

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Dissertations

Theses & Dissertations

4-30-2021

Mixed-Method Investigation of Truancy Intervention Program in a Midwest Public Urban School District

Stephanie Scurlark-Belt

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations>



Part of the Education Commons

Mixed-Method Investigation of Truancy Intervention Program in a
Midwest Public Urban School District

by

Stephanie Scurlark-Belt

A Dissertation Submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Mixed-Method Investigation of Truancy Intervention Program in a
Midwest Public Urban School District

by

Stephanie Scurlark-Belt

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Education
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

Sherrie Wisdom

Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Dissertation Chair

04/30/2021

Date

Emma Cornelius

Dr. Emma Cornelius, Committee Member

4-29-21

Date

Gegi Mara Ra-El

Dr. Gegi Mara Ra-El, Committee Member


04-29-21

Date

Declaration of Originality

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

Full Legal Name: Stephanie Scurlark-Belt

Signature:  Date: 4-28-21

Acknowledgements

I owe my most tremendous gratitude to Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, for her guidance, for her believing in me when I thought the possibility was impossible, and for her keen knowledge throughout the process of writing this dissertation. Without her help, this paper probably would have never been finished. I want to thank my committee members, Dr. Emma Cornelius, for her consistent support, push, and guidance, and Dr. Gegi Mara Ra-El for answering my call on terse notice. I am thankful for your input, advice, and kindness through this experience.

I want to extend my genuine appreciation to the Midwest Public Urban High School (pseudonym) staff for your support in completing the survey and interviews.

Finally, I like to thank my immediate family for being by my side for ten years while accomplishing my goal. Thank you to my wonderful husband, Christopher Belt, for encouraging me and believing in me when I was stressed and gave up hope. You continued to be a rock for me through it all and never stopped saying how proud you were of me. Thank you to my adult kids for encouraging me, Christianna Yvonne Belt and Stephon Christopher Belt, when the road to obtaining my dissertation was getting rough, and for saying, “MOMMA, YOU GOT THIS”! It meant more to me than you would ever know. Finally, thank you to my parents for instilling in me the love for education, learning, and teaching me to finish what I have started.

Abstract

In pursuance of analyzing attendance at Midwest Public Urban School District (a pseudonym), the researcher investigated the high school's truancy intervention program's effectiveness. The research intervention program's goal was to find what worked in the program, what needed to be changed, and how practical the truancy intervention program was. To investigate the program, the researcher used a Skyward software system to collect all quantitative data. The data system gave all chronological data information covering attendance from the Freshman enrollment 2016-2017 school year to the first semester senior year, December 2020. Qualitative data were used to analyze if the truant students' attendance improved after going through the district's and the Regional Office of Education's truancy intervention program. These data were coded and used to make recommendations regarding changes to be made to the intervention program. Secondary survey data were used from the high school truant students' focus group. Answers from the focus group's survey elaborated upon the students' perceptions of truancy factors. The researcher analyzed quantitative and qualitative data and compared the students' responses to create themes from their perceptions. The themes helped determine the consistent characteristics of truancy from the students' perceptions.

Additionally, the rate of attendance was measured and analyzed to validate if the program was working, by examining the percentage of students who continued to be truant after going through the district and ROE programs. The data showed the district program was not working and the ROE program was making small, steady strides. Staff completed a survey that gave their perceptions, and through the data collected from the developed themes, the intervention programs were not deemed effective and needed some

changes. The researcher recommends that the district compose a truancy committee to look into changing the current intervention program.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Chapter One	1
Introduction	1
Background of the Study	3
Statement of the Problem	15
Purpose of the Study	18
Research Questions and Hypotheses	19
Significance of the Study	20
Definition of Key Terms	21
Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions	26
Summary	27
Chapter Two: Review of Literature	29
Introduction	29
Search Strategy	30
Midwest Public Urban School District’s Truancy Intervention Program	30

Midwest Public Urban School District’s High School Attendance Policy	31
Regional Office of Education Truancy Information	32
Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Rates	33
Truancy Intervention Programs	34
Critical Components of Truancy Intervention Program.....	38
Teachers.....	38
Community Resources and Family Engagement	40
Data Systems	44
Rewards and Incentive Program	44
System Theories	47
Ecological Systems	48
Summary	52
Chapter Three: Methodology	54
Introduction	54
Conceptual Framework - Why Attending School Matters	54
Problem and Purpose Overview	57
Research Questions and Hypotheses	59
Research Design	61
Population and Sample.....	63
Instrumentation.....	63

Focus Group Survey	69
Data Collection.....	69
Skyward.....	70
Data Analysis	70
Ethical Considerations.....	72
Limitations	73
Summary	73
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data	75
Purpose Review.....	75
Overview	75
Student Data Cohort.....	76
Null Hypotheses	77
Null Hypothesis # 1	77
Null Hypothesis # 2.....	78
Null Hypothesis # 3.....	79
Null Hypothesis # 4.....	80
Focus Group Student Survey.....	82
Transportation.....	83
Academic/School.....	84
Social	84

Safety	84
Home	85
Health.....	85
Other	86
Findings.....	87
<i>Qualtrics</i> Staff Perception Survey.....	88
Instrumentation	88
Staff Interviews	98
Summary	101
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions.....	103
Introduction	103
Conclusion.....	103
Research Question 1	103
Research Question 2	104
Research Question 3	105
Research Question 4	105
Research Question 5	105
Research Question 6	105
Research Question 7	106
Research Question 8	106

Research Question 9	106
Research Question 10	106
Research Question 11	106
Research Question 12	107
Research Question 13	107
Research Question 14	107
Implications for Practice	110
Recommendations for Future Research	114
References.....	116

List of Tables

Table 1. Factors Related to Absenteeism..... 2

Table 2. What is your classification? 64

Table 3. Outcomes for Truant Students 77

Table 4. Truancy Repeat Rate..... 78

Table 5. Truancy Following ROE..... 79

Table 6. Graduation Rates..... 80

Table 7. What is your classification? 89

Table 8. Collection of General ‘Yes or No’ Questions..... 92

Table 9. In your opinion, what top five factors contribute to truancy? 94

Table 10. What changes do you believe need to be made to the truancy intervention program? 97

Table 11. Staff interview questions and answers..... 99

List of Figures

Figure 1. Absence Rate Among Workers by Gender	12
Figure 2. Students Causes of Truancy Characteristics.....	83

Chapter One

Introduction

At the time of this writing, the Midwest Public Urban school district had implemented the same truancy intervention plan for 15 or more years. The participating school district's chronic absentee rate increased yearly at an alarming rate. Student attendance in the U.S. K-12 school system has been noted as a problem for more than a century. In 1852, Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to enact a compulsory education law, having already passed a similar law in 1647 while still a British colony (FindLaw, 2016a). Laws were passed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, making school attendance mandatory and criminalizing truancy (Preceden, 2020). Truancy is not a sole crisis for only the school district that participated in this study. According to research studies, truancy is a national crisis. A report by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) identified “chronic absenteeism” as a hidden educational crisis (Lovett & Jacob, 2017a). The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), within the USDOE, issued the first national report on chronic absence in 2016. The report was subtitled, “An unprecedented look at a hidden educational crisis,” because of the alarming lack of national focus on chronic absenteeism (Attendance Commission, 2018, p. 16). Students who are chronically absent sometimes deal with issues they or their families do not have the resources to handle, which cause them to be absent from school.

There are numerous researched factors for why students are not attending school, such as, transportation, mental health, and home issues. When it is clear that students are having issues and are not attending school, a school truancy intervention plan should help find the root of the students’ truancy issues. To thoroughly investigate the Midwest

Public Urban school district's truancy intervention program, the researcher decided to look closely at the following truancy risk factors that have been known to cause truancy. Researchers categorize some of the underlying causes of truancy into four groups: (i) student-specific factors, (ii) family-specific factors, (iii) school-specific factors, and (iv) community-specific factors (see Table 1) (Lovett & Jacob, 2017b).

Table 1

Factors Related to Absenteeism

Factors	Inclusion
Student-specific	Teenage motherhood, low academic performance, and repeating grades, lack of caring relationships with adults, negative peer influence, bullying
Family-specific	Low family income, low parent involvement, unstable housing, at-home responsibilities, stressful family events conflicting home and school priorities, language differences
School-specific	Poor conditions or lack of school facilities, low-quality teachers, teacher shortages, poor student-teacher interactions, geographic access to school, less challenging courses, and student boredom
Community-specific	Availability of job opportunities that do not require formal schooling, unsafe neighborhoods, low compulsory education requirements, lack of social and educational support services

The researcher will investigate whether the study site school's current truancy intervention plan helped navigate students when they experienced the truancy risk factors. The causes of truancy are numerous and occur in multiple contexts; it is important that solutions to this complex issue use a variety of strategies that target a number of different influences and work to impact several levels (Eastman et al., 2014).

Background of the Study

Absence. Nearly eight million students, in every state and at every grade level, missed three or more weeks of school in the 2015-2016 academic school year, according to data released by the USDOE's Office for Civil Rights (Cooney, 2019). The Midwest Public Urban school district's Illinois Report Card listed the school as having 50% of its students classified with chronic absenteeism during the 2018-2019 school year (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2020b). The Midwest Public Urban school district's total enrollment during the 2018-2019 school year was 3,433 students. Out of the 3,433 students enrolled, 1,682 were chronically absent (ISBE, 2019a). Illinois law defines "chronic absentee" as a student who misses 10% of school days within an academic year, with or without a valid excuse (ISBE, 2020a). The 10% represents 18 days of an average 180-day school year. Examples of excused absences included illness, suspension, need to care for a family member, etc. Students need daily instruction to succeed. Chronic absentee students are at risk of academic and social problems. (ISBE, 2019b). The Midwest Public Urban school district's chronically absent students missed an average of 18 days out of the 180-days of the school year (ISBE, 2019b). The 2018-2019 school year marked the first-time chronic absence was a statistic in student/school/district records and included in the revised state report card for each school and district (Attendance Commission, 2018, p. 16). According to the Illinois Report Card, 68% of students graduated in four years, 74% in five years, and 70% in six years, during the Midwest Public Urban school district 2018-2019 school year (ISBE, 2020b). Student attendance and graduation rates were a severe problem for the school district. Based on

the researcher's studies, an effective truancy intervention plan should increase the district's attendance and graduation rates.

Chronic truancy. Many studies showed that properly-timed interventions before the chronic absences became entrenched habits were effective at curbing absence (Chang & Romero, 2008, 2010). Research has shown the failure to address chronic truancy can result in a host of problems for youth (Plumas County, n.d.). The San Bernardino District Attorney's Office reported 78% of prison inmates had truancy as their first entry on their arrest records (Plumas County, n.d.). Addressing the truancy issue through intervention services could save some students from a life of self-destruction. Truancy has been identified as an early warning sign of delinquent behavior; 90% of the state of California's prison inmates had chronic truancy records (Cooney, 2019). Truancy has been linked to school dropout and low academic performance and increases the likelihood that youth will engage in drug and alcohol use, fighting, theft, and more serious forms of delinquency (Plumas County, n.d.). The researcher found no research stating students set goals to become truant and unsuccessful.

Typically, students do not miss days from school just because they want to be truant (Sutherlin, 2016). If a student starts at a young age missing over 10 school days a year, eventually, this could become a pattern, leading to misfortunes in the educational system (Sutherlin, 2016, p. 15). Students who continue to be absent regularly from school for no apparent reason will become chronically truant students, due to not coming to school as required.

Research suggests that truancy serves a functional purpose for many students, enabling them to avoid anxiety-producing situations at school or to gain social acceptance

among peers (Dube & Orpinas, 2009, p. 90). The sensible approach to help students combat truancy would be to discover why the student does not want to be at school in the first place and to see if it can be fixed (Education and Culture, 2017). The researcher found that truancy led to future risk factors for students who did not receive support.

Community. According to research by the Prince's Trust, 26% of young people aged 16 to 24, from low-income homes, felt that "people like them don't succeed in life" (as cited in Parenting for a Digital Future, 2019, p. 1). One common view is that students are a product of their communities. A community is a group of people who reside in the same area and share several of the same characteristics. The researcher studied several different communities' demographic data. The data showed how intertwined the education system and the community composition are when it comes to a student's education. Low academic scores and chronic truancy are inclusive of students' environments. Continuously, derelict and high crime neighborhood data showed that students have difficulties graduating. The individual student's ability to achieve school success is largely a function of the student's ability to navigate within a schema that may differ dramatically from the cultural norms learned in one's home community (Ahram et al., n.d.).

Researchers found that students who live with poor families in low-income communities are more prone to experience truancy (Lorenzo, 2016). Children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently; but they are faced daily with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront, and their brains have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance (Jensen, 2009a). Truant youths frequently experience family problems, emotional/psychological issues,

substance misuse, and delinquency (Dembo et al., 2014, p. 165). Being emotionally deficient inhibits the production of new brain cells, alters the path of maturation, and reworks the healthy neural circuitry in children's brains; thereby, undermining emotional and social development and predisposing them to emotional dysfunction (Parker & Parker, 2019). As a result, school absenteeism has a complex nature which includes risk factors associated with personal, academic, family, school environment, and social variables (Balkis et al., 2016, p. 3). Truancy programs typically focus on identifying, locating, and transitioning truant youth back into their respective schools without much or any attention on identifying and referring services for the underlying psycho-social problems causing truant behavior (Dembo & Gullledge, 2008, p. 442).

Class size. According to the 2018-2019 Illinois Report Card, the Midwest Public Urban School District's average class size ranged from 21 to 35 students. The average class size in public schools was 24 students. The average size of a secondary school class in the United States was approximately 23 students (EducationData, 2021). Many estimates showed that even though mental illness affected so many of our children aged six through 17, at least one-half, and many estimated as many as 80%, of them do not receive the mental health care they need (Association for Children's Mental Health, 2019). With a high percentage of students facing mental illness, there may be an average of four or five students in a classroom struggling with mental illness. Mental health is a personal issue that could cause truancy for students during their academic years.

On August 8, 2003, a school law passed that required the State of Illinois to develop a

Children's Mental Health Plan. The plan contained a short-term and a long-term recommendation to provide comprehensive, coordinated mental health

prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for children from birth through age 18 (Public Law 405 ILCS 49/5Sec. 5).

Mental health. Untreated mental health problems in children have serious fiscal consequences for the State because they affect children's ability to learn and increase their propensity for violence, alcohol and substance abuse, and other delinquent behaviors that are extremely costly to treat (Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, 2020). Consistent with being the first state to adopt standards for social-emotional learning (SEL) in the country, Illinois passed legislation, SB 565, Public Act 99-0927, to require social and emotional screenings for children as part of their school entry examinations, effective June 1, 2017 (Prewitt, 2017). Trauma occurring during childhood or adolescence can have a substantial impact on adolescent development (Child Welfare Information Gateway, n.d.).

The researcher believes the urban school district's truancy intervention plan should include a social-emotional health screening for every truant student to help identify resources needed to keep students in school. Having the ability to encompass all of a student's unique, intricate needs in a school truancy intervention program should increase students' chances of getting on track to graduate and help diminish their truancy issues.

School environment. The link between neighborhoods and educational and behavioral outcomes has been widely documented (Laurito et al., 2016). Without intervention, exposure to traumatizing experiences and environments can adversely influence how far a person's education will go (Ross, 2014). A school environment is broadly characterized by its facilities, classrooms, school-based health supports, and

disciplinary policies and practices (Safe Supportive Learning, n.d.). Indicators of a poor school environment include low levels of teacher satisfaction, high rates of teacher turnover, low academic expectations, and messy or unsafe physical plant practices (Safe Supportive Learning, n.d.).

The Midwest Public Urban school district's High School was opened in September, 1951, and had no significant improvements; therefore, the building required repair. Students made a fundraiser video during the 2016-2017 school year to entice more donors to give toward building upkeep. During the video, a student stated that occupants of the building could experience all four seasons during the school day. Another student said they would love to have running water and science equipment in the school's science lab. Statements should help the administrators and the community understand the condition of the school's HVAC system and how students were viewing their school environment. Based on chronic student absenteeism, suspensions/expulsions, and survey responses on the school environment from students and parents, the Midwest Public Urban School District was rated a D+ from students and parents (Overall Niche Grade, 2020).

School climate. The school climate is part of the student's educational experience. The Midwest Public Urban High School students were required to take a 5 *Essentials Survey* developed to help all students improve their outcomes, including their attendance and test scores. Fifty-two percent of students indicated on the 2019 5 *Essentials Survey* that they were not connected with their school (5 Essentials, 2019). For students to learn, they must feel safe, engaged, connected, and supported in their

classrooms and schools (Waldman, 2016). In a *Learning & the Brain* blog post entitled “The Psychology of Belonging (And Why it Matters),” Laldin (2016) stated:

Research has shown that having academic material mirror students’ home life and culture helps them relate to the curriculum and take ownership in learning, improving academic achievement significantly. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) aims to address these challenges. It makes an effort to legitimize all cultures. It gives students the space to take ownership of their cultural heritage. It shows them the value of maintaining this heritage and to do so with pride. There is an effort to create an environment where there are no subtle or overt pressures for students to disavow their own culture and assimilate to the majority culture.

(p. 1)

The year 2018 was the first school year that African American History was taught as an optional course at the Midwest Public Urban High School that served 90.5% African American students while being taught by 85.5% Caucasian teachers. Students bring their background knowledge to the classroom daily, including their culture, language, and life experiences. When teachers can connect a student’s background knowledge and the curriculum to create an optimal learning environment, education becomes meaningful. But for students of color (ELLs) and other underserved student populations, those assets are often overlooked and underutilized (Understood, 2021). Students need to be able to connect with their schools to have a successful school experience.

It is a broad, multifaceted concept that involves many aspects of the student’s school experience (School Climate Improvement, n.d.). Educators recognized the importance of school climate for 100 years (Cohen, 2008). Research has shown that a

positive school climate is tied to high or improving attendance rates, test scores, promotion rates, and graduation rates (Safe Supportive Learning, n.d.). A series of studies showed that a positive school climate is associated with significantly lower levels of absenteeism (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 364). Creating a supportive school climate, and decreasing suspensions and expulsions, requires close attention to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], n.d.). Civil Rights Data Collection (2014) for the 2015-2016 School Year reported 68.6% of the students were suspended in that school year. Specifically, schools with positive climates tended to have fewer student discipline problems, aggressive and violent behaviors, and fewer high school suspensions (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 362). It is especially important for the climate in urban schools to be based on trust, safety, fairness, respect, a welcoming environment, and high expectations, due to the challenging family and community circumstances inner-city youth face (Grace, 2015).

The 2019 *5 Essentials Survey* for students indicated under student/teacher trust that 49% of the teachers do not keep their promises. Trust is at the core of a meaningful learning relationship. Basch (2012) indicated that when trust existed between teachers and students from the adults' perspective, student achievement levels improved at the elementary and secondary levels. Durnford (2010) stated that when trust existed from the students' perspective, student achievement levels improved for students at the secondary level. Students not having the ability to trust their teachers sometimes caused them to have a negative school experience.

A negative school climate can harm students and raise liability issues for schools and districts (Safe Supportive Learning, n.d.). A negative school climate is linked to

lower student achievement and graduation rates and creates opportunities for violence, bullying, and even suicide (Safe Supportive Learning, n.d.). The 2019 *5 Essentials Student Survey* indicated that 37% of students were often threatened and bullied (5 Essentials, 2019). The strength of the linkages between school climate and academic achievement makes it essential that all students have the opportunity to attend schools that provide a safe and supportive environment where they can thrive and fully engage in their studies (Safe Supportive Learning, n.d.).

A review of research, practitioner, and scholarly writings suggests that there are four major aspects of school life that color and shape school climate, which include safety, teaching and learning, relationships, and environmental-structural (Cohen, 2008).

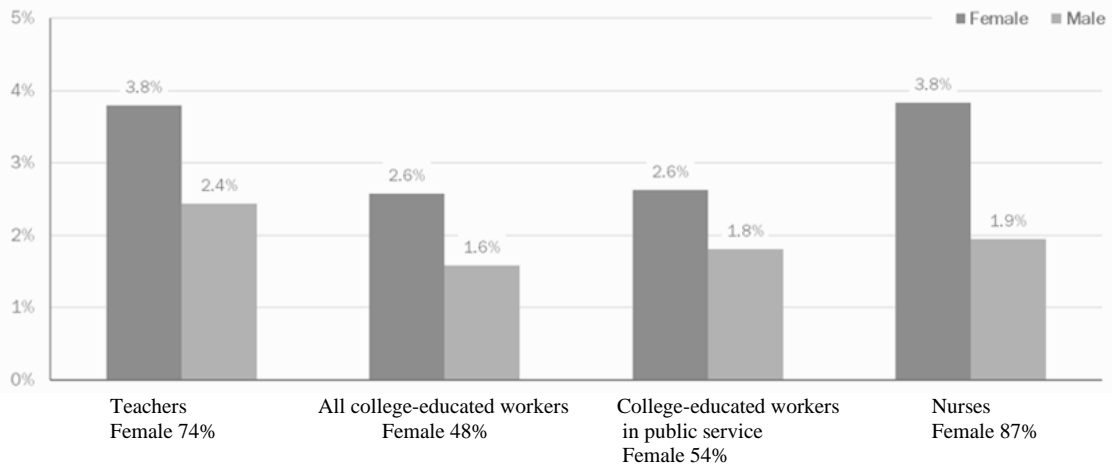
Teacher truancy. In the decade prior to this writing, political battles over teaching focused on the complexities of pensions, evaluations, and standardized testing, often ignoring a basic, but critical issue: Attendance (Resmovits, 2017). The researcher studied the teachers' attendance published by Illinois Report Card for The Midwest Public Urban School District. The Midwest Public Urban School District had an issue with teachers being chronically absent. The data trend showed the increase of teachers' absences within the last several years. In the 2016 school year, teachers were absent 10 or fewer days 34% of the time, and in 2017 teachers were absent 10 or fewer days 61% of the time (Illinois Report Card). The number of teachers who missed 10 or fewer days at the Midwest Public Urban School District almost doubled within one year. Throughout the course of a school year, students would have been assigned teachers who were absent so often that it put learning at risk (Crouch, 2016). Teacher attendance is a "leading indicator" of student achievement, according to the USDOE (Miller, 2012). Civil Rights

Data Collection (2014) published the fact that, out of 200 teachers, 133 of the teachers missed 10 or more days at the Midwest Public Urban School District and were considered to be chronically absent teachers. Only 67 teachers in the district would have been considered as having good attendance.

Empirical evidence now presents a persuasive case that teachers impact a range of student outcomes beyond test scores, including student absences, suspension rates, noncognitive skills, and college attendance (Quintero, 2020). Figure 1 displays both male and female teacher-absence rates significantly higher than college-educated workers in other industries, including other public service occupations (Quintero, 2020).

Figure 1

Absence Rate Among Workers by Gender



Note: Calculations based on Current Population Survey (2016-2019) (Hansen & Quintero, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

Student absenteeism can be connected to problems with the Midwest Public Urban school district truancy intervention program. The truancy's conceptual framework allows the focus to be on numerous relationships to help understand and describe the problem. The researcher studied truancy as a compound problem, because when students

are chronically absent from school, it affects more than student's grades (FindLaw, 2016b). The researcher will use system theories to explain how the various truancy factors negatively influence a student's educational journey.

The researcher will explore all four relational systems theories, family, individual, community, and school, in this study to help gain the knowledge and understanding of what should be in an effective truancy intervention program to help students matriculate and graduate from high school. Throughout the exploration of the theories, the researcher hopes to clarify the requirements needed to have a successful truancy intervention program for the Midwest Public Urban School District. The researcher's increased knowledge should help the school district's administrators to improve their attendance and graduation rates.

Systems theory was first introduced by von Bertalanffy in the 1940s and later continued by Ashby in the 1950s (Heylighen & Joslyn, 1992). Von Bertalanffy introduced the idea that "systems are open to, and interact with their environments, and that they can acquire qualitatively new properties through emergence, resulting in continued evolution" (Heylighen & Joslyn, 1992, para 1). The researcher's study appears to be most efficient in connecting all four relational systems theories; family, individual, community, and school.

The Family Systems Theory was introduced by Bowen, who suggested that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from one another, but rather as a part of their family, as the family is an emotional unit (GenoPro, n.d.). Family systems theory is an approach to understand human functioning focused on interactions between people in a family and between the family and the context(s) in which that family is embedded

(Watson, 2012). Zins (2013) also understood that when looking at truancy, there were major systems and subsystems that affected a student's life, which in result, were the student's risk and protective factors. For example, poor family functioning can result in low parental monitoring, poor parent-child relationships, and low socioeconomic status, which then results in the student's poor school connection, negative peer groups, and poor academic success (Zins, 2013).

The *5 Essentials Survey* for students indicated that eight percent of their parents never encouraged them to work hard at school, and 21% of their parents sometimes encouraged them to work hard at school (5 Essentials, 2019).

Family systems theory has been applied to a wide variety of areas, including psychotherapy in general and family therapy in particular (emotional, behavioral, or relational symptoms in individual, couples, and families); school systems; community problems (polarized disputes, difficult conversations, peace studies, nonviolence training); organizations (consulting, leadership training, coaching); and health care (medical family therapy, emotional dynamics of illness, facilitating collaboration among patients, families, providers, and health care systems) (Watson, 2012, para. 1).

One of the eight concepts of the family system theory focuses on the family projection process. The concept explains how children can pick up their parents' emotional problems. Low income and poverty were linked to inconsistent, unsupportive, and uninvolved parenting styles and poor parental mental health, which in turn are associated with child behavior problems (WZB Berlin Social Science Center et al., 2017). Families play an essential role in students' academic success and cannot be separated.

Finding a way to have parents successfully involved during their child's truancy intervention process will help the student and intervention program succeed.

A mental health evaluation process will need to be part of the truancy intervention program to help understand the complex family issues that cause students to be chronically truant. A truancy intervention program cannot be successful if the student and family relationship are not reviewed. The detrimental impact of poverty on child behavioral problems is well-established, but the mechanisms that explain this relationship are less well-known (WZB Berlin Social Science Center et al., 2017).

The ecological systems theory can help to explicate some of the mechanisms through which poverty and related problems adversely affects educational outcomes and to identify systemic changes likely to lead to improved educational outcomes (Nation et al., 2020, p. 727).

Statement of the Problem

After the researcher carefully reviewed the Midwest Public Urban School District School Improvement Plan (SIP), the researcher noticed that the plan did not include improving or revising the school's truancy intervention plan to improve student attendance or increase graduation rates. School districts must continue to plan and develop strategies when their truancy and dropout rates are soaring increasingly every calendar year. Youth with school attendance problems (SAPs) report lower academic efficacy, poorer academic performances, more anxiety, more symptoms of depression, and less self-esteem (Keppens et al., 2019). In addition, school absenteeism is often embedded in a broader pattern of social deviant behavior: youth with attendance problems have an increased risk of stealing, getting involved in vandalism and are more

likely to partake in behaviors at the risk of their health; for example, smoking, substance use; (Keppens et al., 2019, p. 10). Absenteeism is a truant behavior that negatively affects the performance among students (2013b).

This study resolves to investigate the truancy intervention processes in the Midwest Public Urban High School (pseudonym). The longitudinal study will focus on ninth through 12th-grade students' attendance in a Midwest urban high school. The researcher will complete a longitudinal study starting from the 2016-2017 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. The researcher chose this timeframe to investigate how many students stayed on target to graduate. Students must attend school daily to have a successful academic education. Truancy, a persistent problem in the United States for more than 100 years, is associated with a host of life-course problems (Vaughn et al., 2013, p. 768). Reducing chronic student absences continues to be an essential topic for K-12 urban education systems. Maynard et al. (2012) shared, "A 2012 meta-analysis conducted by the Campbell Collaboration identified 391 studies of truancy interventions, only 28 of which provided any plausible basis for determining that the program was effective" (para. 17).

Effective, data-driven truancy interventions are essential for an urban public school district to help combat truancy issues. However, the urban school districts fail to make it a top priority for district leaders to improve the truancy intervention process annually. District leaders will need to be the driving force behind improving and evaluating the district truancy intervention process yearly.

Most evaluations of truancy programs are based on aggregate data, often lack meaningful comparison groups, and focus on short-term benefits (for example,

reduction in unexcused absences; which do not provide meaningful information on changes in an individual's school attendance or academic school performance (Vaughn et al., 2013, p. 770).

The urban truancy intervention process in the study district has not changed in over a decade. Students or their families did not receive truancy interventions or strategies to help them improve their attendance. The chronic student attendance percentages increased in the district by not receiving help and widening as the students get matriculated in age or class. “Compared to most developed nations, the United States fares poorly with respect to tolerating a relatively high level of truancy and school dropout rate” (Vaughn et al., 2013, p. 769). Lack of current research and an updated intervention truancy process continued to cause the urban school district's chronic truancy rate to increase over the last several years. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result (Hamm, 2020). These words are usually credited to the acclaimed genius Albert Einstein.

The urban school district continued to use the same truancy intervention process while expecting a decrease in the chronic truancy percentages. A review of the literature revealed gaps in the research regarding corrective measures that will help urban school districts understand the importance of an effective truancy intervention process and the significance of revisiting their truancy intervention processes annually.

Despite significant efforts and millions of dollars spent by schools, communities, states, and the federal government to reduce truancy over the past 20 years, there is little evidence that any positive impact has been made on school attendance (Maynard et al., 2017, p. 191).

This study will focus specifically on truancy intervention processes in a Midwest Public Urban high school. The research will show the duplication of services offered by the regional office of education. The study will add to the body of existing research by providing current research data on ineffective truancy intervention programs in an urban district that keeps students and their families in a repeated chronic truancy cycle.

Although truancy is one of the major issues facing schools and the education of youth in the United States, estimating the prevalence of truancy has been fraught with challenges (Vaughn et al., 2013, p. 772). The researcher aims to provide current research to the existing research body by providing current data for grades nine through twelve within an urban environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed-method truancy intervention study was to investigate the effectiveness of the intervention program. A successful program should indicate how students' attendance has changed for the betterment, how student absenteeism has decreased, and how the graduation rate has increased after going through the truancy intervention program. Identification of these youths' problems and responding to them by placing them as early as possible into effective intervention services would benefit them, their families, and society (Dembo & Gulledge, 2008, p. 454).

The researcher hopes to determine if the Midwest Public Urban School District truancy intervention program influenced students to correct their truancy issues and stay on target to graduate with their starting class by developing research questions that lead to greater specificity.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What are the students' attendance changes after going through the district truancy process?
2. What are the students' attendance changes after going through the ROE truancy process?
3. What are the truancy officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
4. What are the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
5. What are the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
6. What are the TAOEP staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
7. What are the counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
8. What are the social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
9. What are the truancy officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
10. What are the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

11. What are the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
12. What is the TAOEP staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
13. What are the counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
14. What are the social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

H1_a: There will be a significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district truancy process.

H2_a: There will be a significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

H3_a: Chronically truant students will graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the district's truancy process

H4_a: Chronically truant students will graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the ROE truancy process.

Significance of the Study

This program evaluation will be the first in the Midwest Public Urban School District, specifically on attendance. Effective, data-driven truancy interventions are essential for an urban public school district to help combat truancy issues. The urban truancy intervention process in the district has not changed in over a decade, prior to this writing. The chronic student attendance percentages were increasing rapidly in the district and continued to widen as the students got older or matriculated in their education. Lack

of current research and an updated intervention truancy process continued to cause the urban school district's chronic truancy rate to increase.

A review of the current literature revealed gaps in the research regarding corrective measures that may help urban school districts understand the importance of an effective truancy intervention process and the significance of revisiting their truancy intervention process annually. A systematic and comprehensive search process was employed to locate all possible truancy intervention studies between 1990 and 2009, and two of the research findings indicated a lack of inclusion of minority students and few studies assessing long-term outcomes (Maynard et al., 2012, p. 14). This program evaluation will try to address those gaps. However, the researcher hopes the study will reflect the importance of reviewing and revising the truancy intervention program annually to the district leaders. District leaders will need to be the driving force behind developing and evaluating their programs for their students' and district's success.

Definition of Key Terms

For this study, the following terms are defined:

5 Essentials Survey. The *5 Essentials Survey* identifies five indicators that lead to improved outcomes for all students, including improved attendance and larger test score gains. The five indicators that positively affect school success are:

1. Effective Leaders
2. Collaborative Teachers
3. Involved Families
4. Supportive Environments
5. Ambitious Instruction (ISBE, 2016, 2021)

Absence Occurrence Report. This report may be generated to obtain a list of students who have a certain number of absences, as well as perfect attendance (Skyward, 2020).

Adequate Yearly Progress. Each year, the state calculates a school or district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to determine if students are improving their performance based on the established annual targets (ISBE, n.d.a).

Adjudicatory Hearing. A trial at which a person has the right to question or cross-examine witnesses and evidence. Parents have the right to bring witnesses and evidence on their child's behalf. The student has the right not to testify (Legal Rights of Juveniles – Virginia Rules, n.d.).

Chronic or habitual truant. A child subject to compulsory school attendance who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days (Public Law 105 ILCS 5/26-2a, n.d.-a).

Compulsory education. Compulsory education refers to a period of education that is required of all people and is imposed by the government. All children between the ages of 6 and 17 are required to attend school in Illinois—it's the law (ISBE, n.d.-b).

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). It is a research-based approach that makes meaningful connections between what students learn in school and their cultures, languages, and life experiences (Understood, 2021).

Homelessness. A designation is given to children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children who are: Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate

accommodations. Living in emergency or transitional shelters. Abandoned in hospitals. Awaiting foster care placement (Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc., 2018).

Individual Education Plan (IEP). A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations (Learning for All, n.d.).

Job Corps Program. Job Corps is a tuition-free training and education program that connects eligible young men and women with the skills and educational opportunities they need to establish real careers (Department of Labor, n.d.).

Lincoln Challenge Academy. The Academy combines classroom instruction, service to community, life skills, job skills, computer literacy, physical training, and challenging individual and team activities into one unique experience (Illinois Challenged Academy, n.d.).

Local Truancy Review Board. A board consisting of the building principals, the building truancy caseworker, a representative from the central office if needed, and a social worker if needed (Truancy, n.d.).

Low Income. The poverty level in Illinois is based on the federal level. Illinois uses the federal poverty limit as its base for determining poverty in the state, which means the poverty line for a family of four is \$26,200 annually and \$2,183 monthly (Francis, 2020).

Mobility. Students may change schools for a variety of reasons, such as a family move, a transfer to a school that better serves the student's needs, or a period of homelessness. Continual student turnover is shown to be academically and socially disruptive to both ongoing and transferring students (Illinois - Student Mobility, n.d.b).

No Child Left Behind. A law (Public Law 107-110) implemented in 2001 that reauthorized a number of federal programs aimed at improving student performance, particularly in reading and math, and increase states', school districts', and schools' accountability (Public Law 107-110; 115 STAT.1435, 2021).

Regional Office of Education Truancy Plan.

The Regional Office of Education Truancy Plan works with local school district's truant students that have missed nine or more days from school. The plan includes a required hearing to review the student's truancy file to determine the resources needed to get the student to attend school regularly. The plan provides students with prevention and intervention services. The county's State's Attorney Office is a part of the Regional Office of Education truancy plan and will petition the court to enforce the student's truancy plan.

Regional Truancy Review Board. A review board consisting of representatives from St. Clair County Youth Coalition, Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities, Chestnut Health Systems, Children Home and Aide Society of Illinois (CHASI), Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, Catholic Social Services, Call for Help, Kids Hope United, two social service representatives attending, along with school principal and truancy caseworker that has worked with the student. County Regional Truancy Review Board hearings conducted by an experienced hearing officer with a panel of educators,

representatives from local social service agencies, and the juvenile justice system (St. Clair County Regional Office of Education, n.d.).

Socioeconomic. Socioeconomic status (SES) is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control (American Psychological Association [APA], n.d.).

Student Identification Number (SIS) The SIS ID is a unique identifier that serves as your student identification number. This number is assigned to you when you register. You will use this number to access information online (Lord Fairfax Community College, 2014).

Skyward. Skyward is a software company specializing in K–12 school management and municipality management technologies, including Student Management, Human Resources, and Financial Management (Skyward, Inc., n.d.).

Truancy Intervention Program. The Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) is an education program designed to (Trumbull County Educational Service Center, n.d.):

- Improve School attendance and decrease absenteeism
- Return habitually truant students to a regular schedule of school attendance
- Increase students' academic performance by improving attendance
- Teach skills that will improve family communication
- Provide skills that will enable students to be successful in school and in life

Truancy Officer. Some schools appoint truancy officers to intervene with truant youth and their families. Truancy officers are an extension of the school. They investigate

unexcused absences and try to mediate and solve the issue among the student, school, and parent (Truant Officer, n.d.).

Truant. Truant is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without a valid cause. This is an unexcused absence (Public Law 105 ILCS 5/26-2a, n.d.-b).

Truants Alternative and Optional Educational Program (TAOEP). These programs serve students with attendance problems and/or dropouts up to and including those who are 21 years of age and provide truancy prevention and intervention services and/or optional education. Programs which primarily provide truancy prevention and intervention services integrate resources of the school and community to meet the needs of the students and parents

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The following delimitations bounded the scope of the study:

Time frame. The secondary data will be collected for the first semester in the month of October 2020.

Location of the study. The study will take place in a Midwest Public Urban High School (pseudonym).

Sample. Participants will be Midwest Public Urban School District's high school employees. They are diverse in age, job titles, race, and education. Participants are all involved with the truant students, and they are either certified or non-certified staff members.

Criteria. High School employees that work directly with truant students who consent to participate will be included.

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample demographics. The sample is a limitation. The researcher only focused on the high school in the district.

Instrument. The survey and interview questions are a limitation. The researcher created both instruments.

Instrument. Teachers may answer the survey items the way they think the researcher would like the items answered.

Limited staff for an interview. Some departments only had one or two people to interview, which limited the data being collected to reflect the department's point of view

The following assumptions were accepted:

1. All staff members in the sample group will answer each survey item honestly and willingly.
2. All staff members in the sample group will return their Survey.
3. All staff members in the sample group will interpret each survey item the same.
4. The sample was representative of the general population of educators who held a certified or non-certified position within the high school.

Summary

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Midwest Public Urban School District truancy intervention program. Youth with school attendance problems (SAPs) reported lower academic efficacy, poorer academic performances, more anxiety, more symptoms of depression, and less self-esteem (Keppens et al., 2019, p. 2). Identification of these youths' problems and responding to them by placing them as early

as possible into effective intervention services would benefit them, their families, and society (Dembo & Gullledge, 2008, p. 439). In Chapter Two, a review of intervention services is found through the current literature at the time of this study.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

Nearly eight million students, within every state and at every grade level, missed three or more weeks of school in 2015-2016, according to data released by the USDOE's Office for Civil Rights (Cooney, 2019). One in seven students in the United States struggles with chronic absenteeism, and 36 states use accountability metrics that are designed to assess attendance rates as part of school performance profiles (Eklund et al., 2020, p. 11).

The Midwest Public Urban school district's Illinois Report Card listed the school as having 50% of its students classified as having chronic absenteeism during the 2018 – 2019 school year. The Midwest Public Urban school district's total enrollment during the 2018 – 2019 school year was 3,433 students. Out of the 3,433 students enrolled, 1,682 were chronically absent per the Illinois Report Card (2019a).

The research study was written to look into the district's Truancy Intervention Program and, if needed, to help the school's administrators make the proper research-based changes to the truancy intervention program to help decrease the chronic absenteeism and increase the graduation rate. Chronic absenteeism can be turned around if schools and community partners' work together with families to monitor who is at risk for poor attendance, nurture a habit of regular attendance, and identify and address the challenges that prevent students from getting to school (Alliance for a Healthier Generation et al., n.d.). With repeated truancy, they can expect suspensions, expulsions, juvenile delinquency, and future adult crime (ScholarChip, 2020). The district needed a relevant plan to address the school's current demographic and student population. There

was a serious need to design and implement effective prevention initiatives that take into account the causes and correlates of truancy and find efficacious means of addressing these issues before students begin skipping school (Henry & Huizinga, 2007, p. 506).

Search Strategy

A methodical and broad search process was employed to locate all possible studies between 2008 and 2021, with every effort made to include both published and unpublished studies to minimize publication bias. This study's search strategy started with establishing a literature review-components outline, which guided the search database keywords. Keywords included but were not limited to truancy, intervention, attendance, absenteeism, school, juvenile, unexcused absences, and partnerships. Sources of information included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government statistics, theses, and dissertations.

Midwest Public Urban School District's Truancy Intervention Program

The following steps below are what consisted of the district's truancy intervention program.

1. If a student misses three unexcused days, the truancy officer will mail an attendance letter to the student's parent or guardian, indicating the student's days they have been absent.
2. The truancy officer will schedule a home or office visit if a student continues to miss days after receiving a three-day letter.
3. If a student misses six unexcused days, the truancy officer will mail an attendance letter on behalf of the superintendent to the student-parent or guardian indicating the days the student has been absent and to request a meeting with the district's

Local Truancy Review Board for a corrective action plan. The Truancy Review Board consisted of the building principal and the truancy officer. During the meeting, an informal discussion was held with the parent to understand why they were truant. The principal, the truancy officer, the parent, and the student will put a corrective action plan together.

4. If the student misses nine or more days, the truancy officer will refer the student to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for a hearing. The ROE will send the student-parent a nine-day letter to attend the hearing.

Midwest Public Urban School District's High School Attendance Policy

For use in this dissertation, a copy of the Midwest Public Urban School District High School Attendance Policy is included in the Appendix A. The policy is located in the high school student handbook. The handbook is accessible on the high school's website. A copy of the handbook is electronically sent to parents.

The following procedures regarding attendance apply:

Students who miss more than 20 minutes of a class period will be counted as absent for that class.

Loss of credit: Students with poor attendance risk losing class credit.

A parent or guardian must contact the school about each absence. In turn, we keep students and parents carefully informed about semester attendance in this manner:

3 days absent - letter and phone call to parents

6 days absent – letter and truancy officer involvement

9 days absent- Attendance packet is prepared for the ROE

11 days absent - student could LOSE CREDIT - notice explaining further rights to parent

Regional Office of Education Truancy Information

Regional Office of Education (n.d.) listed the process they follow below when receiving a local district referral. To review the information on the website, you would click on program, truancy, and procedure.

- After students reach three days of unexcused attendance, the principal or designee sends a 3-day letter.
- After six days of unexcused absences, a letter is sent from the District Superintendent stating the Local Review Board Hearing time and place.
- After nine days of unexcused absences, the school district notifies the Regional Office of Education, and a notification letter to appear before the Regional Truancy Hearing Board will be mailed.

The ROE will need the following documents to proceed with the Regional Truancy Review Board Hearings:

- A. Student Referral Form - Local Outcome form
- B. Copy of the 3-day Letter
- C. Truancy Fact Sheet - Truancy Not To Be Taken Lightly
- D. Copy of the 6-day letter
- E. State's Attorney Letter
- F. Student & Parent Questionnaire
- G. Student S.I.S. Number
- H. Student Service Action Plan

- I. Demographic Sheet
- J. Truancy Interventions
- K. Official Attendance Record

Notice to appear before the Regional Truancy Review Board after nine days of unexcused absences

- Regional Office Staff member will process the 9-day letter after contact from the appropriate school personnel
- Regional Office Staff member, Truancy Case Manager, will notify TRB Board for scheduled TRB Hearings
- Regional Review Board Hearings at the ROE at 1:00 p.m. provided all required information has been submitted to the appropriate staff.
- Persons Present
 1. Student and Parent
 2. Hearing Officer – ROE staff member
 3. Truancy & Mental Health Case Manager – ROE staff member will monitor student attendance and recommendations of the Truancy Review Board
 4. Social Service Agency Representatives
 5. Appropriate School Personnel (if applicable)

Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Rates

Chronic absenteeism rates are highest in high school, according to data in the 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection (USDOE, 2016). A student who's chronically absent in high school is 7.4 times more likely to dropout (Bourgault, 2015). By high

school, attendance is a better dropout indicator than test scores (Alliance for a Healthier Generation et al., 2017). The Department of Education in the United States of America, 2015-2016 school year reported more than 20% of students in high school are chronically absent compared with more than 14% of students in middle school (USDOE, 2016). Many urban school districts in the United States shared a similar set of problems, including low achievement, high rates of dropout, and high rates of behavioral problems/disciplinary referrals (Ritter, 2018). As a result, urban districts often also shared a reputation of being poorly managed and in perpetual turmoil (Nation et al., 2020, p. 728). As a superintendent and the main leader of the district, schools need ways to prevent truancy, develop successful behaviors, and improve attendance rates (ScholarChip, 2020).

Truancy Intervention Programs

This research aimed to investigate the truancy intervention plan of a Midwest Public Urban school district. This investigation study's main objective was to examine the effects of the district's truancy intervention program on school attendance to inform policy, practice, and research. The intervention plan was reviewed to see if it had all of the required researched elements proven to improve attendance and graduation rates in an urban school district. The Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) works with the student's parents or guardians, teachers and other school staff, social workers, and others in the community (ScholarChip, 2020). Frequently, efforts to improve urban education are focused on interventions at the student, school, or district level (Nation et al., 2020, p. 724). However, when school facilities provided intellectual support and resources, all students could develop academically, as they explored their own intellectual abilities

(APA, 2013). A truancy intervention program (TIP) is a program designed to support students who are habitually truant (ScholarChip, 2020). An effective TIP will involve numerous resources that will meet each chronically truant student's unique needs. A truant student may have compounded truancy issues that need to be addressed by the school's truancy intervention program. There is no reason why a truant student should be left by the wayside (ScholarChip, 2020). A TIP should include multiple resources to address the student compounded truancy issues that will increase students' chances of graduating. ScholarChip (2020) provided 10 reasons why a truancy intervention program can help truant students.

1. **TIP intervenes early.** At-risk students can be identified and monitored, particularly important early in their education. Attendance problems and truancy usually begin in the elementary grades. When these are addressed before they can escalate, behaviors and attitudes toward school can often be changed before they worsen. Home visits and outreach to the parents when minimal unexcused absences are involved, enabling family engagement early on. Interventions should address the root causes of the truant behaviors such as reading difficulties or physical or mental health issues. Early childhood education and early literacy development can be introduced. (para. 13)

2. **The program promotes attendance.** The student is matched with a volunteer mentor who visits them several times a week in school. The mentor monitors the student's daily attendance, performs in-school tutoring, acts as a positive role model, and helps with goal setting and achieving, communicating with school staff and social workers. (para. 14)

3. A truancy intervention program promotes student health. Because poor health is often a barrier to attending school, the student is encouraged to engage in healthy behaviors involving personal hygiene to prevent common illnesses. The student's health should extend to access to a school-based health center for screenings and free medical services. (para. 15)

4. A TIP reduces barriers to learning. Barriers to learning can include class instruction moving too fast, health problems, or an inability to find help. Students may not receive appropriate support from home or even within the classroom environment. Your school needs to provide a positive environment where the student can feel safe and engaged. This includes having a positive school climate if the student feels the current one is negative. (para. 16)

5. A truancy intervention program engages students in learning. When the student has a multifaceted support system in place from teachers, administrators, parents, and their surrounding community, they become better engaged. They have the feeling of being cared for, resulting in better learning. (para. 17)

6. A truancy intervention program helps students achieve. With truant students off the streets and in a positive learning situation with caring people, they can achieve their goals and become productive members of society. Students make short- and long-term goals that help them achieve, whether it's getting to school, passing a class, moving on to the next grade, or graduating from high school. (para. 18)

7. A TIP provides support when needed. This includes support from social workers, counselors, school nurses, and school psychologists. Community partners like faith-based communities, law enforcement, after-school or recreation programs can become involved. Proper support can eliminate the barriers to learning and provide the positive support the student needs. (para. 19)

8. The TIP drives child and family relationship building. As part of the family outreach, home visits are used for relationship building and problem solving. The TIP would establish a contact person at school for parents to work with. It can refer students to counselors and conduct workshops for the family. If needed, a truant officer can be used to work with the student and their family. (para. 20)

9. The truancy intervention program addresses diversity. The program works to support students and families from numerous diverse backgrounds. With the increase in minority populations, TIPs are now addressing these families on a growing basis. (para. 21)

10. A truancy intervention program promotes a safe school environment. The school that creates a positive and supportive environment reduces the prevalence of challenging, dangerous, or disrespectful behaviors. (para 22)

Erickson-Gabby (2019) A school is responsible for creating a safe learning environment, tracking student attendance, communicating with parents, and ensuring that all policies are clear, consistent, and communicated.

Erickson-Gabby (2019) Common ways a school may cause truancy include:

unmet needs

undiagnosed learning difficulties

unaddressed mental health issues and bullying. (para 2)

While schools often cite parenting and home life as the cause of truancy, truant youth often report school issues as the cause—for example, poor relationships with teachers, boring classes, and lack of interest in school (Erickson-Gabby, 2019).

O'Connor et al. (2014) reported some states had laws requiring that schools establish procedures for intervening with truant students and their families. Nebraska enacted a law requiring schools to report twenty or more absences or the hourly equivalent of 20 excused or unexcused absences.

Critical Components of Truancy Intervention Program

Teachers

Although research found some promising interventions to reduce absenteeism, the literature lacked clarity on operationalizing absenteeism and when programs should intervene with youth who had varying absenteeism patterns (Hobbs et al., 2018, p. 225). The first step in designing a stronger and more effective school attendance program is to identify the critical components of programs that have demonstrated success (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018). Teachers are usually the first staff members involved with truant students in a school setting. Teachers must recognize when students are not engaged or struggling academically in school. Adelabu et al. (2016) all teachers should create positive interest among their students and encourage them to always show more interest on the school extra-curriculum activities or classroom activities in order to stay in the school (p. 48). A great deal of empirical evidence suggested that a student's lack of

commitment and attachment to school were important predictors of involvement in delinquency and other undesirable behaviors (Henry & Huizinga, 2007, p. 507).

Changing students' negative attitudes towards learning is a process that involves determining the factors driving the attitude and using this information to bring about change (Stephney, 2016). Teachers need to set aside time to talk with the students to ask why they appear to lack interest in school and what is causing them to decline educationally. The student response might often be anger, rebellion, and even physical symptoms, such as anxiousness and illness (Stephney, 2016). Teachers are among the most critical partners of the truancy intervention program, if not the most significant. In-service training is intended as a development effort in which key stakeholders (school administration, school personnel, court personnel, community partners, families, and students) can be educated on the benefits of school attendance and the barriers that may hinder attendance (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018). The Supreme Court of Ohio (2018) reported the core curriculum for school personnel in-service training included, but was not limited to, the following:

- Laws applicable to attendance
- Court and school requirements under H.B. 410
- School engagement
- Intervention strategies
- Collaboration between school and court
- Reasons for student absenteeism
- Human trafficking
- Ways to identify barriers to attendance

- Dispute resolution processes and goals
- The Uniform Mediation Act
- Core values of mediation
- Necessary participants to mediation. (p. 34)

Community Resources and Family Engagement

Some research examined comprehensive intervention programs aimed at targeting chronic truancy, while other research explored early prevention techniques aimed at targeting the issue in earlier years in hopes of mediating its effects in middle and high schools (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018). Due to the strong influence of the family on a child's education and overall well-being, comprehensive truancy interventions must attend to issues pertaining to family dynamics (Parrish, 2015). The approach involved assessing the school and students' needs and establishing strategic partnerships with community organizations to align services to meet the requirements. O'Connor et al. (2014) found that reducing chronic absenteeism required schools to take a comprehensive approach to involving families and the community, including communicating with families, finding mentors in the community, and celebrating good attendance with the students and their families. Perhaps most importantly, our schools and communities need to both recognize the salience of the truancy issue and garner the resources necessary to remedy the situation (Henry & Huizinga, 2007, p. 511).

One way to identify the level of support students need is to connect the number of hours of school a student has been absent to a tiered system of support, i.e., the more hours missed, the higher the tier or level of support (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018). When the student has a multifaceted support system in place from teachers,

administrators, parents, and their surrounding community, they become better engaged (ScholarChip, 2020).

Another way is to invite parents, students, and community members to talk about local barriers through platforms such as World Café, which is a social technology platform for engaging people in conversations, asks questions that spark and direct attention, perception, energy and effort (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018).

Professionals and families join together to talk about what can be done to improve their lives, analyze the resources available to get ahead, and address barriers as a community which allows unknown resources to be tapped (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018).

Previous literature suggested that targeted, school-based counseling interventions have the potential for success with an absentee student population, particularly those focusing on positive relationships and social skill building (Stripling, 2018). The researcher found that scholars suggested that school districts with excessive truancy at the secondary level should rely on a combination of prevention and intervention efforts. Some schools assigned students to mentoring programs like the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program to support attendance (O'Connor et al., 2014).

The Supreme Court of Ohio (2018), reported that The Cleveland Metro School District ran a Get-2-School campaign with The Cleveland Browns Foundation as the signature partner. In its first year, the attendance campaign reduced chronic absenteeism by 11%, and it was its first city-wide campaign promoting the awareness and importance of school attendance, utilizing billboards, yard signs, radio commercials, social media, phone banking, home visits, and videos featuring Cleveland Browns players sharing the importance of getting to school (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018). Cincinnati Public

Schools similarly developed the successful Count-Me-In Campaign (The Supreme Court of Ohio, 2018).

Research and assessment conducted by the National Center for School Engagement and the National Dropout Prevention Center identified six critical components for effective, comprehensive truancy reduction programs, including (Reimer):

Collaboration: Establish a multidisciplinary group to guide and implement truancy programming.

Family Involvement: Target family participation in school attachment activities, engage families in all truancy prevention and intervention efforts, and address family-based needs to support attendance. Family involvement is instrumental when dealing with a truant student. Family involvement will help bring an understanding on how the family is structured and support the family need for the student to be successful.

Erickson-Gabby (2019) parents or guardians are responsible for sending minors to school, every day and on time. The Erickson-Gabby (2019) ways a parent or guardian may encourage truancy include:

- poor parenting skills
- inability to supervise children
- neighborhood violence
- abuse and neglect
- pressure to stay home or work to help the family
- placing little value on education. (para. 5)

Parrish (2015) stated numerous researchers found that parent training helps reduce aggressive, antisocial, and delinquent behavior among children.

Comprehensive Approach: The reasons for nonattendance are varied, and a community's response should be flexible and broad enough to take into consideration the specific issues experienced by students and families (Parrish, 2015).

Use of Incentives and Sanctions: A combination of motivating incentives and accountability-based sanctions works best with youth (Parrish, 2015).

Operate in a Supportive Context: To sustain programming, the program environment, including infrastructure and prevailing policies, must be a supportive source of energy and resources (Parrish, 2015).

Rigorous Evaluation and Assessment: Test the approach to see if the desired outcomes are produced and make midcourse corrections if necessary. Outcome data will help sustain funding for truancy programming and generate positive political will (Parrish, 2015).

Some needs involved social and emotional supports. However, some requirements involved instrumental services, such as funding a clothes closet, so that students would not have to be sent home for dress code violations. For example, Nation et al. (2020) used a case study of the Metro Nashville Public Schools to explore how engagement with the housing and criminal justice systems were necessary for improving urban education. In a Michigan study of a school-based truancy court intervention in four different middle schools, the researchers found that the truancy court was most effective in increasing the attendance rates of students with severe truancy issues (O'Connor et al., 2014). In this Michigan study, truancy courts did help increase attendance rates for students with high

levels of truancy, suggesting that selecting students with higher levels of truancy at the middle school might be more effective (O'Connor et al., 2014).

Data Systems

Interventions for students found to be off-track were determined and implemented by school or district staff (Lovett & Jacob, 2017a). Despite many interventions that existed to address the problem, truancy remained constant between 2002 (10.8%) and 2014 (11.1%) (Stripling, 2018b). Schools were starting to use data systems to help identify truant students before they became chronically truant. There were eight states, including Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Utah, that began to examine chronic absences across the state (O'Connor et al., 2014).

In one Oakland, California, school, the chronic absenteeism rate went from 15% to 8% in one year and scores raised on standardized tests by 30 points, by using data to make decisions about how to improve attendance, engage the full community, and have district leadership support, as characteristic of truancy reduction programs (O'Connor et al., 2014). Henry and Huizinga (2007, p. 506) reported recent data from the Denver Public Schools (National Center for School Engagement 2006) that indicated only a small fraction of even the most serious truants (4% of elementary, 16% of middle and 6% of high school students) received any type of intervention beyond a phone call or letter.

Rewards and Incentive Program

Programs attempted to use rewards for improved or high attendance that may include recognition at school assemblies, certificates provided by the school, options for earning tangible prizes or free food coupons (from local businesses, etc.), or a variety of other rewards. At the extreme, in Anchorage, Alaska, a Jeep Patriot automobile was to be

given away by lottery to one student who had perfect attendance (O'Connor et al., 2014). School districts in California, Connecticut, and Wyoming have also given away cars or trucks to combat truancy, although it is unclear whether these high-profile rewards had any real impact on truancy generally (O'Connor et al., 2014).

The Influence of Trauma. Through multiple readings, the researcher read that trauma occurring during childhood or adolescence can have a substantial impact on adolescent development (Child Welfare Information Gateway, n.d.). A person that experiences high levels of emotional, psychological, and physical distress can temporarily disrupt their ability to function normally in day-to-day life (Victoria State Government & Health and Human Services, n.d.).

Every young person is different, but common symptoms of distress include:

- strong emotions such as sadness, anger, anxiety and guilt
- overreacting to minor irritations
- repetitively thinking about the traumatic event and talking about it often
- disturbed sleeping patterns
- withdrawing from family and friends
- wanting to spend more time alone
- being very protective of family and friends
- returning to younger ways of behaving including giving up responsibilities
sudden return to rebellious behaviour
- increased need for independence
- self-absorption and caring only about what is immediately important
- loss of interest in school, friends, hobbies, and life in general

- pessimistic outlook on life, being cynical and distrusting of others
- depression and feelings of hopelessness
- difficulties with short-term memory, concentration and problem solving.

(Victoria State Government & Health and Human Services, Common Reactions to Trauma in Teenagers, n.d.)

In children and adolescents, traumatic stress can be triggered by a wide range of experiences, including:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Neglect (failure to provide for a child’s basic physical, medical, educational, and emotional needs)
- Interpersonal violence or victimization (e.g., assault, rape)
- Community violence (e.g., gang violence, riots, school shootings)
- Natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, floods, tornadoes)
- Terrorism Traumatic loss or grief (e.g., murder of a parent or sibling, death of a parent in battle)
- Medical trauma (e.g., severe injury, life-threatening illness)
- Accidents. (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2008, para. 4)

Research on human development shows that the effects of such trauma can be mitigated when students learn in a positive school climate that offers long-term, secure relationships that support academic, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development — an approach known as “whole child” education (Learning Policy Institute., 2017).

Education can truly make or break an individual, because it builds and develops a person's belief, ideologies and values (Silas International, 2016). Silas International (2016) education helps in human development from different aspects – personal, social, economic, and spiritual. Truant students are at a disadvantage from receiving the whole child's education when they do not come to school.

System Theories

School Factors. Each year in the United States, 46 million children are exposed to violence, crime, abuse, homelessness, or food insecurity, as well as a range of other experiences that cause psychological trauma (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). In one nationally representative sample of young people ages 12 to 17:

- 8% reported a lifetime prevalence of sexual assault
- 17% reported physical assault
- 39% reported witnessing violence. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, n.d., para 5)

It is important to learn how traumatic events affect children because the more you know, the more you will understand the reasons for certain behaviors and emotions and be better prepared to help children and their families cope (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, n.d.). Referring to Prabha and Maheswari (2017), school factors that may cause truant behavior include, but are not limited to school environment, class atmosphere, teachers' attitudes, and ability to meet each student's diverse needs, and the school's attendance and discipline policy regarding truancy (Rivers, 2010). A school environment that is hostile can cause elevated truancy rates. Truancy is high in

schools that have antagonistic relationships between teacher and students and a poor attendance policy (Rivers, 2010).

At the time of this writing, there were only a few findings available on school-related influencing factors of truancy (Henry & Huizinga, 2007, p. 512). There is a gap in research on finding studies on school-related factors contributing to a successful urban truancy intervention program. Research in that area is not lucrative in the research field. Gubbels et al. (2019) listed in the study that a large body of research has been directed on identifying risk factors for school absenteeism and school dropout. One of these risk factors is related to the school's characteristics; for example, large classes, high retention rates, and a poor quality of teachers.

Theories of stress and coping define structural conditions, such as dirty bathrooms and physical decay, as stressors that undermine students' abilities to concentrate (Hudley, 2013), and lack of concentration, or poor "on-task behavior," is a core indicator of low motivation and disengagement in students. A study completed by Prabha and Maheswari (2017) referenced appointing professionally qualified social workers as student counselors. School social workers are essential to change the negative attitudes of the students towards study, teachers, and school environment (Poppy, 2012). While whole child approaches are ideal for all students, they are especially important for students living with trauma (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019, p. 122).

Ecological Systems

American psychologist, Bronfenbrenner (1979), formulated the Ecological Systems Theory to explain how the inherent qualities of children and their environments interact to influence how they grow and develop (The Psychology Notes HQ, 2020).

This theory, published in 1979, influenced many psychologists in terms of the manner of analyzing the person and the effects of different environmental systems that he encounters (Sincero, 2012). Current studies appear to support the notion that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory on how the social environment affects human development has had a far-reaching impact on psychological research (Guy-Evans, 2020). Numerous scholars have not stated that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory is not perfect, but it is one of the best descriptions for the topic. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory is one of the most accepted explanations regarding the influence of social environments on human development (Guy-Evans, 2020). The ecological systems theory holds that we encounter five different environments throughout our lifespan that may influence our behaviors in varying degrees: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem. Formulated by famous psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, this theory helps us understand why we may behave differently when we compare our behavior in the presence of our family and our behavior when we are in school or at work (Sincero, 2012).

The Micro System. The micro system's setting is the direct environment we have in our lives. Your family, friends, classmates, teachers, neighbors and other people who have a direct contact with you are included in your micro system. The micro system is the setting in which we have direct social interactions with these social agents. The theory states that we are not mere recipients of the experiences we have when socializing with these people in the micro system environment, but we are contributing to the construction of such environment (Sincero, 2012).

The Mesosystem. The mesosystem involves the relationships between the microsystems in one's life. This means that your family experience may be related to your school experience. For example, if a child is neglected by his parents, he may have a low chance of developing positive attitude towards his teachers. Also, this child may feel awkward in the presence of peers and may resort to withdrawal from a group of classmates (Sincero, 2012).

The Exosystem. The exosystem is the setting in which there is a link between the context wherein the person does not have an active role, and the context wherein is actively participating. Suppose a child is more attached to his father than his mother. If the father goes abroad to work for several months, there may be a conflict between the mother and the child's social relationship, or on the other hand, this event may result to a tighter bond between the mother and the child (Sincero, 2012).

The Macrosystem. The macrosystem setting is the actual culture of an individual. The cultural contexts involve the socioeconomic status of the person and/or his family, his ethnicity or race and living in a still developing or a third world country. For example, being born to a poor family makes a person work harder every day (Sincero, 2012). Children from low-income families enter high school with average literacy skills five years behind those of high-income (Children, Youth, Families and Socioeconomic Status, n.d.)

The Chronosystem. The chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan. This may also involve the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person. One classic example of this is how divorce, as a major life transition, may affect not only the couple's relationship but also their children's behaviors. According to a

majority of research, children are negatively affected on the first year after the divorce. The next years after would reveal that the interaction within the family becomes more stable and agreeable (Sincero, 2012).

Because the five systems are interrelated, the influence of one system on a child's development depends on its relationship with the others (Guy-Evans, 2020). Classrooms (as microsystems) are interrelated with macro systems through complex webs of organizations (dubbed meso- and exosystems) that function in-between them (Nation et al., 2020, p. 720). Collectively, these systems create and/or influence the social conditions that children experience, which in turn influence their educational outcomes (Nation et al., 2020, p. 720). Further, students from low-income, mostly minority neighborhoods are more likely to experience higher rates of residential and school mobility, greater exposure to violence, less access to resources, and lower levels of collective efficacy to address the problems (Watson, 2012).

Several scholars argued that the ecological systems theory from inception to now has become a critical theory that has become the foundation of other theorists' works. In relation to education, ecological theory argues that school and classroom environments are important contextual influences on child and adolescent learning, academic performance, and behaviors, but so are local, state, and national macrosystems that influence educational goals, standards, and other policies (Guy-Evans, 2020). Ecological systems theory can help to explicate some of the mechanisms through which poverty and related problems adversely affect educational outcomes, and to identify systemic changes likely to lead to improved educational outcomes (Nation et al., 2020, p. 727). Nation et al., (2020) reported a number of theories and frameworks that described the contextual

influences on health and mental health, including critical race theory and the World Health Organization's (WHO) social determinants of health framework. Numerous scholars openly questioned whether these types of frameworks have been less influential in framing the problems of urban education, such that strategies addressing the influences of social structure on schools and students are much less prominent than strategies addressing the perceived deficits and problems of students and educators (Nation et al., 2020, p. 719). Attentiveness to this complexity in relationships within and between organizations and systems can enhance understanding and ultimately improve urban education (Nation et al., 2020, p. 719).

In short, ecological theory provides a lens through which researchers can more holistically analyze human development and conceptualize interventions to improve outcomes (Nation et al., 2020, p. 719).

Summary

The causes of the truancy factors are critical to understand when implementing a truancy intervention program. Understanding the factors and theories will help gauge resources needed to have a successful and effective program in an urban school district. Truant minors will need the support of their families, school, and communities. All entities coming together will increase the school's attendance and graduation rates.

For schools to build a system-wide successful truancy intervention program, they will have to create a truancy policy committee. The committee will use proven research and actionable data that were accurate, accessible, and regularly reported. The school's truancy committee, executive administrators, and building administrators will need to work together to interpret data to adopt best practices when implementing an effective

truancy intervention program to improve truancy and graduation rates. Training will be required for all staff that deal with students and their truancy issues to maintain a consistent, effective program. The program will be followed as planned to ensure effectiveness. Chapter Two presented a review of current research and practice regarding truancy. Chapter Three describes the methodology and procedure to be used in this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used for this mixed-method study. The mixed method study allows a more complete integration of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and data collection when investigating the effectiveness of a program (Abraham S. Fischler School of Education, n.d.). When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more complete analysis (Migrio & Magangi, 2011). The chapter includes a synopsis of the processes the researcher used to develop the study methodology. The chapter also goes into detail on the development of the staff survey and interview and the data collection and analysis. The limitation of the instruments used for the survey and interview designs concludes the chapter.

Conceptual Framework - Why Attending School Matters

The problem of practice of student absenteeism can be related to the Midwest Public Urban School District truancy intervention program. The truancy's conceptual framework allows the focus to be on numerous relationships to help understand and describe the problem. The researcher studied truancy as a compound problem, because when students are chronically absent from school, it affects more than student's grades (FindLaw, 2016b). The researcher will use system theories to thoroughly explain how the various truancy factors negatively influence a student's educational journey.

The researcher will explore all four relational systems theories, such as family, individual, community, and school, in this study to help gain the knowledge and understanding of what should be in an effective truancy intervention program to help

students matriculate and graduate from high school. Throughout exploring the theories, the researcher hopes to clarify the requirements needed to have a successful truancy intervention program for the Midwest Public Urban School District. The researcher's increased knowledge should help the school district's administrators to improve their attendance and graduation rates.

Coming to school daily is significantly essential. Students have to be in class to learn the subject matters that are taught. Students who attend school regularly improve their chances of being academically successful (Meador, 2017). Erickson-Gabby (2019) indicated the youth also had a responsibility to show up at school, help create a positive environment, and follow instructions from staff, teachers, and other adults. Some youth-related causes for truancy are:

- giving in to peer pressure to skip school
- pregnancy
- bullying
- mental health issues
- boredom
- lack of ambition
- poor grades (especially being held back a grade)
- being behind on schoolwork
- low self-esteem
- drug and alcohol use
- participation in gang activity
- having no friends or social involvement at school. (para. 11)

The Go Abroad Foundation (2020) listed 10 reasons why education matters.

1. Education is powerful
2. Education is the first step to cross-cultural understanding
3. Education builds confidence
4. Education combats poverty
5. Education promotes a healthy lifestyle
6. Education fosters decision making skills and critical thinking
7. Education contributes to the development of interpersonal skills
8. Education develops professional skills
9. Education builds character
10. Education can change our future. (p. 1)

When children learn to read and write, they become confident in their abilities to succeed (Go Abroad Foundation, 2020). However, in most cases, strong attendance correlates with academic success, and poor attendance correlates with educational struggles. When children attend school their brains grow, their minds expand, and their eyes are opened (Go Abroad Foundation, 2020). Attending school offers more than academic success. Students can learn meaningful life lessons from teachers who can influence the remainder of their lives.

Meador (2019) believed, in many cases, sharing these life lessons can have a far greater impact than teaching standard-based content. Teachers can indirectly or directly teach life lessons when preparing their lesson plans. According to Meador (2019) directly, there are natural components of schooling that lead to learning life lessons. Indirectly, teachers often take advantage of what they refer to as teachable moments to

expand topics or to discuss aspects of life brought up by students during class (Meador, 2019).

As students matriculate and further their lives after high school, they soon realize the life lessons they gained from school were not taught in any curriculum. Students need to be present every day to enhance their academic abilities and to gain human development skills. Human development, in effect, means developing people's abilities and giving them a chance to use them (Human Development Reports, 2015).

Problem and Purpose Overview

This study aimed to investigate the truancy intervention program in a Midwest Public Urban High School. Evaluating the truancy intervention program may help reveal the changes that may need to be made to the truancy intervention program to improve school attendance, decrease absenteeism and increase students' graduation rates. The researcher evaluated the program's effectiveness by running a longitudinal attendance report. The attendance report was analyzed starting with the students' ninth-grade year, fall 2016-to-spring 2017, through the end of the first semester of senior year, fall 2019. To thoroughly analyze the data in its entirety, any ninth-grade student that missed nine or more days during the 2016-2017 school year was included in the longitudinal study. Students' attendance records were evaluated each school year until the end of the first semester of their senior year, ending December 31, 2019. Decreasing chronic absenteeism is crucial, due to the strong correlation between student attendance and academic achievement, especially in urban schools (Gottfried, 2010, p. 439). In a recent study, Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) examined the relationship of attendance, academic achievement and high school graduation. They determined that "course performance in

the ninth grade was the strongest predictor of the likelihood that students would graduate” (p. 25). According to the Midwest Public Urban School’s truancy data, in the 2016-2017 school year, they started with 301 ninth-grade students and graduated 122 in May 2020. Out of 301 ninth-grade students, 137 were truant, and only 22 truancy students graduated with their graduating class in May 2020. Student truancy records were one of the highest indicators to determine high school graduation.

Additionally, the researcher chose this timeframe to investigate how many students in class 2020 stayed on target to graduate after being chronically truant their freshman year. Studies found that students who were chronically absent from school were more likely to drop out of school and less likely to be employed six months after the end of compulsory schooling, which in turn negatively impacts their earning potential over their lifetimes (Vaughn et al., 2013, p. 774). The researcher found that the Midwest Public Urban School District had 29 of the 137 truant students drop out, and 102 of the truant students were retained. The researcher hopes to determine if the truancy intervention program influenced students to correct their truancy issues and stay on target to graduate with their starting class. The Midwest Public Urban School District Truancy Intervention program starts when a student misses three unexcused days from school. The researcher chose this grade range for sound reasoning. The most significant reason was to research how effective the truancy intervention processes were for the district by investigating an entire class of high school students over their high school years. The researcher completed a longitudinal study, starting the 2016 school year through the close of the 2019 school year. The researcher used secondary data from the Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) focus group of 200 students.

Most evaluations of truancy programs were based on aggregate data, often lacked meaningful comparison groups and focused on short-term benefits (e.g., reduction in unexcused absences, which did not provide meaningful information on changes in individual's school attendance or academic school performance (Dembo & Gullledge, 2008, p. 453). By completing a quantitative analysis of the comparisons, the researcher hoped to accomplish the following: provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the truancy intervention program for long-term benefits; examine the program; are students matriculating, are they behind; analyze objectives/reasoning that was not addressed in the truancy intervention process; investigate the truancy process to create a potential solution to the possible changes for a meaningful truancy intervention program. Through this investigation of the truancy intervention program, the researcher hoped to identify specific and crucial focus areas in the high school truancy intervention program to decrease chronic truancy and increase the graduation rate.

The district has not changed its truancy intervention process in over a decade. The research findings may play a significant role in the urban school district, revising its truancy intervention program.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What are the students' attendance changes after going through the district truancy process?
2. What are the students' attendance changes after going through the ROE truancy process?

3. What are the truancy officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
4. What are the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
5. What are the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
6. What are the TAOEP staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
7. What are the counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
8. What are the social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?
9. What are the truancy officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
10. What are the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
11. What are the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
12. What is the TAOEP staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?
13. What are the counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

14. What are the social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

H1_a: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district truancy process.

H2_a: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

H3_a: Chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the district's truancy process

H4_a: Chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the ROE truancy process.

Research Design

This study represents a mixed-methods research design, a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Abraham S. Fischler School of Education, n.d.). The overall goal of mixed methods research, of combining qualitative and quantitative research components, is to expand and strengthen a study's conclusions and, therefore, contribute to the published literature (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The truancy intervention program's investigation provides an ideal opportunity for a mixed-methods study to contribute to learning about best practices in an effective truancy intervention program. It also reflects the participants' points of view. Participants in the mixed- methods research have a voice, and it safeguards the participants' experiences. Mixed methods research draws on potential strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing researchers to explore diverse perspectives and uncover relationships

that exist between the intricate layers of our multifaceted research questions (Greene et al., 1989, p. 258).

Midwest Public Urban School District. After the researcher carefully reviewed the Midwest Public Urban School District School Improvement Plan (SIP), the researcher noticed that the plan did not include improving or revising the school's truancy intervention program to improve student attendance or to increase the graduation rate. Schools needed to develop consistent procedures for responding to truancy and chronic absenteeism behaviors (O'Connor et al., 2014)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) required states to report data on chronic absenteeism, but there was still much work to be done at the school and district levels to ensure the quality and consistency of such data (Lovett & Jacob, 2017b). Rodriguez and Conchas (2009) reported that in urban areas, many schools almost "function as drop-out producing factories, poorly able to engage the most vulnerable youth and provide an adequate opportunity to learn" (p. 244).

Existing evidence indicated that trancies peaked in the transition from middle school to high school (around ninth grade) and that racial and ethnic minority groups were more likely to be truant than Caucasian youth. The Midwest Public Urban School District 9th Grade class 2016-2017 enrollment year had 137 truant students, 47 students of the truant students were retained their 9th Grade year, 126 had behavior issues, six went to a Job Corps Program or Lincoln Challenged Academy and seven Dropped Out. According to the skyward report pulled from the Midwest Public Urban School District's information system, the 2016-2017 ninth-grade class student enrollment was 301 and graduated 142 in May 2020. Out of the 301 students, 37 dropped out of school. The

Illinois Report Card for the school year 2018-2019 reported the Midwest school district's graduation rate at 68% and the chronic absenteeism rate at 50%.

The numbers provided declared a need for the school administrators to focus on the truancy intervention plan and make it a critical part of the district's school improvement plan. Schools should identify these students and respond by placing them into effective intervention programs that benefit them, their families, and the community (ScholarChip, 2020).

Population and Sample

The researcher investigated the attendance program at the Midwest Public Urban High School. The population size of the participants was 301 students. The secondary data required the entire 9th-grade population to determine which students missed nine or more days in their freshman year. Out of the 301-population size, 137 9th grade students were truant and were used as the sample. The school's Skyward Specialist ran the report of secondary data from Skyward and submitted it to the researcher for the study.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed the questions of the survey to enhance the study. Also, the survey and study plan were submitted to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) at Lindenwood University of St. Charles, Missouri, and received approval (Appendix C). The researcher did not use any demographic questions that would identify staff members. The demographic research question asked was for the staff member's employment classification. The employment classification was essential to the researcher for analyzing data for the truancy

intervention program's recommendation and gave the researcher a picture of who completed the survey.

Table 2

What is your classification?

Field	Number	Percent
Certified Teacher	28	52.8
Administrator	4	7.6
Non-Certified	18	33.9
Certified	3	5.6
Total	53	

The researcher developed the staff *Qualtrics* survey questions to understand their knowledge and perceptions of the district's truancy intervention program, knowledge of truancy characteristics, and what they believed was needed to have a successful truancy intervention program. In a school setting, staff understanding of schools' programs and policies is critical for success.

The Midwest Public Urban High School had a total of 130 staff members. Out of 130 staff members, a total of 53 staff members completed the voluntary staff survey. The researcher used thematic analysis to determine the high school staff's perceptions, views, opinions, and knowledge regarding the Truancy Intervention Program.

The survey questions were developed based on research regarding the causes of truancy, high rates of excused absences, and staff understanding and perception. The questions follow:

1. *What is your classification?*

Certified Teacher Administrator Non-Certified Certified

2. *Are you aware of the school district policy regarding student attendance?*

Yes No Unsure

3. *Does the attendance policy clearly define what absences will be excused and what absences will be unexcused?*

Yes No Unsure

4. *Were you given a copy of the district truancy policy?*

Yes No Unsure

5. *Were you given a copy of the ROE truancy policy?*

Yes No

6. *Is there a procedure for addressing high rates of excused absences?*

Yes No Unsure

7. *Are you involved with your student's truancy procedures?*

Yes No N/A

8. *In your opinion, which of the following contribute to truancy? Check all that apply:*

Low socio-economic status

Parental abuse of alcohol/drugs

Parent-Child relationships

Student-teacher relationships

Curriculum

Single parent family

Child Abuse/neglect

Student-peer relationships

Attendance policy

Teacher attendance

Domestic violence

Bullying

Social Media

Gangs

Teaching Style

Parenting Style

Learning Difficulties

School Environment

School Culture

Other

9. *In your opinion, which of the following contribute to high rates of excused absences? Check all that apply:*

Low socio-economic status

Parental abuse of alcohol/drugs

Parent-Child relationships

Student-teacher relationships

Curriculum

Single parent family

Child Abuse/neglect

Student-peer relationships

Attendance policy

Teacher attendance

Domestic violence

Bullying

Social Media

Gangs

Teaching Style

Parenting Style

Learning Difficulties

Appointments

School environment

School Culture

Other

10. *Are there prevention/wrap-around services to address attendance?*

Yes No Unsure

11. *Are there intervention services used to address truancy?*

Yes No Unsure

12. *Are there intervention services used to address high rates of excused absences?*

Yes No Unsure

13. *Do you believe your truancy intervention program is effective?*

Yes No

14. *Are truant students keeping up with their assignments?*

Yes No

15. *Are your truant students on track to graduate?*

Yes No

16. *Do you believe your ROE truancy intervention program is effective?*

Yes No

17. *What changes do you believe need to be made to the truancy intervention program?*

Questions two through six were specifically related to the school district's policy regarding student attendance. In questions eight and nine, all of the listed options were causes identified in research. Questions 10 through 12 were specifically related to each school's services to prevent and treat issues of truancy and excused absences. In questions, 13 through 17 ask for staff perceptions of the school's truancy intervention program. According to the research, it is essential to know and understand each survey question to investigate the district's truancy intervention program effectively.

The instrument was designed for this study, and there were no measures of validity or reliability.

The second instrument used for this research was interviewing. The open-ended interview questions were developed to learn what was currently working and not working for the district's truancy intervention program from the staff's perceptions. The researcher used the interviews to see how effective and supportive the truancy intervention program was and how it provided the students and families resources to meet their family needs. The researcher will use the information received from the interviews and analyzed them in themes

Focus Group Survey

The researcher used secondary data from the TAOEP Department student focus group survey. The focus group consisted of 250 chronically truant high school students, grades nine through 12. Starting at the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic school year, the TAOEP Department conducted initial and follow-up interviews regarding students' attendance for the 2018-2019 school year. As a part of the students' Individualized Optional Education Plan - IOEP paperwork, every TAOEP student had to complete the survey during their initial interview. All 250 students completed the survey that lists a plethora of reasons why students would miss school. The focus group survey data gave the researcher a greater in-depth knowledge of the causes of truancy and why they were truant from the student perspective.

The validity and reliability of the focus group survey were solid. The survey was designed to allow truant students to freely express honestly why they were truant from their viewpoint. First, the student completed the initial interview in a safe and welcoming environment. Students were not given the survey to complete until the TAOEP staff member gained the truant student's respect. Once the respect was mutual, the student was allowed to complete the required survey.

Data Collection

The data collection process was initiated when the researcher wrote to the Superintendent of the Midwest Public Urban School District to request permission to use the High School student's secondary attendance data. The researcher also asked to survey and interview the High School staff about the Truancy Intervention Program's effectiveness. Lastly, the researcher asked to use the secondary data from the TAOEP

students Focus Group. The permission was granted; but, first and foremost, needed the High School principal's approval. Without her co-signing the Superintendent's consent, the study would have needed to be revamped, possibly relocated, or not completed at all. Upon receiving approval from the principal, the researcher scheduled a meeting with the High School faculty to create awareness about the dissertation research. The researcher sent the high school staff an email to request completion of the voluntary survey. The staff that voluntarily completed the anonymous emailed survey validated their consent through the submission of the survey. Staff interested in participating in the dissertation interview were asked to sign a voluntary consent form to confirm their desire to be involved in the interview activities.

Skyward

Once the district granted permission to use the students' secondary attendance data. The researcher began locating attendance data from the software program used at the Midwest Public Urban High School, Skyward. Skyward was a database where attendance was tracked for the school by class, the number of days absent, percentage of absences, percent present, number of tardies, late arrivals, ethnicity, and attendance level. The program was used to signify all the 2016-2017 freshman class attendance data through their first-semester senior year, 2019. Data were de-identified and used to report the number of absences to represent the group.

Data Analysis

The researcher used a z-test for difference in proportions to analyze the statistical data represented in each Null Hypothesis. The following strategies were used to address each research question:

Research Question 1: What are the students' attendance changes after going through the district truancy process?

H₁₀: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district truancy process.

Research Question 1 represents Null Hypothesis 1. A two-tailed z-test for difference in proportions was applied.

Research Question 2: What are the students' attendance changes after going through the ROE truancy process?

H₂₀: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

Research Question 2 represents Null Hypothesis 2. A two-tailed z-test for difference in proportions was applied.

Research Questions 3 through 14 were addressed with responses to surveys and interview questions.

Research Question 3: What are the truancy officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Research Question 4: What are the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Research Question 5: What are the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Research Question 6: What are the TAOEP staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Research Question 7: What is the counselors' perception of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Research Question 8: What are the social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Research Question 9: What are the truancy officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Research Question 10: What are the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Research Question 11: What are the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Research Question 12: What is the TAOEP staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Research Question 13: What is the counselors' perception of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Research Question 14: What are the social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality and anonymity are practices to protect participants throughout collecting, reporting, and analyzing the data. The researcher protected the participants' identities by using a unique, unidentifiable number for the students' secondary data. The researcher identified participants by student one, or interviewee two, to protect the participants' identities and keep it from being linked. Confidential demographic information received during the research process will remain protected. The staff that

agreed to participate in the interview process signed a consent form before participating. The staff that completed the anonymous survey through the email system gave consent by accepting and submitting their unidentifiable responses. All data, surveys, and interviews will be stored in a locked file for three years before discarding.

Limitations

The methodology of this study has several limitations. The first involves the secondary data and the lack of control over collection of the data. Using secondary data, the researcher is less able to correct for errors made by the original source during data collection (DeCarlo, 2018). More importantly, the researcher may not know these errors exist and reach erroneous conclusions as a result (DeCarlo, 2018). The second limitation is the staff survey design. The researcher did not include a question to ask staff for their title. Having the title would have given the researcher in-depth data to answer some of the research questions. Asking for staff titles would have possibly violated the confidential research requirement by identifying staff, when the department only has one or two staff members. The third limitation is obtaining data from one site. Investigating multiple site locations for the research would allow the researcher to get staff titles without identifying the staff member. The fourth limitation is the researcher failed to include a parent survey in the study. The researcher recommends that further studies have a parent survey to gather parents' perceptions of the truancy intervention program.

Summary

The Truancy Intervention Program was investigated at a public urban high school in the Midwest, utilizing chronological data from the Freshman enrollment 2016-2017 school year through December 2020. The researcher investigated the program to see if

truant students' attendance improved after going through the district's truancy program. Through data collection, the researcher was able to gain feedback from staff and truant students at Midwest Public Urban High School on their perceptions and thoughts of the truancy program. A mixed-methods approach was utilized between surveys, focus groups, and attendance data-driven from Skyward's software program. Chapter Four explains the results reached from this mixed-methods study.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Purpose Review

The purpose of this mixed-method truancy intervention study was to investigate the effectiveness of the Midwest Public Urban School District's Truancy Intervention Program. The urban truancy intervention process in the district has not changed in over a decade. The chronic student attendance percentages were increasing rapidly, and the graduation rate was decreasing at an alarming rate. The researcher developed interview and survey questions to gain the staff's perception of the district program and the Regional Office of Educations intervention program. Through this investigation of the truancy intervention program, the researcher identified specific and crucial focus areas in the high school truancy intervention program to help decrease chronic truancy and increase the graduation rate.

Overview

The researcher evaluated the program's effectiveness by running a longitudinal attendance report. The attendance report will be analyzed starting the student's ninth-grade year, fall 2016 - spring 2017, through the end of the first semester senior year, fall 2019. To thoroughly analyze the data in its entirety, any ninth-grade student that has missed nine or more days during the 2016-2017 school year was included in the longitudinal study. Students' attendance records were evaluated each school year until the end of the first semester of their senior year, ending December 31, 2019. Student data were de-identified and used to report the number of absences to represent the group.

The researcher developed the questions of the survey to enhance the study. The researcher did not use any demographic questions that would identify staff members.

The demographic research question asked was for the staff member's employment classification. The employment classification is essential to the researcher for analyzing data for the truancy intervention program's recommendation and gives the researcher a picture of who completed the survey. The Midwest Public Urban High School had a total of 130 staff members. Out of 130 staff members, a total of 53 sample staff members completed the voluntary staff survey.

The researcher developed the staff *Qualtrics* survey questions to understand their knowledge and perception of the district's truancy intervention program, knowledge of truancy characteristics, and what they believe is needed to have a successful truancy intervention program. In a school setting, staff understanding of schools' programs and policies is critical for success. The researcher will use thematic analysis to determine the high school staff's perception, views, opinion, and knowledge regarding the Truancy Intervention Program.

Student Data Cohort

The population consisted of a cohort of 301 students in the academic year 2016 - 2017. The sample of truant students' measured characteristics are described in Table 3. Approximately 40.8% were retained with their cohort, with 16% graduating with their class, while 5.8% earned a GED. About 39.4% transferred. The dropout rate was 18.2%, with an expulsion rate of 6.5%.

Table 3*Outcomes for Truant Students*

Category	Number	Percent
Aged Out	1	0.7
Dropped Out	25	18.2
Expulsion	9	6.5
GED	8	5.8
Graduated	22	16.0
Retained	56	40.8
Transferred	54	39.4
Unknown	12	8.7

Note: N = 301; n = 137. % out of 137.

Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this mixed-methods study were as follows:

Null Hypothesis # 1

H1₀: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district truancy process.

Out of 137 truant students during the Freshman year of the cohort, 41 remained truant during year two, 24 remained truant during year three, and 22 remained truant during year four.

Table 4*Truancy Repeat Rate*

2-years	3-years	4-years
29.90%	17.50%	16.05%

Note: Number of years truant during 4-years of expected attendance.

Null Hypothesis # 1 was rejected. A two-tailed z-test for the difference in proportions was applied, with a t-critical value of 1.96. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant two years out of the four-year cohort period ($z = 2.414$), when compared to those who were truant three years out of the four-year cohort. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant two years out of the four-year cohort period ($z = 2.728$), when compared to those who were truant four years out of the four-year cohort. There was not a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant three years out of the four-year cohort period ($z = 0.323$), when compared to those who were truant four years out of the four-year cohort. Therefore, early intervention with truancy seems to work more effectively than a later intervention with truancy. H_{10} : True, there will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district's truancy intervention process.

Null Hypothesis # 2

H_{20} : There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

Table 5*Truancy Following ROE*

Freshman/Sophomore	Sophomore/Junior	Junior/Senior
29.90%	17.50%	16.05%

Note: Number of years truant during 4-years of expected attendance.

Out of the truant students who participated in the ROE process, 81 remained truant during the Freshman and Sophomore years, 42 remained truant during the Sophomore and Junior years, and 22 remained truant during the Junior and Senior years.

Null Hypothesis # 2 was rejected. A two-tailed z-test for the difference in proportions was applied, with a t-critical value of 1.96. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant during the Sophomore and Junior years ($z = 4.737$), when compared to those who were truant during the Freshman and Sophomore years, out of the four-year cohort. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant during the Junior and Senior years ($z = 2.856$), when compared to those who were truant during the Sophomore and Junior years, out of the four-year cohort. There was not a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant during the Junior and Senior years ($z = 7.359$), when compared to those who were truant during the Freshman and Sophomore years, out of the four-year cohort. Therefore, intervention with the ROE process for truancy seems to work effectively at a steady rate of improvement with truancy. H_{20} : True, there will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

Null Hypothesis # 3

H_{30} : Chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the district's truancy process.

Null Hypothesis # 4

H₀: Chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the ROE truancy process.

Table 6*Graduation Rates*

Category	Number	Total
Truant		
GED	8	
Grad	22	
Total	30	137
Non-Truant		
Grad	120	
Total		164

Note: N1 = 137; N2 = 164. N = 301.

Null Hypothesis # 3 and Null Hypothesis # 4 share the same analysis, since all truant students were required to go through the district's truancy process, and all truant students in the study were also required to go through the ROE's truancy process. There were 137 truant students out of a cohort of 301.

To decide whether to reject Null Hypothesis # 3 and/or Null Hypothesis # 4, the individual rate of truant students only graduating was calculated by dividing the 30 regular and GED truant graduates by the total of 137 truant students in the original cohort. The individual rate of non-truant students was calculated by dividing the 120 Null Hypothesis # 3 and Null Hypothesis # 4 share the same analysis, since all truant students

were required to go through the district's truancy process, and all truant students in the study were also required to go through the ROE's truancy process. There were 137 truant students out of a cohort of 301.

To decide whether to reject Null Hypothesis # 3 and/or Null Hypothesis # 4, the individual rate of truant students only graduating was calculated by dividing the 30 regular and GED truant graduates by the total of 137 truant students in the original cohort. The individual rate of non-truant students was calculated by dividing the 120 graduates by the 164 remaining non-truant students in the cohort. Transiency, dropout, and age out are not individually considered.

Both Null Hypothesis # 3 and Null Hypothesis # 4 were not rejected. The graduation rate of truant students in this cohort was 21.9%, and the graduation rate of non-truant students was 73.2%. Comparison with a z-test for the difference in proportion yielded a z-score of 8.80, indicating a significant difference in proportions (z -critical = 1.96). The non-truant student sample represented a significantly higher graduation rate than the truant sample produced.

Any student that missed 8 days completed the district's truancy process. Twenty-two truant students graduated with their class, out of 137 truant 9th graders. Eight truant students earned a GED. One hundred and twenty non-truant students graduated with their class out of 164 non-truant 9th graders. All 137 truant students went through the district's truancy process.

Any student that missed nine or more days had to go through the ROE process. Twenty-two truant students graduated with their class out of 137 truant 9th graders. Eight truant students earned a GED. One hundred and twenty non-truant

students graduated with their class, out of 164 non-truant 9th graders. All 137 truant students went through the ROE's truancy process.

The graduation rate that represents the total number of students in the original cohort of 301 is 64.4%, 22 truant graduates, 8 truant GED graduates, and 164 non-truant graduates; for a total of 194. Since this data represents only the original cohort considered in this study, transfer students and dropout students were not removed from the pool of potential graduates for this report. When considering only the 194 graduates, 15.4% of the graduates were truant students, while the remaining 84.5% represents the percentage of the graduating class that were not truant.

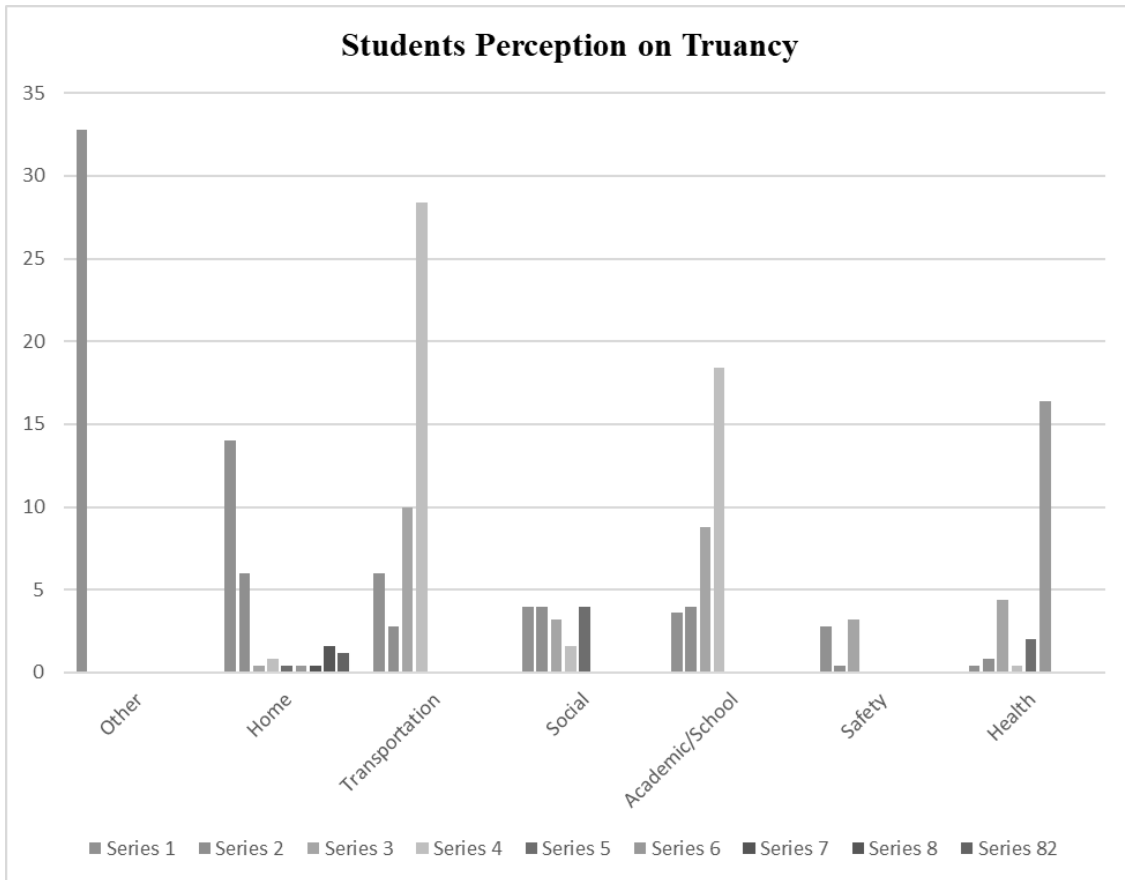
When considering only the 137 truant students represented within the original cohort of 301 students, the graduation rate within the cohort of just the truant students only was 21.9%. H₃₀: True, chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the district's truancy process. H₄₀: True, chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the ROE truancy process.

Focus Group Student Survey

Figure 2 represents causes for truancy reported by students, collected over a three-year period. From the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic school year and up until now, the TAOEP Department has been conducting initial and follow-up interviews regarding students' attendance for the 2018-2019 school year. As a part of the IOEP paperwork, every TAOEP student completed a survey during their initial interview. The survey includes a plethora of reasons why a student would miss school, including transportation, academic/school, and safety.

Figure 2

Student Causes of Truancy Characteristics



The findings from the surveys are:

Transportation:

Too far to go: 6%

No money for transportation: 2.8%

No reliable means getting to school: 10%

Misses Bus/No reliable means of transportation: 28.4%

Truant students expressed transportation as the top two severe problems for the Midwest Public School District's accumulated absences. Students are eligible for bus services if they live 1.5 miles or more away from their school. When students miss the

bus and have no other means to get to school, they receive an unexcused absence.

Students do not have money for transportation and live too far to walk.

Academic/School:

Problems with a teacher or other personnel: 3.6%

Poor academic performance: .4%

School Discipline: 8.8%

Suspended from school: 18.4%

Academic/School problems for truant students is the third major deterrent that causes them not to come to school regularly or causes them to eventually dropout. One hundred twenty-six of the truant students had been suspended from school out of 137 of the total truant student sample.

Social:

Gender intimidation: .4%

Financial issues: .4%

Difficult peer relationships: 3.2%

Bullying: 1.6%

Personal Relationships: 4%

Social issues cause truancy for students. Adolescents come to school to be social and form relationships. Having no friends or connections to the school is difficult for students to handle.

Safety:

Surrounding neighborhood not safe: 2.8%

School not safe: .4%

School problem: 3.2%

The surrounding cities that make up the district crime rate tend to be high for the small population. Students have to walk to school, and 2.8% believe the neighborhoods are not safe. Students can't ride the bus if they are within walking distance, but if it is not safe for students to walk, they will not go to school. Students do not feel the school is not safe. Research shows that safety is a significant concern that causes truancy.

Home:

Tending to younger siblings: 14%

Parent/Guardian not well: 6%

Physical/sexual abuse in the home: .4%

Substance abuse in the home: .8%

Homeless: .4%

Domestic Violence: .4%

Runaway: .4%

Neglect: .4%

Student is a parent: 1.6%

Extended vacation: 1.2%

Home issues for truant students are one of the leading characteristics that cause truancy. 14% of the students answered that they have to tend to their younger siblings, which causes them not to attend school.

Health:

Pregnancy: .4%

Lacking medical care/immunizations: .8%

Medical Problems: 4.4%

Disability: .4%

Mental illness: 2%

Lack of Dr. Note/School Nurse excuse: 16.4%

Health concerns are the fourth highest reason from the focus group survey why students are missing school. To cover the student's absence when they go to the doctor, they will have to submit a doctor's note to make the absence excusable.

Other: 32.8 %

The other was the number one cause why students were not coming to school from the focus group survey. Students are not feeling comfortable asking for help. Some students expressed that they did not have clothes to wear at the beginning of the school year. The other section on the survey is a severe infraction of the district's truancy concern.

To produce this data, the TAOEP tallied each response for a reason why a student could miss school. Once all the answers were tallied, each given response was divided by 250 since we have 250 students on our caseload. We then multiplied by 100 to get the corresponding percentage for that category. Looking at the data previously listed, one can see the top three reasons as to why our students are missing days at school according to the IOEP form, are: "Misses Bus/No reliable Means of transportation," "Suspended from school," and "Lack of Dr. Note/School Nurse excuse."

Lastly, the largest group we have for our students for missing school is the "Other" group. This group consists of various reasons not listed on the IOEP form since it differed per student. Some students chose others because they did not feel comfortable

disclosing the information to us. In contrast, others consisted of not having clothes or shoes at the start of the school year. Students didn't feel like coming to school when losing a parent or guardian, to name a few.

Findings

The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge and work done by previous researchers in truancy intervention. From the results of this study, it can be suggested that the district's truancy intervention program needs to be changed to help decrease the high school attendance and dropout rates. The findings from this study are not solid enough to draw definitive conclusions. But it is not too early to consider the possibility that the researcher's recommended changes to the intervention program may reduce truancy sufficiently with this population of students. From the findings, another recommendation for practice at the Midwest Public Urban school district were identified. The recommendations relate to broad domains of intervention: Policy and procedure, personnel, professional networks, and school interventions for the entire district. The middle school truancy program will need to be monitored as research has proven that truant students tend to drop out or have poor attendance by the ninth-grade school year. Through the study, the researcher learned that the ninth-grade year is the determining factor if the student will drop out of school-based on attendance data instead of test scores.

The district's attendance policy (Appendix A) showed a disconnect between the school attendance policy and the truancy intervention plan. The surveys and interviews provided evidence that the intervention plan needs to be changed. Staff perception of the truancy plan is viewed as being ineffective. The student's survey revealed that their

needs are not being met in the school's intervention plan. The district is not providing minimal school and community resources to the truant student or family. Lack of resources intensified student's attendance problems.

Qualtrics Staff Perception Survey

Instrumentation

The researcher developed the questions of the survey to enhance the study. The researcher did not use any demographic questions that would identify staff members. The demographic research question asked was for the staff member's employment classification. The employment classification is essential to the researcher for analyzing data for the truancy intervention program's recommendation and gives the researcher a picture of who completed the survey.

The researcher developed the staff *Qualtrics* survey questions to understand their knowledge and perception of the district's truancy intervention program, knowledge of truancy characteristics, and what they believe is needed to have a successful truancy intervention program. In a school setting, staff understanding of schools' programs and policies is critical for success.

The Midwest Public Urban High School had a total of 130 staff members. Out of 130 staff members, a total of 53 staff members completed the voluntary staff survey. The researcher will use thematic analysis to determine the high school staff's perception, views, opinion, and knowledge regarding the Truancy Intervention Program.

Table 7*What is your classification?*

Field	Number	Percent
Certified Teacher	28	52.8
Administrator	4	7.6
Non-Certified	18	33.9
Certified	3	5.6
Total	53	

Questions two through six are specifically related to the school district's policy regarding student attendance. In questions eight and nine, all of the listed options are causes identified in the research. Questions ten through twelve are precisely related to each school's services to prevent and treat issues of truancy and excused absences. In questions, thirteen through seventeen ask for staff perception of the school's truancy intervention program. According to the research, it is essential to know and understand each survey question to investigate the district's truancy intervention program effectively.

Table 8 revealed some concerns in the validity of the answers submitted by the staff. The first question in the chart ask, are you aware of the school district's policy regarding student attendance? Fifty staff members out of 53 answered yes to the question. What is alarming is the next question asked, does the attendance policy clearly define what absences will be excused and what absences will be unexcused? Thirty-nine staff members answered yes, four responded no, and ten answered unsure. How can you be uncertain if you answered yes to being aware of the student's attendance policy? The policy is accessible on the school's website in the student handbook. The third question on the chart asked the staff if they were given a copy of the district's truancy policy.

Twenty-nine staff members answered yes, and 24 answered no. If you were never given a copy, how could you respond yes to being aware of the policy? The policy is in the student's handbook. Teachers should be familiar with the student handbook to enforce the rule of the district and school. The fourth question asked, were you given a copy of the Regional Office of Education's - ROE truancy policy? Thirty-eight staff members out of 53 answered no. The district has to make sure staff is aware of the policies that affect the students. The fifth question in the chart asked, is there a procedure to addressing chronic truancy? Thirty-eight staff members answered yes, two responded no, and 13 answered unsure. Thirteen staff members answered unsure, but 50 answered that they are aware of the school district's policy regarding student attendance.

The attendance policy is in the student handbook on the district's school website. The sixth question in the chart asked, are you involved with your students' truancy procedures? Twenty-six staff members answered yes, and 27 answered no. The no responses were shockingly high, and as the researcher of this study, it is essential to know when investigating the school's truancy intervention program. The seventh question in the chart asked, are there prevention/wrap-around services to help address attendance? Twenty staff members answered yes, nine responded no, and 24 answered unsure.

In the attendance policy, the school has a chronic or habitual truant student defined as a child who is absent without valid cause for 5% (9 days) or more of the 180 regular attendance days. To whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention, and remedial services alternative programs and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused. Teachers should be aware or made aware of the

services offered to the truant students in their district. The 2016-2017 Freshman enrollment class had 167 absent students that missed nine or more days. The staff members should know the services being offered when the district chronic and habitual chronic student attendance rate is exceptionally high. The eight-question asked, were you given a copy of the district's prevention/wrap-around services being offered? Nine staff members answered yes, an overwhelming number of 44 staff members answered no. How do you know what services to offer to students if you have never received a copy of the services? Question 9 and 11 asked, do you believe your truancy or ROE prevention programs are effective? Thirty-five staff members answered no to the district program, and 40 staff members answered no to the ROE program out of 53 submitted surveys. The staff is frontline to the truant students in the district. Staff member's perception matters. They are the frontline employees that have to deal with the truant students in the district. The district needs supportive staff to have an effective truancy program.

Understanding factors that cause truancy is imperative for the district staff to comprehend. Comprehending the truancy factors allows empathy of another person's situation to resonate within you. It has to be highly challenging for staff to deal with students that exhibit characteristics of truancy. Understanding the truancy characteristics should allow staff to continue pushing truant students and not giving up hope that students can make it despite their circumstances.

Table 8*Collection of General 'Yes or No' Questions*

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
Are you aware of the school district's policy regarding student attendance?	50	3	
Does the attendance policy clearly define what absences will be excused, and what absences will be unexcused?	39	4	10
Were you given a copy of the district's truancy policy?	29	24	
Were you given a copy of the Regional Office of Education's - ROE truancy policy?	15	38	
Is there a procedure for addressing chronic truancy?	38	2	13
Are you involved with your students' truancy procedures?	26	27	
Are there prevention/wrap-around services to help address attendance?	20	9	24
Were you given a copy of the district's prevention/wrap-around services being offered?	9	44	
Do you believe your truancy prevention program is effective?	18	35	
Do truant students keep up with their assignments when absent?	5	48	
Do you believe ROE truancy prevention program is effective?	13	40	

Instead of chalking up failures to “the system,” we should make it our responsibility to find where, when, and how students stumbled — and how our own actions may have led them to those missteps — so we can help them avoid the same pitfalls in the future (Sherrill, 2017). Don't take a student's negative actions personally (Sherrill, 2017). Instead of thinking about external privileges that are out of their control — the zip code they were born in, the color of their skin, the income of their parents — staff should think about factors that are in their control, such as work ethic or communication skills that would help build healthy relationships with students (Sherrill, 2017). The outcome of the question asked on the survey, in your opinion, what top five factors contribute to truancy? The number one choice selected by the staff at 71.6% was low socio-economic status contribute to truancy. It is powerful that the district staff understands that low socio-economic status causes truancy.

Parent-Child relationships were the second-highest selection by the staff at 49% believes that parent-child relationships contribute to truancy. Clark (2017) reported that recent research by Bodén (2016) established a link between stress among parents and children and truancy, which was greatly attributed to unfavorable relationships between students, parents, and teachers.

Learning difficulties were the third-highest selected choice at 24% by the staff. Truant students inevitably have a high chance of experiencing learning difficulties due to having a habitual truant pattern. Students need to be in school to learn. The fourth top selected choice by staff at 21% was parenting style. Effrim et al. (2018) reported in the research study that there was statistically significant relationship between parenting style and truancy behaviour of pupils (Effrim et al., 2018).

Table 9*In your opinion, what top five factors contribute to truancy?*

Factor	Number	Percent
Low socio-economic status	38	71.6
Parent-Child relationships	26	49.0
Learning difficulties	24	45.2
Parenting style	21	39.6
School Culture	20	37.7
Bullying	19	35.8
Single parent family	17	32.0
School environment	16	30.1
Student-Teacher relationships	14	26.4
Child abuse/neglect	12	22.6
Attendance policy	12	22.6
Student-Peer relationships	10	18.8
Gangs	11	20.7
Parental abuse of alcohol/drugs	11	20.7
Other	9	16.9
Social media	9	16.9
Curriculum	5	9.4
Teacher attendance	4	7.5
Domestic violence	3	5.6
Appointments	3	5.6
Teaching style	2	3.7

The fifth highest selection by staff at 20% that contribute to truancy was school culture. School culture plays a substantial role in students wanting to come to school regularly. When school leaders create a positive school culture, students are more likely to want to be at school (Harper, 2019).

The researcher wanted to include the staff voice and perception on what they believed needed to be changed to the school's truancy intervention program. Having staff buy-in on a significant policy change will increase the staff's chance to support the policy and effectively and consistently follow the policy requirements. Question 17 on the staff survey asked staff to list the changes they believed needed to be made to the district's truancy intervention program. The researcher arranged the staff's answers to question 17 in a thematic analysis to gain meaningful comprehension of the participant's perspective. The six thematic groups that developed a pattern from question 17 were to hold parents accountable, truancy intervention program changes, staff communication, curriculum, build relationships, and not certain.

The staff overwhelmingly voiced their opinion that parents need to be held accountable for their children's education. Holding parents accountable will require the district to include parents on the truancy intervention committee. Having parent's input will increase the districts' chances of providing the appropriate resources needed to help parents become advocates for their child's education.

The second theme developed from the survey was staff would like to see changes made to the district's truancy intervention program. Staff would like to see more resources offered, more parent involvement, dedicated truancy officers, more support

services, and real intervention. It is imperative to have staff members to be on the truancy intervention committee.

The third theme developed from the survey was staff communication. Keeping staff involved with every aspect of the district's truancy program is imperative. Continuous communication and expectations of your staff will help improve the district's truancy intervention program's consistency. Including staff on the committee would provide endless support needed from the district's employees.

The fourth theme developed from the staff's survey was the curriculum. Staff thinks the district needs to review and change how truant students can progress through the district's curriculum.

The fifth theme developed from the survey was building relationships with truant students. The better the relationships between students and staff, the safer the student will feel to discuss issues causing them to be truant.

The sixth and last theme developed from the staff survey was staff not being certain of what is needed to change the district's current truancy intervention program. The sixth theme explains why staff must stay involved and know the district's policies and what is expected of them to help make all policies successful for the students and district.

Table 10

What changes do you believe need to be made to the truancy intervention program?

Hold Parents Accountable

- adhere to the attendance policies and follow through with them regardless of reason
- be clear and consistent and follow state laws-there are no consequences for being truant
- clear policies with meaningful consequences and enforce policy
- consistency of follow through and holding students accountable
- follow school code
- follow through of guidelines must be upheld
- follow through with real consequences
- follow thru
- better follow through on all levels
- hold parents accountable
- hold parents accountable after they have gone through ROE
- make parents accountable
- must be enforced at all times
- need to be more diligent
- parents and students must be held accountable
- parents and students need to be invested in the students' futures
- parents should be held accountable
- prosecute parents
- stop giving them excuses

Truancy Intervention Program Changes

- more interventions
- more resources
- parenting classes
- schedule meetings to suit parents and not the school
- truancy officer - keep trying until progress is made
- energetic, dedicated truancy officers
- real interventions
- home visits
- go to the student's homes
- find a way students can receive their assignments, so they are not far behind
- more support services
- need to change how truant students are being rewarded and being allowed to stay in classes
- incentives
- tried different incentives, keep trying, and don't give up
- more parental involvement
- more parent involvement

Continued

Table 10 Continued.

Staff Communication

- staff awareness of program
- more awareness
- more communication
- clearly define absences and rules for truancy
- constant feedback from teachers and administrators of chronic truant students

Curriculum

- curriculum changes
- students need to attend class
- zoom and not just complete work
- students allowed to make up assignments after missing excessive number of days, they will continue to be truant
- a way students can receive their assignments, so they are not far behind

Build Relationships

- build relationships to deal with issue versus the court system
- you have to know the students because some of them have to work and if they don't work, they don't eat
- grow relationships

Not Certain

- I am not sure
 - I don't know
 - Not sure
 - Nothing
 - Unsure
-

Staff Interviews

Staff interviews added a meaningful, in-depth voice to the dissertation. Through the interviewee's first-hand experiences dealing with the district's truant student, they could contribute to the research body of knowledge. They brought a critical narrative to the investigation of the district's truancy intervention program.

Table 11*Staff interview questions and answers*

Questions*Answers*

What have you found to be successful when working with youth experiencing truancy?

Having Incentives.

Building Relationships.

Students prefer to go to TAOEP and Truancy Departments first because they had meaningful relationships with staff.

Consistently staying on student to do better.

Setting small obtainable attendance goals.

Sending students to ACDC instead of suspending. Students did not like going to the district's ACDC school. It is a better alternative to suspending them.

What have you found to be unsuccessful?

Calling parents were unsuccessful.

It's best to leave the teachers out of it because some teachers were concerned, and some didn't care.

Suspensions did not help. It adds to the problem.

What factors have you observed that contribute to school truancy?

Unstable home lives, root to the most of it.

Mom has to work, and the student has to watch the sibling during the day.

Parents are not as involved, and they see their child as grown, and going to school is up to them.

Sometimes they can't get a ride to school.

Most of it stems from unstable home environments.

Tell me about a successful intervention that you have done or seen done for a student that was chronically truant?

Continued

Table 11 Continued.

Student A was one of my chronically truant students and wouldn't come to school. They did not have a good relationship with teachers, but through relationship building, with student A and others, they were more likely to come to school to see TAOEP staff members talk with them than staying at home. Student A graduated and went to college.

The majority of our truant students had relationship problems with their teachers, and sometimes they say the teacher would pick on them, and the student will tell the teacher to leave them alone, and when they don't, the student will pop off on them.

By having a relationship with students, I can get them to behave better to get through the class. They don't respect the teacher and vice versa. Due to our department relationship with several truant students, we can get the students to cooperate.

Do the youth you work with have any legal issues? Parental legal issues? If so, what type of what type of legal issues?

Yes, legal issues such as gun charges.

Robbed a store in the community.

Students robbed a sports store in another community.

Custody issues and going to court several times cause them to miss school.

Student stealing from the mall.

At what level are the parents involved in the student's education?

They are little to none involved.

Some parents will show up to the parent-teacher conferences.

*Parents that showed up were not our truant student parents. *

Truancy would call parent, and parent would say why you are calling here. The student is grown and know what they are doing.

What themes do you notice among parents with low involvement?

They have a lot going on.

They are working one or two jobs.

If parents have more than one kid, the oldest kids seem to take care of the younger kids and miss out on school.

What is the family's attitude towards school and getting a high school diploma?

They really don't have any feelings toward it.

What are the families' views towards school attendance?

Kids are grown they know what they are doing. They can do what they want. Why are you calling me?

Continued

Table 11 Continued/

We had a student drop out because his attendance was terrible. Truancy went by the house, and mom was an RN, and she was like, he is 17. Why are you bothering me?

Does the school provide interventions that include the family system or encourage family involvement? If so, tell me about it.

Truancy would set up meetings with parents, but it's hard to get them to school.

I think the interventions would go up to the principals to see what they can do.

How do you get involved with a student experiencing truancy?

Anybody that was truant the year before was assigned to me.

Any student that missed three consecutive days in a week.

Attendance drop below 80%

What do you think should be implemented for an effective truancy intervention program?

Early intervention with students and let parents know upfront.

Parent outreach, encourage parent involvement.

Get the parents more involved early on than the last resort.

Set up meetings periodically to evaluate attendance while parents are on campus.

Relationship with parents does play into the student attendance.

Truancy can drop students after missing ten days, but the students know they can miss 8 or 9 days and come back one or two days and their ten days start over when they come back. They can start over missing ten days. Policy needs to be changed.

We need to have a drop system that is consistently being followed by all staff members.

We need to have something in place with the excused absences. Truant students have too many excused absences. Students need to be in class.

Online class for students who are watching their siblings.

Need daycare on campus.

Summary

The results of the data collected and the analyses are presented in Chapter Four.

Data from the staff survey and interview and the student focus group enhanced the

research study significantly by obtaining their perception. The researcher included the

student perception through second-hand data of the district's truant student focus group survey. The student's voice is hard to obtain for research because of being in the protective class. A two-tailed z-test for the difference in proportions was conducted to determine if the district's and ROE's truancy intervention programs were effective. Both tests were rejected. The district test showed no changes to the student's attendance after going through the district's intervention program. The ROE test showed a steady rate of improvement.

Chapter Five provides recommendations for changes to the program and future research regarding attendance at the Midwest Public Urban High School.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

To investigate the effectiveness of the district's truancy intervention program at the Midwest Public Urban High School, the researcher looked at the enrollment Freshman class attendance during the 2016-2017 year and monitored their attendance through their first-semester senior year, which ended December 2020. The truancy intervention program's investigation process was in place to help guide what changes might be needed within the program to ensure its effectiveness. To investigate the program, the researcher administered a voluntary survey amongst the district's staff and analyzed the participants' feedback.

The analysis focused on four research questions and the four corresponding null hypotheses. The sample included 137 truant students starting enrollment freshman year 2016-2017 school year. By examining both the quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher investigated if the truancy intervention program was working to increase attendance and graduation rate and make the district's intervention program better; pending changes were needed.

Conclusion

Research Question 1

What are the students' attendance changes after going through the district truancy process?

Out of 137 truant students during the Freshman year of the cohort, 41 remained truant during year two, 24 remained truant during year three, and 22 remained truant during year four. After investigating the district's truancy intervention program, the

researcher needs to review the research data and make the appropriate changes to the current intervention program. The district needs a relevant plan to address the school's current demographic and student population. The district had not changed the truancy program in over a decade. The peak population of Cahokia was in 1990, when its population was 17,681 (Cahokia, Illinois Population History | 1990 - 2019, 2021). In 1990, Cahokia was the 1,540th largest city in the US; now it's fallen to the 2,424th largest city in the US (Cahokia, Illinois Population History | 1990 - 2019, 2021). Cahokia is currently 21.5% smaller than it was in 1990 (Cahokia, Illinois Population History, 1990 - 2019, 2021). Based on the latest 2020 data from the US census, the current population of Cahokia is 13,880 (Cahokia, Illinois Population History | 1990 - 2019, 2021). There is a severe need to design and implement effective prevention initiatives that take into account the causes and correlates of truancy and find efficacious means of addressing these issues before students begin skipping school (Henry & Huizinga, 2007, p. 506).

Research Question 2

What are the students' attendance changes after going through the ROE truancy process?

Out of 137 truant students during the Freshman year of the cohort, 41 remained truant during year two, 24 remained truant during year three, and 22 remained truant during year four. The conclusion is similar to the question 1 conclusion. The difference is that the district needs to meet with the ROE to discuss the research data's findings. The district and ROE will need to work simultaneously while the district improves the district's truancy intervention program. Chronic absenteeism can be turned around if schools and community partners' work together with families to monitor who is at risk for

poor attendance, nurture a habit of regular attendance, and identify and address the challenges that prevent students from getting to school (Alliance for a Healthier Generation et al., n.d.).

Research Question 3

What are the truancy officer's perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 40 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the ROE intervention program was not effective.

Research Question 4

What are the principal's perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 40 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the ROE intervention program was not effective.

Research Question 5

What are the teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 40 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the ROE intervention program was not effective.

Research Question 6

What are the TAOEP staff perception of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 40 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the ROE intervention program was not effective.

Research Question 7

What is the counselor's perception of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 40 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the ROE intervention program is not effective.

Research Question 8

What are the social worker's perceptions of the effectiveness of the ROE truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 40 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the ROE intervention program was not effective.

Research Question 9

What are the truancy officer's perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 35 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the district's intervention program is not effective.

Research Question 10

What are the principal's perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 35 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the district's intervention program is not effective.

Research Question 11

What are the teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 35 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the district's intervention program is not effective.

Research Question 12

What is the TAOEP staff perception of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 35 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the district's intervention program is not effective.

Research Question 13

What is the counselor's perception of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 35 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the district's intervention program is not effective.

Research Question 14

What are the social worker's perceptions of the effectiveness of the district truancy intervention program?

Staff members completed the *Qualtrics* survey, and 35 staff members out of 53 submitted thought the district's intervention program is not effective.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district truancy process.

Out of 137 truant students during the Freshman year of the cohort, 41 remained truant during year two, 24 remained truant during year three, and 22 remained truant during year four. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant two years out of the four-year cohort period ($z = 2.414$), when compared to those

who were truant three years out of the four-year cohort. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant two years out of the four-year cohort period ($z = 2.728$), when compared to those who were truant four years out of the four-year cohort. There was not a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant three years out of the four-year cohort period ($z = 0.323$), when compared to those who were truant four years out of the four-year cohort. Therefore, early intervention with truancy seems to work more effectively than a later intervention with truancy. H_{10} : True, there will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the district's truancy intervention process.

Hypotheses 2: There will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

Out of the truant students who participated in the ROE process, 81 remained truant during the Freshman and Sophomore years, 42 remained truant during the Sophomore and Junior years, and 22 remained truant during the Junior and Senior years. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant during the Sophomore and Junior years ($z = 4.737$), when compared to those who were truant during the Freshman and Sophomore years, out of the four-year cohort. There was a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant during the Junior and Senior years ($z = 2.856$), when compared to those who were truant during the Sophomore and Junior years, out of the four-year cohort. There was not a significant drop in the percentage of students who were truant during the Junior and Senior years ($z = 7.359$), when compared to those who were truant during the Freshman and Sophomore years, out of the four-year cohort. Therefore, intervention with the ROE process for truancy seems to work

effectively at a steady truancy improvement rate. H_{20} : True, there will be no significant change to truant students' attendance after they go through the ROE truancy process.

Hypotheses 3. Chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the district's truancy process.

Hypotheses 4: Chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the ROE truancy process.

Both Hypothesis # 3 and Hypothesis # 4 were not rejected. The graduation rate of truant students in this cohort was 21.9%, and the graduation rate of non-truant students was 73.2%. Comparison with a z-test for the difference in proportion yielded a z-score of 8.80, indicating a significant difference in proportions (z -critical = 1.96). The non-truant student sample represented a significantly higher graduation rate than the truant sample produced.

There were 137 truant students out of a cohort of 301. The individual rate of truant students only graduating was calculated by dividing the 30 regular and GED truant graduates by the total of 137 truant students in the original cohort. The individual rate of non-truant students was calculated by dividing the 120 graduates by the 164 remaining non-truant students in the cohort. Truancy, dropout, and age out are not individually considered.

Any student that missed eight days completed the district's truancy process. Twenty-two truant students graduated with their class out of 137 truant 9th graders. Eight truant students earned a GED. One hundred and twenty non-truant students graduated with their class out of 164 non-truant 9th graders. All 137 truant students went through the district's truancy process.

Any student that missed nine or more days had to go through the ROE process. Twenty-two truant students graduated with their class out of 137 truant 9th graders. Eight truant students earned a GED. One hundred and twenty non-truant students graduated with their class out of 164 non-truant 9th graders. All 137 truant students went through the ROE's truancy process.

The graduation rate that represents the total number of students in the original cohort of 301 is 64.4%, 22 truant graduates, eight truant GED graduates, and 164 non-truant graduates, for a total of 194. Since this data represents only the original cohort considered in this study, transfer students and dropout students were not removed from the pool of potential graduates for this report. When considering only the 194 graduates, 15.4% of the graduates were truant students, while the remaining 84.5% represents the percentage of the graduating class that were not truant.

When considering only the 137 truant students represented within the original cohort of 301 students, the graduation rate within the cohort of just the truant students only was 21.9%. H3₀: True, chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the district's truancy process. H4₀: True, chronically truant students will not graduate with their class at a rate greater or equal to non-truant peers after going through the ROE truancy process.

Implications for Practice

Several recommendations presented develop from the findings. Findings and recommendations will be presented to the district's leadership team. This program evaluation was the first in the Midwest Public Urban School District, specifically on attendance. Effective, data-driven truancy interventions are essential for an urban public

school district to help combat truancy issues. The urban truancy intervention process in the district has not changed in over a decade. The chronic student attendance percentages are increasing rapidly in the district and continue to widen as the students get older or matriculate in their education. Lack of current research and an updated intervention truancy process continues to cause the urban school district's chronic truancy rate to increase over the last several years.

The researcher recommends that the district implement a new truancy intervention program to address their truant student truancy issues. The following TIP program is recommended to be included in the district's truancy intervention program. ScholarChip (2020) provided 10 reasons why a truancy intervention program can help truant students.

1. TIP intervenes early.
2. The program promotes attendance.
3. A truancy intervention program promotes student health.
4. A TIP reduces barriers to learning.
5. A truancy intervention program engages students in learning.
6. A truancy intervention program helps students achieve.
7. A TIP provides support when needed.
8. The TIP drives child and family relationship building.
9. The truancy intervention program addresses diversity.
10. A truancy intervention program promotes a safe school environment.

The researcher recommends the district provide staff with in-service training. In-service training will keep staff included with changes to the district's intervention

program. The Supreme Court of Ohio (2018) reported the core curriculum for school personnel in-service training includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Laws applicable to attendance
- Court and school requirements under H.B. 410
- School engagement
- Intervention strategies
- Collaboration between school and court
- Reasons for student absenteeism
- Human trafficking
- Ways to identify barriers to attendance
- Dispute resolution processes and goals
- The Uniform Mediation Act
- Core values of mediation
- Necessary participants to mediation.

The researcher recommends the district collaborate with other resources to establish a multidisciplinary group to guide and implement truancy programming. The urban school district in this study is located in an area with a significant unmet need for financial resources to fund supplemental services. As a result, some students and families have difficulties connecting with the school and community support resources. School personnel must do a better job utilizing their professional connections to bring families to these organizations. The district must hold every employee responsible when not meeting their job requirements. It is recommended that the guidance counselors department, the truancy department, and social workers collaborate to reach out to community

organizations that provide services to families in need. It is recommended that the district reach out to the community organizations to request a partnership with their organization. Obtaining reliable resources for the district is the key to turning around the district's chronically truant student issues.

It is highly recommended that the district thoroughly evaluate and assess the newly implemented truancy intervention program monthly to see if the desired outcomes are happening and to make immediate corrections if necessary. Continuous reviewing of the school's truancy data will help increase effective practices and generate positive political will.

The district should consider hiring an intervention attendance clerk for each grade level at the middle and high school. The intervention attendance clerk will be required to monitor each truant student attendance and track resources provided to students to ensure they are following through with the truancy intervention plan. The intervention attendance clerk will be the liaison between district staff, families, and students. They would be responsible for making sure the social worker and any other district staff follow up with students and make sure the truant student and family have received resources promptly. If the school district approves creating an intervention attendance clerk, the position's benefits would help decrease students' attendance issues. It would give the social workers additional time to help create students' intervention plans. Social workers could do home visits with the parent and students to reduce student truancy, which would benefit all parties involved.

In this study, it was clear that school culture played a part in poor attendance. Still, the recommended changes to the truancy interventions program are likely to

improve the culture, which could only improve attendance. School administrators should work with school personnel and stakeholders, including students, parents, and community members, to identify where the systemic problems of engagement may exist, including elements of the school culture that push students away from school. The district should look into partnering with Big Brother Big Sister to offer mentoring resources to students. It would be meaningful if student-teacher/staff mentoring programs are designed to improve student-teacher relations. The better the relationship between student-teacher/staff should help engage truant students and pull them toward school. Relationships are built on trust and will give students a reason to connect with the school.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, this study should carry on through the 2024-2025 school year, with recommended changes. Attendance and dropout rates should continue to be monitored, and the focus group data from the survey should continue to be captured and analyzed if the recommended changes are effective. Once the recommended changes have been implemented, the ongoing research will likely provide a different reaction from the students. Staff would provide more support once they have received in-service training and learn what is expected of them to help students from being truant. Further research should continue to use the researcher's survey instrument, with an additional survey sent to parents regarding attendance. The researcher believes it is essential to include the parents on a similarly worded survey to see if there is parental backing or a correlation between parents who think attendance matters and those who do not. The researcher recommends all schools in the district participate in the study to find areas of needed improvement and know what areas are working successfully.

The study should expand to include the parent perspective, as well. As the program grows, parents' focus group is recommended to understand how they perceive the district's and ROE's truancy intervention program and understand their likes and dislikes with the plan to continue to improve the program. Another stakeholder that should be surveyed about the attendance program is the building secretary. The researcher believes the secretary could provide helpful insight into the intervention program. The secretary will detail the program's effectiveness on many of the students, based on observation, entering student's attendance, and receiving numerous calls from parents regarding student attendance. Expanding the study to include these two categories could help develop a well-rounded study towards tangible, effective future changes.

References

- 5 Essentials*. (2019). <https://www.5-essentials.org/illinois/5e/2019/s/500821870260011/measures/pssm/#performance?o=-score&i=m510,m511,m512,m513,m514>
- Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. (n.d.). *Mixed methods*. Nova Southeastern University.
https://education.nova.edu/Resources/uploads/app/35/files/arc_doc/mixed_methods.pdf
- Adelabu, O. J., Oyelana, A. A., & Adelabu, O. A. (2016). Influence of socio-economic status on truancy among secondary school students. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 12(1), 45–49.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2016.11890411>
- Ahram, R., Stembridge, A., Fergus, E., & Noguera, P. (n.d.). *Framing urban school challenges: The problems to examine when implementing Response to Intervention*. RTI Action Network.
<http://rtinetwork.org/component/content/article/12/465-framing-urban-school>
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Attendance Works, & Healthy Schools Campaign. (n.d.). *Framework for Action: Addressing chronic absenteeism through ESSA implementation*. Healthy Schools Campaign.
<https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Framework-for-Action-Addressing-Chronic-Absenteeism-through-ESSA-Implementation.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (n.d.) Socioeconomic status. (n.d.).
<https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status>

Association for Children's Mental Health. (2019, March 10). *Problems at school*.

ACMH. <http://www.acmh-mi.org/get-help/navigating/problems-at-school/>

Attendance Commission. (2018). Illinois General Assembly.

<https://www.ilga.gov/reports/ReportsSubmitted/153RSGAEmail332RSGAAttach2018%20Attendance%20Commission%20Annual%20Report>

Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, B. (2012, May). *The importance of being in school: A report of absenteeism in the nation's public schools*. John Hopkins University.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/relwestFiles/pdf/508_ChronicAbsenteeism_NatlSummary_Balfanz_Byrnes_2012.pdf

Balkis, M., Arslan, G., & Duru, E. (2016). The school absenteeism among high school students: Contributing factors. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice* 16(6), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2016.6.0125>

Basch, C. A. (2012). *Student-Teacher trust relationships and student performance*.

Semantic Scholar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Student-Teacher-Trust-Relationships-and-Student-Basch/0f74437f2f27e8be7eff41f1744581178047363b>

Bourgault, A. (2015, October 7). *How does chronic absences affect dropout rates?*.

Communities In Schools. <https://communitiesinschools.org/blog/2015/10/chronic-absence-dropout-rates/>

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Google Books.

[https://books.google.nl/books?hl=en&lr=&id=OCmbzWka6xUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=Bronfenbrenner,+U.+\(1979\).+The+ecology+of+human+development:+Experiments+by+nature+and+design.+Cambridge,+MA:+Harvard+University+Press.&ots=yzK_Q-RNhc&sig=yem20fN2EksCy5FGRHNvzxN946c&rediresc=](https://books.google.nl/books?hl=en&lr=&id=OCmbzWka6xUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=Bronfenbrenner,+U.+(1979).+The+ecology+of+human+development:+Experiments+by+nature+and+design.+Cambridge,+MA:+Harvard+University+Press.&ots=yzK_Q-RNhc&sig=yem20fN2EksCy5FGRHNvzxN946c&rediresc=)

y#v= onepage &q=Bronfenbrenner%2C%20U.%20(1979).%20The%20ecology%20of%20human%20development%3A%20Experiments%20by%20nature%20and%20design%20.%20Cambridge%2C%20MA%3A%20Harvard%20University%20Press.&f=false

Chang, H. N., & Romero, M. (2008). *Present, engaged, and accounted for: The critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades.*

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED522727.pdf>

Chang, H. N., & Romero, M. (2010, December). *Truancy prevention.* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/truancy_prevention.pdf

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). *Trauma and adolescent development.* Child Welfare Information Gateway.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/youth/understanding/trauma/>

Civil Rights Data Collection. (2014). Cahokia CUSD 187.

<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/profile/9/district/32889/summary>

Cohen, J. (2008, November 30). *School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education, Teachers College Record, 2009.* ERIC EJ826002.

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ826002>

Cooney, C. (2019, January 12). *The value of public scrutiny: Lessons learned after the release of Data Matters.* Attendance Works.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/the-value-of-public-scrutiny-lessons-learned-from-the-release-of-data-matters/>

Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2019).

Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development.

Applied Developmental Science, 24(2), 97–140.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>

Dembo, R., Briones-Robinson, R., Ungaro, R., Barrett, K., Gullledge, L., Winters, K. C., .

. . . M., & Wareham, J. (2014). Brief intervention for truant youth sexual risk

behavior and alcohol Use: A parallel process growth model analysis. *Journal of*

Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse, 23(3), 155–168.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1067828x.2013.786643>

Dembo, R., & Gullledge, L. M. (2008). Truancy intervention programs. *Criminal Justice*

Policy Review, 20(4), 437–456. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403408327923>

Department of Labor. (n.d.). Joliet Job Corps. <https://joliet.jobcorps.gov/our-program>

Dube, S. R., & Orpinas, P. (2009). Understanding excessive school absenteeism as school

refusal behavior. *Children & Schools, 31*(2), 87–95.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/31.2.87>

Durnford, V. L. (2010, February). *An examination of teacher-student trust in middle*

school classrooms. ScholarWorks.

[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/162/?utm_source=scho](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/162/?utm_source=scholarworks.umass.edu%2Fopen_access_dissertations%2F162&utm_medium=PDF)

[larworks.umass.edu%2Fopen_access_dissertations%2F162&utm_medium=PDF](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/162/?utm_source=scholarworks.umass.edu%2Fopen_access_dissertations%2F162&utm_medium=PDF)

[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/162/?utm_source=scho](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/162/?utm_source=scholarworks.umass.edu%2Fopen_access_dissertations%2F162&utm_medium=PDF)

Eastman, G., Cooney, S., O'Connor, C., & Small, S. (2014, April). *Finding effective*

solutions to truancy. University of Wisconsin–Madison and University of

Wisconsin–Extension.

https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/whatworkswisconsin/files/2014/04/whatworks_05.pdf

Education and Culture. *How to prevent truancy in schools*. (2017, August 21).

<http://www.city-m.eu/prevent-truancy-schools/>

EducationData. (2021, February 28). *K-12 school enrollment & student population statistics*. <https://educationdata.org/k12-enrollment-statistics>

Eklund, K., Burns, M. K., Oyen, K., DeMarchena, S., & McCollom, E. M. (2020).

Addressing chronic absenteeism in schools: A meta-analysis of evidence-based interventions. *School Psychology Review*, 1–17.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966x.2020.1789436>

Erickson-Gabby, A. (2019, November 5). Truancy. Healthline.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/truancy#Causes>

FindLaw. (2016a, June 21). Compulsory education laws: Background.

<https://www.findlaw.com/education/education-options/compulsory-education-laws-background.html>

FindLaw. (2016b, June 20). *Truancy: The Extent of the Problem*. FindLaw.

<https://www.findlaw.com/education/student-conduct-and-discipline/truancy-the-extent-of-the-problem.html>

Francis, K. (2020, November 4). *What is low income in Illinois?*. Sapling.

<https://www.sapling.com/7502012/low-income-illinois>

GenoPro. (n.d.). *Family Systems Theory - GenoPro*.

<https://genopro.com/genogram/family-systems-theory/>

Go Abroad Foundation. (2020, April 15). 10 reasons why education matters.

<http://www.goabroad.org/10-reasons-why-education-matters>

Gottfried, M. A. (2010). Evaluating the relationship between student attendance and

achievement in urban elementary and middle schools. *American Educational*

Research Journal, 47(2), 434–465. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831209350494>

Grace, R. (2015). *Our children, our schools: Seeking solutions for improving the climate*

in urban public schools. Semantic Scholars.

[https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Our-Children%2C-Our-Schools%3A-](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Our-Children%2C-Our-Schools%3A-Seeking-Solutions-for-in-Grace-Harrington/af8e21a32361f3203ef556f33973f4babdfbecb0)

[Seeking-Solutions-for-in-Grace-Harrington/af8e21a32361f3203ef556f33973](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Our-Children%2C-Our-Schools%3A-Seeking-Solutions-for-in-Grace-Harrington/af8e21a32361f3203ef556f33973f4babdfbecb0)

[f4babdfbecb0](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Our-Children%2C-Our-Schools%3A-Seeking-Solutions-for-in-Grace-Harrington/af8e21a32361f3203ef556f33973f4babdfbecb0)

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework

for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy*

Analysis, 11(3), 255–274. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737011003255>

Gubbels, J., Put, C. E., & Assink, M. (2019, July 15). Risk factors for school absenteeism

and dropout: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

[https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-019-01072-5?error=cookies_](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-019-01072-5?error=cookies_Assini=3331645b-7ebf-4f1b-a316-68b0ffa48161)

[Assini=3331645b-7ebf-4f1b-a316-68b0ffa48161](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-019-01072-5?error=cookies_Assini=3331645b-7ebf-4f1b-a316-68b0ffa48161)

Guy-Evans, O. (2020, November 9). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html>

Hamm, T. (2020, November 12). *If you want different results, you have to try different*

approaches. The Simple Dollar. [https://www.thesimpledollar.com/make-](https://www.thesimpledollar.com/make-money/if-you-want-different-results-you-have-to-try-different-approaches/)

[money/if-you-want-different-results-you-have-to-try-different-approaches/](https://www.thesimpledollar.com/make-money/if-you-want-different-results-you-have-to-try-different-approaches/)

- Hansen, M., & Quintero, D. (2020, January 27). We should be focusing on absenteeism among teachers, not just students. Brookings.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/01/27/we-should-be-focusing-on-absenteeism-among-teachers-not-just-students/>
- Henry, K., & Huizinga, D. (2007). School-related risk and protective factors associated with truancy among urban youth placed at risk. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 28*(6), 505–519. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-007-0115-7>
- Heylighen, F., & Joslyn, C. (1992, November 1). *What is Systems Theory? Principia Cybernetica* Web. <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/SYSTHEOR.html>
- Hobbs, A., Kotlaja, M., & Wylie, L. (2018). Absenteeism interventions: An approach for common definitions in statewide program evaluations. *Justice Evaluation Journal, 1*(2), 215–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2018.1517584>
- Hudley, C. (2013, May). Education and urban schools. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2013/05/urban-schools>
- Human Development Reports. (2015). *What is human development?* United Nations Development Programme. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/what-human-development>
- Illinois Challenged Academy. (n.d.). Lincoln’s Challenge Academy – Change Takes Courage. Illinois Challenged Academy Illinois National Guard.
<https://www.lincolnschallenge.org/>

- Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership. (2020, August 4). *Children's Mental Health Act*. <https://www.icmhp.org/about-us/our-mission/childrens-mental-health-act/>
- Illinois State Board of Education. (2016). *5 Essentials Survey Administration Manual, 2016-2017*. <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/5E-survey-manual-2016-17.pdf#search=5%20essential%20survey>
- Illinois State Board of Education. (2019a). *Cahokia CUSD 187 | Enrollment*. Illinois State Report. <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/District.aspx?source=studentcharacteristics&source2=enrollment&Districtid=50082187026>
- Illinois State Board of Education. (2019b). *Chronic absenteeism*. Illinois Report Card. <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=studentcharacteristics&source2=chronicabsenteeism&Stateid=IL>
- Illinois State Board of Education. (2020). *Chronic absenteeism*. Illinois Report Card. <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=studentcharacteristics&source2=chronicabsenteeism&Stateid=IL>
- Illinois State Board of Education. / *State snapshot*. (2020b). Illinois Report Card. <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/State.aspx?source=profile&Stateid=IL>
- Illinois State Board of Education. (2021). *5 Essentials Survey*. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx>
- Illinois State Board of Education. (n.d.a). *Adequate Yearly Progress*. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Adequate-Yearly-Progress.aspx>

Illinois State Board of Education. | Student mobility. (n.d.b). Illinois Report Card.

<https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/state.aspx?source=studentcharacteristics&source2=mobility&Stateid=IL>

Jensen, E. (2009a). *How poverty affects behavior and academic performance*. Books.

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109074/chapters/How-Poverty-Affects-Behavior-and-Academic-Performance.aspx>

Keppens, G., Spruyt, B., & Dockx, J. (2019). *Measuring school absenteeism:*

Administrative attendance data collected by schools differ from self-reports in systematic ways. Frontiers in Psychology, 10, 1–12.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02623>

Laldin, M. (2016, February 11). *The psychology of belonging (and why it matters)*.

Education & teacher conferences. Learning and the Brain.

<https://www.learningandthebrain.com/blog/psychology-of-belonging/>

Laurito, A., Schwartz, A., Lacoé, J., Sharkey, P., & Ellen, I. (2016, November). *The*

academic effects of chronic exposure to neighborhood violence.

<https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1227&context=cpr>

Learning for All: Supporting students with specific learning needs procedure. (n.d.).

HWDSB. <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Learning-For-All-Supporting-Students-with-Specific-Learning-Needs-Procedure.pdf>

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. (2018, January 2). Rights of Homeless

Students. <https://www.lawny.org/node/76/rights-homeless-students>

Learning Policy Institute. *Whole child approaches to education especially effective for students living with trauma*. (2017, September 7).

<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/press-release/whole-child-approaches-education-especially-effective-students-living-trauma>

Legal Rights of Juveniles. (n.d.). Virginia rules. Commonwealth of Virginia.

https://virginiarules.org/varules_topics/legal-rights-of-juveniles/

Lord Fairfax Community College. (2014, August 2). What is an SIS ID?

<https://lfcc.edu/current-students/my-lfcc/frequently-asked-questions-about-my-lfcc/what-is-an-sis-id/>

Lorenzo, J. (2016, August 26). *Examining the impact of community factors on student truancy*. Rowan University.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3096&context=etd>

Lovett, K., & Jacob, B. (2017, July 26). *Chronic absenteeism: An old problem in search of new answers*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/chronic-absenteeism-an-old-problem-in-search-of-new-answers/>

Maynard, B. R., McCrea, K. T., Pigott, T. D., & Kelly, M. S. (2012). Indicated truancy interventions: Effects on school attendance among chronic truant students.

Campbell Systematic Reviews, 8(1), 1–84. <https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2012.10>

Maynard, B. R., Vaughn, M. G., Nelson, E. J., Salas-Wright, C. P., Heyne, D. A., & Kremer, K. P. (2017). Truancy in the United States: Examining temporal trends and correlates by race, age, and gender. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 81, 188–196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.08.008>

Meador, D. (2017, March 18). School attendance matters, and it's our job to improve it.

ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/why-school-attendance-matters-3194437>

Meador, D. (2019, July 3). 20 critical life lessons we learn from teachers at school.

ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/life-lessons-from-teachers-at-school-3194434>

Migrio, S., & Magangi, B. (2011, May 18). *Mixed methods: A review of literature and the future of the new research paradigm*. Academic Journals.

https://academicjournals.org/article/article1381158713_Migrio%20and%20Magangi.pdf

Miller, R. (2012, November 5). *Teacher absence as a leading indicator of student achievement*. Center for American Progress.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2012/11/05/40371/teacher-absence-as-a-leading-indicator-of-student-achievement/>

Nation, M., Christens, B. D., Bess, K. D., Shinn, M., Perkins, D. D., & Speer, P. W. (2020). Addressing the problems of urban education: An ecological systems perspective. *Journal of Urban Affairs, 42*(5), 715–730.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2019.1705847>

O'Connor, A., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Department of Education,

Peterson, R., & Strawhun, J. (2014, March). Truancy Reduction. K 12

Engagement. [https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-](https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/Ttruancy%20Reduction%203-11-2014%20Print.pdf)

[briefs/Ttruancy%20Reduction%203-11-2014%20Print.pdf](https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/Ttruancy%20Reduction%203-11-2014%20Print.pdf)

Overall Niche Grade. (2020). Niche. <https://www.niche.com/k12/d/cahokia-community-unit-school-district-no-187-il/>

Parenting for a Digital Future. (2019, November 13). *How do parents influence their children's attitudes to life?*

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2015/04/02/how-do-parents-influence-their-childrens-attitudes-to-life-2/>

Parker, W. S., & Parker, B. A. (2019, October 27). *Down and out and going to school.*

Brain World. <https://brainworldmagazine.com/down-and-out-and-going-to-school/2/>

Parrish, J. (2015). *A study of the effectiveness of a truancy reduction program for middle and high school students.* Virginia Commonwealth University.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/51290635.pdf>

Plumas County. (n.d.). *Truancy prevention | Plumas County, CA - Official Website.*

<https://www.plumascounty.us/2654/Truancy-Prevention>

Poppy, A. (2012, May). The role of a school social worker from an administrator's perspective. Sophia.

https://sophia.stkate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1074&context=msw_papers

Prabha, S., & Maheswari, K. (2017, September 10). Causes of truancy with special reference to school factors. *International Journal of Applied Research.*

<https://www.allresearchjournal.com/archives/2017/vol3issue11/PartD/3-10-89-601.pdf>

Preceden. (2020). *History of American education timeline.* History of American

Education. <https://www.preceden.com/timelines/166355-history-of-american-education>

Prewitt, E. (2017, January 30). *Illinois governor signs law to include social-emotional screening in school health exams.* ACEsConnection.

<https://www.acesconnection.com/blog/illinois-governor-signs-law-to-include-social-emotional-screening-in-school-health-examinations>

Public Law 105 ILCS 5/26-2a. (n.d.-a). Illinois General Assembly.

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/010500050K26-2a.htm>

Public Law 105 ILCS 5/26-2a. (n.d.-b). Illinois General Assembly.

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/010500050K26-2a.htm>

Public Law 107-110; 115 STAT.1435. (2021).

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED556108.pdf>

Public Law 405 ILCS 49/5Sec. 5. (n.d.). Illinois General Assembly.

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=1496&ChapterID=34>

Regional Office of Education. (n.d.). St. Clair County Regional Office of Education -

Truancy Information. Saint Clair County Regional Office of Education Truancy Information. <http://www.stclair.k12.il.us/services/truancy/>

Resmovits, J. (2017, December 7). *Alarming number of urban teachers are “chronically absent.”* HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/teacher-chronic-absenteeism_n_5434219

Rivers, B. (2010, April). Truancy: Causes, effects, and solutions. Fisher Digital

Publication.

https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1106&context=education_ED_masters

Rodríguez, L. F., & Conchas, G. Q. (2009). Preventing truancy and dropout among urban middle school youth. *Education and Urban Society*, 41(2), 216–247.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124508325681>

- Ross, J. (2014, September 8). Does exposure to violence and trauma impact students' education prospects? *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/09/does-exposure-to-violence-and-trauma-impact-students-education-prospects/431292/>
- Safe Supportive Learning. (n.d.). Environment. National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/environment>
- Safe Supportive Learning. (n.d.b). *School Climate Improvement*. National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/school-climate-improvement>
- ScholarChip. (2020, May 27). 10 reasons why a truancy intervention program can help students. <https://www.scholarchip.com/truancy-intervention-program/>
- Schoonenboom, J., & Johnson, R. (2017). How to construct a mixed methods research design. PubMed Central (PMC).
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5602001/>
- Sherrill, C. (2017, July 25). Why “don’t take it personally” is bad advice. Christian Sherrill. Medium. <https://medium.com/@csherrill/why-dont-take-it-personally-is-bad-advice-74ddab8454aa>
- Silas International. (2016, June 28). *Role of education in human development*. Silas International School. <http://silasinternationalschool.org/blog/2016/06/20/role-education-human-development/>
- Sincero, S. M. (2012, March 14). The Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner. Explorable. <https://explorable.com/ecological-systems-theory>

Skyward. (2020, November 12). Absence occurrence report. Skyward documentation - attendance reporting.

https://support.skyward.com/DeptDocs/Corporate/Documentation/Public%20Website/Tutorials/Software/WS_OF_AT_RE_AR_AD_929647_100_T.pdf

Skyward, Inc. (n.d.). School management software; SIS and ERP. Skyward.

<https://www.skyward.com/>

St. Clair County Regional Office of Education - Truancy Information. (n.d.). St. Clair County Regional Office of Education.

<http://www.stclair.k12.il.us/services/truancy/>

Stephney, S. (2016, August 29). About student attitudes on learning. Ministry of Education, Guyana. <https://education.gov.gy/web/index.php/teachers/tips-for-teaching/item/2192-about-student-attitudes-on-learning>

Stripling, T. (2018). Effectiveness of an adapted behavioral education program targeting attendance improvement. *Professional School Counseling*, 22(1), 2156759X1986733. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x19867339>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). *Recognizing and treating child traumatic stress*. SAMHSA. <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/recognizing-and-treating-child-traumatic-stress>

Sutherland, L. (2016, November 30). *A mixed-methods investigation of an attendance program in a Missouri school district*, ProQuest LLC, 2017. ERIC ED576365. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED576365>

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 357–385.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2008, June). *Understanding traumatic stress in adolescents: A primer for substance abuse professionals*.

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/understanding_traumatic_stress_in_adolescents_substance_abuse_professionals.pdf

The Psychology Notes HQ. (2020, May 22). What is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory? The Psychology Notes Headquarters.

<https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/bronfenbrenner-ecological-theory/>

The Supreme Court of Ohio. (2018). Ohio supports attendance. Dispute Resolution Section, Supreme Court Commission on Dispute Resolution, & Ohio Department of Education. (2018). A Community Collaboration of the Supreme Court of Ohio & the Ohio Department of Education. Supreme Court of Ohio.

<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/disputeResolution/resources/schoolAttendanceToolkit.pdf>

Truancy. (n.d.). Midwest Public Urban School District.

https://www.cusd187.org/pf4/cms2/view_page?d=x&group_id=1516954840030&vdid=i4d1u5f611af

Truant Officer. (n.d.). The Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/truant%20officer>

Trumbull County Educational Service Center. (n.d.). Truancy program.

<https://www.trumbullesc.org/TruancyProgram.aspx>

Understood. (2021, January 27). *Culturally responsive teaching: What you need to know*.

Understood. <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/universal-design-for-learning/what-is-culturally-responsive-teaching>

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Chronic absenteeism in the nation's schools*.

<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html>

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *School climate and discipline*. U.S. Department of

Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>

Vaughn, M. G., Maynard, B. R., Salas-Wright, C. P., Perron, B. E., & Abdon, A. (2013).

Prevalence and correlates of truancy in the US: Results from a national sample.

Journal of Adolescence, 36(4), 767–776.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.03.015>

Victoria State Government & Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Trauma and teenagers - common reactions | betterhealth.vic.gov.au. Better Health Channel.

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/trauma-and-teenagers-common-reactions>

Waldman, C. (2016, November 7). *Four elements for creating a positive learning*

environment. Alliance For Excellent Education. <https://all4ed.org/four-elements-for-creating-a-positive-learning-environment/>

Watson, W. (2012a). *Family systems theory - an overview* | ScienceDirect topics.

Science Direct. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/family-systems-theory#:~:text=According%20to%20Murray%20Bowen%20rather%20than%20as%20individual%20elements>

WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Faculty of Psychology, Telethon KIDS Institute, Center for Population Health Research, & Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education. (2017, September 1). *Poverty and child behavioral problems: The mediating role of parenting and parental well-being*. PubMed Central.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5615518/>

Zins, C. (2013, May). *Engaging families to prevent chronic truancy*. Sophia.

https://sophia.stkate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1280&context=msw_papers

Appendix A

ATTENDANCE

1.1 ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance Offices:

9th Grade Office Number xxx-xxxx

10th & 11th Grade Office Number xxx-xxxx

12th Grade Office Number xxx-xxxx

Successful educational performance is enhanced by regular school attendance.

Educators at MPUSD High School accept the obligation to promote and assure such attendance. It is the intent of this policy to encourage regular attendance and to deter excessive absenteeism, truancy, and tardiness of all students.

Illinois School Code - Compulsory Attendance (105 ILCS 5/26-2) & (105 ILCS 5/26-2a)

A school district shall deny enrollment in its secondary schools to any child above the age of 16 years who has dropped out of school and who could not, because of age and lack of credits, attend classes during the normal school year and graduate before his or her twenty-first birthday.

A "chronic or habitual truant" shall be defined as a child who is absent without valid cause for 5% (9 days) or more of the 180 regular attendance days. A "truant minor" is defined as a chronic truant to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services alternative programs and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy, or have been offered and refused.

A "truant" is defined as subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without a valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof. A "valid cause" for absence shall be illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and shall include such other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the board of education in each district, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student.

Any person having custody or control of a child who is the age of 7 years or below the age of 17 years and who is enrolled in any of grades 1 through 12, in the public school shall cause him or her to attend the public school in the district wherein he or she resides when it is in session during the regular school term unless he or she is excused.

1.2 TARDINESS

A. Tardiness to School:

All students who are tardy to school must sign in at the appropriate grade level office or front desk and indicate their time of arrival and reason for being tardy.

B. Tardiness to Class:

1. Students are allowed five minutes between the changing of class
2. MPUSD High School will not tolerate tardiness to class because students who are late to class disrupt the learning of others and miss instruction.
3. To avoid being classified as tardy to class, students must be in their classrooms at the start of class.
4. Parents should be notified by the teacher on the third tardy to their class as a preventive measure.
5. The classroom instructor will deal with offenses promptly.
6. They will report tardies to the attendance office.

****School officials shall determine the disruption to other students' learning opportunities on a case-by-case basis****

C. Possible School District Responses for Tardiness May Include:

1. Teacher Discretion
2. Parent Notification
3. Detention
4. Exclusion

1.3 TRUANCY

MPUSD High School and the MPUSD School Board & Administration support the principle that local school districts must have the responsibility for matters pertaining to student attendance. Truancy is a violation of the law, and any student who is absent

without a valid cause for any school day or portion thereof shall be considered truant and will receive disciplinary action. In addition to this, a student who is more than 20 minutes late to a class is considered truant and skipping. Parents who fail in causing their children to attend school may be found guilty of a class "C" misdemeanor, which may result in a fine of up to \$500 and/or 30 days in jail. The following definitions are recognized:

TRUANT - A child who is absent without valid cause for a school day or a portion thereof.

CHRONIC OR HABITUAL TRUANT - a child who is absent without valid cause for a school day for five percent or more of the 180 regular school attendance days. The school and district will call upon the resources of outside agencies such as the Juvenile Officer of the local Police Department or the Truancy Officer of the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education.

A special note: A certain number of tardy class periods and absences could lead to a possible delay in a student being enrolled or taking Drivers Education according to the law passed by Governor Pat Quinn.

1.4 STUDENTS WHO REFUSE TO ATTEND MAY BE

- A. Committed to the Regional Office of Education for development of an individual service plan and ordered to comply with the plan.
- B. Fined in excess of \$5, but not exceeding \$100. Each day of absence is a separate offense.
- C. Required to perform some reasonable public service work.
- D. Subject to having his/her driving license suspended.

1.5 ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

- A. When it is necessary for a student to be absent for a valid reason, the parent or guardian is expected to call the school within the first hour of the school day or before, for any scheduled medical appointments.
- B. When absences are more than three consecutive days or more than five days per quarter, the school will require parents or guardians to present medical documentation of physical or emotional conditions causing a student's absence.

Failure to provide medical documentation will result in absences being unexcused.

C. The automated calling system incorporated in the school will call to inform parents if their child has been absent one or more hours or tardy to class.

1.6 EXCUSED ABSENCES

This district, in keeping with Section 26-2a of the Illinois School Code, considers the following circumstances to be valid causes for a student's absence:

- A. illness
- B. observance of a religious holiday
- C. death in the immediate family
- D. family emergency
- E. circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent or guardian for the safety or health of the student
- F. other situations approved by the school principal
- G. Seniors only will be allowed one day per semester for personal business to be treated as an excused absence. Personal business days may be used for college visits, job interviews and military test appointments. Prearrangement with the attendance office is required and is to be made at least 24 hours in advance of the date of absence.

1.7 ABSENCES WILL NOT BE EXCUSED FOR:

- A. Absences will not be excused for: truancy, suspension, missing the bus, trips or vacations while school is in session, shopping, hunting, fishing, birthday, etc.
- B. The parent or guardian is expected to call the appropriate school on each day of absence within the first hour of the school day. In cases of extended absences, when supported by a doctor's written excuse and the parent's written notification of when the child will return, repeat calls will not be necessary.

The student's parent/guardian should contact the student's teacher so that arrangements can be made for make-up work.

1.8 CONSEQUENCES FOR INCONSISTENT ATTENDANCE

- A. Consequences for unexcused absences within a quarter: (The attendance secretary will keep records of excused and unexcused absences and a consequence will be given to repeated violators).
- B. No student is to be absent from class without authorization from the teacher and/or the office. Violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.
- C. After a third, sixth and tenth full-day of unexcused absences, within a quarter, a note will be sent home by the attendance secretary to inform the parent.

1.9 ADDITIONAL ATTENDANCE NOTES

Teachers cannot help students who are not present. All students are required to attend all classes except in cases of illness or emergencies.

Appendix B

1. What is your classification?

- Certified Teacher
- Administrator
- Non-Certified
- Certified

2. Are you aware of the school district's policy regarding student attendance?

- Yes
- No

3. Does the attendance policy clearly define what absences will be excused and what absences will be unexcused?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

4. Were you given a copy of the district's truancy policy?

- Yes
- No

5. Were you given a copy of the Regional Office of Education's - ROE truancy policy?

- Yes

- No

6. Is there a procedure for addressing chronic truancy?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

7. Are you involved with your student's truancy procedures?

- Yes
- No

8. In your opinion, what top five factors contribute to truancy?

- Low socio-economic status
- Parental abuse of alcohol/drugs
- Parent-Child relationships
- Student-Teacher relationships
- Curriculum
- Single parent family
- Child abuse/neglect
- Student-Peer relationships
- Attendance policy
- Teacher attendance

- Domestic violence
- Bullying
- Social media
- Gangs
- Teaching style
- Parenting style
- Learning difficulties
- Appointments
- School environment
- School Culture
- Other

9. Are there prevention/wrap-around services to help address attendance?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

10. Were you given a copy of the district's prevention/wrap-around services being offered?

- Yes
- No

11. Do you believe your truancy intervention program is effective?

- Yes
- No

12. Do truant students keep up with their assignments when absent?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you believe ROE truancy intervention program is effective?

- Yes
- No

14. What changes do you believe need to be made to the truancy intervention program?

- Click to write answer

Appendix C

IRB-21-2 - Initial: Exempt - Approved

irb@lindenwood.edu

Mon 10/5/2020 2:18 PM

Oct 5, 2020 3:18 PM CDT

RE:

IRB-21-2: Initial - Mixed-Method Investigation of Truancy Intervention Program in a Midwest Public Urban School District

Dear Stephanie Scurlark-Belt,

The study, Mixed-Method Investigation of Truancy Intervention Program in a Midwest Public Urban School District , has been Approved as Exempt.

Category: Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

Appendix D

Interview Questions

Principals/Teachers/Truancy Officers/Truant Alternative Education Program Staff

1. Do you work with youth who are experiencing chronic truancy? If so, how often?
2. If a student is chronically truant, what are the first steps you take to address the issue?
 - a. If the issue continues, what are the next steps?
3. What have you found to be successful when working with youth experiencing truancy?
 - a. What have you found to be unsuccessful?
4. How does the high school monitor a student's attendance?
5. What factors have you observed that contribute to school truancy?
6. Tell me about a successful intervention that you have done or seen done for a student that was chronically truant?
7. Do the youth you work with have any legal issues? Parental legal issues? If so, what type of what type of legal issues?
8. At what level are the parents involved in the student's education?
9. What themes do you notice among parents with low involvement?
10. What value do parents place on education?
 - A. What is the family's attitude towards school and getting a high school diploma?
 - B. What are the families' views towards school attendance?
11. Does the school provide interventions that include the family system or encourage family involvement? If so, tell me about it.
12. How do you get involved with a student experiencing truancy?

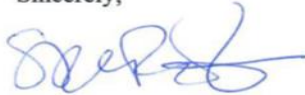
Appendix E

October 2, 2019

Dear Superintendent Harvey,

My name is Stephanie Scurlark-Belt, and I work as the Human Resources Director for the Cahokia Unit School District #187. For the last several years, I have been completing doctoral studies at Lindenwood University and am nearing the research phase of my dissertation program. The university requires that I obtain permission before conducting research. I am writing to request permission to conduct research in the school district for grades 9-12. No students will be included in the research. However, I would like to use student's attendance and credit records. The truancy officers, teachers, TAOEP staff and building principals' participation will remain anonymous, as well as the student data. Attached is a copy of my research prospectus which outlines the study. My hope in completing this project is that it will provide direction on correcting and implementing new student center services for our truancy intervention process. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

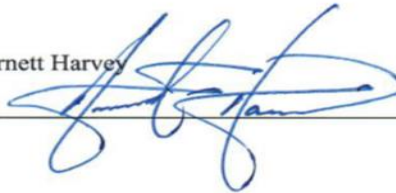


Stephanie Scurlark-Belt,
 Human Resources Director for Cahokia Unit School District #187
 618-332-4778 belts@cusd187.org

I, ARNETT HARVEY, give Stephanie Scurlark-Belt permission to conduct educational research in the district.

Superintendent's name Mr. Arnett Harvey

Superintendent's signature: _____



Date: 4-1-2020

Appendix F



Completion Date 23-Mar-2020
Expiration Date 23-Mar-2023
Record ID 36023397

This is to certify that:

Stephanie Scurlark-Belt

Has completed the following Citi Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Lindenwood University



Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wcb16f3ba-8044-412d-b965-384fda475de8-36023397