8000 students from ages 13 to 18

> return[ed] to their neighborhoods from juvenile detention centers and placement facilities, and from Rikers Island, according to school officials. An overwhelming majority are black or Hispanic, and poor. They have low reading scores, records of truancy and disruptive behavior and few credits toward graduation. About half have been labeled as needing special education. Many have no parents at home. (Rimer, 2004, para. 13)

In New York, only 13% of students who were in custody graduated from high school (Rimer, 2004). When Community Prep moved to Manhattan, it opened with a trained staff and a structure that gave students a better chance to be successful. The partnership between the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) and the school board had a plan to keep classes small and provide plenty of counseling and individual attention (Rimer, 2004). "It emphasized structure and high expectations as well as counseling and support" (Rimer, 2004, para. 21). This approach caused students to expect a transition back to the regular high school or to complete the GED program at Community Prep (Rimer, 2004). Attendance was still low (60%) compared to district averages; but, it was much higher than when the school first opened (Rimer, 2004)

Last-Chance School (Stand Alone).

New York City. Barlow's (2013) review of "These Kids: Identity, Agency, and Social Justice at a Last Chance High School," by Nygreen (2013) uncovered barriers to student success that involved educators identifying them as low-achievers, at-risk, or troubled. When students adopted this language, they set themselves up for failure (Barlow, 2013). The language of educators did not provide an adequate vision of change for underperforming students, and may have impeded social justice (Barlow, 2013). Other obstacles included an unwieldy bureaucracy that lacked the creativity to respond to students' needs, dysfunctional homes, hopelessness, hunger, abuse, abandonment, and the constant threat of violence (Golubtchik, 2013)

Last Chance High was one of 13 special education schools that served five boroughs of severely emotionally disturbed students in New York City (Golubtchik, 2013). These students were described as "non-cooperative, defiant, confrontational, disobedient, and disruptive" (Golubtchik, 2013, p. 2). Although unofficially deemed 'throw-away kids,' they possessed at least average intelligence, creativity, insightfulness, street smarts, and survivor skills. The school had yet to graduate any of its students (Golubtchik, 2013). It seemed the school was only established to get those students out of the general education classroom and keep them out until they dropped out or turned 21 (Golubtchik, 2013)

The focus of the case study was on the successful transformation of the school, which improved high school graduation rates, placed more students in less restrictive educational environments, and decreased the suspension rate (Golubtchik, 2008). Part of the success was attributed to the Power of Choice Model developed from the philosophy of Glasser's Choice Theory (Golubtchik, 2008). Glasser's Choice Theory stated that all

we do is behave, that almost all behavior is chosen, and that we are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 2010). There were ten axioms of Choice Theory that could be accessed for a more detailed understanding (Glasser, 2010)

> The Power of Choice Model grew out of the realization that not even the strongest advocate of traditional public schools can maintain that we are close to a point at which a parent living in a low-income area can consign her child to the closest neighborhood school with confidence that the school will be as good, on average, as any other school within a reasonable geographic radius of her home, much less good enough to secure her child's educational future. (as cited in Croft et al., 2010, p. 2)

Proponents of Choice Theory argue that school choice would improve school quality and efficiency by spurring competition among schools for students, enhancing opportunities for students from disadvantaged families to attend better schools, and creating innovation because of leadership autonomy (Croft et al., 2010). Opponents of school choice argue that it would pigeon-hole students into risk groups based on family background, provide school vouchers to attend religious schools, eliminate standardized curriculum, teacher preparation, and management, and remove the opportunity for poorly performing schools to improve (Croft et al., 2010)

Last Chance was able to improve by a combination of factors. Golubtchik (2013) employed various methods to improve the performance of students at Last Chance. One method was to assure students that they would be successful in the classroom (Golubtchik, 2013). They would be offered challenging work; but, they would also be

offered many options to do well (Golubtchik, 2013). They were offered options to complete their work using alternative methods that they suggested (Golubtchik, 2013). Golubtchik (2013) said that the most important thing was to create a global framework for behavior as soon as school started. According to Golubtchik (2013), student misbehavior was their way of saying that their needs were not being met. Golubtchik (2008) set out to change the school culture as a way to loosen the bureaucratic reigns and overcome students' home and neighborhood environments. Golubtchik (2013) said, "If schools focus on providing a sense of belonging, creating opportunities for success, finding opportunities for students to have some reasonable options, and making classes interesting and not boring, then misbehavior will decrease" (para. 14).

Last-Chance School (School-within-a-School)

San Francisco Youth Treatment and Education Center. According to the NDPC/N (2017), alternative education programs that focused on violence prevention and intervention strategies included Separate Alternative Schools, School-within-a-School, Last-Chance Schools, and Remedial Schools. The school-within-a-school concept could include last-chance and remedial schools (NDPC/N, 2017). These three alternative education programs were the primary focus of this study. In San Francisco, California, the Principals' Center Collaborative (PCC) coached at-risk kids to teach them how to select between high school or spending time in a rural juvenile facility (Rapaport, 2006). The program, San Francisco's last-chance high school, makes court a mandatory educational requirement (Rapaport, 2006). PCC was a "school of choice for students on probation with academic, behavioral, and mental health issues" (Youth Treatment and Education Center [YTEC], 2011, para. 2). The collaborative conducted show trials to

help students understand the process and how to take steps to avoid appearances in juvenile court (Rapaport, 2006)

Initially, the Youth Treatment and Education Court (YTEC) was created to "humanize juvenile judicial proceedings by integrating an educational program, drug and family counseling, individual therapy, substance abuse testing, and other related services" (Rapaport, 2006, para. 4). The YTEC merged with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), which added the educational component to the program and picked up a portion of the funding, because of the combined drug treatment, counseling, and education component, as well as the success of the program (Rapaport, 2006). The collaborative was the joint effort of the SFUSD, Department of Public Health, Juvenile Probation, Superior Court, and the YTEC (YTEC, 2011)

According to Rapaport (2006), during its independence, the YTEC had a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of kids in San Francisco, Australia, China, and Japan. Rapaport (2006) reported that the official statistics showed a 94% decline in drug use by students after six months in the program. Also, "Grade point averages were up for 98 percent of participants, and three out of four posted significant improvements in reading scores on standardized tests" (Rapaport, 2006, para. 7). The Rapaport (2006) study showed a low 12% relapse rate (normally 50%) for YTEC students one year after graduation. Some graduates of the program had gone on to college, vocational school, or became spokesmen for the program (Rapaport, 2006). Collaborative teachers were required to "develop new skills and competencies, learn to work in partnership with behavioral health providers, and master instruction and intervention strategies that promote student self-awareness, health, social and academic skill development, and school engagement" (YTEC, 2011, para. 4)

Rapaport (2006) reported that the program's success was rooted in the mandatory court requirement, where lawyers and educators addressed behaviors, remedies, and the students' Individual Educational Programs (IEPs). Students appreciated the strictness of the program, which kept them for eight hours each school day (Rapaport, 2006). Cell phones and music players were checked at the door until the end of the day, when they were returned (Rapaport, 2006). The success of the program was also tied to the two-to-one ratio of counselors, teachers, psychologists, and administrators to teachers (Rapaport, 2006). According to Rapaport (2006), the cost of staffing was $16,500 per student; much higher than the per public cost in regular San Francisco public schools; yet, much lower than the $60,000 spent annually per ward in the juvenile justice system. Finally, success was also due to the emphasis on parent participation and family counseling, because students brought with them problems from dysfunctional homes (Rapaport, 2006)

School-Within-a-School

In a study that investigated how motivational, curricular, and instructional needs of at-risk students were accommodated by an alternative school program located and organized within a conventional high school in northern Louisiana, "Findings showed that behaviors that characterized at-risk students in the alternative school program were the result of low self-esteem and poor social skills" (Watts, 2000, p. 1). Students with specific needs were those who benefitted most from alternative school programs, and those needs must be identified if the alternative school program was to successfully meet them (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000) who cited Maslow (1987), said that needs at the bottom of the hierarchy must be met before the next level of needs could be addressed. Physiological needs were the most basic, followed by the need for safety, security, and structure (Watts, 2000)

Satisfaction of social needs and the desire for relationships were next in the hierarchy, followed by esteem needs (confidence and self-worth) and self-actualization (self-fulfillment and reaching one's full potential) (Watts, 2000). The researchers developed and used the Statements about School (SAS) to assess teacher and student perceptions about how well the alternative school was meeting the needs of students and found that the perception was that alternative schools were doing a better job of meeting security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs of students (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000) suggested that alternative schools should also accommodate the curricula and instructional needs of students.

Teachers reported that smaller class sizes allowed them to provide at-risk students with more personalized instruction, while students reported that individual instruction helped them concentrate and gave them the opportunity to be known by the teacher (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000) cited Duke and Griesdon (1999) and said that small school size was by design a way to provide a personalized environment and close supervision; however, small school size was expensive and may limit course offerings. Innovative curricula and instructional programs designed to fix the environment of at-risk students should be engaging, challenging, and relevant (Watts, 2000). An integrated curriculum that addressed the academic, social, and behavioral needs of students should include; vocational, career, and community service components (Watts, 2000)

Instructional programs designed to fix the student should emphasize the basics and meet individual needs of students with a focus on rehabilitation, remediation, and behavior modification (Watts, 2000). Although teachers may frequently interrupt the learning process to respond to student problems, successful teachers implemented strong academic programs and pushed students to succeed, while emphasizing progress over

absolute performance (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000) suggested that any study of alternative schools should be made with the understanding that alternative schools were designed to serve a specific population of at-risk students.

The purpose of the Watts (2000) study was to investigate the programs implemented by the alternative school in North Louisiana to determine how the programs met the motivational, curricula, and instructional needs of the at-risk students it served. The researchers conducted interviews and made classroom observations to gather their data, and the success of the program was intended to facilitate the understanding of alternative school programs that met the needs of at-risk students, as well as to provide a model for future alternative school programs (Watts, 2000). The study looked at high school dropout rates in the North Louisiana School of Choice, which identified at-risk students at the conventional high school and allowed them to participate in the alternative school program until they earned enough credits to graduate (Watts, 2000)

There were five teachers, an administrator/counselor, and 75 students in the alternative school, with five classrooms and an administrative office within close proximity to each other located within the conventional school (Watts, 2000). Students within the program were at-risk of dropping out at the conventional high school or repeatedly violated conventional school behavior codes and were allowed to participate by choice (Watts, 2000). Alternative school students shared facilities and programs with the conventional high school students, as well as socialized and interacted with them (Watts, 2000). Interviews were conducted with students, the administrator/counselor, and teachers of the alternative school, and classroom observations were also conducted, while funding was provided through a grant (Watts, 2000)

Watts (2000) cited Peterson et al. (1991), and said that successful teachers of at-risk students provided academic activities in which students had an interest. Successful teachers provided direct instruction, role-playing, and other interesting activities with a focus on basic skills, social learning, and higher-level learning (Watts, 2000). Successful teachers coached their students on social skills, personal behavior, and problem solving (Watts, 2000). Attempts to generalize common characteristics among successful alternative schools were difficult because each was designed to serve a specific at-risk population (Watts, 2000). The programs were unique to the specific population; therefore, the schools should be studied within that unique framework (Watts, 2000).

The Louisiana case study was designed to answer the following questions:

Question 1: What are the specific motivational needs of at-risks students enrolled in the alternative school and how does the organizational structure of the program accommodate these needs?

Question 2: What are the specific curricula needs of at-risk students enrolled in the alternative school and how does the organizational structure of the program accommodate these needs?

Question 3: What are the specific instructional needs of at-risk students enrolled in the alternative school and how does the organizational structure of the program accommodate these needs? (Watts, 2000, p. 10)

The researchers asserted that the behavior of the alternative school students was characteristic of low self-esteem and poor social skills (Watts, 2000). The researchers also asserted that the motivational needs of students could be met when an academic program allowed them to experience success, coupled with a counseling program that addressed the specific needs of each student (Watts, 2000).

School-Within-a-School.

Alternative classroom. The Oakland (California) Unified School District (OUSD) implemented an alternative classroom that targeted African American male students who had low academic performance (Nasir et al., 2013). The Manhood Development Program (MDP) was created to increase attendance, reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, promote self-awareness, and help cultivate healthy identities among Black male students (Nasir et al., 2013). Nasir, Ross, de Royston, Givens, and Bryant (2013), building on theories by "Althusser (1971) and Leonardo (2005)," (para. 1) theorized about the racialized nature of school discipline and believed that the alternative classroom setting of MDP would change how young Black male students responded to school discipline.

Nasir et al. (2013) cited Noguera (2003) and stated that the current methods of school discipline, such as suspension or expulsion, excluded Black students from valuable instruction time. This deepened the academic disparities, increased absenteeism, and placed the students even more at-risk of dropping out of school. The Nasir et al. (2013) study examined how an all-Black, all-male alternative class setting provided Black male students alternative experiences with school discipline. The focus of the Nasir et al. (2013) study was on how discipline was enacted and reformulated within the MDP classroom and whether some biases of the dominant culture were transformed through an alternative system of discipline.

Nasir et al. (2013) used Althusser's (1971) notion of the 'hero teacher' to examine how the teacher's alternative approach to discipline in an all-Black, male MDP class could produce instances of transformative resistance (as cited in Giroux, 2001). According to Nasir et al.'s (2013) interpretation of Althusser's (1971) hero teacher, the

hero teacher was one who pushed against and transformed repressive institutional structures in small ways. Nasir et al. explained that Althusser's (1971) theories of ideology helped educators understand how state institutions (schools) used ideology and repression (punishment or the threat of punishment) to reinforce the racial ideology of White supremacy and to maintain power for the ruling class.

Nasir et al. (2013) said that Giroux's (2001) theory of transformative resistance was the product of the hero teacher's teachings against the dominant ideology. He also said that Althusser (1971) argued that Ideological State Apparatuses (schools/churches) reproduced dominant ruling class ideology, while Repressive State Apparatuses (police/prisons) repressed working-class power. Data from the Nasir et al. (2013) study came from observations and video data from the MDP classroom at Valley High School and from student interviews from three of the MDP sites. The main issues from the study were caring teacher-student connections and actions, disciplinary forms and impacts, perception of fairness, and effects of disciplinary actions on achievement or student success (Nasir et al., 2013)

Desks in the MDP classroom at Valley High School were arranged in a circle, classroom activities were centered on group work and class discussion, and the MDP curriculum included in depth discussions about Black history, written text, video, outside speakers, and debates on then-current events, such as police brutality, Black-on-Black violence, and the mainstream media's prejudice against women (Nasir et al., 2013). Students elected class representatives to hold various positions and co-created classroom structure, rules, and norms (Nasir et al., 2013). The community building approach of the MDP classroom included the teacher in the learning process with a focus on mutual respect and accountability (Nasir et al., 2013)

The disciplinary system in the MDP classroom was not punitive, but rather focused on students' cultural communicative styles, freedom of movement, and the assumption of student good intent (Nasir et al., 2013). Disciplinary sanctions took place when students violated the principles of community, such as when students were not engaged in the class when there were negative peer interactions (Nasir et al., 2013). The reframing of discipline could conceptualize it as a positive, productive, and necessary aspect of African American male identity formation (Nasir et al., 2013). Discipline in the MDP classroom was intended to foster student development and mutual respect within the classroom, as well as to transform students into learners and engaged participants (Nasir et al., 2013)

Nasir et al.'s (2013) study demonstrated how an MDP class could transform African American male students into engaged learners by protecting them from the school's disciplinary system, rather than subjecting them to it. The reframed disciplinary practices within the MDP classroom fostered a productive classroom environment in which students felt supported by the disciplinary environment and practices. Nasir et al.'s (2013) study critiqued the pattern of school discipline disproportionately affecting Black males; but, he offered no statistical evidence to support his theories that the MDP classroom could support positive Black male identity. To conclude from this study that the MDP classroom could improve the graduation rate of African American students would be stretching the study beyond its scope. Furthermore, the subject of graduation rates in inner city schools was not addressed by other studies that have been conducted on alternative classrooms.

School-Within-a-School

Remedial/compensatory program. The remedial/compensatory program was an intervention for at-risk students who were in a regular educational program in order to correct learning deficiencies and improve their performance; and thereby, improve their chance of success in regular classroom settings (Sekayi, 2001). The least restrictive environment requirement of the Individuals with Disability Education Act of 1990 mandated schools to place students with disabilities with their peers as much as possible and discouraged removal unless it was necessary to benefit the student with special education services (Kemmis & Dunn, 1996). The challenge was for teachers and administrators to provide students with meaningful, challenging curriculum (Kemmis & Dunn, 1996)

Sekayi (2001) cited Sanoff (1994) and said that alternative schools must provide choice and be different from regular schools. Sekayi (2001) studied Branton Institute (BI), a small, full day, one-year alternative program within the Baldwin Public School District in a Midwestern suburb. BI was the alternative program for Baldwin High School, which was 50% African American and 50% European American (Sekayi, 2001). BI invited underachieving, but capable students from the eighth grade class of the feeder elementary school, along with some freshmen and occasional sophomores from Baldwin High (Sekayi, 2001). The program, however, was overwhelmingly African American male (Sekayi, 2001)

BI offered a traditional curriculum, but the student body had different expectations and resisted the traditional approach (Sekayi, 2001). The resistance came in the form of "verbal expression, passive aggressive behavior, and aggressive behavior" (Sekayi, 2001, p. 417). Sekayi said students were concerned that they were not being

challenged enough to prepare them for the regular classroom curriculum. Sekayi (2001) also said that students at BI were concerned they were not being socially prepared to interact with the students at Baldwin High and felt embarrassment when in social settings with Baldwin High students because they came from the alternative school.

Sekayi's (2001) examination of the program found inherent weaknesses in its administration. The students expected something different from the traditional structure (Sekayi, 2001). They also expected a more challenging curriculum; one that prepared them better for their eventual reentry into the regular school (Sekayi, 2001). Furthermore, they expected to receive better social preparedness, which was not forthcoming (Sekayi, 2001). The students' opinion was that they did not receive what they were told they would receive (Sekayi, 2001). They expected the program to offer a unique approach in an alternative educational setting; but, what they got instead was a traditional approach to education with a curriculum that was not challenging and left them disillusioned, resentful, and angry, because they felt that they were worse off than they would have been had they remained in the regular classroom (Sekayi, 2001)

According to Sekayi (2001) the ability of the students to express their dissatisfaction with BI should benefit the school going forward. Sekayi (2001) said the school was constantly being refined, because the on-site leadership managed the school reflectively and made revisions when procedures, policies, or ideas did not work. Although the success of BI was inconclusive, Sekayi (2001) concluded that a remedial/compensatory alternative education program could be successful when the on-site leadership offered a different approach to the traditional education, a challenging curriculum, and better social preparedness. In this case, student feedback was the key to a reflective leadership approach.

School-Within-a-School.

Career academies. Career academies offered small, personalized learning environments that integrated academic and technical courses organized around career themes with work-based learning opportunities, designed to engage students and better prepare them for college and the workplace (Estacion, D'Souza, & Bozick, 2011). According to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES, 2004), the focus of career academies shifted from the school-to-work format and added the school-to-college design. The career academy approach to school reform was one of the most durable and popular high school reform models in the United States (Visher, Altuna, & Safran, 2013)

The career academies intervention was set up as a school-within-a-school to provide focused interpersonal student support with a combination of academic and career-oriented curricula integrated using a career theme and also had community partnerships with employers to provide students with career development and work-based learning opportunities (IES, 2004). The IES (2004), which cited the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's (MDRC, 2004) 10 year longitudinal experimental study made the following observations:

> Career Academies produced positive labor market outcomes for young men; there was no difference for young women. Career Academies had no impact on overall educational attainment. Among students most at risk of dropping out, Career Academies significantly improved high school outcomes. The Academies reduced dropout rates, improved attendance, and increased academic course-taking. (IES, 2004, p. 2)

The IES (2004) reported that the well-executed implementation of the Career Academies' plan was a necessity if positive results were expected, because the academies

alone would not improve student achievement. The IES (2004) also reported that the MDRC (2004) evaluations focused on the degree of interpersonal supports offered to students and concluded that interpersonal support from teachers and peers improved school engagement for high-risk and medium-risk subgroups. The IES (2004), which cited the MDRC study by Kemple and Snipes (2000), stated that lack of interpersonal support "increased dropout rates and reduced school engagement for some students" (IES, 2004, p. 4)

The IES (2004) reported the following findings on labor market outcomes and educational attainment, from a study of Career Academies by Kemple and Scott-Clayton (2004):

> Career Academies produced positive and sustained impacts on a range of labor market outcomes among young men and produced substantial increases in employment and earnings for high or medium at-risk students. Career Academies produced no impacts on educational attainment, but high school completion rates were higher than the national average. Career Academies also modestly reduced enrollments in post-secondary education for high at-risk students. (IES, 2004, p. 5)

The IES (2004) cited another MDRC study of Career Academies by Kemple (2000), which reported the following observations:

> Career Academies increased both the level of interpersonal support students experienced during high school and their participation in career awareness and work-based learning activities, reduced dropout rates, improved attendance, increased academic course-taking, and increased the likelihood of earning enough credits to graduate on time.

For students least likely to drop out, the Academies increased the likelihood of graduating on time and increased vocational course-taking without interfering with completion of basic core academic curriculum (IES, 2004). Career Academies reduced dropout rates and improved school engagement rates for medium and high at-risk subgroups when interpersonal support was enhanced (IES, 2004). Career Academies did not improve standardized math and reading test scores, and there was a high degree of variation in effectiveness among different groups of students and across different program contexts (IES, 2004).

The Florida Department of Education requested information from the 12 school districts (2006/07 school year) which consistently reported data on the career academies operating within their districts (Estacion et al., 2011). The aim of the study was to provide state education leaders with trends and patterns that would help track and evaluate Florida's career academy development (Estacion et al., 2011). A summary of those findings indicated that 79% of Florida's high schools offered career academies, 48% of those used a school-within-a-school structure, and 89% of the wall-to-wall career academies were in the Miami-Dade School District (Florida's largest district) (Estacion et al., 2011). The most common career cluster (the field around which the career academy's curriculum was organized) in the school-within-a-school structure was hospitality and tourism; the most common in wall-to-wall structures was arts, audiovisual technology, and communication (Estacion et al., 2011)

Wall-to-wall career academies had larger average enrollment than schools organized as school-within-a-school career academies and had higher average rates of student eligibility for free and reduced price lunch and students receiving special education services than the school-within-a-school career academies (Estacion et al.,

2011). Fifteen percent of students from the 12 school districts were enrolled in a career academy while 54% of those enrolled in the career academies were girls and 46% were boys and more students were enrolled in the school-within-a-school career academies that in the wall-to-wall career academies (Estacion et al., 2011). Forty-five percent of students enrolled in wall-to-wall career academies were Hispanic and 25% received special education services; 16% of students enrolled in school-within-a-school career academies were Hispanic and 13% received special education services (Estacion et al., 2011). The education and training cluster was 84% female; the transportation, distribution, and logistics cluster was 8% female (Estacion et al., 2011)

For this study, the researchers gathered data from the Florida Department of Education's PK-20 Education Data Warehouse, the Florida Department of Education's Master School Identification file, and the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data. Data analysis was made using descriptive statistics (Estacion et al., 2011). The questions that the researchers sought to answer were, "How many career academies were there, and what types, what were the characteristics of high schools offering career academies, how many students were enrolled in career academies, and what were their characteristics?" (Estacion et al., 2011, p. 4)

The 12 hand-picked school districts were selected because they reported the data on career academies most consistently; therefore, the study was conducted on a non-random basis and the information from the study may not be indicative of the entire state of Florida (Estacion et al., 2011). Making generalizations based on the information from the study may not be valid (Estacion et al., 2011). Also, two data sources sometimes reported conflicting information and may not be totally reliable (Estacion et al., 2011). Additionally, further research needs to be conducted on the relationship between the

dominant career clusters and labor market demands (Estacion et al., 2011). No attempt was made by the researchers to determine the success of the career academies (Estacion et al., 2011). The public high school four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the state of Florida for the school year 2010-11 was 71%, which was below the national average (Estacion et al., 2011). In 2011-2012, the rate was 75% as compared to the national average of 80% (Stetzer, 2014).

With 21st-century skills being the theme of career academies, work-based learning experiences were an integral part of the career academy model (Visher et al., 2013). However, career academies may have fallen short on providing college and career exploration curricula to all of their students (Visher et al., 2013). The MDRC piloted a program to help academies build college and career exploration programs. According to Visher, Altuna, and Safran (2013), the program, Exploring College and Career Options (ECCO), significantly improved the capacity of career academies to offer college and career explorations programs, as well as the student participation rate in both program activities and internships (Visher et al., 2013). Eighteen academies in six school districts across three states (California, Florida, and Georgia) participated in the three-year study (Visher et al., 2013)

There were four core components of the ECCO program: (1) Students attend a series of one-hour in-class lessons, (2) Students make visits to local work sites, (3) students make visits to college campuses, and (4) students participate in a six-week internship offered to all students in the summer before or during their senior year (Visher et al., 2013). The curriculum instructed educators and partnering employers on how to arrange and manage students' out-of-school experiences (Visher et al., 2013). Generous financial assistance and coaching enabled strong implementation of the program during

the three-year study (Visher et al., 2013). ECCO also had success with internship placement for students who were interested and available for them (Visher, 2013)

According to Visher et al. (2013), the MDRC conducted a rigorous evaluation of career academies in the mid-1990s. "The study found strong and sustained positive impacts from participation in career academies on students' labor market experiences — notably, higher earnings. These impacts occurred without any detrimental effects on educational outcomes, such as graduation from high school or post-secondary enrollment" (Visher et al., 2013, p. ES-4). Visher et al. (2013) found the following key factors to be associated with smooth implementation across all of the ECCO academies:

> A strong district level employee with the capacity and credibility to effectively support the academies, a high level of commitment to the goals of the program at the academy level, alignment with the district's existing initiatives and priorities and flexibility in scheduling, within the academy's calendar, coupled with release time or stipends to compensate ECCO coordinators for the time they spent building and supporting partnerships with employers. (Visher et al., 2013, p. ES-6)

The implementation of the ECCO program at the career academies that fully participated in the study served to increase their capacity to build career and college exploration programs that could reach all students (Visher et al., 2013). In spite of the programs' success however, Visher et al. (2013) found that the academies had some challenges during the implementation process. Finding room for the new curricula, arranging workplace and college campus visits, and finding the right employers to host internships was time consuming and required special skills (Visher et al., 2013)

Visher et al. (2013) said the success of the career academies was dependent upon district support and that good results could be achieved by providing teachers with resources, time, and training. Also, districts need to consider alternatives to the traditional internship model, because some students were unable to participate due to the need to earn money, the need to attend summer school, family summer plans, or the inability to pay for public transportation (Visher et al., 2013). Visher et al. (2013) also suggested interdisciplinary teacher involvement as a way to integrate the college and career exploratory activities with the total academy experience.

Summary

Chapter Four provided a description of alternative school interventions included in this meta-analysis, and related to the research questions for this study. Discussion included the varied application of interventions, such as Last-Chance Schools and School-Within-a-School. Chapter Five discusses findings from the study.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, meta-analysis study was to determine whether alternative school interventions were effective in reducing the incidences of violence in schools and improving attendance and graduation rates, whether positive behavior intervention supports were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives, and whether parental and community involvements were necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives.

Research Questions

Through meta-analysis, this study considered the following questions.

RQ1. Are alternative education programs effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ2. Are positive behavior intervention supports effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

RQ3. Is parental and community involvement necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives?

The discussion in Chapter Five collectively addresses the research questions for this study, based on findings of my research.

The relationships I established were not specific to the study I have undertaken. However, the experiences of the people that I know have gone a long way to help me identify areas of interest related to my particular topic. All were concerned about the negative impact violence had on academics, health, the school environment, and within the community. I expected to get ideas on how to reduce violence within the schools, as

well as the surrounding neighborhoods. I did not expect there to be a quick fix, because the problems did not happen overnight. However, I expected to identify as many problem types as possible and research similar problems in other areas to see what was done to reduce violence and improve conditions in those schools and communities.

The relationships established in this study developed as a result of moving from school-to-school and to other school districts. I talked with administrators and teachers wherever I went to get input on the problems they experienced and the types of interventions that they employed. The most common theme among the various schools and personnel was that suspensions were quite temporary and did not solve the problems of individual disruptive behavior. There seemed to be other factors involved that caused the same students to consistently act out in a public setting without forethought or consequential expectations. What was most puzzling to me was when students, particularly African American males, engaged in behaviors that caused retaliatory actions from others.

Even more disheartening was when a student was chased down in the street while waiting on the school bus and shot down like a rabid dog (Fox 2 News, 2013). Activity of this nature led me to believe there were major problems within the community that needed to be addressed. I wanted to identify the community factors that may lead to school violence and research preventive measures that have had success in other communities with similar demographics. Suspensions from school only exposed students to more community problems, which they could possibly avoid if they were in school. When they were not engaged in school activities, what else could they do?

Violence in schools led to a disruptive and threatening environment, physical injury, and emotional stress. Teachers and administrators implemented “programs

designed to prevent, deter, and respond to potential violence in schools" (USDOE, 2007, p. 1). The NCLB Act of 2001 required schools to have a safety plan in place to provide a safe learning environment. Schools differed in their needs and capabilities, so, schools implemented a variety of practices designed to prevent and reduce violence (USDOE, 2007). Despite the safeguards, Arum (2011) reported that teachers and administrators in urban schools said fear of legal challenges affected their willingness or ability to maintain classroom order and deal with student discipline.

In-school suspensions. One intervention, in-school suspensions, slowed the progression toward suspension or expulsion, but it may only have been a precursor to the eventual suspension of some students who could not or would not control their antisocial behaviors. Once they were suspended, they were left to the streets to fend for themselves. If they had a parent or parents who worked, they would have too much unsupervised idle time on their hands. This was where the major problem occurred. What was left for them were street gangs, drugs, alcohol, criminal activity, and teen pregnancy. In many communities, there were not enough programs to address these social ills. When administrators were considering long suspensions or expulsion, students' rights should be dominant and perhaps expanded to include due process requirements (Arum, 2011)

It was difficult to assess the effectiveness of individual intervention strategies, because districts applied them in combination with one or more additional interventions. Some districts employed intervention strategies with an enthusiastic urgency, while others merely put them in place just to say they had them. Longitudinal studies that track specific students over a long period of time may provide more useful data on the success of particular interventions, if those interventions can be studied in isolation. It may be

difficult to gather useful data if longitudinal studies do not isolate the particular interventions to determine the effectiveness. However, ethical questions arise if administrators are not doing all that they can to help students reach their fullest potential. Holding back on potential interventions for the sake of research crosses the line. For now, the combination of various intervention strategies and collaborative efforts holds the best chance for success in reducing violence and improving overall student performance.

Last Chance Alternative School. The success of one intervention, the Last Chance Alternative School in San Francisco, California, was the result of collaboration between the SFUSD, Department of Public Health, Juvenile Probation, Superior Court, and the Youth Treatment and Education Court, along with retraining of program teachers, the requirement of parent participation and family counseling, and the two-to-one ratio of counselors, teachers, psychologists, and administrators to teachers (Rapaport, 2006; YTEC, 2011). The program's success was a result of a mandatory court requirement, where lawyers and educators addressed behaviors, remedies, and the students' IEPs, the two-to-one ratio of counselors, teachers, psychologists, and administrators to teachers, and the emphasis on parent participation and family counseling.

Jeynes (2007) believed that parental involvement in urban areas was essential because of the unique set of circumstances children in these areas faced. The CPE (2011) reported that in a survey of teachers, two-thirds of respondents believed that parental involvement was a necessary component of the improved performance of their students. They concluded that an effective school/family partnership built around academics was vital for student achievement and that partnership should include learning at home because it enabled parents to convey high expectations to their children (CPE, 2011).

Steinberg (n.d.) said there was a link between family dysfunction and youth antisocial behavior, academic success, personality development, and mental health and that poor parenting was a risk factor irrespective of the race or socioeconomic and marital status of parents. Furthermore, in community-school partnerships, schools connected families with resources and support to increase parent participation and improve academics, attendance, behavior, and development. (Owen, Wettach, & Hoffman, 2015).

Recommendation. I recommend that schools incorporate school-family partnerships and school-community partnerships into any school improvement plan or alternative school program to increase the probability of success.

Community Prep. When Community Prep opened in Brooklyn, New York, for students recently released from juvenile prisons and jails, the untrained teachers and lack of structure failed to improve the students' chances for academic success and graduation. After moving to Manhattan, the school opened with a trained staff and a structure that gave students a better chance to be successful. The partnership developed between CASES and the school board had a plan to keep classes small and provide plenty of counseling and individual attention and support with an emphasis on high expectations (Rimer, 2004). Attendance improved and students expected to transition back into the regular high school or to complete the GED program at Community Prep (Rimer, 2004)

Manhood Development Program. The OUSD implemented the Manhood Development Program (MDP), an alternative classroom at Valley High School that targeted African American male students who had low academic performance, to increase attendance, reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, promote self-awareness, and help cultivate healthy identities among Black male students (Nasir et al., 2013). Nasir et al. (2013) cited Noguera (2003)

and stated that suspensions and expulsions excluded Black students from valuable instruction time, which worsened academic disparities, increased absenteeism, and increased the risk of dropping out of school.

The Nasir et al. (2013) study examined how discipline was enacted and reformulated within the MDP classroom and whether some biases of the dominant culture were transformed through an alternative system of discipline by using the theory of transformative resistance, a product of the hero teacher's teachings against the dominant ideology (Nasir et al., 2013, as cited in Giroux, 2001). Classroom activities were centered on group work and class discussion and the MDP curriculum included in-depth discussions about Black history, written text, video, outside speakers, and debates on current events, such as police brutality, Black-on-Black violence, and the mainstream media's prejudice against women (Nasir et al., 2013). Students elected class representatives to hold various positions and co-created classroom structure, rules, and norms (Nasir et al., 2013)

The community-building approach of the MDP classroom included the teacher in the learning process with a focus on mutual respect and accountability (Nasir et al., 2013). The disciplinary system in the MDP classroom was not punitive, but rather focused on students' cultural communicative styles, freedom of movement, and the assumption of student good intent (Nasir et al., 2013). Discipline in the MDP classroom was intended to foster student development and mutual respect within the classroom, as well as to transform students into learners and engaged participants (Nasir et al., 2013)

Nasir et al.'s (2013) study demonstrated how an MDP class could transform African American male students into engaged learners by protecting

them from the school's disciplinary system, rather than subjecting them to the discipline. The reframed disciplinary practices within the MDP classroom fostered a productive classroom environment in which students felt supported by the disciplinary environment and practices, as opposed to being subjected to it (Nasir et al., 2013)

Alternative school. In the Watts (2000) study in Louisiana, the alternative school targeted behaviors of at-risk students that resulted from low self-esteem and poor social skills by addressing the motivational, curricular, and instructional needs of at-risk students. Watts (2000) identified those needs as physiological, safety, security, and structure. Researchers used the Statements about School (SAS) to assess teacher and student perceptions about how well the alternative school was meeting the needs of students and found that the perception was that alternative schools were doing a better job of meeting the needs of students; meeting security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs of students (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000) suggested that alternative schools should also accommodate the curricula and instructional needs of students.

Smaller class sizes allowed teachers to provide at-risk students with more personalized instruction and helped students to concentrate and be known by the teacher (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000), citing Duke and Griesdon (1999) said that small school size was a way to provide a personal attention and close supervision, but it was expensive and may limit course offerings. Watts (2000) said that innovative curricula and instructional programs designed to fix the environment of at-risk students should be engaging, challenging, and relevant and should

include vocational, career, and community service components, with a focus on rehabilitation, remediation, and behavior modification.

Watts (2000) said that teachers should implement strong academic programs and push students to succeed, while emphasizing progress over absolute performance. Watts (2000) said that alternative schools were designed to serve a specific population of at-risk students and that students' motivational needs could be met when an academic program allowed them to experience success coupled with a counseling program that addressed the specific needs of each student.

Branton Institute. Sekayi (2001) studied Branton Institute (BI), a small, full day, one-year alternative program within the Baldwin Public School District in a Midwestern suburb. BI offered a traditional curriculum, but the student body had different expectations and resisted the traditional approach, because they were concerned that they were not being challenged enough to prepare them for the regular classroom curriculum, and they were concerned that they were not being socially prepared to interact with the students at Baldwin High and felt embarrassment when in social settings with Baldwin High students, because they came from the alternative school (Sekayi, 2001)

The students expected the program to offer a unique approach in an alternative educational setting, but what they got instead was a traditional approach to education with a curriculum that was not challenging and left them disillusioned, resentful, and angry, because they felt that they were worse off than they would have been had they remained in the regular classroom (Sekayi, 2001). Sekayi (2001) said the school was constantly being refined because the on-site leadership managed the school reflectively and made revisions when procedures,

policies, or ideas did not work. Although the success of BI was inconclusive, Sekayi (2001) concluded that a remedial/compensatory alternative education program could be successful when the on-site leadership offered a different approach to the traditional education, a challenging curriculum, and better social preparedness.

Career academies. According to Visher et al. (2013), career academies were the most popular approach to school reform in the United States. Although "Career Academies produced positive labor market outcomes for young men (no difference for young women), they had no impact on overall educational attainment" (Kemple & Scott-Clayton, 2004, p. iii). However, for students most at risk of dropping out, Career Academies significantly improved high school outcomes by reducing dropout rates, improving attendance, and increasing academic course-taking (IES, 2004). The plan must be well-executed, if positive results are expected, because the academies alone would not improve student achievement (IES, 2004). Also, interpersonal supports from teachers and peers were necessary to improve school engagement and reduce the dropout rate for high-risk and medium-risk subgroups (IES, 2004). Career Academies' success depended on district support and adequate resources, time, and training for teachers (Visher et al., 2013).

Preventing school violence required an understanding of the extent and nature of the problem. The school environment had to be reviewed so that the incidents of violence, gang activity, threats against teachers and students, and drug use were known. Risk behaviors, which included carrying a weapon on school property, fighting, attempted suicide, and illegal drug activity, also had to be evaluated. Preventing violent

behavior was a hit-and-miss proposition; therefore, a common national database system must be implemented to improve the capacity to recognize risk factors and predict the probability of violent behavior.

The goal was to use the available data to analyze the characteristics of schools and their relationship to incidents of violence and serious violence. This may provide information that will direct administrative practices and guide school policies on the factors most clearly associated with school violence. Knowing risk factors will help teachers and administrators recognize children who are at risk for violent behavior, either as victims or as perpetrators. Teachers could intervene and provide parents and administrators with recommendations to help children change their behavior, but behavior modification should be approached cautiously, because inequities may exist in the system that leads to inappropriate behavior by children.

Recommendation. I recommend that intervention techniques be implemented school-wide to increase the effectiveness of the curriculum. Also, efforts to prevent violence must encompass the entire community and should begin early in elementary school to maximize its effectiveness. The intervention groups may have the effect of increasing students' knowledge about violence and help them develop skills that will enable them to reduce violence.

Humanities Prep High School. At Humanities Prep High School in Manhattan, New York, (where admission was very competitive), administrators, teachers, and students developed a restorative justice fairness committee to issue some form of restorative justice as a way to get students to reflect on their behaviors and then to assist in determining the best path to restore the school community when actions had been taken that were inconsistent with the school's core values. The Fairness Committee dealt

with community concerns by giving students a voice to question discipline and consequences, provided a safe place for students to reflect on their behaviors and to accept or reject the school's core values, and provided a positive, democratic, and inclusive process for students to express multiple perspectives on community concerns.

As was the case at Humanities Prep, when schools taught essential knowledge and skills, provided a positive school environment, supported the emotional and behavioral development of students, and encouraged student participation in the development of school policies, they employed a preemptive strike against high incidences of school violence. Prep began as a dropout prevention and academic re-socialization program and eventually morphed into a complete school, which sent over 99% of its graduates to top universities. The human rights framework and restorative practices used at Prep reduced behavioral incidents significantly, as well as improved the graduation rate for students classified as at-risk.

Patterson High School. Patterson High School in Baltimore subdivided its student body into five smaller academies that focused on personalization and career-centered curriculum. That strategy dramatically improved student behavior, attendance, and academic achievement at Patterson, despite the fact that Patterson lagged behind county and state statistics in attendance and graduation. This may have been a reflection of problems inherent in the school system.

Recommendation. I recommend that administrators ensure that teachers and police officers who patrol the hallways are required to receive training in behavior management and instructional strategies for students with disabilities and special learning needs. Administrators should define and support high standards of behavior and

achievement to help reduce overall student disruptions as effectively as individual treatment programs.

Administrators should also ensure that alternative schools do not marginalize students or threaten the equity of the system by segregating poor, disabled, and minority students. Furthermore, the school environment motivates students to learn when it creates a sense of community and security while stimulating interest and providing motivation to improve performance. The alternative school setting should be structured and designed to change the student's environment and school culture to improve student attitudes, behavior, and achievement. Administrators must be serious about student improvement, rather than placing students in alternative schools just to get them out of the general education classroom. Also, identifying students as low-achievers, at-risk, or troubled sets themselves up for failure (Barlow, 2013; Nygreen, 2013). Administrators should maintain flexibility and creativity to respond to the problems students face, such as dysfunctional homes, hopelessness, hunger, abuse, abandonment, and the constant threat of violence (Golubtchik, 2013). However, teachers and administrators must expect, support, and demand high standards of behavior.

Last Chance High was one of 13 special education schools that served five boroughs of severely emotionally disturbed students in New York City (Golubtchik, 2013). According to Golubtchik (2013), the school was only established to get those students out of the general education classroom and keep them out until they dropped out or turned 21 years-of-age. Golubtchik's (2013) case study focused on the successful transformation of the school, which improved high school graduation rates, placed more students in less restrictive educational environments, and decreased the suspension rate. Golubtchik (2008) attributed part of the success on the Power of Choice Model, which

developed from the philosophy of Glasser's Choice Theory (Glasser, 2010). Glasser's Choice Theory stated that "all we do is behave, that almost all behavior is chosen, and that we are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun" (Golubtchik, 2008, para. 2).

Golubtchik (2013) said that students' misbehaviors were their way of saying that their needs were not being met; but, the most important thing to do was to establish behavior parameters as soon as school started. To improve behavior, Golubtchik's (2008, 2013) goal was to change the school culture as a way to loosen the bureaucratic reigns and overcome students' home and neighborhood environments, provide a sense of belonging, create opportunities for success, find opportunities for students to have some reasonable options, and make classes interesting.

Recommendation. The socioeconomic impact of the weakening of the Black community caused social problems that were not adequately addressed. Some suggestions include embracing diversity and giving residents a voice and an opportunity to contribute to the school community. The recruitment of African American males should be a priority among the nation's school districts. Give minority teachers and administrators the same type of support given to others. Develop job creation strategies to strengthen the Black community. Show Black students that they are valued for their differences and appreciated for their contributions. Celebrate high achievement and promote academic success and encourage them when they falter. When students have a sense of community and moral obligation, they are less likely to become entangled in the criminal justice system.

To overcome the harm caused by zero-tolerance policies, improved high school graduation and attendance rates and decrease the suspension rate, administrators of alternative schools should focus on placing more students in less restrictive educational environments. Educators should assure students that they will be successful in the classroom by offering challenging work, giving students many options, and giving them several opportunities to do well. Those options should include the ability to suggest and use alternative methods to complete their work. Educators and administrators should work with students to create a global framework for behavior as soon as school starts and set out to change the school culture as a way to loosen the bureaucratic reigns to overcome students' home and neighborhood environments. Teachers should provide students with a sense of belonging, create opportunities for success, give students some reasonable options, and make classes interesting.

High school graduation rate. The various research-based strategies implemented at various schools and school districts throughout the United States showed promise singly, but were more effective when used jointly with one or more other school improvement programs. The task of singling out one particularly effective school improvement program proved to be elusive. Despite the collateral influences that negatively impact student success, the use of the various intervention strategies have had an impact on school improvement in the United States. The high school graduation rate was a clear indicator of the realization of the promise of school improvement programs.

In 2012-2013, the graduation rate reached a new high of 81% (USDOE, 2015) and 82% in 2013-2014 (NCES, 2016). For 2016, according to the *Washington Post* (Strauss, 2016), the high school graduation rate reached 83.2%. Attaching these improvements with the various intervention and school improvement programs that were

implemented in the few years previous to this improvement was what educators and (especially) program creators and supporters would like to do. However, the improvement in the graduation rate was more complicated than it would appear on the surface. It was difficult to single out any program and hold it out to be the program that worked. Many other factors were in play concurrently with those programs. Character education had grown in the previous few years and many schools included a character education component in their curriculum. However, that is the topic of another study.

Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate. Furthermore, nationwide in 2010, school districts began using a new, common measure called the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) as a way to promote greater accountability (USDOE, 2015). The plan was to use the ACGR data to develop strategies that would keep students in school and improve the graduation rate. Hopefully, the data from the ACGR was accurate and schools and districts were uniform in the way they classified and counted students. Without nationwide sample audits, there was no way to be sure that districts were consistent and uniform. However, I will not speculate on these issues. I will just be happy that there has been consistent improvement now and hopefully in the future.

Research Question 1

At the beginning of this meta-analysis, one of the questions that I wanted to answer was whether alternative education programs were effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives? The answer to this question and the questions that follow are what I recommend to any administrator considering these intervention strategies to reduce violence and improve attendance, performance, and graduation rates. Initially, I was not sure that alternative school programs would be effective, because I have taught at some alternative schools and I did not see an overall improvement in

behaviors, performance, attendance, or graduation rates. However, those programs placed everyone together without targeting the specific student behaviors that caused the student to be placed in the program in the first place. Students were placed in the alternative program just to get them out of the general student population.

The alternative program should target specific student behaviors and accommodate the curricula and instructional needs of students by providing innovative curricula and instructional programs that are engaging, challenging, and relevant, as well as emphasizing progress over absolute performance to allow students to experience success, so that students motivational needs can be met. The success will also depend on whether administrators can keep classes small and provide plenty of counseling and individual attention and support with an emphasis on high expectations. The alternative program should improve ratios between students and counselors, teachers, psychologists, and administrators to teachers.

Also, district support and adequate resources, time, and training for teachers are imperative for alternative school success. Teachers and administrators should be enthusiastic about the application and urgency of interventions and consider combining intervention strategies with collaborative efforts. The program should start with a trained staff and a structure that gives students a better chance to be successful and include the teacher in the learning process with a focus on mutual respect and accountability.

Research Question 2

The next question that I wanted to answer was whether positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) are effective intervention strategies in school

violence prevention initiatives? The first step in any intervention is to provide a safe learning environment. PBIS is effective when administrators are able to remove biases of the dominant culture from the disciplinary process, reduce out-of-school suspensions and use in-school suspensions instead, and respect student rights and due process considerations before suspensions and expulsions.

PBIS programs should increase students' knowledge about violence and help them develop skills that will enable them to reduce and avoid violence. Discipline should foster student development and mutual respect and transform students into learners and engaged participants. Effective PBIS programs give students a voice to question discipline and consequences, provide a safe place for students to reflect on their behaviors and to accept or reject the schools core values, and provide a positive, democratic and inclusive process for students to express multiple perspectives on community concerns.

Research Question 3

Finally, I wanted to know whether parental and community involvement is necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives? There was a recurring theme for successful interventions in the research that revolved around family and community support. Administrators should establish school/family partnerships built around academics to connect families with community resources and support to increase parent participation and improve academics, attendance, behavior, and development. Furthermore, administrators and teachers should maintain flexibility and creativity to respond to the problems students face in their community such as dysfunctional homes, hopelessness, hunger, abuse,

abandonment, and the constant threat of violence while concurrently expecting, supporting, and demanding high standards of behavior.

Conclusion

To answer the three research questions, Are alternative education programs effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?; Are positive behavior intervention supports effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?; and Is parental and community involvement necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives?, this study was conducted as a meta-analysis exploring case studies and alternative education interventions.

Recommendations from the findings of the study include:

Schools should incorporate school-family partnerships and school-community partnerships into any school improvement plan or alternative school program to increase the probability of success. Intervention techniques should be implemented school-wide to increase the effectiveness of the curriculum. Also, efforts to prevent violence must encompass the entire community and should begin early in elementary school to maximize effectiveness.

Administrators should ensure that teachers and police officers who patrol the hallways receive training in behavior management and instructional strategies for students with disabilities and special learning needs. Administrators should also ensure that alternative schools do not marginalize students or threaten the equity of the system by segregating poor, disabled, and minority students.

The alternative school setting should be structured and designed to change the student's environment and school culture to improve student attitudes, behavior, and achievement.

Some suggestions include embracing diversity and giving residents a voice and an opportunity to contribute to the school community. The recruitment of African American males should be a priority among the nation's school districts.

School districts should give minority teachers and administrators the same type of support given to others, develop job creation strategies to strengthen the Black community, show Black students that they are valued for their differences and appreciated for their contributions, and celebrate high achievement and promote academic success and encourage them when they falter.

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Appendix

LINDENWOOD

Application for IRB Review of Research Proposal Involving Human Subjects

If you have any questions about whether you need to complete a full or expedited application, please review the expedited application criteria at http://www.lindenwood.edu/academics/irb/

1. Title of Project: **The effectiveness of school violence preventive and intervention strategies in school violence prevention.**

2. Date of Last Revision (if this is the first submission, list NA): **NA**

3. List the names of all researchers/faculty advisors and their contact information in the table below.

Name	Email	Phone Number	Department	Student/Faculty
Norman Robinson	ner695@lionmail.lindenwood.edu	(314) 814-6301	St. Louis Public Schools	Ed.D. Student
Dr. Jill Hutcheson	**JHutcheson@lindenwood.edu**	(636) 627-2950	**Lindenwood Univ**	Dissertation Chair (must be LU full time or adjunct faculty member)
Dr. Kenneth Johnson	**KJohnson@lindenwood.edu**	**(636) 949-4847**	**Lindenwood Univ**	Committee Member
Dr. June Murry	junemurry@hotmail.com	**(731) 616-2320**	Jackson-Madison County Schools	Committee Member

Note: adjunct faculty may only serve as researchers with the approval of the Dean of the appropriate school.

4. Anticipated starting date for this project: **Upon Approval** Anticipated ending date: **One Year Following Approval**

(Collection of *primary* data – data you collect yourself - cannot begin without IRB approval. Completion/Amendment form required yearly, even if stated anticipated ending date is more than one year in the future.)

5. Will the results of this research be published in any way?

(Publication involves dissemination of results to the public in any manner, including but not limited to: publication in print or online, presentation at a conference, display at an event open to the public, etc.)

☒ Yes* ☐ No

* If yes, briefly describe how you intend to publish this research:
The results of this study will be published in dissertation format by Lindenwood University on ProQuest UMI

6. Lay Summary

Summarize the proposed research using non-technical language that can be readily understood by IRB members whose primary concerns are nonscientific. The summary should include a statement of the purpose of the project (what you want to accomplish), background information necessary to understand the study including definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader, and the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) of the proposed project. The complete summary must not exceed 750 words. Use complete sentences.

Definitions:

1. Electronic aggression. Any kind of aggression perpetrated through technology-any type of harassment or bullying (teasing, telling lies, making fun of someone, making rude or mean comments, spreading rumors, or making threatening or aggressive comments) that occurs through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, a website (including blogs), text messaging, or videos or pictures posted on websites or sent through cell phones
2. Indirect aggression. Aggressive acts in which the aggressor can remain unidentified and consequently avoid retaliation and disapproval from the rest of the community
3. Risk factor. Any characteristic of a person (such as age), a situation (such as the severity of
a traumatic event), or a person's environment (such as family life) that increases the likelihood that that person will eventually become involved in violence, either as a perpetrator or victim
4. Violence. Physical, verbal, or written acts against others which may include bullying, sexual harassment, rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon.
5. School discipline. The system of rules, punishments, and behavioral strategies appropriate to the regulation of children or adolescents and the maintenance of order in schools.
6. Response to Intervention (RTI). A multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs.
7. Alternative education. A public elementary or secondary school that offers nontraditional educational services to students whose needs can't be met in a regular school.

Rationale:

The rationale for this study is to give schools and school districts a reference tool for alternative violence prevention and intervention strategies, based on documented, historical information related to this topic. This study will show which techniques have been effective, with consideration given to demographics. In the view of the researcher, current studies focus on a specific technique. This study will search previous studies and evaluate various techniques and combinations of strategies to determine the most effective methods. The study will look at what schools are doing, parental input, community organizational input, and whether there is parental follow-up when referrals are made to various community-based help organizations.

Purpose:

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not alternative school interventions are effective in reducing the incidences of violence in schools and

improving attendance and graduation rates. This paper will provide some reasons why violence occurs in schools, how to address it, and more important, how to prevent it.

Research Questions:

Through meta-analysis, this study will consider the following questions.

Are alternative education programs effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

Are positive behavior intervention supports effective intervention strategies in school violence prevention initiatives?

Is parental and community involvement necessary for intervention strategies and supports to be effective in school violence prevention initiatives?

7. Research Funding

a. Is this research funded?

☒ No. Continue to question 8.

☐ Yes or pending. Complete the rest of this section (below).

b. Check all of the appropriate boxes for funding sources (including pending sources) for this research.

☐ Federal Agency Name:

☐ Foundation Name:

☐ State Agency Name:

☐ Industry Sponsor Name:

☐ Other – Name:

Please attach a copy of the grant or contract to this application for federally funded research where Lindenwood University is the awardee institution or lead site.

8. a. Has this research project been reviewed or is it currently being reviewed by an official or institutional research department at another institution?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Pending

b. Has this research project been reviewed by another department or educational institution?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please state where the research has been/will be reviewed. Provide a copy of any related documents in the appendix if the research was approved.

Note: if another institution's review procedure requires changes to the research protocol after Lindenwood IRB approval has been granted, the researcher must submit an amendment to the LU IRB and gain approval before research can commence or continue as amended.

9. What is the PI's relationship with the participants in the study or research site? If you have no relationship, indicate that. Explain how any coercion will be reduced or how the identities of the participants will remain anonymous if the PI is a superior.

NA; no participants

10. Participants involved in the study: **NA; no participants**

a. Indicate the minimum and maximum number of persons, of what type, will be recruited as participants in this study.

Total requested number of LU subjects:
Total subjects enrolled at sites that do not fall under the responsibility of the LU IRB:

b. Primary Focus of Age Range (check all that apply):

☐ Newborn to 17 years of age *(students in the LPP that are 17 years of age have a signed parental consent form on file and can be treated as consenting adults)*
☐ 18-64 Years
☐ 65+ Years

c. Populations that are the PRIMARY FOCUS of this research. Remember to take into account the location in which recruitment will occur and where the research will be conducted. Also note that additional information and/or safeguards will be required when a subject population has been designated as vulnerable (with an asterisk *). Check all that apply:
☐ Adults: Health Subjects or Control Subjects (for biomedical research)
☐ Pregnant Women, Neonates, Fetuses/Fetal Tissue*
☐ Prisoners*
☐ Decisionally-Impaired*
☐ Economically and/or Educationally Disadvantaged*
☐ Vulnerable to Coercion or Undue Influence*
☐ LU Employees**
☐ LU Students (not LPP)**
☐ Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP)**
☐ Other: specify

Note: groups listed above marked with an asterisk (*), as well as subjects under the age of 18, are considered "vulnerable" and require special consideration by the federal regulatory agencies and/or by the LU IRB.

Note: any survey of more than 100 LU faculty, staff, or students, marked above with two asterisks (**), requires approval by the Provost after IRB approval has been granted. Electronic surveys of LU faculty, staff, or students must use the University's Survey Monkey account, which must be created by an authorized administrator.

d. From what source(s) will the potential participants be recruited? **NA; no participants**

e. Describe the process of participant recruitment. **NA; no participants**

f. Will any participants be excluded? **NA; no participants**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain why and how.

g. Where will the study take place?

☐ On campus – Explain:

☒ Off campus – Explain:

Document analysis only

11. Methodology/procedures:

With respect to alternative school interventions and their effectiveness in reducing incidences of violence in schools and improving attendance and graduation rates, reasons why violence occurs in schools, how to address violence, and how to prevent violence,

Current educational research will be evaluated
School district data will be evaluated from the district website.
Data from state elementary and secondary education websites will also be evaluated.

Which of the following data-gathering procedures will be used?
Provide a copy of all materials to be used in this study with application.

☐ Observing participants (i.e., in a classroom, playground, school board meeting, etc.)

When?

Where?

For how long?

How often?

What data will be recorded?

☐ Survey / questionnaire: ☐ paper ☐ email or Web based
Source of survey:

☐ Interview(s) ☐ (in person) ☐ (by telephone)

☐ Focus group(s)

☐ Audio recording

☐ Video recording

☐ Analysis of deidentified secondary data - specify source (who gathered data initially and for what purpose?):

☐ Test ☐ paper ☐ email or Web based

Source of test:

Type of test (such as memory, verbal skills):

☐ Interactive

Describe (e.g., completed time puzzle, watch video and respond to questions, sample items to compare):

☒ Other (specify):
Analysis of publicly available School district data will be evaluated from the district websites. Publicly available Data from state elementary and secondary education websites will also be evaluated. Current educational research will be evaluated

a. Based on the boxes checked above, provide a detailed description of how the participants will be treated and what will happen to all information and/or materials collected for the research.

NA; no participants

12. Will the results of this research be made accessible to participants, institutions, or schools/district?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain when and how: As a part of current educational literature through publication of dissertation.

13. Potential benefits and compensation from the study:

a. Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to the participants (perhaps academic, psychological, or social) from their involvement in the project.
NA; no participants

b. Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to society from this study.
Possible effective and alternative solutions to violence in the public school settings may be disseminated.

c. Describe any anticipated compensation to participants (money, grades, extra credit).
NA; no participants
Note: this information must exactly match the compensation described in the consent form.

14. Potential risks from the study:

a. Identify and describe any known or anticipated risks (i.e., physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, etc.) to participants involved in this study:

NA; no participants

b. Describe, in detail, how your research design addresses these potential risks:

NA; no participants

c. Will deception be used in this study? If so, explain the rationale.

No deception will be used.

d. Does this project involve gathering information about *sensitive topics*?

[*Sensitive topics* are defined as political affiliations; psychological disorders of participants or their families; sexual behavior or attitudes; illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of participants' families or employers; legally recognized privileged relationships (lawyers, doctors, ministers); income; religious beliefs and practices.]

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, explain:

e. Indicate the identifiable elements that will be collected and/or included in the research records. Check all that apply:

☐ Names
☐ Device identifiers/Serial numbers
☐ Medical record numbers
☐ Street address
☐ City or State
☐ Zip Code
☐ Account numbers
☐ Vehicle ID numbers
☐ License/Certificate numbers
☐ Financial account information (including student ID)
☐ Social Security Numbers*
☐ Phone numbers
☐ Web URLs
☐ Health plan numbers
☐ IP address numbers
☐ Biometric identifiers**
☐ Fax numbers
☐ E-mail address
☐ Facial Photos/Images
☐ Date of Birth

☐ Any other unique identifier – Specify:

☒ None of the identifiers listed above

** If Social Security Numbers will be collected, explain below why they are necessary and how they will be used:*

*** Biometric identifiers are observable biological characteristics which could be used to identify an individual, e.g., fingerprints, iris/retina patterns, and facial patterns.*

f. Indicate how data will be stored and secured. Please mark all that apply.

Electronic data:
☐ Not applicable
☐ De-identified only (i.e., no personal identifiers, including 18 HIPAA identifiers, are included with or linked to the data via a code)
☐ Password access
☐ Coded, with a master list secured and kept separately
☐ Encryption software will be used. Specify encryption software:

☐ Secure network server will be used to store data. Specify secure server:
☐ Stand-alone desktop/laptop computer will be used to store data
☐ Not connected to server/internet
☐ An organization outside of the LU covered entity will store the code key. The organization will have a business associate agreement with LU.
☒ Other (specify):
NA; no participants
Not applicable. All sources of data for this meta-analysis are publicly available in the original state. The meta-anlaysis simply describes and synthesizes the information.

Hardcopy data (consents and other study documents, recordings, artifacts, and specimens):
☒ Not applicable
☐ De-identified only (i.e., no personal identifiers, including 18 HIPAA identifiers, are included with or linked to the data via a code)
☐ Coded, with a master list secured and kept separately
☐ Locked file cabinet
☐ Locked office/lab
☐ Locked suite
☐ Locked refrigerator/freezer
☐ Specimens coded with a master list secured and kept separately
☐ Other (specify):

g. Explain the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data during the data-gathering phase of the research, in the storage of data, and in the release of the findings.
NA; no participants

h. How will confidentiality be explained to participants?
NA; no participants

i. Indicate the duration and location of secure data storage and the method to be used for final disposition of the data.

Paper Records
☐ Data will be retained for 3 years according to federal regulation.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where?

Audio/Video Recordings
☐ Audio/video recordings will be retained for 3 years according to federal regulation.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where?

Electronic Data (computer files)
☒ Electronic data will be retained for 3 years according to federal regulation.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where? **Researcher's personal computer.**

15. Informed consent process:

a. What process will be used to inform the potential participants about the study details and (if necessary) to obtain their written consent for participation?
NA; no participants

☐ An information letter / written consent form for participants or their legally authorized agents will be used; include a copy with application.

☐ An information letter from director of institution involved will be provided; include a copy with application.

☐ Other (specify):

☐ If any copyrighted survey or instrument has been used, include a letter or email of permission to use it in this research.

b. What special provisions have been made for providing information to those not fluent in English, mentally disabled persons, or other populations for whom it may be difficult to ensure that they can give informed consent?

NA; no participants

16. All supporting materials/documentation for this application are to be uploaded to IRBNet and attached to the package with your protocol and your credentials. Please indicate which appendices are included with your application. Submission of an incomplete application package will result in the application being returned to you unevaluated.

☐ Recruitment materials: A copy of any posters, fliers, advertisements, letters, telephone, or other verbal scripts used to recruit/gain access to participants.

☐ Data gathering materials: A copy of all surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, focus group questions, or any standardized tests used to collect data.

☐ Permission if using a copyrighted instrument

☐ Information letter for participants

☐ Informed Consent Form: Adult

☐ Informed Consent Form: guardian to sign consent for minor to participate

☐ Informed Assent Form for minors

☐ Information/Cover letters used in studies involving surveys or questionnaires

☐ Permission letter from research site

☒ Certificate from NIH IRB training for all students and faculty

☐ IRBNet electronic signature of faculty/student
☐ PPSRC Form (*Psychology Applications Only*)