11-16-2021

The Impact of Advisory Programs on Student Achievement, Attendance, and Behavior

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by

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November 16, 2021

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

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This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment

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Dr. Brad Hanson, Dissertation Chair	11/16/2021 Date
Dr. Sherry DeVore, Committee Member	11/16/2021 Date
Dr. Dennis Cooper, Committee Member	11/16/2021 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 at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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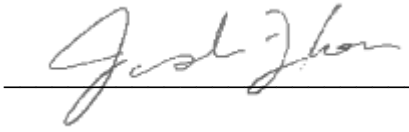
Signature:  Date: 11/16/2021

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee chairperson, Dr. Brad Hanson, for his commitment to assisting me throughout the dissertation process. Dr. Hanson showed patience, empathy, reassurance, and support during the past few years, and I cannot thank him enough for his willingness to stay with me on the journey. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Sherry DeVore and Dr. Dennis Cooper. Dr. DeVore provided feedback, suggestions, and encouragement which in many instances accelerated my progress and gave me the desire to continue. Dr. Cooper also provided feedback and ideas necessary to continue my progress. Dr. Kathy Grover offered advice and the instruction necessary to understand statistics and appropriately apply them to my study. In addition, I would like to thank my administrators, Dr. Anthony Rossetti, Dr. Kevin Cooper, and Dr. Brenten Byrd. Each of these individuals encouraged, guided, and pushed me to reach the finish line. Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Stacy Flora, for her encouragement and sacrifice. A spouse's commitment to the dissertation process is just as important as the one writing, and I could not have finished without her love and support.

Abstract

The impact of advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior was explored in this study. The study was conducted to contribute to existing research and to gain insight as to whether or not advisory programs promote positive academic outcomes in schools. Four schools with advisory programs and four schools with academic homerooms participated in the study. Each school provided student achievement, attendance, and behavior data from the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. In addition, advisory teachers responded to a survey regarding outcomes of advisory and their perceptions of advisory programs. The data were analyzed using an independent sample *t*-test to compare the means of each group to determine the level of significance. In analyzing the data, it was determined there is no statistical significance between advisory programs and academic homerooms in terms of their impact on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Advisory teachers indicated the need for advisory, as it provides an intentional opportunity to build relationships within the school day. The majority of advisory teacher participants reported the ability to build relationships with students within an advisory program can have a positive effect on student achievement, can decrease student behaviors, and can have an overall positive impact on the school environment. The data collected and conclusions drawn from this study will assist educators to research, plan, and implement school programming and processes to obtain optimal student outcomes.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Educators across the country strive to find innovative ways to differentiate instruction and to increase engagement for students (Foster, 2017). Despite these continued efforts, declining student engagement and lack of interest in school remain a concern, particularly at the high school level (Mooney, 2017). Adolescent students are faced with an array of home and social issues, distracting them from their ability to learn, while teachers and administrators try to create a connection between student values and school requirements (Edgar, 2014). Those passionate about student relationships indicate personal mentorship is the key to increased interest, connectedness, and achievement (Roorda et al., 2017; Templeton, 2017). Van Ornum (2014) suggested teachers have the most contact with students during the school years and can be the most influential.

At the high school level, schools often offer structured time during the school day when special activities and curricula are implemented to help students gain the skills necessary to be successful and on-target for their grade level (McCluskey, 2017). Although this structured time may vary from school to school, the time is often classified as homerooms or advisories, each serving a different purpose (Cook-Deegan, 2017). Homerooms typically focus on academic homework time and housekeeping-related issues, while advisories focus on academics with an intentional focus on building relationships and advising students (Templeton, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014). There is a current lack of research, past and present, indicating whether homerooms or advisories have a greater impact on positive student outcomes in terms of achievement, attendance, and behavior (Washor & Mokowski, 2014).

Background of the Study

Educators have long recognized the benefit of strong connections between teachers and their students (Allensworth et al., 2017). Although some believe it can be traced back hundreds of years, personalization of learning is thought of as a recent educational movement, especially in advisories (Jones et al., 2012). Briggs (1920) mentioned the movement to incorporate homerooms into schools began in the 1920s as a teacher-advisor initiative and was championed by junior high principal S. E. Roem. Roem indicated teachers in homeroom systems are expected to be advisors and guides to students, and any type of activity is permitted during homeroom (as cited in Briggs, 1920).

The core essentials of advisory programs developed in the 1920s have changed drastically over the years, not only in function but also in identity (Mare & Reeves, 2017). Functions of this structured time during the school day now include the following: advisory, advisory-advisee program, home base, home group, homeroom, teacher-advisor program, teacher-based guidance, and teacher-counselor programs (Galassi et al., 1997). Regardless of the name, this structured time during the school day serves various student and school needs; the organization's mission, vision, and philosophy tend to impact the program and employees within an organization (Agwu et al., 2016).

A consistent issue of structured time, often called homeroom or advisory, is the inability to sustain the program (Van Ornum, 2014). Teacher support, staff turnover, poor planning, lack of reflective data analysis, and many other factors led to the discontinuation of these programs (Van Ornum, 2014). There is little published research about the effects of these programs, specifically advisory programs at the high school

level (Brodie, 2014). This study was designed to provide information pertaining to the analysis and development of an advisory program (Brodie, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Attachment theory and stage-environment fit theory provided the theoretical framework for this study (Eccles & Midgley, 1990; Mare & Reeves, 2017). Attachment theory, first developed by Bowlby in the 1960s, provides a framework for understanding the impact of social and emotional relationships on a child who constructs his or her views of self, the world, and others (Mare & Reeves, 2017). Attachment theory is considered one of the most-influential theories in developmental and social psychology (Buckley et al., 2014). Schochet et al. (2013) suggested a student's primary attachment relationship can directly influence academic and extracurricular activities, school connectedness, and satisfaction with teachers.

Aligned with attachment theory, positive student-teacher relationships enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments, while they are provided with scaffolding for important academic and social skills (Biag, 2016; Roybal et al., 2014). These developed relationships can extend beyond the family to those who provide emotional support and protection using the same attachment model (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). The quality of the teacher-child relationship is linked to the quality of the parent-child relationship, and issues are often observed in students who have not had a positive experience with their caregivers (Mare & Reeves, 2017).

Students with insecure attachments have a higher risk for internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). Positive relationships between teachers and students are connected to increased motivation, improved academic

achievement, better attendance, and an overall more positive mentality toward school (Biag, 2016). Teachers have the opportunity to support students' academic and social development by building positive relationships (Mare & Reeves, 2017). For many students, the teacher serves as a supportive adult, which provides teachers with a unique opportunity to make a long-lasting impact (Alley et al., 2015). The transition from middle school to high school can prove to be difficult for many students; therefore, schools offer programming to help with the transition (Roybal et al., 2014).

At the start of high school, preparedness, social adaptability, and emotional stability can vary among students (Donovan, 2014). As the educational journey through high school continues, the focus quickly becomes centered on credits, graduation, and post-secondary goals (Anderson et al., 2017). The foundational relationships and adult interactions children and adolescents have as they get older can positively or negatively affect their ability to succeed (Eggalite, 2016). Foundational relationships in an educational setting are typically mentoring-type relationships characterized by mutuality with both the mentor and mentee deriving value from the relationship (Buckley et al., 2014).

In stage-environment fit theory, Eccles and Roeser (2011) indicated teachers and students can foster a learning environment responsive to adolescent's developmental needs. Often, a student's motivation is influenced by the needs, supports, and challenges the school environment can or cannot provide (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). During the adolescent years, it is important to establish the appropriate learning environment, with the correct supports, to positively impact student self-perception and educational environment (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). At the heart of stage-environment fit theory exists

the notion students perform better when classrooms are suited to their needs; if the needs are not met, the opportunity to learn is diminished (Eisenbach & Greathouse, 2020).

The environment in which students are raised often molds and shapes the people they become, and those raised in difficult settings have challenges and trials to overcome that other students do not have to face (Donovan, 2014; Edgar, 2014). The environments from which students come can impact their responses and interactions with others, including interactions taking place in the educational setting (Hadd & Rodgers, 2017). As stage-environment fit theory meshes with the student's environmental upbringing, the student's individual needs must be taken into consideration (Eisenbach & Greathouse, 2020). School culture, personal interactions, and programming throughout the school day are an essential component to overcoming the daily challenges students face (Edgar, 2014; Templeton, 2017)

Together, attachment theory and stage-environment fit theory suggest motivation, engagement, a sense of belonging, and other positive virtues may be enhanced when the basic and developmental needs of students are met and they are genuinely cared for by others (Alley et al., 2015; Mare & Reeves, 2017). The teacher-student relationship may be the single-most important factor for positive adaptation to school, and teachers may be the only influence fostering positive representations of their students and others (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004).

High school advisory programs engage teachers in providing supportive teaching and mentoring while fostering positive student relationships (Alley et al., 2015; Templeton, 2017). These programs are a means to improve student-school connections, student engagement, and academic outcomes (Mooney, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014).

Building rapport and developing connections with students are an important component of education, often missed by schools (Gayl, 2018). Roybal et al. (2014) suggested if students do not feel connected to their school, academic outcomes may suffer. Positive student-teacher relationships are a main component of advisory programs and can maximize personal interactions, school engagement, and achievement while mitigating negative outcomes (Eisenbach & Greathouse, 2020; Mooney, 2017).

This study's research questions were derived as a result of the desire to compare advisory programs and academic homerooms to examine outcomes pertaining to student attendance, behavior, and discipline. Stage-environment fit theory and attachment theory collectively suggest increases in motivation and engagement when positive relationships are present between student and teacher, and when student needs are met (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Mare & Reeves, 2017). Advisory programs intentionally emphasize positive relationships and the meeting of student needs, while academic homerooms may not provide purposeful focus on the foundational components of stage-environment fit theory and attachment theory (Eccles & Midgley, 1990; McLeod, 2017; Mooney, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014)

Statement of the Problem

Adolescents face challenges affecting their lives, including adverse life experiences, substance abuse, suicide, academic standards, media and technology, violence, bullying, physical and sexual abuse, hunger, emotional abandonment by parents, and community and family disruptions (Edgar, 2014). Childhood experiences, family upbringing, and previous educational memories present challenges for both students and educators, often difficult to overcome (Eggalite, 2016). As a result, students

with negative experiences in their home or educational upbringing can struggle with preparedness, emotional stability, and social adaptability, which all lead to a disconnectedness in school (Donovan, 2014). Researchers and educators across the country have acknowledged a growing awareness that adolescents are increasingly in need of organizational and emotional support (Pearsall, 2017). Students who have experienced trauma are impacted emotionally and need a supportive environment or an adult to assist in reducing negative outcomes; this support role frequently falls to teachers (Alley et al., 2015; Edgar, 2014).

Social and emotional education has often been referred to as the missing component of America's educational system, while research continues to show relationships and social-emotional learning are associated with long-term academic and career success (Gayl, 2018). Although many schools across the country still do not prioritize social-emotional education, there is a growing consensus among states, school districts, educators, and stakeholders to focus more on relationships and social-emotional learning (Gayl, 2018). If intentional time is not built into the school day, or teachers are not adequately trained in how to build safe and positive relationships with students, the engagement and connectedness barriers schools currently face may be difficult to overcome (Pearsall, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014).

Some schools have recognized the role of supportive relationships and engagement, and as a result, have implemented advisory programs embedded during the school day (Mooney, 2017). Advisories are often based on an emphasis on mentoring students, but current literature is lacking to understand mentoring relationships as a source for addressing behaviors and their outcomes (Buckley et al., 2014; Mooney,

2017). Recognizing the role of student engagement in individual student success, some schools have decided to implement advisory programs to strengthen the teacher-student relationship in hopes of affecting positive student outcomes (Mooney, 2017).

School climate and school connectedness have been recognized as vital components of student achievement (Roybal et al., 2014). If students do not feel connected to their school, academic performance may suffer (Angus & Hughes, 2017; Roybal et al., 2014). Through advisory, teachers are able to develop supportive teacher-student relationships and provide academic and non-academic advisement, which can enhance student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement (Templeton, 2017). Advisory programs also allow schools to personalize education and to create bridges between staff and students, leading to positive academic outcomes (Van Ornum, 2014).

The ability to influence students does not come easily and is a topic schools across the country are constantly researching (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Adapting to change and promoting positive teacher-student interactions, along with school programming to reduce negative behaviors, increase attendance, and positively impact student achievement, are at the core of school programming philosophy (Stripling, 2019). Many researchers and educators believe social-emotional education, combined with positive student-teacher relationships, is the key to student hearts and positive results (Biag, 2016; Mooney, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

It is becoming increasingly vital for schools to listen closely to student feedback to help students connect to their learning environment (Washor & Mokowski, 2014). Researchers have indicated many students perform poorly as a result of not being

connected to the school they are attending, and it is rare for staff to listen to student feedback or suggestions (Mooney, 2017). All across the country, schools offer traditional homerooms or incorporate traditional advisory programs during the school day (Templeton, 2017). Due to the lack of research on the outcomes of advisory programs and on the comparison of advisory programs to homerooms, there is an immediate need to determine the effectiveness of advisory programs (Brodie, 2014; Washor & Mokowski, 2014).

As adolescents grow older, their needs and interests can drastically change, and the curriculum must be adjusted to maintain relevancy and effectiveness (Salyers & McKee, 2016). Different educational environments could be needed for various age levels to meet the developmental needs of students; therefore, some educational programs may be inappropriate at certain stages of development (Hernandez et al., 2017). There is a definite relationship between the amount of curriculum covered and student outcomes, and usually when a program is implemented, improved student outcomes are the result (Pettigrew et al., 2015).

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Specific teacher perceptions pertaining to advisory programs were analyzed, along with considerations administrators and teachers should reflect on when offering or considering advisory. Schools implementing an advisory program were compared with schools providing a more traditional academic homeroom. Student achievement, attendance, and behavior data from both study groups were analyzed to determine if there is any difference between advisory programs and academic homerooms in the areas of achievement, attendance,

and behavior. In addition, the impact of advisory on achievement, attendance, and behavior was also specifically evaluated by comparing the freshmen and sophomore years. The transitions students experience from middle school to high school and during the early grades of high school, can be difficult and challenging (Roybal et al., 2014; Van Ornum, 2014). This study was designed to determine the effectiveness of support through advisory during the first few years of high school, as compared with academic homerooms.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What do high school advisory teachers state as outcomes of high school advisory programs?

2. What is the difference in student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms?

$H2_0$: There is no difference in student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms.

3. What is the difference in the growth between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those attending traditional academic homerooms?

$H3_0$: There is no difference in the growth between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those who attend traditional academic homerooms.

Significance of the Study

There is little quantitative research demonstrating a positive relationship between high school advisory programs and enhanced academic achievement (Brodie, 2014; Templeton, 2017). Although most schools across the country offer either advisories or academic homerooms, there is little clarity as to the effectiveness of each (Templeton, 2017). While homeroom and advisory have some similarities, advisory programs place a strategic emphasis on the building of positive relationships (Templeton, 2017). At the center of advisory programs are forged connections among teachers, students, and the school community, creating conditions that facilitate academic success and personal growth (Adams, 2016).

The goal of this study was to contribute to the existing research to gain better insight as to whether or not advisory programs promote improved academic outcomes in the schools where they are offered. Gaps currently exist in the research, and this study could result in information to fill those gaps, while providing teachers and administrators with data to help make programming decisions.

The research correlating advisory programs to increased student attendance is somewhat limited; however, Galassi et al. (1997) suggested students lacking an attachment to school personnel tend to have poorer attendance when compared to those who perceive they are part of a supportive, caring school environment. Eggalite (2016) recommended the mobilization of schools in an attempt to enrich the school-family partnership, which is often disconnected, due to school interactions or lack of resources. Advisories place the teacher in a mentor role, and the mentor teacher identifies and facilitates the provision of resources to the student (Van Ornum, 2014). Schools alone

cannot level the inequalities students bring to school, but a combination of resources facilitated by teachers as advisors provide students with a better chance at success (Eggalite, 2016). Attendance data from advisory schools were examined to intentionally focus on school connectedness, mentoring, and relationships, and were compared with attendance data from schools with academic homerooms.

Although multiple researchers have indicated a strong connection between positive student-teacher relationships and student success, few have outlined the connection between advisory and student behavior or discipline (Brodie, 2014; Mooney, 2017). Behavior data from both advisory and academic homeroom schools were analyzed in an effort to determine if there are any significant differences between the two groups. Survey feedback from advisory teachers could also prove to be useful for educators evaluating or considering advisory programs.

When viewing advisory programs from a common-sense perspective, it appears the programs will work and have a positive impact on student outcomes (Brodie, 2014). Making such judgments without a review of data is not recommended and can lead to incorrect decisions (Schildkamp, 2018). School districts must recognize their school climate needs and what time and resources they are willing to commit to create an effective student advisory program (Cook-Deegan, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014). Data collected within this study relating to advisory programs will assist educators in making decisions pertaining to advisory and homeroom programs in the future.

Definition of Key Terms

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

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement represents performance outcomes indicating the extent to which a student has accomplished specific goals related to instruction (Steinmayr et al., 2014).

Academic Homeroom

Academic homeroom is an extension of school administration under the supervision of a teacher who administers routines and activities not associated with subject matter, other than providing an opportunity to work on homework (Templeton, 2017).

Advisory

Advisory teachers provide academic and non-academic advisement during the school day, provide social/emotional support and instruction, and develop a positive relationship with each student (Mooney, 2017).

Personalized Learning

Personalized learning enables learners to influence how, what, when, and where they learn while also promoting the creation of a small school environment and tailoring the learning for each learner's interests, strengths, and needs (Basham et al., 2016).

Student Engagement

Student engagement is the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion students show when they are learning or being taught (Great Schools Partnership, 2016).

Limitations and Assumptions

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Limitations and assumptions were considered within this study as a result of the chosen study sample.

The following limitations were identified:

Location

The eight high schools participating in this study were all located in Missouri.

Sample

The participants in this study were from public school districts in Missouri and were teachers of high school students.

Time Frame

The data collected were limited to a four-year period: 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019. The survey was distributed in the Spring 2021 semester**.**

Instrument

The survey items were restricted to items included in the survey sent to advisory teachers. This study was limited to those teachers willing to participate by completing the survey instrument. There is no guarantee the responses provided by those responding were representative of the entire population.

The following assumptions were considered:

Responses of Participants

All respondents answered honestly as they shared their perceptions.

Instrument

The survey instrument utilized in this study demonstrates, as required, statistical significance and reliability.

Sample Population

The sample population chosen for this study was representative of the overall population of high school students.

Summary

The impact of school programming on student educational outcomes is often prioritized among educators and educational institutions (Cochran-Smith, 2005). The optimal programming and educational approach needed to increase positive student outcomes varies greatly from school to school and often educator to educator (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Although opinions differ, educators agree positive student-teacher relationships impact school culture and student outcomes in a positive way (Roybal et al., 2014). Schools differ in how structured time built into the school day should be facilitated, and also differ in the degree to which relationships and teacher-student mentoring should be facilitated during this structured time (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Roybal et al., 2014).

An in-depth literature review of advisories, academic homerooms, and factors affecting student achievement, attendance, and behaviors is presented in Chapter Two. The approaches of academic homerooms and advisories are outlined in great detail, as are the factors impacting student outcomes in advisories and academic homerooms. In addition, components important to advisories and academic homerooms are also discussed.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

This study was focused on the outcomes of advisory and academic homerooms. Factors that influence educational outcomes, including mental health, student-teacher relationships, social-emotional learning, and personalized learning, are included in this review of literature. Advisory and academic homerooms differ in how these factors should be included and implemented (Mooney, 2017). Research on attachment theory and stage environment-fit theory framed the philosophical importance of relationships between adults and adolescents and of ensuring learning environments meet the needs of students, both foundational pillars of advisory programs (Ainsworth, 1973; Mooney, 2017). Additional research on the impact of advisory and homeroom on student achievement, attendance, and behavior were also explored.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory references the emotional bond across time and space between two individuals (Ainsworth, 1973). In 1969, Bowlby first published his beliefs on attachment theory and the relationships that develop between children and their parents. The attachment relationship is defined as between two individuals, not necessarily reciprocal, and often referenced as the relationship between a mother and her child (McLeod, 2017). Bowlby's work in the Child Guidance Clinic in London led to further investigation of child-mother separation and maladjustment (McLeod, 2017).

Attachment relationships are characterized by showing preference in normal settings, or retreating when the feeling of threat exists (Straus, 2017). Attachment theory and relationship development between children and adults lead to connections and implications beyond the home (McLean, 2016). Bowlby's (1968) work focused on the

relationships within the home, specifically between the mother and child, but McLean (2016) examined child and adult relationships in out-of-home care settings. The importance of attachment relationships within the educational setting is a powerful component of the connection and education of students (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Attachment theory or attachment relationships have two functions applicable to classroom settings (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Attachment provides feelings of security, allowing students to take risks and feel comfortable in the learning environment (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). The more securely attached students are, the more separate and free they can be (Straus, 2017). During one's entire life, including the adolescent years, having someone present and supportive provides a sense of security and safety (Straus, 2017). Security in relationships, specifically the comfort associated with a safe learning environment, can lead to more impactful learning (Biag, 2016; Mooney, 2017). It is normal for adolescents to explore and engage in a variety of close relationships (Baumeister & Finkel, 2019). A strong network of reliable individuals is healthy for teens as they work their way to becoming adults (Straus, 2017).

Research widely supports the impact of upbringing on ideology, thought processes, and social outcomes (Johnsen et al., 2018). Although Bowlby indicated the prolonged impact of mother-child attachment, a growing body of evidence contradicts his work and suggests new relationships and life events can change attachment patterns over time (as cited in Straus, 2017). It was first suggested a child's attachment and experiences can forever shape social interactions and the ability to form meaningful relationships (Straus, 2017). Although influence through upbringing can be a real challenge for adolescents, recent researchers have indicated an ability for individuals to overcome

difficult situations (Biag, 2016; Johnsen et al., 2018; Mooney, 2017). Positive interactions and healthy relationships with friends or adults who care lead to adolescents overcoming childhood trauma and the renewal of positive attachments (Collinson et al., 2018; Mare & Reeves, 2017).

Stage-Environment Fit Theory

Stage-environment fit theory was first proposed by Eccles and Midgley (1990) and brought to light the potential lack of fit among adolescent developmental stages, their needs, and their environment (Jindal-Snape, 2016). A substantial number of researchers have expressed the importance of student comfortability and security in learning environments, as well as the importance of aligning student needs with the educational process (Mason et al., 2017; Mare & Reeves, 2017; Wagner, 2019). Much of Eccles and Midgley's (1990) emphasis was placed on adolescent stages of development and environment fit; however, students must also have their needs met while in the school setting. Student needs and optimal environments can be described various ways, but feeling safe while in school, cared for by school personnel, and trusting the school's educational process are all important for student-school connectedness, student stage-environment fit, and students' overall success (Hosan & Hoglund, 2017; Jindal-Snape, 2016; Wagner, 2019).

Eccles and Midgley (1990) provided a perspective indicating individuals display negative behavioral motivations when in environments not aligned with their physical and emotional needs. These physical and emotional needs can vary greatly between various grade levels, and considerations must be taken to match student needs with learning environments (Eccles & Midgley, 1990; Salyers & McKee, 2016). Jindal-Snape

(2016) outlined the importance of meeting the specific needs of adolescents and specified the autonomous nature of adolescents often requires some independence in classroom settings. Adults who go against the need for independence can cause strained social environments and negative relationships between the teacher and student (Jindal-Snape, 2016). In Jindal-Snape's (2016) application of stage-environment fit theory to an educational setting, students who perceive the instructor to exhibit characteristics of greater control, less compassion, and unfriendliness change their attitudes toward school (Jindal-Snape, 2016). Stage-environment fit theory has direct educational applications; student needs and learning environments must be aligned (Eisenbach & Greathouse, 2020).

Schools often make strategic efforts to align the needs of students with the learning environment, but the effort is not always successful for all students (Jindal-Snape, 2016; Ramberg et al., 2019). Given the variance in learning needs of students and differing levels of emotional and social maturity exhibited, schools often have to differentiate supports (Bullard & Dede, 2017). Overall student success varies based upon staff and student receptiveness to emotional and social supports (Biag, 2016; Jindal-Snape, 2016; McLean, 2016; Ramberg et al., 2019). Students who experience negative environmental conditions tend to show the greatest mismatch and often exhibit decreased intrinsic motivation and increased school misconduct (Eccles et al., 1993). The fit between the educational environment and the needs of students is important; when these two components align, positive student outcomes are likely (Eccles et al., 1993; Jindal-Snape, 2016).

A mismatch between student needs and the classroom environment can influence learning, classroom climate, and the relationships built between students and staff (Eisenbach & Greathouse, 2020). In situations when a learning environment does not align with the needs of the learner, a decrease in student motivation and an increase in classroom management challenges may occur (Eccles & Roeser, 1991). When positive stage-environment fit occurs within the classroom setting, the self-esteem of students improves, academic self-efficacy increases, and positive academic outcomes result (Phillips, 2017). It is important for educators and educational institutions to stay focused on individual student needs and make attempts to address environment-need mismatches as they arise (Eccles & Midgley, 1990; McCluskey, 2017).

Student-Teacher Relationships

Many adolescents are faced with challenges that affect their lives and academic performance including exams, drug abuse, depression, peer and parental pressure, social media, bullying, hunger, family issues, and abuse (Edgar, 2014). Relationships between teachers and students have been researched for several years, and many studies have confirmed relationships are a predictor of student academic outcomes and social adjustment (Ramberg et al., 2019). In an era of high demand for student performance, as well as documented but largely unmet needs for social-emotional support services in schools, pressure for teachers to provide social and emotional support is increasingly common (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). The demand for social and emotional support in schools is high, persistent, and essential to student success for students (Mare & Reeves, 2017). According to Ramberg et al. (2019), “Numerous studies have also

indicated that a caring teacher can positively impact learning outcomes, motivation, and social and moral development" (p. 56).

Mooney (2017) proposed the lack of engagement in high school students is a signal school districts need to place more emphasis on building positive relationships between students and teachers. Although there is increasing need for relational support for students in schools due to rising mental health issues and difficulties at home, the ability to provide this type of support may not come easy for all educators (Biag, 2016; McLean, 2016). Relational support for students can be uncomfortable, and some educators do not enjoy providing this support due to increased stress which can lead to burnout (Wilkins, 2014). Although positive relationships are needed, some teachers feel as if they are not trained to provide this type of support to students and are uncomfortable doing so (Mason et al., 2017). Teachers with well-developed social-emotional support schemas seem to deal appropriately with the discomforts and strains accompanying their work mentoring students, and student outcomes are more positive after intervention (Mare & Reeves, 2017). There are times when it can be easier to provide relational or emotional support in smaller schools, due to lower staff-to-student ratios (Biag, 2016; Wilkins, 2014). Educators are increasingly placing an emphasis on the prioritization of positive relationships between teachers and students and maximizing these interactions in the school setting (Mare & Reeves, 2017).

Supportive teacher-student relationships are a critical component of providing students with a sense of belonging, which can lead to positive behavioral and academic outcomes (Mason et al., 2017). The ability for students to feel safe in the educational setting and to be cared for by staff within the building is a foundational component of

almost all successful schools (Ramberg et al., 2019). Biag (2016) and Mooney (2017) suggested students with caring and supportive interpersonal school relationships exhibit more positive academic attitudes and values, are more satisfied with school, and demonstrate increased engagement. Students who feel like they belong and know they are cared for tend to be more successful in school and have a higher probability of graduating from high school (Biag, 2016; Gayl, 2018; Mare & Reeves, 2017). At the center of all program development and school planning, educators must remember students often feel more connected to the school, are more engaged, more intrinsically motivated, and achieve academically at higher levels when they believe their teachers understand and care about them (Marshik et al., 2016).

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning is the process children and adults use to acquire and apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy to others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make positive decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.). Social and emotional learning has been called America's biggest missing component of the educational system, although research suggests social-emotional learning approaches are associated with long-term academic and career success (Gayl, 2018). The soft skills and job skills encompassed in social-emotional learning are vital to the success of students, not only in the academic setting, but also in the workplace (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). The ability of individuals to regulate their emotions, appropriately deal with adversity, resolve conflict, communicate effectively, and problem solve are

necessary skills in almost any social setting and are vital for success in most workplaces (Jones & Doolittle, 2017).

Mental health issues and lack of social preparedness are steadily increasing in adolescents, and the burden to provide supports and social-emotional education often falls to schools (Foster, 2017). Schools across the country incorporate social and emotional learning into classroom instruction, as social and emotional learning also contribute to the mastery of academic content (Foster, 2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act recommended school districts provide professional development and other supports to train teachers and school leaders on incorporating social and emotional learning into academic instruction (Grant et al., 2017). Some educators feel better equipped to provide social-emotional training and support to students than others (Mason et al., 2017; Wilkins, 2014). Targeted professional development for staff and adequate support from administration can ease this discomfort, result in better supports for students, and help staff feel better equipped when providing supports and interventions (Mare & Reeves, 2017; Porter, 2020). Gayl (2018) suggested educators, once trained, model behaviors and provide learning opportunities for students to enhance skills such as building positive relationships and providing emotional support.

Teacher-student relationships and social-emotional support are major contributors to student interest and engagement in school; however, many other factors have an impact on student engagement (Hosan & Hoglund, 2017). Anti-school culture, or oppositional culture, is deeply rooted in the social environments and peer systems found at school (Ivaniushina & Alexandrov, 2017). School programming, including advisories, place an emphasis on social interactions, inclusion, and intentional efforts to help

students become connected to other students, student groups, and the school. Hosan and Hoglund (2017) indicated students with quality friendships lacking conflict and sources of stress tend to participate more in classroom activities, are more engaged, and view school as a safe place to learn. Through social-emotional learning and opportunities for students to connect with others, students are better able to build soft skills such communicating effectively (Hosan & Hoglund, 2017). Although students may form their own opinions of school through experience and peer influence, the ideas of school engagement and buy-in are greatly influenced through social-emotional learning, the quality of student relationships with teachers, and student-friend relationships at school (Hosan & Hoglund, 2017).

Mental Health

Mental health problems, including anxiety, behavioral or conduct issues, depression, substance abuse, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are common among school-aged students (Hustus & Owens, 2018; Osagiede et al., 2018). Mental illness is on the rise across the United States for school-age children, and the need for mental health services is increasing (Osagiede et al., 2018). Mental illness continues to be more prevalent and visible in school settings, and school districts are researching avenues to combat this crisis (Hustus & Owens, 2018). Districts are putting various resources and interventions into place, as they can afford to do so (Hustus & Owens, 2018).

A large amount of evidence specifies the growing prevalence of mental health conditions among children; however, most are left untreated (Elvidge et al., 2018). Swick and Powers (2018) proposed 25% of school-age youth battle mental and

behavioral challenges, which can directly affect learning outcomes (p. 130). Osagiede et al. (2018) indicated although many students face mental health challenges, the real crisis is the fact only 36% of school-age children with mental health illnesses receive mental health services (p. 240). It is important for mental health professionals to provide mental illness support, as negative health traits often follow individuals with mental illness through all areas of life (Bridges et al., 2018). The contributors to mental health issues can include biological, psychological, and environmental factors (Bridges et al., 2018).

Schools are becoming more aware of the current mental health crisis and are taking action to assist students battling mental health issues (Hustus & Owens, 2018). Although schools are aware of the need to combat the mental health crisis, lack of knowledge, lack of resources, and inadequate staff training often make it difficult to provide the proper interventions needed to assist those with mental health problems (Thorley, 2016). The mental health factors experienced by students can distract from the learning process and make it difficult to function in life, much less school (Swick & Powers, 2018). Interventions for mental health in the school setting are becoming more prevalent and often include referrals to mental health professionals, on-site social workers and mental health counselors, added programming to improve staff-student relationships, and staff mental or trauma-informed training (Chafouleas & Overstreet, 2016; Cuellar & Mason, 2019; Hustus & Owens, 2018; Swick & Powers, 2018). Evidence indicates school-based mental health services (SBMHS) have the highest likelihood of reaching youth in need, although not all schools can provide this support (Albrecht et al., 2017). There is a large movement among schools to provide mental health services within the school setting to assist with crisis situations and to keep students from missing

instructional time (Albrecht et al., 2017; Hustus & Owens, 2018; Swick & Powers, 2018). Osagiede et al. (2018) estimated 70% to 80% of students who receive mental health services now receive them in school, and these services greatly help students and families (pp. 240–241).

According to the National Association of School Psychologists (2021), mental health professionals play a large role in the support of students with mental illness inside and outside the school setting. Schools must not only seek out external resources from mental health professionals and agencies within the community, but also provide care within the school setting to further support these students (Bridges et al., 2018; Hustus & Owens, 2018). There are many supports schools can put into place to further assist students with mental illness and minimize the occurrence of issues associated with the disease (National Association of School Psychologists, 2021). Mental health training, suicide prevention training, training of staff and counselors, and employing social workers and licensed clinical therapists can collectively provide support to reduce the impact of mental health issues on a student's education and ultimately make the student more successful in school (Swick & Powers, 2018; Thorley, 2016).

Advisory Programs

All throughout the United States, schools are experiencing reduced engagement and increased dropout rates (McCluskey, 2017). Multiple factors are contributing to the loss of engagement and lack of student progress toward graduation including boring classes, increased apathy, need to work, lack of proper schooling, and other social factors (Brown & Flores, 2019). The junior high years, early high school years, and the transition between junior high and high school can prove to be some of the most difficult times for

students (Corey, 2020). Templeton (2017) suggested the period of adolescence between ages 10 and 19 prepares teenagers for adulthood due to specific skill acquisition. If the attitudes, habits, and skills developed during this period are positive, it is likely the student will be more successful (Templeton, 2017). Parental support, caring teachers, positive friendships, a sense of connectedness, and positive school culture are often credited with contributing to a student's academic success (Mason et al., 2017).

Many high schools across the country have developed programs to address the inability to meet state and national requirements due to deficiency in parental support, increased dropout rates, and other issues encountered in daily adolescent life (Van Ornum, 2014). The transition from middle school to high school has proven to be difficult for many students, and advisory programs help students make a successful transition (Roybal et al., 2014; Van Ornum, 2014). Advisory programs are assisting educators in overcoming many of the difficult barriers schools currently face and are increasingly being incorporated into the school day (Pearsall, 2017).

Advisory programs are the vehicles used by schools to deliver social-emotional support during the school day while additionally supporting students academically and socially (McCluskey, 2017). Due to the increased need for social and emotional support in combination with current social tensions within the United States, there is a strong need for character development and social education in order for students to be successful in academics and in life (Pace, 2016). Social and emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make

responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.). Social-emotional learning is increasingly becoming a target area for educators, and advisory programs are an avenue to deliver that training and support for students (Foster, 2017; McCluskey, 2017).

With increased social conflicts and lack of communication abilities, a growing consensus among states and school districts indicates more educational time should be spent on social-emotional learning (Gayl, 2018; Mare & Reeves, 2017). Gayl (2018) specified social and emotional development of adolescents has often been called the missing piece of America's educational system. School districts across the country are integrating social and emotional learning into the district strategic plan and classroom instruction to further prepare students for social interactions and the mastery of academic content (Foster, 2017). Frequently missing are the ability to provide support for students and the confidence of educators to guide and support students in social-emotional education and training (Mason et al., 2017; Wilkins, 2014).

Teachers often report feeling inadequate or underprepared to train and mentor students in these areas, so it is vital administrators provide ample professional development to prepare teachers to deliver this type of support (Mare & Reeves, 2017). Social-emotional learning involving self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making can assist students with long-term academic and career success, which is why educators must feel comfortable preparing students in social-emotional learning and soft skill development (Gayl, 2018; Mare & Reeves, 2017).

Academic Homerooms

The structure of the day in secondary school settings can vary greatly from district to district, and opinions on the effectiveness of the daily structure can differ (Kim, 2017). Educators disagree in their philosophies and opinions on how to best provide school programming throughout the school day (Mooney, 2017). Although the structure of the school day may differ, many schools offer time during the day referred to as homeroom (Templeton, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014). The emphasis and approach used during this allocated homeroom time has extended over many years and has been met with varied acceptance (Brodie, 2014; Price, 1965). Over the years, the name for allocated time within the school day has been known as session period, report period, section period, guidance period, sponsor period, and administrative period (Knox, 1963). The overall goals and functions of academic homeroom have not changed greatly over time; homeroom is primarily academic in focus and foundational components remain in most schools where it has been implemented (Knox, 1963; Mooney, 2017).

The homeroom idea and expansion began in the 1800s and had the greatest development in American schools between 1920 and 1930 (McCorkle, 1953). The creation of homeroom came as a result of increasing enrollment and the resulting strain on central office staff to keep up with school administrative demands (Erickson, 1937; McCorkle, 1953). It was necessary to create a newer form of organization and method of distributing information, so homerooms were initiated to assist with that process (Erickson, 1937). At the time of homeroom origination, few schools used homeroom time to serve guidance purposes or to meet students' emotional needs, as the intent was strictly to disseminate information and to provide academic support (Erickson, 1937).

Academic homeroom periods in secondary school settings have been used to provide academic advisement, tutoring, and to relay school-related information to students (Mooney, 2017; Templeton, 2017). Academic homerooms are quite different from advisory programs; advisory programs intentionally offer opportunities for students to form positive relationships with classmates and their teacher, help students meet and become familiar with graduation requirements, teach soft skills, and provide opportunities for students to research and plan for college and careers (Jones et al., 2012; Mooney, 2017). Although academic homerooms provide smaller group settings and an opportunity to build relationships, relationships and mentoring are not an intentional focus, as they are in advisory programs (Erickson, 1937; Mason et al., 2017; Mooney, 2017).

As homerooms expanded, philosophies continued to differ among educators as to whether the time should be allocated for administrative or social functions (McCorkle, 1953). Over time, more schools began to see the importance of guidance functions offered during the homeroom time (Brodie, 2014; McCorkle, 1953; Templeton, 2017). Since the implementation of guidance functions in homerooms, schools are utilizing homeroom to track graduation credits and provide enrollment guidance, to build relationships, and for administrative and homework purposes (Cochran-Smith, 2005; McCorkle, 1953; Price, 1965; Templeton, 2017). There are also schools using a blend of the two approaches (Cochran-Smith, 2005; McCorkle, 1953; Price, 1965; Templeton, 2017). Academic homerooms have evolved in function over the years and do provide beneficial supports to students; however, the supports vary from those offered through advisory programs (McCorkle, 1953; Templeton, 2017). Each approach, advisory and

academic homeroom, can provide benefits to students and staff when they are implemented correctly, but the degree to which the benefits occur is often debated (Brodie, 2014; Knox, 1963; Templeton, 2017).

Student Engagement

Despite educators' recent efforts to increase engagement and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students, student engagement still remains a concern at the high school level (Mooney, 2017). Student engagement is defined as the quality of a student's connection or involvement with the activities associated with school (Roorda et al., 2017). Roorda et al. (2017) characterized engagement as inclusive of three broad components including behavior engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. The three types of engagement referenced by Roorda et al. (2017) all contribute to participation in academics and social activities, describe a student's reactions and feelings toward academics, and reflect a willingness to invest in the mastery of comprehending complex ideas. The National Association of Independent Schools (2014) indicated 82% of public-school participants in the study admitted to experiencing boredom in their classes (p. 23). Within the survey, only 35% of public-school students indicated they put forth their best effort possible (National Association of Independent Schools, 2014, p. 21).

Factors beyond the school setting not only impact a student's ability to become engaged in school, but also can be a detriment to a student's ability to connect academically and socially (Edgar, 2014). Students and families are often exposed to factors, within and beyond their control, that negate any momentum for success (Eggalite, 2016). Family background factors including parental education, family income,

parental incarceration, and family structures can all impact educational engagement and make it difficult for students to be successful (Eggalite, 2016).

Economic hardships may prevent parents from providing needed resources, including physical resources, while limiting their ability to engage in responsive parenting and consistent supervision (Iverson et al., 2018). Parents with financial hardships often work multiple jobs, or long hours, making it difficult to enforce consistent bedtimes, read to their children, and invest in activities to enrich their child's learning experiences (Eggalite, 2016). Brotman et al. (2018) indicated adolescents who lack support at home have lower rates of academic attainment, which can lead to further struggles in life. Economic disparities and impact on cognitive skills can be seen as early as nine months of age and follow students through adolescence, often affecting high school completion (Simmons & Steele, 2020). Adverse family backgrounds and life circumstances diminish student engagement and achievement in school; therefore, schools must be creative in finding avenues to reach these students (Iverson et al., 2018; Washor & Mokowski, 2014).

Parent involvement in their children's education has a direct impact on student success in school; high schools across the country are making efforts to improve communication between parents and the school (Atkin et al., 2018; Mason et al., 2017). Families who place value on education and make it a priority tend to have students with higher success rates in school (Chen, 2020). Overcoming school engagement issues is not an easy task, but building positive relationships and providing opportunities for students to become more involved in school can contribute to increased student success (Adamson et al., 2019; Brodie, 2014; Templeton, 2017).

Personalized Learning

Recently, a philosophical shift in the approach to educate and engage students has occurred, and the need to personalize education and focus on individual students through the building of positive relationships has risen to the forefront of the educational conversation (McCluskey, 2017). Now more than ever, focusing on the whole child and all student needs is extremely vital to the educational success of students (Barkauskas & Burroughs, 2017). Schools across the country are emphasizing student-centered learning environments and smaller learning communities in an effort to personalize learning experiences for each student (McCluskey, 2017). This personalization effort by schools is not only in response to research confirming the need for addressing individual student needs, but it is also an effort to connect with students on a personal level (Barkauskas & Burroughs, 2017; Brodie, 2014). The connection to students through the building of relationships and providing one-on-one individual support increases the personalization of education and leads to a higher probability of student-school connectedness (Templeton, 2017). Researchers have suggested the more connected students are to staff and the school, the more likely the students are to succeed academically (Gayl, 2018; Marshik et al., 2016).

The *National Education Technology Plan*, in guidance with the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires personalized learning to be prioritized within the universal design learning framework (UDL), not leaving much of an option for schools to opt-out of the approach (Office of Educational Technology, 2016). Both large and small schools are trying to create communities within, so students feel involved and connected to the

school and have personal connections with staff (Brodie, 2014). According to Baird et al. (2015), personalized learning encompasses the following:

> (a) system and approaches that accelerate and deepen student learning by tailoring instruction to each student's individual needs, skills, and interests; (b) a variety of rich learning experiences that collectively prepare students for success in the college and career of their choice; and (c) the teacher's role in designing and managing the learning environment, leading instruction, and providing students with expert guidance and support to help them take increasing ownership of their own learning. (pp. 2–3)

Another component of personalizing learning experiences for students is focusing on student and teacher relationships to create a sense of belonging (Bullard & Dede, 2017).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement, according to the Minnesota Department of Education (2017), is defined as the current level of understanding an individual student possesses. When viewed through a lens of accountability from the Every Student Succeeds Act, academic achievement refers to the percentage of students at a particular school whose learning currently meets or exceeds the grade-level standards (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). Academic achievement data are important, as they indicate student mastery of standards, identify areas where students might be struggling, and provide reasonable starting points for school improvement (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017).

The academic achievement of students and their understanding of academic concepts can be impacted by many factors including peer networks, access to resources,

socioeconomic status, parental support, and teacher-student relationships (Atkin et al., 2018; Berthelon et al., 2019; Bounsanga et al., 2020). Unfortunately, students do not get to make life choices to alter many of these factors (Hoskins, 2017). Educational institutions and the students attending these institutions are often dealt hands not of their choosing, and emphasis must be placed on providing avenues and opportunities to overcome obstacles (Lopez, 2019; Roybal et al., 2014). When schools and educators put supports and programming into place to overcome obstacles and trauma impacting students, this effort can largely determine the success of the school and can increase academic achievement (Berger, 2019; Gayl, 2018; Hattie, 2009). School programming, mental health and social-emotional support, and the ability to build relationships to increase school connectedness and engagement all contribute to increased achievement for students (Gayl, 2018; Hustus & Owens, 2018; Ramberg et al., 2019).

Hattie (2009) outlined effect sizes in his meta-analysis on the conditions of effective teaching and learning. Hattie (2009) and Bryen et al. (2018) described effective instructional practices, particularly those strategies and approaches with the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. Atkin et al. (2018) outlined factors that can hinder student performance, and Hattie (2009) highlighted factors to assist educators in overcoming the hindrances that affect student learning (Hattie, 2009). Atkin et al. (2018) and Hattie (2009) suggested teacher-student relationships, teacher influence, classroom environmental conditions, and student feedback have the greatest impact on positive student outcomes. Although some argue schools and educators should not have to deal with non-academic external factors that affect achievement, most agree the factors must

be considered and addressed to help students develop job and life skills to be successful after high school (Hattie, 2009; Jones & Doolittle, 2017; Mason et al., 2017).

Attendance

The role of attendance and absenteeism in student and school success is widely agreed upon among educators; students who do not come to school are not usually academically successful (Allensworth & Evans, 2016; Balfanz, 2016; Blad, 2017; Nauer, 2016). Student attendance can be more predictive than any other demographic factor, including the combination of race, gender, prior academic achievement, and poverty, in predicting student success (Allensworth & Evans, 2016). Frequent school absenteeism has immediate and long-lasting effects on academic performance, social functioning, high school and college graduation, adult income, health, and life expectancy (Allen et al., 2018). In Chicago's public school system from 2014 to 2016, student absences were the main driver of course failures, thus verifying the need to reduce student absences (Allensworth & Evans, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights released data in 2016 indicating more than six million public school students do not attend school regularly, and as a result, experience little school success (Balfanz, 2016, p. 8). Absenteeism can be attributed to various causes including medical issues, family and social factors, mental health conditions, bullying, perceived lack of safety, inconsistent parenting, negative culture within the school, and unreliable transportation (Allen et al., 2018).

The evidence indicating student academic achievement is highly sensitive to absenteeism could not be more clear from kindergarten through high school graduation (Balfanz, 2016). Missing school throws students off track for academic success, leading

to more course failures, an increased risk of dropping out, and a decrease in post-secondary education (Allensworth & Evans, 2016; Balfanz, 2016). Students who miss school often find it difficult to remain connected, stay on track with course progress, and comprehend the concepts and standards for which they must show competency (Allensworth & Evans, 2016; Balfanz, 2016).

Absenteeism not only has an effect on individual students, but also influences the school as a whole (Nauer, 2016). The Every Student Succeeds Act requires schools to regulate chronic absenteeism, defined as missing more than 10% of the attendance days for an academic school year (Blad, 2017, p. 5). The Center of New York City Affairs analyzed achievement data on the state's annual achievement exams, and the data revealed schools with 10% more chronically absent students than schools with similar demographics have 13% fewer students score proficient on the exam (Nauer, 2016, p. 30). Nauer (2016) strongly suggested student absenteeism is a strong indicator of academic success.

Many believe students who fall subject to absenteeism are a lost cause and will have difficulty regaining academic success (Balfanz, 2016). Balfanz (2016) suggested students who exit chronic absenteeism and get back on track have increased odds of staying in school and raising their achievement levels. Schools across the country have seen success in their efforts to track students who are at-risk and chronically absent, while applying interventions to support these students (Allensworth & Evans, 2016). Uncovering the root of the absenteeism, supporting students and families throughout the transition process, making school inviting, overcoming trauma, incorporating school mentors, and building positive relationships with school staff have all shown to be

effective in making school enjoyable for students while reducing absenteeism (Allensworth & Evans, 2016; Balfanz, 2016; Edgar, 2014; Mooney, 2017). Students present within the school building develop positive relationships with staff and their peers, develop soft skills and job skills needed for the workforce, and gain the knowledge to be successful in life (Allen et al., 2018; Mooney, 2017).

Student Behavior

Educational success is characterized by performance in classes; academic accomplishment can define student status in the classroom and impact future opportunities (Illhan et al., 2019). The factors that impact student performance are numerous; however, one frequently highlighted by teachers is student behavior (Illhan et al., 2019). Student behaviors can create a barrier to achieving academic success, while leading to diminished teacher-student relationships, which can be difficult to overcome (Briesch et al., 2020; Longobardi, et al., 2016).

Briesch et al. (2020) indicated the National Center for Statistics showed 38% of teachers surveyed reported disruptive behavior interfering with their teaching, and 75% of those surveyed felt as if their teaching would be more effective if behaviors were reduced (p. 224). Students who exhibit negative behaviors in class are not only impacting their own learning, but are also affecting the learning of other students in the classroom with them (Briesch et al., 2020). Exposure to negative behaviors can lead to detrimental educational outcomes for all students due to loss of instructional time (Briesch et al., 2020). Many schools are making efforts to implement student supports focused on preventing behavior problems before they occur (Berger, 2019; Pitts, 2017). Programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Behavior Intervention and

Support Team (BIST), and Trauma-Informed Schools all focus on processing and improving the external factors that lead to behaviors (Berger, 2019; Chon et al., 2017; Pitts, 2017).

Disruptive behavior is a concern for all students, but can be even more alarming for those students with extreme emotional or behavior issues (Gage et al., 2018). Students with disruptive behavior tend to isolate more, relate less with their teachers, and show less interest in school, which all lead to reduced success (Longobardi et al., 2016). Just as engagement is a predictor of student success, disruptive student behaviors can be a predictor of student failure and limited long-term academic success (Adamson et al., 2019; Gage et al., 2018).

Behaviors exhibited within the school setting can vary greatly, with some behaviors leading to extended absences or suspensions, thus further impacting student learning (Hinze-Pifer & Sartain, 2018). Suspensions due to behavior issues result in the student missing academic instruction (Katz-Amey, 2019). Reduced instructional time is not the only issue resulting from school suspensions, as students often build up resentment that can become a barrier for future engagement in classroom activities (Katz-Amey, 2019). Once students perceive a disconnection with school and become disengaged in school activities, the barriers are difficult to overcome (Adelman & Taylor, 2017). The ability of teachers to build quality relationships with students, the implementation of programming to address the root of behavior issues, rewards for positive behavior, and the creation of opportunities for additional student life and behavior support can assist students in overcoming trauma and becoming more successful in school (Berger, 2019; Mare & Reeves, 2017; Pitts, 2017).

A variety of factors influence student success in the classroom; however, teachers have a critical impact on the amount of success students experience (Gage et al., 2018). Unfortunately, not all teachers are equipped with the skills needed to address problem behaviors, nor do they structure classroom environments in a way where students are more likely to behave appropriately (Adamson et al., 2019). Educational researchers have reinforced the powerful impact of teachers, specifically those teachers working with students who have negative school experiences and existing barriers (Killian, 2017). Targeted interventions and intentional school programming have been proven to be effective in improving social-emotional skills, behavior, and academic performance (Mare & Reeves, 2017). It is vital staff have the ability to mitigate various risk factors and break down barriers by making intentional efforts to build positive relationships with students in order to form a student-school connection (Katz-Amey, 2019; Mare & Reeves, 2017).

Summary

Chapter Two served as a review of literature on approaches to educational programming, factors that influence student success, and essential educational outcomes. Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and stage-environment fit theory (Eccles et al., 1993) were reviewed, and attention was given to influences of external factors on student learning environments. The factors that impact student outcomes discussed in the chapter included student-teacher relationships, social-emotional learning, mental health, student engagement, personalized learning, achievement, attendance, and behavior. An overview of advisory programs and academic homerooms was provided, and the differences in approach were discussed.

In Chapter Three, the problem and purpose overview, research questions, and research design are presented. The population and sample, instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis are described. To finalize Chapter Three, ethical considerations are stated.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Problem and Purpose Overview

Decrease in student engagement, lack of student-school connectedness, and increase in mental health issues among students have required schools to examine practices and programming to provide needed student supports (Elvidge et al., 2018; Hustus & Owens, 2018). The types of support and programming educators believe have the greatest impact differs among schools and educators (Rasku-Puttonen et al., 2017). Homeroom and advisory programs are part of this debate, and there is a true lack of research supporting either approach (Brodie, 2014; Washor & Mokowski, 2014).

Achievement, attendance, and behavior data were examined and analyzed from schools with an advisory period and were compared to schools with a traditional academic homeroom. The transition for students in the early years of high school can be difficult, and at times, requires adaptability (Templeton, 2017). Based upon the transition and the many challenges students face during this time of their lives, achievement, attendance, and behavior data were examined to compare students' freshmen and sophomore years to their junior and senior years (Eccles et al., 1993; Edgar, 2014; Donovan, 2014).

Contributing factors and outcomes of advisory programs were elicited from teachers of an advisory course. Feedback provided included outcomes of advisory related to student-teacher relationships, personalized learning, achievement, attendance, and behavior. Teachers facilitating an advisory also provided feedback specific to program improvement and contributions to their own professional growth and improvement.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What do high school advisory teachers state as outcomes of high school advisory programs?
2. What is the difference in student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms?

$H2_0$: There is no difference in student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms.

3. What is the difference in the growth between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those attending traditional academic homerooms?

$H3_0$: There is no difference in the growth between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those who attend traditional academic homerooms.

Research Design

The design selected for this research was quantitative in nature. A quantitative design was selected to provide a comprehensive answer to the research questions of the study (Gay & Mills, 2019). Quantitative survey research allows the researcher to gain insights into participant perspectives (Gay & Mills, 2019). Boudah (2020) indicated survey research is an appropriate approach when individual responses are needed to answer the research questions. Survey research was conducted to assess the preferences

and attitudes of participants regarding advisory programs within their schools. In addition, student achievement, attendance, and behavior data were requested and analyzed to determine outcomes of homeroom and advisory programs.

Population and Sample

Participants in this study included teachers employed at four high schools in the Midwest region of the United States, each offering an advisory program. The total population of teachers within these four high schools is approximately 380 (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2020). School A employs 120 teachers, School B employs 100 teachers, and Schools C and D employ 80 teachers each (MODESE, 2020). All advisory teachers were asked to participate in a survey designed to gather data concerning the contributing factors and outcomes of their advisory program. The average external survey response rate is around 10%–15% and has shown a further decline in individuals willing to respond in recent years (Bista & Saleh, 2017; Nulty, 2008). Given the response rate information, this study required a minimum sample size of 40 teachers.

Secondary student data were collected from each of the four advisory high schools, as well as from four high schools implementing academic homerooms, for all students during the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. The 2019–2020 school year was not selected due to the impacts of the coronavirus on the potential data obtained. These eight schools from the Midwest region of the United States each have a minimum of 450 students, representation from multiple ethnic groups in the student population, and over 40% of students who qualify for free and/or reduced-price meals (MODESE, 2020). These data were disaggregated based on yearly totals, including

attendance percentage, number of behavior incidents/referrals per student, and number failing grades per student. The approximate sample size for the secondary data was 4,000 students. All participating schools utilize the same academic grading scales.

Archival secondary data extracted from the MODESE (2020) indicated the four high schools with advisory programs have an approximate student population of 6,672 students with School A's student enrollment at 2,282 students, School B with 1,467 students, School C with 1,517 students, and School D with an enrollment of 1,406. Archival secondary data extracted from the MODESE (2020) indicated the four schools offering traditional homerooms have an approximate total student enrollment of 3,259, with School E with 1,242 students, School F with 904 students, School G with 449 students, and School H with 604 students (MODESE, 2020).

The type of sampling used in this study for the primary sample was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of participants due to the qualities the participants possess (Etikan et al., 2016). The survey was administered to teachers in the four schools that offer an advisory program with an intentional focus on relationships. The census method was used for the secondary data sample, as 100% of the population was included as part of the sample (Gay & Mills, 2019). The four advisory schools and four academic homeroom schools were chosen as a result of being in the same geographical region, meeting the demographic requirements of the study, and offering advisory or academic homerooms during the school day as clarified in the definition of terms. The initial intent of the study was to garner four participating advisory schools; however, one school did not respond to the request for

data. Due to failure to respond to the request, three advisory schools were included in the study.

Instrumentation

The survey (see Appendix A) was developed by the researcher to gather feedback on advisory programs. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated, “Survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population” (p. 147). Palmer (2019) suggested surveys are defined as data collection tools for which a researcher defines a specific population of people to be described, draws a systematic and representative sample of members of the population, collects data from those individuals either by asking questions or by asking them to perform other tasks, and computes statistics that properly reflect the nature of the sampling process used to select the individuals.

The feedback teachers provided included their feelings and perceptions about advisory programs. A four-point Likert-type scale was utilized to gather response data. In the questions containing Likert-type responses, teachers selected from the options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. In addition, four open-ended questions were included in an effort to elicit further information to support teacher responses. The survey was administered through the *Qualtrics* platform.

Within the survey instrument, teachers were asked to provide the grade level of the advisory class taught, as the data for the survey were disaggregated by grade level. Three statements on the survey related to the impact of advisory programs on building relationships with students. Adult interactions, including the building of positive

relationships with students, can have a large impact on social, emotional, and academic development (Biag, 2016). Two statements were designed to gather feedback on an advisory program's ability to assist in personalizing the learning experience and increasing students' ability to be self-directed in their learning. Personalized learning is tailored to individual student needs and supports students in taking ownership of their own learning (Baird et al., 2015).

Teachers were asked to provide feedback concerning the impact of advisory on student achievement when presented with two survey statements. Student achievement, although impacted by many factors, is directly affected by students feeling connected to their school (Roybal et al., 2014). Teachers were asked to respond to two survey statements pertaining to advisory's impact on attendance and student-school connectedness. School-student connectedness is another area of emphasis for high school advisory programs (Bullard & Dede, 2017). The remaining Likert-type survey statements were designed so teachers could share perceptions of advisory's influence on student behaviors and school environment. Connections in research linking advisory outcomes to improved student behavior are somewhat limited; however, student engagement is linked to school connectedness, and students with strong school connections tend to have fewer behavioral and academic issues (Roybal et al., 2014).

To close out the teacher survey, four open response questions were included so teachers could make recommendations as to how advisories can be improved, how advisories assist educators in their own personal growth, how advisories impact the level of personalization for students, and what specific outcomes advisories provide for schools

and students. The survey responses provided additional clarity to the impact of advisory programs on students.

The teacher survey was pilot tested prior to implementation with this research study. Pilot testing of surveys highlights deficiencies in the questions and also allows those taking the survey to provide suggestions for improvement (Gay & Mills, 2019). Several individuals working in schools in southwest Missouri were selected as field participants to provide feedback on the survey and its questions, specifically on the purpose and clarity of questions.

Data Collection

Written permission was requested from superintendents via email (see Appendix B) for each of the eight schools to participate in the study. This correspondence included a request to survey all advisory teachers from the four advisory schools and for each school to provide achievement, attendance, and behavior data for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. Contact information for the superintendent was collected from each district's website.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board of Lindenwood University (see Appendix C), the principals of each participating district were emailed a letter (Appendix D) to request achievement, attendance, and behavior data needed for the study. In addition, principals from schools offering advisory were sent the survey and a description of the survey for email distribution to staff for completion, along with the research study consent form (Appendix E). Participants were given two weeks to complete the survey, and data were collected using the *Qualtrics* platform.

Data Analysis

Survey data from the Likert-type responses were analyzed in an effort to answer research question one. These survey data are displayed in Chapter Four using descriptive statistics to provide a meaningful description of the data collected (Gay & Mills, 2019). The mode and the frequency of the responses calculated as percentages were analyzed for this study. The mode was chosen, as ratio variables include all of the properties of all other measurement variable possibilities (Gay & Mills, 2019). In addition, open-ended responses were organized into themes to provide teacher recommendations for educators looking to develop advisory programs.

Attendance, behavior, and achievement data were provided by each participating school in an effort to answer research question two. A two-tailed independent *t*-test was utilized to compare the means of the academic homeroom and advisory groups, as the groups were independent of each other (Gay & Mills, 2019). The *t*-test was performed on each of the three variables within each group to determine if a significant difference exists between the means of the two independent groups at a 95% level of significance. The SPSS software program was used to analyze the data.

The differences in achievement, attendance, and behavior data were analyzed to compare the 9th and 10th-grade years and the 11th and 12th-grade years, to show possible progression differences for students in these grade levels. The mean difference and standard deviation were calculated for each variable within the four advisory and four academic homeroom schools. A two-tailed independent sample *t*-test was again used to compare the mean differences of the two groups for achievement, attendance, and behavior (Gay & Mills, 2019). The *t*-test was performed on the three variables within

each group to determine if there is a significant difference between the two means of the independent groups at a 95% level of significance. The SPSS software program was used to analyze the data.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher had no relationship with teachers in three of the four advisory schools where the survey was distributed. The researcher worked in the fourth advisory school; however, the online survey was completely anonymous, the responses did not contain any identifiable information, and this information was relayed to all potential participants in the Research Consent Form. Participation in the survey was voluntary.

The student data were collected in the form of an Excel spreadsheet and did not contain any identifiable data that could be traced back to a particular student. The data collected were not disaggregated by school. All data will be kept in a secure location for three years, and after three years, the data will be destroyed. All data were reported with ethical considerations in mind, and the researcher anticipated minimal or no risk to the participants.

Summary

This quantitative research study was designed to examine the impact of academic homerooms and advisories on student achievement, attendance, and behavior outcomes. This study included an analysis of data from eight high schools in Missouri, four with traditional academic homerooms and four with advisories. The four advisory schools requested staff participation in a survey, and teacher perceptions and feelings pertaining to advisories were examined. The research questions were presented in Chapter Three,

along with the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations for the study.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Review of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Chapter Four is divided into six sections: (a) participants, (b) research questions, (c) advisory class and survey information, (d) teacher perceptions of advisory programs, (e) statement of advisory outcomes and future recommendations, and (f) differences in attendance, behavior, and achievement. The SPSS v26.0 was the tool used to analyze the data.

Many schools across the United States allocate time within the day to accomplish various tasks necessary for school functioning and to support students; this allocated time is usually called an academic homeroom or advisory period (Templeton, 2017). The implementation and focus areas of each method are different, and research is minimal on the effectiveness of each approach's effect on academic achievement (Brodie, 2014). The goal of this study was to contribute to the existing research in an effort to gain better insight on the effectiveness of each approach and to offer data and suggestions to educators looking to make changes to an existing program or to implement a new program.

Permission was requested and granted from the four advisory school superintendents and four academic homeroom superintendents to provide student data and distribute the surveys to high school staff members. Secondary data, including the number of referrals per student, number of failing grades per student, and attendance percentage, were provided by the principals of each high school for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. The high school principals at each

advisory school forwarded the Likert-type survey to their staff members to gather data concerning the contributing factors and outcomes of their advisory program. The survey was presented to advisory teachers via the *Qualtrics* platform. The data were analyzed to determine differences in student attendance, behavior, and achievement for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms. Also examined was the feedback teachers provided concerning the outcomes, feelings, and perceptions of advisory programs.

Participants

The school districts included in the study were selected based upon proximity and the offering of an advisory program, as defined in the research study. The purposive sampling method, also called the judgment sampling method, was selected due to each school's demographic and program qualities (Etikan et al., 2016). Participants in this study included teachers employed at four high schools in the Midwest region of the United States, each offering an advisory program.

The sample consisted of 380 high school teachers. A total of 109 responses were collected during the two-week window the survey was open. Of the 109 responses, 34 responses were incomplete and therefore discarded from the data set. The average external response rate is around 10%–15%, and given this information, the minimum sample size needed was 40 submissions (Bista & Saleh, 2017; Nulty, 2008). A total of 75 responses were completed to include in the study, which indicated an overall survey response rate of 19.7%.

Advisory Class and Survey Information

Teacher participants in the survey facilitated and taught advisory classes. The advisory teachers indicated various grade levels were represented in their advisory classes (see Table 1).

Table 1

Grade Levels Represented in Participant Advisory Classes

Advisory Grade Level	Number of Advisory Classes Represented
Ninth Grade	13
10th Grade	8
11th Grade	5
12th Grade	6
Ninth and 10th Grades	2
10th and 11th Grades	1
11th and 12th Grades	9
10th, 11th, and 12th Grades	1
Ninth, 10th, 11th, and 12th Grades	30

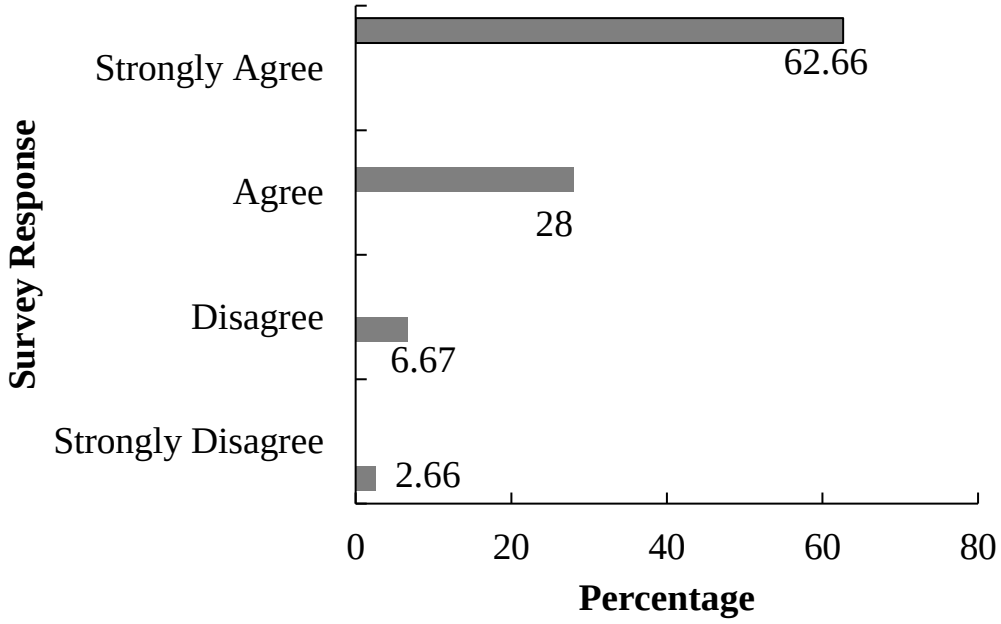
The advisory teachers selected responses to represent their feelings pertaining to advisory programs. Fourteen items in the survey contain this type of Likert-response, with four selections included within the scale. Survey respondents could select from strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Teacher Perceptions of Advisory Programs

The teachers selected responses aligning with their beliefs and feelings about advisory program outcomes. The first item on the survey requested a response to the statement that advisory periods provide an avenue to build intentional positive relationships. Over 90% of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Teacher responses are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Advisory Periods Provide an Avenue to Build Intentional Positive Relationships

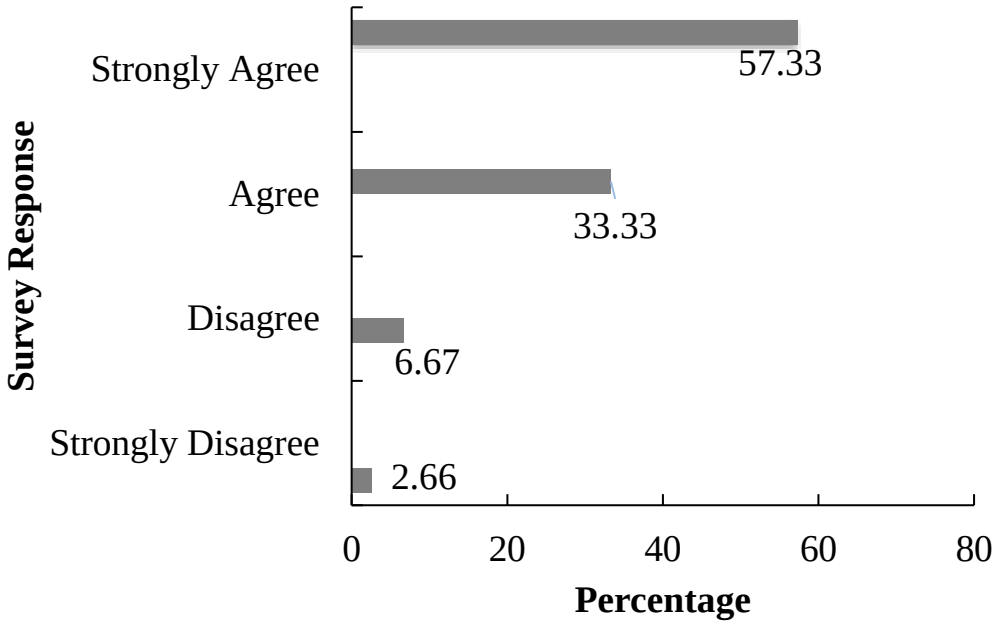


For the second item on the survey, participants responded to the statement that advisory periods allow teachers the ability to connect with students in a way that might not be possible in other settings. Again, over 90% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, while less than 10% of teachers indicated advisory periods

did not provide opportunities to build relationships and connect with students. Teacher responses were converted to percentages and are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

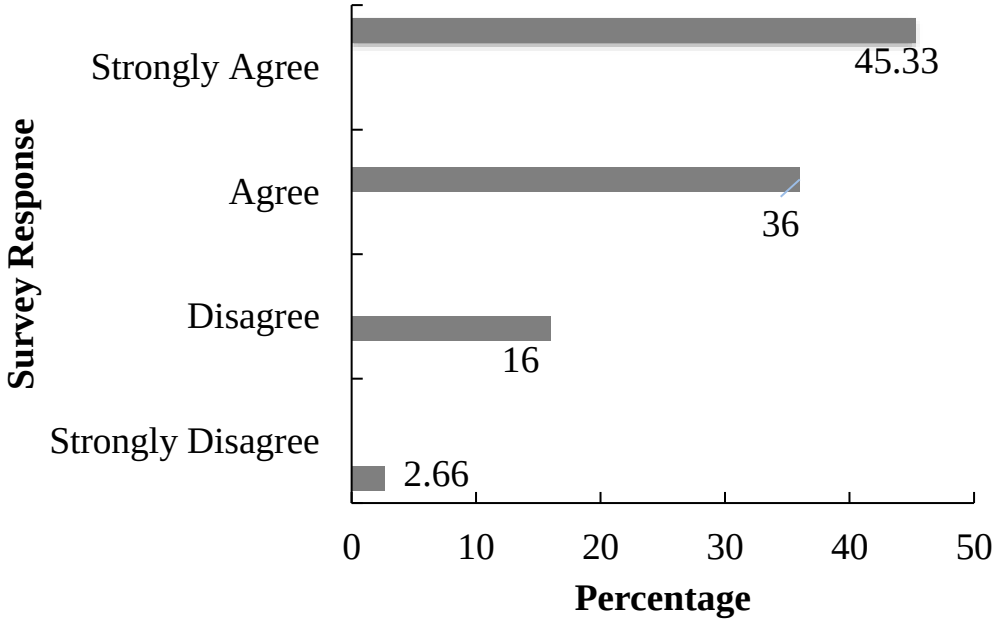
Advisory Period Influence on the Student-Teacher Connection



On the third survey item, over 80% of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed advisory programs are successful only if the student engages in the building of relationships. Of those responding, 18.66% believed relationships could still be formed between teachers and students, given effort by teachers to form the relationships even when the students are not willing to do so (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

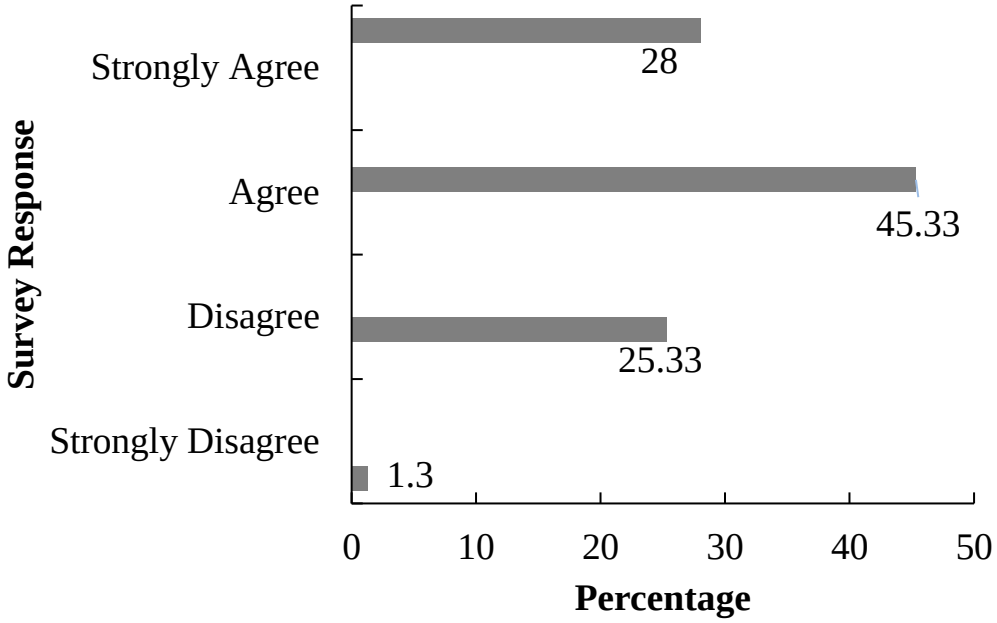
Advisory Periods Are Only Successful if the Students Are Engaged in the Building of Relationships



Participants responded to the statement that advisory periods assist in personalizing the learning experience for students. The majority of teachers, 73.33%, strongly agreed or agreed advisory periods assist in personalizing the learning experience (see Figure 4). Feedback provided in response to the open-ended questions suggested the small groups of students in advisory classes and one-on-one conferencing opportunities contribute greatly to the personalization of learning. In addition, one teacher suggested if relationships are built, one-on-one conferencing becomes more natural, and personalization of learning experiences is more probable.

Figure 4

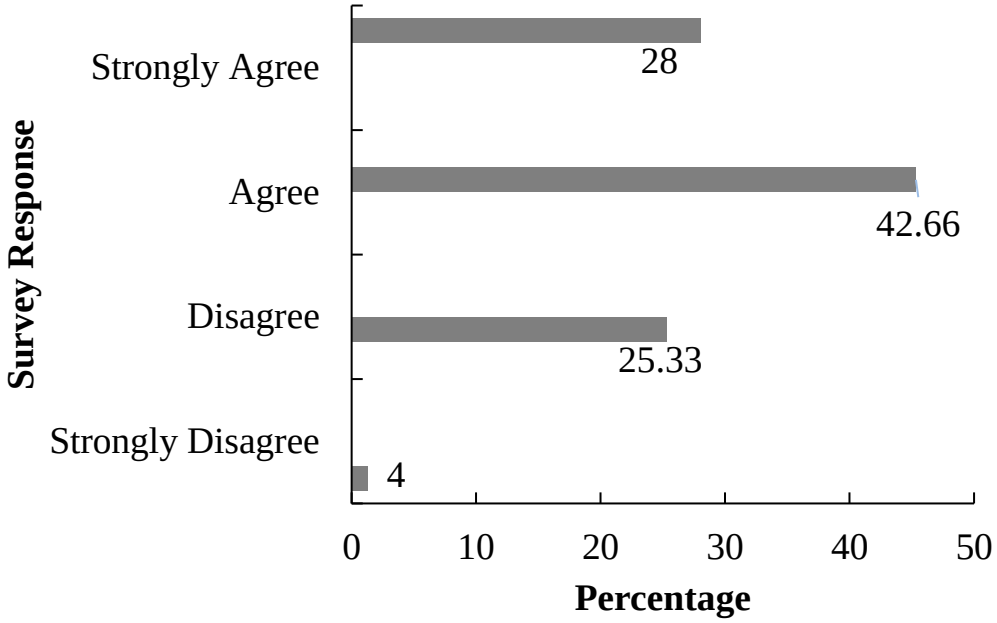
Advisory Periods Assist in Personalizing the Learning Experience for Students



For survey item five, 70.66% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that advisory periods assist in personalizing the learning experiences of students by enabling them to take ownership of their learning. Approximately 29.33% of responding teachers strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

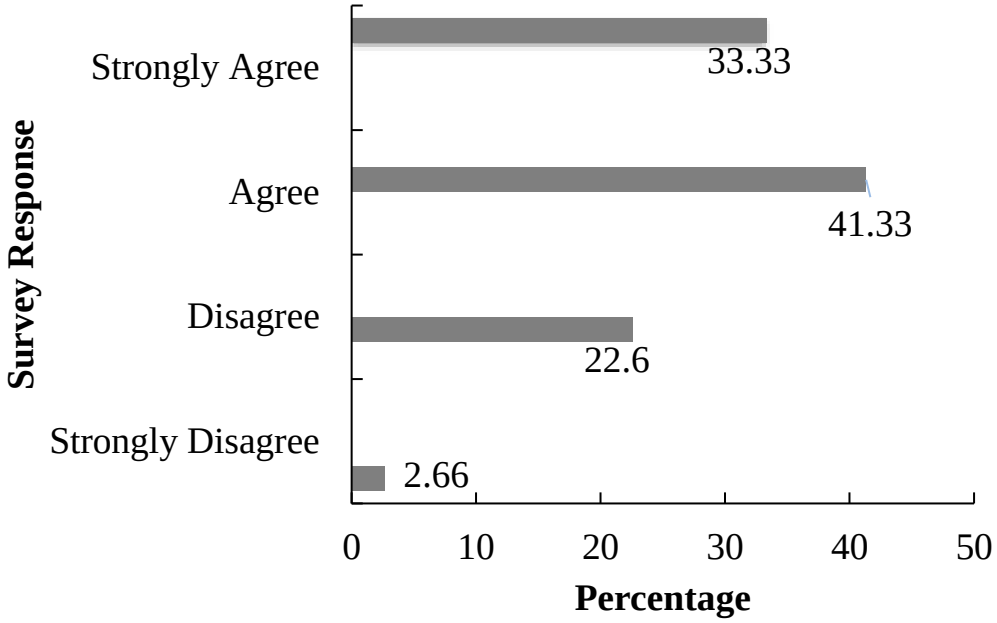
Advisory Period Influence on Personalization and Student Ownership of Learning



Teachers' views on the effect of advisory periods on student achievement were mixed in the survey responses for item six. While 74.66% of the responding advisory teachers indicated advisory periods have the ability to impact student achievement, 25.26% of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed advisory periods can impact student achievement (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

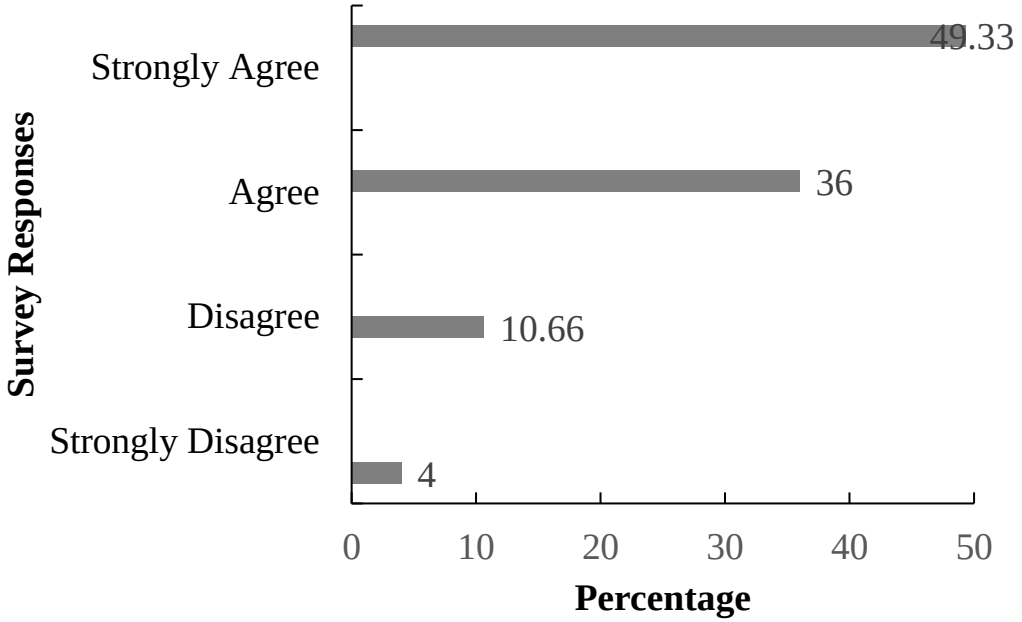
Advisory Periods Have a Positive Impact on Student Achievement



On item seven, only 21.22% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed advisory periods do not have an impact on student achievement. Moreover, 78.66% of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

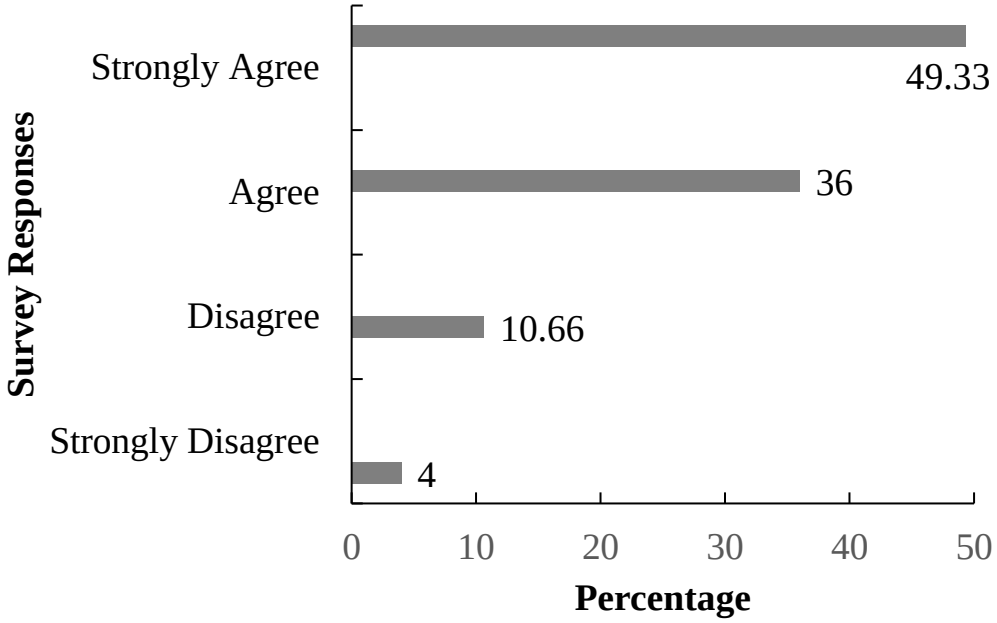
Advisory Periods Do Not Have Any Effect on Student Achievement



The majority of advisory teachers, 85.33%, strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that advisory periods provide an opportunity for academic advisement, which positively affects student achievement. The of 14.67% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

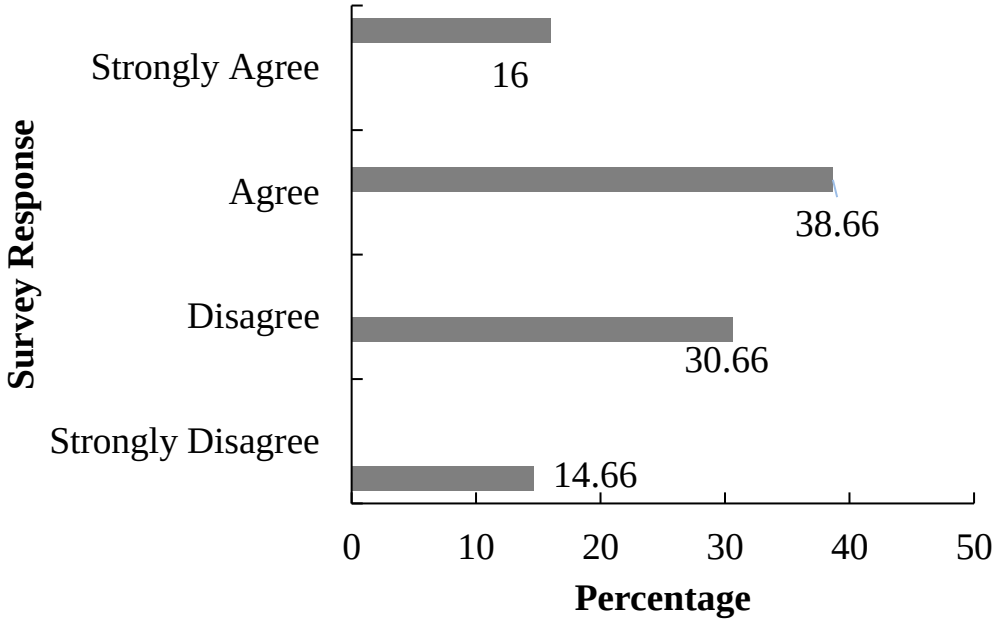
Advisory Academic Advisement and Its Effect on Student Achievement



For item nine, the survey data indicated only 54.66% of teachers believed advisory programs have a positive effect on student attendance, and 45.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed advisory positively impacts student attendance (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

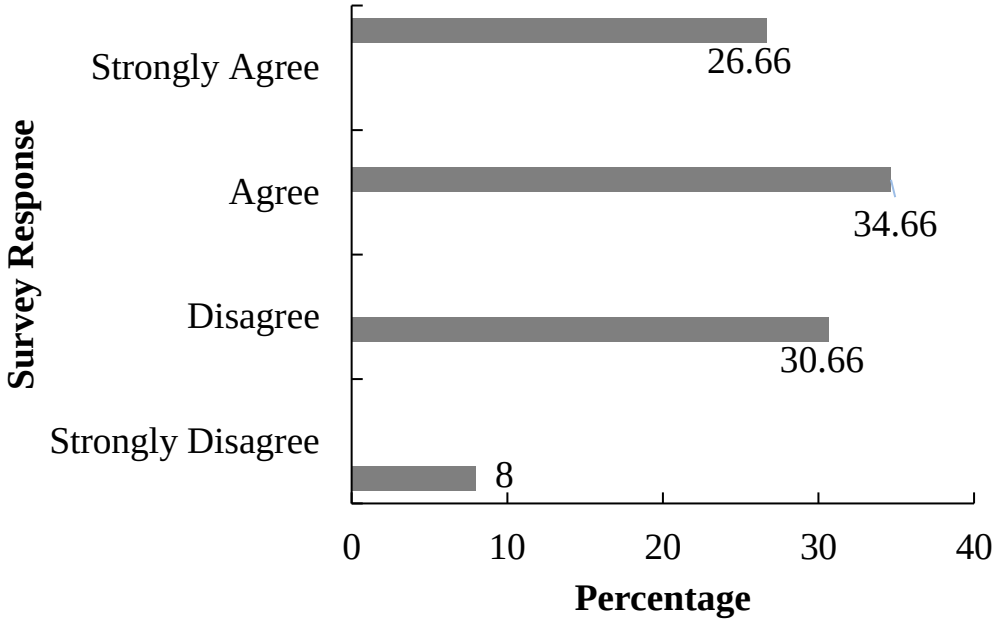
Advisory Periods Have a Positive Effect on Student Attendance



Item 10 results indicated advisory teachers strongly agreed or agreed (61.3%) with the statement that advisory periods contribute to student-school connectedness, resulting in an increasing desire to attend school. The other 38.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

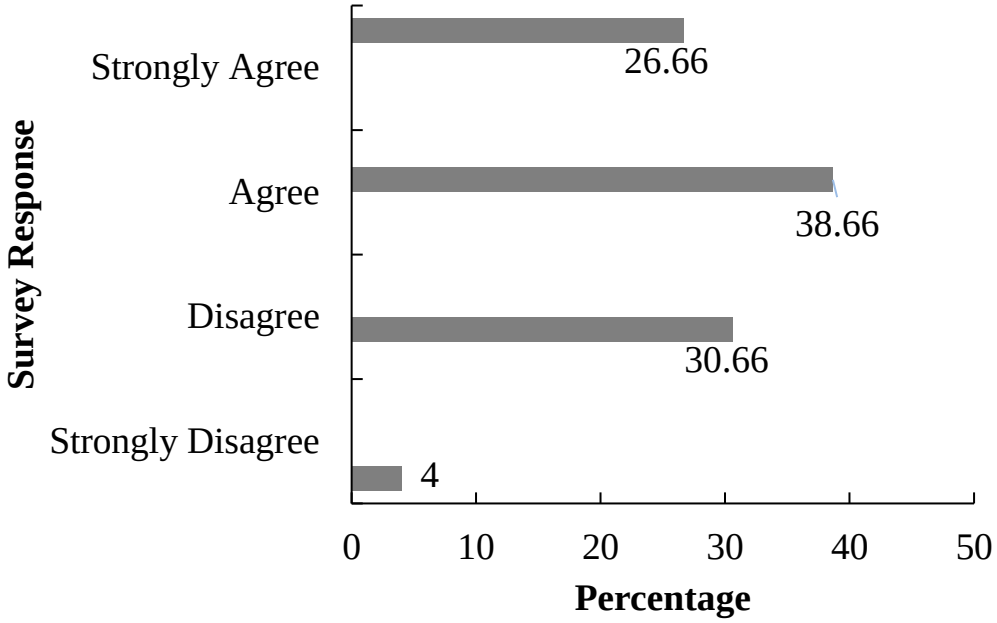
Advisory Period Influence on Student-School Connectedness and Attendance



For item 11, 65.32% of the advisory teachers strongly agreed or agreed advisory periods contribute to improved student behavior. A low percentage, 34.66%, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Responses are displayed in Figure 11.

Figure 11

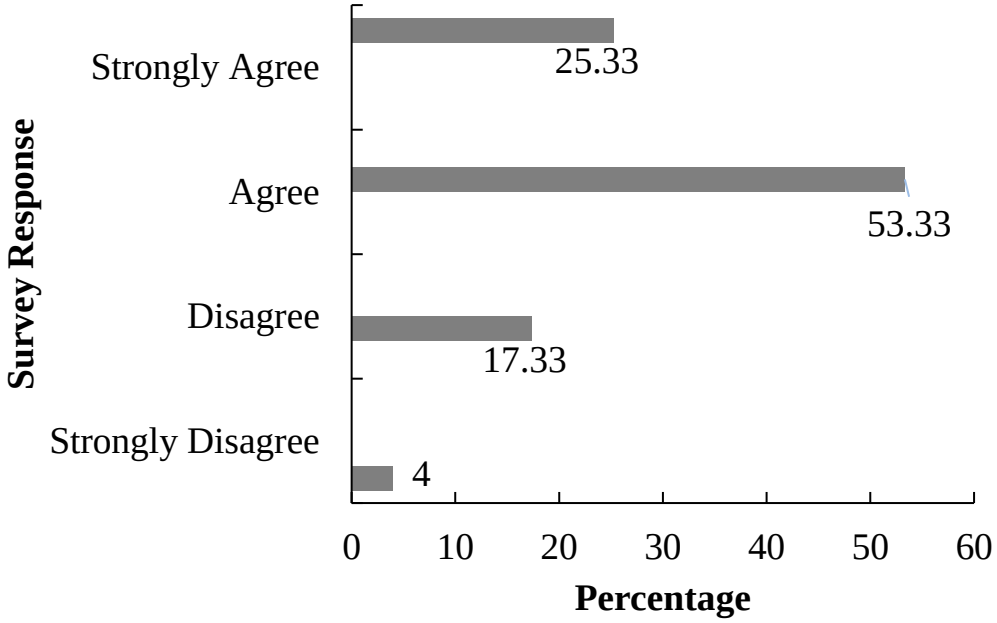
Advisory Periods Contribute to Improved Student Behavior



Item 12 responses revealed over 78% of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that advisory periods assist in reducing student behaviors due to the teacher-student relationship. A few teachers (21.33%) strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. The teachers' responses are displayed in Figure 12.

Figure 12

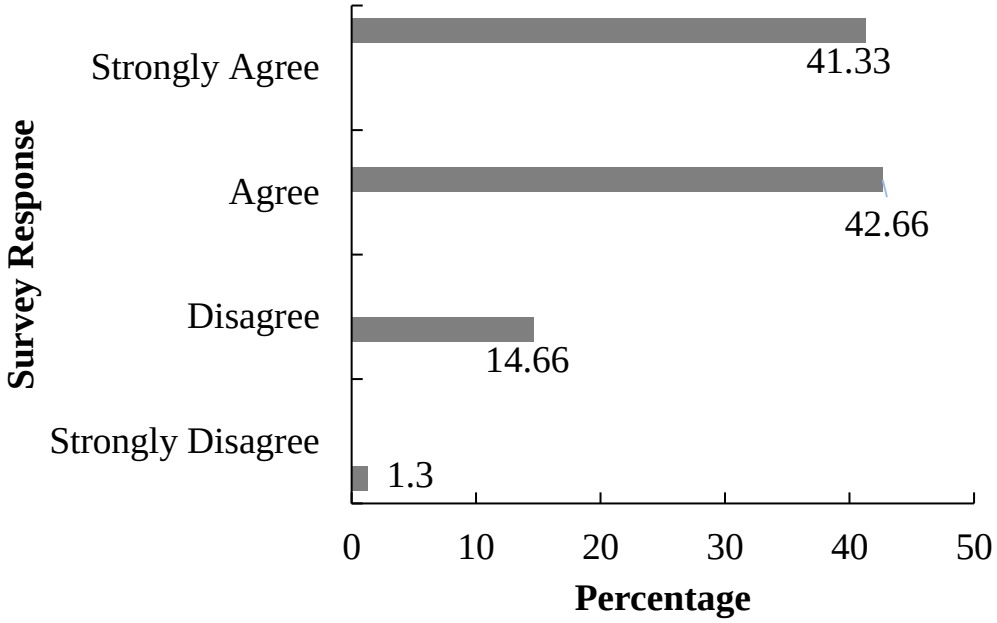
Advisory Periods Assist in Reducing Student Behaviors Due to the Teacher-Student Relationship



Item 13 on the survey included the statement that advisory periods impact the school environment in a positive manner. While 83.99% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed, 16% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Advisory Programs Impact the School Environment in a Positive Manner



Statement of Advisory Outcomes and Future Recommendations

The survey included open-ended questions the teachers could answer to provide positive and negative feedback pertaining to advisory programs in their districts. In addition, recommendations were given by those teaching advisory classes to help others improve advisory programs. Responses and recommendations were organized into themes and are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Outcomes of advisory programs, whether positive or negative, are valuable for reflection and improvement of advisory programming. The teachers suggested several positive outcomes of advisory programs, and the most frequently mentioned was student-teacher relationships. Survey data indicated the value of offering an advisory program to provide students with staff mentors or advisors students could trust within the building.

The safe and non-confrontational advisory experience; connection with a staff member in a non-academic environment; and maintaining an advocate for the student from an academic, social, and personal standpoint were listed as positive outcomes of an advisory program. Overall, teachers viewed the advisory program in a positive manner when considering student-teacher relationships.

Teachers highlighted the importance of providing social-emotional support to all students and providing an intentional focus on soft skill and job skill development. Many students transition straight out of high school directly into the workforce, and although academic classes provide opportunities to reinforce these skills, an intentional effort is not generally placed on developing soft skills and job skills. Teachers explained advisory programs focus on goal setting, career planning, and the development of social-emotional skills, specifically those soft skills necessary to be successful in any work setting. In addition, advisory periods have smaller student-teacher ratios, which provides an opportunity to model and follow-up on conversations pertaining to soft skill development.

Teachers suggested advisory programs provide opportunities for upperclassmen to advise and mentor underclassmen. Many advisory teachers viewed advisory class as their "school family" and felt this connection to increase trust and connection within the school was irreplaceable. A chance to celebrate peers, build relationships, and develop inter-personal skills were benefits relayed by teachers who provided feedback. Additionally, teachers indicated their advisory periods helped them grow as educators and become more effective teachers. Teaching students in advisory classes with grades 9–12 allows teachers to see the changes students go through as they transition from

freshman to senior year. This transition and observation of student skill development over the four years in high school can help teachers cater to an individual student's learning needs and continue to grow as educators.

Teacher participants were given an opportunity in the survey to provide suggestions to educators seeking to improve an existing advisory program or to start a new program. Teachers indicated implementation and consistency in the program are essential to program success. Clearly defined objectives, consistency among teachers, and ensuring staff knows the purpose for the program and reasons behind the decisions all assist with staff buy-in during implementation. Most advisory programs are implemented with the purpose of building positive relationships; however, additional expectations and outside demands are often placed on teachers within the advisory period. The teachers suggested administrators should do their best to protect the time allocated within advisory and prioritize the purpose and objectives of the advisory program.

A small group of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with advisory implementation at their schools. These teachers indicated advisory takes away from instructional time within core classes, and the time is better used within the regular classroom setting. These teachers believed soft skill development could occur within classroom settings, and due to the lack of student buy-in to the advisory program at their school, the program was not very successful in positively impacting students.

Differences in Achievement, Attendance, and Behavior

The student achievement, attendance, and behavior data for this study were provided by eight high schools in the Midwest. The high schools included in this study were of various sizes, with the largest school's maximum enrollment for the four years

outlined in the study at 2,216 students in grades 9–12, and the smallest school's enrollment at 442 students in grades 9–12. Four of the high schools offered an advisory program for students in grades 9–12, while the other four high schools offered academic homerooms to students in grades 9–12. The data were provided from each of the eight participating high schools for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2

Participating Academic Homeroom Student Data

High School	School Year	Number of Students	Attendance %	Referrals per Student *M*	F's per Student *M*
1	2015–2016	1006	91.77	2.03	0.38
	2016–2017	979	94.28	1.96	0.52
	2017–2018	964	93.92	1.99	0.60
	2018–2019	971	94.05	1.77	0.73
2	2015–2016	621	95.25	1.38	0.49
	2016–2017	629	94.75	1.14	0.45
	2017–2018	604	95.00	1.20	0.54
	2018–2019	594	95.50	1.22	0.64
3	2015–2016	442	94.86	1.98	0.10
	2016–2017	476	94.25	1.08	0.23
	2017–2018	449	94.42	1.37	0.26
	2018–2019	465	94.58	0.71	0.25
4	2015–2016	1356	95.32	1.94	0.74
	2016–2017	1424	95.10	2.25	0.70
	2017–2018	1467	93.77	3.44	0.91
	2018–2019	1471	94.35	1.74	0.64

Table 3

Participating Advisory Student Data

High School	School Year	Number of Students	Attendance %	Referrals per Student *M*	F's per Student *M*
1	2015–2016	2216	93.40	2.94	1.29
	2016–2017	2213	93.41	3.13	1.35
	2017–2018	2191	93.25	2.84	1.35
	2018–2019	2145	93.39	3.16	1.30
2	2015–2016	1463	94.72	1.01	0.15
	2016–2017	1474	94.19	0.83	0.09
	2017–2018	1482	94.20	1.00	0.18
	2018–2019	1395	94.30	0.85	0.10
3	2015–2016	1177	98.68	1.77	0.43
	2016–2017	1163	95.17	2.59	0.41
	2017–2018	1242	95.47	1.73	0.61
	2018–2019	1277	94.78	2.15	0.91

The data in Table 4 show the total calculated means for each variable analyzed for academic homeroom and advisory schools during the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. The means were calculated by averaging the variable mean from each participating school during the designated year. The rationale for this calculation was to create equability between comparisons for those schools with large student populations and those with smaller student populations.

Table 4

Calculated Means for Advisory and Academic Homeroom Schools

Method of Instruction	School Year	*M* of the Attendance %	Referrals per Student *M*	F's per Student *M*
Advisory	2015–2016	95.60	1.91	0.62
	2016–2017	94.25	2.18	0.67
	2017–2018	94.30	1.85	0.71
	2018–2019	94.15	2.05	0.77
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	94.30	1.82	0.43
	2016–2017	94.67	1.61	0.48
	2017–2018	94.27	2.00	0.58
	2018–2019	94.62	1.36	0.57

Note. The means represented in this table are calculated total means for advisory and academic homeroom schools during the school years designated.

The method chosen to analyze the data provided by advisory and academic homeroom schools was independent sample *t*-tests. One *t*-test was performed for each of the variables – attendance, behavior, and achievement – for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. The results of the *t*-tests are presented according to school year, the variable analyzed, and whether the approach used was an academic homeroom or advisory program. The level of significance, represented by alpha level, corresponds to the probability of a Type I error rejecting the null hypothesis given that the null hypothesis would not be rejected (Gay & Mills, 2019). The alpha level was set at 0.05 or the 95% confidence interval.

Achievement

The differences in the means for student achievement during the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years were investigated through the use of independent sample *t*-tests. Investigation of the means for student achievement by advisory and academic homeroom for the 2015–2016 school year indicated a student achievement mean of 0.62 for advisory schools and 0.42 for academic homeroom schools. Student achievement was represented by the number of failing grades per student. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student achievement between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.59, with a *p*-value of 0.57; therefore, the difference in means was not significant (see Table 5).

Table 5

Student Achievement During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Name	School Year	Fs Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			0.59	0.57
Advisory	2015–2016	0.62	0.59		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	0.42	0.26		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$ .05 level was not significant, $t(.61) = t$ stat, $p = 0.57$, $d = 0.43$, 95% [-.6449, 1.0366].

Investigation of the mean student achievement for each group, advisory and academic homeroom, for the 2016–2017 school year indicated a student achievement

mean of 0.61 for advisory schools and 0.47 for academic homeroom schools. The *p*-value measuring the difference of the means for student achievement between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.69, with a *t*-score of 0.42. The *p*-value was not less than .05, which is required to be statistically significant. Results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Achievement During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Fs Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			0.42	0.69
Advisory	2016–2017	0.61	0.65		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.47	0.19		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.41) = t$ stat, $p = 0.69$, $d = 0.29$, 95% [-.7236, 1.0069].

Investigation of the means for advisory schools indicated a mean for student achievement during the 2017–2018 school year of .71 failing grades per student. The mean for student achievement during the 2017–2018 school year for academic homeroom schools was .57 failing grades per student. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student achievement between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.41, with a *p*-value of 0.69, and therefore the difference in means was not significant (see Table 7).

Table 7

Student Achievement During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Fs Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			0.41	0.69
Advisory	2017–2018	0.71	0.59		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.57	0.26		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.43) = t$ stat, $p = 0.69$, $d = 0.30$, 95% [-.7035, 0.9751].

Investigation of the means for advisory schools indicated a mean for student achievement during the 2018–2019 school year of .77 failing grades per student. The mean for student achievement during the 2017–2018 school year for academic homeroom schools was .56 failing grades per student. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student achievement between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.63, with a *p*-value of 0.55, and therefore the difference in means was not significant (see Table 8).

Table 8

Student Achievement During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Fs Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.63	0.55
Advisory	2018–2019	0.77	0.61		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.56	0.21		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.65) = t$ stat, $p = 0.55$, $d = 0.46$, 95% [-.6220, 1.0320].

Attendance

Using an independent sample *t*-test, investigation of the mean attendance percentage for advisory and academic homeroom schools, during the 2015–2016 school year, indicated an attendance mean of 95.60 for advisory schools and 94.30 for academic homeroom schools. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student achievement between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.78, with a *p*-value of 0.47, and therefore the difference in means was not significant. Results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Attendance Percentage During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* of the Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			0.78	0.47
Advisory	2015–2016	95.60	2.74		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	94.67	1.58		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.57) = t$ stat, $p = 0.47$, $d = 0.41$, 95% [-2.9819, 5.5886].

Investigation of the mean attendance percentage for each group, advisory and academic homeroom, for the 2016–2017 school year indicated an attendance mean of 94.20 for advisory schools and 94.67 for academic homeroom schools. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for attendance between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.69, with a *p*-value of 0.52; the difference in means was not significant. Results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Attendance Percentage During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* of the Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			0.69	0.52
Advisory	2016–2017	94.25	0.50		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	94.59	0.40		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(-1.00) = t$ stat, $p = 0.52$, $d = 0.75$, 95% [-1.5963, 0.9196].

Investigation of the mean attendance percentage for each group, advisory and academic homeroom, for the 2017–2018 school year indicated an attendance mean of 94.30 for advisory schools and 94.27 for academic homeroom schools. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for attendance between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.13, with a *p*-value of 0.90, and therefore, the difference in means was not significant. Results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Attendance Percentage During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* of the Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			0.13	0.90
Advisory	2017–2018	94.30	0.96		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	94.27	0.55		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.053) = t$ stat, $p = 0.90$, $d = 0.03$, 95% [-1.5358, 1.3875].

Investigation of the mean attendance percentage for each group, advisory and academic homeroom, for the 2018–2019 school year indicated an attendance mean of 94.15 for advisory schools and 94.62 for academic homeroom schools. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for attendance between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.92, with a *p*-value of 0.39; therefore, the difference in means was not significant. Results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Attendance Percentage During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* of the Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.92	0.39
Advisory	2018–2019	94.15	0.70		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	94.62	0.62		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(-.094) = t$ stat, $p = 0.39$, $d = 0.71$, 95% [-1.7569, 0.8303].

Behavior

Mean differences for academic homeroom schools and advisory schools for student behaviors during the 2015–2016 school year were investigated through the use of independent sample *t*-tests (see Table 10). Investigation of the means for advisory schools indicated a mean for student behaviors during the 2015–2016 school year of 1.83 referrals per student. The mean for behaviors during the 2015–2016 school year for academic homeroom schools was 1.79 referrals per student. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for behavior referrals between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.07, with a *p*-value of 0.94; therefore, the difference in means was not significant (see Table 13).

Table 13

Student Behavior During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Referrals Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			0.07	0.94
Advisory	2015–2016	1.83	0.91		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	1.79	0.32		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.08) = t$ stat, $p = 0.94$, $d = 0.05$, 95% [-1.1978, 1.2678].

Investigation of the mean number of behavior referrals for each group, advisory and academic homeroom, for the 2016–2017 school year indicated a student behavior mean of 1.92 referrals for advisory schools and 1.57 referrals for academic homeroom schools. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for behavior referrals between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.55, with a *p*-value of 0.60; therefore, the difference in means was not significant. Results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Student Behavior During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Referrals Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			0.55	0.60
Advisory	2016–2017	1.92	1.09		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	1.57	0.57		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.55) = t$ stat, $p = 0.60$, $d = 0.40$, 95% [-1.2669, 1.9652].

Investigation of the means for advisory schools indicated a mean for student behaviors during the 2017–2018 school year of 1.85 referrals per student. The mean for behaviors during the 2017–2018 school year for academic homeroom schools was 1.75 referrals per student. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for behavior referrals between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.18, with a *p*-value of 0.86; therefore, the difference in means was not significant (see Table 15).

Table 15

Student Behavior During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Referrals Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			0.18	0.86
Advisory	2017–2018	1.85	0.91		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	1.75	0.58		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.17) = t$ stat, $p = 0.86$, $d = 0.13$, 95% [-1.3405, 1.5472].

Investigation of the mean number of behavior referrals for each group, advisory and academic homeroom, for the 2018–2019 school year indicated a student behavior mean of 2.01 referrals for advisory schools and 1.40 referrals for academic homeroom schools. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student achievement between advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.99, with a *p*-value of 0.36; therefore, the difference in means was not significant. Results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Student Behavior During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	Referrals Per Student *M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.99	0.36
Advisory	2018–2019	2.01	1.16		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	1.40	1.40		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.61) = t$ stat, $p = 0.36$, $d = 0.47$, 95% [-.9633, 2.1833].

Differences Among Grades Levels

Educational settings and programming can be catered to meet the needs of students as they develop and mature, and some programming may be inappropriate at various stages of student development (Eccles et al., 1993). Research question three was designed to examine the differences among grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those attending traditional academic homerooms in the areas of attendance, behavior, and student achievement. Research question three was designed to investigate the impact of each program at various grade levels based upon student maturity and development.

Mean differences were calculated for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years in the areas of attendance, behavior, and achievement to compare the ninth grade with 10th-grade years and the 11th grade with 12th-grade years. Negative mean values indicate a decrease in attendance percentage, number of referrals,

or number of failing grades in a given year, while a positive value indicates an increase in the stated values.

Differences in Achievement for Grades Nine and 10

Analysis of achievement means for academic homeroom and advisory schools, for grades nine and 10 during the 2015–2016 school year, was completed by using independent sample *t*-tests. The differences in the means for achievement between the groups for grades nine and 10 were examined. The *t*-score was determined to be 2.25, with a *p*-value of 0.07. The difference in means was not significant, as represented in Table 17.

Table 17

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			2.25	0.07
Advisory	2015–2016	0.19	0.11		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	0.06	0.03		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$ .05 level was not significant, $t(2.32) = t$ stat, $p = 0.07$, $d = 1.61$, 95% [-.0189, .2856].

Investigation of the mean difference in the achievement between grades nine and 10 for the 2016–2017 school year provided a *t*-score of 1.97, with a difference in means

of 0.16 between the two groups. The *t*-score was determined to be 1.97, with a *p*-value of 0.10. The difference in means was not significant, as presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			1.97	0.10
Advisory	2016–2017	0.24	0.15		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.08	0.04		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.97) = t$ stat, $p = 0.10$, $d = 0.13$, 95% [-.0473, .3590].

Investigation of the mean difference in achievement between grades nine and 10 for the 2017–2018 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 1.03, with a difference in means of 0.12 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.34, the difference in means was not significant, as presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			1.03	0.34
Advisory	2017–2018	0.11	0.15		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.23	0.23		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.03) = t$ stat, $p = 0.34$, $d = 0.61$, 95% [-.0394, .1677].

Investigation of the mean difference in achievement between grades nine and 10 for the 2018–2019 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.89, with a difference in means of 0.13 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.41, the difference in the means was not significant, as presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in F's per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.89	0.41
Advisory	2018–2019	0.34	0.23		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.21	0.15		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.89) = t$ stat, $p = 0.41$, $d = 0.66$, 95% [-.2398, .4964].

Differences in Attendance for Grades Nine and 10

Analysis of the attendance means for academic homeroom and advisory schools, for grades nine and 10 during the 2015–2016 school year, was completed using independent sample *t*-tests. The differences in the means for attendance between the groups for grades nine and 10 were examined. The *t*-score was determined to be 2.27, with a *p*-value of .07. The differences in the means were not significant, as represented in Table 21.

Table 21

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance *%*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			2.27	0.07
Advisory	2015–2016	0.16	0.24		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	1.01	0.60		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(2.27) = t$ stat, $p = 0.07$, $d = 1.86$, 95% [-1.8140, .1123].

Investigation of the mean difference in the attendance percentage between grades nine and 10 for the 2016–2017 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.49, with a difference in means of 0.50 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.64, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			0.49	0.64
Advisory	2016–2017	0.42	0.37		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.69	0.87		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.49) = t$ stat, $p = 0.64$, $d = 0.40$, 95% [-1.6884, 1.1468].

Investigation of the mean difference in the attendance percentage between grades nine and 10 for the 2017–2018 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 1.98, with a difference in means of 0.52 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.10, the difference in the means was not significant (see Table 23).

Table 23

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			1.98	0.10
Advisory	2017–2018	0.22	0.09		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.74	0.43		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.98) = t$ stat, $p = 0.10$, $d = 1.67$, 95% [-1.1825, .1509].

Investigation of the mean difference in the attendance percentage between grades nine and 10 for the 2018–2019 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.63, with a difference in means of 0.33 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.55, the difference in the means was not significant (see Table 24).

Table 24

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.63	0.55
Advisory	2018–2019	0.93	0.68		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.60	0.65		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.63) = t$ stat, $p = 0.55$, $d = 0.49$, 95% [-.9845, 1.6295].

Differences in Behavior for Grades Nine and 10

Analysis of the behavior means for academic homeroom and advisory schools, for grades nine and 10 during the 2015–2016 school year, was completed using independent sample *t*-tests. The differences in the means for behavior between the groups for grades nine and 10 were examined. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student behavior in advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 1.15. With a *p*-value of 0.30, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are represented in Table 25.

Table 25

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			1.15	0.30
Advisory	2015–2016	0.48	0.40		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	0.21	0.22		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.15) = t$ stat, $p = 0.30$, $d = 0.13$, 95% [-.3364, .8831].

Investigation of the mean difference in the behavior between grades nine and 10 for the 2016–2017 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.75, with a difference in means of 0.19 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.48, the difference in the means was not significant (see Table 26).

Table 26

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			0.75	0.48
Advisory	2016–2017	0.63	0.42		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.44	0.24		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.75) = t$ stat, $p = 0.48$, $d = 0.55$, 95% [-.4616, .8433].

Investigation of the mean difference in behavior between grades nine and 10 for the 2017–2018 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 1.55, with a difference in means of 0.60 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.18, the difference in the means was not significant (see Table 27).

Table 27

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			1.55	0.18
Advisory	2017–2018	0.29	0.19		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.89	0.63		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.55) = t$ stat, $p = 0.18$, $d = 1.28$, 95% [-1.5943, .3943].

Investigation of the mean difference in behavior between grades nine and 10 for the 2018–2019 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 1.68, with a difference in means of 0.35 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.15, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 28.

Table 28

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 9 and 10 During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			1.68	0.15
Advisory	2018–2019	0.65	0.35		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.30	0.19		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <. 05$ level was not significant, $t(1.68) = t$ stat, $p = 0.15$, $d = 1.24$, 95% [-.1844, .8877].

Differences in Achievement for Grades 11 and 12

Analysis of the achievement means for academic homeroom and advisory schools, for grades 11 and 12 during the 2015–2016 school year, was completed using independent sample *t*-tests. The differences in the means for achievement between the groups for grades 11 and 12 were examined. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student achievement in advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.76. With a *p*-value of 0.76, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are represented in Table 29.

Table 29

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			0.31	0.76
Advisory	2015–2016	0.37	0.52		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	0.28	0.24		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.31) = t$ stat, $p = 0.76$, $d = 0.22$, 95% [-.6535, .8369].

Investigation of the mean difference in achievement between grades 11 and 12 for the 2016–2017 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.73, with a difference in means of 0.21 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.49, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 30.

Table 30

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			0.73	0.49
Advisory	2016–2017	0.45	0.58		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.24	0.16		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.73) = t$ stat, $p = 0.49$, $d = 0.49$, 95% [-.5445, .9778].

Investigation of the mean difference in achievement between grades 11 and 12 for the 2017–2018 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 1.51, with a difference in means of 0.45 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.19, the difference in the means was not significant (see Table 31).

Table 31

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			1.51	0.19
Advisory	2017–2018	0.71	0.52		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.26	0.25		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.51) = t$ stat, $p = 0.19$, $d = 1.10$, 95% [-.3113, 1.2013].

Investigation of the mean difference in achievement between grades 11 and 12 for the 2018–2019 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.62, with a difference in means of 0.12 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.55, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 32.

Table 32

Mean Differences in Achievement Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Fs Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.62	0.55
Advisory	2018–2019	0.39	0.29		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.27	0.20		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.62) = t$ stat, $p = 0.55$, $d = 0.48$, 95% [-.3656, .6006].

Differences in Attendance for Grades 11 and 12

Analysis of the attendance means for academic homeroom and advisory schools, for grades 11 and 12 during the 2015–2016 school year, was completed using independent sample *t*-tests. The differences in the means for attendance between the groups for grades 11 and 12 were examined. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student attendance in advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 1.15. With a *p*-value of 0.30, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are represented in Table 33.

Table 33

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance *%*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			1.15	0.30
Advisory	2015–2016	0.51	0.25		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	4.35	5.61		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.15) = t$ stat, $p = 0.30$, $d = 0.96$, 95% [-12.39, 4.700].

Investigation of the mean difference in the attendance percentage between grades 11 and 12 for the 2016–2017 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 1.51, with a difference in means of 0.53 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.19, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 34.

Table 34

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			1.51	0.19
Advisory	2016–2017	0.43	0.40		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.96	0.48		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(1.51) = t$ stat, $p = 0.19$, $d = 1.19$, 95% [-1.4206, .3689].

Investigation of the mean difference in the attendance percentage between grades 11 and 12 for the 2017–2018 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.80, with a difference in means of 0.22 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.45, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 35.

Table 35

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			0.80	0.45
Advisory	2017–2018	0.29	0.10		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.51	0.44		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.80) = t$ stat, $p = 0.45$, $d = 0.68$, 95% [-.9115, .4748].

Investigation of the mean difference in the attendance percentage between grades 11 and 12 for the 2018–2019 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.17, with a difference in means of 0.07 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.86, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 36.

Table 36

Mean Differences in Attendance Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Attendance %	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.17	0.86
Advisory	2018–2019	0.61	0.47		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.54	0.57		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.17) = t$ stat, $p = 0.86$, $d = 0.13$, 95% [-.9799, 1.1216].

Differences in Behavior for Grades 11 and 12

Analysis of the behavior means for academic homeroom and advisory schools, for grades 11 and 12 during the 2015–2016 school year, was completed using independent sample *t*-tests. The differences in the means for behavior referrals between the groups for grades 11 and 12 were examined. The *t*-score measuring the difference of the means for student behavior referrals in advisory and academic homeroom schools was determined to be 0.97. With a *p*-value of 0.97, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are represented in Table 37.

Table 37

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2015–2016 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2015–2016			0.97	0.97
Advisory	2015–2016	0.47	0.49		
Academic Homeroom	2015–2016	0.48	0.35		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(-.03) = t$ stat, $p = 0.97$, $d = 0.02$, 95% [-8324, .8124].

Investigation of the mean difference in behavior referrals between grades 11 and 12 for the 2016–2017 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 2.53, a difference in means of 0.68, and a *p*-value of 0.05. The difference in means was not significant, and the results are presented in Table 38.

Table 38

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2016–2017 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2016–2017			2.53	0.05
Advisory	2016–2017	0.12	0.01		
Academic Homeroom	2016–2017	0.80	0.45		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(2.53) = t$ stat, $p = 0.05$, $d = 2.13$, 95% [-1.3850, .0100].

Investigation of the mean difference in behavior referrals between grades 11 and 12 for the 2017–2018 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.11, with a difference in means of 0.04 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.91, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 39.

Table 39

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2017–2018 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2017–2018			0.11	0.91
Advisory	2017–2018	0.70	0.61		
Academic Homeroom	2017–2018	0.66	0.38		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.11) = t$ stat, $p = 0.91$, $d = 0.07$, 95% [-.9223, 1.0106].

Investigation of the mean difference in behavior referrals between grades 11 and 12 for the 2018–2019 school year resulted in a *t*-score of 0.27, with a difference in means of 0.02 between the two groups. With a *p*-value of 0.79, the difference in the means was not significant. The results are presented in Table 40.

Table 40

Mean Differences in Behavior Between Grades 11 and 12 During the 2018–2019 School Year

Group Names	School Year	*M* Difference in Referrals Per Student	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Advisory and Academic Homeroom Comparison	2018–2019			0.27	0.79
Advisory	2018–2019	0.48	0.05		
Academic Homeroom	2018–2019	0.46	0.16		

Note. The difference between advisory and academic homeroom at the $p <$. 05 level was not significant, $t(.27) = t$ stat, $p = 0.79$, $d = 0.13$, 95% [-2270, .2803].

Summary

An analysis of data was presented in Chapter Four. The advisory teachers who participated in the survey suggested an advisory program provides opportunities to build positive relationships within the school day that might not otherwise be possible. Although strong opinions were shared by the teachers indicating advisory provides opportunities to build relationships with students, their perceptions differed regarding the impact of advisory on achievement, attendance, and behavior. The analysis from advisory and academic homeroom schools indicated there is no difference between the impact advisory and academic homerooms have on student attendance, achievement, and behavior.

In Chapter Five, the major elements of the study are presented, and conclusions are drawn from the data that were analyzed. The findings are summarized to provide a

detailed view of the impact of advisory programs on student attendance, behavior, and achievement. In addition, teacher perceptions, recommendations, and statements of outcomes are presented. The conclusions lead to suggestions and implications for practice with regard to advisory programs and academic homerooms. Recommendations for future research are also stated.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

This study was conducted to determine the impact of advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Chapter Five begins with the presentation of findings from the data analysis, and conclusions are presented based upon those findings. Implications for practice are offered and recommendations for future research are given to provide researchers with suggestions pertaining to advisory and academic homeroom implementation and program adjustment.

Findings

In Chapter Four, the data from the survey responses were presented, along with outcomes for advisory programs. Independent sample *t*-tests were completed to compare the student achievement, attendance, and behavior means for advisory programs and academic homerooms for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Explanations pertaining to the statistical significance of each comparison, and the differences between the means for advisories and academic homerooms were given.

Research Question One

What do high school advisory teachers state as outcomes of high school advisory programs?

Teachers from various grade levels responded to the survey since the teachers' classrooms consist of a blend of students from various grade levels within their advisory classes. The greatest number of teachers responding, 63%, taught a mixed grade level advisory class, while the remaining 37% had only one grade level represented in their advisory period. Of the 73 teacher respondents, 13% had freshmen only, 7% had sophomores, 8% had juniors, and 9% had seniors.

Feedback from the survey indicated an overall positive perception towards advisory periods, specifically in advisory's ability to provide opportunities to build positive, intentional relationships with students. Researchers suggest advisory periods provide opportunities to build positive relationships, and advisory teacher beliefs align with the stated research (Atkin et al., 2018; Gayl, 2018; McCluskey, 2017). The majority of teacher participants, 90.66%, *strongly agreed* or *agreed* advisory periods provide an avenue to build positive relationships.

The survey data suggested most teachers, 90.66%, believed advisory periods provide an opportunity to connect and build relationships that would otherwise not be possible if the advisory period did not exist. Feedback suggested 91.33% of the teachers felt the building of relationships within an advisory class is only successful if the students are engaged in the process of building relationships. Most teachers, 81.34%, believed this was the case, while 18.66% of the teacher participants thought positive relationships could be formed with students regardless of the degree to which the students are engaged in the process. In this study, 90.66% of the advisory teachers noted that advisory programs allow students to build positive relationships, which aligns with current research on advisory programs (McCluskey, 2017; Pearsall, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014).

Advisory periods are often facilitated in smaller groups, emphasizing personal connections with individual students (McCluskey, 2017; Templeton, 2017). The student's ability to comprehend skills and demonstrate competency will largely impact their academic success, and small group settings and personalization of learning can impact student achievement in a positive way (Atkin et al., 2018; Bounsanga et al., 2020). The majority of teachers *strongly agreed* or *agreed* (73.33%) that advisory periods assist with

the personalization of the learning experience for students. Atkin et al. (2018) suggested that personalization of learning has been shown to positively impact student achievement; however, teachers who participated in the survey responded with mixed feelings about whether advisory periods have a positive impact on student achievement.

Nearly three-quarters of the teachers, 74.33%, believed advisories positively impact student achievement, while 25.77% *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* with the advisory's ability to do so. The teachers' views on an advisory program's ability to impact student achievement were less confident in advisory's ability to affect achievement versus advisory's ability in providing opportunities to build positive relationships. Teachers felt strongly that advisory periods provide time to support students through academic advisement; however, survey data indicated the confidence is low on academic advisement's impact on student achievement through the time offered in an advisory period.

Advisory periods can increase student connectedness to school by building personal relationships, providing social-emotional support, and providing personalized learning experiences (Barkauskas & Burroughs, 2017; Gayl, 2018; Van Ornum, 2014). Although the link between relationships, social-emotional support, and personalized learning's impact on student achievement, attendance, and behavior is not readily made in research, student attendance stands to be one of the leading predictors in student academic success (Allensworth & Evans, 2016). Participants in this study relayed their perceptions of an advisory program's impact on student attendance, and just over half of the teachers responding, 54.66%, believed advisory programs positively impact student attendance. Similarly, when asked if advisory periods contribute to student-school

connectedness, influencing students to attend school, 61.32% of respondents believe advisory periods assist in increasing a student's desire to attend school.

The ability of a student to be academically successful in a school setting can often be impacted by their own behavior or another student's behavior in the educational setting, and school programming can function in reducing those behaviors (Briesch et al., 2020; Mare & Reeves, 2017). One survey statement was focused on if advisory periods assist in reducing student behaviors due to teacher-student relationships, and this statement was widely supported by the teachers. The majority of teachers, 78.66%, *strongly agreed* or *agreed* the relationships formed between teachers and students during advisory can assist in diminishing student behaviors in the school setting. When expanding advisory's impact beyond the individual student to the building level, most of the teachers, 83.99%, *strongly agreed* or *agreed* advisory programs impact the school environment in a positive manner.

Research Question Two

What is the difference among student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms?

$H2_0$: There is no difference among student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms.

The impact of advisory programs on high school student achievement, attendance, and behavior is not well researched, and there has been a need for additional data pertaining to advisory program impact (Washor & Mokowski, 2014). The intent of

research question two was to provide additional data on the impact of advisory on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. For research question two, the null hypothesis was not rejected as there was not a statistically significant difference in the means for advisory schools and academic homeroom schools for the variables of student achievement, attendance, and behavior. In examining the level of significance for advisory schools and academic homeroom schools, for all years evaluated, all *p*-values were greater than 0.05, indicating a lack of statistical significance (see Table 41).

Table 41

p-Values of Advisory and Academic Homeroom Schools

School Year	Achievement	Attendance	Behavior
2015-2016	0.57	0.47	0.94
2016-2017	0.69	0.52	0.60
2017-2018	0.69	0.90	0.86
2018-2019	0.55	0.39	0.36

Note. p-Values less than 0.05 are significant.

Confidence intervals are an indication of an acceptable range of the mean in the population sampled, and increased variance can lead to a larger range in confidence intervals (Gay & Mills, 2019). Likewise, the calculated standard deviation for the data sample provides information indicating how wide the range for a sample may be (Gay & Mills, 2019). When reviewing the data for advisory and academic homeroom schools, the standard deviation difference was greater than 0.3 for all variables in each year examined, indicating there was a large spread in the range of the sample and likely indicative of the sample surveyed. The data provided in this study indicated no statistically significant difference among student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms.

Advisory programs and academic homerooms are used in schools throughout the United States, and the rationale for the implementation of either program often depends on educational philosophy and community needs (Agwu et al., 2016). When comparing the results from this study with previous findings in related research, the results are consistent. Brodie (2014) found there is no significant difference in the impact of advisory programs or academic homerooms on student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

School programs are often implemented to create change and positive influence within students and the school as a whole, and quantifying the results of those changes can often be difficult. Many factors influence student achievement, attendance, and behaviors, including home environment, student-school connectedness, curriculum, teacher-student relationships, school programming, and others (Mooney, 2017). Positive student outcomes and gains in student achievement, attendance, and behavior are likely a result of the collective influence of all efforts to improve student and school outcomes.

Research Question Three

What is the difference between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those attending traditional academic homerooms?

$H3_0$: There is no difference between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those who attend traditional academic homerooms.

Differences in the areas of student achievement, attendance, and behaviors for advisory and academic homeroom schools were evaluated between grades 9 and 10. Likewise, differences in the areas of student achievement, attendance, and behaviors for advisory and academic homeroom schools were evaluated between grades 11 and 12. The

purpose of this comparison was to determine if there were considerable differences between advisory and academic homeroom schools at various grade levels in high school. As research indicates, student needs often change as students mature and progress through school, and the need for adjustments in school programming may be necessary to accommodate the developing and changing learners (Branje, 2018; Hernandez, et al., 2017).

For research question three, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all years and variables tested. There was no significant difference between grades 9 and 10 for advisory and academic homeroom schools during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Additionally, there was no significant difference between grade levels for student achievement, attendance, and behaviors between grades 11 and 12 for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Examining the level of significance for differences in student achievement, attendance, and behavior for advisory and academic homeroom grade levels, for all four years evaluated indicated all *p*-values were greater than 0.05, indicating a lack of statistical significance for those data set comparisons (see Table 42 and Table 43).

Table 42

p-Values for Differences between Grades 9 and 10

School Year	Achievement	Attendance	Behavior
2015-2016	0.07	0.07	0.30
2016-2017	0.10	0.64	0.48
2017-2018	0.34	0.10	0.18
2018-2019	0.41	0.55	0.15

Note. p-Values less than 0.05 are significant.

Table 43

p-Values for Differences between Grades 11 and 12

School Year	Achievement	Attendance	Behavior
2015-2016	0.49	0.30	0.97
2016-2017	0.19	0.19	0.05
2017-2018	0.55	0.45	0.91
2018-2019	0.30	0.86	0.79

Note. p-Values less than 0.05 are significant.

Although students transition from one grade level to the next, and their needs may change, the data indicated no statistically significant difference between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those who attend traditional academic homerooms. Similar to research question two, students exposed to advisory programs and academic homerooms can demonstrate positive or negative outcomes in school. These outcomes are likely a result of various factors contributing to and influencing student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Conclusions

There is a lack of research comparing advisory programs to academic homerooms and each approach's impact on student achievement, attendance, and behavior (Washor & Mokowski, 2014). This study provided data contributing to existing research and filled current gaps in this area of study. The survey data in this research study indicated advisory programs provide opportunities to build positive relationships with students that may not be possible in traditional classroom settings. When students engage in the relationship-building process with school staff during advisory, positive outcomes exist. The advisory time allocated within the school day provides teachers an intentional opportunity to connect with students, and by having this focus, there can be a positive impact on students and the culture of the building.

Personalization of learning was also an area of emphasis in this study and is often a focus area for advisory programs. Personalization of learning is one of the positive outcomes of advisory periods, as stated by survey respondents. Teachers focusing on one-on-one interactions, paired with few students in advisory periods, allow for increased personal interactions between students and teachers, thus increasing the personalization of learning opportunities. Survey data indicated a high number of advisory teachers believe advisory periods assist in increasing personalization of learning opportunities for students, and interactions in advisory can also help students develop soft skills, thus influencing a student's ability to take ownership in their own learning process.

In this study, advisory teachers were asked to provide their perceptions on the impact of advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Most advisory teachers communicated in the survey their belief that advisory programs can

positively influence both student achievement and student behavior outcomes. Advisory teachers attributed advisory's positive influence on student achievement and student behaviors to the relationships built between the teacher and student during the allocated advisory time during the school day. The ability of advisory programs ability to impact student attendance is limited, and advisory teacher opinions' lacked confidence in advisory's ability to positively influence student attendance, thus increasing a student's desire to attend school.

In addition, survey data suggested there is a need to build community within the advisory class to create trust and improve communication between the teacher, student, and peers. Relationships, student-school connectedness, and social-emotional support are focus areas in advisory programs, and this study confirmed the need for those areas to be foundational components in any advisory program (Gayl, 2018; Roorda et al., 2017; Schochet et al., 2013). Overall, survey respondents viewed advisory programs in a positive manner and believed they have a positive impact on student outcomes, specifically student achievement and student behaviors. Survey data also indicated advisory periods have a positive impact on the school culture.

The data provided in this study lacked evidence to indicate either approach, advisory or academic homeroom, is superior in the impact each has on student attendance, achievement, and behavior. There is difficulty in suggesting any one factor is responsible for influencing student achievement, attendance, and behavior as there are many factors inside and outside the school setting influencing each of these variables (Utah State Board of Education, 2019). The influence any one factor has on student achievement, attendance, and behavior may be difficult to quantify; however, all efforts

made to improve each of these areas can have a positive impact on a student's achievement, attendance, behaviors, soft skill development, or the school as a whole.

Given the differences in students' ability and maturity as they progress throughout high school, it is possible that student needs may change as they progress from one grade level to the next (Hernandez, et al., 2017). Various grade levels were examined for both academic homeroom and advisory programs to determine if there was a difference in student achievement, attendance, and behavior for either approach. The study data suggested no statistical difference between ninth and tenth grades, and also eleventh and twelfth grades, for advisory periods and academic homerooms in their impact on student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Although the results of this study did not indicate a statistically significant difference between advisory and academic homeroom schools and their impact on student achievement, attendance, and behaviors, research and the feedback provided from advisory teachers in the study make clear the importance of building relationships and forming connections with students. Efforts made to build relationships and further support students can impact student-school connectedness and contribute to positive student and school outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).

Implications for Practice

Within this study, recommendations were provided by advisory teachers with the intent of improving advisory programs and providing valuable information to educators looking to implement an advisory program in their schools. Advisory teachers provided feedback proving beneficial for anyone working in an advisory school or looking to start a new program. Overall, feedback from advisory teachers suggested that advisory is

viewed through a positive lens by most advisory teachers. The time allocated by advisory provides opportunities to build positive relationships with students and form one-on-one connections with them.

School staff looking to implement a new advisory program should gather feedback from all stakeholders and incorporate stakeholder feedback into program development's planning and development phases. Clearly defined program goals and staff expectations are necessary to ensure consistency between teachers and a common commitment by staff to work towards the program goals. Staff buy-in is greater when the objectives are clearly defined, and failure to ensure consistency can place undue stress on staff members who work towards the common expectations for the program.

As school leaders begin to decide whether an advisory program or academic homeroom should be implemented, they must first consider their students, staff, culture, and current areas of needed improvement. Advisory programs and academic homerooms provide foundational components and focus areas that prove beneficial to a school and community (Brodie, 2014; Templeton, 2017; Van Ornum, 2014). Researching advisory programs and academic homerooms, seeking input from stakeholders, considering the current needs and areas of improvement for the building and district, providing appropriate professional development prior to implementation, and ensuring consistency and a common commitment towards the program goals are the implications for practice from this study.

Finally, providing timely and adequate professional development to all staff prior to program implementation is a necessity. Properly implemented professional development can assist staff in feeling more comfortable with their role in the

implementation and can improve the overall success and impact of the program (Mason et al., 2017; Wilkins, 2014). Providing professional development often leads to gained knowledge and skills required to facilitate program improvements and school-wide success (Mare & Reeves, 2017; Porter, 2020).

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, further research could be conducted to obtain additional feedback from students, parents, and administrators stating their perceptions on advisory programs. The survey data in this study provided teacher perceptions on advisory programs. Surveying advisory students to gather their perceptions and recommendations could prove beneficial in making adjustments to programming. In addition, surveying administrators who have implemented advisory programs could provide helpful information for current administrators considering advisory implementation, and this feedback could help administrators avoid major pitfalls in the planning or implementation process. In addition, the surveying of academic homeroom teachers could provide comparative data between academic homeroom and advisory teachers.

A second recommendation for future research is to survey advisory and academic homeroom graduates and their parents to determine graduate perceptions. Feedback would be collected on each program's contribution in preparing them for post-secondary education or workplace readiness. It would be interesting to follow up with these families to see their perceptions of which program they feel better prepared them for life after high school.

This study took place over a four-year period and included schools located in the Midwestern United States. The third recommendation for future research would be to replicate this study over a longer period of time, include more schools as participants in the research, and expand the geographical area from which participating schools are located. It would be interesting to see if including a longer time span, a larger sample size, and an expanded geographical region would provide additional information and alternative outcomes, further contributing to the already existing research.

The fourth recommendation for future research would be to compare advisory and academic homeroom student data for achievement, attendance, and behavior with those schools with similar demographics but who do not offer a homeroom or advisory period. The data from this study suggested there is no significant difference between advisory and academic homeroom's impact on achievement, attendance, and behavior. This suggested comparison could provide additional data about the impact of not offering an advisory or academic homeroom on student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Summary

Allocated time during the school day to offer an advisory period or academic homeroom is commonplace within high schools across the United States (source/year). The decision as to which approach to implement often depends on past practice within the school, educational philosophies of current staff, and current goals or objectives of the building and district. Each approach can provide benefits to the students, staff, and community in which the school resides, and the decision on which method will be most effective largely depends on the needs and beliefs of the stakeholders within the school's community.

Student achievement, attendance, and behavior are often considered the three areas most influencing a student's success in school; however, there are other factors such as parental support, previous educational experience, cognitive ability, soft skill acquisition, and many others that can contribute to a student's ability to succeed in school. It is possible that any one of these factors can greatly impact a student's success in school; however, it is also likely that multiple factors contribute to the collective outcome for a student's school experience and performance. This study specifically examined the impact of advisory programs on student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

The first research question was developed to gain feedback from advisory teachers on their perceptions of advisory programs. In this study, a large percentage of survey respondents expressed an appreciation for the time allocated for an advisory period within the school day, specifically for the time advisory provides to build positive relationships with students. Teachers stated the time allocated in advisory provides an opportunity for personal connection; however, teachers believe students must be active participants in building relationships for the effort to be successful. Additionally, advisory teachers believe the efforts in advisory can positively impact student achievement, although participants' views are varied on the influence of advisory on student attendance and its ability to influence students' desires to attend school. Overall, the teachers indicated advisory has a positive impact on the school culture and environment.

The teachers provided several recommendations for administrators and teachers looking to improve an existing advisory or implement a new program. It is recommended that adequate feedback be requested and collected from stakeholders within the school

and community during the planning process. Gathering this information can help the school better meet the needs of those students they are serving. Appropriate and timely professional development is essential in the teachers' ability to feel comfortable in supporting students academically, socially, and emotionally. Additionally, participants believed the administration should relay clear and concise expectations pertaining to program objectives, and all staff members should maintain consistency in working toward the program goals. A common effort and collective commitment towards the program goals will provide the best opportunity for positive student impact and program success.

The second research question was developed to determine the impact advisory programs have on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. In comparing the impact of advisory with academic homeroom, the data provided in this study indicated no statistically significant difference among student achievement, attendance, and behavior for high school students exposed to an advisory program and those exposed to traditional academic homerooms.

The third research question was developed to determine if there was a difference in growth between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those attending traditional academic homerooms. As a student progresses through high school, they often gain maturity and acquire skills, possibly impacting or changing the student's needs in the school setting. Research question three was posed to investigate if advisory or academic homerooms impact student achievement, attendance, and behavior at various grade levels. In reviewing the data and analysis, there was no statistically significant

difference in the growth between grade levels for students exposed to an advisory program and those who attend traditional academic homerooms.

This research provided a thorough analysis and comparison of schools that offer an advisory program and those that use an academic homeroom. This study provided information contributing to the research on advisory programs and their impact on student achievement, attendance, and behavior. Recommendations were provided for teachers and administrators considering the implementation of an advisory program. The information provided by advisory teachers will assist those in the planning and implementation process in providing the best chance for success as they begin their advisory program journey.

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Appendix A

Survey

This survey is being used in a doctoral study to determine the effectiveness of high school advisory programs on student achievement, behaviors, and attendance. This survey is designed to elicit specific teacher opinions pertaining to advisory programs that may be useful for schools starting or adjusting an advisory program.

*Required

What grade level do you have this year for your advisory period? *

___ 9 ___10 ____11 ____12

Please select the answer that best represents your feelings about advisory periods.

Survey Scale:
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree

Advisory periods provide an avenue to build intentional positive relationships *

___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods allow teachers the ability to connect with students in a way that might not be possible in other settings *

___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods are only successful if the students are engaged in the building of relationships *

___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods assist in personalizing learning experiences for students *

___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods assist in personalizing the learning experiences of students by enabling students to take ownership in their learning *

___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods have a positive effect on student achievement *

___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods do not have any effect on student achievement *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods provide an opportunity for academic advisement, which positively affects student achievement *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods have a positive effect on student attendance *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods contribute to student-school connectedness, resulting in an increasing desire to attend school *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods contribute to improved student behavior *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods assist in reducing student behaviors due to the teacher-student relationship *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Advisory periods impact the school environment in a positive manner *
___ 1 ___2 ___3 ___4

Please write the response that best represents your feelings about advisory periods.

What are the outcomes, positive or negative, of offering an advisory period? *

How do advisory periods impact the level of personalization your students receive in the learning process? *

What would make advisory better for you? *

What do you see as the greatest benefit of advisory, if any, to your own personal growth and development? *

Appendix B

Advisory – Superintendent Letters

XXXX School District

Date: February 25, 2021

Dr. XXXX,

My name is Josh Flora. I am presently pursuing my Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration through Lindenwood University and am in the process of writing my dissertation entitled *The Impact of Advisory Programs on Student Achievement, Attendance, and Behaviors.*

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, behavior, and attendance. This study will involve elicitation of teacher opinions pertaining to advisory programs, as well as suggested considerations administrators and teachers should reflect on when offering an advisory or planning to implement an advisory. In addition, the impact of advisories and homerooms on student achievement, attendance, and behaviors will be determined.

I am hereby requesting your permission to allow me to survey the certified classroom teachers of **XXXX High School**. In addition, I am requesting that **XXXX High School** supply the number of F's per grade level, attendance percentage per grade level, and the number of behavior incidents per grade level (9–12) for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. The data will be gathered in a confidential manner with no identifying information.

Your approval in this matter will greatly be appreciated. Thank you for your consideration, and you may reach me by email at [redacted] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Josh Flora

Appendix C

IRB Approval

IRB-21-124: Initial - The Impact of Advisory Programs on Student Achievement, Attendance, and Behavior

Dear Joshua Flora,

The study, The Impact of Advisory Programs on Student Achievement, Attendance, and Behavior, 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.

The submission was approved on April 14, 2021.

Here are the findings:

IRB Discussion

- The PI is reminded that compliance with the recruitment policies at an external site resides with the PI. Should the policies of an external site require authorization from that site's IRB or another office, the PI must obtain this authorization and upload it as a modification to their approved LU IRB application prior to recruiting subjects at that site.

Regulatory Determinations

- This study has been determined to be minimal risk because the research is not obtaining data considered sensitive information or performing interventions posing harm greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

Sincerely,
Lindenwood University (lindenwood) Institutional Review Board

Appendix D

Advisory – Principal Letters

XXXX School District

Date: February 25, 2021

XXXX,

My name is Josh Flora. I am presently pursuing my Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration through Lindenwood University and am in the process of writing my dissertation entitled *The Impact of Advisory Programs on Student Achievement, Attendance, and Behaviors.*

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, behavior, and attendance. This study will involve elicitation of teacher opinions pertaining to advisory programs, as well as suggested considerations administrators and teachers should reflect on when offering an advisory or planning to implement an advisory. In addition, the impact of advisories and homerooms on student achievement, attendance, and behaviors will be determined.

I am hereby requesting your permission to allow me to survey the certified classroom teachers of **XXXX High School**. In addition, I am requesting that **XXXX High School** supply the number of F's per grade level, attendance percentage per grade level, and the number of behavior incidents per grade level (9–12) for the 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. The data will be gathered in a confidential manner with no identifying information.

Your approval on this matter will greatly be appreciated. Thank you for your consideration, and you may reach me by email at [redacted] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Josh Flora

Appendix E

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

The Impact of Advisory Programs on Student Achievement, Attendance, and Behaviors

Before reading this consent form, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

Basic information about this study:

- We are interested in learning about the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, behavior, and attendance.
- You will be asked to respond to survey questions using one link sent to you in an email.
- Participation includes minimal risk; however, it is possible that information could be captured and used by others not associated with this study.

LINDENWOOD

Survey Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a survey conducted by Josh Flora and Dr. Brad Hanson at Lindenwood University. We are conducting this study to determine the influence of high school advisory programs on student achievement, behavior, and attendance. This study will involve elicitation of teacher opinions pertaining to advisory programs, as well as suggested considerations administrators and teachers should reflect on when offering an advisory or planning to implement an advisory. In addition, the impact of advisories and homerooms on student achievement, attendance, and behaviors will be determined. We will be asking about 380 other people to answer these questions.

It will take about 30 minutes to complete this survey.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window. There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Josh Flora [redacted]

Dr. Brad Hanson [redacted]

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age.

You can withdraw from this study at any time by simply closing the browser window. Please feel free to print a copy of this information sheet.

Vita

Josh Flora has been in public education for 17 years. Josh's journey began in a rural school in southwest Missouri, where he taught various science courses including dual credit biology, chemistry, and physical science for grades 9–12. Josh served within this district for 10 years, was a member of the building leadership team and character education team, and served as an assistant baseball and softball coach. It was during this time that he obtained a master's degree in Educational Administration.

Following his years teaching high school science, Josh became an assistant principal at a large urban school, also in southwest Missouri. Josh served as the ninth-grade assistant principal for three years and the junior assistant principal for one year. Josh was responsible for leading the transitions committee, the at-risk team, and virtual instruction. During his last year in the district, Josh received the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals Assistant Principal of the Year Award for Southwest Missouri.

After his fourth year as an assistant principal, Josh obtained a lead principal position at a large neighboring high school in southwest Missouri. Josh is an active member of the southwest region's Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals and was recently named the Exemplary New Principal of the Year.