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Inter-agency Coordination: The Key to Successfully Transition Juvenile Offenders Back into the Educational Mainstream

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Recommended Citation

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A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Declaration of Originality

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

Robyn B. Gordon

Signature: *Robyn Gordon* Date: *1-31-13*

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend special thanks Dr. Sherry DeVore, Dr. Terry Reid, Dr. Kimberly Fitzpatrick, and Dr. Kathy Grover for their support, advice, and encouragement through the course of this project. Thank you to my colleagues who were a wonderful support through this academic journey. Most importantly, I would like to extend my thanks to my friends and family. I could not have reached this goal without their love and support. To my most precious children, Noah and Aaron, thank you for being my biggest cheerleaders and the most wonderful boys.

Abstract

The focus of this study was to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the educational mainstream. The study was also used to determine the implementation needed for effective inter-agency coordination of social service systems for students to successfully transition into the educational setting. The NCLB accountability measures were reviewed to discover how the measures influenced educators and created a reluctance to accept delinquent youth when they re-enter public school. The three overarching questions addressed in this study were: What inter-agency involvement is necessary in implementing a successful re-entry program? What are the characteristics of successful school re-entry programs for juvenile delinquents as they transition back into the public school setting? Due to the pressures of NCLB accountability measures, what are the reasons educators are reluctant to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream? This study yielded findings showing few schools had few schools had a transition plan in place. Transition data results revealed the process for schools and juvenile officers differ from that of Division of Youth Services (DYS), with DYS having more proactive transition planning protocols. Inter-agency involvement is necessary for successful re-entry plans and involves transition planning, positive parental involvement, increased inter-agency coordination, and positive relationships. This research study also revealed that successful re-entry programs involve consistent communication, progress monitoring, provide protective factors, parent involvement, meet individual needs of students, and provide positive connections. Schools and various agencies must strive to improve inter-agency coordination and collaboration practices.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

Educating all students in the public education system to achieve at levels of proficiency or above has proven to be an arduous task for educators across the nation. Implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has required educators to reassess educational practices and what measures must be taken to assure all students are learning at high levels (NCLB, 2002). The pressure of meeting adequate yearly progress and having 100% of students performing at levels of proficient or above by the year 2014, has created a sense of urgency for educators to determine what changes can be made to ensure students of all subgroups are making adequate achievement gains (Kagan, 2007).

One subgroup that garners a great deal of attention from researchers and educators is students of low socioeconomic status (Strickland, 2010). Within this subgroup there is a population of highly at-risk children and youth who are part of the juvenile court system (Feierman, Levick, & Mody, 2009). These are students who are often placed outside of the public school setting for various, court-appointed reasons (Altschuler, 2008). The National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk [NDTAC] (2008) discussed, as the placement of the youth changes, coordination between state agencies would help ease the transition of these students when it is time to return to the public school setting.

Shared communication between schools and outside agencies helps to provide the data and background knowledge necessary for educators to create suitable education re-entry plans for at-risk students (NDTAC, 2008). Lack of information shared between

agencies is often a frustration, causing each agency to work in isolation rather than collaboratively (Feierman et al., 2009). Due to the complexity of the collaborative process necessary for effective inter-agency coordination, this challenging task is often disregarded, and each system works individually, resulting in more difficult transitions for youth (Altschuler, 2008). This fragmentation of service delivery impedes the efficiency and effectiveness of individual agencies, diminishing the opportunity for students to find personal and academic success (Altschuler, 2008).

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Attorney General Eric Holder have recognized the detrimental effects of the school-to-prison pipeline for at-risk youth and the collaborative efforts necessary to help troubled youth (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2011), in July of 2011, Duncan and Holder "launched the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, a collaborative effort between the Departments of Justice and Education" (p. 1). Goals of this initiative included:

1) build consensus for action among federal, state and local education and justice stakeholders

2) collaborate on research and data collection that may be needed to inform this work, such as evaluations of alternative disciplinary policies and interventions

3) develop guidance to ensure that school discipline policies and practices comply with the nation's civil rights laws and to promote positive disciplinary options to both keep kids in school and improve the climate for learning

4) promote awareness and knowledge about evidence-based and promising policies and practices among state judicial and education leadership. (U.S.

Department of Justice, 2011, p. 1)

Leaders in the Departments of Justice and Education are now working collaboratively with various organizations and agencies to take preemptive measures to help troubled youth avoid the school-to-prison pipeline (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011).

Many students who have become part of the juvenile court system, find reintegrating into the public school setting difficult and often times drop out of school (Brock & Keegan, 2007). Students are often from low socioeconomic backgrounds and do not have the community and family support to help them successfully rejoin the educational mainstream (Brock, O'Cumming, & Milligan, 2008). To examine this phenomenon, this study was viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's model and centered on the five domains of risk factors for juvenile delinquency: community, family, school, peer level, and individual level (Durlak et al., 2007).

Conceptual Framework

Noted child psychologist, Bronfenbrenner (1979), pioneered efforts to encourage human service systems to consider the impact of the ecological system on children and their families. His theory was based on the triadic principle whereby:

> ...the capacity of a setting—such as the home, school, or workplace—to function effectively as a context for development is seen to depend on the existence and nature of social interconnections between settings, including joint participation, communication, and the existence of information in each setting about the other. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 31)

To provide students with the best context for human development, interconnections must be present between all ecological settings within which a child resides and encounters. In

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development, he contended, "every ecological transition is an instigator of developmental processes" (p. 40).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the developmental implications of transitions are based on the change in roles and expectations of the child associated with varying environments. While in confinement, the role of a juvenile offender is vastly different from the environment, as is the role of a public school student; thereby, solidifying the need to address the developmental implications of transitions for at-risk youth (Altschuler, 2008). Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized the importance of a child's transition between ecological environments, which can affect a child's development. This model of human development supports the assumption that it is critical for education and social service systems to join forces to support healthy human development of children and families they serve (Altschuler, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Frequent movement of youth in and out of state care and juvenile justice programs creates several challenges for school districts and youth offenders (Altschuler, 2008). The mobility rate of these students between state agencies often results in a fragmentation of service delivery to highly at-risk students (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). Incarcerated youth face a myriad of challenges upon their release from the highly structured confines of detention facilities to a less rigidly structured school setting (Altschuler, 2008).

Without proper support, students re-entering the educational mainstream after release from juvenile detention facilities often find it difficult to achieve educational success (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). For many youth, this leads to school dropout and/or

recidivism (Department of Social Services [DSS], 2006). Few programs in existence within the juvenile justice system provide rehabilitation for detained youth, making it crucial for schools to take responsibility, not only for the youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, but also, those who are already involved (Mazzotti & Higgins, 2006).

Although the U.S. Department of Education has provided funding to improve transition services for neglected and delinquent youth, authorized by Title I Part D of NCLB in 2001, the transitional help has not been effectively utilized (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2007). Within the Title I Part D program assessment, it is noted that one of the weaknesses of the program is a lack of awareness of some state agencies "of the funds and other tools available for improving transition services and therefore [state agencies] were not maximizing their capacity to implement transition services" (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2007, p. 1).

Although the need for effectively transitioning these students has been addressed at the federal level, implementation of those services still has room for improvement (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2007). It takes the help and support of all social service institutions working together to make that goal reach fruition. Moore (2002) reported:

   That array of institutions begins with the family—with parents who naturally assume (or guardians who are assigned) the responsibility for raising children. It includes the admittedly imperfect network of welfare support, including prenatal care and early childhood education that helps the nation's neediest children to get off to a reasonably healthy start. It includes an array of laws and institutions

designed to guard children from abuse and neglect. It includes publicly financed educational and recreational opportunities. In addition, when all else fails, it includes the agencies of the criminal justice system—the police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, courts, and correctional agencies, including the specialized parts of that system that deal with juvenile offenders and with abuse and neglect of children. (p. 596)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system from court appointed juvenile justice facilities. The study was also used to determine the implementation needed for effective inter-agency coordination of social service systems for students to successfully transition back into the educational mainstream. The NCLB accountability measures were reviewed to discover how the measures influenced educators and created a reluctance to accept delinquent youth as they re-enter the public school setting.

Fragmentation between residential care and after-care services has been an ongoing obstacle for youth corrections (Altschuler, 2008). By converging human service systems with the goal to best serve troubled youth, systems will solve the issues of duplicating efforts, service availability, diminishing fiscal resources, and program effectiveness and sustainability (Altschuler, 2008). Mazzotti and Higgins (2006) noted, "Because schools are a place where a child coming from a detention facility should feel safe and successful, it is extremely important that schools develop and facilitate relationships with the JJS to curtail recidivism" (p. 296).

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What inter-agency involvement is necessary in implementing a successful re-entry program?

2. What are the characteristics of successful school re-entry programs for juvenile delinquents as they transition back into the public school setting?

3. Due to the pressures of NCLB accountability measures, what are the reasons educators are reluctant to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream?

Significance of the Study

Each of the key agencies that provide services for delinquent youth has set goals within their strategic plans to provide transitional services for at-risk youth. As Kotter (2007) suggested, strategic planning does not ensure that strategy transforms into action; thereby, "70 percent of business strategic plans are never implemented" (p. 32). Although the need for transitional services has been recognized by various agencies, appropriate implementation of these practices has been hindered by the lack of inter-agency coordination and collaboration (Altschuler, 2008). Moore (2002) clarified:

> …[the importance of establishing] networks of capacity – which encompass public-private partnerships and partnerships of local, state, and federal agencies – cross the boundaries of existing organizations. The challenge is to "take the existing uncoordinated operations of different agencies . . . and turn them into a more or less coherent and well-understood strategy for action that can be implemented successfully." (p. 59)

This study provided a review of current transitional practices for youth offenders, as well as recommendations of practices that effectively transition delinquent youth back into the

educational mainstream. Research has shown a positive correlation between academic success and reduced recidivism of youth offenders; therefore, it is essential to provide at-risk youth with a positive educational experience for academic success (Annual Report to the Florida Department of Education, 2006).

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Adjudicated. A judicial sentence or decision (Missouri Juvenile Court Annual Report, 2007).

Diversion. Process of working to redirect youth offenders away from further delinquent activities.

Ecological transitions. A change of environment or shift in role that a person may experience during one's lifetime (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Law violation. Law violations are "acts which would be in violation of the Missouri Criminal Code if they were committed by an adult" (Missouri Juvenile Court Annual Report, 2007, p. 2).

Recidivism. The act of reoffending, resulting in an additional confinement in the juvenile justice system.

Referral. Referrals include "any action involving a juvenile which results in a determination, finding or outcome and a written record maintained in the juveniles name" (Missouri Juvenile Court Annual Report, 2007, p. 1).

Status violation. Status violations are "acts which are violations only if committed by a juvenile. These include such infractions as truancy and running away from home" (Missouri Juvenile Court Annual Report, 2007, p. 2).

Limitations and Assumptions

Mixed-methods research design, or research combining qualitative and quantitative data analysis is a relatively new methodology that has not always been viewed as legitimate research (Creswell, 2007). Mixed-methods research has gained acceptance as a valid and important methodological approach, as it provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of each qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2011). For purposes of this study, the judges selected to interview provided the judiciary perspective, and the people selected for surveys strengthened the investigation to provide insight from administrators of various social service systems. In addition, survey completion was voluntary which could indicate respondents had a greater interest or knowledgebase of the research topic than non-respondents, which could skew the results.

The following limitations were identified in this study:

1. The collection of quantitative data was limited to 119 administrators of various child-serving agencies. The response rate of principals and juvenile officers was low.

2. The collection of qualitative data was limited to two circuit court judges and one juvenile drug court administrator.

3. The online survey data were limited only to participants who chose to complete and submit the survey.

4. The location of study included one region in a Midwest state.

5. It was assumed that respondents answered honestly without bias.

Summary

The public education system is just one of many institutions committed to helping children traverse the various human developmental stages to become well-educated and

productive citizens (Altschuler, 2008). All is not lost when youth become part of the criminal justice system (Altschuler, 2008). Many state, federal, and local government agencies have responded to the problem of juvenile delinquency and are making a concerted effort to provide youth support services (Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice Annual Report, 2009).

In Chapter One, an introduction to the study was presented by providing background information of the study. The conceptual framework provided the underpinnings of concepts outlining the study. A statement of the problem presented information explaining the research problem and how it is ubiquitous to current educational practices. The purpose of the study provided information of proposed importance of the conducted research. Lastly, the significance of the study was presented to show the necessity of researching current educational practices in successfully transitioning juvenile offenders back into the educational mainstream.

Within Chapter Two of this study, a review of literature included: (a) conceptual framework; (b) No Child Left Behind (NCLB); (c) Division of Youth Services; (d) juvenile justice system; (e) five domains of risk factors; (f) barriers to re-entry; (g) juvenile justice legislation; (h) judicial leadership; and (i) connections and resiliency. In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology were discussed, including the subsections: (a) problems and purpose; (b) research design; (c) population and sample; (d) instrumentation; (e) data collection; and (f) data analysis. Data analysis was presented in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, a summary of the findings related to literature, conclusions, and recommendations for further research were discussed.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

In 2011, 12, 733,166 youth between the ages of 15 and 17 were part of the juvenile justice population (Puzzanchera, Sladky, & Kang, 2012). Based on findings by Altschuler (2008), many of these youth will return to the educational mainstream after leaving very structured juvenile facilities (Altschuler, 2008). To find academic and social success upon re-entry to schools, youth must be provided appropriate support services, which includes not only educators, but social service agencies, making inter-agency coordination critical to student success (Feierman et al., 2009).

The main topics guiding this study included social service systems, the at-risk students in which they serve, the programs implemented to best serve highly at-risk student populations, the risk factors that are barriers for healthy development of at-risk youth, and the connections of each component to ensure youths social and educational success. Each of these systems is representative within the various layers and structures of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of human development. Within this review of literature, the following topics were discussed: conceptual framework, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Division of Youth Services, juvenile justice system, five domains of risk factors, barriers to re-entry, juvenile justice legislation, judicial leadership, and connections and resiliency.

Conceptual Framework

In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model, schools, the social services systems that serve the needs of at-risk youth, families, and the risk factors are all structures within a child's microsystem (see Figure 1). Since this layer of the system is the one most closely related to the child, it includes a variety of structures, such as

family, schools, communities, and other facilities in which children and youth reside (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Extending beyond the microsystem is the mesosystem, which is the layer of the system representative of the connections between the structures within the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
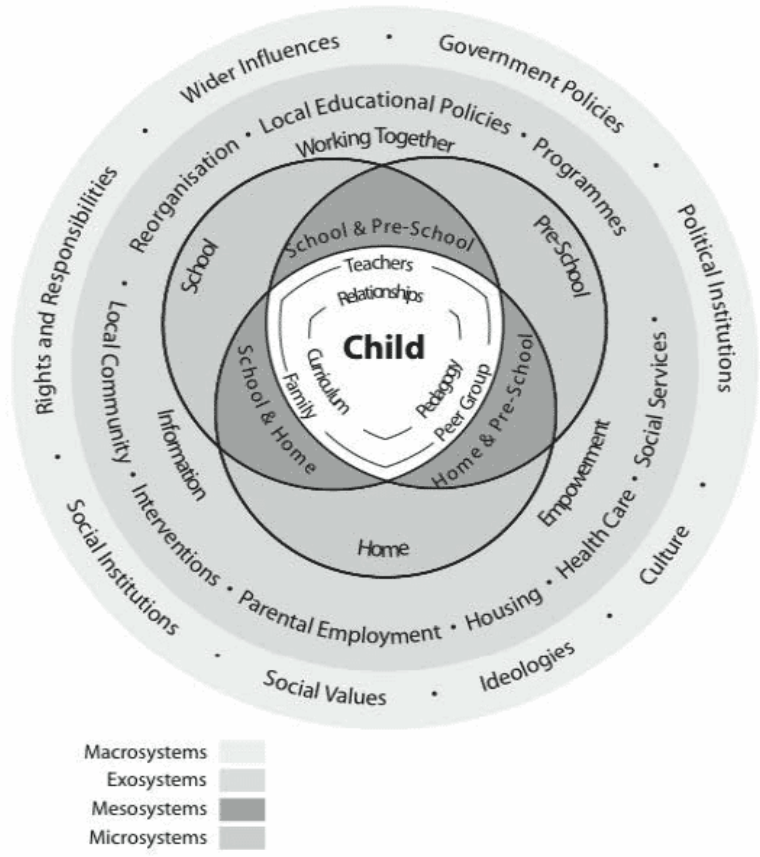
Figure 1. Adapted from "Positive Behaviour in the Early Years: Perceptions of Staff, Service Providers and Parents in Managing and Promoting Positive Behaviour in Early Years and Early Primary Settings," by Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Peter Lee, Jacque Fee, Anne Hughes, Dr Ann Grieve, Dr Helen Marwick, (2008). Copyright Dunlop (2002) after Bronfenbrenner.

Since schools represent an important structure within a child's microsystem, reintegrating students back into the educational mainstream is a critical component to the rehabilitative success of at-risk youth (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). A great deal of research has supported the belief that higher levels of educational achievement are positively correlated to lower incidents of criminal behavior (Annual Report to the Florida Department of Education, 2006). Much like the developmental importance of making ecological connections for healthy youth maturation, cognitive connections are critical to knowledge acquisition for youth (Short, n.d.).

When presented with new information, students must make connections between new information and background knowledge they already possess (Short, n.d.). Making cognitive connections can be difficult for at-risk students, who are attempting to reconnect to the educational mainstream, creating a risk factor for school dropout and recidivism (NDTAC, 2008). According to Short (n.d.):

While the search for connections is a natural part of learning, students' experiences in schools have led many to expect fragmentation and lack of connection in what they are learning. Educators have responded to this fragmentation by emphasizing background experiences. (p. 284)

Although race, class, and culturally different backgrounds are not the sole cause of the achievement gap, they are a contributing factor (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

Due to impoverished living conditions, lack of academic experiences, and background knowledge, academic achievement is negatively impacted for at-risk students (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Many times, academic difficulties cultivate behavioral problems, perpetuating the cycle of delinquent behavior of at-risk learners (Christle,

Jolivette, & Nelson, 2006). To successfully support this student population, it is imperative to make appropriate connections between their ecological systems and provide the tools for them to make cognitive connections necessary to become academically and socially successful (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Juvenile Delinquency and Academic Achievement

Many students involved in the juvenile justice system have complex behavioral and educational needs, making it essential they receive high-quality educational services (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). Leone and Weinberg (2010) noted, "Academic achievement levels of adolescent-aged delinquents rarely exceed elementary grade levels" (p. 10). In another study reviewing the academic performance of juvenile offenders, it was discovered they "scored on average about four years below their age-equivalent peers on standardized tests in reading and math" (Leone & Weinberg, 2010, p. 11).

If these needs are not met, it is difficult for youth to achieve important educational goals (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). As Feierman et al. (2009) noted:

On any given day, approximately 100,000 youth are in some form of juvenile justice placement nationally. Research shows that when these children return from such placements to school, recidivism rates drop and their successful re-entry into the community becomes more likely. (p. 1116)

With educational attainment being a high correlate to future success and reduced recidivism, we must get these kids connected at school (Leone & Weinberg, 2010).

According to Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, and Spann (2008), several sociological theories have been developed by researchers "to explain the relation between academic performance and delinquency" (p.179). Supporters of the differential association theory

contend a person is prone to delinquency when there are more factors favorable of

delinquent behaviors (e.g., academic failure) than those unfavorable (Vito, Maahs, &

Holmes, 2007). Proponents of the school failure theory consider delinquency to be

associated with the "negative self-image that develops from numerous damaging

experiences associated with school" (Katsiyannis et al., 2008, p. 179).

Of the various sociological theories that explain deviance and crime, Bandura's

social learning theory and Hirschi's social control theory both have strong correlations to

juvenile delinquency (Simposon, n.d.). According to Pratt et al. (2012), the social

learning theory is based on the core constructs of differential association, definitions,

imitation, and differential reinforcement, while adding the proposition:

> …that definitions may be general (broadly approving or disapproving of crime) or
> specific to a particular act or situation. Definitions may also be negative
> (oppositional to crime), positive (defining a criminal behavior as desirable), or
> neutralizing (defining crime as permissible). (p. 768)

Conversely, the social control theory is based on the assumption "that school and its

associated pro-social experiences can serve as a social bond to help prevent children from

engaging in delinquent acts" (Katsiyannis et al., 2008, p. 179).

No Child Left Behind

Title I Part D. According to the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice,

strong federal support is the catalyst for states to make effective decisions that help

provide neglected and delinquent youth with the direction and support necessary to

become productive citizens (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009). The federal government

empowered State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to provide Local Education Agencies

(LEAs) with funding to support this student subgroup through, *The Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk*, authorized by Title I Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which was later amended by NCLB in 2001. The U.S. Department of Education provides federal funding to assist SEAs that provide programs for neglected, delinquent, and at-risk youth in various institutions. The legislation also authorizes the SEAs to award sub-grants to LEAs to provide programs for these students in local facilities (NCLB, 2008).

According to Title I Part D §1422 (2008), federal funds can be obligated toward transitional and academic services. The purpose for these allocations is to provide additional resources for transitional programs aimed at helping neglected and delinquent children and youth succeed when they re-enter the school setting (NCLB, 2008). Title I Part D, of NCLB recognizes significant challenges in educating the youth of the juvenile justice system (Blomberg et al., 2006). As Blomberg et al. (2006) noted, Title I Part D, of NCLB contains critical provisions for juvenile justice schools, including:

> …emphasis on students returning to school upon release from an institution, providing transitions, conducting evaluations of juvenile justice schools using specific student learning and community reintegration outcome measures and developing state juvenile justice education plans. (p. 143)

Also included in NCLB mandates is that juvenile justice schools are to be held to the same standards as the public education system and retain highly qualified teachers, maintain 95% participation rates on state tests, and show student progress on state tests (Blomberg et al., 2006).

In Missouri, 54 of the 534 schools received Title I Part D funding for programming to help neglected and delinquent youth (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2008-09). Thirty-five of the districts received funding for programs for neglected youth, 11 received funding for programs for delinquent youth and eight districts received program funding to support neglected and delinquent youth (MODESE, 2008-09). A mere 15% of schools within the state of Missouri received Title I Part D funds (MODESE, 2008-09). The MODESE (2008-09) accepts applications for Title I Part D funds from any local education agency that desires financial assistance with these programs. With almost 70,000 referrals to Missouri's juvenile courts, and an unidentified population of students who consider dropping out of school prior to graduation, there is a need for support services to provide at-risk students with the best chance possible to attain academic success (Missouri Juvenile Court Annual Report, 2007).

Division of Youth Services

According to Missouri Revised Statute (RMoS) Youth Services § 219.016 (2006), the responsibility of the Division of Youth Services (DYS) includes "the prevention and control of juvenile delinquency and the rehabilitation of children" (p. 1). As indicated in statute, coordinated efforts should be made with other public and voluntary organizations involved in efforts to meet the needs of youth involved in the social services system (Youth Services, 2007). Within § 219.016, it is the responsibility of the department for "cooperating with and assisting other agencies serving children and youth" (Youth Services, 2007, p. 1).

According to the DSS Strategic Plan (2006), one of the core functions of the

agency for years 2005-2009 included youth rehabilitation. The determined outcome measures for this core function were a low percentage of youth recommitted to the system, increased academic achievement, and increased educational completion (DSS, 2006). The DSS Strategic Plan (2006) reported that the DYS initiatives are planned with the intention of aiding young offenders in successfully transitioning back into the community. The department has established various strategies to ensure less than 10% of youth are recommitted to the system, of which, two strategies are directly related to effective transitions for youth (DSS, 2006). The first strategy the department employs is for supervisors to ensure that the individual treatment plan of youth includes appropriate planning for family reintegration and successful transitioning back into the community (DSS, 2006).

The second strategy implemented by the DYS, is that the "service coordinator will assure youth are productively involved in school or work while in aftercare" (DSS, 2006, p. 2). One of the goals for the DYS is for youth to earn a high school diploma, either through high school completion or attaining a GED (DSS, 2006). It is reported in the DSS strategic plan that, "service coordinators, facility managers and teachers will work cooperatively with public school officials to improve the transition of students best served by returning to the public school setting to complete their basic education requirements" (DSS, 2006, p. 5).   The strategies recognized in this plan, show that the department has a keen understanding of the importance of education and productive involvement of offenders to reduce recidivism rates (DSS, 2006).

Juvenile Justice System

Education. Understanding the importance of offering effective educational

services to youth who are under the jurisdiction of juvenile courts, RMoS, Juvenile

Courts § 211.015 (2007) mandated the MODESE and the DSS conduct a study to ensure

that educational needs of these children are being met. According to § 211.015 (2007),

the study was not only to contain the procedures, appropriateness of the education, and

student class hours, but also "recommendations for determining the responsibility,

financial or otherwise, among either the local school district and child-placing agency or

both as to the proper and timely placement of such children in an appropriate educational

setting" (p. 1).

   Missouri Juvenile Court Statistics. The total number of juvenile court referrals

in Missouri in 2007 was 69,385 (Division of Youth Services [DYS], 2007). Law

violations totaled 37,249 referrals, which accounted for 54% of all juvenile court referrals

in 2007 (DYS, 2007). When these youth are eventually released and reintegrated back

into society, many return to the public school system (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). Some

children and youth are involved in the juvenile court system because they have been

abused, neglected, or involved in custody disputes (DYS, 2007). According to the 2007

Missouri Juvenile Court Annual Report:

   A total of 5,080 referrals were placed out-of-home in 2007. The Children's

   Division received 56% of these placements. Another 24% placements were made

   to DYS. Other placement categories include court residential care, relatives other

   than parents, private agencies, or public agencies. (p. 7)

Unfortunately, it is difficult for at-risk youth to successfully transition back into the

educational mainstream (NDTAC, 2008). Abrupt exits and re-entry of these students to

and from the public school setting is not only difficult for the student, but can also be difficult for teachers and school administrators (Altschuler, 2008).

Five Domains of Risk Factors

Delinquency does not take place in isolation; it is the result of a variety of complex factors involving diverse social institutions (Elrod & Ryder, 2011). According to Howell and Egley (2005), risk factors for juvenile offenders include "those elements in an individual's life that increase his or her vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes and also increase the probability of maintenance of a problem condition or digression to a more serious state" (p. 335). Durlak et al. (2007) noted the five domains of risk factors for delinquency, which includes community, family, school, peer groups, and individual levels (see Figure 2). These are fundamental components identified in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

RISK FACTORS BY DOMAIN	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence	Depression/Anxiety
Community						
Availability of Drugs	■				■	
Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	■	■			■	
Transitions and Mobility	■	■		■		■
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	■	■			■	
Extreme Economic Deprivation	■	■	■	■	■	
Family						
Family History of the Problem Behavior	■	■	■	■	■	■
Family Management Problems	■	■	■	■	■	■
Family Conflict	■	■	■	■	■	■
Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior	■	■			■	
School						
Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lack of Commitment to School	■	■	■	■	■	
Individual/Peer						
Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	■	■	■	■	■	■
Rebelliousness	■	■		■		
Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior	■	■	■	■	■	
Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior	■	■	■	■		
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior	■	■	■	■	■	
Constitutional Factors	■	■			■	■
Gang Involvement	■	■			■	

Source: Social Development Research Group, University of Washington.

Figure 2. Risk and protective factor framework. Adapted from Prevention WINS (2011).

In the Annual Report of the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (2009), it is recognized that there are unique biological, social, and developmental challenges encountered by juvenile offenders. Barriers that prevent juvenile offenders from successfully transitioning to adulthood emerge in the ecological domains of the individual, family, school, and community as risk factors (Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk, & Yamamoto, 2009). The problematic behaviors of juvenile offenders are often derived from multiple determinants, which are often highly related (Howell & Egley Jr., 2005). According to Chew, Osseck, Raygor, Eldridge-Houser, and Cox (2010):

> Possessing high numbers of developmental assets greatly reduces the likelihood of a young person engaging in risky behaviors that have both negative short and long-term impacts on their health. Aided by these assets, youth have the potential to achieve higher grades in school, display high levels of self-esteem, and have the ability to make social adjustments in a positive manner. (p. 67)

According to Christle and Yell (2008), **"**the greater the number of risk factors to which a youth is exposed, the greater the likelihood he or she will become involved in the juvenile justice system" (p. 149).

In 2004, the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth developed a comprehensive response to the issue of youth failure in which they acknowledged many youth are not raised in an environment conducive to meet their health, emotional, educational, and developmental needs (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008). The task force noted the significant role that government agencies play in the lives of these disadvantaged youth (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008). Within the 13 recommendations

from the task force, it was noted that efforts should be made to target reform efforts toward youth who manifest risk factors for delinquency, as well as youth within public care (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008).

Many administrators of entities that support troubled youth recognize the negative effect of youth exposed to the risk factors that impede healthy child development (DYS, 2007). The Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice (2009) noted in the core values that youth in the juvenile justice system are entitled to integrated services, as well as "services based on an objective assessment of risk and protective factors, equally accessible across all classes, cultures, jurisdictions, and linguistic and ethnic groups, which are individualized, gender specific, and developmentally appropriate" (p. xi). Within the core values, it is also indicated that communities, as well as juveniles within the system, "are entitled to a system in which individuals and entities work in a collaborative manner" (Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2009, p. xi).

Community. The community in which a child lives affects his or her development (Chilenski & Greenberg, 2009). The political and economic contexts in which a family resides has intense influence on the lifestyle of a family (Elrod & Ryder, 2011). According to Barton and Butts (2008), when living in a disadvantaged community:

> …the increased prevalence of mental health problems among youth in the juvenile justice system is at least in part due to the economic and social conditions of the neighborhoods in which they live, rather than to inherit individual differences between offenders and non-offenders. (p. 5)

Youth developmental experts have recognized the developmental process involves the

interactions youth engage in with adults from a wide range of social environmental structures (Barton & Butts, 2008).

The ecological domain in which families live "shapes the family's access to and interconnection with other institutions, such as work establishments, schools, churches, and volunteer associations. These institutions can function as resources for the family and can facilitate access to other resources" (Elrod & Ryder, 2011, p. 57). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979):

The environmental events that are the most immediate and potent in affecting a person's development are activities that are engaged in by others with that person or in her presence. Active engagement in, or even mere exposure to, what others are doing often inspires the person to undertake similar activities on her own.

(p. 32)

Children who are raised in disorganized neighborhoods with high crime rates and prevalence of drugs are often influenced by their surroundings, increasing their chances for participating in delinquent behavior (Shader, 2009). Some of the major community risk factors that promote juvenile delinquency include community laws and norms that are favorable to illegal activity (Risk and Protective Factors, n.d.).

Positive community influences on youth help reduce their chances for recidivism (Warren, 2007). Unruh et al. (2009) noted, "moreover, when youth report positive membership in their communities, their likelihood to re-offend or engage in antisocial behavior may decrease" (p. 213). In a study examining the risk and protective factors for juveniles across their ecological domains, Unruh et al. (2009) reported:

More than half of the youth interviewed (26 youth, 51%) identified access to

drugs in their community as a barrier to successful community adjustment.

Related to drug use, youth also indicated a need for more accessible healthy

leisure activities in their communities (24 youth, 47%). From church attendance

to gym membership, youth identified a range of activities they would like to see

available to replace their negative behaviors of gang membership and drug and

alcohol use (e.g. sports, hunting and fishing, skateboarding parks, reading, etc.).

(p. 213)

Juvenile offenders also reported they were less likely to return to the same peers and

hangouts when there was access to positive community resources, decreasing the chances

of reoffending (Unruh et al., 2009). Bilichik and Nash (2008) noted, "Young people

living in stable communities with safe schools, access to healthcare, and supportive adult

and peer relationships are more likely to thrive" (p. 17).

Family. Although various factors influence a child's developmental process,

researchers have noted family as a predominant role in shaping the emerging personality

of a child (Brown, Mangelsdorf, Neff, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Frosch, 2009). Families play

a pivotal role in both the healthy or adverse development and socialization of children

(Elrod & Ryder, 2011). The relationships children have with family are a possible

positive correlate to their early self-concepts (Brown et al., 2009). These relationships

can also be a key factor in the prevention of delinquency (Elrod & Ryder, 2011).

According to Chew et al. (2010), "A supportive family and community can provide many

of the external assets that encourage positive, healthy choices needed by youth for

successful development and maturation" (p. 67).

Family risk factors are characterized by children who have a poor relationship

with their parents, strict or lenient discipline, poorly monitored, uninvolved or antisocial parents, broken homes, family conflict, or a low socioeconomic status (Shader, 2009). According to Unruh et al. (2009), in a study considering adjudicated youth views of the importance of family, "thirty-six (72%) respondents described the need for strong emotional support from family members in order to experience a successful adulthood trajectory. These youth viewed their families' emotional support as a vital factor for reducing continued negative behaviors" (p. 212).

Family support can also be a protective factor for youth when they have a positive and supportive relationship with their parents and other adults, parents' approval of peer choices, and close parental monitoring (Shader, 2009). In a study examining the risk and protective factors for juveniles across their ecological domains, Unruh et al. (2009) noted:

> While youth identified specific ways their families could be supportive, a myriad of potential barriers additionally were mentioned. Youth identified their families as potential barriers when family members were involved in gangs, drugs, alcohol, violence or the adult criminal justice system. Youth voiced a strong need to have a stable place to live to support positive development. Lacking this stable environment, many youth reported that they would return to their old peer groups and negative behaviors and activities. (p. 212)

Poverty often limits high levels of family involvement, affecting student achievement and risk for delinquency (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Persons with low incomes often struggle to overcome barriers, such as lack of health benefits, less family time due to shift work, inability to hire tutors, and less secure jobs (Burney & Beilke, 2008). It is critical for schools to be relentless in their efforts to involve, educate,

support, and communicate with families of poverty (Burney & Beilke, 2008).

The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study, conducted by Coleman et al. (1966) indicated that socioeconomic status was a greater indicator of student achievement deficits than resources. According to a study conducted by Burney & Beilke (2008), "opportunities to learn in group settings and exposure to information-rich environments have been found to be less available to children in poverty, placing them at a disadvantage relative to more affluent classmates when they enter the school environment" (p. 181). When children are raised in poverty, their parents provide less cognitive stimulation in their formative years, than the parents of their more affluent classmates (Jensen, 2009).

In 2011, approximately 46.2 million families in the United States were living below the poverty level, which translated to 15% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The percentages of minorities living in poverty almost doubled that rate with 27.4% of Blacks and 26.5% of Hispanics living below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). With high percentages of minority students living below the poverty level, meeting proficiency targets in subgroups can create exigent barriers for educators in educational systems that are not resourced with high quality programs for at-risk learners (Burney & Beilke, 2008).

Children born into families of poverty endure many situational and behavioral factors that can impede their achievement outcomes (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Just a few of the issues experienced by children living in poverty include more health related concerns, inadequate housing, inadequate nutrition, and higher mobility rates (Rebell, 2007). Researchers have provided a great deal of insight into the mindsets of individuals

in various economic classes, explaining characteristic differences such as social norms, language register, and support systems that challenge students in poverty as they maneuver through an educational system tailored to the middle class (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Each situational and behavioral issue negatively impacts a student's chance for high levels of achievement (Altschuler, 2008).

School. School is an important social structure for youth, since it is the avenue that will provide them with the academic and educational attainment necessary to find future success (Elrod & Ryder, 2011). Blomberg, Bales and Piquero (2012) addressed the role of education, citing researchers have consistently reported "less involvement in delinquency among youth who were committed and attached to school, spent significant time studying, and made good grades" (p. 202)

School connectedness is critical to the success of youth, predicting academic competence, future employment, and educational attainment (Kelly et al., 2011). Students with a weak connection and commitment to school, poor attendance, high number of suspensions or expulsions, and academic difficulties are at a substantially higher risk of juvenile delinquency than students who have a strong connection at school (Denning & Homel, 2008). According to Katsiyannis et al. (2008), "Researchers have also reported delinquent youth earn significantly lower course grades in school than their non-delinquent peers and score lower on standardized academic achievement tests" (p. 181). Low intelligence and low school achievement are on the list of moderately strong predictors of juvenile delinquency (Spinger & Roberts, 2011).

The DYS has recognized academic achievement as a protective factor for at-risk youth by using it as an outcome measure to ensure the effective rehabilitation of youth

(DSS, 2006). According to the DSS Strategic Plan (2006), "youth entering the Division of Youth Services (DYS) typically are academically behind their age peers" (p. 70). The division's goals are to narrow the gap between at-risk youth and their peers and increase the number of students who complete school (DSS, 2006). The DYS representatives are making a concerted effort for positive educational attainment by implementing a performance based curriculum, utilizing teaching strategies that promote problem-solving in math and science, as well as focusing on improved literacy (DSS, 2006).

Peer level. Research concerning peer associations and delinquency has often taken the sociological approach to study the group dynamic of delinquency (Katsiyannis et al., 2008). In a study conducted to determine what juvenile offenders perceived as barriers to a positive transition into their adult lives, adjudicated youth ascertained that peer association could be a possible protective or risk factors for successful transitions. According to Unruh et al. (2009):

> Youth identified their peers as a contributive factor to positive behavioral development. In fact, 24 youth (47%) recognized peers as a potential protective factor, citing the importance of having peer support, enjoying school because of the social opportunities it presents, and engaging in healthy leisure activities with friends. Conversely, 41 (87%) identified peers as a potential barrier leading to continued involvement with gangs, antisocial behavior (violence, crime, etc.) and drugs and alcohol. (p. 213)

Peer groups are a risk factor when youth surround themselves with peers who have weak social ties, antisocial behavior, delinquent behaviors, or gang membership (Shader, 2009). Peer groups can also serve as a protective factor when transitioning youth make

connections with "friends who engage in conventional behavior" (Shader, 2009, p. 4).

Individual level. Individual qualities and traits can be contributing risk factor for juvenile delinquency (Shader, 2009). According to Chin-Chih, Symons, and Reynolds (2011), "Early disruptive behavior and aggression consistently have been shown to be associated with later delinquent and criminal behavior in adolescence and adulthood" (p. 6). Simões and Matos noted (2008), "positive expectations and attitudes towards delinquency, low levels of social and decision making skills, maladjustment symptoms, certain personality traits, like aggressiveness or sensation seeking, can be risk factors at this level" (p. 391). Additional risk factors for juvenile delinquency can include antisocial behavior, poor cognitive development, and impulsivity (Unruh et al., 2009).

Academic failure is a leading factor in the development of antisocial behavior (Chin-Chih et al., 2011). Low intelligence is a moderately strong predictor of youth offending (Spinger & Roberts, 2011). According to Chin-Chih et al. (2011), "evidence consistently shows that poor academic performance is related to subsequent delinquency and violent behavior" (p. 6).

Research also indicates a strong correlation between youth who have been diagnosed with an emotional or behavioral disorder (Katsiyannis et al., 2008). According to Katsiyannis et al. (2008), "...45% of youths in correctional facilities qualify for special education as individuals with EBD" (p. 184). According to Chin-Chih et al. (2011), "For adolescents with ED, aggression in childhood was found to be associated with later antisocial behavior" (p. 6). It was also noted that students with disabilities display more classroom maladaptive behavior, resulting in more discipline incidents at school (Chin-Chih, et al., 2011).

Barriers to Re-Entry

According to the DSS (2006), "While many youth do return to the public school setting after release, it is believed a significant number do not complete their graduation requirements before dropping out" (p. 5). As a strategy to combat this phenomenon, the DYS has determined the necessity of its shareholders to work collaboratively with public school officials to improve the transition of students that do return to the public school setting (DSS, 2006).

In a study conducted to determine barriers to providing juvenile offenders with a quality education, the need for better transition services for these students was mentioned:

One teacher stated that "everyone needs to work together on the transition plan for the student." This can be done by check[ing] the plan every 6 months" and "making follow-up contact each quarter." Teachers stated that "better cooperation with the receiving school" would be another facilitator to this problem and would help with students' "assimilation to district norms." They suggest that "plan[ning] trips to get students gradually back into the community" is needed. (Houchins, Puckett-Patterson, Crosby, Shippen, & Jolivette, 2009, p. 163)

A great deal of attention has been focused on increased school referrals to the juvenile justice system, but there has not been enough focus on the barriers youth face when they return to public schools after release from the juvenile justice system (Feierman et al., 2009). According to Zubrzycki (2012):

The responsibilities of the various agencies and schools involved in the

transition are often not clearly defined by state or local regulation, and

students are left to navigate through vague procedures and cope with a lack

of educational continuity without clear guidance or support. (p. 6)

School administrators and teachers play an important role in helping youth re-enter into

the educational mainstream, since they can act as a hub for various agencies to provide

services (Zubrzycki, 2012).

Unfortunately, re-entry youth sometimes find re-enrollment difficult, when

confronting policies and procedures set forth by the schools (Feierman et al., 2009).

Some schools have concerns about returning youth posing a safety threat or that they will

score poorly on standardized testing, compromising the federal accountability measures

of No Child Left Behind (Feierman et al., 2009). According to Zubrzycki (2012), authors

of a Georgetown report of youth transitioning back into school from juvenile facilities

found, "…schools that simply refused to enroll students, which the authors attributed

partly to pressure on schools due to No Child Left Behind, the federal law that requires

schools to show progress in raising student achievement" (p. 6).

Lack of coordination of paperwork between agencies can sometimes cause a

barrier for students, who may be denied enrollment (Feierman et al., 2009).

Other re-enrollment issues arise when certain academic and vocational programs do not

allow for enrollees midyear, and sometimes even after a student's freshman and

sophomore year (Feierman et al., 2009).   According to Zubrzycki (2012), "students [are]

unable to receive credit for courses taken in juvenile facilities, or being prohibited from

attending class while waiting up to six months for transcripts and records to transfer" (p.

6). Schools sometimes do not accept all credits juveniles received while in detention

facilities, questioning the quality of educational program (Feierman et al., 2009).

Taylor, Banner and Hartman (2012) noted:

> Schools use a variety of excuses and evade general school-access requirements in order to keep these students out. School safety concerns are often cited to justify student exclusion, which affects particularly vulnerable groups of students including youth on probation, girls who are pregnant, students with perceived and actual disciplinary problems, or those who are or are thought to be academically low performing. Some students are kept out based on the rationale that they are too old, have too few credits, or some combination of the two. (p. 7)

According to Feierman et al. (2009), "As a result of these and other problems, dropout rates are extraordinarily high for youth returning from care. A national study reports that more than 66% of youth in custody drop out of school after they are released" (p. 1117).

Juvenile Justice Legislation

In 1974, Congress recognized the need to address juvenile delinquency prevention and improve juvenile justice; legislation was then passed to enact the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDPA) (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008). According to Teske and Huff (2010):

> [The JJDPA] creates a partnership among the federal government, states, and U.S. territories to create more effective juvenile justice systems premised on standards for the fair treatment of court-involved youth, and to reduce over-reliance on incarceration, while still holding youth accountable and keeping communities safe. (p. 54)

The JJDPA was a milestone in federal juvenile justice legislation, which focused on the

best interest and care of youth involved in the juvenile justice system (Hughes, n.d.).

Hughes (n.d.) noted two key factors in the 1974 legislation, which included "separation of juveniles from incarcerated adults and deinstitutionalization of status offenders (DSO)" (p. 30). Teske and Huff (2010) noted under the DSO mandate, "states may not place status youth in secure (that is, locked) detention. Rather, states must implement policies and programs that provide status youth with the family and community-based services needed to address and ameliorate root causes of their behavior" (p. 54). Prior to the DSO mandate, youth status offenders were incarcerated (Hughes, n.d.) According to Hughes (n.d.), inclusion of the DSO mandate within the 1974 JJDPA, showed that "Congress recognized that status offenses should be treated differently than crimes and delinquent acts" (p. 30).

In 1977, there was a reauthorization of the JJDPA, which focused on the DSO, placing additional emphasis on treating youth instead of incarcerating offenders (Hughes, n.d.). According to Teske and Huff (2010):

> A statutory exception to this mandate is the valid court order (VCO) exception.
> Under the VCO exception, judges may order the locked detention of a status
> youth who has violated a direct order of the court not to commit a repeat or
> additional status offense, such as running away again or breaking curfew. (p. 55)

Research later showed that what was intended to keep status youth from locked facilities was misused, and many youth status offenders were being placed in locked facilities (Teske & Huff, 2010). Hughes noted (n.d.), "by 1992, the JJDPA was amended to include additional requirements to make the four core requirements still present in the law today: sight and sound separation, jail removal, disproportionate minority contact and

deinstitutionalization of status offenders" (p. 30). The last reauthorization of JJDPA, by Congress, took place in 2002 (Hughes, n.d.).

The JJDPA also created the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), as well as established the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2008). One of the statutory responsibilities of the council is to "examine how programs can be coordinated among federal, state, and local governments to better serve at-risk youth" (Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008, p. 32). According to the Coordinating Council 2008 Report, the council supports the OJJDP mission of improving the well being of at-risk children and youth through the following goals:

1. Strengthen the practice of inter- and intra-agency youth-focused collaboration

2. Increase knowledge, dissemination, and use of evidence-based programs in juvenile justice and prevention work

3. Elevate the importance of a comprehensive juvenile justice agenda at the federal level, and achieve an increased alignment of goals between the juvenile justice and other systems at all levels of government. (p. 4)

By reaching goals of increased inter-agency collaboration, use of evidence-based programs, and approaching juvenile justice in a comprehensive manner, program effectiveness should yield positive benefits for youth offenders (Altschuler, 2008).

In 1994, Title V funds were made available, and according to the U.S.

Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs (2009):

…the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has administered the Title V Community Prevention Grants Program (Title V program), which provides funds to help communities develop and implement delinquency prevention programs. The Title V program focuses on helping youth avoid involvement in delinquency by reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors in their schools, communities, and families. (p. 1)

Of the 34 Title V program areas noted, delinquency, diversion, school programs, and youth courts, child abuse and neglect programs, and mental health services, were programming available to receive funding (U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, 2009). Each of these programs supports protective factors that lessen the risk of juvenile delinquency (Durlak et al., 2007).

Judicial Leadership

There is no individual agency that is equipped to address the range of services needed by at-risk youth involved in multiple social service systems, so many have begun to research ways to provide more protective factors for youth (Bilchik & Nash, 2008). In many cases, a juvenile court judge operates as the administrator of court staff, affording them the ability to ensure inter-agency coordination (Flexner & Baldwin, 2012). According to Bilchik and Nash (2008):

Judges in both delinquency and dependency courts are in a unique position to foster collaboration among agencies so that the multi-dimensional needs of crossover youths may be met. Judges may utilize a range of strategies that can actively engage stakeholders while holding them accountable; changes meant to address the multi-faceted needs of our most challenged young people can be

institutionalized within the courts; and judges can ensure that the data provided to

and collected in the courtroom will further the development of the best practices

in serving crossover youths. (p. 17)

Teske and Huff (2010) discussed the importance of advocating for collaboration citing,

"judicial leadership both from the bench and off the bench is the key to good detention

practice" (p. 57). In order to cultivate an effective culture of inter-agency coordination

within any jurisdiction, it is critical for judicial leadership to be knowledgeable of the

comprehensive needs of these highly at-risk youth (Bilchik & Nash, 2008).

Juvenile court judges play an important role in making decisions that ensure youth

are provided the best possible chance at success (Flexner & Baldwin, 2012). According

to Bilchik and Nash (2008):

The prestige and respect garnered by the judiciary, coupled with the power to

bring disparate stakeholders together, can enable judges to become the catalysts

behind critical system reform. The research only confirms what many in the field

already know; abused and neglected children are more likely to commit

delinquent acts and have problems integrating into our communities both as

adolescents and adults. Collaboration will translate to healthier, more capable

youths in the short-term and to safer, more stable communities in the long run.

Taking on a leadership role in systems integration is not easy, but it is essential

for judges dedicated to serving young people, their families, and their

communities. (p. 20)

Inter-agency coordination is critical for many of these youth who move across various

social service systems, and a collective effort must be made to produce positive outcomes

for youth (Teske & Huff, 2010). The disruptions caused as these youth move between systems can leave some youth ineligible for necessary educational and health services as well as loss of connections to their judges, attorneys, and any other advocates (Altschuler, 2008). According to Bilchik and Nash (2008), "Judicial leadership can facilitate cross-system collaboration to ensure that crossover youths and their families maintain access to services and continuity of representation" (p.18).

To achieve best practice in juvenile justice systems, it is necessary to involve police, schools, social services, community partners, and all other stakeholders in the process of understanding the law, needs of youth, and resources necessary to best serve at-risk youth (Teske, 2011). Teske (2011) reported:

Just as collaboration is the key to detention reform, judicial leadership is the key to collaboration. Despite most judges favorable disposition to detention reform, many juvenile justice practitioners have commented that they would like their judge to show more leadership in addressing the underlying causes of unnecessary detention — especially the school system's zero tolerance policies. (n.p.)

Judges serve in a capacity in which they have the authority and credibility of the bench to involve pertinent shareholders to develop sustainable policies and practices that will meet the various needs of youth offenders (Bilchik & Nash, 2008). According to Teske and Huff (2010), "A judge's collaborative efforts to connect the bench and community increases the effectiveness of juvenile justice. When this occurs, the kid, victim and community win. This is what we call Balance and Restorative Justice" (p. 1).

A judge's role extends beyond the adjudication of a case; a judge should make sure the various agencies successfully complete court-mandated programs (Bilchik & Nash, 2008). According to Teske (2011):

> I believe former NCJFCJ [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges] president Judge Leonard Perry Edwards and recipient of the National Center for State Courts Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence best describes this unique dichotomous leadership when he said '. . . we have to get off the bench and work in the community. We have to ask these agencies in the community to work together to support our efforts so that the orders we make on the bench can be fulfilled. We have to be champions of collaboration.' (p. 1)

It is imperative that judges exert their leadership to ensure inter-agency collaboration takes place and sustainable policies and practices become effective actions that positively impact the lives of at-risk youth (Bilchik & Nask, 2008).

Connections and Resiliency

Resiliency is the human ability to overcome oppositional situations; with regard to at-risk students of poverty, resilience enables them to find success despite the risk factors they face in day-to-day life (Burney & Beilke, 2008). According to research, "Effective coping strategies differ depending upon particular circumstances, but successful academic experiences can enhance self-efficacy, which, in turn, supports resiliency" (Burney & Beilke, 2008, p. 181). Burney and Beilke (2008) noted, "… although high ability was not a predictor or requirement of the capacity to overcome adversity, cognitive ability was a supporting factor for the development of resilience" (p. 181).

Research shows that youth returning from juvenile justice placements tend to underperform academically, proving the necessity to provide positive educational experiences that will foster a resilient attitude (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). It is importance for re-entry youth to make connections with a caring person, who encourages self-efficacy and optimistic attitude (Burney & Beilke, 2008). According to Burney and Beilke (2008) additional protective factors for at-risk youth include, "supportive adults, friendships with other high achievers, and opportunities for advanced courses and involvement" (p. 181).

Summary

In the review of literature, the ecological model of human development, NCLB, the Division of Youth Services, the juvenile justice system, the five domains of risk factors for juvenile delinquency, barriers to re-entry, juvenile justice legislation, judicial leadership, and connections and resiliency were discused.

Effectively educating at-risk youth at high levels can be a complex task, when one considers the barriers that impede their progress toward high levels of learning (Houchins et al., 2009). To overcome these obstacles and achieve at proficient levels, these students must be provided a fair and equitable education (Feierman et al., 2009). Collaboration between public schools and other state and federal agencies would help to effectively educate children of all backgrounds, in all situations, to raise student achievement and leave no child behind (Livers, 2009).

Chapter Two included a review of literature related to agencies involved in transitioning juvenile delinquents back into school, as well as the legislation that guided practices of those agencies. In Chapter Three, the methodology and design of the study

were addressed. Analysis of data was presented in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, a summary of the findings related to literature, conclusions, and recommendations for further research were discussed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Problem and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of the importance of inter-agency collaboration in effectively transitioning students from secure juvenile facilities back into the educational mainstream. According to Trochim (2005), "Phenomenology is a school of thought that focuses on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world" (p. 18). Qualitative data were obtained to gain a richer understanding of how judges view this phenomenon. Quantitative information was gathered and analyzed to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system from court appointed juvenile justice facilities. The NCLB accountability measures were reviewed to discover if the measures create an administrative reluctance to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream.

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What inter-agency involvement is necessary in implementing a successful re-entry program?

2. What are the characteristics of successful school re-entry programs for juvenile delinquents as they transition back into the public school setting?

3. Due to the pressures of NCLB accountability measures, what are the reasons educators are reluctant to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream?

Research Design

A mixed-methods design was used to achieve a deeper understanding of the connections between a child's ecological systems and how at-risk youth adapt to changes

as they move between ecological environments. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007):

> Mixed-methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

With the rich complexity of social issues infused in this topic of study, qualitative and quantitative measures were used in this social research project to better understand the phenomenon of inter-agency coordination in transitioning adjudicated youth back into the educational mainstream. For purposes of this study, qualitative data consisted of coded responses from judge and drug court administrator interviews. Quantitative data consisted of survey response data from principals of public high schools, DYS, and juvenile officers.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was comprised of system administrators, juvenile judges, and court administrators. Criteria for selection included system administrators working in one Missouri region. This region was comprised of eight DYS residential facilities, two DYS day treatment centers, nine juvenile divisions, and 100 high schools covering 24 counties. Administrators from each of these facilities were surveyed and

interviews were conducted with circuit court judges from the region.

A purposive sample was used to ensure the viewpoints from all child service agencies were adequately represented in this study. The sample was selected with the purpose of surveying three predetermined groups (Trochim, 2005). A non-proportional quota sampling of participants also aided in gathering specific insight and experiences from each subgroup and their process for transitioning students between detention facilities and public school systems.

Non-proportional quota sampling is less restrictive and allows the researcher to involve smaller groups in the research (Trochim, 2005). This was important to this study since the number of high school principals in the region far outweighed the population of the DYS administrators and juvenile officers. Quantitative data, in the form of an online survey, were collected from principals, juvenile divisions, and detention facilities. Qualitative data, from face-to-face interviews, were collected from court judges located in the DYS region.

Instrumentation

For purposes of this study, survey and interview protocols were designed to elicit information that was useful for analysis. The theory of pattern matching was used to assess construct validity of the survey instrument. Patterns were linked between the theoretical realm of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) for healthy human development and the observational realm of protective factors that reduce the risk of juvenile delinquency (Trochim, 2005). To avoid errors that might adversely affect the results, the following three guidelines were used in question construction: question content, purpose selection of response format, and wording of the questions (Creswell,

2011). The survey and statements were field-tested by the dissertation committee members to assure clarity and understanding. The members offered suggestions, which were incorporated in the survey.

A Likert scale, which is a measurement instrument that provides a rating scale, was used to determine the scope of collaborative efforts of transitional programs for adjudicated youth (McBurney & White, 2009). Survey statements (see Appendix A) addressed key elements of effective transition programs for adjudicated youth. The survey was disseminated electronically to all administrators.   In an effort to gather meaningful qualitative data, face-to-face interviews were used in conjunction with the electronic surveys. Interviews were conducted with a juvenile drug court administrator and circuit court judges in the Missouri region.

Data Collection

As suggested by Stake (2010), the method for gathering data should be "selected to fit the research question and to fit the style of inquiry the researcher prefers" (pp. 89-90). The first set of data was collected from an online survey. The list of participants included 119 administrators of various child serving agencies to ensure sufficient coverage and sampling. The survey was sent via electronic mail with a cover letter (see Appendix B). In two weeks, there was a second mailing of the survey to participants who had not responded.

The second set of data collection, from face-to-face interviews was gathered. Interview subjects included two court judges and one juvenile drug court administrator within the Missouri region. Scripted interview questions (see Appendix C) were provided to each judge, with a cover letter, prior to the scheduled interview (see

Appendix D). Interviewees were contacted by phone to set interview dates. The

researcher met individually with each judge to explore various topics to uncover the

participants' views of this phenomenon. With signed consent from each judge and drug

court administrator, the interviews were audio-taped (see Appendix E).

The convergence of multiple data sources allowed the researcher to triangulate the

data. According to Creswell and Plano (2007), "[triangulation data is] referred to as

'multilevel research'. In a multilevel model, different methods (quantitative and

qualitative) are used to address different levels within a system. The findings from each

level are merged together into one overall interpretation" (p. 65). As noted by Creswell

and Plano (2007), one of the strengths of the triangulation design is "data can be collected

and analyzed separately and independently, using the techniques traditionally associated

with each data type" (p. 66).

Data Analysis

Survey responses were automatically stored in a spreadsheet integrated with the

electronic survey in Google documents. Responses were reported as a holistic group, as

well as non-proportional quota sampling groups (i.e., high school principals, DYS

administrators, juvenile division administrators). Responses from the Likert scale were

coded with a numerical scale for analysis. From the numerical data, the researcher

reduced the data into descriptive statistics to present quantitative descriptions of the data.

Responses from the survey were further explored with inferential statistical

techniques. According to Creswell (2007), the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

is used to determine the significance of the mean between two or more groups. An

ANOVA was applied for each survey statement, as well as each theme embedded in the

survey. When significant differences were found between groups, a post hoc analysis using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance were conducted to determine the level of statistical significance. Data results were presented in tables.

Qualitative data gathered from the face-to-face interviews was coded for data analysis. According to Salaña (2009), "A code in qualitative inquiry is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion-based or visual data" (p. 3). Coding was conducted during and after data collection as an analytic tactic for exploratory and problem-solving purposes (Salaña, 2009).

Responses to interview questions were analyzed to find patterns in data. The researcher determined patterns by identifying shared characteristics within the data sets (Salaña, 2009). Salaña (2009) posed, "Qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns and meanings of human experience" (p. 10). Transcripts of the interview responses were qualitatively coded. Coding of the qualitative data took part in two cycles. The first cycle of coding was conducted in the initial stages of data analysis dividing the data into subcategories (Salaña, 2009). The second cycle of data analysis involved more complex procedures, such as classifying and categorizing the data (Salaña, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher prepared and submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. The final disposition report stating approval of the proposed study was received before any research was conducted (see Appendix F). The raw data obtained from the survey and interviews were secured under

the supervision of the researcher. No personally identifiable information from survey respondents or interviewees occurred in publication. Therefore, anonymity confidentiality were insured. All paper and electronic documents will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

Summary

The research methodology and design were presented in Chapter Three. The problem and purpose of the research were detailed in the introduction followed by the research questions. Justification of the population and sample was presented. The purpose for choosing a mixed-methods study was explained and the instrumentation design was presented. A description of the data collection and analysis process followed.

This mixed-methods study used the afore-mentioned statistical measures to gain a richer understanding of how administrators of these various agencies view and experience the phenomenon of inter-agency collaboration in transitioning at-risk youth from juvenile facilities to the educational mainstream. The collection, review, and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data determined the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system from court appointed juvenile justice facilities.

In Chapter Four, data analysis was presented. Data results were presented by individual survey responses, themed survey responses, and face-to-face survey data. In Chapter Five, a summary of the findings related to literature, conclusions, and recommendations for further research were discussed.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system from court appointed juvenile justice facilities. Inter-agency coordination between child-serving agencies would help to effectively educate youth and raise student achievement (Livers, 2009). The study was also used to determine the implementation needed for effective inter-agency coordination of social service systems for students to successfully transition back into the educational mainstream.

A mixed-methods design was used to determine the transition practices of various child-serving agencies as well as circuit court judges' perceptions of best practices. In this study, an online survey of child-service agency administrators was administered to collect quantitative data. To enrich the study, qualitative data were gathered from interviews conducted with circuit court judges. An ecological model of human development in conjunction with the five domains of risk factors for juvenile delinquency provided the conceptual framework through which the data were reviewed.

This study was conducted within one Missouri region, which was comprised of eight DYS residential facilities, two DYS day treatment centers, nine juvenile divisions, and 100 high schools covering 24 counties. The sample for this study included system administrators working in the region. Administrators from each of these facilities were surveyed and interviews were conducted with circuit court judges from the region.

A purposive sample was used to ensure the viewpoints from all child service agencies were adequately represented in this study. A non-proportional quota sampling of participants also aided in gathering specific insight and experiences from each

subgroup and their process for transitioning students between detention facilities and public school systems. Of the 109 high school principals surveyed, there were 15 (14%) respondents. Of the 34 juvenile officers surveyed, there were six (18%) respondents. Of the 10 DYS administrators surveyed, there were seven (70%) respondents.

Organization of Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter was to present a summary of collected data regarding the practices of preparing juvenile offenders to re-enter the educational mainstream. Data analysis was conducted in two stages. In stage one, was gleaned information from individual survey responses as well as responses from themes incorporated into the survey statements; descriptive and inferential statistical information was reported. The results from stage one represented responses from the eight DYS residential facilities, two DYS day treatment centers, nine juvenile divisions, and 100 high schools encompassed within the Missouri region. Stage two was a review of qualitative data from personal interviews of circuit court judges and juvenile drug court administrator.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data, in the form of a survey, were collected from school district administrators, juvenile officers, and detention facilities. Survey statements were designed around five overarching themes: transitions, pre/post planning, collaboration, knowledge of other agencies, and protective factors. The statements correlating to each theme were used to determine efforts made by each agency to implement best practices in transitional support and protective factors for juvenile resiliency. During stage one, the responses to individual statements followed by information grouped by theme, were tabulated to determine the mean, standard deviation, and confidence interval. After

descriptive statistics were determined, responses were further explored with inferential statistics in the form of a one-way ANOVA followed with Scheffé post hoc analysis for statistical significance. After analyzing responses of the online survey, stage two was conducted to review coded qualitative data gleaned from face-to-face interviews.

Stage One: Data Analysis of Survey Responses

Survey question 1. Do you currently have a transition program for students who have been assigned to short term detention? If so, please describe your transition plan.

Of the 28 respondents, nine (32%) participants reported having a transition program currently in place for students who had been assigned to short term detention. Conversely, 19 (68%) participants reported having no transition program for students who have been assigned to short term detention. Three (20%) principals reported that their schools had transition programs in place, while the other twelve (80%) reported they did not have a transition program at their school. Five (83%) juvenile officers reported not having a transition program, while the other one (17%) reported having a transition program in place. Of the seven DYS respondents, five (71%) reported having a transition program in place, while the other two (29%) did not currently have a transition program.

The three high school principals are referred to as Principal 1 (P1), Principal 2 (P2) and Principal 3 (P3) for the purpose of this study. All three principals who reported having a transition plan stated their first step involves a transition plan meeting. P1 explained how high school administrators, the offending juvenile's counselor, special education (if necessary), school resource officer, juvenile justice representative, offending juvenile and parents, are all involved in the initial planning meeting. P1

explained that this meeting is held to discuss a plan of action for the juvenile to return to the high school environment.

P2 also reported meeting with the parent/guardian, juvenile, school counselor, and administrators to assess academic standing, needs, set a timeline, and discuss accommodations. P1 stated the transitional plan often includes the alternative school to allow a slow transition of the student back into the mainstream environment. P2 reported that after the transition meeting, there are two additional stages. Stage two involves communication with classroom teachers to give them an overview of the information discussed in the transition meeting. Stage three involves tracking student performance data (attendance, academics, discipline, meeting timeline goals, and effectiveness of accommodations). P3 reported meeting individually with students to determine their placement. It is determined if a full day, half day, or alternative school assignment would work best for the returning student.

Four of the five DYS administrators, who reported having a transition plan, submitted a synopsis of their plan. These four DYS administrators are referred to as DYS administrator 1 (DYS1), DYS administrator 2 (DYS2), DYS administrator 3 (DYS3), and DYS administrator 4 (DYS4) for the purpose of this study. DYS1 did not submit a transition plan, but pointed out how the "Day Treatment focuses on working with students who are leaving residential facilities and moving back to mainstream school." DYS2 reported:

Our facility works to begin with the end in mind with all of our youth. We use a base line of four months from entry to the program to have them back into their home community. This includes a two week transition period where the youth is

re-enrolling in his/her local school and returning to the facility on the weekends

for further counseling. A transition meeting is held before the two week transition,

which includes the youth, the youth's family, the youth's case manager, a facility

representative, and hopefully a few individuals from the youth's community; such

as a school representative, someone from a local outreach initiative if possible…

DYS3 reported how transitions are individualized to meet the specific needs of each

youth, "most transition plans include multiple treatment furloughs back to their home to

slowly integrate them back into their family system." DYS4 stated DYS is a short-term

treatment program for juvenile offenders and not a detention facility. DYS4 also stated:

During the period of transition back into the community, our youth and family

receive mentoring support. We also work with them to find support systems

outside our own agency that may be able to provide more long term services or

support to the family. Family therapy is provided free of charge by our agency.

While this service is optional, it is highly encouraged. Prior to a youth returning to

the community, a meeting takes place in which a tentative plan is set as to the

details of services what services will need to be provided by the agency and what

responsibilities the youth and family will have.

DYS 4 also noted, community support members are often invited to these meetings,

"since they can help to build the support system for the family."

Responses from the survey were used to determine the scope of collaborative

efforts of transitional programs for adjudicated youth. Survey questions addressed key

elements of effective transition programs for adjudicated youth. The overarching themes

analyzed were transitions, pre/post planning, collaboration, knowledge of other agencies,

and protective factors.

Transitions

>>>*Survey statement 2. Transition planning begins at the first day of intake.*

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Two (13%) principals reported that transition planning *always* begins at the first day of intake. One (7%) responded with *usually*, and one (7%) responded with *sometimes*. Nine (60%) principals responded with *rarely,* and two (13%) responded with *never*.

According to the juvenile officer responses, one (17%) reported transition planning *sometimes* happens on the first day of intake. Two (33%) responded *rarely,* and three (50%) responded *never.* According to the DYS administrators, two (29%) responded that transition planning *always* takes place on the first day of intake. Four (57%) responded *usually*, and one (14%) responded *never*.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 1. There were significant differences between agency responses concerning transition planning beginning the first day of intake. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.14), while the juvenile officers had the lowest mean rank (1.67).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 2

Groups	n	M	SD	CI
Principals	15	2.47	1.25	.69
Juvenile Officers	6	1.67	.82	.86
DYS administrators	7	4.14	.69	.64
Total	28	2.71	1.36	.53

Note: n = Number of participants, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze this difference, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to transition planning that begins at the first day of intake. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 9.754$, $p = .0007$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.25$) was significantly different from the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .69$). The comparison also showed a significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .85$) and DYS administrators ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .69$). However, the principals and juvenile officers did not significantly differ. Taken together, these results suggest that immediate transition planning takes place with more involvement from the DYS than school principals and juvenile officers.

Survey statement 3. Transition plans are shared with the base school.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). One (7%) principal reported that transition plans are *always* shared with the base school. Two (13%) principals responded *usually*, and three (20%) responded *sometimes*. Six (40%) principals reported *rarely,* and three (20%) reported *never*.

One (17%) juvenile officer reported transitions plans are *always* shared with base schools. One (17%) responded *usually,* and one (17%) responded *sometimes.* Two (33%) juvenile officers responded *rarely,* and one responded *never.*

Three (43%) DYS administrators reported that transition plans are *always* shared with the base school. Two (29%) responded *usually,* and two (29%) responded *sometimes.* The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 2. There are significant differences between agency responses concerning transition plans being shared with the base school. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.14), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (2.47).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 3

Groups	n	M	SD	CI
Principals	15	2.47	1.19	.66
Juvenile Officers	6	2.83	1.47	1.54
DYS administrators	7	4.14	.90	.83
Total	28	2.96	1.35	.52

Note: n = Number of participants, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further investigate this difference, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to whether transition plans are shared with the base school. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 4.778$, $p = .017$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.19$) was significantly different from the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .90$). The comparison showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.47$) principals or the DYS administrators. Taken together, these results suggest that principal and the DYS administrators differ in their perception of transition plan sharing.

Survey statement 4. Youth are involved in the process of developing the transition plan to ensure acceptance.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Two (13%) principals reported youth *always* are involved in the process of developing the transition plan. Four (27%) responded *usually,* and two (13%) reported youth are *sometimes* involved in the process. Four (27%) principals reported youth are *rarely* involved, while three (20%) reported youth are *never* involved.

Three (50%) juvenile officers reported youth are *sometimes* involved in developing the transition plan. One (17%) responded *rarely*, and two (33%) responded *never*. Six (86%) DYS administrators reported youth are *always* involved in the transition planning process, while one (14%) responded *usually*.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 3. There

were significant differences between agency responses concerning transition plans being

shared with the base school. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.86), while the

principals had the lowest mean rank (2.19).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 4

Groups	n	M	SD	CI
Principals	15	3	1.41	.78
Juvenile Officers	6	2.17	.98	1.03
DYS administrators	7	4.86	.38	.35
Total	28	3.21	1.50	.58

Note: n = Number of participants, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze the data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted

to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and the DYS

administrators in their response to whether youth were involved in the process of

developing the transition plan. There was a statistically significant difference between

groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 10.484$, $p = .0005$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated

that the mean score for the principals ($M = 3$, $SD = 1.41$) was significantly different from

the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 4.86$, $SD = .38$).   The comparison also

showed a significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .98$) and

DYS administrators ($M = 4.86$, $SD = .38$). However, the principals and juvenile officers

did not significantly differ. Taken together, these results suggest that youth involvement

in developing the transition plan is more prevalent in DYS than at schools and the juvenile office.

Survey statement 5. Transition plans are formed between the base school, detention facility and youth.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the *p* < .05 level for the three groups [*F*(2,25) = 1.68, *p* = .3]. The mean score for all groups was 2.89 indicating the respondents felt transition plans are *sometimes* formed between the base school, detention facility, and youth.

Survey statement 6. Transition plans include parent input.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Seven (47%) principals reported parents *usually* have input in transition plans. Two (13%) responded *sometimes,* and four (27%) reported parent input is *rarely* included. Two (13%) principals reported it is *never* included.

One (17%) juvenile officer reported parents *always* have input in transition plans. One (17%) reported parents *usually* have input. Two (33%) juvenile officers reported *sometimes,* and two (33%) reported parents *rarely* have input in the transition plans.

Five (71%) DYS administrators reported transition plans *always* include parent input. Two (29%) reported parent input is *usually* included in transition plans. The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 4. There were significant differences between agency responses concerning transition plans being shared with the base school. DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.71), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (2.93).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 6

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.93	1.16	.64
Juvenile Officers	6	3.17	1.17	1.23
DYS administrators	7	4.71	.49	.45
Total	28	3.43	1.26	.49

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze the data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and the DYS administrators in their response to whether transition plans are formed between the base school, detention facility, and youth. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 7.2$, $p = .003$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.16$) was significantly different from the mean score of the DYS administrators ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .49$). The comparison showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.17$) principals or the DYS administrators. Taken together, these results suggest that parent input in transition planning is less likely to occur at the public high school, while parent input is more prevalent in the DYS transition planning process.

Statements #2-6. These statements specifically addressed issues related to transitioning juvenile offenders between agencies. The cell sizes, means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals are presented in Table 5. There were significant

differences between agencies responses concerning transitions. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.26), while the juvenile officers had the lowest mean rank (2.57).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Statements #2-6, Concerning Transitions

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.67	.15	.19
Juvenile Officers	6	2.57	.63	.78
DYS Administrators	7	4.26	.57	.70
Total	28	3.04	.28	.35

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to questions concerning transitions. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 7.4$, $p = .003$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean scores for the principals ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .15$) and juvenile officers ($M = 2.57$, $SD = .63$) were significantly different from the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .57$). The comparison showed no significant difference between the principals and juvenile officers. Taken together, these results suggest that the transition process for schools and juvenile offices differs from that of DYS.

Pre/Post Planning

Survey statement 7. Records are exchanged between detention facility and base school.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 3.17$, $p = .213$]. The mean score for all groups was 3.36 indicating the respondents felt records are *sometimes* exchanged between detention facility and base school.

Survey statement 8. Meetings occur between base school and detention facility.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 2.88$, $p = .116$]. The mean score for all groups was 2.36 indicating the respondents felt meetings *rarely* occur between the base school and detention facility.

Survey statement 9. Pre-release planning meetings are held with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 1.43$, $p = .320$]. The mean score for all groups was 2.43 indicating the respondents felt pre-release planning meetings are *rarely* held with the appropriate representative of the receiving school.

Survey statement 10. Follow-up communication takes place between the base school and detention facility.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Two (13%) principals reported there is *usually* follow-up communication between the school and detention facility, and three (20%) responded *sometimes*. Six

(40%) principals responded there is *rarely* follow-up communication between the school and detention facility, while four (27%) reported *never*.

Three (50%) juvenile officers reported follow-up communication *sometimes* takes place between the school and detention facility. Two (33%) responded *rarely,* and one (17%) reported follow-up communication *never* happens. Six (86%) DYS administrators reported there is *usually* follow-up communication between the school and detention facility, while two (14%) reported it *rarely* happens.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 6. There were significant differences between agency responses concerning transition plans being shared with the base school. DYS group had the highest mean rank (3.71), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (2.2).

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 10

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.2	1.23	.69
Juvenile Officers	6	2.33	.82	.86
DYS administrators	7	3	1	.92
Total	28	3.71	1.1	.43

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze this data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and the DYS administrators in their response to follow-up communication between the base school and

detention facility. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the *p* < .05 level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 6.8$, $p = .004$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals (*M* = 2.2, *SD* = 1.01) was significantly different from the mean score of DYS administrators (*M* = 3.71, *SD* = .76). The comparison showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers (*M* = 2.33, *SD* = .82) principals or DYS administrators. Taken together, these results suggest DYS administrators felt there was follow-up communication with the base schools, while high school principals did not feel that there was a great deal of follow-up communication.

Statements #7-10. These statements specifically addressed issues related to pre/post planning. The cell sizes, means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals are presented in Table 7. There were no significant differences concerning pre/post planning.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Statements #7-10, Concerning Pre/post Planning

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.57	.44	.71
Juvenile Officers	6	2.17	.53	.84
DYS administrators	7	3.39	.65	1.04
Total	28	2.69	.46	.73

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and the DYS administrators in their responses to questions concerning pre/post planning. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = 3.6, p = .04]$. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between groups.

Knowledge of Other Agencies

Survey statement 11. Information/training has been received regarding the mandates, policies, and procedures of other child-serving agencies.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = .148, p = .834]$. The mean score for all groups was 3.04 indicating the respondents felt information/training is *sometimes* received regarding the mandates, policies, and procedures of other child-serving agencies.

Survey statement 12. This agency has a clear understanding of the social expectations other child-serving agencies have of youth.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = .329, p = .743]$. The mean score for all groups was 3.32 indicating the respondents felt the agency *sometimes* has a clear understanding of the social expectations other child-serving agencies have of youth.

Survey statement 13. This agency has a clear understanding of the educational expectations other child-serving agencies have of youth.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = 1.72, p = .252]$. The mean score for all groups was

3.54 indicating the respondents felt the agency *sometimes* has a clear understanding of the educational expectations other child-serving agencies have of youth.

Survey statement 14. This agency has a clear understanding of the individual educational needs of youth offenders.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 1.94$, $p = .087$]. The mean score for all groups was 3.93 indicating the respondents felt the agency *usually* has a clear understanding of the individual educational needs of youth offenders.

Survey statement 15. This agency has a clear understanding of the individual needs of youth offenders.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). One (7%) principal reported the school *always* has a clear understanding of the individual needs of youth offenders, while eight (53%) reported *usually*. Three (20%) responded *sometimes,* and two (13%) responded *rarely*. One (7%) principal reported there is *never* a clear understanding of the needs of youth offenders.

One (17%) juvenile officer reported the agency *always* has a clear understanding of the individual needs of youth offenders. Two (33%) responded *usually,* and two (33%) responded *sometimes*. One (17%) juvenile officer reported there is *rarely* a clear understanding of the needs of youth offenders.

Four (57%) DYS administrators reported the agency *always* has a clear understanding of the individual needs of youth offenders, while three (43%) responded *usually*. The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 8. There were significant differences between agencies responses concerning transition plans

being shared with the base school. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.57), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (3.4).

Table 8

Descriptive statistics of responses to survey statement 15

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	3.4	1.06	.58
Juvenile Officers	6	3.5	1.05	1.1
DYS administrators	7	4.57	.53	.49
Total	28	3.71	1.05	.41

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze the data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators when asked if their agency had a clear understanding of the individual needs of youth offenders There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 7.78$, $p = .037$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there was no significant difference between individual groups. The mean score for the principals ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 1.06$) was not significantly different from the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .53$). The comparison showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.05$) principals or DYS administrators.

Survey statement 16. This agency has a clear understanding of the additional support needs of youth offenders.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). One (7%) principal reported there is *always* a clear understanding of the additional support needs of youth offenders. Nine (60%) responded *usually,* and three (20%) responded *sometimes.* Two (13%) principals reported there is *rarely* a clear understanding of additional support needs of youth offenders.

Two (33%) juvenile officers reported there is *always* a clear understanding of the additional support needs of youth offenders, and four (67%) responded *usually*. Four (57%) DYS administrators reported there is *always* a clear understanding of the additional support needs of youth offenders, and three (43%) reported *usually*.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 9. There were significant differences between agencies responses concerning transition plans being shared with the base school. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.57), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (3.6).

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 16

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	3.6	.96	.53
Juvenile Officers	6	4.33	.75	.79
DYS administrators	7	4.57	.58	.53
Total	28	4.19	.82	.32

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze the data, one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to whether their agency has a clear understanding of the additional support needs of youth offenders. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 5.29$, $p = .012$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 3.6$, $SD = .83$) was not significantly different from the mean score of both juvenile officers ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .52$) and DYS administrators ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .53$). The comparison also showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers and the DYS administrators.

Statements #11-16. These statements specifically addressed issues related to knowledge of other agencies. The cell sizes, means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals are presented in Table 10. There were no significant differences concerning each agency's knowledge of each other.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Statements #11-16, Concerning Knowledge of Other Agencies

Groups	n	M	SD	CI
Principals	15	3.32	.37	.39
Juvenile Officers	6	3.58	.39	.41
DYS administrators	7	4.17	.49	.51
Total	28	3.59	.37	.39

Note: n = Number of participants, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

Collaboration

Survey statement 17. Inter-agency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). One (7%) principal reported inter-agency collaboration is *always* stressed throughout the transition process. Two (13%) responded *usually,* and four (27%) reported *sometimes.* Eight (53%) principals reported inter-agency coordination is *rarely* stressed throughout the transition process.

Two (33%) juvenile officers reported inter-agency collaboration is *always* stressed throughout the transition process. Three (50%) responded *usually.* One (17%) juvenile officer responded inter-agency collaboration is *sometimes* stressed.

One (14%) DYS administrator reported inter-agency collaboration is *always* stressed. Five (71%) responded *usually.* One (14%) DYS administrator reported that inter-agency collaboration is *sometimes* stressed.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 11. There were significant differences between agencies responses concerning transition plans being shared with the base school. The juvenile officer group had the highest mean rank (4.17), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (2.73).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 17

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.73	.96	.53
Juvenile Officers	6	4.17	.75	.79
DYS administrators	7	4	.58	.53
Total	28	3.36	1.06	.41

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze the data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to whether inter-agency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 8.91$, $p = .001$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .96$) was significantly different from the mean score of both juvenile officers ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .75$) and DYS administrators ($M = 4$, $SD = .58$). Taken together, these results suggest that principals do not feel as strongly that inter-agency collaboration is stressed through the transition process, as juvenile officers and DYS administrators.

Survey statement 18. Written protocols are in place related to communication and coordination between agencies/entities that serve juvenile offenders.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). One (7%) principal reported written protocol related to communication and

coordination between agencies/entities is *always* in place. Two (13%) responded *usually*

and four (27%) responded *sometimes*. Six (40%) principals reported written protocol is

rarely in place and two (13%) reported *never*.

Two (33%) juvenile officers reported written protocol is *usually* in place and two

(33%) reported *sometimes*. One (17%) responded *rarely*. One (17%) reported written

protocol is *never* in place.

One (14%) DYS administrator reported written protocols are *always* in place.

Four (57%) responded *usually*. Two (29%) DYS administrators reported written protocol

is *never* in place.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 12. There

were significant differences between agencies responses concerning transition plans

being shared with the base school. The DYS group had the highest mean rank (3.86),

while the principals had the lowest mean rank (2.6).

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 18

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.6	1.12	.62
Juvenile Officers	6	2.83	1.17	1.23
DYS administrators	7	3.86	.69	.64
Total	28	2.96	1.18	.44

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

To further analyze the data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their responses to whether written protocols are in place related to communication and coordination between agencies/entities that serve juvenile offenders. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ levels for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 3.51$, $p = .045$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.12$) was not significantly different from the mean score of both juvenile officers ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.17$) and DYS administrators ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .69$). The comparison also showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers and DYS administrators.

Survey statement 19. There is consistent communication between agencies serving juvenile offenders throughout the entire transition process.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Three (20%) principals reported there is *usually* consistent communication between agencies. Four (27%) responded *sometimes*. Five (33%) responded *rarely* and three (20%) responded *never*.

Three (50%) juvenile officers reported there is *usually* consistent communication. Two (33%) reported *sometimes*. One (17%) juvenile officer reported there is *rarely* communication.

One (14%) DYS administrator reported there is *always* consistent communication. Two (29%) reported *usually*. Four (57%) DYS administrators reported *sometimes*.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 13. There were significant differences between agencies responses concerning the consistency of communication. DYS group had the highest mean rank (3.86), while the principals had the lowest mean rank (2.6).

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 19

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.6	1.12	.62
Juvenile Officers	6	2.83	1.17	1.23
DYS administrators	7	3.86	.82	.64
Total	28	2.96	1.14	.44

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to whether there is consistent communication between agencies serving juvenile offenders throughout the entire transition process. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 3.51$, $p = .045$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between any groups.

Survey statement 20. Curriculum and educational programming is aligned between detention facility and base school.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 1.847, p = .469$]. The mean score for all groups was 2.43 indicating the respondents felt the curriculum and educational programming is *rarely* aligned between detention facility and base school.

Survey statement 21. Confidentiality concerns of agencies impede the ability to gather necessary information to best serve the needs of the transitioning youth.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = .680, p = .516$]. The mean score for all groups was 2.64 indicating the confidentiality concerns of agencies *rarely* impede the ability to gather necessary information to best serve the needs of the transitioning youth.

Survey statement 22. Collaboration is usually initiated by the educational agency.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = .205, p = .806$]. The mean score for all groups was 2.82 indicating the respondents felt that collaboration was *rarely* initiated by the educational agency.

Survey statement 23. Collaboration is usually initiated by the social service agency.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 2.30, p = .061$]. The mean score for all groups was

3.04 indicating the respondents felt that collaboration was *sometimes* initiated by the educational agency.

  Statements #17-23. These statements specifically addressed issues related to collaboration. The cell sizes, means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals are presented in Table 14. There were significant differences between agencies responses concerning collaborative practices. DYS group had the highest mean rank (3.37), while principals had the lowest mean rank (2.59).

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for Statements #17-23, Concerning Collaboration

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.59	.24	.22
Juvenile Officers	6	3.05	.55	.51
DYS administrators	7	3.37	.55	.51
Total	28	2.88	.30	.27

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

  A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to questions concerning collaboration. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 4.14$, $p = .03$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between groups.

Protective Factors

Survey statement 24. This agency involves community members/organizations for additional youth and family support.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Two (13%) principals reported *always* involving community members/organizations for additional youth and family support. Nine (60%) responded *sometimes*. Three (20%) principals reported *rarely* and one (7%) responded *never*.

One (17%) juvenile officer reported *always* involving community members/organizations. One (17%) responded *usually* and three (50%) responded *sometimes*. One (17%) juvenile officer reported *rarely* involving community members/organizations.

One (14%) DYS administrator reported *always* involving community members/organizations. Four (57%) reported *usually*. Two (29%) DYS administrators reported *sometimes* involving community members/organizations.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 15. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between any groups.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 24

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	2.8	.77	.43
Juvenile Officers	6	3.33	1.03	1.08
DYS administrators	7	3.86	.69	.64
Total	28	3.18	.90	.35

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to whether their agency involves community members/organizations for additional youth and family support. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 4.16$, $p = .027$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 2.8$, $SD = .77$) was not significantly different from the mean score of both juvenile officers ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.03$) and DYS administrators ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .48$). The comparison also showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers and the DYS administrators.

Survey statement 25. This agency encourages/initiates family involvement in the transition process.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Four (27%) principals reported *always* encouraging/initiating family

involvement in the transition process and six (40%) responded *usually*. Three (20%)

principals responded *sometimes* and two (13%) responded *rarely*.

Four (67%) juvenile officers reported *always* encouraging/initiating family

involvement in the transition process and two (33%) reported *usually*. Seven (100%)

DYS administrators reported *always* encouraging/initiating family involvement in the

transition process. The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table

16.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 25

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	3.8	1.01	.56
Juvenile Officers	6	4.67	.52	.54
DYS administrators	7	5	0	0
Total	28	4.29	.94	.36

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses

between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to

whether their agency encourages/initiates family involvement in the transition process.

There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the p < .05 level for the

three groups [$F(2,25) = 6.34$, $p = .005$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated

that the mean score for the principals ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.03$) was significantly different

from the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 5$, $SD = 0$).   The comparison showed

no significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 4.67$, $SD = .52$) principals or

DYS administrators. Taken together, these results suggest DYS administrators felt more

strongly that they encourage/initiate family involvement, while high school principals did

not feel that the schools always encourage/initiate family involvement.

Survey statement 26. This agency encourages/promotes extracurricular

involvement for the youth offender.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to

5 (always). One (7%) principal reported *always* encouraging/promoting extracurricular

involvement for the youth offender. Nine (60%) responded *usually*. One (7%) principal

responded *sometimes* and four (27%) responded *rarely*.

Three (50%) juvenile officers responded *always* and three (50%) reported *usually*.

Four (57%) DYS administrators responded *always* and three (43%) responded *usually*.

The cell sizes, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 26

Groups	n	M	SD	CI
Principals	15	3.47	.99	.55
Juvenile Officers	6	4.5	.55	.57
DYS administrators	7	4.57	.53	.49
Total	28	3.96	.96	.37

Note: n = Number of participants, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to whether their agency encourages/promotes extracurricular involvement for the youth offender. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = 5.91, p = .008]$.

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the principals ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .98$) was not significantly different from the mean score of both juvenile officers ($M = 4.5$, $SD = .55$) and DYS administrators ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .53$). The comparison also showed no significant difference between the juvenile officers and DYS administrators.

Survey statement 27. This agency facilitates opportunities for youth to engage in positive peer relationships.

There was not a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = 1.867, p = .120]$. The mean score for all groups was 4 indicating the respondents felt that their agency *usually* facilitates opportunities for youth to engage in positive peer relationships.

Survey statement 28. This agency provides opportunities for youth to engage in counseling for individual growth.

Respondents were asked to rate this statement according to a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). Three (20%) principals reported *always* providing opportunities for youth counseling. Eight (53%) responded *usually*. One (7%) principal responded *sometimes,* and three (20%) responded *rarely*.

Four (67%) juvenile officers responded *always,* and two (33%) responded *usually.*

All seven (100%) DYS administrators responded *always.* The cell sizes, means, and

standard deviations are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics of Responses to Survey Statement 28

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	3.73	1.03	.57
Juvenile Officers	6	4.67	.52	.54
DYS administrators	7	5	0	0
Total	28	4.25	.97	.37

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses

between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to

whether their agency provides opportunities for youth to engage in counseling for

individual growth. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the

$p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 6.90$, $p = .004$].

Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated

that the mean score for the principals ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.07$) was significantly different

from the mean score of DYS administrators ($M = 5$, $SD = 0$). The comparison showed

no significant difference between the juvenile officers ($M = 4.67$, $SD = .52$) principals or

DYS administrators. Taken together, these results suggest DYS administrators felt more

strongly that they provide opportunities for counseling, while high school principals did

not feel that the schools always provide counseling opportunities.

Statements #24-28. These statements specifically addressed issues related to protective factors. The cell sizes, means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals are presented in Table 19. There were significant differences between agencies responses concerning protective factors. DYS group had the highest mean rank (4.49), while principals had the lowest mean rank (3.51).

Table 19

Descriptive Statistics for Statements #24-28, Concerning Protective Factors

Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*	CI
Principals	15	3.51	.42	.52
Juvenile Officers	6	4.37	.58	.72
DYS administrators	7	4.49	.54	.67
Total	28	3.94	.45	.56

Note: *n* = Number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, CI = Confidence interval

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the responses between principals, juvenile officers, and DYS administrators in their response to questions concerning protective factors. There was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = 8.13, p = .001]$. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between groups.

Stage Two: Analysis of Qualitative Data

Two circuit court judges and one juvenile drug court administrator, referred to as

Judge 1 (J1), Judge 2 (J2), and Juvenile Drug Court Administrator (JDCA) for the

purpose of this study, were interviewed to gather supporting information. Interviews

were conducted at a location requested by the participant. One hour was allowed for each

interview. Each participant was provided a preview copy of questions to read and the

informed consent form prior to the interview process.   Interviews were audiotaped, with

consent from each participant. To ensure data accuracy, audiotapes were transcribed

verbatim.

Interview question 1. In this jurisdiction, what are your duties in the

administration of the juvenile probation department and/or court staff?

Both circuit court judges discussed how they preside over the juvenile court

hearings in their jurisdictions. J1 and J2 both stated how they work with juvenile

officers, attorneys, and conduct juvenile hearings. JDCA is responsible for staff

development and training and working toward reinstituting a juvenile drug court, as soon

as funding can be secured. JDCA also stated that it I the judge's responsibility to involve

the juvenile office and probation staff in the professional training and development.

The judge is also responsible for deciding the placement of youth until the

jurisdiction or adjudication hearing is held. This placement can be under parent care or in

a detention facility. The jurisdictional hearing is where there is the determination of

guilty or not guilty. The process mirrors adult criminal process with special

considerations for under age offenders. The youth are afforded the same rights as adults

charged with a crime, and must be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

J2 mentioned the importance of taking proactive measures with these youth to try to help them get on the right path before they become adult offenders. The judge is involved most during the 72-hour hearing. The youth has generally been in detention, the judge appoints an attorney.

The juvenile officer and attorney visit about the case. The detention hearing is often waived and the process proceeds on to the jurisdictional hearing. During the disposition, the judge determines punishment. This can be a release to parents, probation or commitment to DYS. Commitment to DYS is generally an indeterminate period of time, ranging from four months up to a year.

Interview question 2. How do these responsibilities affect coordination between the court and probation office?

When presented this question, both judges discussed four common themes: coordination with juvenile officers and attorneys, relationships with youth, family involvement, and information sharing. J1 and J2 each discussed the importance of the coordination that takes place between themselves the juvenile officers and the attorneys. Both judges also mentioned the common theme of relationships with the juvenile offenders. J2 specifically mentioned how closely the juvenile officers work with the offenders, are very knowledgeable about the youth and have made connections with them.

J1 and J2 discussed the importance of family involvement. The families meet with the youth and court staff. J1 went on to mention the importance of family involvement in progress monitoring of the youth. J1 and J2 both stated how the hearing

was an information sharing opportunity. J1 also mentioned the importance of his role in ensuring the juvenile officer has clear understanding of the court.

J1 went on to further discuss additional aspects of the court responsibilities. J1 mentioned the importance of clear communications and making personal connections with youth offenders. Lower risk offenders generally do not have a hearing, yet youth who are found guilty of significant probation violations or other major violations are often committed to DYS. DYS referrals are usually made for youth who have ongoing problematic behaviors.

J1 noted the correlation between problematic youth behavior and parenting problems, pointing out that the same thing is probably seen in the school setting. J1 emphasized the importance of positive family involvement, and individualization of handling youth personally to provide the best services possible.

J1 also discussed the importance of coordination with substance abuse counselors. J1 had been involved in attempting to implement a juvenile drug court, but noted the lack of success. Some of the barriers to success involve lack of parent engagement, lack of parent accountability, parents modeling criminal behaviors, and lack of resources.

JDCA discussed how consistent communication between agencies is how the JDCA role affects the coordination between the court and probation office. There are also responsibilities involving communication about funding issues, training and various other issues they face.

Interview question 3. Drawing from your experience with juvenile offenders, what suggestions would you give to school administrators to help students be successful as they reenter the educational mainstream?

J1 and J2 both discussed the importance of school administrator cooperation, information sharing, and regular communication with DYS and juvenile officers. J2 also mentioned it would be beneficial for schools to increase awareness of the importance of school administrators and personnel to communicate with DYS and juvenile officers concerning and special needs or problems encountered by re-entry youth. Both J1 and J2 also noted schools must be involved in transitioning re-entry students back into the educational mainstream and work with other agencies to make it a successful transition. J1 went on to mention some schools tended to be more involved in information sharing while others were less inclined to be involved.

J1 and J2 both suggested progress-monitoring students upon re-entry. Each discussed the benefits of monitoring the returning students' attendance, peer associations, behavior, grades, and school involvement. J1 suggested it would be advantageous if schools had a liaison, which was responsible for keeping track of re-entry students. J2 considered re-entry students' realignment with former peers to be a serious obstacle and recommended school administrators are proactive in encouraging positive peer relationships and involvement in school activities.

J2 and JDCA both mentioned dysfunctional families and communities as contributing factors that cause difficulties for students' as they transitions back to school; this was mentioned as a factor that is out of the schools control. JDCA emphasized the critical need for increased parental involvement. The JDCA had personal experience with kids involved in the juvenile justice system and noted the youth were rarely from a nuclear family, and were often times being raised by a single grandmother.

JDCA also addressed the issue of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), noting the IEPs were generally due to a behavior disorder. The problem often occurs when students get expelled from school, and there is often a waiting list for any type of alternative educational setting. Some parents make the arrangements to home school their child, but essentially there is a demographic of juvenile offenders who do not have access to necessary educational services.

JDCA recommended securing resources specifically for this group of youth. JDCA said it is a huge deficit, making it incredibly challenging to secure and education or proper resources for this student demographic. JDCA emphasized the importance of this since education is such a strong correlate to juvenile delinquency.

Interview question 4. What are some current inter-agency coordination practices that you feel positively affect these youth?

When presented with this question, J1, J2, and JDCA each discussed the positive impact of regular communication and information sharing between agencies. Each judge mentioned the importance of confidentiality to protect underage youth. J1 went on to discuss how confidentiality concerns can sometimes be an inhibitor in the information sharing process. J2 also mentioned the benefits of informal information sharing that happens between a judge and juvenile officers, in keeping everyone informed of the progress of youth offenders.

JDCA discussed the importance of other agencies helping the juvenile office to provide support for families of delinquent youth. JDCA cited this as a necessity for the juvenile office as fiscal resources diminish leaving only enough for attorney fees and FTE's. When there are fiscal cuts, programming was noted as the first thing to be cut.

Without programming resources, it is important for the juvenile office to be supported by faith-based organizations, clinical resources, community partnerships, vocational resources and various other resources that provide families of delinquent youth with needed assistance. JDCA stated if the juvenile office does not have those relationships with community resources, they are really nothing more than a law enforcement tool.

   Interview question 5. What practices could be implemented to improve our current practices?

   J1, J2, and JDCA each said that improved coordination between the school system and other agencies would be beneficial for re-entry youth. J1 expanded by saying early intervention with these youth is critical, and it is important for the schools to work closely with the juvenile office. They each also mentioned the importance of tracking the progress of these youth as they transition back into the educational mainstream.

   J2 talked about how important it is for school personnel to share information with the juvenile officer, when there are early signs of possible problems. J1 discussed the importance of teachers building a relationship with these students, to help in the transition as well as monitor student progress. JDCA discussed how it is critical to have leadership that encourages inter-agency partnerships, stating how this builds and strengthens internal policy and transcends into better practice for youth and families served.

   J2 discussed the need for some courts to be more proactive with status offenses, providing interventions for youth before they commit a serious crime. J2 suggested more informal probations for youth who have committed status offenses. J2 said it is very important for counties to have proactive juvenile officers, who work with youth and schools to help kids get on the right path before they commit serious crimes.

J2 talked about how there is a variance from county to county in how status offenses are handled and it could be beneficial to propose legislation that requires early interventions for these youth. Lack of uniformity in practices between counties, has resulted in inconsistent practices and services to these youth. Although not providing a solution or practice to solve this problem, J2 mentioned there is a need for helping fractured families. Many youth involved in the juvenile court are youth who are often victims of abuse and neglect cases.

Interview question 6. What proactive practices could be implemented, within the school system, to help detour youth from finding themselves in trouble with the law?

When presented with this question, both J1 and J2 suggested schools work to increase parental involvement for these students. They also discussed he importance of school involvement, suggesting school personnel be diligent in finding ways for these students to become connected in school through extracurricular activities. When kids participate in school activities, they become involved, form positive peer relationships and don't have as much free time to get into trouble. J1 noted that a specific solution is difficult, but some possible proactive measures could include: encouraging positive social interactions, improved school/parent communication, anti-bullying awareness, and increased drug education for parents and students.

JDCA mentioned several practices proven to be helpful in providing for the needs of delinquent youth: clinical social workers in schools, drug court youth sharing their stories in school settings, teen court, and any other practices that are teen-driven. JDCA discussed the benefits of a clinical social worker as being a positive resource and outlet

for at-risk youth. JDCA discussed the positive impact of many peer-driven programs, stating that shared experiences positively touch their lives.

   Interview question 7. The Missouri Model has received a great deal of publicity for low percentages of recidivism. How can schools work with detention facilities and other social service systems to ensure high levels of academic success for these students?

   When asked this question, J1, J2, and JDCA all discussed increased inter-agency coordination as a beneficial practice. J1 cited the importance of information from teachers, stating they were the first line of defense and see the warning signs of trouble long before anyone else. J2 expanded on that by suggesting providing a more heightened awareness for school personnel to communicate regularly with DYS and the juvenile office. Both judges also suggested having a monitoring system in place for these kids when they reenter the educational mainstream. JDCA emphasized the importance of constant communication and community partnerships.

   J1 mentioned the important role school resource officers play in a school system. J1 talked about the importance of providing school resource officers with training on how to relate with adolescents. The positive impact of a school resource officer is much more profound if he/she is trained in adolescent development and has the ability to make positive connections with youth.

   J2 maintained DYS does a good job with these kids, but there is a risk factor for these kids upon release back to their families, communities, and in the school system. J2 talked about how release back to their homes is a big transition for these kids and the environments are very different. J2 also suggested having a structured system in place to

get these students involved in school activities and detour them from realigning with former troubled peers. JDCA also discussed the importance of education in the re-entry process. JDCA recommended any practices, programs, or activities that foster education and provide a connection to school.

Summary

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. During stage one, the responses to individual statements followed by information grouped by theme were tabulated to determine the mean, standard deviation, and confidence interval. After descriptive statistics were determined, responses were further explored with inferential statistics in the form of a one-way ANOVA followed with Scheffé post hoc analysis for statistical significance.

Responses from the survey were used to determine the scope of collaborative efforts of transitional programs for adjudicated youth. Survey statements addressed key elements of effective transition programs for adjudicated youth. The overarching themes analyzed were transitions, pre/post planning, collaboration, knowledge of other agencies, and protective factors.

Stage two of data analysis was a review of qualitative data from personal interview questions of circuit court judges and juvenile drug court administrator. The judges and juvenile drug court administrator interviewed, supported the survey data with specific examples from the juvenile court perspective of the importance of inter-agency collaboration in transitioning youth offenders back into the educational mainstream. In

Chapter Five, the purpose of the study, the procedures chosen, the summary of the

findings, the research questions, the limitations of the findings, and a conclusion of the

research findings were explained. Additionally, implications for practice and

recommendations for future research were discussed.

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusions, and Suggestions

The purpose of the study was to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system from court appointed juvenile justice facilities. The study was also used to determine the implementation needed for effective inter-agency coordination of social service systems for students to successfully transition back into the educational mainstream. The NCLB accountability measures were reviewed to discover how the measures influenced educators and created a reluctance to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream.

Shared communication between schools and outside agencies helps to provide the data and background knowledge necessary for educators to create suitable education re-entry plans for at-risk students (NDTAC, 2008). Lack of information shared between agencies is often a frustration, causing each agency to work in isolation rather than collaboratively (Feierman et al., 2009). Due to the complexity of the collaborative process necessary for effective inter-agency coordination, this challenging task is often disregarded and each system works individually, resulting in more difficult transitions for youth (Altschuler, 2008).

This fragmentation of service delivery impedes the efficiency and effectiveness of individual agencies, diminishing the opportunity for students to find personal and academic success (Altschuler, 2008). This study provides a review of current transitional practices for youth offenders, as well as recommendations of practices that effectively transition delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream.

For purposes of this study, data collected included, (a) survey information from

high school principals, DYS administrators, and juvenile officers and (b) interviews of two circuit court judges and one juvenile drug court administrator. The following research questions were posed for this study:

2. What inter-agency involvement is necessary in implementing a successful re-entry program?

3. What are the characteristics of successful school re-entry programs for juvenile delinquents as they transition back into the public school setting?

4. Due to the pressures of NCLB accountability measures, what are the reasons educators are reluctant to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream? Literature related to this study included background information of social service agencies, juvenile delinquents and academic achievement, five domains of risk factors, juvenile justice legislation, judicial leadership, and connections and resiliency.

The population sample for this study included administrators from of eight DYS residential facilities, two DYS day treatment centers, nine juvenile divisions, and 100 high schools covering 24 counties. Administrators from each of these facilities were surveyed and interviews were conducted with circuit court judges from the region. The response rate from the survey sent to 100 schools was 15%. The response rate of

Summary of the Findings

The collective survey and interview data were analyzed in two stages. Stage one was used to gain information from individual survey questions, as well as, themes incorporated into the survey; descriptive and inferential statistical information was reported. Stage two was a review of qualitative data from personal interview questions of circuit court judges. Results were presented in narrative form. The results from stages

one and two represent responses from the eight DYS residential facilities, two DYS day treatment centers, nine juvenile divisions, and 100 high schools encompassed within the Missouri DYS region. Stage three was a review of qualitative data from personal interview questions of circuit court judges. Results were presented in narrative form.

Stage One: Survey Response Data. According to data gleaned from individual survey responses, the following information was surmised. Out of the 28 respondents, nine (32%) participants reported having a transition program currently in place for students who have been assigned to short term detention. Conversely, 19 (68%) participants reported having no transition program for students who have been assigned to short term detention.

Three (20%) principals reported that their schools had transition programs in place, while the other twelve (80%) reported they did not. Five (83%) juvenile officers reported not having a transition program, while the one (17%) reported having a transition program. Of the seven DYS respondents, five (71%) reported having a transition program in place, while the other two (29%) do not currently have a transition program.

When asked if transition planning took place on the first day of intake, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups $[F(2,25) = 9.754, p = .0007]$. Taken together, these results suggested that immediate transition planning takes place with more involvement from DYS than school principals and juvenile officers.

When asked if transition plans were shared with the base school, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups

[$F(2,25) = 4.778$, $p = .017$]. Taken together, these results suggested that principal and DYS administrators differ in their perception of transition plan sharing.

When asked if youth were involved in the transition planning process, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 10.484$, $p = .0005$]. The principals and DYS administrators showed a statistically significant difference, however, the principals and juvenile officers showed no difference. Taken together, these results suggested that youth involvement in developing the transition plan is more prevalent in DYS than at schools and the juvenile office.

When asked if parents were involved in the transition planning process, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 7.2$, $p = .003$]. Taken together, these results suggested that parent input in transition planning is less likely to occur at the public high school, while parent input is more prevalent in the DYS transition planning process.

According to theme data, in relation to transition planning, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 7.4$, $p = .003$]. The comparison showed no significant difference between the principals and juvenile officers. Taken together, these results suggested that the transition process for schools and juvenile offices differs from that of DYS, with DYS having more proactive transition planning protocols in place.

When asked if follow-up communication took place between the base school and detention facilities, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the

$p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 6.8$, $p = .004$]. Taken together, these results

suggested DYS administrators felt there was follow-up communication with the base

schools, while high school principals did not feel that there was a great deal of follow-up

communication.

According to data analysis there were no statistically significant differences

between agency responses concerning pre/post planning. Data analysis also revealed

there were no statistically significant differences concerning each agency's knowledge of

each other.

When asked if inter-agency collaboration was stressed through the transition

process, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level

for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 8.91$, $p = .001$]. Taken together, these results suggested

that principals do not feel as strongly that inter-agency collaboration is stressed through

the transition process, as juvenile officers and DYS administrators.

When asked if the agency encourages/initiates family involvement in the

transition process, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the

$p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 6.34$, $p = .005$]. Taken together, these results

suggested DYS administrators felt more strongly that they encourage/initiate family

involvement, while high school principals did not feel that the schools always

encourage/initiate family involvement.

In survey questions related to collaboration, data analysis showed there was a

significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups

[$F(2,25) = 4.14$, $p = .03$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for

significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between

groups.

When asked if the agency provides opportunities for youth to engage in counseling for personal growth, there was a statistically significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 6.90$, $p = .004$]. Taken together, these results suggested DYS administrators felt more strongly that they provide opportunities for counseling, while high school principals did not feel that the schools always provide counseling opportunities.

In relation to protective factors, there was a significant difference between groups at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F(2,25) = 8.13$, $p = .001$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between groups.

Stage Two: Qualitative Data. According to information gleaned from face-to-face interviews, the following information was surmised. When asked how the judicial/administrative duties affect coordination between the court and probation office, there were four common themes. The themes included: coordination with juvenile officers and attorneys, relationships with youth, family involvement, and information sharing.

When asked about current inter-agency coordination practices that positively affect these youth, five common themes emerged. These themes include: regular communication, information sharing between agencies, confidentiality, community support, and shared resources.

When asked what practices could be implemented to improve the current practices, six important themes were found. These themes include: improved

coordination between the school system and other agencies, early intervention, progress monitoring, leadership that encourages inter-agency coordination, proactive juvenile officers, and legislation to provide uniformity in status offense practices for early intervention.

When asked what proactive practices could be implemented within the school system, to help detour youth from finding themselves in trouble with the law, four suggestions were made. These suggestions include: increased parental involvement, help youth connect to school, positive peer programs, and counseling support.

When asked how schools can work with detention facilities and other social service systems to ensure high levels of academic success for these students, eight topics emerged. These topics include: increased inter-agency coordination, more heightened awareness, monitoring system, constant communication, community partnerships, positive connections, school involvement, and positive peer involvement.

Limitations of the Findings

The limitations of this study were involved the geographic area of the study and the design of study chosen by the researcher as listed below.

1. The collection of quantitative data was limited to 119 administrators of various child-serving agencies. The response rate of principals and juvenile officers was low.

2. The collection of qualitative data was limited to two circuit court judges and one juvenile drug court administrator.

3. The location of study included one Midwest state.

4. It was an assumption that respondents answered honestly without bias.

5. The online survey data was limited only to participants who chose to complete

and submit the survey.

Conclusions

Within the context of the limitations of this study, the perceptions of best practices for successfully transitioning juvenile offenders back into the educational mainstream were viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development and the five domains of risk factors for delinquency.

Research question 1. What inter-agency involvement is necessary in implementing successful re-entry program?

Data extrapolated from surveys and interviews revealed four reoccurring practices important to inter-agency involvement in implementing successful re-entry programs: transition planning, parent/student involvement, coordination and collaboration, and building relationships.

Transition planning between agencies is a key component to successful re-entry programs. Theme data showed the most significant differences in survey responses concerning transition planning. Immediate transition planning is more likely to take place in DYS than it is in schools or the juvenile office. Principals and DYS administrators differed in their perceptions of transition plans being shared with the base school. Youth and parental involvement in the transition process is more likely to occur in DYS than at school or in the juvenile office.

Positive parental involvement is known to be a protective factor for at-risk youth. Survey results showed that DYS administrators encourage parental involvement while school administrators felt that they were less likely to encourage parent involvement. All interviewees cited the importance of positive parental involvement in students' lives, the

transition process, and academic success. When asked what the school systems could do to help detour juvenile delinquency, all interviewees suggested schools encourage more parent involvement. They also discussed the importance of parent involvement after youth have become delinquent.

All agencies felt they work hard to encourage student involvement to school and positive activities, yet schools mean response to encouraging youth involvement was significantly lower than DYS. All interviewees discussed the importance of students' involvement in school and extracurricular activities.

Although survey results showed no significant differences in theme data concerning collaboration and coordination, it was a consistent theme deduced from qualitative data. All interviewees consistently discussed the importance of increasing inter-agency coordination and collaboration, to best meet the needs of re-entry youth. A prevalent theme in that data was consistent communication, which they said, could be improved.

The last theme that was consistently discussed was the importance of building positive relationships. Interviewees discussed the importance of building positive teacher/student relationships, encouraging positive peer interactions, providing opportunities for positive relationships between parents and students, and cultivating positive relationships between agencies.

Research question 2. What are the characteristics of successful school re-entry programs for juvenile delinquents as they transition back into the public school setting?

Data extrapolated from surveys and interviews revealed three reoccurring

characteristics important to successful re-entry programs: communication/information-sharing, progress monitoring, protective factors, and making connections.

As noted in the qualitative data, it is important for school administrator cooperation, information-sharing and regular communication with DYS and the juvenile office. School personnel may need to be made aware of the importance of communicating with these other agencies to better serve re-entry youth. Schools must be involved in transitioning re-entry students back into the educational mainstream and work with other agencies to make it a successful transition. According to survey data, principals did not feel as strongly that inter-agency collaboration is stressed through the transition process, as officers and DYS administrators.

There is a need for progress-monitoring students upon re-entry. Schools must monitor the returning students' attendance, peer associations, behavior, grades, and school involvement. It would be advantageous if schools had a liaison responsible for keeping track of re-entry students.

Schools with successful re-entry programs for juvenile offenders are well-versed in considering and providing support for protective factors of at-risk youth. These risk/protective factors include: peers, school, family, individual, and community. Successful school programs understand students' realignment with former peers is a serious obstacle for re-entry youth; therefore school administrators are proactive in encouraging positive peer relationships and involvement in school activities. Successful schools have a structured system in place to provide opportunities for students to make a connection to school through extra-curricular activities.

Dysfunctional families and communities are contributing factors that cause difficulties for students' as they transitions back to school. Schools successful in providing necessary resources for re-entry youth will provide and encourage ample opportunity for parent involvement. Schools should strive to provide opportunities for positive interaction and involvement between youth and parents. According to survey data, DYS administrators' always encouraged/initiated family involvement, while principals did not feel they were as diligent in fostering parental involvement of re-entry youth.

Successful school re-entry programs are consistent in meeting the individual needs of each student. Many re-entry youth are students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The IEPs often address youth with behavior disorders. Often times, these students are expelled from school, and there is a waiting list for availability in an alternative school placement. Successful schools secure educational resources and placements specifically for this group of youth. Successful programs provide resources, such as counselors or clinical social workers to help meet the individual personal and emotional needs of re-entry youth. According to survey data, DYS administrators felt more strongly that they always provide opportunities for counseling juvenile offenders, while high school principals did not feel like they provided adequate counseling opportunities.

The last characteristic of successful school re-entry programs involves positive connections. Interviewees discussed the importance of positive connections between teachers and students, positive connection to school, connections to positive peer influences, opportunities for positive connections between parents and students,

purposeful connections and sharing between agencies, and connections between education and future success of re-entry students.

   Research question 3. Due to the pressures of NCLB accountability measures, what are the reasons educators are reluctant to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream?

   According to qualitative data, NCLB was well intentioned, but there were some collateral effects of the legislation. School administrators do not want to take a hit on their dropout rates or test scores. Often times, the students who NCLB was intended for, and the students who need it most, are the ones who often sign statements they are going to pursue their educational opportunities elsewhere.

   This at-risk group is often the youth expelled from school and left without the necessary educational resources or opportunities. According to Feierman, et al. (2009):

   NCLB fuels the reluctance of schools to re-enroll youth returning from juvenile

   justice placement for a number of reasons. Under NCLB, schools are held

   accountable for the percentage of their students who attain proficient scores on

   state standardized test. Because youth returning from detention frequently

   experience academic difficulties, many schools fear that if they enroll these youth

   the percentages of their students who achieve proficiency will decrease. (p. 1121)

Due to the mandates and accountability measures of NCLB, schools are more inclined to exclude low scoring students either by refusal to enroll them, encouraging them to dropout, or pursue a GED (Feierman, 2009).

Implications for Practice

   According to results from survey and interview data, the following school

practices would prove to have a positive effect on the transition of re-entry youth back into the educational mainstream:

1. Work to keep re-entry youth positively connected to school. Have a structured system in place to ensure re-entry youth are becoming involved in extra-curricular activities and making positive connections to school and peers.

2. Progress-monitor students upon re-entry. Monitor grades, attendance, behavior, peer associations, and school connectedness.

3. Improve personnel awareness of the importance of inter-agency collaboration and early communication with the juvenile office.

4. Develop early intervention strategies for youth exhibiting signs of risk factors for delinquency. Provide youth with support services to provide protective factors that will help reduce chances they will become involved in delinquent behaviors.

5. Use specific student learning and community reintegration outcome measures to guide and monitor positive impact of practices.

6. Become more proactive with follow-up communication with the juvenile officers and DYS. Request meetings with other agencies, when further communication is in the best interest of re-entry youth.

7. Increase personnel awareness of additional support needs of re-entry youth.

8. Work with various agencies to ensure current educational programming of re-entry youth is aligned to avoid students falling behind in schoolwork.

9. Increase parental involvement in all aspects of transitioning re-entry youth back into the educational mainstream. Involve students in the planning process.

10. Provide more counseling and support services for re-entry youth.

11. Employ leadership that encourages inter-agency partnerships, which will build and strengthen internal policy, transcending into better practice for youth and families served.

12. Become proponents for positive juvenile justice legislation that will provide uniformity to bench practices and provide more proactive approaches to early intervention for at-risk youth.

13. Develop individualized plans that will support the individual support needs of re-entry youth. Create a plan that will ensure persistence to graduation and personal success for each child.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations for further research are offered:

1. Focused research on how federal accountability measures impact the perceptions of school personnel toward re-entry youth.

2. The study should be furthered to include a broader sampling of participants to obtain a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon studied.

3. The study should be enhanced by gathering data from interviews with juvenile justice officers. Qualitative data from juvenile justice officers would benefit this study, since they work very closely with juvenile offenders, families, juvenile court judges and attorneys through the adjudication process.

4. Continued research on the correlation between students with IEP's and juvenile delinquency.

5. Research on best instructional practices to engage at-risk youth. Youth who are

academically disadvantaged have less of a connection to school and could benefit from best teaching practices that foster student engagement.

6. Research on best support interventions for at-risk youth who struggle academically. Providing students with opportunities for academic success and how it reduces the chances for involvement in the juvenile justice system.

7. Further research on how well school incorporates system practices that ensure protective factors are in place to detour students from delinquent behaviors.

8. Further research could be conducted to investigate the attitudes of leadership of various agencies toward inter-agency collaboration and its impact on the transition of re-entry youth back into the educational mainstream.

Summary

The emphasis of this study was to explore the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for adjudicated youth back into the educational mainstream. This study revealed the beliefs and opinions of two circuit court judges and one drug court administrator regarding the practices of inter-agency coordination, and 28 administrators from various social service agencies. The data collected were viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of ecological model of human development and centered on the five domains of risk factors for juvenile delinquency.

As a result of this study, further questions were raised regarding best practices for transitioning juvenile offenders back into the educational mainstream. The importance of school personnel's clear understanding of the connection between academic success and protective factors can aide in decreasing juvenile delinquency. While accountability is at the forefront of the minds of all educators, meeting the individual learning and

developmental needs of all students is of utmost importance. To best meet the

educational needs of re-entry youth, it is imperative that schools and various agencies

work to improve the current inter-agency coordination and collaboration practices.

Appendix A

Survey

Transitioning Juvenile Offenders: For the purpose of this study, transitioning will be defined as moving juvenile offenders from a detention facility back to the educational mainstream (public or alternative school).

Transition Program

1. Do you currently have a transition program for students who have been assigned to short term detention?

    1   Yes
    2   No

If so, please attach a copy or describe your transition program.

Transition Plans
For the purpose of this study, transition plans are defined as an individualized plan devised for the transitioning juvenile offender.

2. Transition planning begins at the first day of intake.

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

3. Transition plans are shared with the base school.

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

4. Youth are involved in the process of developing the transition plan to ensure acceptance.

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

5. Transition plans are formed between the base school, detention facility and youth.

  1   Never
  2   Rarely
  3   Sometimes
  4   Usually
  5   Always

6. Transition plans include parent input.

  1   Never
  2   Rarely
  3   Sometimes
  4   Usually
  5   Always

Pre & Post Planning

7. Records are exchanged between detention facility and base school.

  1   Never
  2   Rarely
  3   Sometimes
  4   Usually
  5   Always

8. Meetings occur between base school and detention facility.

  1   Never
  2   Rarely
  3   Sometimes
  4   Usually
  5   Always

9. Pre-release planning meetings are held with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools.

  1   Never
  2   Rarely
  3   Sometimes
  4   Usually
  5   Always

10. Follow-up communication takes place between the base school and detention facility.

1   Never
2   Rarely
3   Sometimes
4   Usually
5   Always

Knowledge of Agency Information
Based on your agency, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Strongly Apply), rate the following according to how much it applies to your knowledge of other child-serving agencies.

11. Information/training has been received regarding the mandates, policies, and procedures of other child-serving agencies.

1   Never
2   Rarely
3   Sometimes
4   Usually
5   Always

12. This agency has a clear understanding of the social expectations other child-serving agencies have of youth.

1   Never
2   Rarely
3   Sometimes
4   Usually
5   Always

13. This agency has a clear understanding of the educational expectations other child-serving agencies have of youth.

1   Never
2   Rarely
3   Sometimes
4   Usually
5   Always

14. This agency has a clear understanding of the individual educational needs of youth offenders.

1   Never
2   Rarely
3   Sometimes
4   Usually
5   Always

15. This agency has a clear understanding of the individual social needs of youth offenders.

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

16. This agency has a clear understanding of the additional support needs of youth offenders. (i.e. Drug/alcohol rehabilitation, mental health needs, mentoring, etc)

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

Inter-agency Collaboration/Coordination
The following questions have been posed to elicit information concerning the amount of communication and collaboration between all child-servicing agencies. Based on your agency, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Strongly Apply), rate the following according to how much it applies to the level of inter-agency collaboration with other child-serving agencies.

17. Inter-agency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process.

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

18. Written protocols are in place related to communication and coordination between agencies/entities that serve juvenile offenders.

    1   Never
    2   Rarely
    3   Sometimes
    4   Usually
    5   Always

19. There is consistent communication between agencies serving juvenile offenders throughout the entire transition process.

1 Never
2 Rarely
3 Sometimes
4 Usually
5 Always

20. Curriculum and educational programming is aligned between detention facility and base school.

1 Never
2 Rarely
3 Sometimes
4 Usually
5 Always

21. Confidentiality concerns of agencies impede the ability to gather necessary information to best serve the needs of the transitioning youth.

1 Never
2 Rarely
3 Sometimes
4 Usually
5 Always

22. Collaboration is usually initiated by the educational agency.

1 Never
2 Rarely
3 Sometimes
4 Usually
5 Always

23. Collaboration is usually initiated by the social service agency.

1 Never
2 Rarely
3 Sometimes
4 Usually
5 Always

Protective Factors
The following questions have been posed to elicit information concerning the amount of positive youth involvement. Based on your agency, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Strongly Apply), rate the following according to how much it applies to the level of involvement of protective factors.

24. This agency involves community members/organizations for additional youth and family support.

   1   Never
   2   Rarely
   3   Sometimes
   4   Usually
   5   Always

25. This agency encourages/initiates family involvement in the transition process.

   1   Never
   2   Rarely
   3   Sometimes
   4   Usually
   5   Always

26. This agency encourages/promotes extra-curricular involvement for the youth offender.

   1   Never
   2   Rarely
   3   Sometimes
   4   Usually
   5   Always

27. This agency facilitates opportunities for youth to engage in positive peer relationships.

   1   Never
   2   Rarely
   3   Sometimes
   4   Usually
   5   Always

28. This agency provides opportunities for youth to engage in counseling for individual growth.

   1   Never
   2   Rarely
   3   Sometimes
   4   Usually
   5   Always

29. Any other comments?

Appendix B

Letter of Recruitment

<Date>

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>
<Position>
<School District>
<Address>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>,

I am writing to ask your permission to request your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University. I believe the information gathered through this study will positively contribute to the body of knowledge regarding effective inter-agency coordination to help successfully transition adjudicated youth back into the educational mainstream.

A great deal of research has supported the belief that higher levels of educational achievement is highly correlated to lower incidents of criminal behavior. Since schools represent an important structure within a child's environment, reintegrating students back into the educational mainstream is a critical component to the rehabilitative success of an at-risk youth. The purpose of the study will be to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system, from court appointed juvenile justice facilities

Attached is a Google document survey. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Confidentiality is assured. If you have questions, you can reach me at 417- or by e-mail.

By completing this survey, you consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time,

Robyn Gordon

Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. In this jurisdiction, what are your duties in the administration of the juvenile probation department and/or court staff?

2. How do these responsibilities affect coordination between the court and probation office?

3. Drawing from your experience with juvenile offenders, what suggestions would you give to school administrators to help students be successful as they reenter the educational mainstream?

4. What are some current inter-agency coordination practices that you feel positively affect these youth?

5. What practices could be implemented to improve our current practices?

6. What proactive practices could be implemented, within the school system, to help detour youth from finding themselves in trouble with the law?

7. The Missouri Model has received a great deal of publicity for low percentages of recidivism. How can schools work with detention facilities and other social service systems to ensure high levels of academic success for these students?

Appendix D

Letter of Introduction

<Date>

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>
<Position>
<School District>
<Address>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>,

Thank you for participating in my research study. I look forward to meeting with you on <date> <time> to gather your experiences and expertise in Working with youth involved in the juvenile court system.

I have allotted one hour to conduct the interview. Additionally, I would like to collect any public documents of K-12 projects you have been a part of, to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the affects of inter-agency coordination on transition programs for at-risk youth.

Enclosed are the interview questions to allow time for reflection before our interview. I have also enclosed the Informed Consent Form for your review and signature. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Confidentiality is assured. If you have questions, you can reach me by phone or by e-mail.

Sincerely,

Robyn Gordon

Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix E

Lindenwood University

School of Education

209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

"Inter-agency Coordination: The Key to Successfully Transition Juvenile Offenders Back into the Educational Mainstream"

Principal Investigator: Robyn B. Gordon

Telephone: 417- E-mail:

Participant _____ Contact info _____

1.   You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Robyn B. Gordon under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of the study will be to determine the characteristics of successful re-entry programs for youth as they transition back into the public education system, from court appointed juvenile justice facilities. The study will determine the implementation needed for effective inter-agency coordination of social service systems, to successfully transition back into the educational mainstream. The study will also review NCLB accountability measures, to find out if they influence educators and create a reluctance to accept delinquent youth back into the educational mainstream.

2. a) Your participation will involve:

➢   Complete a 29 question electronic survey questionnaire regarding your experiences in collaborating with other social service systems, involved with juvenile offenders.

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 20 minutes.

Approximately 123 administrators from public high schools, Division of Youth Services Administrators, juvenile division administrators, and court judges will be involved in this research.

3.   There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4.   There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about inter-agency coordination in transitioning adjudicated youth back into the educational mainstream.

5.   Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

 6.   We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a locked cabinet for five years and then destroyed.

7.   If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, would like a copy of the research findings, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, (Robyn B. Gordon at 417-) or the Supervising Faculty, (Dr. Kim Fitzpatrick at 417-). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date   Participant's Printed Name

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator   Date   Investigator Printed Name

Appendix F

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

To: Robyn Beth Gordon

CC: Dr. Sherry DeVore

IRB Project Number <u>12-27</u>

Title: Inter-agency Coordination: The Key to Successfully

Transition Juvenile Offenders Back into the Educational

Mainstream

The IRB has reviewed your application for research updates, and they have been approved.

Thank you.

Dana K Jar

<u>Dana Klar</u>   <u>12/14/11 (with initial approval date of 11/23/2011)</u>

Institutional Review Board Chair   Date

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Vita

Robyn Gordon currently serves as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at Spokane R-VII School District in Spokane, Missouri. Prior to serving in district administration, she taught English, Art, and At-risk at Neosho R-V School District. Additionally, Robyn taught English in the East Newton R-IV School District. She graduated from Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, Missouri, in May 1994, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education with a focus on secondary English education. Robyn attended Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri and obtained a Master of Arts in School Administration in 2006. She also graduated from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri, in 2008 with an Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership.