Fall 8-2016

Alternative School Leadership Transformation: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Outcomes

Justin Fears
Lindenwood University

Alternative School Leadership Transformation:

A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Outcomes

by

Justin Fears

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

Alternative School Leadership Transformation:

A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Outcomes

by

Justin Fears

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

Sherrie Wisdom — 8-5-2016

Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Dissertation Chair — Date

Graham Weir — 8/5/16

Dr. Graham Weir, Committee Member — Date

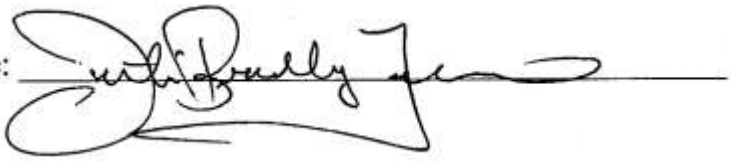
John Long — 8.5.16

Dr. John Long, Committee Member — Date

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.

Full Legal Name: Justin Bradley Fears

Signature:  Date: 8/5/16

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those that have helped me accomplish this incredible achievement. I want to recognize my dissertation committee members Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Dr. Graham Weir, and my mentor Dr. John Long. These people have been paramount in my successful completion of this milestone, and I am forever grateful for their patience and instruction. I would also like to thank those individuals who took the time to participate in my research initiatives, as well as the school district that afforded me their cooperation with this project and the privilege to develop myself both educationally, professionally and personally. The following research is a testament to their support and confidence in my abilities as an administrator and a leader. Most of all, I would like to thank my family whose unconditional love and support carried and motivated me at every impasse. My beautiful wife Nicci, my wonderful boys Mattox and Ryder, my parents, my siblings, my friends . . . I love and cherish each, and every one of you. Thank you all so much!

Abstract

This study was a documentation and assessment of Beta Academy Alternative School's (pseudonym) transition to a newly introduced educational model/ leadership paradigm and examination of student educational outcomes, resulting from the leadership change. As a first year administrator, the researcher undertook the task of transforming an underperforming alternative education program by targeting areas of identified deficiency and/or concern (graduation rates, attendance, and discipline).

In this study, the researcher executed a mixed-method evaluation of the new educational model in an effort to determine contributions to success, potential barriers to change, and the characteristics associated with both, as well as the quantitative analysis that would support or not support the researcher's hypotheses.

The first goal of the study stated that following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals would decrease by 10% per semester, as compared to previous referral data. The results indicated a 280% decrease in student referrals, thus illustrating a dramatic and statistically significant decrease.

The second goal indicated that graduation rates would increase or would stay the same, within 2% of previous rates (percentage of total seniors), as compared to the previous year's results and following implementation of the new educational and leadership paradigms. A *z*-test for difference in proportion tested a change in graduation rates of less than 1%, thus, supporting the graduation rates goal.

The last goal outlined in the study stated that following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance would increase by 30% per

semester, as determined by ADA hours and compared to previous attendance data. Upon calculation, it was determined that there was an increase in attendance of 36.2% providing statistical support that the increase in attendance was significant, as well as met the outlined goal for attendance improvement.

The qualitative component of the study used responses to a questionnaire analysis to gauge stakeholder involvement and perceptions associated with the new educational model. The feedback was positive and indicated the measured criteria to be impactful and effective in the areas of fidelity, implementation, development, and attainment of desired goals.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Chapter One provides an introduction to the background information and instigating factors leading to the research reported in this dissertation. The introduction describes the backstory of the Beta Academy (pseudonym) alternative program, which subsequently prompted the researcher to pursue the specified topics. Chapter One also introduces the reader to the relevant research questions, hypotheses, rationale, and conceptual framework. The background information presents the scenario and conditions under which the researcher, a newly appointed alternative education principal, inherited the Beta Academy Alternative School (BAAS) education program.

This chapter also describes the purpose of the study, rationalizes the intent of the study, and reiterates the researcher's hope to provide a valuable tool in evaluating the perceptions of the new program among stakeholders. The dynamics shaping the transformation of leadership and its implementation are also contained herein. The latter sections of the chapter outline the research questions and hypotheses investigated, summarize the methodology of the study, discuss potential limitations, and define relevant terms.

It is important to note that the research presented in this document represents more than a simple evaluation of outcomes pertaining to the leadership transformation of an alternative education program. The researcher, as a first year administrator, invested time and energy into the creation, introduction, and implementation of the new educational model, as well as the development of a new leadership paradigm, both of which were the focus of this study outcomes evaluation.

The methods, processes, and strategies implemented throughout this process were research based and theoretically applicable to the alternative education setting. These were influenced by the novelty of the program to both staff (including the administrator) and students, the combination of methodologies implemented, and the dynamic nature of education in general, especially in the alternative education setting. Though each alternative education setting was unique to specific needs of its institution, there were theories and best practices, at the time of this writing, appropriate to incorporate when creating an alternative education model.

The educational model created by the researcher for the BAASP needed to address specific student outcomes that could align with assigned building-level goals. The building-level goals included decreasing the number of building discipline referrals by 10% per semester, as compared to previous referral data, maintaining graduation rates within 2% of previous rates, and increasing attendance by 30% per semester, as determined by ADA hours and compared to previous attendance data. Within his role as administrator of the BAASP, it was the researcher's duty to report to key stakeholders, the progress the program made towards meeting the designated goals. The evaluation of outcomes resulting from the implemented changes to the educational model represented the basis of the research. The attainment of the specified building level goals would serve as the basis of the research and the subsequent quantitative analysis of outcomes.

Background

The Beta Academy Alternative School (BAAS) program existed within the Gamma District (pseudonym) for nearly three decades. The program had many different looks and served many different purposes throughout that time. The history of the BAAS

program, described, from genesis to current day, at the time of this writing, is included in Chapter Three. These historical references help to establish purpose of the study, research design, research setting, and situations under which the program existed. An abbreviated history of the Beta Academy Alternative School and synopsis of alternative education is included in this section.

Upon appointment to the newly developed position of BAAS principal, the researcher began the task of developing a new educational paradigm to reflect the stakeholder's mission and vision for the educational program. It was also an expectation that the new leadership model would work towards successfully addressing established, student-specific goals by implementing a research-based and data-driven educational paradigm. In addition, the new educational paradigm would need supporting documentation, recorded and presented in the form of a new student handbook. The researcher had challenging work to complete before the following school year commenced. The development of a model of education new to the district, along with a new handbook to guide the program would be a point of beginning. The hoped-for result would be a new model based on research-based best practices.

When the researcher commenced the writing of this dissertation, alternative education, as a whole, was a relatively novel concept, when referenced against the scope of public education (Raywid, 1999; Sliwka, 2008). Even though evidence of alternative education paradigms existed in the infancy of public education, dating as far back as the early 19th century (Raywid, 1999), alternative education and student-centered education began to receive credibility and widespread recognition in the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The large-scale social movement spawned educational reform in response to

heightened criticism of public education (Sliwka, 2008). Despite the growing popularity of alternative education, there were limited resources addressing researched-based strategies designed to impact specific student outcomes. When researching specific student outcomes resulting from alternative education, the resultant information reflected methodologies and implementation paradigms, but lacked the correlative component linking those practices to specific outcomes.

The research available at that time did a good job addressing the then-current realities of alternative education throughout the nation and strongly evidenced best practices for the development of alternative education programs. Publications, such as the National Alternative Education Association's (NAEA, 2009) *Exemplary Practices in Education: Indicators of Quality Programing* (2009), and Ruzzi and Kraemar's (2006) article, Academic Programs in Alternative Education, provided resource and reference for program development and implementation, but also failed to link practices to student outcome data. Despite the widespread availability of student outcome data pertaining to alternative education, the need for alternative education programs persisted. The need for these programs was evidenced by researchers, such as Kochhar-Bryant (2005), who stated, "Many observers contend[ed] that traditional schools are failing to engage a significant number of such students and meet their complex needs" (p. 109). She continued with, "Quality long-term alternative education programs can have positive effects on school performance, attitudes towards school, and self-esteem" (p. 109). Chapter Two contains a summary of such research items, as well as research outlining cultural models for change, classroom management, leadership models, program implementation strategies, and program perception analysis.

Purpose of the Dissertation

Upon taking a newly created position as principal of BAAS, the researcher was charged by district administration with the task of improving specific student outcomes, maintaining graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals, as well as solidifying a structural framework to encompass solid educational strategies to improve upon previous educational outcomes. The specific student outcomes, maintaining graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals, which influenced the specific program-design strategies, reflected the student outcomes the researcher was charged with improving or maintaining, upon appointment. Throughout the process of developing his new leadership role, the researcher kept detailed case notes reflecting the interactions with stakeholders, program reviews, meeting agendas and minutes, planned initiatives, and a record of applied best practices. The researcher also gathered secondary district data, such as previous attendance, academic, and discipline data to assist in addressing the aforementioned issues.

This study resulted from documentation and assessment of BAAS's program transition to a newly introduced educational model/leadership paradigm and examination of student educational outcomes, which resulted from the leadership change that took place over the course of a single calendar year. Once developed and implemented, the researcher executed a mixed method evaluation of the new educational model, in an effort to determine contributions to success, potential barriers to change, and the characteristics associated with both, as well as a quantitative analysis that would support, or not support, the researcher's hypotheses. The qualitative component of the study required input from stakeholders and the researcher, and explored strategies,

observations, processes, and perceptions associated with the new educational model. The quantitative component examined previous year's data and their relationship to data levels present at the end of the study, to determine if the outlined category percentages significantly changed following implementation of the new educational model.

Rationale

In 2009, the NAEA identified alternative education as a fast-growing and evolving discipline. The nature of alternative education required many programs to re-tool their educational frameworks. Through publications, such as the NAEA's (2009) *Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education: Indicators of Quality Programing*, guidelines developed to assist alternative schools in the creation and implementation of new educational models that were research based and, "built upon exemplary practices in the field" (p. 3).

The exemplary practices mentioned in the NAEA (2009) publication, covered a range of educational best practices in alternative education and offered a summation of each topic's indices. The exemplary practices listed were an attempt to bring unification to alternative education throughout all fifty states. The list of topics included in the document were: a) Mission and Purpose; b) Leadership; c) Climate and Culture; d) Staffing and Professional Development; e) Curriculum; f) Student Assessment; g) Transitional Planning and Support; h) Parent/Guardian Involvement; i) Collaboration; and j) Program Evaluation (NAEA, 2009).

One challenge associated with creating a new alternative education model was, according to the American Institute for Research, "Literature and data reveal ambiguity regarding the definition and functions of alternative schools" (Quinn & Poirier, 2007, p.

3). To eliminate ambiguity, the researcher provided the operational definition of alternative schools in the terms section of this dissertation, in Chapter One. The researcher stated objectives of the study were to identify the functional areas to be addressed in the new educational model, review the design and implementation of the model, and qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of the changes, with regard to the administrator-requested student outcomes.

Another challenge was, "many of the existing options for alternative education predate[d] the imperative for students to obtain higher levels of skills in an increasingly global economy" (Almeida, Le, Steinberg, & Cervantes, 2010, p. v). This fact, and others, prompted the BAAS program administration to take on the creation and implementation of a new educational model. As with any change initiatives, it was imperative for the school to closely monitor and evaluate the change, as well as the implementation process. Many of the changes taken on by the BAAS program were an attempt to influence specific student outcomes, maintaining graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals.

There were resources available to the team, such as NAEA's (2009) *Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education: Indicators of Quality Programing;* Quinn and Poirier's (2007) *Study of Effective Alternative Education Programs: Final Grant Report;* Aron's (2006) *An Overview of Alternative Education;* and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's *Alternative Learning Programs and Schools, Grades K-12* (2003)*;* which recommended the implementation of specific alternative education components. These recommended components were research-based, designed to assist in the structuring of alternative education programs as a whole and provided a platform for

discussion later in this document. Few of the resources consulted spoke of methods designed to target the specific student outcomes of maintaining graduation rates (Cash, 2004; Miao & Haney, 2004), increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals (Center for Response to Intervention [RTI], 2015; Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports – OSEP [PBIS], 2016), and the resources that did address specific outcomes were ambiguous at best, in the view of this researcher.

Through the evaluation of BAAS's program creation, transition, and implementation of a new educational model, resulting from new leadership, the researcher hoped to contribute to literature by providing a potential resource for administrators and school officials managing similar alternative school programs, attempting to implement change to influence specific student outcomes. The choice of outcomes could vary, depending on the district in which the educational program resided. The conceptual framework and methodologies executed, as described in this dissertation, could potentially serve as a guide for leadership transition and an educational paradigm modification and implementation, as well as a recommendation for data collection and evaluation strategies.

Research Questions

The researcher chose the following question: In the implementation of new educational structures for the alternative learning setting at the secondary level, what are (a) the major contributions to success and barriers to effective change and (b) the characteristics of those major contributions and barriers?

Sub Questions

Question 1. What strategies were used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes (increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals), for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 2. What strategies were used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 3. What processes were used in identifying deficiencies in the previous model?

Question 4. What processes were used in identifying new procedures and processes for the new model of education in the alternative setting?

Question 5. What were the strategies and processes designed to address the specific student outcomes?

Question 6. What strategies were used in the implementation processes?

Question 7. What types of observable behaviors and/or student outcomes are the results of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates?

Question 8. What are the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the transition, as indicated on the program analysis questionnaire?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated to examine student outcomes that were directives given by Gamma District to the newly appointed administrator, the researcher. The

categories and target percentages were predetermined district and building goals. Categories were based on criteria used for student evaluation in the alternative setting.

Hypothesis 1. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals will decrease by 10% per semester as compared to previous referral data.

Hypothesis 2. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance will increase by 30% per semester as determined by ADA hours compared to previous attendance data.

Hypothesis 3. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, graduation rates will remain consistent within 2% of previous rates, or improve, as a percentage of total seniors, as compared to previous year's results.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical foundation and/or conceptual framework of this study was the lens through which the researcher viewed the research question(s). As such, the foundation of this research was a personal reflection, by the researcher, and a mixed method review of outcomes, as a result of the transformation in leadership, within an alternative school setting. The change in the paradigm was developed and implemented through review of existing data and the study of other successful programs that transitioned from one leadership paradigm to another, while simultaneously implementing dynamic elements of a new educational model. The aforementioned research questions, hypotheses, and foreshadowed problems, assumptions made based on review of graduation, attendance, and discipline data, existed as a derivative of the researcher's introspective look at factors

that influenced decisions made throughout the creation of the new educational model and the fidelity of that model's implementation.

The researcher made assumptions (hypotheses) based on the review of existing data following the implementation process of the educational model. It was the researcher's belief that relationships existed between the implementation of the new educational model and improved results in the specified targeted areas of educational performance. The shift from a previously ineffective model, as determined by administratively established district expectations, to the new educational paradigm prompted an introspective mixed-method analysis of outcomes related to the effectiveness of change in specific implemented measures, as well as the change in leadership, as qualitatively determined through stakeholder questionnaire analysis.

Summary of Methodology

The methodology the researcher chose in approaching the research was broken down into four distinct steps that presented the information in a clearly outlined and detailed format, for ease of interpretation. The critical stages of the researcher's methodology included identifying, designing, implementing, and observing. These terms related directly to the processes used in the creation and implementation of the new educational model, as well as the transitional process in the leadership paradigm. The summary of these four steps are briefly outlined in the subsequent paragraphs.

The first step of this study was to examine secondary qualitative data to identify the strategies, steps, and processes used in determining the areas of deficiency in the previous educational model and concurrently identify areas that the new educational model addressed. The reviewed data included thorough case notes, previously recorded

documentation, and secondary district data; accessed with district permission and as part of the researcher's job, which guided the decision-making process.

The second step of this study was to examine the design of the changed educational model and discuss the processes, research, and rationale behind the creation of the initiatives used to address specific student outcomes, using qualitative data in the form of case notes, administered questionnaires, and previously recorded documentation. An additional component in this process was examination of the implementation process, the specific strategies used to ensure fidelity of implementation, and the rationale/data used to drive those decisions, such as case notes and previously recorded documentation.

The last step of the study was to determine if the specific identified student outcomes were significantly better after the implementation of the new educational model using previously collected district data juxtaposed to the researcher's subsequently collected data. Quantitatively, the researcher applied a *z*-test for difference in proportion to determine the potential statistical significance of the collected data, concerning the categories of graduation rate, student attendance, and number of discipline referrals. Qualitatively, responses to the questionnaires required summation and review for prominent, similar, and contrasting themes.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were rooted in the nature of alternative education. Students who fell under the sub-context of alternative were inherently dynamic and inconsistent; referring to their background, socioeconomic status, temperament, and other personal and educational factors, much as the entire categorical classification of modern alternative education. According to the Institute of Education Sciences, "Because

individual states or school districts define and determine the features of their alternative education programs, programs may differ in key characteristics, such as target population, setting, services, and structure" (Porowski, O'Conner, & Luo, 2014, p. i). The researcher sought to minimize extraneous influences and incongruencies, such as researcher bias, false reporting, and data irregularities, throughout the development and implementation process of the new educational model; however, limitations persisted in various forms.

The first limitation the researcher faced was the fact that the caliber of students selected for the new program, which may not have reflected the same population as in previous years. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) defined this as a History Threat or "the possibility that results are due to an event that is not part of an intervention, but which may affect performance on the dependent variable, thereby affecting internal validity" (as cited in Fraenkel, Wallen, (2006), p. 1). Though the students from both models fit the alternative student classification, the students attending the new program were voluntarily participating, versus a forced placement; and the selection and approval process was more involved than in previous years. This was to ensure a good fit for the students and the program.

Due to the change in admission and acceptance, another limitation, caused by the use of a convenience sample (as cited in "More Articles," 2016), was the inherent motivation of students. With forced placement, as in the previous educational model, students may have lacked the desire to perform optimally due to resentment of forced placement into the program. Due to the voluntary nature of the new educational

construct, students may have shown more motivation to finish than they had in previous years (Ronan, 2015).

Another potential bias limitation to the research could have been the senior lab teacher's influence on student achievement (Explorable, 2015). Under the new program construct, senior success corresponded, not only to the new educational model, but also to the senior lab teacher's increased freedom to assist students and focus on instruction. This influence may have been greater given the parameters of the new educational program's implementation; however, there was no data to support that assumption, as the effect was unforeseen.

A data piece directly linked to the new model was the meticulous keeping of attendance records. The validity and reliability of data limitation to the study arose when the potential lack of competency and consistency of previous record keeping practices became apparent (Sagor, 2006). It was possible that comparing attendance figures under the new educational model to attendance figures of the old educational model failed to juxtapose the same information.

In line with attendance data and their limitations was the limitation of discipline referral data. Under the new educational model, teachers had greater ability to discipline independently for minor infractions, without writing referrals. This could have been a contributing factor for the decrease, if any, in the number of discipline referrals recorded. Another possibility was making the reduction of discipline referrals a building-level goal could have influenced teachers not to write referrals for offenses they may have otherwise written.

The conceptual framework of this study was the lens through which the researcher viewed the research questions, and thus required the researcher to take precautionary measures to combat against researcher bias. The qualitative component of the study required the researcher to be mindful of the delivery and collection methodologies of questionnaire materials and make sure protocol outlined in Chapter Three was followed in each step of the process. The quantitative component of the study required the researcher to be careful in the gathering and evaluation of data, so that it was as accurate a reflection of then current and past realities as possible. The researcher kept the possibility of bias in mind during each phase of research collection, transcription, and evaluation process, reducing the validity threats to the aforementioned research limitations.

Definition of Terms

Alternative school: For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined an alternative school as a separate high school setting that offered non-traditional educational options for at-risk students. These students usually possessed extenuating circumstances, which could include, but were not limited to, pregnancy, low socioeconomic backgrounds, poor attendance, homelessness, history of non-success in the traditional setting, and/or history of substance abuse. Some characteristics of alternative schools were smaller student-to-teacher ratios, reduced student population, more individualized instruction, and emphasis on student-to-teacher relationships (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014a).

Educational model: For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined an educational model as the collective sum of an institution's goals and initiatives designed to produce specific outcomes in the educational setting.

Individualized Education Program: IEPs were documents containing individualized strategies addressing specific learning deficits of students. An IEP was required for any student diagnosed with a disability. The IEP, "creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities" (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014b, para. 4).

Missouri Option Program: The Missouri Option Program (MOOP) permitted full-time, public school enrolled students who were at least 17 years-of-age and at-risk of dropping out or not graduating with their cohort group the opportunity to earn a standard high school diploma. Graduation through the MOOP was not dependent on Carnegie credit attainment. The MOOP was competency-based and approved by the State Board of Education. The program utilized a high school equivalency exam as content mastery for graduation purposes. The exam sanctioned by the state for the MOOP was the HiSET® test. Missouri Option students successfully passing the exam and completing all other program requirements were eligible to receive a high school diploma. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], n.d., para. 1)

Network for Educator Effectiveness: The Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) was a web-based evaluation system created at the University of Missouri that used Missouri standards to provide guidelines and protocol for evaluating educators. The

program also had a, "web-based platform for storing and managing data on each educator in the building/district" (Assessment Resource Center, 2016, para. 4).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was a framework designed to assist in the implementation of supports that aided students with the development of skills that would promote positive academic and social behavior. The framework methodologies used the teaching of expectations and reinforcing of positive behaviors as the foundation for success. PBIS emphasized data-driven decision-making as related to behavioral practices and the use of organized resources to obtain lasting results (PBIS, 2016).

Professional Learning Communities: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were conceptualized by DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) and were created in an effort to transform schools. PLCs focused on five principles, "A Shared Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals; Collaborative Teams; Collective Inquiry; Action Orientations and Experimentations, Continuous Improvement, and Results Orientation" (Curriculum21, 2009-2016, item 30).

Student outcomes: For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined student outcomes as attendance by hours, academic performance, as determined by semester grades, and discipline in school, as determined by number of referrals.

School Wide Positive Behavior Supports:

School wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) is a framework for creating safe and orderly learning environments in schools, while improving the social-emotional outcomes for students. It is a proactive approach that relies on research-based practices, including developing clear behavioral expectations,

> teaching these expectations, acknowledging appropriate behavior, consistently correcting inappropriate behavior, and using behavioral data to systematically solve problems. SW-PBS is built on a three-tiered model that provides additional behavioral supports to students who are not responding to the tier 1 interventions. (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports – OSEP, 2016, para. 1)

Triple A: This student outcome tracker was a method, through use of a form, developed by the researcher and staff to track student progress in three main areas, every hour of every school day. The areas tracked were academic performance, attitude in the classroom, and attendance. The sums of these three indicators were tallied bi-weekly and a percentage was formulated. Students were held accountable for this percentage and were required to maintain an 80% or better, or the student risked removal from the program. This percentage was also used to benchmark student progress and used to keep parents, guardians, and students informed (Fears, 2013, p. 58).

Summary

Chapter One provides background information and a short introduction to research, pertaining to the background, processes, and methodologies followed in the research reported in this dissertation. Relevant terms, described and presented, provide the reader with supplemental information that could be valuable when examining the research results. An attempt to rationalize the research paradigm and conceptual framework of the study exists, as well. The researcher identified potential limitations to the study and introduced the reader to the research questions and hypotheses explored. Chapter Two provides a more in-depth investigation into the research's constituent

components through use of the supporting literature available at the time of study, used to substantiate each topic's inclusion.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter Two provides the reader of this study an opportunity to be exposed to past and relevant literature, as it applied to the nature of this research, Alternative School Leadership Transformation. This chapter creates an underlying thread between topics addressed in the dissertation, such as best practices, fidelity of implementation, and transformation of leadership actions of the researcher; and existing data in those sub categories, such as graduation rates, attendance, and discipline. Each sub category contains relevant information about the research in the form of supporting literature used to substantiate each topic's inclusion.

Review of Literature Pertaining to Research Components

Strategies for establishing a cultural model for change. Research showed several effective strategies for establishing effective cultural change within an organization (Bush, 2006; Heick, 2014; Martin & Sugarman, 1993). In an article by Katzenbach, von Post, and Thomas (2014), the authors led by condemning an overly complex schematic for implementing cultural change by stating, “A sharp focus on the critical few reduces complexity and begets more positive, informal, and lasting cultural impact on performance” (p. 5). The authors also stated, “Key behaviors have to be actively managed and made visible” (p. 3), noting, “Companies that recognize and encourage such habits [as a sharp focus and specific targets] stand to build cultures with influence that goes beyond employee engagement and directly boosts performance” (p. 3). The notion that minimal, specific, and pointed targets within the change paradigm would yield positive and productive results was a strategy used in the establishment of

the new cultural model examined in this study, which focuses on three major student-behavior measures, attendance, discipline, and persistence to graduation.

As an educational organization moves forward with change in leadership and/or the implementation of a new educational model, including cultural changes, the fidelity of implementation as well as the content and context of change, must be disseminated by the management/leadership team. In many instances, according to Bush (2006), "Leaders have the main responsibility for generating and sustaining culture and communicating core values and beliefs both within the organization and to external stakeholders" (p. 19). It was the charge of the researcher in this study, as the leader of the educational institution and the proprietor of the educational change, to ensure the focus of the educational change and that the culture within the building reflected the desired outcomes outlined in the new educational paradigm, which included, among others, a culture of learning.

Heick (2014) wrote an article in *Edutopia*, stating "that a culture of learning is a collection of thinking habits, beliefs about self, and collaborative workflows that result in sustained critical thinking" (para. 5). This was another strategic approach considered in establishing the cultural shift in the researcher's new educational model. The change sought to replace a stigmatic and punitive culture with one of learning and adaptation. Part of the cultural shift to learning included what Heick called the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, which focused on three important elements: show them, help them, and let them achieve sustainability. For this researcher's study, various elements of Heick's (2014) model contributed to the strategizing and development of an educational

paradigm that would promote a shift in culture by targeting classroom practices and focused on student learner outcomes.

The success of the students contributes to the continued success of a positive culture and climate in an educational setting. Researchers said that student success was largely contingent upon the climate and level of expectations educators had for students within the classroom (Mintrom, 2014; Martin & Sugarman, 1993; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). According to an educational study by Mintrom (2014) in the educational publication *Cogent Education*, "A statistical analysis of subsequent student performance on a significant, related task indicates that explicitly promoting a culture of excellence among course participants can have a positive and sustained impact on their individual practices" (para. 1). A culture of excellence is a reflection of both leadership expectations of educators and educators' expectations of students, as well as classroom management practices.

Quality classroom management was a targeted strategy in the improvement of the educational climate and culture at BAAS. "Classroom management refers to those activities of classroom teachers that create a positive classroom climate within which effective teaching and learning can occur" (Martin & Sugarman, 1993, p. 9). A key strategy influencing classroom management included in the new educational paradigm for BAAS was the concept of School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports. "Positive behavior support offers a method for identifying the environmental events, circumstances and interactions that trigger problem behavior, developing strategy prevention and teaching new skills" (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2008, p. 6). According

to the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education article, positive support interventions promoted a positive culture and a climate conducive to learning.

An additional research-based strategy used to create a positive climate and culture under the newly developed educational model that paralleled positive behavior supports was the active interests in student life outside of the educational setting and the creation of positive educator student relationships. Marzano stated, "Without the foundation of a good relationship, students commonly resist rules and procedures and the disciplinary actions that follow their violations" (as cited in Marzano et al., 2003, p. 41). Connecting with students on a personal level, generally accepted as a best practice as it relates to improving climate and culture in an educational setting, existed as a key component in the cultural change and paradigm shift for the newly created educational model at the BAAS. These strategies were kept in mind through implementation, along with quality classroom management, positive behavior supports, setting high expectations, and keeping the focus of change narrow enough to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Establishing a leadership model for an alternative setting. For the newly created educational paradigm, identification of a multitude of slightly varying established leadership models was necessary. Many models defined the role of the successful, or traditional, educational leader as paramount in producing and obtaining successful student outcomes. In an increasing climate of accountability, leadership was under scrutiny. Admittedly, "there is much that we do not yet understand about effective educational leadership" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 2); however, educational leadership still made a difference in the broad scope of the educational organization, and

there much gleaned from the compilation of strategies in place within the educational system, both traditional and alternative.

In a review of research on "How Leadership Influences Student Learning," Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) stated, "Leadership not only matters: it is second only to teaching, among school-related factors in its impact on student learning" (p. 3). The influence research showed leadership had on student learning and success guided the shift in leadership by ensuring a tactful research-based model for implementation. Several leadership models presented in subsequent sections of this chapter, and various elements of each provided a synthesis of data leading to the creation of BAAS's educational leadership paradigm.

Educational leadership, at the time of this study, was an ambiguous term that lent itself to an organization's interpretation and practice. When determining the leadership strategy for the new educational model, consideration concerning application and function became necessary. Research said, "At the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions, providing direction and exercising influence" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 3). The new leadership paradigm in this study, created with these functions in mind, exhibited many of the same characteristics contained in literature. Further, it was the sentiment of the researcher, which was echoed by research, that leadership not simply be the mandating of policy to subordinates, but the process of working with individuals, with a common purpose and in an effort to achieve shared goals.

The National School Climate Center (NSCC) (as cited in Hughes & Pickeral, 2013) established that shared leadership models would improve school climate through a series of strategies that needed consideration when developing the new leadership and

educational model. In an article titled, "School Climate and Shared Leadership," the NSCC outlined five strategies that would reportedly build broad engagement through the following promising shared leadership strategies:

1. Set clear parameters to create balanced power and establish leadership as a partnership.
2. Engage all stakeholders in working together toward a shared purpose.
3. Ensure all participants share responsibility and accountability.
4. Recognize embrace diverse perspectives in the group.
5. Teach and value inner strength in all participants in shared leadership. (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013, p. 1)

In the instance of BAAS, the transformation of leadership shifted from a primarily directed approach to a more immersive, hands-on or shared approach. The number of systematic issues that needed addressing within the new educational and leadership transformation would have been overwhelming for one individual to attempt on his/her own. Hughes and Pickeral (2013) stated in their research, "Teachers, staff, students, parents and principals working together are a powerful leadership lever" (p. 3), and

> Schools need to recognize and develop leadership among many different kinds of individuals representing all education stakeholders to effectively model and develop a school climate that engages adults and students in a shared mission that improves student development (p. 3).

The re-assignment and delegation of tasks and leadership duties proved to be an integral component in the transformation of leadership and the effectiveness of the new educational model used at the BAAS.

The sharing of roles was a key strategy in the implementation and fidelity of the new leadership model, but other factors weighed heavily on the new model's success, as well. The new leadership paradigm also operated from the research-based theory that "leaders influence student learning by helping to promote vision and goals, and by ensuring that resources and processes are in place to enable teachers to teach well" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 4). With a focus on teaching and learning and a solid foundation based in research, the new leadership paradigm strategy was designed to promote not only the targeted learning outcomes for the program, but to positively impact the educational organization as a whole.

The components needed for the transition to a transformational school and leadership paradigm required research-based practices, delegated amongst stakeholders and implemented with fidelity, to ensure the best chance for measurable and residual success. Evidence shows that when a new leadership paradigm begins implementation, the responsibility of fidelity and success falls squarely on the leader. That statement may have some elements of truth, but "transformation requires the leadership of more than one individual for pervasive and lasting change" (Denmark, 2012, para. 2). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) and Denmark (2012) agreed in their research that collaborative leadership was paramount in transformational leadership.

In *AdvancED*'s article, "Transforming Schools: Transformational Leadership - A Matter of Perspective," by Denmark in 2012, the characteristics of leadership were referenced and given in a concise format (Appendix A), starting with the standards for quality and then referencing one of the seven dimensions associated with that standard. The first standard mentioned is Purpose and Direction and the associated dimension is

"Building school vision and establishing goals" (Denmark, 2012, p. 2). The next standard is Governance and Leadership, which falls under "Creating a productive school culture" (p. 2). Teaching and Assessing for Learning has two associated dimensions, "Providing intellectual stimulation" and "Offering individualized support" (p. 2). Resources and Support Systems also correspond to the dimension "Offering individualized support" (p. 2). The next of the seven dimensions, "Modeling best practices and important organizational values", fits the first three standards (Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing for Learning) (p. 2). The sixth dimension is "Demonstrating high performance expectations" (p. 2). This dimension is associated with standards 1, 3, and 5 (Purpose and Direction, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, Using Results for Continuous Improvement) (p. 2). The last dimension is "Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions" (p. 2). The seventh dimension falls under standards 1, 2, and 3 (Purpose and Direction, Governance and Leadership, and Teaching and Assessing for Learning).

These characteristics stem from Leithwood's (as cited in Denmark, 2012) research on dimensions of transformational leadership and the seven discrete characteristics of transformational leaders. The research stated, "for transformation to occur in an underperforming school or school system, then leaders must act as system thinkers . . . System thinking serves as the conceptual framework" for the characteristics outlined by Denmark (2012) and Leithwood's research (as cited in Denmark, 2012, para. 2). The system's conceptual framework established the leadership and educational paradigm for the BAAS's new educational model.

Identifying deficiencies in an educational model. Deficiencies in educational models appear in various contexts. The scope of an educational model's deficiencies can be vast, can implicate anything from the then-current leadership paradigm to ineffective classroom management, and are generally those areas identified through the disaggregation of relevant data and close introspection into the infrastructure of the educational paradigm. The previous educational model at BAAS, which was examined in this study, involved a one-dimensional leadership philosophy and classroom management strategies that were not effective concerning the targeted educational outcomes of graduation rates, attendance, and discipline.

Research was clear about the practices in alternative education deemed ineffective. According information in the article, "Alternative Learning Programs and Schools Standards and Implementation Procedures," ineffective characteristics in alternative education include a mission statement not clearly defined, a target population not clearly defined, forced placement for students and/or staff, punitive purpose, lack of resources, ignorance to needs of students, insufficient professional development, inconsistent and inequitable work assignments, and arbitrary policies, procedures, and/or practices (Ingram & Wong, 2009, p. 26). By identifying the deficiencies listed in the research, this researcher was able to identify areas needing a fundamental revision at BAAS, through the new educational and leadership paradigms.

The researcher, upon appointment to the position of principal of the BAAS, began to investigate and identify areas of concern that fit criteria of ineffective practices in alternative education. The researcher continued to disaggregate data pertinent to improvement and transformational change in areas specified by administration and key

stakeholders as priorities (identified deficiencies) in the current educational model. The data and documentation reviewed consisted of case notes reflecting the interactions with stakeholders, program reviews, meeting agendas and minutes, planned initiatives, and a record of applied best practices. The researcher also gathered secondary district data, such as previous attendance, academic, and discipline records. Differences in desired targeted outcomes and then-current realities needed documenting, and a focus for the subsequent educational calendar year was developed.

The concept of shared leadership as a component of transformational change became the focus of the new BAAS educational paradigm. From a leadership perspective, the disseminated, disaggregated data helped develop a viable plan of action. According to Hallinger and Heck (2002), a crucial component of leadership resided in assisting the group in understanding the organization's goals and foci to reinforce the vision. The new leadership paradigm of transformational leadership lent itself to a collaborative environment where the stakeholders could openly discuss ideas, concerns, and implementation of the new educational model. The new educational paradigm would incorporate a shared mission and vision, which research said embodied the best practices and ways of thinking about education (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), setting it apart from its predecessor.

Through shared leadership, program introspection, and the transformational change of the leadership model, the staff at BAAS collectively discovered that many existing processes appeared negligent or nonexistent. Because of these deficiencies, the researcher felt changes within the existing educational construct would have a positive impact on the new educational paradigm’s outcomes. Some highlighted areas of

deficiency, as identified by the researcher and staff upon reviewing the previously implemented policies and procedures, were the absence of a consistent tardy/late-to-school policy, an effective incentive/reward program for positive behaviors, quality communication between the BAAS and parents/guardians of students. Communication, as a critical element of a successful program, needed to be addressed immediately, due to the lack of effective communication with the schools from which the students attending BAAS came. Other deficiencies included the absence of an effective way to evaluate student performance on a daily basis, a concise and specific student application and selection process, and a stigmatized climate and culture. These deficiencies, among others, required summation and synthesizing into a tangible document that became the driving force behind the new educational and leadership paradigm.

Identifying new procedures and processes in alternative education. Although there existed a multitude of research in the field of alternative education, there were still many facets needing exploration. Alternative education was a diverse and complex subsection of the substantial institution of public education and had emerged primarily as a vehicle for those students who were not successful in traditional or mainstream educational settings, to reach the ultimate goal of high school graduation. Alternative education was rooted in the disparity of socio-economics and pervasive achievement gaps that permeated educational institutions in every demographic (Ruiz de Velasco, Austin, Dixon, Johnson, McLaughlin, & Perez, 2008).

As alternative education became more pervasive, many states, as well as national agencies, began to recognize the role of alternative education and the necessity for state policy and legislation that supported and guided this emerging sector of public education.

In a report entitled “Reinventing Alternative Education; An Assessment of Current State Policy and how to Improve It,” the authors described the then-current presidential administration (under Barack Obama) as committed to “expanding and enhancing alternative schools that cater to young people who are struggling in school or who have dropped out of the school system, rather than focusing exclusively on redesigning traditional high schools” (Almeida et al., 2010). The report outlined “seven policy elements that all states should incorporate in order to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to alternative education” (p. 3). The seven model elements presented in the research were: (1) Broaden eligibility, (2) clarify state and district roles and responsibilities, (3) strengthen accountability for results, (4) increase support for innovation, (5) ensure high-quality staff, (6) enhance student support services, and (7) enrich funding (Almeida et al., 2010, pp. 3-4).

Policy at the state and federal levels, updated and upgraded to reflect the nature of alternative education, would likely continue to change as research and empirical evidence accumulated. At the time this researcher collected data, there was no one state that had adopted and/or “incorporated all seven model policy elements” (Almeida et al., 2010, p. 5). There were, however, “examples of model policies for almost all of the elements across the states” (p. 5).

While Missouri specifically had achieved broadened eligibility standards for alternative education, as well as partially achieving enriched funding, those were the only two policy elements the state had addressed (Almeida et al., 2010, p. 19). BAAS would have struggled to independently impact the adoption and implementation of the recommended federal and state policy elements at their respective levels; however, the

researcher was able to use the research findings to help shape and guide the vision and extensive educational framework of BAAS when developing the new educational and leadership models. The researcher's next objective was to establish a research-based typology inside the construct of the broader classification of alternative education.

The primary role of many alternative education programs was the prevention of high school dropouts and preparation of graduates for success upon entering the workforce. Aron's (2003) research stated that an estimated 3.8 million youths did not have a diploma and remained unemployed at the time of the investigation (p. 5). This information reinforced his notion that development of an alternative to traditional education was needed in an attempt to re-engage unsuccessful youth. Aron (2006) went on to define alternative education as any educational activity that fell "outside the traditional K-12 school system (including home schooling, GED preparation programs, special programs for gifted children, charter schools, etc.)" (p. 3). Research further broke down the archetype of alternative education into a three-part typology. The three-part typology for alternative school classification related directly to the research of Raywid (1994, 1999) and used a program's goals as the distinguishing characteristic. Those characteristics bear the following descriptions:

> **Type I** - schools offer full-time, multi-year, education options for students of all kinds, including those needing more individualization, those seeking an innovative or challenging curriculum, or dropouts wishing to earn their diplomas. A full instructional program offers students the credits needed for graduation. Students choose to attend. Other characteristics include divergence from standard school organization and practices (deregulation, flexibility, autonomy, and teacher

> and student empowerment); an especially caring, professional staff; small size and small classes; and a personalized, whole-student approach that builds a sense of affiliation and features individual instruction, self-paced work, and career counseling. Models range from schools-within-schools to magnet schools, charter schools, schools without walls, experiential school, career-focused and job-based schools, dropout-recovery programs, after-hours schools, and schools in atypical settings like shopping malls and museums. (Aron, 2006, p. 4)
>
> **Type II** - schools whose distinguishing characteristic is discipline, which aims to segregate, contain, and reform disruptive students. Students typically do not choose to attend, but are sent to the school for specified times or until behavior requirements are met. Since placement is short-term, the curriculum is limited to a few basic, required courses or is entirely supplied by the 'home school' as a list of assignments. Familiar models include last-chance schools and in-school suspension. (Aron, 2006, p. 4)
>
> **Type III** - programs provide short-term but therapeutic settings for students with social and emotional problems that create academic and behavioral barriers to learning. Although Type III programs target specific populations--offering counseling, access to social services, and academic remediation--students can choose not to participate. (Aron, 2006, p. 4)

The definition and implications of alternative education existed as a complex and intertwined set of theories, observations, and best practices. Miller (2001, 2004), a researcher and author, subsequently supplemented the three-part alternative education typology proposed by Raywid, (1994, 1999). In addition to the three-part classification

typology, Miller proposed that six distinct orientations of alternative education existed. In his writings, Miller (2001) sought to give parents a guide by which they could identify what type of education was optimal for their children. Miller's (2004) article, "A Map of the Alternative Education Landscape," outlined the six orientation typologies based on variables he felt required consideration when educational approaches were evaluated. The six models Miller (2004) proposed (some of which shared overlapping commonalities) were:

1) Transmission model - "conventional educational thinking" (pp. 1-2);
2) Freedom-based learning - "centers on a learner's entirely self-motivated exploration of whatever the world has to offer" (p. 2);
3) Social constructivist models - "social endeavor, requiring meaningful interaction between and among persons within an environment that deliberately encourages collaboration, inquiry, and creative problem solving" (pp. 3-4);
4) Critical pedagogy - "not to transmit knowledge and preserve social traditions but to transform society by helping students develop a perceptive and inquisitive consciousness of the conditions of their culture" (pp. 3-4);
5) Spiritual developmentalism - "based on very specific ideas about the unfolding of the human soul through specific stages of development" (p. 4); and

6) Integral or holistic education - “integrative category in which we find all the other parts...essentially, they are trying to describe the interconnected nature of the world and human experience” (pp. 4-5);

The research showed that alternative education could take on many forms within any given school district or institution of learning, and that alternative could refer to both the educational construct and the means of disseminating information, as well as the purpose of instituting various programs labeled as alternative. While Miller’s (2001, 2004) typologies were more abstract and metaphysical in nature than Aron’s (2003, 2006), they lent the researcher insight into various approaches to non-traditional educational models, whereas Aron’s three-part typology sought to classify the express purpose and instigating factors that led to the creation of a given alternative education program.

Though, at the time of this writing, there did not seem to be a large quantity of research available denoting which type of alternative facilitation measure was more or less successful, most successful alternative programs seemed to fall under Miller’s (2001, 2004) sixth model, integral or holistic, as well as Aron’s (2006) Type I typology. These findings were evidenced by Raywid’s (1994, 1999) preliminary research, which suggested, “the first group of programs--the true educational alternatives--are the most successful,” referring to Type I typologies (Aron, 2006, p. 4). Most, if not all, involved a varying degree of holistic student development, academic remediation, dropout prevention, credit recovery, social/emotional counseling, and/or college/career preparedness (Hemmer & Shepperson, 2014).

Some students found themselves in an alternative setting for a multitude of reasons including, but not limited to, pregnancy, truancy, personal or family turbulence, social/emotional issues, and/or disruptive behavior (Aron, 2006). This typology of alternative education, developed and proposed by Roderick of the University of Chicago, influenced the new educational construct (as cited in Aron, 2006). Roderick based her typology on the specific, "educational problems or challenges students present[ed]" (Aron, 2006, p. 5). A table developed by Ruzzi (as cited in Ruzzi & Kraemar, 2006), segregated the challenges students faced into an easily perceptible document (Appendix B). The document also listed the academic needs of each targeted population, as well as the educational objective, relevant resources, and appropriate streams of funding. The six target populations in Ruzzi's table were comprised of students in high school who were behind academically (between fourth grade and eighth grade), students in high school who were significantly behind academically (below fourth grade), students in high school who were not attending, students who dropped out and were between the ages of 16 and 18, students who dropped out and were over the age of 18, and students who are incarcerated (as cited in Ruzzi & Kraemar, 2006).

Ruzzi & Kraemar (2006) also included in the table each student's educational needs, as they related to the student's category. The student needs were presented as standards-based remediation; special education and ELL (for students identified as behind academically); special education and ELL (for students identified as significantly behind); dropout recovery or special education (for the students identified as in school but not attending); credit recovery; small group learning; twilight school; special education; adult basic education (for students who dropped out between the ages of 16

and 18); online learning; evening school; special education; adult basic education; dual enrollment; modular credits (for dropouts over the age of 18); standards-based alternative curriculum; and work-based learning for students who were incarcerated (Ruzzi & Kraemar, 2006, p. 1). The educational objectives were consistent throughout each identified population. The table shows the attainment of a diploma or GED as the end objective for each category. There were also a number of correlating services and funding sources tied to each target population.

While some alternative education programs most likely formed in an effort to assist students similar to the students in Ruzzi & Kraemar's (2006) six targeted student populations, qualifying characteristics for placement or enrollment in alternative programs were still dependent solely upon the educational model established by the school district in which the alternative school resided. This meant that a school could include or omit students from any, or all of the targeted populations in Ruzzi's table. Though alternative education models had threads of commonality, there was not a universally accepted alternative education model.

As mentioned in the previous discussion of typology, and according to the research, some alternative education facilities relied on forced placement as a punitive/remediative alternative to more severe disciplinary action (Heick, 2014; Ingram & Wong, 2009). These placements served as a direct response to the perpetrated infractions. Some used their alternative education school as a 'last chance' for students wishing to finish who were unsuccessful in the traditional setting for any of the aforementioned reasons. Other institutions of alternative education, and the majority of successful programs, established enrollment on a voluntary basis, not as much for

disciplinary purposes, but as a preemptive dropout prevention measure for students struggling in the traditional setting. The secondary program types (such as Type II and III), according to Raywid (1994, 1999), proved to be less likely to result in substantial and lasting advancements in the educational setting (Aron, 2006).

When creating the new educational model for BAAS, the researcher and stakeholders took into account which paradigm would best suit BAAS, given its then-current realities, past endeavors, and vision for the future. Given the preliminary research findings at the time, the stakeholders felt the Type I model, in an off-site setting, would be the most advantageous for achieving the specific outcomes outlined in the program's mission and vision (see Chapter Three). Some of the specific characteristics the BAAS program adopted from the Type I educational model typology were, but were not limited to, flexibility for students, teacher and student empowerment, an especially caring and professional staff, small size and small classes, a personalized whole-student approach, self-paced work, and career counseling (Aron, 2006). The researcher and stakeholders also felt a holistic, or whole student, approach to student development would be the most advantageous for the at-risk population. Many of the remediation tactics and student assistance practices expressed began to permeate traditional school settings and were norm-referenced as general best practices in education.

In September of 1994, Raywid wrote that alternative schools "represent[ed] our most definitive departure from the programmatic, organizational, and behavioral regularities that inhibit[ed] school reform" (para. 2). She went on to state:

> Moreover, many of the reforms currently pursued in traditional schools--downsizing the high school, pursuing a focus or theme, student and teacher

> choice, making the school a community, empowering staff, active learner engagement, authentic assessment--are practices that alternative schools pioneered. (Raywid, 1994, para. 2)

The success of these Type I strategies led the researcher and stakeholders to incorporate these educational characteristics at BAAS, with a high level of priority, into the development of the new alternative education paradigm.

Changing the educational model to achieve specific student outcomes. Based on the student outcomes the researcher sought to impact, which included maintaining graduation rates, decreasing discipline referrals, and improving student attendance, the formalization of a systematic and strategic plan was prepared and disseminated. After an in-depth analysis of the research, a disaggregation of the relevant educational data, and consultation with district stakeholders, a comprehensive plan resulting from an amalgamation of the outlined and targeted components began to emerge. The plan was to be extensive and transformational for both the educational and leadership paradigms.

According to research, the areas targeted by the new educational paradigm were pervasive throughout the country. Tyler and Lofstrom (2009) gave the example that "every year more than a million children leave school without a traditional high school diploma" (p. 87). The researcher's targeted student outcomes, including high school graduation, were outcomes that research indicated an appropriate alternative education program could positively influence (Quinn & Poirier, 2007). A number of program best practices also existed, supporting the addition of critical educational components within the alternative education environment.

The research showed that an especially caring, professional staff, small classes, a personalized, whole-student approach, self-paced work, and career counseling were all characteristics of quality alternative education programing (Aron, 2006). As such, the researcher and stakeholders decided to implement these characteristics into the new educational paradigm with the hope that these program alterations would positively affect all targeted areas of concerns (maintaining graduation rates, decreasing discipline, and improving student attendance) at BAAS.

The areas previously identified as program deficiencies included the absence of a consistent tardy/late-to-school policy and an effective incentive/reward program for positive behaviors. Deficiencies also included quality communication between the BAAS and parents/guardians of students, an effective way to evaluate student performance on a daily basis, a concise and specific student application and selection process, and a stigmatized climate and culture. The researcher sought to rectify and amend these deficiencies through the implementation of research-based programs that would address targeted outcomes. Among the new procedural implementations were the NEE evaluation process, PLCs, SWPBS, among other supporting incentive models, as well as the reformation of outdated policies described in Chapter Three.

When the researcher looked at the district's initiative to implement the NEE, the researcher was inclined to investigate the perceived advantages of using the new system of evaluation. Though NEE's website did not include empirical evidence of improvement other than district testimonials, NEE's website did reference a list of potential advantages corresponding to the use the then newly developed evaluation tool

(Assessment Resource Center, 2016). The researcher cited the following advantages of the new evaluation tool from NEE's website:

> NEE's innovative system encourages the professional growth of educators, with the goal of improved student achievement. Evaluators are trained to make reliable, consistent assessments of classroom observations and other facets of performance such as units of instruction, professional development plans, surveys, building improvement plans, and self-assessments. Combining data from these sources provides a comprehensive view of educator effectiveness. Each educator is then able to focus on specific areas of needed growth and may access educational resources embedded in the system. (Assessment Resource Center, 2016, p. 1)

Advantages for administrators. Advantages for administrators included: a) training is provided to evaluate teachers consistently and validly; b) the meanings for scores assigned to teachers are clear and transparent; c) the system is designed to be fair, trustworthy, and applied equally for all teachers; d) a sense of teamwork is instilled as parties work together to improve classroom practice; e) emphasis is on coaching for growth; f) web-based system for ease data storage and accessibility; and g) genuinely useful information is generated (Assessment Resource Center, 2016, p. 1).

Advantages for teachers. Advantages for teachers included: a) frequent observations followed by relevant feedback; b) recognition of effective teaching; c) emphasis on growth and improvement; d) professional development targets

> specific, personal needs; and e) evaluation information is timely, aligned, and easy to interpret (Assessment Resource Center, 2016, p. 1).

Advantages for students. Advantages for students included: a) effective teachers in every classroom and b) optimal learning environments are created to improve student performance (Assessment Resource Center, 2016, p. 1).

The application and implementation of the NEE program was one explicit way BAAS sought to improve the effectiveness of instruction within the alternative education environment. Another valuable research-based strategy the researcher advocated for, as a result of district initiatives was a Professional Learning Community (PLC). A PLC, as defined by the online publication, "All Things PLC", was:

> An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators. ("All Things PLC," 2016, para. 1)

The primary elements of the PLC included a shared mission, vision, values, and goals; collaborative teams; collective inquiry; action orientations and experimentations, continuous improvement, and results orientation (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). The researcher and stakeholders at BAAS felt that these proven strategies for student achievement would have far-reaching implications for the BAAS educational and leadership paradigm.

A third comprehensive research based strategy incorporated into the new educational model was the use of SW-PBS. The implication of SW-PBS was that

implementation with fidelity would yield positive results in relation to the targeted student outcomes, specifically, increased student attendance and decreased discipline (PBIS, 2016). SW-PBS was defined in Missouri as:

> A framework for creating safe and orderly learning environments in schools, while improving the social-emotional outcomes for students. It is a proactive approach that relies on research-based practices, including developing clear behavioral expectations, teaching these expectations, acknowledging appropriate behavior, consistently correcting inappropriate behavior, and using behavioral data to systematically identify and solve problems. SW-PBS represents a three-tiered model that provides additional behavioral supports to students who are not responding to the tier 1 interventions. (PBIS, 2016, para. 1)

The framework mentioned in the operational definition of SW-PBS contained several key components that needed implementation with fidelity for the initiative to have the effects the research boasted. The first was a data-collection protocol and decision-making process (Appendix H). Another was a continuum of support, represented in the graphic chart provided in Appendix J. The last, and most comprehensive element, was the Universal Support Checklist (Appendix K) that stated the significant areas needing evaluation, as well as an evaluation of the fidelity of implementation.

The elements contained in the Universal Support Checklist were associated with targeted student outcomes, but included other elements the researcher and stakeholders at BAAS sought to improve upon within the educational setting. The components addressed through the implementation of the SW-PBS model included common philosophy and purpose, leadership, clarifying expected behavior, teaching expected

behavior, encouraging expected behavior, discouraging inappropriate behavior, ongoing monitoring, and effective classroom practices. Because of the comprehensiveness of the SW-PBS model, the researchers and stakeholders felt they could target several student outcomes and best practices within the construct of the SW-PBS model.

Upon the establishment of the framework for major educational changes, the researcher began to synthesize a document that represented the new educational model, specified desired student outcomes, and listed the procedures followed throughout implementation process. The document also contained secondary strategies designed to support the initiatives addressed in the major educational paradigm changes listed in this chapter (NEE, PLC, SW-PBS). One supplementary theory the researcher found throughout educational research, which the researcher and stakeholders felt would be beneficial, was the notion that high expectations for teachers and students had a great influence on behavior (Miller, 2001). The researcher noted as the document synthesis process began, high expectations were a theme that influenced and permeated all aspects of the new educational paradigm.

Strategies for implementation of educational change. Educational change was the underlying component of the new educational model and creation of the new educational paradigm. Throughout the process, the researcher knew a significant paradigm change would affect all stakeholders, and the impact depended on the magnitude of the change. Because the degree of change was large, it was imperative that a procedure be in place for the process of implementation. Farvo (2015) stated, "Strategy, implementation, and execution are three co-incident determinants of a company or business unit's ultimate output – its results – that are very difficult to parse

into their individual effects" (para. 15). Components of the strategy, implementation, and execution all focused upon the element of program integrity and the maintenance of implementation fidelity.

Research showed that the primary influence on successful implementation was the maintenance of program integrity (Duerden & Witt, 2012). Moncher and Prinz (1991) stated that mainlining a high level of program integrity would increase the probability of achieving targeted outcomes. The importance of a program's integrity and the level of fidelity by which that program implementation transpired led the researcher to outline a specific implementation plan when the new educational paradigm introduction commenced.

Research presented five dimensions leading to the maintenance of program integrity throughout implementation. Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, and Hanson (2003) presented the five constituent components. The first component was adherence, which referred to whether the program functioned the way the program design intended. The next element referred to dosage, which referred to the amount of support the staff received throughout the process. Then, the research presented quality and delivery as a component. This element referred to how the new program presentation appeared to those involved. Next, was participation responsiveness, which referenced participant's engagement in the new program. The last element had direct ties to program differentiation, which referred to how involved the constituent stakeholders were throughout the process (Dusenbury et al., 2003).

Upon synthesis of the implementation plan, the stakeholders were able to review the new processes and procedures. The dissemination and implementation were then able

to commence in the form of a new student handbook. The new alternative education paradigm and the varying degrees of change were included in the handbook, along with the mission and vision of the building and annual goals created at both the building and district levels. The quantitative component of this study focused on the evaluation and assessment of the goals.

Relationship between observable behaviors in targeted areas (graduation rates, discipline, attendance) and educational model. According to one source, there was a high degree of interrelatedness between school attendance, discipline, and graduation rates (PBIS, 2016). An additional relationship existed between these characteristics and the type of educational model an institution chose to implement. There existed a multitude of alternative education models throughout the consulted research. The three alternative education models most prevalent were separate location, separate programs, or onsite remediation within the larger school of origin (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014a). The BAAS program became an offsite institution that worked with the traditional (sending) school to assist students needing an alternative setting. The new educational model worked within the construct of what research described as best practices in the alternative education setting. The new educational model used research to develop a program design that allowed the BAAS to work towards specific targeted outcomes through the application of effective program characteristics and their relationship to the desired educational outcomes.

Successful alternative education models, by design, provided a setting for students who did not experience success in the traditional learning environment and attempted to match specific educational strategies with desired educational outcomes. The research

stated that involvement in alternative education programs could have positive effects on attitude towards school, as well as academic performance in line with desired student outcomes identified by the researcher and stakeholders (White & Kochhar-Bryant, 2004). The researcher hypothesized that through the implementation of specific research-based alternative education strategies, such as low student-teacher ratio, highly structured classroom setting, positive behavior management, and quality instruction, the chances for student success in the BAAS education program were increased, as supported by research published by Tobin and Sprague (1999).

These strategies, upon implementation in the BAAS new educational paradigm, subsequently influenced the specific targeted student outcomes of increased attendance rates, maintenance of graduation rates, and decreased discipline referrals, in a positive manner.

Measuring perceptions of stakeholders via program analysis questionnaire. After the implementation process and execution of the new educational paradigm, the researcher sought to solicit input from the key stakeholders involved in the process to establish a qualitative perspective relating to the effect of the educational model and the perceived effects on specific targeted outcomes as well as the fidelity of implementation. Questionnaires were a way to solicit opinions from individuals whose input would provide insight and reflection on the expressed subject of interest. Research said, "Questionnaires are the most frequently used data collection method in educational and evaluation research" (Radhakrishna, 2007, para. 1). During the research process the researcher discovered several methods for creating and validating questionnaires to be used in an educational context.

The research stated that a data collection instrument should be valid to ensure dependability of findings and that the validation process could include a number of components including reliability, validity, internal validity, external validity, sensitivity, specificity, statistical validity, longitudinal validity, linguistic validity, discriminant validity, and construct validity (Howard, 2008). For the purposes of the research presented in this document, not all of these validation components were applicable. The researcher addresses potential threats to validity in the limitations section of this document.

Throughout the creation of the questionnaire used in this study, the researcher referenced research-based models and processes such as Radhakrishna's (2007) sequence for questionnaire development. That model cited a five-step process, which included background, questionnaire conceptualization, format and data analysis, establishing validity, and establishing reliability. The researcher used a dual component format for the questionnaire that established qualitative and quantitative elements. The researcher also sought input from professionals in the field, such as veteran teachers, school board members, and school administrators, and their review of the questionnaire to evaluate the questionnaire's validity and reliability.

The questionnaire used in this dissertation appears in Appendix E. It contained a five-point Likert scale referencing involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of implemented measures. Selections on the scale were extremely = 5; very = 4; moderately = 3; slightly = 2; and not at all = 1. It also contained a written portion soliciting verbal descriptions of involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of the new educational paradigm.

Summary

The review of literature presented in Chapter Two contributed to the identification of deficiencies in the previous education model at BAAS and the identification of new procedures and processes to be used in the new educational model (Questions 3 and 4). The questions represented the scope of research relevant to the creation of specific methodologies, typologies, and best practices in a new alternative education paradigm at the time of inquiry.

These review of literature also supported the chosen research design for the study in consideration of questionnaire analysis, improving attendance, increasing graduation rates, dropout prevention, implementation of educational change, transformational leadership, educational leadership models, educational framework, alternative education model, procedures and processes in alternative education, cultural model for change, improving student outcomes, identifying educational deficiencies, alternative education best practices, alternative education, and measuring perceptions in educational setting.

The historical background of the topics researched, as represented in this chapter, was rooted in the successes and barriers of effective change, as well as the history and adaptation of alternative education. The research described in Chapter Two paved the way for subsequent changes in the educational model and the leadership paradigm implemented at BAAS, as well as provided information relevant to procedural modifications and the basis for implementation. There was also a tangible underlying element within the leadership paradigms and educational models with regard to how they presented themselves in supporting the change of specific student outcomes. These elements created the conceptual framework used to focus the broader concepts into

workable research questions and sub-questions, as the processes for this research were designed. Chapter Three introduced and elaborated on the methodologies used to assess the data associated with the research questions, as well as the effectiveness of the development, implementation, and results of the leadership and educational transformation.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter Three contains detailed background information of the BAAS program from its genesis, the methodology, and the research design for the research study as a whole, as well as the segmented approach the researcher used to differentiate between the four themes of the action research. This chapter also contains the methods by which information was gathered, disaggregated, analyzed, and compiled. The processes involved in each step outline the approach used to promote continuity and provide an opportunity for replication.

It was important for the researcher to convey the depth and history surrounding the BAAS alternative education program and the factors leading to the change in leadership and educational model. The alternative program in Gamma District was an evolutionary process spanning several decades and took on many different looks. Some of the changes the BAAS endured over the years included faculty turnover, changes in alternative education philosophy, shifts in leadership paradigms, and multiple changes in location within the district boundaries.

Chapter Three provides information pertaining to the evolution of the BAAS education program to the point at which the researcher took over. The chapter also discusses the four major components of the data collection, data analysis, research methodology, implementation, and evaluation process. The four components discussed are the identification, design, implementation, and observation processes.

Research Questions

The researcher chose the following question: In the implementation of new educational structures for the alternative learning setting at the secondary level, what are (a) the major contributions to success and barriers to effective change and (b) the characteristics of those major contributions and barriers?

Sub Questions

Question 1. What strategies were used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes (increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals), for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 2. What strategies were used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 3. What processes were used in identifying deficiencies in the previous model?

Question 4. What processes were used in identifying new procedures and processes for the new model of education in the alternative setting?

Question 5. What were the strategies and processes designed to address the specific student outcomes?

Question 6. What strategies were used in the implementation processes?

Question 7. What types of observable behaviors and/or student outcomes are the results of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates?

Question 8. What are the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the transition, as indicated on the program analysis questionnaire?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated to examine student outcomes that were directives given by Gamma District to the newly appointed administrator, the researcher. The categories and target percentages were predetermined district and building goals. Categories were based on criteria used for student evaluation in the alternative setting.

Null Hypothesis 1. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals will not decrease by 10% per semester as compared to previous referral data.

Null Hypothesis 2. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance will not increase by 30% per semester as determined by ADA hours compared to previous attendance data.

Null Hypothesis 3. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, graduation rates will not remain consistent within 2% of previous rates, nor improve, as a percentage of total seniors, as compared to previous year's results.

The Research Site:

BAAS in Gamma School District enrolled from 40-to-60 students per semester, with a number of students leaving or enrolling during that period. The BAAS serviced secondary students from ninth to twelfth grades. Enrollment figures were included in with the Beta High School's numbers, for the purposes of district reports for state data records keeping. The student-to-teacher ratio was approximately 15-to-1, and the free

and reduced lunch count was well above the district average (Researcher's notes, 2015; Study District Student Information Systems, 2015).

The Research Site- Gamma School District (demographic data):

In 2015, the Gamma School District supported three elementary schools (PK-5), with an enrollment of 1,552; one junior high school (6-8), with an enrollment of 745; and one high school, which included the BAAS (9-12), with an enrollment of 3,249 (MODESE, 2015, p. 1). In the study years of 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively, total district enrollment was 2,959, 3,112, 3,151, and 3,191; percent of Free/Reduced Lunch was 49.5%, 49.9%, 20.5%, and 51.7%; and the student-to-classroom teachers ratio was 19-to-1; 20-to-1; 19-to-1; and 19-to-1, respectively (MODESE, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, p. 1, respectively).

Table 1.

Gamma School District Ethnicity and Free/Reduced Lunch Percentage

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Enrollment	2,959	3,112	3,151	3,191
Asian Percent	*	*	*	*
Black Percent	*	*	*	*
Hispanic Percent	*	*	*	*
Indian Percent	*	*	*	*
Multi-race Percent	*	*	*	*
Pacific Islander Percent	*	*	*	*
White Percent	90.70	89.60	88.40	87.70
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE) Percent	53.1	55.9	56.0	55.6

Note: Data from MODESE 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015. * indicates sample sizes too small to be included.

Cultural characteristics of the region reflected in the district's demographic data show a small percentage of minorities in this community. Gamma School District resides in an area that is primarily white with the remainder of ethnicities representing such a

small sample size that the state data is not calculated. The area, considered rural, has a population of approximately 24,500 residents (Missouri County Population, 2016).

In the study years of 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively, district attendance rate was 91.7%, 91.5%, 92.7%, and 93%; graduation rate was 92.2%, 95.8%, 95.5%, and 95.3%; and the number of discipline incidents were reported as 30, 24, 29, and 43, respectively (MODESE, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, p. 1, respectively). Discipline incidents were reported for situations where students no longer participated in the regular classroom setting for 10 or more consecutive days (MODESE, 2016, p. 1).

Participants

Stakeholders included in the survey portion of this researcher were two Gamma District Board of Education members, Assistant Superintendent of Gamma School District, sending school's building Principal, and three BAAS teachers. Secondary data related to attendance, graduation, and discipline were gathered for previous and then-current students of BAAS.

History of the BAAS Alternative Program Prior to Research

The BAAS moved to its location, current at the time of the study, nearly four years prior to this writing; a relatively short period in comparison to occupation of other buildings on campus. The newer location was larger than in previous years and designed specifically for the alternative education program in the district. The new location provided an environment that could operate autonomously from the traditional high school and leave room for growth in enrollment and the addition of personnel. The site of the new building, about a mile away from previous locations and on the other side of

town, effectively isolated the school from the other buildings in Gamma District (researcher, personal knowledge, 2014, 2015, 2016).

The BAAS education program existed in one form or another for approximately twenty-five years. It was interesting to note that the original grant written to fund the program focused on eliminating gang activity in Gamma District (personal communication, veteran BAAS teacher, November 2013). What made this particularly interesting was that the community in which the district resided was a relatively small, rural community, over an hour from the nearest urban community (Missouri County Population, 2016).

The alternative education program in Gamma District evolved throughout the years in both name and function. When the program was simply the 'alternative school' it existed as it moved through several locations in town, including a two story house, a middle school classroom, and its location prior to the last move, a small trailer near the campus of the Gamma District middle school. The program existed in the trailer for approximately nine years before making the latest move across town to its location current at the time of this writing (researcher, personal knowledge, 2014, 2015, 2016). As with many of the previous locations, the accommodations in the trailer were limited in both size and functionality.

As Gamma District grew in the mid to late 2000s, so did enrollment in the alternative school. The relocation of the BAAS became a necessity recognized by the district school board, as well as Gamma District's administration. There were many functional elements missing from the trailer location that a new building could accommodate. The new location provided amenities, such as a commons area for eating

lunch and recreating, a conference room for meetings, a kitchenette for cooking classes, a shower facility, larger restrooms, a counselor's area, and the capacity to hold more students and staff (Relocation and Planning meeting notes, Beta High School assistant principal, December, 2011)

Following the move to the new facility, Gamma District decided it would need leadership in the building in the form of an administrator. In the years prior to the move, the trailer only housed students and the few teachers who were brave enough to teach there with no counselor or administration present (personal communication, Beta High School assistant principal, December, 2013, February, 2014; veteran BAAS teacher, November, 2013). This arrangement was less than ideal though the program managed to subsist this way for many years. The proximity to other buildings in the district helped, but problems persisted.

Among the problems that arose from the previous configuration was the delay in the administration of discipline. All formal discipline reports went into a computer program, and then the teachers would have to wait for a high school administrator's response. In the case of an emergency, a high school administrator would have to respond to a telephone call, and then the teachers would have to wait for the administrator to arrive. Having an administrator off site did not prove to be a very effective or efficient way to handle situations (personal communication, Beta High School assistant principal, December 2013, February 2014; veteran BAAS teacher, November 2013). The burden of counselor, administrator, and educator fell squarely on the shoulders of the teachers and the workload associated with wearing all these hats was challenging (personal communication, Beta High School assistant principal, February 2014; veteran BAAS

teacher, November 2013). In addition to providing a more functional environment for the program, the entire educational model would need revamping, when moving forward with a new facility.

Once constructed in 2012, the new building effectively transformed the functional environment and inherently altered the educational model under which the alternative program was operating. This included changing the name of the program to the BAAS to be less stigmatizing, bringing in an administrator (and later a counselor), removing some of the workload from the teachers so they could focus on teaching, and attempting to develop a sense of autonomy in relation to the traditional high school (personal communication, Beta High School assistant principal, February 2014; veteran BAAS teacher, November 2013; researcher, personal knowledge, 2013, 2014). The BAAS began to take on a new look though there would be more changes and challenges to come.

Once in the new facility, the BAAS took on a new leadership model. The Gamma District school board created an administrative position designed to resolve some of the issues the BAAS was experiencing. The position title was Alternative Program Director. This position was responsible for creating a student handbook (Appendix C) and outlining a new educational model that would promote building autonomy, address building and district-level goals, and increase the efficiency of operations in the building.

The first year of BAAS (2012) saw some minor improvements, but the framework for the new educational model was skeletal at best. There were discrepancies about what exactly the program should look like, as well as the functionality and responsibilities of

the new director position. There were growing pains, but it seemed the program would be able to overcome the obstacles.

By the second year, the director of the BAAS was under scrutiny from district stakeholders, and district administration was becoming increasingly anxious for the program to solidify itself (personal communication, Beta High School principal, August 2013; school board member, August 2013; veteran BAAS teacher, August 2013) Due to undisclosed circumstances, by the end of the first semester of BAAS's second year, the director resigned, effectively leaving the program and teachers leaderless and in a vulnerable predicament.

It was the decision of the board and district administration to finish the school year with no administrator. The board, instead, assigned one of the traditional high school assistant principals as liaison to the BAAS, much as it had been in years prior, to handle discipline and general building operations. With no leadership in the building, student discipline increased while attendance and performance declined (personal communication, veteran BAAS teacher, November 2013). By the end of the second semester of the 2012-2013 school year, the attendance rate was below 50%, and discipline was over 3.5 referrals per student (district data, 2013; student information system, 2013). The district decided it would begin conducting interviews for a new administrator in the spring.

It was at this time that the board of education decided the new position would be a building-level principal position instead of a director position. The hope was that the new title and increased pay would attract highly qualified candidates. The board had a stake in the success of the BAAS program, due to the investment made for the new

building and the hopes of what a successful alternative program could do for Gamma District.

This was the point in time that the researcher entered the picture. After a series of interviews and meetings with district stakeholders, the researcher accepted the newly created position of principal of BAAS. There was challenging work to complete before the following school year commenced. The first task charged to the principal was to create a viable and thorough handbook (which had been lacking previously) that outlined what the program was going to look like, the implementation of a specific educational model, and the tools associated with making the transition to the new model (Appendix B).

The new model needed to address specific student outcomes aligned to building goals and aligned with district-level goals. The researcher's duty was to report to key stakeholders on the progress the program was making towards meeting these goals. The evaluation of outcomes resulting from the implemented changes to the educational model represent the basis of the following research.

This researcher's task as principal was to identify strategies, steps, and processes to determine deficiencies in the previous educational model and identify areas the new educational model could address. As researcher, the task was to design a study to measure the success of implementation. The reviewed data included thorough case notes, previously recorded documentation, and secondary district data; accessed with district permission and as part of the researcher's job, guided the decision-making process.

A rationale for the strategies, steps, and processes used to create the changed educational model, under the newly developed leadership role are discussed in this

dissertation. The use of secondary data in the form of Triple A documentation (a daily/hourly measure of student attendance, academic performance, and attitude (see Appendix G for sample data collection tool), case notes, minutes of meetings, handbooks, mission and vision statements, directives given to the staff in writing, and meeting agendas also influenced the new educational model. Data in the form of best-practice research, building observations, accessed student information service database of attendance, grades, discipline referrals, formal entry plan, previously recorded interview notes; e-mails from stakeholders, and other previously recorded documentation also contributed. Items from this list specifically used for analysis in this study were accessed in the district student information system database of attendance, grades, and discipline referrals.

Stakeholders at the time of the research working in the alternative setting, as well as those who helped develop and implement the new structure of the program were given a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of specific involvement, effectiveness, success of implementation and goal attainment, as it pertained to the new program. The specific questionnaire used in this study was included in Appendix E of this document. The questionnaire contained both qualitative and quantitative elements.

The second step of this study was to examine the design of the changed educational model and answer the research questions about strategies and processes. The last step of the study was to determine if the specific identified student outcomes were significantly better after the implementation of the new educational model. Quantitatively, the researcher applied a *z*-test for difference in proportion to potential change in student outcomes following implementation of the new educational model.

Qualitatively, responses to the questionnaires required summation and review for prominent, similar, and contrasting themes.

Analysis Procedures

The methodology the researcher chose in approaching this research was broken down into four distinct steps, outlined and detailed for the ease of interpretation. The stages of the researcher's methodology included identifying, designing, implementing, and observing. These terms related directly to the process used in the creation and implementation of the new educational model, as well as the transitional process in the leadership paradigm. The summary of these four steps follows:

Identify: The first step of this study examined secondary qualitative data to identify the strategies, steps, and processes used in determining the areas of deficiency in the previous educational model and identify areas addressed in the new educational model. The data reviewed included thorough case notes, previously recorded documentation, and secondary district data, accessed as part of the researcher's job, which guided the decision-making process.

The process used in reviewing the data was a multi-step process intended for multiple purposes. The first purpose was to use disaggregated data to isolate the areas the stakeholders and the researcher felt were areas of concern, such as graduation rates, attendance, and discipline. The second function of the data reviewed was to juxtapose previous BAAS alternative education practices against what research showed to be ineffective practices in alternative education.

The researcher-identified information pertaining to best practices using existing literature and the previous BAAS handbook, as well as stakeholder guidance. The data

relating to areas of deficiencies gathered by the researcher surfaced as part of the appointed job duties through the Gamma District's Student Information System. Disaggregation of data quickly confirmed the areas of deficiencies and reiterated the need for an educational paradigm shift.

The disaggregation of data and the subsequent findings served as the rationale for the processes used to create the changed educational model, under the newly developed leadership role, and surfaces in discussion in later sections. Additional data used by the researcher also included secondary data in the form of (a) Triple A data, which tracked student progress; (b) case notes pertaining to best practices in alternative education; (c) minutes of meetings held prior to the creation of BAAS; handbooks from Beta High School and BAAS; (d) directives given to the staff in writing, prior to the principal's first year at BAAS; (e) best practice research; and (f) building observations conducted by the new administrator. Other sources included the district's database of attendance, grades, discipline referrals, a formal entry plan, previously recorded interview notes, e-mails from stakeholders, and other previously recorded documentation.

The strategies implemented through the change in leadership and the educational model represent research evidenced best practices in alternative education. The research that supported these changes appear in Chapter Two (Aron, 2006; Heick, 2014; Raywid, 1994). The implementation and execution of the changes were included in the first comprehensive BAAS handbook (Appendix C).

Another component of data collection source involved stakeholders who worked in the BAAS alternative setting, as well as those who helped develop and implement the new structure of the program. These individuals responded to a questionnaire regarding

their perceptions of the identification of tasks, development of processes, and implementation of the new program. See a list of questions in Appendix E. The questionnaire helped the researcher interpret the effectiveness of change, the involvement of stakeholders, and the fidelity of implementation.

Design: The second step of this study examined the design of the changed educational model and discussed the processes, research, and rationale behind the creation of the initiatives designed to address specific student outcomes, using qualitative data in the form of case notes and previously recorded documentation. The design implemented, focused on researched best practices and other successful alternative program designs. The research supported and guided both the conceptual framework of the educational paradigm and the transformation of leadership, as well as the implemented best practices and new educational constructs, such as PLC, SW-PBS, and NEE.

Implement: The third step of this study examined the implementation process and the specific strategies used to ensure fidelity of implementation. It also looked at the rationale/data used to drive those decisions such as case notes and previously recorded documentation. The process used to implement the change in leadership and educational model were staff meetings, dissemination of newly created handbook, and review of new and relevant material with students upon their return to school for the 2013-2014 school year. Fidelity of implementation was determined qualitatively using a questionnaire disseminated to stakeholders as part of the research methodology.

Observe: The last step of the study was to determine if the specific identified student outcomes were significantly better after the implementation of the new

educational model, using previously collected district data and juxtaposing to the newly collected data following implementation. Quantitatively the researcher used a *z*-test for difference in proportion to determine the potential significance of the collected data, maintenance of graduation rates, decline of discipline referrals calculated per student, and increased attendance rates, as calculated by the Gamma District's Student Information System, compared to data collected previous to implementation of the new model. Qualitatively, responses to the questionnaires, which included a Likert scale to establish a valuated level, corresponded to the written component. Coding then commenced for prominent, similar, and contrasting themes, as they pertained to involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of the new educational paradigm for stakeholders.

Data Collection

Identification: The first step of this process was to examine secondary qualitative data to help identify the strategies, steps, and processes used in determining the areas of deficiency in the previous educational model. The way the researcher went about accomplishing the first step was by collecting the initial relevant available data from Gamma District. The researcher gained full permission from Gamma District to access and incorporate all pertinent data for the purpose of this research.

The types of relevant data gathered included secondary district data, such as previous attendance records, academic records, and discipline data. These records, kept by the district, remained in a school system database called SIS K12, which stands for Student Information System Kindergarten through 12th grade. This system allowed the

researcher to look retroactively at the prescribed indices and make determinations, based on that information, the results of which emerge in the next chapter.

Once the collection and disaggregation of the district provided data was complete, the researcher selected other specific secondary data previously collected throughout the restructuring process, on which to focus. These other data sources included Triple A data, case notes gathered while reviewing other alternative programs, minutes of meetings with key stakeholders, handbooks of other established alternative programs as well as review of their mission and vision statements. The data also included directives given to staff in writing, various meeting agendas, and best-practice documents from public and private sources. Some of the data created by the researcher included building observations, a formal entry plan, and previously recorded interview notes outlining expectations for the new program, e-mails from key stakeholders, and other previously recorded documents relevant to the creation of and transition to the new educational model.

The last component of the identification process pertained directly to the district stakeholders affiliated with the program or closely associated with the researcher during the implementation and creation of the new educational model. These stakeholders took a questionnaire (Appendix E) regarding their perceptions of the identification of tasks, development of processes, and implementation of the new paradigm.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire directly to the stakeholders and submitted electronically to a third party for aggregation upon completion, to maintain anonymity. The questionnaires, once tallied and summarized by the third party, left only relevant and pertinent information. The third party then generated a summary report of

all returned questionnaires and disseminated the information to the researcher as a single document. The information contained in the summary report was used by the researcher to aide in the evaluation of the fidelity of implementation, as well as to gauge areas of perceived strengths and deficiency throughout the process and will be discussed more thoroughly in the results section of this document.

Design: The second major step of this study was to examine the design of the changed educational model and discuss the processes, research, and rationale behind the creation of the initiatives implemented to address specific student outcomes, as well as the change in leadership. The evaluation of the design paradigm used an introspective approach to scrutinize the components of the new educational model. The synthesis of those components helped to create the new educational model. By investigating the process, research, and rationale behind the creation of the new initiatives, the researcher was able to deduce contributing factors for perceived success, as well as identify areas where opportunity for improvement was evident.

The methodology of the aforementioned inquiries began with the gathering and reviewing of data that contributed to the development and execution of the data synthesis process. This processes included the physical cultivation of relevant research and secondary materials. Web-based sites and the Gamma District's SIS provided the virtual data. The sorting of data for relevancy and the synthesis of data into a functional working hierarchy of information provided the researcher information from which to draw while working to finalize and rationalize the creation of the new educational paradigm.

The research component of the new educational model consisted primarily of searches for best practices within the field of alternative education. Many of the resources were published educational articles from authors, such as Aron (2006), Miller (2004), and Raywid (1994). These publications, among others, helped to guide the researcher in the development of norms that were research based and data driven.

Additional resources for the researcher were program guides and handbooks of existing established alternative programs with high levels of perceived success, such as Troy Buchanan's New Horizons program, Palmyra's PRIDE program, Francis Howell's Union, and Fort Zumwalt's Hope high school. These existing alternative programs were in districts similar demographically to that of the BAAS in size, setting, and composition. These handbooks allowed the researcher to model the new alternative education program's handbook to fit the needs outlined from the onset, including discipline structure, schedules, credit earning options, and student/parent/guardian contracts.

The rationale behind the change from the old educational model to the new paradigm encompassed many components. The first precipitating factor for change was the lack of success the former program in the defined areas of student attendance, discipline, and inconsistent graduation rates. It was then the charge of the new leadership role to research best practices and develop process and practices to address these areas of deficiency. The researcher, upon accepting the new leadership role, then took the gathered information and synthesized a new program protocol to address the outlined deficiencies in a handbook.

Due to the novelty of practices contained in the new educational model, the researcher felt it was imperative to assess the impact of the new paradigm on the

expressed areas of concern following the first year of implementation. The researcher collected and disaggregated relevant data from Gamma District's SIS to determine the effectiveness of the new educational model, as well as distributing questionnaires to key stakeholders to determine the perception of change, the effectiveness of change, the fidelity of implementation, and the impact of the new leadership role. An introspective look at qualitative data allowed the researcher to process through the sub questions outlined in the research question portion of this document. The researcher then used a *z*-test for difference in proportion to determine the potential significance of the collected data, maintenance of graduation rates, decline of discipline referrals calculated per student, and increased attendance rates, as calculated by the Gamma District's SIS. Comparisons to previously collected data gave statistical validity to the prescribed hypotheses.

Implementation: The third step of the research methodology involved the review of the implementation process, the specific strategies used to ensure fidelity of implementation, and the rationale/data used to drive those decisions, such as case notes and previously recorded documentation. The implementation phase of the new educational model entailed a relatively quick turnaround time from creation of the new protocol to active implementation. The process relied heavily upon stakeholder buy-in and immediate dissemination of pertinent materials (i.e. new handbook, discipline protocols, etc.).

The nature of the changes made it imperative for staff to meet prior to the commencement of the upcoming school year. The faculty received copies of the new handbook, upon which review of the protocols and procedures took place. The

expectation was that the new educational paradigm commenced upon the return of students for the 2013-2014 school year. The researcher began work on the educational changes and leadership transformation upon appointment in the spring of 2013 and completed a student handbook for approval by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

The implementation of the new educational model relied heavily on the transformation of leadership and the leadership style of the new educational leader. The style of leadership chosen relied heavily on research and best practices in alternative education. The leadership style involved a hands-on approach and allowed the researcher to facilitate change at the ground level starting with staff and carrying through to the student population.

The verification of proper implementation required the researcher to monitor the new educational construct with faculty on a regular basis. The researcher also reported data pertaining to targeted outcomes to stakeholders monthly. Triple A data was monitored on an hourly basis throughout the transformation of the new educational paradigm. The handbook allowed for frequent referencing to ensure enforcement of the proper procedures, in relation to the new educational construct.

Observation: The last step of the research, classified as observation, included the review of the changes to the BAAS education program, implementation of the new educational paradigm, and the transformation of leadership. The observations also referenced previous year's data juxtaposed to data resulting from the change in leadership, and perception of success and involvement of stakeholders, as evidenced by questionnaires that served as a component of the research.

The creation of the new BAAS handbook was the first step in the educational and leadership transformation. The previous handbook consisted of seven pages of general information (Appendix D) whereas the new handbook contained approximately sixty-three pages and was more comprehensive. The new handbook outlined the changes in leadership, as well as new educational constructs commencing the following school year.

The implementation process started with the researcher gaining board approval for the new handbook (Appendix C) and educational model and then transitioned to the dissemination of information to the four building teachers and new counselor. Once the staff of BAAS was up to speed with the changes, they collectively strategized on how they would bring the new information to the students for the 2013-2014 school year. At the conclusion of summer staff meetings, it was determined the students would be presented the information in an assembly style format the first week of school in August. Each subsequent student to attend BAAS received information pertaining to the changes in the program when they and their parents interviewed for placement.

A few of the educational constructs, presented exclusively to the staff, in the new educational paradigm were, Professional Learning Communities (which pertained primarily to staff), Network for Educator Effectiveness (pertaining to faculty evaluation), and Student Wide Positive Behavior Supports (which referenced student reward systems, behavior management strategies, and school wide expectations). Teachers received a full debriefing on the new constructs before students entered the building the following school year (2013-2014).

Information given to the students included, but were not limited to, the new daily bell schedule, explicit board approved discipline guidelines and code of conduct, the new

mission and vision for the building, as well as targeted student outcomes and expectations. New students also received information pertaining to new admittance and application procedures (application packet for new students, see Appendix F), classroom size limitations, the new attendance policy, and the new program structure focusing on direct instruction for classes, in which students would need to complete end of course exams. Discussions also took place concerning the new comprehensive accountability system in Triple A, individualized academic plans, pacing studies for seniors doing computer-based credit recovery, and alternative program completion options for seniors (A+ credit recovery program, technical/trade school, Missouri Option program).

The transformation of leadership contained several components and involved a number of different individuals. The first was the appointment of a building principal (the researcher). The position changed from a director's position, as it existed the two previous years, to a building level principal. Prior to the director's position there was no administrative leadership in the building. The second change in leadership involved the addition of a school counselor. The newly appointed building principal wrote a petition to the board of education requesting the addition of the counselor position and upon review; the board approved the new position. The researcher also was responsible for hiring two new instructors. One would replace a paraprofessional position with a certified teacher in the senior lab, and the other would be a classroom teacher providing direct instruction. As part of the new leadership paradigm, the researcher reviewed existing data allowing the leadership team to accurately set goals for the upcoming school year, as well as collaboratively develop an appropriate mission and vision for the transformed leadership and educational model.

Upon review of the previous year's data, the researcher found the rate of attendance to be a dismal 44%. Also noted, the average discipline referral per student equated to 3.64 referrals per student for 69 students. The graduation rates for Gamma District equated to 94.965% (per Gamma District SIS). The graduation rate goal was set to maintain the graduation rates of subsequent years within a two percent variance as the current rate reflected an adequate percentage, as perceived by stakeholders. The attendance rate goal was set for a 30% increase over the previous year, and the discipline referral goal was set for a 10% decrease of the previous year's results. These figures served as the basis of comparison included in the Chapter Four data analysis *z*-test for difference in proportion. The results of the analysis helped in the synthesis of results, as it pertained to the research questions and hypotheses.

Once the initial school year ended, the researcher set out to establish a measure of success for the implementation of the new leadership and educational paradigms, as perceived by those who were involved in the process. The inquiries proposed by the researcher were the genesis of this dissertation and led to the creation of the research questions and subsequently the hypotheses as they related to the researched educational outcomes. To determine the perceived impact of the educational and leadership changes, among stakeholders, the researcher created a questionnaire that addressed stakeholder involvement as well as their perceptions of the success of the program as a whole. The results of those questionnaires and the disaggregation of the information they yielded appears in Chapter Four. The responses to the questionnaires, which included a Likert scale to establish a valuated level, corresponded to the written component. Coding then commenced for prominent, similar, and contrasting themes, as they pertained to

involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of the new educational paradigm for stakeholders.

Developing the New Educational Paradigm:

Upon appointment to the newly developed position of BAAS principal, the researcher accepted the task of developing a new educational paradigm that reflected the stakeholders' mission and vision for the program. It was also an expectation that the new leadership model would work towards successfully addressing the established, student specific, goals by implementing a research-based and data-driven educational paradigm. In addition, the new educational paradigm would need to include documentation, recorded and presented in the form of a new student handbook. The researcher, in the role of administrator, had work to complete before the following school year commenced.

After the implementation process and execution of the new educational paradigm, the researcher sought to solicit input from the key stakeholders involved in the process to establish a qualitative perspective relating to the effect of the educational model and the perceived effects on specific targeted outcomes, as well as the fidelity of implementation. Radhakrishna (2007) said, "Questionnaires are the most frequently used data collection method in educational and evaluation research" (para. 1).

The research stated that a data collection instrument should be valid to ensure dependability of findings and that the validation process could include a number of components including reliability, validity, internal validity, external validity, sensitivity, specificity, statistical validity, longitudinal validity, linguistic validity, discriminant validity, and construct validity (Howard, 2008). For the purposes of the research

presented in this document, not all of the aforementioned validation components were applicable.

Throughout the creation of the questionnaire used in this study, the researcher referenced research-based models and processes such as Radhakrishna's (2007) sequence for questionnaire development. That model cited a five-step process, which included background, questionnaire conceptualization, format and data analysis, establishing validity, and establishing reliability. The researcher used a dual component format for the questionnaire, which established qualitative and quantitative elements. The researcher also sought input from professionals in the field and their review of the questionnaire to evaluate the questionnaire's content validity and reliability, with respect to the research topic. The questionnaire used in this dissertation appears in Appendix E. It contained a Likert scale referencing involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of implemented measures. It also contained a written portion soliciting verbal descriptions of involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of the new educational paradigm.

Summary

Chapter Three provides the framework and background information to explain the circumstances by which the researcher inherited the BAAS program and the transformational changes the researcher, along with key stakeholders, were responsible for implementing. Chapter Three also details the methods and process involved in creating and implementing the changes to educational and leadership paradigms. The presentation of information also included the methodologies behind the changes and the research that supported each newly implemented construct.

The methodology the researcher chose in approaching the research was broken into four distinct steps. These steps appear in Chapter Three, outlined and detailed for the ease of interpretation. The stages of the researcher's methodology included identifying, designing, implementing, and observing. These terms related to the process used in the creation and implementation of the new educational model, as well as the transitional process in the leadership paradigm.

Discussion about the types of evaluations and data analysis used to evaluate the research were described in Chapter Three and gave insight into how the researcher approached the evaluation process following the creation and implementation of the newly created educational and leadership paradigms. Of particular note were the *z*-tests for difference in proportion pertaining to specific educational outcomes and the questionnaires given to stakeholders to identify perceived success and involvement in the new educational and leadership constructs. Results and disaggregation of data correlating to the researcher's statistical tests appear in in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

Chapter Four provides the synthesis of data and the correlating results of tests and assessments as they pertained to the research questions, sub questions, and hypotheses. This chapter reviews the *z*-tests for difference in proportion for the targeted educational outcomes (graduation rates, attendance, and discipline referrals). Quantitatively, the *z*-tests were performed using an embedded formula in an Excel spreadsheet, which compared data from the year preceding the implementation of the new educational and leadership paradigm with the data from the year subsequent to the implementation. The comparative data presented in this chapter is reported under the sub question referencing observable behaviors and student outcomes related to the program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates.

Qualitatively, responses to the questionnaires (Appendix E), which included a 5-point Likert scale to allow the participant to establish a valuated level, corresponded to the written component. Coding then commenced to identify prominent, similar, and contrasting themes, as they pertained to involvement, effectiveness, successfulness, and impact of the new educational paradigm for stakeholders. The specific details of the methodologies, addressed in Chapter Three, explained how the data helped to answer the sub questions. The research used to validate and substantiate the transformation of leadership and the subsequent changes to the educational paradigm appears in Chapter Two.

Research Questions

The researcher chose the following question: In the implementation of new educational structures for the alternative learning setting at the secondary level, what are (a) the major contributions to success and barriers to effective change and (b) the characteristics of those major contributions and barriers?

Sub Questions

Question 1. What strategies were used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes (increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals), for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 2. What strategies were used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 3. What processes were used in identifying deficiencies in the previous model?

Question 4. What processes were used in identifying new procedures and processes for the new model of education in the alternative setting?

Question 5. What were the strategies and processes designed to address the specific student outcomes?

Question 6. What strategies were used in the implementation processes?

Question 7. What types of observable behaviors and/or student outcomes are the results of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates?

Question 8. What are the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the transition, as indicated on the program analysis questionnaire?

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses were formulated to examine student outcomes that were directives given by Gamma District to the newly appointed administrator, the researcher. The categories and target percentages were predetermined district and building goals. Categories were based on criteria used for student evaluation in the alternative setting.

Null Hypothesis 1. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals will not decrease by 10% per semester as compared to previous referral data.

Null Hypothesis 2. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance will not increase by 30% per semester as determined by ADA hours compared to previous attendance data.

Null Hypothesis 3. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, graduation rates will not remain consistent within 2% of previous rates, nor improve, as a percentage of total seniors, as compared to previous year's results.

Sub Questions

Question 1. What strategies were used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes (increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals), for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

The evaluation of the previous educational model, at the time of appointment, created a challenge for the researcher when reviewing for best practices commenced. The leadership, teaching, and learning methodologies along with policies, procedures, and corresponding mission and vision statements underwent close inspection during the evaluation. The researcher compared the realities of the BAAS program, at the time of the paradigm shift, to research best practices in an effort to establish effective versus perceived ineffective practices.

BAAS realities at the time included a lack of shared leadership, a stigmatized climate and culture, a paradigm of forced placement, low attendance rates, elevated discipline referrals, and the absence of data-driven, researched-based practices.

Consideration placed importance on district directives, which included the improvement of specified targeted outcomes as well as a need for leadership transformation. The researcher was able to identify areas of deficiency through data disaggregation that reiterated district stakeholder's perceptions of ineffectiveness. Once the areas of deficiency were identified, goals were set to influence these targeted areas of concern and a new educational paradigm commenced as a result of the transformation of leadership.

The specific district directives guiding this research were to decrease discipline referrals, increase attendance rates, and the maintenance of graduation rates. The areas of deficiency at the beginning of the new educational model were lack of shared leadership, a stigmatized climate and culture, a paradigm of forced placement for students, low attendance, elevated discipline referrals, and the absence of data-driven, researched based practices. The goals set by the new alternative education setting were to increase the

attendance rate by 30%, maintain graduation rates within 2% of the then-current rate, and to decrease discipline referrals by 10%.

The researcher was able to identify areas of program deficiency and create a methodological approach to improve the program construct through the review of the research-based strategies found in Chapter Two. The research-based strategies pertained to increasing graduation rates, strategies for improving attendance rates, trends among at-risk populations, best practices within at-risk populations, effective behavioral strategies for decreasing discipline and evaluation of alternative programs that serviced similar demographics (Denmark, 2012; Miller, 2001; Raywid, 1994, 1999; Ruzzi & Kraemar, 2006). The result was a comprehensive student handbook and peripheral educational research-based best practices for staff and leadership including NEE, SW-PBS, and PLC. Many best practices found in the research, and implemented in the new educational constructs, claimed to promote cultural change, such as student and staff recognition, building personal relationships, and concise/constant expectations (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2003).

The new handbook, which was one of the strategies used to address deficiencies included the BAAS mission and vision, also paralleled the mission and vision of the Beta High School (sending school). The mission and vision statements provided a guideline for the comparable elements of the two facilities, as well as touching on some of the differences. In general, the statements served as a guide, but lacked specifics needed to achieve the pre-determined goals. This lack of specificity necessitated the creation of a comprehensive handbook and entry plan. The mission and vision statements for both were as follows:

Beta High School: Mission. "Beta High School is committed to student success; our mission is to provide the best education possible for each student in a safe and supportive environment" (Fears, 2013, p. 20).

Beta High School: Vision.

> In order to prepare students for post-secondary life, Beta High School will create an academic culture to develop student growth and performance; increase community, student, and parent involvement to foster a sense of pride in the school; and produce clear academic and behavioral expectations to enhance engagement. (Fears, 2013, p. 20).

Beta Academy Alternative School: Mission. "The mission of [Gamma District's] Beta Academy is to serve students that learn more effectively in a non-traditional setting in an effort to inspire students to become productive members of their school and community" (Fears, 2013, p. 7).

Beta Academy Alternative School: Vision.

> Beta Academy is a place where students are encouraged to meet their full potential through academics, citizenship, service, and social skills. Emphasis in individualized / small group instruction and specialized interventions in cooperation with our community partner organizations are essential components of the program (Fears, 2013, p. 7).

Question 2. What strategies were used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

In the instance of BAAS, the transformation of leadership shifted from primarily a directed approach to a more immersive, hands-on or shared approach. The amount of systematic issues that needed to be addressed within the new educational and leadership transformation would have been overwhelming for one individual to attempt to correct on his/her own. Hughes and Pickeral (2013) stated in their research, "Teachers, staff, students, parents and principals working together are a powerful leadership lever" (p. 3), and:

> Schools need to recognize and develop leadership among many different kinds of individuals representing all education stakeholders to effectively model and develop a school climate that engages adults and students in a shared mission that improves student development. (p. 3)

The re-assignment and delegation of tasks and leadership duties proved to be an integral component in the transformation of leadership and the effectiveness of the new educational model used at the BAAS. For example, some of the tasks delegated were the creation of the master schedule, classroom discipline, the student supervision schedule, and credit recovery applications. In addition, some of the tasks re-assigned included subjects taught, room assignments, chairs for various committee work, and after school tutoring.

The sharing of roles was a key strategy in the implementation and fidelity of the new leadership model, but other factors weighed on the new model's success, as well. The new leadership paradigm operated from the research-based theory that "leaders influence student learning by helping to promote vision and goals, and by ensuring that resources and processes are in place to enable teachers to teach well" (Leithwood &

Riehl, 2003, p. 4). With a focus on teaching and learning and a solid foundation based in research, the new leadership paradigm strategy was designed to promote not only the predetermined learning outcomes outlined in this document, but to positively impact the educational organization as a whole.

Question 3. What processes were used in identifying deficiencies in the previous model?

The first step the researcher took when attempting to identify the deficiencies with the previous educational model was to listen carefully to district stakeholders in positions at the time of the researcher's appointment to the newly created principal position at BAAS. Stakeholders expressed concerns, according to researchers' notes (December, 2011), with (a) climate and culture in the building, (b) program stigmatization, (c) attendance being punitive rather than remediative, (d) poor attendance rates, (e) lack of consistent leadership, (f) lack of consistent and/or effective disciplinary procedures, (g) lack of a clear admission/selection process for applicants, and (h) lack of a counselor in the building to keep students informed of progress and/or graduation requirements. The district stakeholders wanted these initiatives addressed, as quickly as possible, and as the new administrator in the building, the researcher was responsible for making the appropriate changes to address each of the areas of concern.

Though most items on the concerns list were self-explanatory, symptoms of program stigmatization were the way individuals, especially Beta High School teachers, spoke about the program. Another sign of stigmatization was the negative connotation board members and other community members used when referencing to BAAS during conversations with the researcher. The students at Beta High School also spoke poorly of

the BAAS during the researcher's time spent in that location as a teacher. It appeared evident to the researcher, through conversations with stakeholders, that the program was not held in high regard. In addition, lack of consistent and effective disciplinary procedures was characterized by the absence of an onsite administrator, the difficulty for teachers to communicate effective instruction and serve as disciplinarians, as well as the simultaneous vacating of the director's position by the previous administrator. There was a lack of concise disciplinary protocol and code of conduct, as well as the limited availability of the Beta High School assistant principal to intervene when the administration of discipline was needed.

The researcher used notes from initial meetings with stakeholders, which expressed perceived deficiencies and targeted goals for the inaugural year for the new educational paradigm; to create goals for BAAS in specific targeted areas. These sentiments were also expressed through meeting notes given to the researcher upon appointment as principal, from meetings that transpired prior to the new program initiatives. These resources proved valuable to the researcher when identifying areas of improvement to target using the new educational paradigm. The notes expressed a need for a cultural shift, a stronger presence of leadership, and specific student outcomes (graduation rates, attendance, discipline). They also helped the principal segue into the next step of the identification process, as it pertained to the existing program's deficiencies.

The next step the researcher used to identify areas of deficiency was to look at successful alternative education programs and juxtapose their best practices to the practices of BAAS. Because the construct of the BAAS's program was skeletal, many

areas needed creation or elaboration. Many areas paralleled the concerns of district stakeholders, but there were also areas that needed revamping or that did not yet exist. Items, such as specific teacher expectations, academic goals for students, school-day logistics, safety protocols, clear mission and vision statements, and new district-level educational constructs needed implementation and remained to be incorporated into the new educational paradigm.

The last method used to identify deficiencies within the former educational construct, and the most tangible, was the disaggregation of collected data from Gamma District's SIS. The data retrieved by the researcher reflected the deficiencies and concerns of the district stakeholders as they pertained to specific student outcomes. The data the researcher collected from SIS related to graduation rates, attendance percentages, and discipline referrals. After reviewing the data, it was determined that attendance percentages and discipline referrals needed immediate remediation and the graduation rates were such that maintenance of the previous year's rates were adequate, in terms of goal setting.

Question 4. What processes were used in identifying new procedures and processes for the new model of education in the alternative setting?

When the researcher set out to make changes to the existing educational paradigm, there were two invaluable resources used and frequently referenced. The first was research-based best practices. A detailed summation of research supporting various methods to incorporate into a successful alternative program appear in Chapter Two. Of particular note was research that stated the implementation of specific research-based alternative education strategies, such as low student-teacher ratio, highly structured

classroom setting, positive behavior management, and quality instruction, would increase the success of an alternative education program (Tobin & Sprague, 1999).

Another process used to identify new procedures and processes for the creation of the educational and leadership paradigms was the review of other alternative programs with perceived success. Among these programs were Troy Buchanan's New Horizons program, Palmyra's PRIDE program, Francis Howell's Union, and Fort Zumwalt's Hope high school. The researcher used these programs' handbooks to evaluate the educational construct of each, glean pertinent information relating to their infrastructure, and decipher their leadership construct. The researcher also visited several of these programs to view the setup and organization of the physical locations.

Question 5. What were the strategies and processes designed to address the specific student outcomes?

The changes presented to students included, but were not limited to, a new daily bell schedule and explicit board-approved discipline guidelines and code of conduct. There was also a new mission and vision for the building, targeted student outcomes and expectations, new admittance and application procedures (Appendix F), classroom size limitations, a new attendance policy, and a student recognition matrix. The student recognition matrix was a guide for teachers outlining achievement criteria and the associated rewards students could earn for achieving those goals.

At the classroom level there was a new program structure focused on direct instruction for classes in which students would need to complete end of course exams, along with access to technology. Other building initiatives included improved facility amenities, assistance programs for underprivileged students, a comprehensive

accountability system in Triple A, individualized academic plans, pacing studies for seniors completing computer-based credit recovery, and alternative program completion options for seniors (A+ credit recovery program, technical/trade school, Missouri Option program).

Triple A, as defined in Chapter One, included the evaluation of student performance hourly in three major areas (attitude, academics, attendance). Assistance programs for underprivileged students in Gamma School District included Operation Backpack, free/reduced lunch, Care to Learn, availability of the school store, and homeless funding.

Question 6. What strategies were used in the implementation processes?

The verification of proper implementation required the researcher to monitor the new educational construct with faculty on a regular basis. The processes used by the researcher for verification included short question and answer sessions with staff, collaboration during the PLC process, informal e-mails soliciting input, and data disaggregation of current realities in the three focus areas (academics, attendance, graduation). The researcher also reported data pertaining to targeted outcomes to stakeholders monthly. These stakeholders included all building principals, members of the board of education, the superintendent and assistant superintendent of schools, as well as community members attending the board meetings. Triple A data was monitored on an hourly basis throughout the transformation of the new educational paradigm. The person(s) assigned to the hourly monitoring were the classroom teachers at BAAS. The handbook provided a reference for teachers and ensured proper procedural execution in relation to the new educational construct.

Question 7. What types of observable behaviors and/or student outcomes are the results of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates? This question was addressed in the analysis of discipline referral, attendance, and graduation completion data to address Null Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

Null Hypothesis 1. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals will not decrease by 10% per semester as compared to previous referral data.

Discipline referral rates for the 2012-2013 school year were represented by 3.64 referrals per student (251 referrals, 69 students), and for the 2013-2014 school year were represented by 0.84 referrals per student (82 referrals, 98 students). This was a 280% observable decrease. Though the difference is observably large, the calculation of the *z*-test for difference in proportion yielded at *z*-test value of -12.660, which compared to the critical value of ±1.96, allowed the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, with a 95% confidence level, data did support the significant decrease in discipline referrals per semester, which exceeded the 10% decrease marker.

Null Hypothesis 2. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance will not increase by 30% per semester as determined by ADA hours compared to previous attendance data.

Attendance rates for the 2012-2013 school year were represented by 44%, and for the 2013-2014 school year were represented by 80.2%. This was a 36.2% observable increase. Though the difference is observably more than the 30% target, the calculation of the *z*-test for difference in proportion yielded at *z*-test value of 4.837, which compared to the critical value of ±1.96, allowed the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, with

a 95% confidence level, data did support the significant increase in attendance rates per semester, which exceeded the 30% increase marker.

Null Hypothesis 3. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, graduation rates will not remain consistent within 2% of previous rates, nor improve, as a percentage of total seniors, as compared to previous year's results.

Graduation rates for the 2012-2013 school year were represented by 94.965%, and for the 2013-2014 school year were represented by 94.17%. This was an observable decrease of 0.475%. Though the difference was a decrease, it was observably within the 2% target. In addition to this data support of Hypothesis 3, the calculation of the *z*-test for difference in proportion yielded at *z*-test value of -0.222, which compared to the critical value of ±1.96, allowed the non-rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, with a 95% confidence level, data did support that, though graduation rates decrease, the decrease was not significant. Therefore, graduation rates remained statistically consistent when comparing the 2012-2013 rate of 94.965% to the 2013-2014 rate of 94.17%.

Results for Research Question 7 include data support for a statistical decrease in discipline referral rates, a statistical increase in attendance rates, and a statistically significant lack of change in graduation rates.

Question 8. What are the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the transition, as indicated on the program analysis questionnaire?

Upon review of the stakeholders' questionnaires, it appeared the transformation of leadership, fidelity of implementation, and successful attainment of building goals was successful. The range of involvement spanned from slightly involved to very involved

throughout the process. For the purpose of anonymity, the survey answers, collected by a third party, were summarized and restated.

Survey question 1. What was your level of involvement in the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model? Likert-scale choices were extremely involved = 5; very involved = 4; moderately involved = 3; slightly involved = 2; and not at all involved = 1. Describe your activities throughout the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model. Answers included:

1) I worked with the school board to understand the goals of the program. I also worked with the building principal in the hiring process.
2) I talked with [the principal] about options, what has been done in the past, worked with him for budget, scheduling, etc.
3) I worked with the director of the Beta Academy when developing the initial handbook: I worked with the architect when designing and building the facility; and I worked with the school board to develop buy in for the project.
4) Mainly with [the principal].
5) Visited other alternative schools in the area with high school administrator/teachers.
6) Reviewed plans and goals of the school. (Survey Responses)

Survey question 2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model? Likert-scale choices were extremely effective = 5; very effective = 4; moderately effective = 3; slightly effective = 2; and not at all effective = 1. What observations or

measurements did you make to lead you to this evaluation of effectiveness? Answers included:

1) Increased productivity of students; increase in number graduating; increase of number in the program; decrease in the number of write-ups (discipline referrals); attendance rate is up.
2) Numbers look good and students are graduating.
3) At first, the program lacked leadership and correct personnel. Now that the program has a counselor and an effective principal, the district is seeing more students being successful.
4) Graduation rate has increased and attendance has increased.
5) Through: Graduation rates, Participation increase, Attendance increase, Discipline decrease, and Satisfaction of students. (Survey Responses)

Survey question 3. How successful was the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model? Likert-scale choices were extremely successful = 5; very successful = 4; moderately successful = 3; slightly successful = 2; and not at all successful = 1. Provide examples that led to your rating on successfulness. Give examples. What can be done to improve? Answers included:

1) Better grades; fewer absences; little harder on discipline earlier in the year; students are attending and discipline is down. Looking forward to seeing better attendance out of our 11th & 12th graders.
2) Better follow through with Triple A (no ‘secret probation’).
3) Improvement on EOC scores would help make Beta Academy a bigger success.

4) The implementation had a rocky start as the philosophy of administration and the school board did not match. It took a year or so before the school board realized this is not a jail for the high school, but rather an alternative learning environment. Now, I would say the program is extremely successful as it concludes its second year.
5) Attendance is up and graduation rate has increased. I believe students have a deeper connection to school than they did at the high school. I would like to see academic achievement improve. I think a good goal would be for less than half of the students at Beta scoring below basic on the EOC exam.
6) The Beta Academy developing its own culture.
7) Belonging to an important group.
8) Students' willingness to become a part of the program for self-improvement. (Survey Responses)

Survey question 4. What impact, if any, has the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model had on the alternative school? Likert-scale choices were extremely impactful = 5; very impactful = 4; moderately impactful = 3; slightly impactful = 2; and not at all impactful = 1. What were the original goals of the alternative program? Have the goals changed, and if so, how? Answers included:

1) The original goals were for the alternative program to see higher attendance and increased graduation rates. The goals have not changed.
2) Same goals but more of a method to accomplish them.

3) From everything I have seen and heard, the atmosphere at Beta Academy is much better than in years past.
4) The building is seeing much improved attendance, which leads to improved graduation rates and more students who believe in themselves.
5) To improve attendance, decrease discipline and increase student achievement. The goals are still relevant.
6) To reach kids who do not fit or find success at the high school - who are reaching out for help, instead of a dumping ground for behaviors that the high school could or did not want to deal with anymore.
7) To me – the goals of reaching kids who really need help. You can reach more of them, rather than spend all your time on the behavioral students and not learn. More bang for your buck. (Survey Responses)

Survey question 5. How successful has the new alternative education model been in helping the alternative school reach their original goals? Likert-scale choices were extremely successful = 5; very successful = 4; moderately successful = 3; slightly successful = 2; and not at all successful = 1. Comments included:

1) It's getting them to stay in school and planning some post-secondary education opportunities. (Survey Responses)

Survey question 6. How effective, overall, has the new alternative education model been in accomplishing what it was developed to do? Likert-scale choices were extremely effective = 5; very effective = 4; moderately effective = 3; slightly effective = 2; and not at all effective = 1. What suggestions do you have for different processes for the alternative school, if any? Answers included:

1) Continue to have a solid application process and give students hope that they can be successful at school.
2) Make the school more of a privilege to come.
3) I think our biggest challenge is to start seeing alternative school student's score above basic than below basic on EOCs and other standardized test scores.
4) Now that the basics are being covered, it is probably time to start focus on improving the academic side. I would suggest looking at a process to improve the learning standards and instructional processes.
5) When we talk about the Beta Academy, we talk about it with pride and satisfaction of how we are reaching kids and giving them an opportunity for success.
6) Go back to the goal and approach from when the present director adjusted and guided the program. (Survey Responses)

Summary of Questionnaire Results:

An overall summary of results of the questionnaire, with indicators for the percentage of respondents marking 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1; representing extremely; very; moderately; slightly; or not at all, include:

1) All stakeholders were at least moderately involved to very involved (42.9%; 42.9%; 14.3%; 0.0%; 0.0%).
2) All stakeholders felt the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new educational model was at least moderately effective to extremely effective (42.9%; 42.9%; 14.3%; 0.0%; 0.0%).

3) All stakeholders felt the development, implementation and fidelity of delivery of the new educational model was at least moderately successful to extremely successful (42.9%; 28.6%; 28.6%; 0.0%; 0.0%).
4) All stakeholders felt the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model was at least moderately impactful to extremely impactful (57.1%; 28.6%; 14.3%; 0.0%; 0.0%).
5) All stakeholders felt the new alternative education model was at least very successful to extremely successful in helping the alternative school achieve their original goals (57.1%; 42.9%; 0.0%; 0.0%; 0.0%).
6) All stakeholders felt the new alternative education model was at least moderately effective to extremely effective in accomplishing what it was developed to do (42.9%; 42.9%; 14.3%; 0.0%; 0.0%).

Summary

After collecting, synthesizing and evaluating the data, it was clear that the methods, practices, and implementation strategies for BAAS's new educational and leadership paradigms were a success. The quantitative data showed there were significant results in maintenance, as in the area of graduation rates, increases, as in the area of attendance, and decreases, as in the area of discipline referrals. The research also showed that the stakeholders involved, qualitatively perceived success in the areas of development, implementation, delivery, fidelity, and attainment of targeted outcomes. The hypotheses created by the researcher were supported by the data gathered in this study and the qualitative responses by the individuals involved throughout the process. At the end of the research, the researcher and stakeholders felt the educational and

leadership transformation was appropriate, beneficial, and effective. Chapter Five addresses the researcher's personal reflections as they pertained to the research, the resultant data, processes involved, and recommendations for future research in the areas of transformational leadership and alternative education.

Chapter Five:

Discussion, Reflection, and Recommendations for Future Research

Introduction

Chapter Five provided an opportunity for the researcher to discuss and reflect upon the research from a methodological perspective, as well as to express suggestions for future research, as it pertains to the relevant questions, sub questions, and hypotheses of this study. The chapter also contains discussion of identifiable limitations and areas within the alternative educational setting of this research that still need improvement through continued support and implementation and/or refinement of processes. The educational and leadership paradigms presented in this dissertation, though successful overall, were not a blanket solution for all alternative education settings or constructs. Thus, the researcher makes suggestions in this chapter for future research in the areas of transformational leadership, educational change, and alternative education.

Research Questions

The researcher chose the following question: In the implementation of new educational structures for the alternative learning setting at the secondary level, what are (a) the major contributions to success and barriers to effective change and (b) the characteristics of those major contributions and barriers?

Sub Questions

Question 1. What strategies were used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes (increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals), for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 2. What strategies were used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Question 3. What processes were used in identifying deficiencies in the previous model?

Question 4. What processes were used in identifying new procedures and processes for the new model of education in the alternative setting?

Question 5. What were the strategies and processes designed to address the specific student outcomes?

Question 6. What strategies were used in the implementation processes?

Question 7. What types of observable behaviors and/or student outcomes are the results of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates?

Question 8. What are the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the transition, as indicated on the program analysis questionnaire?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated to examine student outcomes that were directives given by Gamma District to the newly appointed administrator, the researcher. The categories and target percentages were predetermined district and building goals. Categories were based on criteria used for student evaluation in the alternative setting.

Hypothesis 1. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals will decrease by 10% per semester as compared to previous referral data.

Hypothesis 2. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance will increase by 30% per semester as determined by ADA hours compared to previous attendance data.

Hypothesis 3. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, graduation rates will remain consistent within 2% of previous rates, or improve, as a percentage of total seniors, as compared to previous year's results.

Summary of Results

The objective of this study was to answer questions pertaining to the transition of an existing alternative education model to a newly introduced educational model/ leadership paradigm and the examination of student educational outcomes, resulting from the leadership change. The study examined the strategies used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes of increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals, and how those strategies were modified throughout the implementation process. The study found that among the strategies used to establish a cultural model for change were best practices, such as student and staff recognition, building personal relationships and concise/consistent expectations (Bush, 2006; Heick, 2014; Katzenbach et al., 2014). Feedback from students and staff helped in the modification of strategies to optimize effectiveness. Examples of modification included increased frequency of recognition, re-teaching of expectations, and more one-on-one conversations with students and staff.

Question 1. What strategies were used in establishing a cultural model for change, based upon the directed outcomes (increasing graduation rates, increasing

attendance, and decreasing discipline referrals), for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

Research Question 1 asked about the strategies used to establish a new leadership model and how those strategies were modified throughout implementation. The strategies for establishing the leadership model came from research (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) and targeted the sharing of roles, the delegation of tasks, and the promotion of building mission and vision as the foundational elements for change. The transformational leadership model accounts for the change agents outlined in this researcher's model for educational change. These changes, too, were modified throughout the process, based on student and teacher feedback, so that processes could be streamlined and results optimized.

Question 2. What strategies were used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting, and how were those strategies modified throughout the implementation process?

The educational leadership model in the alternative setting allows for a more hands-on approach and uses a construct of shared leadership in addressing building and classroom management. The building is smaller so the administrator is more visible, but gives teachers more control of the classrooms through the application of a classroom-managed behavior matrix. The administrator uses the increased visibility to lead by example and uses praise and reinforcement to encourage appropriate behaviors for students and staff.

Question 3. What processes were used in identifying deficiencies in the previous model?

This question, pertaining to the identification of deficiencies in previous models was answered through the disaggregation of available district data, conversation with stakeholders, the collection and review of qualitative data, and comparisons between existing alternative education programs. The perceptions of stakeholders were collected through a questionnaire and district data was accessed, with permission, from the districts data collection site. The administrator chose to keep the skeletal framework of the previous program in place, things such as classroom location, content taught, and the senior lab work program, while changing the pragmatics and educational paradigm of the new program. The new program would use educational initiatives to achieve many of the large construct changes, such as PLC, SWPBIS, and NEE.

Question 4. What processes were used in identifying new procedures and processes for the new model of education in the alternative setting?

The processes used to identify new procedures and process pertaining to the new alternative education model were also rooted in research (Almeida et al., 2010; Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008; Tobin & Sprague, 1999). The principal used specific research-based alternative education strategies, such as low student-teacher ratio, highly structured classroom setting, positive behavior management, and quality instruction, which would increase the success of an alternative education program (Tobin & Sprague, 1999). These strategies were also used to address specific student outcomes, along with a new mission and vision for the building, new admittance and application procedures (Appendix F), classroom size limitations, a new attendance policy, and a student recognition matrix.

Question 5. What were the strategies and processes designed to address the specific student outcomes?

The observable results of the new educational paradigm's implementation were evident in the data collected by the researcher. All targeted specific student outcomes supported improvement or maintenance (maintain graduation rates, increase attendance, and decrease discipline referrals), and feedback provided by stakeholders via the questionnaire expressed positive sentiments about the new program. The hypothesis for each student outcome examined in this study was supported, finding statistical evidence supporting the new educational paradigm and the positive impact on the targeted student outcomes. The new attendance policy included daily phone calls to the residence of students not in attendance, a required attendance percentage to maintain placement at BAAS, and a probationary period for students whose attendance was becoming problematic.

Question 6. What strategies were used in the implementation processes?

The question referencing strategies used during the implementation process required the principal to monitor the new educational construct with faculty on a regular basis. The principal also reported data pertaining to targeted outcomes to stakeholders monthly. Triple A data was monitored on an hourly basis by the classroom teachers and counselor and was reviewed by the principal bi-weekly throughout the transformation of the new educational paradigm. The handbook provided a reference for teachers and ensured proper procedural execution in relation to the new educational construct. Effective implementation also required the principal to have a concise timeline for introduction and acclimation to new expectations. At the BAAS, all of the new program

information was given to students on the first day of school and reiterated throughout the first week. At the commencement of the second week of school, students were responsible for following the expectations outlined in the new BAAS handbook. All students had access to the handbook and could ask questions pertaining to its contents at any time. Teachers would review information with students bi-weekly to ensure the quality of implementation. Graduation rates were maintained by working closely with seniors to make sure they were made progress toward their academic goals, and the counselor performed pacing studies with the students to make sure they maintained an adequate pace. Attendance issues with seniors were a priority, and staff worked with students on a personal level to make sure they had transportation and their needs outside of school were met (as is usual with all the students at BAAS).

Question 7. What types of observable behaviors and/or student outcomes are the results of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates?

Hypothesis 1. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building discipline referrals will decrease by 10% per semester as compared to previous referral data. Data supported Hypothesis 1, as evidence of success in the alternative education program.

Hypothesis 2. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, building attendance will increase by 30% per semester as determined by ADA hours compared to previous attendance data. Data supported Hypothesis 2, as evidence of success in the alternative education program.

Hypothesis 3. Following the implementation of the new model for alternative education, graduation rates will remain consistent or improve, within 2% of previous rates, as a percentage of total seniors, as compared to previous year's results. Data supported Hypothesis 3, as evidence of success in the alternative education program.

Question 8. What are the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the transition, as indicated on the program analysis questionnaire?

The perceptions of personnel concerning the transition appeared on the program analysis questionnaire. Once the researcher reviewed how stakeholders answered the questionnaire, there was a sense of accomplishment and validation pertaining to both the creation of the new leadership transformation, as well as the new educational framework. The consensus, per the questionnaire, was that the creation and implementation of the new educational model produced meaningful and successful results. The responses from the stakeholders pertaining to the transformation were important to the researcher, as it was the researcher's first real test in the new administrative role.

Researcher Reflection and Discussion

Upon the researcher's appointment to the new leadership position at BAAS, there were factors to be considered when choosing how to remedy the issues of concern evident in the building. Though the researcher was familiar with administrative processes and approaches to leadership transformation, the principal position at BAAS was the researcher's first endeavor as a school administrator. Careful consideration of the paradigms that existed prior, the wishes of the district stakeholders, and the practices that could ultimately prove effective in rectifying the pervasive deficiencies, remained a priority.

First steps. The first steps were to review previously implemented initiatives and determine what, if anything had been effective versus which practices were ineffective. After reviewing the program's construct and meeting with stakeholders, it was evident to the researcher where the process needed to begin. The creation of a new and comprehensive handbook would be the genesis of the transformation of the educational paradigm. The leadership transformation began upon the researcher's appointment to the position.

The researcher spent time and energy pouring through alternative education research and best practices, in an attempt to isolate and identify a construct that would not only rectify the deficiencies identified, but also lay the groundwork for a successful alternative education program. Although it was impossible for the researcher to review every article or periodical pertaining to alternative education, there was a substantial amount of literature consulted when developing the framework for the new program, as evidenced in Chapter Two (Aron, 2006; Miller, 2001, 2004; Raywid, 1994, 1999).

Another valuable resource for the researcher when creating the new educational paradigm was examination of other successful alternative program constructs. The regional area surrounding Gamma District had many established alternative education programs from which to solicit information. The researcher used both the handbooks of these programs, as well as personal visits to the alternative educate sites to help solidify an appropriate methodology for creating and implementing a successful alternative education program.

Timeline. The turnaround time from appointment as principal to submission of the new educational construct for board of education approval was short. The researcher

had to utilize every strategic advantage to gather and incorporate appropriate data for the new construct. This included district data available to the researcher, as well as personal conversations with stakeholders and other alternative educators. Because of the amount of information, the quick turnaround, and magnitude of changes, the researcher had to create a multi-tiered implementation plan (Appendix L) to cover the scope of the new model from both an educational and a leadership perspective.

The first thirty days were the most critical for the researcher concerning modifying the educational construct. The handbook needed be complete, the data needed disaggregation, staff meetings were scheduled and held, and the assessment of the previous model's current reality needed to be established. The relationship-building process began immediately upon appointment, through stakeholder conversations, including those with staff, students, principals, board members, superintendents, and parents. The researcher knew it was going to take a monumental push to not only implement the new educational construct, including the transformation of leadership, but also to begin rebuilding a climate and culture in the building conducive to growth and learning.

When reflecting upon the questions and hypotheses raised in this dissertation, the researcher was able to identify areas that were successful and to identify areas that needed further consideration. Not every component of the new educational model was successful in accomplishing its desired outcome, but the overall results of the educational and leadership transformation were impactful and effective in achieving the targeted outcomes. The data calculations and the questionnaire analysis discussed in Chapter Four provided evidence of the program's successes.

Perceptions. Perceptions of stakeholders and conversations with students prior to the commencement of the researchers first academic year as principal of BAAS were the basis for the strategies used to establish the cultural model for change Many factors that considered were gathered through secondary sources, and thus, had to be taken at face value. The most impactful actions the researcher took to influence the culture, outside of the program restructuring, was the building of relationships with staff and students. Strategies to incentivize student success and productivity were modified, once it was established what motivated the students individually.

Student placement at BAAS. The other major procedural implementation the researcher used to influence a positive culture was the removal of forced placement at BAAS. Students were then able to make a conscious decision to come to school and be successful without feeling that attendance was punitive. The researcher noticed improvement of attitude and program acceptance once the perception was privilege oriented versus corrective. The researcher noticed that giving the students more ownership in decisions regarding the education and the educational environment led to increased student engagement and improved the climate in the building. Part of the cultural change was rooted in the change in leadership style.

Leadership model. The strategies used in establishing a leadership model for the alternative setting primarily referenced the research, though the researcher brought many personal elements of leadership to the new educational model. When reflecting upon the effectiveness of the leadership transformation, the method of approaching stakeholders with change (specifically staff and students) made a difference in how they

followed through with the implementation. This element relates directly to the shared leadership model reiterated in stakeholders' reflections in the research questionnaire.

Based on the perception of changes implemented, the researcher was able to modify strategies pertaining to the implementation process to achieve maximum effectiveness. After implementation of a particularly restrictive directive, the researcher would take responsibility for the change. Upon implementation of an incentive-based change, input from staff and students became the focus, so they could take ownership for the increase in positivity and the improvement of the climate and culture. This strategy proved effective on more than one occasion, worked well to address the improvement of climate and culture, and reiterated the shared leadership construct.

Reflection. The researcher took time to reflect on the processes used to create and implement the new educational model, and though the methods were effective overall, the researcher felt that more focused time on each individual construct could have been advantageous. Had the required turnaround time for the handbook completion not been so expeditious, further investigation of the relevant paradigms could have been beneficial to the process. Due to the condition of the program upon appointment and the immediate need for remediation, the researcher never had an opportunity to see the program (or others) in operation prior to accepting the position as principal, and thus, had to base many decisions on secondary information.

The data obtained through Gamma District's SIS was helpful in targeting specific needs and learning outcomes, but did not provide qualitative information on cultural barriers, climate deficiencies, expectations, leadership styles, or perceptions about the existing program. Many changes to the program were based on assumptions assimilated

from the secondary information, such as stakeholder interviews, principal interview notes, case notes, minutes of meetings, handbooks, mission and vision statements, directives given to staff in writing, meeting agendas, best-practice research, building observations, and e-mails from stakeholders. The data showed the results of the leadership transformation and educational paradigm achieved success qualitatively and quantitatively, but that much of the success was not as efficient as it could have been.

Identification processes. The researcher was pleased with the processes used in identifying new procedures and constructs designed for the new model of education at BAAS. The research proved to be valuable and relevant, and the resources the researcher used from other existing alternative programs laid the groundwork for the new educational and leadership paradigms. There were specific items gleaned from other programs, such as acceptance procedures, disciplinary guidelines, and code of conduct, while the research provided necessary effective conceptual framework information, such as classroom size and ratios, instructional methodology, and student incentive programs. The commencement of the new educational processes and procedures was a smooth transition, due to the detailed framework and the research-based methodologies implemented throughout. The implemented methodologies allowed the researcher and staff to address the specific targeted student outcomes in a productive and meaningful way.

Resources. The researcher had viable resources available to address specific student outcomes throughout the creation of the new educational paradigm. Many of the resources used by the researcher became available to the researcher through district initiatives. All of the strategies implemented to impact specific student outcomes were

research-based and proven effective in a variety of settings. Because the district was spearheading many of the new educational initiatives, there was plenty of support for both introduction and implementation. Initiatives designed specifically to impact student outcomes included SW-PBS and PLC. In referencing the research, the specific student outcomes affected included maintenance of graduation rates, decrease in discipline referral rates, and increase in attendance rate. The extensive training and support offered to staff was effective and efficient. Throughout creation and implementation, both educational initiatives (SW-PBS and PLC) made efforts at every level to assist and develop a culture conducive to implementation within the new educational paradigm.

There was an abundant amount of strategy and coordination used in the implementation processes of the new educational and leadership paradigm, as discussed in the methodology of this dissertation. It was an observation of the researcher that many of the new initiatives, implemented together, would lead to a more efficient presentation. That approach made the task of introducing the new constructs less tedious and seamless throughout the transition. The staff was the first to receive the information pertaining to the transformation of leadership and educational construct. They were given the new handbook and debriefed on the changes prior to the students' arrival. Together with the researcher, the staff was able to develop a plan to disseminate the information to the students once they returned for the 2013-2014 school. The new leadership paradigm worked well in ensuring the delegation of tasks was appropriate and that all building stakeholders shared ownership in the dissemination of the information contained in the new educational construct. The methodology of implementation, as perceived by stakeholders, was both impactful and successful in achieving the desired outcomes.

Stakeholder perception. The positive perceptions of stakeholders were a poignant observation through the genesis of the program and leadership transformation for the researcher, as a new administrator, was to achieve tangible observable outcomes as they pertained to the BAAS program's student population. The true validation of success was the difference in observable behaviors, the change in climate, and the student outcomes that were the result of program implementation in the areas of discipline, attendance, and graduation rates. The specific impact on the targeted student outcomes corresponded to the data that supported each hypothesis statement. The hypotheses appear as follows:

Recommended Changes to the Program

The researcher felt the program construct from creation through implementation was an overall success. It was obvious to the researcher though that there would need to be some additive measures to ensure continued success and viability of the program. Of particular note was the continued implementation of the SW-PBS model. The first year of program implementation, within the SW-PBS construct, was primarily the gathering of data and assessment of the then-current realities within the educational setting. Subsequent years would allow for further implementation of SW-PBS modalities, which may have a more substantial impact on outcomes. These constructs include the collection of discipline data, identification and creation of building-level priorities, lessons addressing specific expectations, behavior matrices, and student incentive programs, to name a few. Each year a building participates in the SW-PBS model, the more advanced the construct becomes.

Professional Learning Community or PLC, was another important educational construct that would need further implementation and participation from staff, in order to maintain viability and functionality of BAAS's new educational paradigm. The staff would need to continue to meet regularly, sharing data and best practices, so that the mission and vision of the building could remain a focus and classroom effectiveness and productivity would remain consistent, as well as continuation of the practices implemented through the SW-PBS model. The continued implementation of PLC would allow for a collaborative environment and give teachers access to effective strategies for classroom management, as well as common assessments and relevant educational data within the same building. Common goals and assessments allow BAAS and Beta High School (pseudonym) to stay on the same page concerning instruction and content. It would be important for the two buildings to remain in close communication in all areas pertaining to students and their approaches to learning.

Another example of the imperative nature of close communication between the two schools involved the identification and screening of potential BAAS candidates coming from Beta High School. The researcher felt the new application process, implemented throughout the duration of the research, was an excellent preliminary measure to begin honing the approach to applicant screening. Upon commencement of the new process, there were facets of the process that needed fine-tuning. The recommendation from the researcher would be to continue working closely with the sending-school counselors and administration so that each building knows what student characteristics represent a quality candidate.

There was also the procedural element that may need some modification. A set procedure, from application to interview to acceptance, needed implementation so that there was no confusion from either building as to what measure was the next to be taken in the transfer process. There were also procedural elements that must be in place when considering the acceptance of students with disabilities. It would be necessary for a procedural guideline to exist for these instances. The process would also need to include correspondence between case managers, the director of special services, and the BAAS administration.

One difference between Beta High School and the BAAS, that was not educational in nature, was the duration of the school day and the execution of the bell schedules. The researcher felt another change needed to take place concerning the daily bell schedule at the BAAS. The bell schedule in the new educational paradigm did not allow for passing periods between classes. The BAAS building did not have a large interior. The initial determination was that students could manage their time traversing the short distance through the commons area to get from one class to another. It was subsequently determined that the students were not successful in their transition, and a short passing period with bells would allow teachers to more closely monitor the amount of time students spent in the commons between classes. This would also allow for an accurate tracking of tardies. Accurate tardy counts would then allow teachers to assign consequences to frequent violators.

From a disciplinary perspective, a few additions were necessary, as the new educational construct progressed. The new BAAS handbook provided extensive disciplinary guidelines, but because of special issues at BAAS, in-school suspension was

not an option on the disciplinary continuum. It would be necessary for the Beta High School and BAAS to arrange a mutually agreeable accommodation for students whose disciplinary infractions required the assignment of in-school suspension. The researcher felt a viable option would be for students assigned in-school suspension at BAAS to serve their suspension at Beta High School and return to BAAS after completing the terms of their suspension.

The disciplinary construct also would need to incorporate an affirmative classroom versus an office-managed behavior matrix. This would allow teachers, students, and administration know what behaviors were referable versus classroom-managed. Part of this new construct would hinge on the teachers being able to assign small disciplinary consequences, such as lunch and after-school detentions. By taking the ambiguity out of resultant consequences, responses to behaviors would be more consistent, timely, and unbiased.

Part of improving the climate, culture, and BAAS was the shift from a forced placement to a voluntary program that fostered a privilege-based philosophy. In order to develop and sustain the privilege-based philosophy, the BAAS needs to offer similar, and in some instances better, incentives/tools for students who attend. Technology in the classroom would fit into this category. Technology in education was pervasive in school districts across the country. From an alternative education perspective, access to technology was important. The importance of technology helped to keep education relevant and transcended generational gaps between teachers and students. It was the recommendation of the researcher that on-site access to a mobile technology lab at BAAS become available, to give all students access to technology and its applications in the

classroom setting for the aforementioned reasons. The access and application of technology in the classroom would provide a setting for another excellent research project in the future.

Student success remained the ultimate goal for BAAS students and staff. Providing the proper tools for student success was a portion of what would allow students to continue to grow and learn at BAAS. In addition, for alternative education students to realize success in an academic environment, the fulfillment of basic needs was necessary. This applied to both the school and home settings. If a student came to school hungry or in clothes he had worn all week or after a night of sleeping in a car, his focus would not necessarily be on the education he was about to receive, but rather trying to meet those basic needs. It was a recommendation of the researcher to implement programs available in the district that would help to fulfill some of the basic needs students may be lack outside of school. One such program was operation backpack, which provided food for students who did not have enough to eat. They simply needed to consult with the counselor and they would receive a bag of food to take home.

Another program designed to assist students was the school closet, which had clothing for students who did not have appropriate clothing or enough clothing to fulfill their needs. A variety of clothing was available to meet the needs of those who otherwise could not afford new clothes. Lastly, BAAS would offer free and reduced breakfast and lunch services for students who could not afford the regular price of school meals. This service was common throughout all districts, but BAAS would make a concerted effort to identify these students and offer application packets when it did not appear that a student was taking advantage of the food services offered. These measures would help ensure

students access to basic resources, from a food and clothing perspective, and in turn would ideally help students to stay focused and successful while in school.

An additional element of basic needs imperative for students was safety and security. The initial tour of the BAAS yielded a number of concerns that needed to be addressed. Many of those issues still exist and are facility concerns that, by the end of the research continuum, may still need addressing. The researcher added them as recommendations to address in the future. Additionally, the fulfillment of basic needs in an alternative education setting and the resultant impact on the educational environment could potentially be the root of future research.

To meet safety needs, the first modification to the building would be the addition of a locking mechanism on the front door, controlled by a button the front-desk worker operated. This would preserve the integrity of the facility and would not jeopardize staff and students every time a stranger comes to the front door. Other buildings in the district already installed such devices and prevented individuals providing access to potential intruders by allowing them to first open locked doors to determine intent. These new devices provide a video camera and microphone just outside the door, so that workers could see and communicate with guests without physically providing access to the facility. Once the identity and purpose of the guest is established, the worker can then buzz the guest in by pushing a button to unlock the doors. The safety implications of such a device are obvious. The benefit to staff and students is both a physical and psychological sense of safety in the building.

Another safety and administrative need for the building was a series of cameras that could effectively monitor and record the actions of individuals inside and outside the

building. Cameras would allow administration to monitor the building from within the office and provided a resource in the instance of an incident occurring within the building. These cameras would both help to deter individuals from making bad decisions and provide another layer of safety from a supervision perspective. The idea, again, is to make sure that the environment is safe and conducive for education and learning without the distraction of worrying for one's safety.

The last change to the facility, for the sake of safety, would be to create an enclosed receiving area for guests, limiting access of individuals entering the building to the front desk, so that they may not reach students simply by entering the front doors. This would provide another layer of protection for staff and students and would remove some of the distractions that result from deliveries, sign-outs, and program inquires. By creating a physical barrier between the front reception area with a locking door, guests remain contained while they carry out their intended business. This also effectively segregates the front office/counselor area and the rest of the building, so that confidential meetings would remain private without the worry of privacy violations. Many modifications to the BAAS building are technically aesthetic in nature. These physical modifications would also serve to address an important staff and student need, specifically safety.

So far, the recommendations for changes to the program included concerns about continued implementation of SW-PBS and PLC, as well as candidate screening, procedural applications between sending and receiving schools, bell schedule modification, modifications to the disciplinary construct, shift towards a privilege-based placement philosophy, increased access to technology, and basic-needs fulfillment

(specifically food, clothing, and safety). As time progresses the researcher is confident these modifications would have a positive impact on the program, but there is also a high probability that the dynamic nature of education (both traditional and alternative) will necessitate a variety of changes not yet identified. It is the researcher's recommendation that the BAAS keep an accessible and comprehensive list of educational initiatives and the corresponding results of those initiatives. It will also be imperative to keep abreast of research and best practices in the field of alternative education. As more research becomes available, alternative education programs will be able to fine-tune their approach to leadership and educational paradigm development and implementation. Based on the research reported in this document and through the researcher's introspective look at alternative education and leadership paradigms, the researcher can make recommendations for future research in the aforementioned categories of alternative education.

Recommendations for Future Research

The first recommendation for future research relates to the duration of the study. It is the researcher's belief that by conducting the research in a longitudinal manner versus in a single year, the results of the study would produce additional valuable information. Part of this recommendation stems from the fact that many of the constructs implemented in the new educational model would require several years of implementation to reach maximum effectiveness (such as SW-PBS and PLC). Another supporting component for a longer study is the turnover in student population. By conducting the study over a longer period, multiple student groups matriculating through the BAAS program would be responsible for targeted successes, rather than a single

population. A more diversified sample set would allow for broader generalization of results.

In addition to an expanded allotment of time for research, the researcher also felt the volume of initiatives implemented in the new educational and leadership paradigms makes it difficult to pinpoint one construct as the catalyst for improved student outcomes. In order to determine the success of each individual construct, it would be beneficial to isolate one paradigm shift and focus a study specifically on the outcomes resultant from those changes. The turnaround time, from creation to implementation of the educational and leadership paradigms, was very rapid and thus, the segregation of these constructs was not an option for the purposes of this study. A subsequent study separating the various initiatives would make an excellent follow up to the data presented in this dissertation.

The researcher felt that not only would a study separating each initiative be effective, but a study identifying individual teachers and their methodologies, as well as student grade levels could also provide useful information. By reviewing each teacher's approach, a hypothesis based on instructional practices, as well as how closely they followed or deviated from the educational model in place, would help generate an analysis of the construct on an individual level. A grade-level review would essentially provide the same information, but through the lens of varying students at different places in their educational careers. This type of study would be able to highlight student success, or lack thereof, by identified grade level.

Any one of the educational or leadership paradigms presented and implemented throughout this process could benefit from a closer introspective look at its individual

effects on the learning environment and specifically the alternative learning environment. As a collective program and educational construct, the new BAAS leadership and educational paradigms proved to be effective in accomplishing targeted objectives; however, each objective in the study (increasing attendance, decreasing discipline, and maintaining graduation rates) researched independently, would provide a valuable informational and introspective look at influences and effects on student success. In addition, other elements of the new educational construct presented in this dissertation could also benefit from a more thorough investigation. Examples include initiatives and potential research, such as improving climate and culture in an alternative setting, effects of larger constructs, such as SW-PBS and PLC on alternative learning, the effects of NEE on quality instruction, and the impact of hourly progress monitoring (Triple A) on alternative education student's success,

Conclusion

In conclusion, to the research presented in this dissertation, the researcher feels that the construct, implementation, and evaluation of the new educational paradigm was successful. However, the researcher recognizes the opportunity for further examination of specific elements contained within the educational construct. The scope of this study was immense and allowed the researcher the opportunity to explore many facets of alternative education as well as specific data and information about the Gamma School District.

The most significant outcome from the study included the confirmation by district stakeholders that the change in the leadership and educational paradigms were perceived as meaningful and effective. Another significant outcome was evidence provided by

study data in support of the hypotheses. BAAS was able to decrease discipline referrals, increase attendance rates, and maintain graduation rates following implementation of the new programs. These outcomes supported the researcher's thoughts on the implications of the new leadership and educational paradigms. Lastly, as a result of the investigation and introspective review of the new educational and leadership paradigms, the researcher was exposed to many new potential research questions and contributed to identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the new leadership and educational models.

References

All things PLC. (2016). Retrieved from http://allthingsplc.info/about

Almeida, C., Le, C., Steinberg, A., & Cervantes, R. (2010, September). Reinventing alternative education: An assessment of current state policy and how to improve it. Retrieved from http://www.jff.org/publications/reinventing-alternative-education-assessment-current-state-policy-and-how-improve-it

Alternative Learning Programs and Schools, Grades K-12. (2003). Retrieved from http://www.ncpublicschools.org/

Aron, L. (2003, July). Towards a typology of alternative education programs: A compilation of elements from the literature. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED480992

Aron, L. A. (2006, January). An overview of alternative education - NCEE. Retrieved from http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Overview AltEd.pdf

Assessment Resource Center. (2016). Network for Educator Effectiveness. University of Missouri. Retrieved from http://arc.missouri.edu/product_nee.aspx

Bush, T. (2006, September 15). Theories of educational management. Retrieved from http://conx.org/content/m13867/1.1/

Cash, T. (2004). Alternative schooling. In J. Smink, & F. P. Schargel (Eds.), *Helping students graduate: A strategic approach to dropout prevention*, (p. 22). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Center for Response to Intervention. (2015). *Essential components of RTI- A closer look at response to intervention*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Retrieved from http://www.rti4success.org/resource/essential-components-rti-closer-look-response-intervention

Curriculum21 - Mapping the global classroom of the future. (2009-2016). Retrieved from http://www.curriculum21.com/pd/curriculum-mapping/archives/glossary/

Denmark, V. (2012). Transformational leadership - A matter of perspective. Retrieved from http://www.advanc-ed.org/source/transformational-leadership-matter-perspective

Duerden, M., & Witt, P. (2012, February). Assessing program implementation: What it is, Why it's important, and how to do it. *Journal of Extension, 50*(1), 1-8. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2012february/pdf/JOE_v50_1a4.pdf

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Dusenbury, L., Brannigan, R., Falco, M., & Hanson, W. B. (2003) A review of research on fidelity of implementation: Implications for drug abuse prevention in school settings. *Health Education Research*, *18*(2), 237-256.

Explorable. (2015). Curiosity killed the cat. *Explorable*.com. Retrieved from https://explorable.com/ideas/ test

Farvo, K. (2015, March 31). Defining strategy, implementation, and execution. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2015/03/defining-strategy-implementation-and-execution

Fears, J. (2013). Beta Academy Alternative School Handbook. Unpublished document. Midwest, MO: Study School District.

Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2006). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2002). What do you call people with visions? The role of vision, mission and goals in school leadership and improvement. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *The Handbook of educational leadership and administration* (2nd ed.) (pp. 9-40). Dordrecht, Germany: Kluwer.

Heick, T. (2014, February 14). Promoting a culture of learning. Retrieved from http://www.edutopia.org/blog/promoting-a-culture-of-learning-terry-heick

Hemmer, L., & Shepperson, T. (2014). A cross case state analysis of alternative education accountability policy. *International Journal of Organizational Behavior in Education, 2*(1), 1-11. Retrieved from http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic Journal Volumes/Hemmer, Lynn A Cross Case State Analysis IJOBE V2 N1 2014.pdf

Howard, K. (2008). Validating questionnaires. Kestrel Consultants, Inc. Retrieved from http://kestrelconsultants.com/reference_files/Validating_Questionnaires.pdf

Hughes, W., & Pickeral, T. (2013, February). School climate and shared leadership. Retrieved from http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/documents/sc-brief-leadership.pdf

Ingram, V., & Wong, A. (2009, February 10). *Alternative learning programs and schools: Standards and implementation procedures*. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved from http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/alp/develop/alp-standards.doc

Katzenbach, J., Von Post, R., & Thomas, J. (2014, February 11). The critical few: Components of a truly effective cCulture. *Chicago Booth: Executive Education.* Retrieved from http://www.strategy-business.com/article/ 00237? gko=f5031

Kochhar-Bryant, C. A. (2005). Alternative education as a quality choice for youth: Preparing educators for effective programs. Persistently safe schools 2005. The National Conference of the Hamilton Fish Institute on Schools and Community Violence, held September 11 – 14, 2005 in Philadelphia, PA.

Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). *Division A of AERA. What we know about successful school leadership*. Center for Educational Policy Analysis. Retrieved from http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/file/ What_we_know_about_School Leadership.pdf

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How leadership influences student learning. *The Wallace Foundation.* Retrieved from http://www. wallacefoundation.org/ knowledge-center/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx

Martin, J., & Sugarman, J. (1993) *Models of classroom management*, (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. (2003). *Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Metropolitan Center for Urban Education. (2008). Culturally responsive classroom management strategies. *NYU, Steinhardt*. Retrieved from http://steinhardt. nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/005/121/Culturally%20Responsive%20Classroom% 20Mgmt%20Strat2.pdf

Miao, J., & Haney, W. (2004, October 15). High school graduation rates: Alternative

methods and implications. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *12*(55), 1-70. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ853521

Miller, R. (2001, November). Greater expectations to improve student learning. *The Psycho-Educational Teacher Blog Spot*. Retrieved from http://www.greaterexpectations.org/briefing_papers/improvestudentlearning.html

Miller, R. (2004). *A map of the alternative education landscape.* Alternative Roslyn Heights, NY: Education Resource Organization. Retrieved from http://www.educationrevolution.org/store/resources/alternatives/mapoflandscape/

Mintrom, M. (2014, August 8). Creating cultures of excellence: Strategies and outcomes. *Cogent Education, 1*(1), 934084. doi:10.1080/2331186x.2014.934084

Missouri County Population. (2016). Retrieved from http://insurance.mo.gov/industry/filings/mc/moCounties.htm

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). Missouri option program. Retrieved from http://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/ missouri-option-programhttp://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/missouri-option-program.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2012). Quick facts. Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Missouri%20School%20Directory/2012/2012%20Missouri%20School%20Directory.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2013). Quick facts. Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Missouri%20School%20Directory/2013/2013%20Missouri%20School%20Directory.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2014). Quick facts. Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Missouri%20School%20Directory/2014/2014%20Missouri%20School%20Directory.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015). Quick facts. Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Missouri%20School%20Directory/2015/2015%20Missouri%20School%20Directory.pdf

Moncher, F. J., & Prinz, R. J. (1991). Treatment fidelity in outcome studies. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *11*(3), 247-266.

More articles. (2016). Retrieved from http://www.BusinessDictionary.com/www.BusinessDictionary.com

MU Center for SW-PBIS. (2016). Universal support checklist. Retrieved from http://pbismissouri.org/teams/common-philosophy-and-purpose

National Alternative Education Association. (2009). *Exemplary practices in education: Indicators of quality programing.* Retrieved from http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/School-Improvement-Services/Documents/AEP/Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education Programs.pdf

National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2014a). Our focus areas. The Rennie Center: Education Research & Policy. Retrieved from http://www.ncld.org/students-disabilities/iep-504-plan/what-is-iep

National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2014b). Understanding individualized education programs. Retrieved from http://www.ncld.org/students-disabilities/iep-504-plan/what-is-iep

Porowski, A., O'Conner, R., & Luo, J. L. (2014). *How do states define alternative education?* (REL 2014–038). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports – OSEP. (2016). *SWPBIS for beginners*. Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners

Quinn, M. M., & Poirier, J. M. (2007). Study of effective alternative education programs: Final grant report. American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED522072

Radhakrishna, R. B. (2007, February). Tips for developing and testing questionnaires/instruments. *The Journal of Extension*, *45*(1), 1-1. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2007february/tt2.shtml

Raywid, M. A. (1994, September). Synthesis of research/alternative schools: The state of the art. *Educational Leadership, 52*(1), 26-31. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept94/vol52/num01/Synthesis-of-Research-~-Alternative-Schools@-The-State-of-the-Art.aspx

Raywid, M. A. (1999, May). Current literature on small schools. *The Eric Digest, 01*(00), 47-51. ED425049.

Ronan, A. (2015, March/April). 7 ways to hack your classroom to include student choice. *Edudemic*. Retrieved from http://www.edudemic.com/?s=7+ways+to+hack+your+classroom

Ruiz de Velasco, J., Austin, G., Dixon, D., Johnson, J., McLaughlin, M., & Perez, L. (2008). Alternative education options: A descriptive study of California Continuation High School. Retrieved from http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/AEOIssueBrief-4-08.pdf

Ruzzi, B. B., & Kraemar, J. (2006, April). Academic programs in alternative education: An overview. Retrieved from http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/AcademicProg.pdf

Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding school improvement with action research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Sliwka, A. (2008). The contribution of alternative education. In Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (Ed.) *Innovating to learn, learning to innovate* (unpaginated). Paris, France: Author. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/40805108.pdf

Tobin, T., & Sprague, J. (1999). Alternative education programs for at-risk youth: Issues, best practice, and recommendations. *Oregon School Study Council Bulletin, 42*(4), 1-20. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED432805

Tyler, J. H., & Lofstrom, M. (2009). Finishing high school: Alternative pathways and dropout recovery. National Center for Biotechnology Information. *U.S. National Library of Medicine*, *19*(1), 87.

White, D., & Kochhar-Bryant, C. A. (2004). *Alternative education*. National Alternative Education Association. Washington D.C.: Hamilton Fish Institute on Schools and Community Violence.

Appendices

Appendix A – Characteristics of Leadership

Appendix B – Alternative Education: Target Population, Educational Needs, Funding

Appendix C – Beta Academy Alternative School: new handbook

Appendix D – Beta Academy Alternative School: initial handbook

Appendix E – Program Analysis Questionnaire

Appendix F – New Student Application Packet

Appendix G – Triple A

Appendix H – Data-Collection Protocol

Appendix I – Decision-Making Process

Appendix J – Continuum of Support

Appendix K – Universal Support Checklist

Appendix L – Implementation/Entry Plan

Appendix M – Student Recognition Matrix

Appendix A

Characteristics of Leadership

AdvancED Standard for Quality	Seven Dimensions
Standard 1: ● Purpose and Direction	Building school vision and establishing school goals
Standard 2: ● Governance and Leadership	Creating a productive school culture
Standard 3: ● Teaching and Assessing for Learning	Providing intellectual stimulation
Standard 3: ● Teaching and Assessing for Learning **Standard 4:** ● Resources and Support Systems	Offering individualized support
Standard 1: ● Purpose and Direction **Standard 2:** ● Governance and Leadership **Standard 3:** ● Teaching and Assessing for Learning	Modeling best practices and important organizational values
Standard 1: ● Purpose and Direction **Standard 3:** ● Teaching and Assessing for Learning **Standard 5:** ● Using Results for Continuous Improvement	Demonstrating high performance expectations
Standard 1: ● Purpose and Direction **Standard 2:** ● Governance and Leadership **Standard 3:** ● Teaching and Assessing for Learning	Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions

Figure A1. Characteristics of Leadership. Adapted, with permission, from Denmark (2012).

Appendix B

The Diversity of Alternative Education

The shaded area highlights the Department of Labor's targeted focus.

Target Population	Educational Needs	Educational Objectives	Other Services	Funding Stream
In high school, behind academically > 4th grade < 8th grade	▪ Standards-based remediation ▪ Special Education ▪ ELL	▪ Diploma	▪ College & Career Counseling	▪ IDEA ▪ Title I ▪ Striving Reader ▪ ADA ▪ Perkins
In high school, substantially behind academically < 4th grade	▪ Special Education ▪ ELL	▪ Diploma ▪ Alternative Diploma	▪ OJT	▪ Title I ▪ IDEA ▪ Voc Rel ▪ ADA ▪ Perkins
In high school, not attending	▪ Dropout recovery ▪ Special Education	▪ Diploma ▪ GED	▪ Counseling ▪ Drug Rehab ▪ Day Care ▪ Shelter/Foster Home	▪ IDEA ▪ Title I ▪ ADA ▪ Perkins
Dropout between 16-18, risk factors vary	▪ Credit retrieval ▪ Small group learning ▪ Standards-based, alternative curriculum ▪ Work based learning ▪ Twilight school ▪ Special Education ▪ Adult Basic Education	▪ Diploma ▪ GED	▪ Counseling ▪ Drug Rehab ▪ Day Care ▪ Employment services ▪ Flexible hours ▪ Health care ▪ Case management ▪ Career counseling ▪ Work readiness training	▪ IDEA ▪ Private grants ▪ WIA ▪ TANF ▪ Other state, lo funding ▪ AEFLA
Dropout and over age 18	▪ Credit retrieval ▪ Small group learning ▪ Standards-based, alternative curriculum ▪ Dual enrollment ▪ Modular credits ▪ On-line learning ▪ Work based learning ▪ Evening school ▪ Special Education ▪ Adult Basic Education	▪ Diploma ▪ GED	▪ Counseling ▪ Drug Rehab ▪ Day Care ▪ Employment services ▪ Flexible hours ▪ Health care ▪ Case management ▪ College & career counseling ▪ Work readiness training	▪ IDEA ▪ Private grants ▪ WIA ▪ TANF ▪ Other state, lo funding ▪ AEFLA
Incarcerated	▪ Credit retrieval ▪ Small group learning ▪ Standards-based, alternative curriculum ▪ Work based learning	▪ Diploma ▪ GED	▪ Counseling ▪ Drug Rehab ▪ Career exploration & counseling ▪ Work readiness training	▪ Juvenile Justice ▪ Private Grants ▪ IDEA

Developed by Betsy Brown Ruzzi (2005), Washington, D.C.: National Center on Education and the Economy

Figure A2. Alternative Education. Adapted, with permission, from Ruzzi & Kraemar (2006).

Appendix C

Beta Academy Alternative School:

Table of Contents: New Handbook

Appendix D

Beta Academy Alternative School:

Table of Contents: Initial Handbook

Appendix E

Program Analysis Questionnaire

1. The questionnaire helped the researcher interpret the effectiveness of change, the involvement of stakeholders, and the fidelity of implementation.
2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model?
3. How successful was the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model?
4. What impact, if any, has the development, implementation, and fidelity of delivery of the new alternative educational model had on the alternative school?
5. How successful has the new alternative education model been in helping the alternative school reach their original goals?
6. How effective, overall, has the new alternative education model been in accomplishing what it was developed to do? What suggestions do you have for different processes for the alternative school, if any?

Note: The Likert-Scale used was extremely = 5; very = 4; moderately = 3; slightly = 2; and not at all = 1.

Appendix F

New Student Application Packet

Please forward completed application packet via inter-office mail to Principal for consideration.

Beta Academy

2013 Application for Enrollment

Applicant Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

Documentation Checklist:
Application for Enrollment: _____
Applicant Essay: _____
Counselor Statement: _____
Principal Statement: _____
Verification of No Fines Due: _____
Transcripts: _____
Past and Current Attendance Records: _____
Current Class Schedule: _____
Copy of Behavior Referrals: _____
Credits: _____
IEP: Yes _____ (attached) No _____ _____
504: Yes _____ (attached) No _____ _____
Beta Academy Use Only:
Date Received: _____ Page **1** of **2**

Beta Academy

Application for Enrollment

This application must be filled out completely. Do not leave any question unanswered. A current copy of the student's transcript and history of discipline must accompany this application.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Total Credits Earned: _____ Cohort Graduation Date: _____

IEP? *(Please Circle)* Yes No Educational Diagnosis:_____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Home Phone: _____ Parent/Guardian Work Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

This signature denotes permission for student to apply to Beta Academy.

Please circle any of the following that describe you as a student:

Drug/alcohol abuse
Anger issues
Long-term suspension/expulsion
Weapon at school
Poor attendance
Low expectations
Have attended an alternative school previously
Dropped out
Social anxiety
Have been retained before
Low reading ability
Family dropout history
Failure to follow school rules
Have a child/expecting
Several relocations during school career
ADD/ADHD
Homeless
Significant law/juvenile involvement
Low math ability
Low self-esteem
Death of a family member
Life trauma
Credit deficient
Bullying concerns

Students must answer the following questions in order to be considered for an interview and possible acceptance into the program.

1) What are some of your favorite things about school?

_____
_____

2) What difficulties have you experienced in school?

_____
_____

3) What do you feel are your strengths in school?

_____
_____

4) What do you feel are your weaknesses in school?

_____
_____

5) Why do you want to graduate from high school?

_____
_____

6) What do you like about your current school?

_____
_____

7) What do you dislike about your current school?

_____
_____

Autobiographical sketch: On your own paper, please write a one-page handwritten essay. It is important that you state why you should be considered above other candidates, as due to space availability, not all candidates who apply will be accepted into Beta Academy.

Please answer the following in your response:
1) Please share any information that you feel will tell us about who you are as a person. (Including your goals and plans for the future.)
2) Explain to us why you are a good candidate for Beta Academy.

Please Attach Transcript *(Applicant will not be considered without a transcript on file with their application.)*

Beta Academy

Counselor Statement

Applicant Name:

_____

Please provide the following information requested for the above referenced applicant. This information will enable us to determine those students who would benefit from this school. ***This information must be provided for the applicant to be considered for an interview and ultimately, acceptance to this school.***

The following are characteristics typical of students for which the alternative school is designed. To the best of your knowledge, **please check** all those that apply to the above-named student.

_____ Average to High Ability
_____ Low Motivation
_____ Poor Attendance

_____ Age/Grade Discrepancy
_____ Deficient in Credits
_____ Lack of Family Support
_____ Poor Self-Esteem
_____ Lack of Respect for Authority

What interventions have been done to help this student succeed? What are the results of those interventions?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Please add any comments/information you consider pertinent or relevant:

_____
_____
_____

Counselor Signature: _____ Date:

Please Attach Discipline History *(Applicant will not be considered without discipline history on file with their application.)* Form AA4 (5/13)

Beta Academy

Principal Statement

Applicant Name:

_____

Please provide the following information requested for the above referenced applicant. This information will enable us to determine those students who would benefit from this school. ***This information must be provided for the applicant to be considered for an interview and ultimately, acceptance to this school.***

The following are characteristics typical of students for which the alternative school is designed. To the best of your knowledge, **please check** all those that apply to the above-named student.

_____ Average to High Ability
_____ Low Motivation
_____ Poor Attendance
_____ Age/Grade Discrepancy
_____ Deficient in Credits
_____ Lack of Family Support
_____ Poor Self-Esteem
_____ Lack of Respect for Authority

Based upon the history of discipline and your knowledge of the student, what type of candidate do you think this student is for Beta Academy?

_____ Poor
_____ Good
_____ Excellent

Please add any comments/information you consider pertinent or relevant:

_____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____ *Please forward completed form to the student's counselor to be included in their application for Beta Academy. Applicant will not be considered without Verification of No Fines Due on file.*

Beta Academy

Verification of No Fines Due

Applicant Name:

_____

Finance Office

Does the above referenced student have any outstanding fines or fees? Yes _____ No _____

If so, please list a description of items dues including amounts.

Item Due: Amount:

_____

_____

Finance Signature: _____ Date:

Note: Printed with permission.

Appendix G

Triple A

Attendance . . .
Academics. .
Attitude .

TRIPLE A

Hour: _____ Week: _____ Teacher: _____

Student	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday			Possible	Earned	%

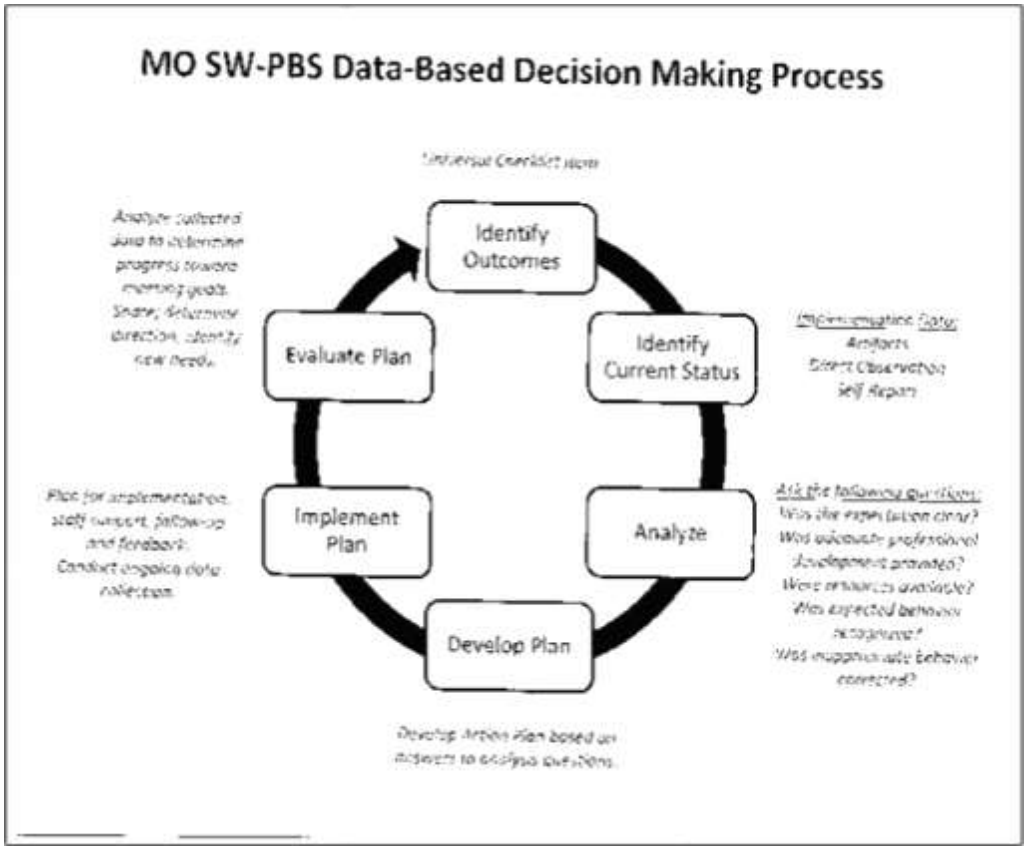
/=pt. earned X=no pt. O=n/a

Appendix H: Data-Collection Protocol

MO SW-PBS Data Collection At-A-Glance

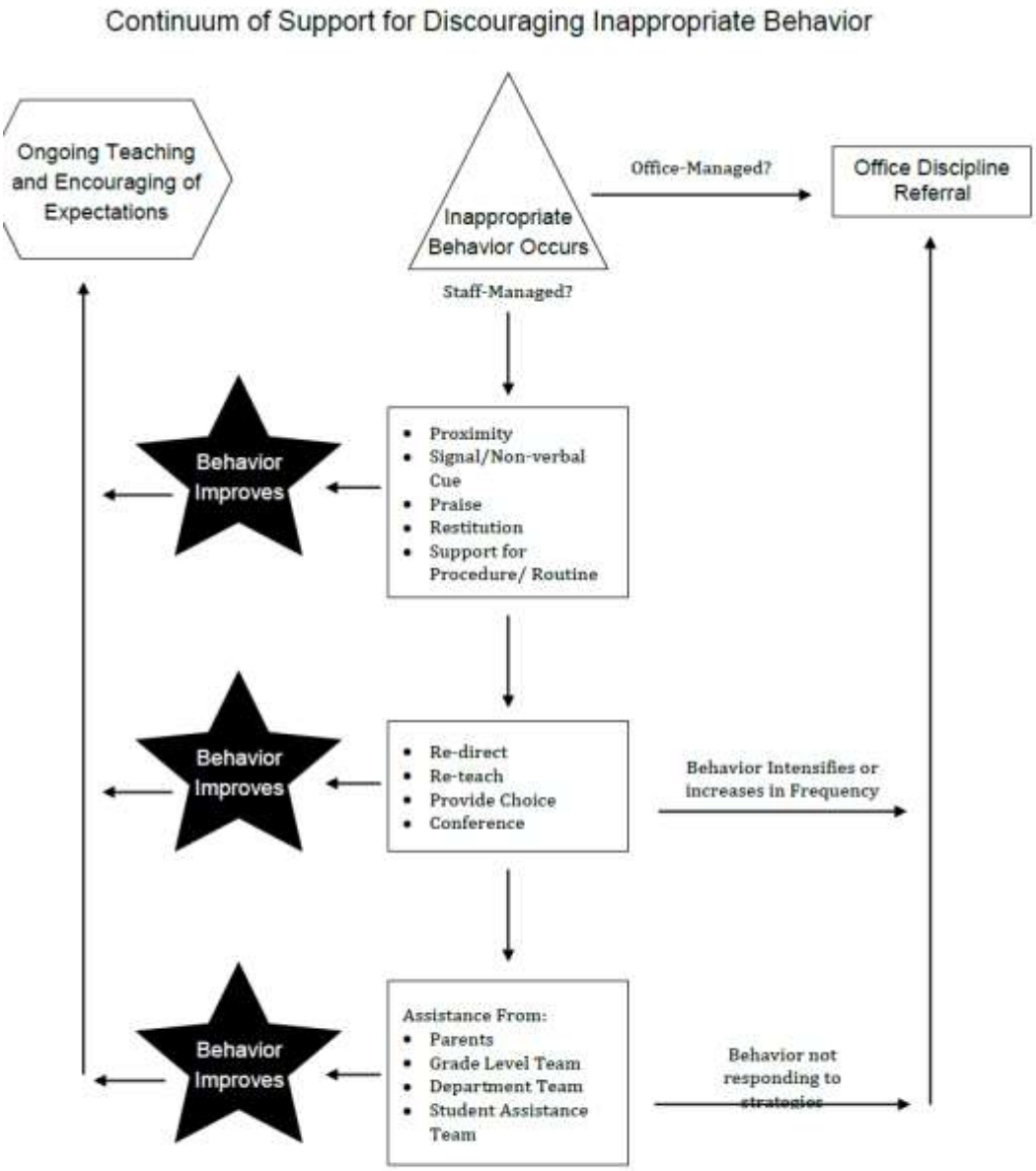
Data Source	Reporter	When	Purpose
Big Five ODR Reports	Database Manager	Monthly	The compilation of a school's office discipline referral (ODR) data which Includes: 1) average referrals per day per month, 2) referral location, 3) behavior, 4) time, and 5) by student. Guides questioning to look deeper at ODR data. Leads to specific problem identification and action planning. Also used to monitor progress on efforts.
Leadership Team Meeting Minutes	Secretary	Ongoing	A record of leadership team meetings including decisions, things to be done, as well as progress on initiative tasks or action steps. Serves as a means to communicate team and building activity with all stakeholders.
Self Assessment Survey (SAS)	All School Staff	Initially and Annually	A school staff survey to identify their perception of the status and priority for improvement of SW-PBS systems: 1) schoolwide discipline, 2) non-classroom management (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, playground), 3) classroom management, and 4) individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors. Used for awareness building with staff, action planning and decision-making, assessment of change over time, and team validation. Used initially with all staff; can be used subsequently with all staff, a representative group, or a focus group for ongoing planning.
School Safety Survey (SSS)	Representative Staff	Annually	A staff survey to determine risk and protection factors for school safety and violence. Completed by a minimum of five staff including administrator, custodial staff, supervisory/classified staff, certified staff and office staff. Provides information to determine training and support needs related to school safety and violence prevention.
MO SW-PBS Universal Checklist	Leadership Team	On-going	A team checklist completed in conjunction with action planning. Monitors activities for implementation of SW-PBS by tracking essential component items that are "Yes," "Partially" or "No." All team members provide input and one member records group responses. Guides action planning for Tier 1.
MO SW-PBS School Data Profile (SDP)	Administrator, Coach, or Database Manager	Annually	An online database that pulls together important building statistics. • Input Data includes: 1) student demographics, 2) building demographics, and 3) staff count. • Outcome Data includes: 1) attendance, 2) graduation/drop-out rates, 3) assistance referrals, special education eligibility, 4) ODRs by grade level, and 5) MO Assessment Program (MAP) scores • Helps assess the impact of SW-PBS efforts and guide overall planning and decision-making.
Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET)	Trained SET Evaluator / Regional Consultant	Annually, Following Implementation	An external review to measure implementation of SW-PBS critical features, determining those that are 1) not yet targeted/started, 2) in the planning phase, or 3) in the implementation/maintenance phase. • Features assessed: expectations defined, expectations taught, rewarding expectations, responding to behavioral violations, decision making, management and District level support. • A research tool designed to provide trend lines of improvement and sustainability over time.
Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)	School Leadership Team	Annually	A team self-assessment to identify strengths as well as areas needing improvement in their implementation of SW-PBS, Tier 1. • Looks at team, faculty commitment, discipline procedures, data entry & analysis, expectations, recognition, teaching, implementation plan, classroom systems, and evaluation. • Alternative to SET for schools with 80%/80% on SET for two consecutive years.

Appendix I: Decision-Making Process



Appendix J

Continuum of Support



Appendix K

Universal Support Checklist

"The skills and products that are pivotal to MO SW-PBS are identified below and organized by the Essential Components. Used to guide team action planning, the specific content related to each of these skills or products will be gradually included in your training and technical assistance process. As such, it creates a vision of your work and a roadmap of what should be in place to ensure a positive, proactive and instructional approach to social and behavioral skills" (MU Center for SW-PBIS, 2016, p. 1).

Link to the Universal Support Checklist (with permission from MU Center for SW-PBIS, 2016).

http://pbismissouri.org/teams/common-philosophy-and-purpose

Appendix L

Implementation/Entry Plan

Three part entry plan:

I. First 30 days

- A. Disaggregate current data
  - 1. attendance
  - 2. discipline
  - 3. graduation rates
  - 4. success rates/ academic reality
  - 5. demographics
- B. Staff meeting (luncheon)
  - 1. expectations
  - 2. discuss upcoming year
  - 3. potential changes
  - 4. goals for success
    - a. accountability
    - b. consistency
  - 5. paradigm shift
- C. Kiddos
  - 1. meet current kids
  - 2. talk to incoming students
- D. Facility
  - 1. tour facility
  - 2. first impressions

II. By the first day of school

- A. Handbook revision (with staff input)
  - 1. discipline guidelines (implement PBS)
  - 2. selection criteria
  - 3. mission statement

4. responsibilities
5. general information
6. safety
7. school day logistics

B. Needs assessment

1. technology
2. professional staff
    a. Staff
    b. Counselor
    c. Paraprofessionals
    d. Secretary
3. materials
4. facility
5. transportation
6. curriculum (CCSS)
7. daily structure

C. Community contacts

1. agape
2. vocational education programs
3. potential service projects
4. guest speakers
5. local charities
6. work programs

III. By the end of first quarter

A. Evaluate current success as a team

1. transportation
2. discipline (PBS)
3. student selection
4. technology
5. common core state standards

6. vocational programs/ work programs/ pass program
7. personal successes (teachers, principals, secretary, counselor, students)
8. core data (attendance, grades, discipline

B. Implement successful method of communication with all stakeholders (faculty, staff, parents/guardians, students, board of education, superintendent)

1. Newsletter
2. E-mails
3. Phone calls
4. Conferences
5. Home visits

C. Staff discussion: "Where to go from here?"

1. identify what's working and what is not
2. identify and observe at least three successful programs
3. professional development for staff
4. incentives for students
5. new needs assessment
6. professional evaluations
7. leadership assessment

Side notes:

PBS

CCSS

MSIP 5

Autonomy (leadership, facility, etc.)

Graduation ceremony

Technology

Other successful programs

Data driven decisions

High expectations

Clear, concise, frequent communication

Team/relationship building

Appendix M

Student Recognition Matrix

Name	Achievement Criteria	Award	Presented at….	Frequency	Number of Awards per Year	Coordinated by	Dissemination	Type
Verbal Praise	Following behavior expectations in any setting	Verbal Praise	Time of noticed behavior	Daily	Unlimited	All Staff	All classroom teachers	Individual
Alpha Miles	Following behavior expectations in any setting	Verbal praise Alpha Mile token	May be received anywhere on campus.	Daily	Unlimited	SW-PBS Team	All staff members may give out Alpha Miles	Individual
School wide Attendance Certificate	90% or higher attendance for a week	School wide Pizza Party	End of Week	Weekly		Mr. Fears	Mr. Fears will announce	Whole School