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A Mixed-Methods Exploration Study on Trauma-Informed Practices Used to Dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Public and Private Schools in the City of St. Louis

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by

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Declaration of Originality

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

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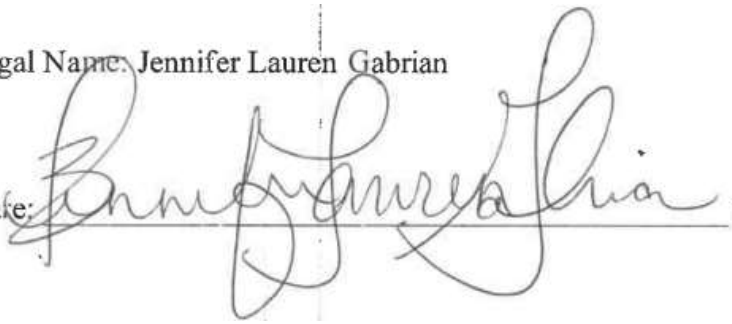
Signature:  Date: 1/28/22

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Abstract

Since the release of the Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in 2019, school leaders were given the opportunity to start the process of meeting the emotional and fundamental needs of students. With the effects of trauma reaching all diverse groups of race, gender, economic status, and community surroundings, there is an increased need to use the education system to reach students emotionally. Though the model is a blueprint for schools, school districts are not required to adopt this model and implement it within their districts. Due to the recent pandemic, trauma has reached everyone across the world. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has caused some type of disruption to everyday life and social norms. Other traumas that children in the community have faced include incarceration, abuse, and neglect. Saint Louis, where this study took place, poverty is higher than that of the national and state averages. This mixed-methods study examined how different types of schools and roles within education systems used trauma-informed practices and how participants believe these practices can dismantle the ongoing effects of the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Through interviews and surveys, the researcher examined various types of questions to reflect how public, private, and charter schools and teachers, administrators, and support staff understand and implement these practices. The survey and interview addressed the definition of trauma, if and how participants use trauma-informed practices, as well as their discipline methods. There were just under 200 participants included across the city of St. Louis in public, private, and charter schools. To analyze this the researcher used the survey to differentiate between administration and staff, public, charter, and private school employees, and those who identify as trauma-

informed and those who do not identify as trauma-informed. Using an ANOVA, the researcher analyzed survey questions. This analysis found there is no difference in their level of understanding as it pertains to trauma-informed practices. However, there was a significant difference in how participants enforce them and how fair and consistently they address students' social and emotional needs. The researcher recommends that school leaders work together to create consistency and accountability for their staff and students.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Job responsibilities for St. Louis city educators extend beyond academics and the classroom. An educator's goal is to push students academically by moving the needle toward proficiency on benchmark and statewide assessments. Yet, teachers are working as counselors to build strong relationships, parents to teach manners and discipline, social workers to help their basic needs, and nurses when injured. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA, 2019) defines trauma as:

> Results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individuals' functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. (SAMSHA, Trauma and Violence, para. 2)

Trauma affects the student population which impacts the relationships with educators in the school system. Trauma can cause challenges for students academically, behaviorally, and socially (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Yet, teachers do not receive guidance nor proper training to address the whole child. To better support those who have experienced trauma, teachers, administrators, and school mental health providers desire specialized training (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018). There is a divide that matriculates into the education system leaving students with limited resources needed for their social, emotional, and academic development. In this study, the researcher examined the training, programs, and perceptions of trauma-informed care in each type of school within city limits.

The researcher used data from the Census and analyzed the Race American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019), which found the estimated racial composition of St. Louis city is 44% White, 45% Black or African American, 4% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 3% Two or more races (Demographics Section, Figure 2). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), in the city of St. Louis, there are approximately 52% of families who earn less than $50,000 a year and 30% who make between $50,000 and $100,000 (Economics Section, Figure 1). In St. Louis, 19% of the population live below the poverty line, which is about 1.5 times the amount it is in Missouri and the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019, Economics Section, Figure 2). Historically, the growth of mass incarceration caused children to lose their parents to incarceration, especially their fathers (Turney, 2017). Dickerson and Agosto (2015) reported that Black males had the lowest number of high school graduates in 38 states across the country. In contrast, the highest school graduation rate is among White people with a rate of 91.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019, Social Section, Figure 1). In St. Louis, 19% of the male population is unemployed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019, Poverty Status, para. 1). African Americans represent the prison population by 40%, but only represent 13% of the national population (Wagner & Rabuy, 2017, p. 15). Poverty, incarceration, family structure, and racial divide are the factors that should be considered when identifying students who are exposed to trauma. Other examples of traumatic experiences children overcome are child abuse, community violence, domestic violence, war, and neglect (Norton et al., 2019). These experiences cause triggers within children. Triggers can create emotional responses in the school setting. “Children who are victims of traumatic events often struggle to focus on instructions or academic content, behave

according to prescribed school rules, engage with their peers in a socially responsive or appropriate manner and feel a sense of comfort and safety at school" (Field et al, 2017, p. 5).

There is a growing need for school leaders to find how to educate, support, and discipline students who are facing traumatic challenges in Saint Louis. In the city of St. Louis, the youth living in extreme poverty areas are losing their peers and family members in large numbers, due to gun violence. Students tend to seek ways to adjust to their circumstances by adapting to survival, looking outside of the home and relying on gangs for protection or comfort. With constant exposure to community violence, students struggle with finding the purpose and importance of education in their future. Building strong relationships with students to educate them inside and outside the classroom is always at the forefront of urban education. Therefore, teachers must know the community they serve to make connections to the curriculum in schools.

A lack of students' basic needs causes them to find those needs for themselves. Maslow (1943) postulated that only needs not yet satisfied influence human behavior. In order to survive and maintain a physiological balance, the lowest levels of needs relate to the body's need for food, water, oxygen, and sleep (Harper et al., 2003). Middle and high school students across the Saint Louis city area are coming to school with adult responsibilities weighing on their shoulders daily. Building on those basic needs is the second tier of safety needs, which include protection, stability, and freedom from fear and constant anxiety (Harper et al., 2003). Maslow's next level is the need for belongingness and love, where individuals need to find their place in a group, support system, or even a youth gang (Harper et al., 2003). Families are divided and separated, leaving little

stability for students to focus on education. Families living in poverty may rely on siblings to raise one another. “Some children may face further exposure to toxic stress from historical and ongoing traumas due to systemic racism or the impacts on multigenerational poverty resulting from limited educational and economic opportunities” (CDC, 2019, p. 8). These responsibilities coupled with trauma limit opportunities and abilities for students to identify feelings or work through their emotions. Without an adequate place for students to understand these emotions, students are in turn holding in their feelings, which tends to lead to explosions of behaviors or misconceptions of what they feel when asked to conform to school policies or expectations. When these emotional outbursts occur, their reaction can become bigger than the apparent problem. A fight-flight-freeze reaction results from stressful situations directly evoking a fear response (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018). For example, the reaction does not fit the misunderstanding. Once a person or event triggers an individual who has suffered a traumatic experience it can cause aggressive behavior (Cavanaugh, 2016). These reactions from students can be drastic, requiring schools to use limited discipline strategies, such as out of school suspension, that further separate traumatized students from the classroom. A student’s response to trauma shapes the history, frequency, and seriousness of the traumatic event, as well as the support provided to the traumatizing event (CDC, 2019). Students cannot learn if discipline continuously separates students from the learning experience. Trauma-informed approaches help the student learn how to develop healthy coping skills by holding them accountable for their behavior. Administrators and teachers discipline students based on their behaviors, rather than healing the cause of the behavior. There are few developmentally appropriate school

discipline interventions used by teachers and policymakers (Gregory et al., 2016). Without prior knowledge of a student's experience in trauma, schools discipline students with limited knowledge.

Due to continuous Exposure to Community Violence (ECV), youth are desensitized and prone to criminal activity outside the home, which can result in death or incarceration. Increased exposure to community violence is more likely to cause aggressive responses and behavior (Gaylord et al., 2017). "Students in the vulnerable schools also had more negative perceptions of peers, more fights, and more substance abuse, all of which highlight the individual need and negatively impact school culture" (Blitz & Lee, 2015, p. 34). These are factors that create a cycle of discipline further separating students from their education by removing the child from the classroom and often the school premises. Some discipline responses are tiered and matched to the outcome that the district sees will fit. Other discipline programs use a panel approach to make final discipline decisions. Some districts have one administrator responsible for discipline with little, to no consistency or documentation to show the effects of discipline. This research will contribute to discipline by analyzing different trauma-informed practices used to meet the emotional needs of students and using them to create a community of academic achievement and educate the whole child. This research could expose teachers and administrators to the definition and importance of trauma-informed practices or programs. This knowledge could create a single program that could be used unilaterally within the city limits across different demographics. Applying this knowledge can create consistency in the city across all schools and how they will use trauma-informed training to address a large amount of exposure to community violence

and ongoing exposure to trauma. Implementing trauma-informed practices would unite schools on discipline and could dismantle the School-to-Prison pipeline. The goals of schools are to bring students to a proficient level of understanding in each academic subject at their current grade level. This study can create an approach for embedding strong restorative practices and trauma-informed practices that may lead to positive impacts on the whole child and their learning processes.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this study was to analyze the implementation of trauma-informed practices in public and private school settings within the city limits of St. Louis. In 2016, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) enforced statewide training about trauma. The purpose of the training was to change educators' perspectives and approach to Missouri students. To use as a guide, Missouri created a model outlining the methods and systems to become a trauma-informed school.

According to The Missouri Model: A Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Approaches, the purpose of this initiative was to ensure that agencies do no harm to students, to assess the implementation of the basic principle of trauma-informed approaches to various organizational settings, to develop a common language and framework for discussion, to help increase the effectiveness of services, wherever and whatever they are by increasing awareness of trauma (DESE, 2019, p. 4).

After this initiative, there was no mandate imposed by DESE to ensure schools created a program using this model. DESE did not set guidelines for district leaders to create a trauma-informed atmosphere. “The American Psychological Association (APA), indicated that such trauma may lead to challenges with emotional regulation, social

relationships, and the development of physical symptoms due to anxiety" (as cited in Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 41). Though teachers and administrators were required to participate in training provided by their schools, this information was given in a single day of professional development. In some districts, this training was a half-day professional development coupled with active shooter training. This dissertation will not discuss the importance of trauma-informed practices in education, as research has been found in several studies. "In 2014, Pappano's research indicated that as many as 68% of children experience at least some form of trauma event" (as cited in Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 41). The purpose of this study is to find commonalities in how teachers, administrators, and support staff used trauma-informed practices within St. Louis city limits at public, private, and charter schools. The Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools was a paradigm shift to consider when making discipline decisions inside and outside the classroom. However, without a mandate for Missouri schools to apply this model, there is no accountability for districts. The gap in the literature did show educators were lacking professional development courses and specific trauma-informed practices that reduce discipline incidents. "Missouri Senate Bill 638 requires DESE to provide information to schools about what it means to be trauma-informed but does not represent a requirement for schools to provide trauma training to staff or begin the journey to becoming trauma-informed" (DESE, 2019, p. 4). There are no requirements regarding the number of disciplinary actions taken against nor programs implemented within the state to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Educators are accountable for academics and leaders are accountable to stakeholders causing school and distinct leaders to view students' academic accomplishments as opposed to the whole child. The purpose of education is to

meet the needs of each student and provide them with tools for equal opportunities that find individual success.

To understand the importance of trauma-informed practices, it is necessary to research effective practices for students living in low-income areas. A study in upstate New York evaluated the federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant awarded to a cooperative group of 10 school districts (Blitz & Lee, 2015). This study used out of school suspension as the indicator of behavioral problems and found 0% in suburban schools and 22% in an urban school (Blitz & Lee, 2015, p. 20, 32). Out of school suspensions result in students out of school going back into the community where they may be more exposed to community violence and a lack of guidance. Walkely and Cox (2013) found that:

> Whether in urban, suburban, or rural settings, trauma-informed schools and 0-to-5 programs have the capacity to meet the needs of children and youths suffering from effects of familial substance abuse, community, and neighborhood violence, child abuse and neglect, forced separation through foster care or parental incarceration, and other traumatic experiences. (p. 126)

African American males lack meaningful relationships with male role models, due to the on-going effects of mass incarceration, paternal absence, and poverty (Gaylord et al., 2017). Urban communities report disproportionate levels of ECV in African American men (Gaylord et al., 2017). This system of abusing out of school suspensions has continuously failed to educate our middle and high school students and prepare them for any future other than the judicial system. This cycle is referenced as the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Flannery, 2015). The researcher investigated the level of understanding and

implementation of trauma-informed practices to establish a link to ineffective discipline strategies forcing students into unsafe communities surrounding inner-city schools. "Traumatic experiences may include physical or sexual abuse, neglect, experiencing or witnessing domestic violence, exposure to the community and school violence, natural or man-made disasters, terrorism, suicides, and war" (Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 41). With students overcoming challenges prior to entering the classroom, it is important to invest in programs to help them find appropriate ways to recognize their triggers, heal from their trauma, and provide support to make a change.

To become trauma-responsive, schools must partner with early care to create a continuum of support services for individuals from the prenatal stage through the college age (Walkley & Cox, 2016). "In schools, trauma not only shows up in the experiences of students, but educators also are impacted by the trauma they experience both outside the school and the vicarious trauma they experience within it" (DESE, 2019, p. 3). Without specific training on intervention for students, teachers are not equipped with the knowledge to support students' trauma or supported to cope with their own trauma (Field et al., 2017). Individual awareness and awareness in schools is the first step. Enlightened educators view challenging behaviors through a trauma lens (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). "To maximize the impact of a school's trauma-informed practices and policies, it is essential that students and caregivers also be given educational opportunities to learn about the impacts of stress and trauma and the importance of self-care and resilience" (DESE, 2019, p. 4). It is evident that schools can reduce barriers to trauma care by being an acceptable site for trauma treatment (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018). Schools are a common

space that reaches every community. Therefore, implementing trauma-informed practices will benefit the entire student population across the nation.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions were investigated:

Research Question 1: How does the level of understanding of trauma-informed practices differ between administrators and others in the education system?

Research Question 2: How do public and private schools differ in their implementation of trauma-informed practices?

Research Question 3: In what ways do trauma-informed practices work to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

The hypotheses for this mixed-method study were as follows:

Hypothesis 1. There is a significant difference between public, private, and charter trauma-informed practice implementation.

Hypothesis 2. There is a significant difference between the perception of those who are trauma-informed and how they implement trauma-informed practices and those who are not trauma-informed and their implementation of trauma-informed practices.

Definition of Terms

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)- "Adverse Childhood Experiences," or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years), such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect; witnessing violence in the home; and having a family member attempt or die by suicide. Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with substance misuse, mental health problems, or instability

due to parental separation or incarceration of a parent, sibling, or other member of the household (CDC, 2019, Adverse Childhood Experience, para. 1).

At-Risk Students - "Students who are often behind academically, have or are at-risk for dropping out of school, or have been expelled or suspended from high schools" (Lange, 1998, p. 183).

Delinquent Juvenile Officer (DJO) - "a police officer charged with detection, prosecution, and care of juvenile delinquents" (Delinquent Juvenile Officer, n.d., para. 1).

Exposure to Community Violence (ECV)- "One potential mechanism is desensitization to community violence" (Gaylord et al., 2017, p. 464).

Effective - "producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect" (Effective, n.d., para. 1).

Mass Incarceration - Starting in the 1980's prison population has grown at an exponential rate, where there is racial disproportionality in United States imprisonments. African Americans represent 40% of the prison population and men possess 91% of the prison population (Wagner & Rabuy, 2017, Figure 3).

Private School- "a school that is established, conducted, and primarily supported by a nongovernmental agency" (Private School, n.d., para. 1).

Public School- "a free tax-supported school controlled by a local governmental authority" (Public School, n.d.).

Restorative Practices- Claasen and Claasen stated, "focuses on repairing the harm and increasing the quality of relationships through a positive response to discipline among all members of the school community" (as cited in Ingraham et al., 2016, p. 355).

School to Prison Pipeline -

> The trend of directly referring students to law enforcement for committing certain offenses at school or creating conditions under which students are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system, such as excluding them from school. There are devastating consequences on students, its causes, and its disproportionate impact on students of color. (Nance, 2016, p. 314)

Trauma-

> Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individuals' functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. (SAMSHA, 2019, para. 1)

Toxic Stress- "Toxic stress has been associated with low socioeconomic status, indicating that the stressors children who live in poverty face impact their development, stress response, and perceptions of others" (Blitz & Lee, 2015, p. 23).

Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative- "includes providing information and training to school districts regarding the trauma-informed approach, how schools can become trauma-informed schools, and developed a website about the trauma-informed schools initiative that include information for schools and parents" (DESE, 2019, p. 6).

Trauma-Informed Practices- "A trauma-informed practice is a comprehensive approach that fosters a strong partnership with the client and exercises the use of multiple social work skills and competencies within the construct of the helping relationship" (Bent-Goodley, 2019, p. 6).

Trauma-Informed- "a universal approach to address practice, program, policy, and culture" (DESE, 2019, p. 2).

Trauma-Informed Approach-

> is a profound paradigm shift in knowledge, perspective, attitudes, and skills that continue to deepen and unfold over time. Some leaders in the field are beginning to talk about a "continuum" of implementation, where organizations move through stages. The continuum begins with becoming trauma aware and moves to trauma sensitive to responsive to being fully trauma informed. (DESE, 2019, para. 1)

Limitations

The timing of the survey is a potential limitation. Many educators do not check their email over the summer unless they are part of a summer program. The researcher collected emails from the school's website that may not have been accurate, based on this timeline. The researcher used district or organization websites to find email addresses for their staff. If the information on the website was not accurate or updated, the email addresses would have excluded them from the study. Some districts use programs to restrict any outside emails from coming through their network, which limited access to participants. These restrictions could have caused the survey to go to the Spam folder in their email. This could prevent access for some employees and school organizations.

Prior to this study, there was a worldwide pandemic. Around the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year, schools were asked to close their doors to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. At this time, teachers were asked to switch over to an online education platform. Though this caused more dependency on the

connection to email and technology, it could have caused teachers to need a disconnect at the end of the school year. A limitation could have been school staff needed to take a technology break from a difficult school year and the current conditions within the pandemic at the end of the school year.

Participants could have felt compelled to answer the questions in the survey correctly instead of responding with direct knowledge. The lack of integrity can skew the data because it would not be a true representation of how educators, administrators, and support staff use trauma-informed practices in schools. There can be hesitation for staff to come forward about their feelings about how well administration handles discipline and meeting students' needs in schools. Though this study was confidential, some may have felt that they could not express their true feelings about the topic.

While using the platform *Qualtrics,* the researcher was limited in the knowledge of this program. The researcher's inexperience with the program, *Qualtrics*, is a limitation. The first survey sent to participants was the unpublished version. A few days after the survey went live, the researcher sent the corrected version of the survey. Therefore, some of the data do not have a consistent number of participants for each question. The other questions in the unpublished survey were not analyzed for this study.

Conclusion

Understanding the growing concern of the effects on trauma to youth is vital that districts are requiring policies and procedures that protect students from being retraumatized or the use of discipline to further exclude each child from the teaching and learning process in schools. By identifying commonalities in how different schools address trauma, school leaders can transition into an accountability phase to ensure that

each child's individual needs are met emotionally, socially, and academically. Creating a plan to meet those needs can and will in turn dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. Using trauma-informed practices to address areas of need of our youth and understanding the emotional disconnect within our young people is a common need within the city of St. Louis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review discusses the implications of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Mass Incarceration, Trauma-Informed Practices, and Restorative Practices. To initiate each topic, the research starts with a brief historical overview. Following history, this chapter discusses the research supporting the effects these topics have on youth today, then transitions to the responsibility of schools to meet this growing population of students suffering from trauma and uses this knowledge to research how schools are using Trauma-Informed Practices to develop a student's emotional and basic needs to fuel academic success.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

During World War II, Abraham Maslow began his journey by researching human motivation. In 1943, Maslow wrote *The Theory of Human Motivation* where he found his work on the Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's work on self-actualization stems from that of Carl Jung (1928), who describes the process toward achieving self-realization (as cited in Ivtzan et al., 2013). In a *Theory of Human Motivation,* Maslow (1943) postulated that only needs not yet satisfied influence human behavior. "What this means specifically is, that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be physiological needs rather than any others" (Maslow, 1943, p. 373). This hierarchy is built like a pyramid. From lowest, meaning the most basic to sustain life to highest, the five need categories begin with basic physiological needs (Greene & Burke, 2007). "Placing love needs before safety needs represents the majority of the human population, otherwise some have voluntarily cast aside their safety needs - for the chance of keeping their beloved, friends, lovers, or

family members, from harm" (Oved, 2017, p. 537). Educators must recognize how the lack of these needs is weighing on our youth and is affecting their motivation to find success in the classroom. "For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food" (Maslow, 1943, Sec. II, para. 8). Therefore, the lack of needs met outside of the classroom affects the ability to connect inside the classroom. Maslow's theory is one that is still applicable to our students today. "It explains human nature as something that most humans immediately recognize in themselves and others" (Abulof, 2017, p. 508). In fact, at the time of the pandemic, providing these needs for students should have been at the forefront of education. Schools have a need to see the effects trauma has on the whole child before schools can achieve academic success.

Prior to his death, Maslow was exploring the peak of the pyramid, transcendence, though this work was not finished or published before his death. To topple self-actualization on the pyramid was the suggestion that it should replace reproductive goals, such as finding and keeping mates, with parenting motivation at the new peak (Kenrick, 2017). This created an uproar, because it is not in everyone to desire a family. The *New York Times* covered the new pyramid, upsetting those who believe that not all humans have a motive to reproduce and that the very suggestion was an attempt to promote politically conservative and social policies (Kenrick, 2017). While Maslow (1943) "designed the hierarchy of needs to be linear and hierarchical, a post-modern, humanistic perspective allows for acknowledging a fluid human experience" (Lonn & Dantzler, 2017, p. 67). By applying this approach in schools, professionals would create teams to discuss how to support all the needs of their student body or on an individual basis.

Understanding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to Implement in Education

There are three domains in Maslow's Hierarchy: Basic needs, psychological needs, and self-fulfillment needs. Basic needs are broken down into physiological and safety needs. Physiological needs include food, water, clothing, and shelter, which are minimal needs for health. Safety needs are more fundamental, such as security in your personal life, health, and financial well-being (Zheng et al., 2016). The inability to provide these needs for themselves as young people creates the need for a student's caregiver to meet their safety and stability. "Safety is the major reason for a mental disorder, such as anxiety, phobia, depression, and PTSD" (Zheng et al., 2016, p. 5). The lack of these basic needs has an everlasting effect on children. "This attitude may be not so much because of the injustice per se or any particular pains involved, but rather because this treatment threatens to make the world look unreliable, or unsafe, or unpredictable" (Maslow, 1943, p. 377). Injustice, or inconsistency in the parents seems to make a child feel anxious and unsafe (Zheng et al., 2016). Social needs become a motivator after meeting basic needs (Greene & Burke, 2007). As children enter adulthood, those effects and the level of needs are further explored on a psychological level rather than biological. "At such a moment of pain, it may be postulated that, for the child, the appearance of the whole world suddenly changes from sunniness to darkness, so to speak, and becomes a place in which anything at all might happen, in which previously stable things have suddenly become unstable" (Maslow, 1943, p. 377). With this level of distrust, humans seek other ways to get their needs met. "Esteem might further constitute a social need, and virtual space has become a significant arena in this regard" (Kellerman, 2014, p. 543). After meeting one's basic and psychological needs,

Maslow discussed the top of the pyramid as self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). An individual's quest to be creative, to acquire knowledge, and to develop one's abilities is self-actualization (Ivtzan et al., 2013). At this level, one has personal growth and self-awareness (Kellerman, 2014). "Maslow (1954, 1962) observed that self-actualizers have deeper and healthier interpersonal relationships than other adults, respect the autonomy, respect the individuality of others, and express genuine empathy" (Ivtzan et al., 2013, p. 120). Beyond self-actualization, Maslow began studying the idea of transcendence as the new peak to his hierarchy of needs. He began this journey near the end of his life. "Maslow coined the term *peak experience* to describe experiences of interconnectedness, harmonization, unification, and awareness of something greater than oneself, which sometimes seem mystical in essence" (Scott & Evans, 2010, p. 144). For an individual to reach their full potential at the peak of the pyramid, one's needs must be met.

To apply Maslow's theory in education, understanding the social aspect of the student today is crucial. Unfortunately, the internet has taken away authentic relationships and face-to-face interactions. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic caused individuals to quarantine in isolation and created new means of communication. This separation from each other introduced new ways for individuals to get their emotional needs met. Self-esteem needs are a contributing factor in the development of young people. The more basic needs are the most critical. Students are seeking their psychological needs to be satisfied virtually. Using opportunities through social networking has become a part of an individual's daily routine worldwide (Kellerman, 2014, p. 542). The shift in their sense of belonging changed how students were getting their self-esteem and other needs met. More recently, the expansion of social media and

networking has adjusted the need for physical interactions (Kellerman, 2014). Virtual learning made it impossible to protect students from bullying and provide services to students who need additional support and the opportunity to help families in need who may have lost their jobs due to the COVID pandemic. "Virtual space might have come to form in recent years, jointly with physical space, “double space” for the satisfaction of human needs in two spaces, rather than the traditional single physical space as the only arena permitting this gratification” (Kellerman, 2014, p. 538). The more psychologically healthy the person is, the needs were met higher on the pyramid (Lester et al., 1983). The pandemic affected everyone's psychological health. “From a societal point of view, it appears to be increasingly important to focus on the needs, interest, and well-being of people in general if contemporary world events are an indicator” (Greene & Burke, 2007, p. 122). The students who suffer from psychological disorders or families with these needs may not have exposure to all the higher levels in The Hierarchy of Needs, such as self-actualization. If a child is exposed to those who are at the peak of the pyramid, self-actualization, that exposure can lead to stronger personal development and self-actualization within themselves (Ivtzan et al., 2013). This created a need to implement this understanding across the community, including professionals in education. Using this research and implementing this theory in schools would require schools to adjust their procedures, protocols, and curriculum to align with the new needs of students today.

Evolution of Mass Incarceration

Building on the emotional needs of students there are several outside factors that contribute to their well-being or lack thereof. The effects can be generational, such as systemic racism, or environmental, such as poverty and community violence. Garland

(2001) created the term “mass incarceration” to categorize the massive population incarcerated in the United States as opposed to other countries (as cited in Sykes & Pettit, 2014). “Over the last 40 years, the United States has been able to build a chronically overcrowded system of mass imprisonment without pausing to address the physical and mental injuries that crowded, poorly resourced conditions produce for prison inmates” (Garland, 2011, p. 790). In the history of America, there were a considerable number of movements towards equality for people of all races, sex, and orientation. Using punitive measures, such as truth-in-sentencing laws, three-strikes laws, and the death penalty have perpetuated a cycle of a punitive climate (Karstedt et al., 2019). The racial composition of those behind bars may have been influenced by racial bias or stereotypes and the overall rising desire for punitiveness (Enns, 2014). More recently, the lack of change from past movements has become more prevalent in the present day by highlighting police brutality, the Black Lives Matter movement, and statistics pointing to the unlawful use of racial profiling.

> Imprisonment becomes *mass imprisonment* when it ceases to be the incarceration of individual offenders and becomes systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the population. In the case of the USA, the group concerned is, of course, young black males in large urban centres. (Garland, 2001, p. 6)

As there are continuous cuts to bed availability for patients with severe mental health illnesses, there is an increase in the risk of incarceration (Allison et al., 2017). Mass incarceration systemically targets and punishes non-White individuals at higher rates than those who are White (Shaw, 2016). The horrific deaths of Philando Castille, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and many others has drawn more awareness to the public about the

needs of the Black community that continuously goes unaddressed (Gilbert, 2017). “In 2003, Whitman stated until the mid-1970’s, the incarceration rate in the United States was similar to the incarceration rate in France and Germany, in addition to other industrialized nations” (as cited in Sykes & Pettit, 2014, p. 128). People with low levels of education are the focus for the growth of incarceration at the state, local, and federal level (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). “In 2009, for the first time in 38 years, the number of prisoners in U.S. state prisons dropped by 0.3%, after an unabated increase of 708% since the 1970’s” (Karstedt et al., 2019, p. 59). Between 2014 and 2015, the population in federal prisons dropped by 7% and the state population incarcerated dropped 2% (Karstedt et al., 2019, p. 59). Though we are starting to see a change in the percentage of the prison population, the effects of mass incarceration are everlasting to those suffering from this and those living in areas with high poverty rates.

> In 2016, the Brennan Center examined convictions and sentences for the 1.46 million people behind bars nationally and found that fully 39%, or 576,000, were in prison without any public safety reason and could have been punished in a less costly and damaging way (such as community service).” (Cullen, 2018, para. 6)

The disproportionate racial epidemic of mass incarceration in adults has led to high rates of child poverty (Shaw, 2016). Though parental incarceration has affected children of all races, Black children have experienced the largest and fastest growth in parental incarceration (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). The removal of a parent due to incarceration effects that individual as well as the welfare of the family, including children.

Effects of Mass Incarceration on Families and Children

As stated, the effects of mass incarceration have separated children from their families and increased their chances of poverty. Intergenerational effects of mass incarceration are producing adverse effects on future generations (Shaw, 2016). The effects of incarceration in vast racial disparities could have implications for, not only men, but entire communities (Karstedt et al., 2019). Without support for those affected by incarceration, families are struggling below the poverty line to provide basic needs for their children. "These communities and historical traumas are rooted in systemic oppression which has created ongoing stress in communities through the disempowerment, disinvestment, and discrimination they experience" (DESE, 2019, p. 3). Due to incarceration, generations of African American fathers have been absent from the home (Modecki & Wilson, 2009).

> Expanding the research to include youth who experience the loss of any household member to incarceration is not only more theoretically valid but also more culturally relevant when examining the effect that mass incarceration policies have on the outcomes of adolescence. (Nichols & Loper, 2012, p. 2)

Incarceration may also play a role in family complexity through its effects on single and noncustodial parenthood, as well as marital and residential instability (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). A family's poverty, stress, and social support influence the child's exosystem (Nichols & Loper, 2012). Following incarceration, families are released into society with a label that may prevent them from employment and unpaid debts (Shaw, 2016). Family complexity may be increasing, because of diminished earnings and employment prospects associated with having spent time in prison or jail (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). "In

1980, roughly half a million children had a parent behind bars; and by 2012, nearly 2.6 million children had at least one parent in prison or jail" (Sykes & Pettit, 2014, p. 135). "One in nine Black children has a parent incarcerated on any given day, while one-quarter of Black children will have a parent spend at least a year in prison" (Sykes & Pettit, 2014, p. 142). By 2012, the combined total of White and Hispanic children with incarcerated parents in prison or jail was less than that of Black children totaling over 1.21 million (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). The study by Modecki and Wilson (2009) suggested providing education to incarcerated parents could improve the quality of their role as fathers. This opportunity is counterproductive due to child support, the idea of self-sufficiency, financial independence, and establishing stable families, which are policies used to punish offenders even after their sentences (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). "The average prisoner spends roughly six times as long exposed to the consequences of past incarceration as they do be incarcerated" (Karstedt et al., 2019, p. 59). Absent parents for a prolonged amount of time and the limited resources and ways that the released parent can contribute are all factors that affect children (Shaw, 2016). "The risk of homelessness for non-White children is particularly high, with the odds of Black youth experiencing housing instability being 144% larger if they have a father incarcerated compared to children who never experienced paternal incarceration" (Sykes & Pettit, 2014, p. 144). Children suffering the effect of a parent incarcerated in the United States have increased fivefold in number since 1980 (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). There is not much research on how the effects of parental removal affects children, as the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world (Nichols & Loper, 2012). Isolating the effects of incarceration on families and children has been deemed difficult, due to the other markers

that are highly correlated with the disadvantage of this population (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). With the loss of a family member or loved one to the prison system, the dynamic of the family and children shifts to survival, leaving education at the back of their minds. Children with families living in poverty may choose to help provide for their families by dropping out of school to work (Nichols & Loper, 2012). Therefore, continuing the cycle of poverty changes the trajectory of a student's future.

The limits on children and their future status are stigmatized by incarceration of parents (Shaw, 2016). The length of parental incarceration, the quality of the relationship between parents, and the terms of a parent's parole will alter each child's experience (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). Young children have different risks for experiencing paternal incarceration, based on the behavioral characteristics of their parents, as well as demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (Turney, 2017). "As a result of oppressive structures, however, marginalized youth may not have sufficient access to information, skills, and tools needed to become critically conscious social activists" (Albright et al., 2017, p. 373). The study conducted by Nichols and Loper (2012) found that households with an incarcerated family member reported lower rates of maternal education, vocabulary skills, and home quality, as well as higher rates of poverty. Physiological hypersensitization is a result of youth exposed to changes in levels of arousals (Gaylord et al., 2017). Predictions made about higher levels of Exposure to Community Violence (ECV) affecting aggressive behavior over time prove to be consistent (Gaylord et al., 2017).

The uncertainty associated with living and educational arrangements highlight the greater concerts a youth may have regarding how they will have their basic needs

> met, threats to their sense of security, and beliefs that adults in their lives are able to care for them. (Nichols & Loper, 2012, p. 10)

The effect incarceration has on students' welfare at home has an increasing effect on their ability to find success in the school system.

Effect of Mass Incarceration in the Education System

There is a racial disparity in how Mass Incarceration profoundly affects non-White communities. One way to achieve community and school partnership is by providing continuous opportunities to hear the voices of the community and to provide structures that incorporate these voices to aid decision-making (Gilbert, 2017). Mondisa (2018) conducted a study between African American men and women proteges in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs using a situated identity lens. "This study emphasizes a need for empathy in the process of listening and, more importantly, validation of what the protege is feeling" (p. 305). Another link between youth members incarcerated and those not, was the negative perceptions of students and their families made by teachers and other students (Nichols & Loper, 2012). This is a result of creating bias opinions of youth in the communities serving the Black population. Payne and Welch (2010) stated,

> In a society deluged with widespread images of young Black males as "super predators" and Black culture as inherently criminal, Black youth not only encounter a criminal justice system that increasingly pursues and punishes them but also schools that increasingly undermine their chances for success later in life, thereby increasing the odds that criminal justice system also eventually will get its chance with them. (p. 1049)

Continuous lessons learned and information presented to suggest that Black males cannot do it, may begin to shape their thinking to align with that way of thinking (Gilbert, 2017). "While there are structural issues related to race that hinge on racialized stereotypes about Black youth, mentoring programs work at the individual level to promote positive outcomes associated with having strong relationships with caring adults" (Dickerson & Agosto, 2015, p. 14). Using mentorships in schools makes connections with the youth and adults to create change. Mentors validate their proteges' feelings, which play an important role in the development of their relationship (Mondisa, 2018). Without mentor programs and the lack of connection between adults and students can leave young women and men to believe that they cannot be more than the stigma stated against them. To build a greater community and organization, individuals must first use the values of the existing culture to create the necessary change (Gilbert, 2017). Therefore, programs, such as mentoring have been connected in schools. In mentoring relationships, connecting, and advancing both parties occur at the acknowledgement and exchange that occurs in the learning partnerships (Mondisa, 2018).

Black students disproportionately punished by the several sources of influence on discipline have clearly affected the racial threat in schools (Payne & Welch, 2010). Currently, Black males are not exposed to a rigorous curriculum and grade-level material when compared to their peers leaving them to continuously underperform in the education system (Gilbert, 2017). Extended school absences and failure to graduate were associated with the incarceration of an extended household member (Nichols & Loper, 2012). As individuals are released from prison, they are at a greater disadvantage of pursuing their education at the collegiate level or finding a job to provide for themselves

and their families. Those individuals who continued their education beyond high school may have been exposed to responsive parenting practices (Modecki & Wilson, 2009). The tested population by Nichols and Loper (2012) found that youth with a member of their family incarcerated faced more socioeconomic challenges, lower cognitive skills, and more frequent home adversities in contrast to those who have not experience this disadvantage. The state of the literature on children of incarcerated parents provides substantial evidence for the increased occurrence of negative behavioral outcomes, but there is still much to learn about the academic outcomes of these youth (Nichols & Loper, 2012).

> A more congruent experience, aimed at developing students' critical thinking skills and critical participation in society reflective of democratic and emancipatory ideals, could be provided if cultural relevance were incorporated and the following Black curriculum orientations were exemplified in the curriculum guide: Afrocentrism, social reconstructionism, and liberalism. (Dickerson & Agosto, 2015, p. 98)

Until the education system can connect to curricula to reach all individuals across race, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, we will continue to further separate the exposure of rigorous curriculum and academic achievements desired by the state. The lack of education and disproportionate levels of discipline to Black children fuels the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Impacting youth development is the direct result of the rippling effects in the United States' mass incarceration policy (Nichols & Loper, 2012). Those released from prison or jail are consistently disqualified from housing assistance and whole classes of occupations and jobs, as well as Pell grants (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). Positive

connections between the curriculum and schooling are not always made for Black males (Gilbert, 2017). Adolescents become disengaged from school content due the increased responsibility for financial stability and decreased supervision (Nichols & Loper, 2012). In 2013, Walkley and Cox stated that:

> Whether in urban, suburban, or rural settings, trauma-informed schools, and 0-to-5 programs have the capacity to meet the needs of children and youths suffering from the effects of familial substance abuse, community and neighborhood violence, child abuse and neglect, forced separation through foster care or parental incarceration, and other traumatic. (p. 4)

There are several disadvantages that this population faces while accountable to the same curriculum as other children who may not experience these same disadvantages. “The findings of this body of research suggest that applying social justice framework to mentoring programs may facilitate reaching traditional program goals (e.g., academic achievement) among marginalized adolescents who are contending with structural oppression” (Albright et al, 2017, p. 373). Without an education system built to meet the needs of the population they serve; the ongoing cycle of the underserved continues to affect them.

The Effects of Community Violence on Youth

In St. Louis, some disadvantages of youth are families suffering from poverty and incarceration. Beyond those disadvantages, the crime rates in St. Louis are amongst the highest in the United States, solidifying their second-place ranking (Fieldstadt, 2020). Students in highly impoverished areas are witnessing violence, because of the location of their school and home. Due to the experience faced with having an incarcerated parent,

children are exposed to more frequent criminal activity and continuous disruptions to the home and living situations (Nichols & Loper, 2012). The threatening, traumatic, and uncontrollable nature of community violence increases the likelihood of physiological hypersensitization in response to community violence (Gaylord et al., 2017). Distinct from other forms of violence, such as bullying and domestic violence, Community Violence Exposure (CVE) refers to acts of aggression, such as robberies, shootings, and stabbings, intended to harm someone within that community (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2016). This exposure to violence is not only in the community, but many times experienced within the home, as well. Transitions of living that youth experience with a mother in and out of jail are much greater than with a mother permanently removed from a home or a mother who lives in prison (Nichols & Loper, 2012). While the removal of an abusive parent is in the best interests of children, nonviolent crimes and drug offenses are likely to populate the prison, due to low levels of a traditional education rather than the proclivity of violence (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). Consequently, youth with chronic CVE may be more likely to respond with impulsive and reactive aggression, due to the misinterpretation of situations (Gaylord et al., 2017). “This pattern may indicate true “desensitization,” in that youth become emotionally numb, are less distressed by CVE as they become accustomed to community violence and develop increasingly aggressive tendencies to adapt to their violent environment” (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2016, p. 785). Using anger as a defense mechanism to protect themselves in volatile situations or even situations in which students feel disrespected, can leave a child’s anger and reaction misunderstood.

Connection to Trauma

The constant threat to children living in poverty, the type of media coverage, and continuous exposure to police brutality can be triggering for any child and retraumatize those who have experienced past trauma. Trauma is defined by an occurrence that has a lasting negative effect on an individual (SAMSHA, 2019, para. 1). “On a daily basis, the media recounts numerous stories on traumatic events, thus exposing the public to horrific, and often incomprehensible, events” (Field et al., 2017, p. 169). According to the ACEs study, women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for having experienced four or more types of ACEs, as opposed to the other populations (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019). “The recent high-profile slayings of young Black males by law enforcement officers have sparked national outrage, with social media tags like ‘Black Lives Matter' and ‘Hands Up, Don't Shoot’” (Dickerson & Agosto, 2015, p. 14). For children to witness a parent’s arrest or absence, visiting a parent in prison, or watching their parent wrongfully convicted raises important social policy issues and leaves youth traumatized or retraumatized (Sykes & Pettit, 2014). Though these factors lack control in schools, working to fix this or understand the effects of trauma becomes a necessity for schools.

History of Treatment for Trauma

Community violence, mass incarceration, systemic racism, and Adverse Childhood Experience all create a disruption to a child’s development and emotional wellbeing. This disruption connects to the identification of the term “trauma.” Though the discussion around the definition of trauma and how it affects individuals emotionally began in the early 2000’s, the implementation of using trauma-informed practices with

our children or in education did not come until years later. Trauma-Informed Care is an approach developed by Harris and Fallot (2001) to improve clinical practice and service delivery (as cited in Carello & Butler, 2015). A Trauma-Informed Care approach applies to the medical field. The Missouri Model guided by Maxine Harris and Roger Fallot of Community Connections, stated: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment (DESE, 2019). These five principles were the foundation of the Missouri Model. The original ACE Study conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 included two waves of data collection (CDC, 2019). This study has continued to develop over the years but was not addressed in schools until recent years. Over 17,000 Health Maintenance Organization members from Southern California receiving physical exams completed confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviors (CDC, 2019). The results of this study found that:

> More than two-thirds of the study's 17,000 participants reported experience at least one ACE, which included three types of childhood abuse (psychological, physical, and sexual) and four categories of household dysfunction (exposure to caregiver substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment of mother or stepmother, and criminal behavior with the household). (as cited in Bryson et al., 2017, p. 2)

Outside of the ACE study, there was little to no information about how trauma affects the development of our youth socially, academically, emotionally, nor psychologically before 2010. "The topic of childhood trauma has generated a surge of interest in recent years, fueled by an increasing recognition that traumatizing experiences during childhood are widespread both in the United States and throughout the world" (Tishelman et al., 2010,

p. 279). Now that same paradigm shift from the disability informed and trauma-informed movements, understanding trauma now influences education (Carello & Butler, 2015). With the focus on how ACEs and trauma psychologically and emotionally affect the children, there was no research on how that would manifest for the child academically. In general, chronic conditions, such as caregiver neglect to natural disasters and interpersonal violence professionals are starting to appreciate that a broad range of experiences can be extremely stressful to children (Tishelman et al., 2010). In 2010, Barack Obama began the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Advancing the prevention, diagnosis, and management of ACEs and their consequences is the focus of implementing the ACA (Srivastav et al., 2017). In 2012, a collaborative project aimed at adjusting the use of punitive disciplinary measures, such as suspensions and expulsions, toward more restorative ways of reaching students, was created by the U.S. Department of Education and Justice and named the Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI) (Darling & Monk, 2018). The American Academy of Pediatrics stated in a 2012 policy (as cited in Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016):

> The pediatric community must provide strong, proactive advocacy for more effective interventions …. The proposed ecobiodevelopmental framework (1) incorporates growing evidence of the impact of toxic stress on the developing brain, (2) informs a deeper understanding of early life origins of both educational failure and adult disease, and (3) underscores the need for collaborative efforts to prevent the long-term consequences of early adversity. (p. 8)

The content provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics was not used in education until 2014, when the DESE mandated that each teacher take a Trauma-Informed Initiative. DESE found (2019):

> The implementation of a trauma-informed approach is an ongoing organizational change process. Most people in the field emphasize that a "trauma-informed approach" is not a program model implemented and then simply monitored by a fidelity checklist. Rather, it is a profound paradigm shift in knowledge, perspective, attitudes, and skills that continue to deepen and unfold over time. The journey to becoming trauma informed is as unique as each school. A checklist to become trauma informed does not exist, but there is a general process that most organizations find best accelerates their work. (p. 6)

Implementing trauma-informed practices broadens the approach of using one mental health professional accountable to many students shifting into communities taking greater levels of ownership to adapt, respond, and support the social and emotional needs of one another (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Though this was a needed push in the right direction of treating students fairly, there were no unilateral guidelines measured across each school nor consistency for how to approach these guidelines and effect change. A trauma-informed structure could include a place to mediate among individuals, honored lunch periods, mental health days, self-care strategies, and training staff to recognize their triggers and students' triggers (Bent-Goodley, 2019). This information was created for the schools that chose to be trauma-informed as opposed to requiring schools to be trauma-informed.

> Unlike academic issues in which identification of need and provision of assistance is relatively focused and non-controversial, a host of layered complexities (e.g., involvement of multiple systems of care, family privacy, school resource capacity) surround trauma-informed service delivery in schools." (Chafouleas et al., 2016)

As the topic develops, the research is underutilized by schools with a minority population or low-income areas in the St. Louis area.

Types of Traumas

There are several distinct categories in which trauma can directly affect someone emotionally, physically, and academically. When defining a traumatic event, it is imperative to find the individual's perception of the trauma (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). According to Paccione-Dyszlewski (2016), "trauma can be defined as any adverse experience that affects a child's ability to function" (p. 1). Pappano (2014) stated that childhood emotional, physical, and/or sexual trauma is a common experience. Research indicated that as many as 68% of children experience at least some form of trauma event (as cited in Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 1). Microaggressions of racism, classism, or other oppressions, and recognition of intergenerational or historical trauma are a variety of stressors that are associated with poverty (Blitz & Lee, 2015). "Approximately 3 million children a year have a substantiated maltreatment report, and many, many more children who are abused or neglected go unreported or unfound" (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016, p. 1). Natural disasters, automobile accidents, ongoing emotional abuse and neglect, and structural violence resulting from inequality are different events that give an individualized definition of trauma (Bryson et al., 2017). Field et al. (2017) stated that:

> School-aged children can experience a range of interpersonal traumatic events such as domestic violence; parental divorce; crime in their surrounding community; changing schools; being bullied by peers; failing a grade; sexual, physical, emotional abuse, or neglect; extreme poverty; racist acts; car accidents; unwanted pregnancies; suicide; death in the family; death of a teacher; and school violence. (p. 2)

There are also different events that can be classified as trauma and can manifest in each child or adult differently. Nearly 11 million children under the age of 18 are being raised in a household with at least one parent suffering from alcoholism (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016, p. 1). The underdevelopment of a child's brain leads educators and parents to believe children are protected from the effects of a traumatic event (Field et al, 2017). "Three to 10 million children annually witness domestic violence" (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016, p. 1). Poverty, community violence, domestic violence, war, and neglect, and child abuse are all traumatic experiences that children face (Norton et al., 2019). "One hundred children are killed each year in accidental gun shootings" (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016, p. 1). Whitted and Dupper (2005) stated bullying is often understood as physical or psychological abuse of an individual that takes place over time with the intent to exert power and domination, creating an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse. Cyberbullying can take place via multiple electronic means, so the youth can be victimized anywhere at any time, including at home. Thus, youth do not get relief from the threat or provocations of bullying from classmates via the internet, causing the bullying to spill over into home life (Blitz & Lee, 2015). Traumatic events are occurring more frequently, especially in highly impoverished communities and in the minority

population. Currently, the nation is suffering from a pandemic causing schools to shut down and switch to virtual learning. Due to this change, teachers are further disconnected from students. Students who are in unfortunate situations are left to fend for themselves with little to no social and emotional support. To further discuss the effects of trauma, the research points to two categories: social and academic.

Social Effects of Trauma on Students

Social status is important to students and their development of self and self-confidence. A common belief is that children recover from a traumatic event within a few weeks. Relatively little attention devoted to student's socioemotional learning and functioning experiences at school have discussed the impacts across different domains of functioning despite the recent recognition of the effects of trauma and stress to children (Tishelman et al., 2010). Their recovery is dependent upon access to healthy coping skills and strategies, emotional support from adults that are significant in their lives, and who validated their emotion (e.g., parents, teachers, etc.) (Field et al., 2017). According to author and trauma survivor Danielle Bernock (as cited in Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016), "Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated, the silent screams continue internally heard only by the one held captive" (p. 1). Children with trauma histories generally present with psychosocial, physical, and cognitive vulnerabilities (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Breaking glass, someone catching their breath or a distant everyday sound, like a doorbell ringing, create sounds that may be connected to a traumatic event for a child and may trigger an unwarranted response to the sound (Greenway, 2005). When students have a heightened state of alarm causing impairments in higher-order reasoning and language expression preventing students'

abilities to articulate what they are feeling, how they are feeling about something, or asking for help (Morton & Berardi, 2018). What has changed, however, is research shows consequences of prolonged exposure to stress are universal and impact all major domains of child development. Executive functioning can be compromised, because those affected by trauma may not know how to use coping skills successfully and effectively until they are taught (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Self-regulation and interpersonal relationships and delays in school performance are the cause of early disruptions of trauma in early childhood (Tishelman et al., 2010). Different cultural groups, one's support network, and the individual's cultural context may have unique responses to support healing, causing different individual's responses and manifestations of trauma (Ardino, 2014). Contradicting the efforts by schools to establish a predictable routine and consistent discipline ensuring pupil safety, security, and learning; traumatic events are unexpected and uncontrollable (Greenway, 2005). "When people have endured multiple interpersonal traumatic events from a very young age and have been exposed to chronic and complex trauma--usually instigated by primary caregiving adult--there is a profound impact on a child's long-term development" (Norton et al., 2019, p. 85). By analyzing the correlations between health-risk behaviors, negative health outcomes, and adverse childhood events in adults show that it is crucial to disrupt this event by intervening in children at a young age (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008). Morton and Berardi (2018) found that:

> As researchers deepen their understanding of the multigenerational impact of trauma, environmental factors stressing parents, and the sudden twists of fate that undermine the safety and stability of a family, a trauma-informed response to

> parents inspires deep empathy for the entire family while offering parents a way to contribute to healing multigenerational traumas. (p. 492)

There are still no specific events of trauma that manifest into definite reactions or psychological effects. Structures essential to cognitive processing are impaired to constant over exposure to stress-response hormones (Morton & Berardi, 2018). When traumatic events cannot be faced, these events become constant re-enactments in our deeply unconscious (Greenway, 2005). Given the impact trauma can have on children and youth on future functioning, the trauma must be addressed (Norton et al., 2019). Cognitive, social, physical, and emotional impairment manifest from an alarming amount of those who have experienced significant trauma or chronic stress in their childhood (Morton & Berardi, 2018). The effects and symptoms that trauma can have on individuals can develop significant and longer-lasting problems or can have minimal effects to traumatic exposure and youth may recover quickly (Ardino, 2014). “Repeated exposure to traumatic events can alter psychobiological development and increase the risk of low academic performance, engagement in high-risk behaviors, and difficulties in peer and family relationships” (Bent-Goodley, 2019, p. 397). The education system is the common denominator for all children. Schools are unable to protect students from traumatic events. Schools can create trauma-informed structures that help students heal by educating teachers on trauma-informed practices and creating a safe space for students to understand their individuality.

Academic Effects of Trauma on Children

As previously stated, school-based functioning is strongly impacted by traumatic exposure, based on different types of traumas and the age and the frequency at which the

child was exposed to trauma. If educational environments recoil from validating damaging childhood experiences, the toxicity of trauma will corrode the very potential of learning (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). School is an essential, potential contributor to a child's coping and healing, because it is also a space where the consequence of traumatic exposure presents itself (Tishelman et al., 2010). Trauma can have a permanent impact on the neurological and cognitive development of a child (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). "Trauma confronts schools with a serious dilemma: how to balance their primary mission of education with the reality that many students need help in dealing with traumatic stress to attend regularly and engage in learning process" (Ko et al., 2008, p. 398). The research on trauma gives the necessary back story and understanding behind many students' difficulties that plague our educational systems and their academic growth (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). There are not enough individuals to adequately provide the needs our students have nor the funding to support the wellness of a child. Methods to aid the recovery of traumatized students that are environmental should be provided through budgets being tightened (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008). When reviewing the study of how children can access mental health services indicated that schools are the primary portal of entry for trauma-informed practices (Bent-Goodley, 2019). To reach each child, developing culturally appropriate outreach programs in the education system is critical (Lonn & Dantzler, 2017). A series of appropriate assessments of emotional needs, support, culturally competent strategies, effective interventions, and strong organizational capacity is required to implement trauma-informed approaches and culturally sensitive programs (Ardino, 2014). Paccione-Dyzlewski (2016) found specific effects from trauma by stating:

> Young children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of trauma, which can result in developmental delays in language and cognitive functioning, difficulty in maintaining attention and concentration, and difficulty in maintaining attention and concentration, and difficulty in regulating emotions and functioning appropriately in a classroom setting. (p. 1)

Students may be hesitant to disclose their trauma as it relates to their family members, because it can be construed as "ratting them out," which is a violation of social codes (Miller & Najavits, 2012). "Extreme, traumatic, and repetitive childhood stressors such as abuse, witnessing or being the victim of domestic violence, and related types of ACES are common and end to be kept secret, and go unrecognized by the outside world" (Anda et al., 2005, p. 180). The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) was created under the Bush Administration. This act had several requirements, but it was based on education reform holding all students to the same set of standards in math and English (Shah et al., 2019). With No Child Left Behind, there is not enough support to hold students accountable for their work, while still meeting their emotional and psychological needs. Each child may be impacted by trauma creating a unique set of skills and deficits, causing the need to meet students' needs causing educators to do a careful evaluation of the depths of trauma and lasting effects (Tishelman et al., 2010). "Student survey data were used to inform program design and data analysis revealed differences in students' social-emotional vulnerabilities when comparing school population based on the dimensions of poverty, out-of-school suspensions, and residential mobility" (Blitz & Lee, 2015, p. 20). As compared with the general population, maltreated children were found to have as high as three times the drop-out rate and were found to have significantly higher rates of drop-

out and grade retention across several different studies (Tishelman et al., 2010); therefore, widening the gap in education and socioeconomic status and those who are traumatized. When the central nervous system is in a constant state of anxiety causing high norepinephrine and cortisol productions are found to disengage students from the academic success (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Students who are not supported during the healing process after a traumatic event suffer more academic challenges and students who have been traumatized tend to disengage from academic content. The constant state of stress, misunderstanding, and frustration further affect the children's abilities to cultivate strong relationships with their peers.

Students who are exposed to trauma and chronic stress often face struggles when trying to focus on academic content or instructions by adults, conforming to school rules, engaging with peers in an appropriate or socially responsive manner, and feel safe and comfortable in schools (Field et al., 2017). Without clear guidelines and expectations to hold schools accountable, there is no adequate proof that they have implemented the initiative given by DESE. Without the support in schools, there is a consistent cycle of retraumatizing students outside of schools, which manifests as difficulties in schools. Though this may not be intentional, the lack of resources, training, and understanding leaves the student without the proper tools to become a successful young adult and the development of the whole child in schools.

State & National Trauma Trainings for Educators

DESE required Missouri teachers a one-day professional development training session discussing trauma that was coupled with Shooter Training for the public school within the city of St. Louis. Therefore, lacking a clear expectation of how and what

schools should be doing to meet the needs of their community who have suffered traumatic events. “The training, coaching, and monitoring process is not merely content driven, but involves coaching educators in perceptual, conceptual, and executive skills historically embedded in mental health training programs” (Morton & Berardi, 2018, p. 491). To better support students exposed to trauma, teachers, administrators, and school mental health providers desire more specialized trainings and other choices for discipline (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018).

In the public-school district, there were ongoing training sessions that were dedicated to understanding what a trauma-informed approach looks like. To reduce the barriers blocking trauma care and providing children with trauma treatment, there is evidence that schools are acceptable sites as they reach each child individually (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018). How schools choose to implement and address trauma within their population is on a school-by-school basis or district-by-district basis. The provision and development of information and materials provided to teachers, principals, and pre teacher students is the first step in creating trauma-informed practices in schools (Alisic et al., 2012). It is important to develop common languages or responses to traumas by teachers and other school staff who are not aware or educated in the effects of trauma or any other mental health training (Blitz & Lee, 2015). The time has come for schools to pivot their cultures to become more trauma informed. Interdisciplinary studies have demonstrated that nurturing and supportive caregiver relationships provide a protective ‘buffer’ against the effects of childhood (Bryson et al., 2017).

Understanding the influence of someone’s culture is essential to making an effective therapeutic connection and to being part of the recovery process (Ardino, 2014).

A central concept of a trauma-informed setting is that everyone who interacts with a student assumes that every child has trauma in his/her background and acts accordingly. According to Frydman and Mayor (2017), promoting inclusion and providing a foundation for psychoeducation, assessment, and prevention can be found by opening dialogue to the entire student body, as well as teachers, administrators, or others who are part of the education system. To promote optimal cognitive functioning and reducing classroom management challenges, teacher preparation programs should demonstrate how trauma-informed competencies are needed for implementation and understanding of trauma-informed practices (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Alisic et al. (2012) and others find that the training should include:

> Topics to cover would be how to facilitate coping when working with children in the classroom, how to recognize symptoms of adaptive and maladaptive coping, where to refer children and their families when specialized services are necessary, and how to take care of themselves under stressful conditions. (p. 100)

There is evidence in this research proving the need to train teachers, implement said practices, and adjust the lens in which children are viewed.

Administrative Level Training and Implementation

The needs of understanding symptoms of toxic stress and how these effects present themselves in the school setting must be used to educate any individual working in the education system (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). School administration must remain totally committed to the elements and create that same commitment amongst those that follow their lead in schools (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). “With each new initiative or program, teachers are logically hesitant to buy into what is often perceived as the latest

fad, especially when it undermines instruction time or efficacy in producing the student outcomes for which they are evaluated" (Morton & Berardi, 2018, p. 490). The success of these programs is based on the leadership style and relationship between the staff and administration. Lack of communication, collaboration between systems and organizations and support; and resistance to changing standard practice; time and monetary constraints are barriers at the organizational level and that of the individual practitioner level (Kramer et al., 2015). The purpose of TIC and the development of staff buy-in is modeled in most trauma-informed concepts by urging comprehensive staff training across all constituents in the school system (Bryson et al., 2017). Providing clear guidelines on how each position in the school can individually assist those who have been impacted by traumatic events is an important element (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). "Staff training across disciplines, integrated trauma-sensitive routines, individual student supports, close collaboration with the behavioral health care community, well-crafted policies and procedures, and targeted, outcome-focused funding will help schools establish environments that will enable all children to succeed" (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016, p. 1). Without proper training to all staff members, programs, and resources provided to students with traumatic experiences are lacking understanding of the student's behavior and student's tendency to lack control over emotional responses. As trauma-informed schools implement programs, it requires an integration of each member's knowledge and skills to form a partnership between mental health professionals and educators (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Teachers should have basic knowledge of how traumatic stress manifests in children and feel confident enough to work with children exposed to trauma, but teachers are not expected to become therapists (Alisic et al., 2012).

> In 2006, Perry stated that if this misinterpretation or miscommunication is not resolved, it often results in classroom exclusions, such as an office referral, restrictions on necessary breaks such as recess, or more serious actions such as suspensions or expulsions. (as cited in Morton & Berardi, 2018, p. 489)

Differentiating between a nonthreatening situation that triggers a past traumatic event and a current traumatic event is often challenging without the capacity to diversify one's perspective (Frydman & Mayor, 2017). Administrators are responsible for preparing their staff and providing the tools necessary for their success.

The Growing Need to Train Teachers in Trauma-Informed Practices

The roles for the teacher extend beyond academics. Teachers are responsible for meeting the academic needs of each student in their classroom (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Beyond that, a teacher is often responsible for providing immediate support and intervention for students, because children bring their social and emotional needs to school (Field et al., 2017). Greenway (2005) stated that:

> Maintaining their twin roles as educators and caregivers, in looking after the learning and pastoral needs of students, may be very stressful for teachers, bearing in mind that their own individual response to a traumatic event may be emotionally overwhelming, and may impact any previous traumatic events and bereavements that they may have experienced. (p. 236)

The number of hours that educators spend with children daily creates opportunity for properly trained teacher to help change posttraumatic behavior (Alisic et al., 2012). "Therefore, [training] is important that teachers be aware of the symptoms of psychological trauma, including changes in behavior, and avoid misinterpreting

emotional or behavioral changes as mere defiance, laziness, or some other 'character' flaw in the student" (Field et al., 2017). To be trauma-informed is an alternate way of thinking, not just an approach to students (Goodley, 2018). "Nurturing relationships between children and caregivers mediate the successful development of neurobiological functions that involve decision-making, working memory, self- and social-awareness, and mood and impulse control" (Bryson et al., 2017, p. 2). By responding to children in a calm, soothing, and predictable manner, teachers can decrease the traumatized child's feelings of agitation, emotional dysregulations, alarm, and isolation (Field et al., 2017). Aside from teaching content, teachers should be trained and providing adequate resources to provide a warm and inviting space for students daily (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). This would require incorporating trauma-informed practices in curriculum, day-to-day practices, and policy changes. Addressing trauma symptoms by creating a program can help the youth create a positive self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy, heal interpersonal relationships, and achieve healthy emotional regulation (Bulanda & Byro Johnson, 2016). Without proper understanding of trauma-related behaviors of avoidance, such as laziness, lack of cognitive capacity, or lack of effort, students can become disengaged in the content and relationship built between teachers (Tishelman et al., 2010). Therefore, a teacher's role when identifying, providing, and supporting the needs of children are vital (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). Misbehavior in class or a child externalizing behavior is often identified by teachers easily, but not all behaviors are attributed to the child enduring a traumatic event (Field et al., 2017). Teachers' misinterpretations of actions or responses of kids, when a child's stress response circuitry is activated, is not uncommon (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Misinterpretation of messages

children convey through their behaviors can inadvertently create more obstacles to a child's success by school personnel (Tishelman et al., 2010). School experience can nurture a child's abilities and gifts, when provided adequate training and proper programs. Students who do not externalize their behavior may go unnoticed by teachers, because of their inability to notice changes in their behaviors, social responses, and moods (Field et al., 2017). Furthermore in 2017, Field et al. found:

> Because children often express behaviorally what they cannot express verbally, their trauma symptoms can manifest as changes in behavior, altered social interactions with peers, noncompliance with rules or adults' expectations, avoidance behaviors (i.e., avoidance of any stimuli that remind them of the traumatic event), and negative thinking or attribution. (p. 173)

In a trauma-sensitive culture, when a child raises his voice, curses, is unable to express his needs, tosses a pencil, or is not attending school regularly, trauma will be considered the root of the cause. The educator, when using this framework, responds to misbehavior with understanding to avoid humiliating the child publicly (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). Training should include hands-on opportunities for staff to practice self-regulation techniques and focus on the characteristics, according to Hodgdon et al., the "developmental impact of trauma, building secure attachments, increasing self-regulation and competency, and self-care and vicarious trauma" (as cited in Bryson et al., 2017, p. 12). School personnel may have no confirmation of what is happening in the home. Parents and guardians may be apprehensive to sharing concerns and difficult or private child-family situations with those in education for valid reasons (Tishelman et al., 2010). Without the understanding of why students lose control, their behaviors will be

misconstrued. Healing and transcending the effects of toxic stress by creating a positive learning environment culture, based on trust and acceptance when a child loses control of their emotions (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). Teachers are held accountable to meeting the academic needs of students, but the knowledge of trauma encompasses much more than the subject content. Most adults, including teachers, are motivated to help children do their absolute best in all aspects of life. Without an adequate emotional assessment, teachers have limited knowledge on how to address emotional needs (Tishelman et al., 2010). Trauma-informed care should encompass administration, just as much as the way teachers are responding to students in the classroom. "Collaborative critical thinking with all members of a TIC framework provides care for children with unique types of traumas and offers healing properties of non-threatening, consistent, nurturing relationships between teachers and students" (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018, p. 423). To equip traumatized children and help them optimally, educators and all school personnel need recommendations and guidance to tailor their needs individually (Tishelman et al., 2010). Field et al. (2017) stated:

> Teachers might therefore feel ill-equipped in broaching the topic of a significant behavioral change with a child because they are unsure of how the student will respond and afraid that the confrontation might aggravate the child's emotional state; furthermore, teachers might simply not know how to help the student manage their emotional needs. (p. 173)

Additionally, teachers need support, because teachers are trying to adequately manage the devastating demands of educating and providing support to this sometimes-difficult population (Tishelman et al., 2010).

The same effects that trauma has on our youth can be the same effects that are suffered by our teachers. A school that addresses the impact of trauma on students by reacting, rather than being proactive will continue to struggle with staff burnout, turnover, and compassion fatigue (DESE, 2019). Strategies, like workshops on self-care strategies, mental health days, lunch periods that are honored and encouraged, places to exercise or meditate in the work environment, or expectations for teachers' workloads to conclude once the person leaves the school premises are organizational trauma-informed that are embedded in structures (Goodley, 2018). Providing clinical support and a system where teachers and support staff can ask for and receive consultation clinically is crucial in protecting educators against the effects of secondary traumatic stress (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018); therefore, creating a climate of acceptance for students and teachers and understanding that trauma effects everyone.

Effective Practices of Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices

School climate is as important as, if not more important than, the curriculum created for students. In the context of its community and the families within a school climate can create the target of change (Blitz & Lee, 2015). Using trauma-informed assessment to develop recommendations for programs would target the specific mental health needs of trauma-exposed individuals (Ezell et al., 2018). Children arrive at school emotionally and socially affected by their environment and other outside factors causing the growing need to view school climate in the context of community experiences and the students' families (Blitz & Lee, 2015). Paccione-Dyszlewski (2016) found in their research:

> Schools can no longer be just a place where a child goes just to learn to read and write; they must focus equally on becoming an epicenter of social and emotional development. A shift in school culture to become more trauma-informed will set the stage for maximum academic growth. (p. 1)

A trauma informed culture provides specific treatment for people (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008). This approach is a paradigm shift, not a separate set of activities or tools that are occasionally implemented, but a perspective helping children overcome academic or social challenges throughout their schooling career (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Tishelman et al. (2010) found:

> Although it might provide significant benefit to a child to have his or her traumatic history known at school, unless the school's policies and protocols are clear, sensitive, and understood by parents, the potential negative repercussions might appear to outweigh the benefits for a family. (p. 284)

Documentation of past traumas does not provide clear reactions to the current difficulties and which events students are reacting to (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018). Once a school climate of acceptance is created, implementing effective practices unilaterally should be the next focus. The role of the schools and classroom teachers must be expanded beyond learning and be created in include understanding and responding to students who face trauma-induced challenges, because of their complex needs (Morton & Berardi, 2018).

> From the child's perspective, self-protection is driven by a survival instinct derived from early experiences which influence a child's reluctance to seek

> support and guidance therefore causing a greater chance the child will perceive telling an adult and behave more aggressively. (Tishelman et al., 2010, p. 281)

Defining trauma-informed care involves understanding, responding to, and recognizing all kinds of trauma as an organization (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). This framework must come from the top of the organization at the leadership level and matriculate down to those following them. Tishelman et al. (2010) stated that:

> A school environment can buffer the effects of a challenging life and provide a safe and supportive haven for children, the school setting can also be a context that not only triggers traumatic reactions for children but also reinforces some of the negative themes that have been learned over the course of a traumatized child's development, thereby increasing a child's vulnerabilities. (p. 282)

In a negative school climate, as perceived by children, those who bully others might feel good about themselves, because of their popularity status by their peers (Blitz & Lee, 2015). Awareness is the first step. If a child presents challenging behaviors, an enlightened educator views the behavior through the lens of trauma (Paccione-Dyszlewski, 2016). Leading educators to mis-categorize certain child behaviors as intentional misbehaviors, rather than the reaction of emotion or behavior to a traumatic event in their past (Field et al., 2017). Trained professionals can identify these behaviors in the first weeks of school. A trauma-informed school would then continue to reevaluate that child as they transition through the school year. After concluding their study in New York, knowing that the two concepts [emotional well-being of bully and victim] are linked, however, supports the need for a school-climate-focused approach that attends to the emotional vulnerability of children in addition to individual interventions for students

in need (Blitz & Lee, 2015, p. 34). Little is found about the evaluation of the programs that are addressing trauma and trauma-informed practices' impact learning in a school setting (Tishelman et al., 2010). Several different schools use a multitude of resources, but there is not a consistent program that proved to be effective for all children. A continuum of support services provided in schools across the prenatal through college age spectrum should bridge early education care and beyond (Walkley & Cox, 2013). TIC is not a treatment model or a single structured program delivered unilaterally amongst different types of traumas; it is more difficult to find empirical investigation about successful programs through experimental design (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Bryson et al (2017), finds that TIC and trauma-informed practices are more ambitious than specific treatments and direct counseling techniques, because TIC embeds the care in the system itself in every aspect of service delivery, therefore placing a higher priority on safety, control, and choice of individuals. Tishelman et al. (2010) found that:

> Trauma-informed practices are critically important for schools to emphasize and support positive student-professional relationships in the building, implement strong and effective anti-bullying and anti-violence policies, limit harsh discipline or other policies that are potentially traumatizing, provide support to teachers so that they can in turn emotionally connected and supportive of their students, and implement effective and empirically based violence prevention programs. (p. 285)

The philosophy of TIC is established as a treatment and culture of nonviolence, learning, and collaboration, which precautions individuals to highlight interpersonal interactions universally (Bryson et al., 2017). Morton and Berardi (2017, 2018) found several examples of trauma-informed dispositions for school personnel including:

> Curiosity and compassion for the life circumstances of each student; unwavering acceptance of each child regardless of the student's successes or failures; commitment to creating a trauma-informed culture of care in each classroom reflective of the school and districts' same commitment; and a view of discipline or structure as a method of providing safety to self and other while affirming the student's ability to learn less harmful coping measures. (p. 490)

Conducting regular verbal check-ins with each student during the class and instruction helps determine if students are in a healthy place emotionally or things needs to be adjusted (Carello & Butler, 2015). Self-empowerment can create the space for a survivor of trauma to be inspired by opportunities of encouragement and validation (Goodley, 2018). Family Enrichment Adventure Therapy (FEAT) used by Norton et al, found that significantly lower depression levels occurred for those at the three-month mark (Norton et al., 2019). FEAT families self-reported growth in trust and closeness in problem-solving skills and greater communication following the adventure therapy intervention (Norton et al., 2019). A faster return to normalcy and a greater sense of empowerment and healing was described by FEAT families as opposed to those who did not participate in the therapy (Norton et al., 2019). Though these practices are considered best practices, there are still few programs that offer for youth to engage with other youth and lead in addressing violence or the effects of violence (Harden et al., 2015).

In 2018, Skinner-Osei and Levenson found that strategies exist that can be used to translate trauma-informed principles into practice:

1. Use person-first language when referring to children and their parents. For example, we should try to avoid labels like "offender," "criminal," or addict,"

instead of using phrases like “someone who has committed an offense” or “a person who struggles with addiction.” Positive messaging that separates people from their behavior can help reduce stigma and increase a personal sense of value and worth.

2. Reframe resistance. Children who have been traumatized may push helpers away due to their own fears of vulnerability. Instead of viewing resistance as a lack of motivation for change, we can think of it as ambivalence. Resistant clients are often struggling with wanting to trust the promise of helpers while needing to hang on to survival strategies that have been protective in the past.
3. Avoid confrontational approaches that can feel threatening, reactivate hyperarousal, and lead to fight-flight-or-freeze responses. By modeling respectful communication and shared decision making, we can coach self-determination, self-advocacy, and self-efficacy skills.
4. Use the social work relationship as a corrective experience. We can help build resilience by providing a stable, supportive, caring, trustworthy encounter, and by supporting caregivers in children’s lives to do the same. When children have adults, they can depend on, the world feels like a safer place. (p. 432)

Re-examining conceptual models is required for educators as a result of chronic and severe stress that our students learning is challenged by (Morton & Berardi, 2018). “’The Sanctuary Model’ is a trauma-informed method for creating or changing an organizational culture” (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008, p. 49). “Trauma-informed adventure therapy (AT) can be defined as the perspective use of adventure experiences provided by a mental health professional, often in a natural setting that kinesthetically engage clients

on cognitive, affective and behavioral levels" (Norton et al., 2019, p. 87). Frydman and Mayor (2017) suggested that school social workers must be proactive by not waiting to respond to explicit problems related to known by traumatic experiences, but to follow a model of prevention-assessment-intervention.

School Culture

School culture is creating a space for students to feel safe. Creating safety is especially necessary as a precondition to a conducive learning environment (Alisic et al., 2012). Achieving safety and creating a safe space is when students are assured that they are understood and valued (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Self-efficacy, empathy, delayed gratification, and frustration-tolerance are the building blocks for the ability to feel safe despite the overwhelming presence of anger (Morton & Berardi, 2018). The culture of the organization and the environment are all used as therapeutic tools themselves in a therapeutic community model (Bryson et al., 2017). Service providers who view and respond to presenting problems or disruptions through the lens of trauma in a client-centered environment is when Trauma-informed Care occurs (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Overly stressed students need stability and safety and stabilization to return to a state of calm before they can engage in the instructional process (Morton & Berardi, 2018). Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports model (PBIS) is one program used across several states as their way of providing a therapeutic and safe environment (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). "To actualize the features for this trauma-informed approach requires substantial efforts given the multiple systems and stakeholders outside of the school context, yet all must interact toward facilitating clear messages for policy and practice" (Chafoules et al., 2015, p. 152).

Disciplines Practices Currently Used in Schools

To reduce the reliance on school exclusion and the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities within the discipline system, policymakers are seeking alternatives to current discipline practices (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008). Although establishment and maintenance of school safety is a critical goal, the overapplication of "zero-tolerance" policies, though necessary for school safety, create rigid and punitive responses for sometimes minor offenses (Tishelman et al., 2010). Such practices are contributing factors to hardline consequences of practices, which exclude an understanding of the behaviors by students and do not meet the individual needs of students (Tishelman et al., 2010). "School staff can misunderstand trauma-related behavioral reactions as oppositional or defiant behavior, inadvertently use discipline strategies that can serve as triggers for traumatized students, and miss opportunities to support social, emotional, and academic growth" (Chafouleas et al., 2016, p. 154). If the goal of the program is to heal children and help them grow academically, understanding the root of their trauma and how to address it is the first step. Students need to be held accountable for their actions, but also to find a way to react appropriately to prevent a perpetual cycle of discipline. Continuous and repetitive negative consequences for "bad" behavior do not solve the problem, but continue the cycle (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Schools use out-of-school suspension as a form of punishment, but this only further separates the gap of students who are proficient versus students who are below basic in academics. Children do not generally announce themselves as victims of violence, especially those with family violence in their lives, therefore teachers and staff members are unaware of the traumatic stress that is creating more difficulties in school (Tishelman et al., 2010). Typical responses to violent behavior

include restraint and separating the child, identified as seclusion. “Seclusion refers to involuntary confinement of a child in a room or isolated area from which they may leave, and restraint is the use of a physical, mechanical, or chemical means to prevent a child’s physical mobility” (Bryson et al., 2017, p. 3). TIC extends far beyond reducing the frequency or need for seclusion and restraint use by practicing trauma-informed practices and care into the culture of safety created within an organization (Bryson et al., 2017). Individual staff members must find a way to change their behaviors and response to misbehavior to reduce the practices of restraint and seclusion (Denison et al., 2018). Community practices identified as ‘The Sanctuary Network,’ are reporting significant changes in their treatment environments that resulted in positive outcomes for the families and children they serve (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008). “Some notable improvements have been documented in the following areas: reduction of physical restraint and aggression improved staff morale, lower staff turnover, fewer injuries to staff and clients, improved collaboration, and improved clinical outcomes for children” (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008, p. 49).

As schools shifted their focus to remove punitive responses to discipline, consequences changed to identify more restorative ways to keep the student connected to the education process. “In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education and Justice began the Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI), a collaborative project aimed at helping schools move away from suspensions and expulsion toward restorative ways of engaging students” (Darling & Monk, 2018, p. 80). Restorative practices, such as doing things with those who misbehaved, as opposed to doing it for them or to them, involve changing relationships by engaging people, providing both high support with these practices

(Mirsky, 2007). Members of schools in the United Kingdom have found the need for solutions to develop a school ethos reducing the possibility of conflict, restoring relationships when conflict does arise (McCluskey et al., 2008). “Vygotsky proposed a ‘zone of proximal development’ to describe the gap between what individuals know and are familiar with on their own account, and what it is possible for them to know and do about the involvement of other people” (Macready, 2009, p. 213). Adapting principles and practices, the restorative justice conferencing is now well advanced in several other countries around the world (Drewery, 2016). Schools’ minority populations are deemed responsible for the intense nature of school punishment, therefore increasing criminalization of students, and increasing prisonization of schools (Payne & Welch, 2010). Schools have limited resources to discipline students. A punitive climate separates students from the classroom, does not heal the trauma, and affects the relationships between students and staff.

Purpose of Restorative Justice Practices

Schools can use different approaches to discipline through using misbehavior as an opportunity to teach the importance of community. Restorative justice is a new way of thinking about criminal justice and crime, because it creates an emphasis about how crime hurts relationships between those who are affected by the crime and those living in the community (Chankova et al., 2016). Restorative justice was created to make kids in the juvenile system. These practices have since been adapted and encouraged to be used in schools with students who struggle with discipline. “Restorative justice provides all stakeholders involved with an opportunity to participate in a forum to discuss the wrongdoing, who and how it has impacted, and what needs to be done to repair the harm”

(Kline & Stewart, 2016, p. 98). Since the early 2000's, school systems and school personnel starting in the 2000's acknowledged the power of restorative practice, but continually faced challenges when implementing the practices (Darling & Monk, 2018). Payne and Welch's (2010) research found that significant positive relationships existed among the various disciplinary responses as opposed to suspensions and expulsions. It stated:

> The findings around positive relationships indicate that schools responding to student misbehavior with one type of discipline tend to use other types of responses as well, which suggests that when discipline is used by schools, it, in fact, might become harsher just by virtue of the number of disciplinary measures implemented by those schools. (p. 1046)

With a prevention focus and intervention focus, restorative practices create a positive school climate by transforming the relationship between adults and students (Gregory et al., 2016). To remain collaborative, one should take direction from the client to find what is needed to heal (Bent-Goodley, 2019). Using this practice has expanded the role for victims and requires responsibility for the offender's action and for the harm the offender's actions caused (Chankova et al., 2016). Together, the offender and the offended decide how to repair the harm after a classroom or schoolwide disruption has occurred (Gregory et al., 2016). The basic requirement of civil society is mutual respect for all of those involved (Drewery, 2016). Facing one another, they have open discussions about classroom-specific topics, academic and emotional topics (Gregory et al., 2016).

To understand the full potential of the promising intervention of restorative practices at the high school level, it needs further systematic examination (Gregory et al., 2016). Darling and Monk (2018) found that in the academic year 2012-2013 there were 8,038 suspensions and 178 expulsions in the district, whereas two years later, there were 4,872 suspensions and 71 expulsions, nearly cutting discipline incidences in half. Supportive educational opportunities prepare them for the roles in adulthood and provide individuals with adequate resources to help students reach their full potential (Chankova et al., 2016). The difference in restorative practice in schools differs from those in the justice system in that schools' personnel and adults are working exclusively with the offended young people (McCluskey et al., 2008). The principles in restorative justice are closely aligned with those in the counseling field. The two philosophies align in building self-efficacy and self-esteem, teaching conflict resolution skills, positive well-being, and respect for all, empowering students, advocating for the marginalized, and building strong relationships with the community (Kline & Stewart, 2016). In developing a restorative school climate, School communities move beyond their known and familiar practices to a process unknown to them (Macready, 2009). Using these circles, students and teachers learn about one another, causing the school community to share authority/ownership over the school and classroom climate, which in turn increases accountability for young people (Gregory et al., 2016). Macready (2009) identified specific restorative practices to include:

> Whole-school, class, and playground activities to promote and practice social and emotional aspects of learning; developing restorative language and restorative conversations; peer mediation; classroom circles; restorative thinking plans;

> checking-in and checking-out circles for students and staff; small and large groups restorative meetings; formal restorative conferences; and restorative ethos building. (pp. 217-218)

Involving parents in the process of restorative practices has found that the parents were intrigued by learning how to break the intergenerational patterns of violence and were willing to participate and learn about restorative circles (Ingraham et al., 2016). The circle techniques are used to provide feedback, generate learning goals, collaborate to find solutions to misbehavior, and resolve any conflict amongst the school community (Macready, 2009). School mediation offers these factors, but are using the whole school community except those involved (Chankova et al., 2016). The culture is created by the school, which plays an integral role in creating a culture where young people learn to find the value of social cooperation in relationships (Macready, 2009). Balance of clarity, readiness for change, and flexibility about identifying aims are key features for the successful implementation of restorative practices in both primary and secondary schools (McCluskey et al., 2008). Using the school to create relationships where students understand the consequences for their actions and build a strong community that supports accountability and success.

Schoolwide Effects of Restorative Practices

Effective schools allow students to learn by using community to foster important relationships. Essentially, exploring alternatives to punishment and discipline, as it could be counterproductive to learning environment (Chankova et al., 2016). “Restorative practices present schools with an opportunity to respectfully respond to students’ inappropriate behavior, while offering an inclusive, educational, non-punitive approach to

make things right for everyone involved" (Kline, 2016). The power in relationships creates major change as school personnel commit themselves to hearing students and attempt to see the challenge from their point of view (Drewery, 2016). Staff described as fair and listening to "both sides of the story," showed overall students who were calmer, and positive about their whole school experience (McCluskey et al., 2008). "In a large suburban high school, the number of incidents of 'disrespect to teacher' and 'classroom disruption' reduced by 70% after 1 year of intervention" (Gregory et al., 2016). Restorative practices provide opportunities to learn about the view, understanding, and emotional responses to the incident. Educators can create a sense of community among students and help students stimulate the ability to take other people as equally valued members of the community (Macready, 2009). "Young people need to be comforted when they are upset, listened to with sympathy, taken seriously, and given opportunities to share feelings, including difficult ones like anger, fear, and anxiety" (Chankova et al., 2016, p. 170). Conflict resolution and mediation build an individual's listening skills by helping opposing side to find a mutually acceptable solution (Chankova et al., 2016). Results from the study conducted by Gregory et al. (2016), suggest that RP implementation was associated with better teacher-student relationships, as measured by the teacher's use of exclusionary disciplines, such as suspension and expulsion and student-perceived teacher respect. "Punitive practices perpetuate an "us versus them" attitude, influence high recidivism rates, and often lead to higher rates of incarceration" (Kline & Stewart, 2016, p. 101). Qualitative methods provided evidence that members in the community, such as students, teachers, and parents using RP, found that discipline paradigms were shifting, and the results of interventions had social and cultural validity

(Ingraham et al., 2016). Research shows that exclusion from school is closely linked with academic failure, dropout, and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Kline, 2016). Building on RP, mediation offers a structured approach that empowers young people by defusing disagreements among peers (Chankova et al., 2016). There is not one program that works across every population. Therefore, schools should use their community to create systems and policies for the students they serve.

Connection to Trauma-Informed Practices

Family members and individuals affected by the hurt caused by offenders engaged in small groups using restorative meetings, which contribute to the learning process (Macready, 2009). The findings by Payne and Welch (2010) suggest that some schools may be responding to misbehavior with the means available to their school community, whether it includes suspending them, sending them to a counselor, charging students with crimes, or having them engage in community service. Support, structure, and student voice are effective when trying to "humanize" teacher interactions to the offending group (Gregory et al., 2016). Using this model fosters a strong sense of safety, as well as a strong sense of community (Mirsky, 2007). Punishing and criminalizing student misbehavior with only one type of discipline, increases the severity of the responses of offended individuals and in turn increases the frequency in which offenders continue to misbehave (Payne & Welch, 2010). Massachusetts Advocates for Children created a Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TPLI), which stated,

> A better understanding of how a positive community response can actually reduce the severity of the trauma symptoms should encourage educators to infuse

> trauma-sensitive approaches for students and supports for personnel throughout the schools because schools are the central community for most children (p. 7).

Conclusion

As shown, trauma affects students, teachers, and other staff members across diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. The effects of trauma can manifest in individuals differently. Therefore, research points to the need to include trauma-informed practices in school policy and procedure in every school.

Chapter Three: Methodology

As Chapter Two reviewed the literature on Trauma-Informed Care and Practices, Mass Incarceration, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Restorative Practices, Chapter Three will focus on the methods used to research the variety of practices schools implement to meet the needs of students with the city of St. Louis and whether teachers, administrators, and support staff are trauma informed. This was a mixed-methods study using a survey and an interview to seek how educators serving the city of St. Louis understood and used trauma-informed practices. The researcher emailed a survey to the educators within city schools. Participants were from parochial, public, charter, and private schools, using their contact information on the schools' websites. The researcher retrieved the data in June 2020. This survey was sent in July 2020. The interviews followed the survey and were conducted in August and September of 2020. During this time, many schools closed and switched to virtual learning, due to COVID-19. The interviews were held virtually or over the phone, due to the restrictions in the pandemic. The summer school courses were held virtually in the city of St. Louis. Additionally, this chapter will outline the methods used to conduct the study, the survey and interview questions, and how the data were collected and analyzed.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how district leaders in different schools within the city of St. Louis apply the Trauma-Informed Initiative released by DESE and signed within the MO Senate Bill 638 on June 22, 2016. There are no mandates for schools in Missouri to address trauma or create a trauma-informed setting. The Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools stated that the model should be used as a guideline

to start the journey to be trauma informed (DESE, 2019). Therefore, the district and individual schools can choose to use this information or not consider it at all. The disadvantages for students in the city of St. Louis include poverty, community violence, gang activity, and gun violence, as well as many other traumatic household experiences. According to the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, the total number of crimes from 2018 to 2019 increased by 2.9%, resulting in 24,544 crimes committed ("Saint Louis Metro Police Department," Crime Comparison based on UCR Reporting, 01/2020 - 12/2021). Several studies proved that trauma affects individuals among different populations. The importance of this study is to investigate successful practices in schools and educators, as well as their understanding of trauma, applying this knowledge and approach to dismantle the School-to-Prison pipeline, and view students through a trauma lens. Affecting two-thirds of the population, the prevalence of trauma is incredibly high (DESE, Jan 2019). About 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), and nearly 1 in 6 reported experiencing four or more types of ACEs (CDC, 20219). With trauma affecting over half the population, there is a growing need to hold schools accountable to meet their students' mental health needs and to meet their achievement goals within their schools.

To become a Trauma-informed school impacts daily practice, program design, and policy creation and implementation, and the culture of the school must be infused with the science about trauma (DESE, 2019). This study will examine how separate roles within the education system are working to become trauma informed. With the city of St. Louis being at the forefront of community violence, poverty, and traumatic experiences,

there is a need to enforce a trauma-informed approach to helping students. This study will examine how different schools are addressing trauma within their structure or the lack of trauma-informed services being provided for students.

Methodology

This study was a mixed-methods study using surveys and interviews. Administrators, teachers, and support staff surveyed and interviewed concerning if and how different schools and systems implemented trauma-informed strategies to reach students. The survey questions included the enrollment in their schools, discipline structures if participants considered themselves trauma-informed, and how they used that information to influence daily decisions. The researcher compiled a list of administrators, educators, and support staff across the city of St. Louis via their school websites. The researcher sent out a mass email to all educators and administrators with a consent form and survey to complete for willing participants. Participants' responses were collected while the survey was active for one month. Due to the unpublished version of the survey being shared with participants, the researcher extended the window to two months. As part of the survey, the researcher asked participants if they were willing for a follow-up interview virtually to address their current school's approach and their success with any programs that they are implementing using their knowledge of trauma-informed practices. The interview process extended several months, due to schedule conflicts between participants and the researcher.

Procedures

The researcher compiled a list of educators and administrators who were currently employed in the city of St. Louis at any public, private, and charter school. This survey

included those who worked specifically with middle and high school students. There is only one public school district in the city of St. Louis and several charter and parochial schools. The list of middle and high school administrators and educators is posted on each district site with the exclusion of one charter school which had no email information available online. The list of charter and private schools was compiled from an internet search of schools in the city of St. Louis. The researcher followed up by viewing their websites to ensure they were working with students within the study age range. The schools within city limits were chosen, based on location and the community which they served. This study focused on the city students and excluded any St. Louis County school districts. Each address and zip code were verified to remain within the city limits of St. Louis. On most schools' websites there is a link with staff that includes all members of that school, as well as their emails. Some schools did not provide a spreadsheet of emails; therefore, the researcher went to the individual teacher's page to find an email or used the names of staff members and the structure of the email to send the surveys. This list included secretaries, building substitutes, interventionists, counselors, social workers, therapists, and any other member of the school community that works with the middle and high school aged students. All the emails compiled from each site were added to an excel spreadsheet and everyone was offered the opportunity to participate in the study. There were not any schools or staff excluded from this opportunity to participate, with the exception to the one charter school that did not have staff emails listed on the website. Some schools had different firewall protections, which could have caused the email to go to their spam folder. There were 1,985 emails sent using *Qualtrics* software. Of those

emails sent, 268 surveys were started, 158 surveys were finished, 78 emails returned, and there were 24 duplicate emails.

Sample Sizes and Selection Criteria

The city of St. Louis is composed of 79 different neighborhoods ("St. Louis Metro Police Department," Crime Comparison based on UCR Reporting, 01/2020 - 12/2021). There are approximately 300,576 people in the city of St. Louis stretching across 61.7 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, Population, Figure 1). There is a total of 53 schools in St. Louis City that teach middle school students. There are a total of 23 schools that teach high school students. Black students are 70% more likely than White students to be enrolled in schools, where more than half of the teachers have fewer than three years of teaching experience (Saint Louis MO Government, Teacher Experience, 2021, para. 2). There are more than 4,000 teachers, administrators, and support staff within the city of St. Louis. Of the 300,000 people living in St. Louis city, approximately 21% of that population is in school age, which means approximately 63,000 students are enrolled in schools within the city limits.

The sample population consisted of administrators, teachers, and support staff in the city limits of St. Louis. The researcher used a search of middle and high schools in St. Louis city to identify all the schools within the city limits. Through each school's website, the researcher found emails for all staff members at that location. The researcher provided consent forms to potential participants in using their results from the survey sent through *Qualtrics*. Participants had a month to respond to the survey. Following the survey, there was a final question for willing participants to add their email for follow-up virtual interviews via Google Meet, Zoom, or phone call. Due to the pandemic, interview

participants were also given the option to respond to the interview questions at their leisure via Google Docs. Of the data collected, the researcher analyzed the information to search for common themes used to address trauma in the city of St. Louis.

Survey

After research of trauma-informed practices, the researcher used the knowledge of the research to create survey questions (see Appendix A). The survey questions inquired how individuals in different settings and distinct roles were addressing trauma in their schools. The survey consisted of 24 questions. There was a mixture of Likert scale questions, open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, order ranking questions, and multiple selection questions. This survey was sent to all participants twice. The first survey was not the published version of the survey. Therefore, the number of participants is not the same as each survey question. The original survey was sent out to 2010 email participants. The researcher only used the questions of the published survey for analysis. The questions from the original survey were not used for any research in this study.

Interview

Survey participants were asked to include an email address in a survey response question if they were willing to participate in an interview discussing the implementation of trauma-informed practices. The interview included 13 questions. Each participant was asked for their consent at the beginning of their interview. Each question was aligned with the research questions and used to analyze how their school differs from others, when implementing trauma-informed practices. The interview consisted of questions discussing programs, practices, discipline, and emotional needs of the students in their school. There was a total of 16 respondents who participated in the interview process.

Additionally, there were 12 participants who were interested, but unable to participate during the interview timeline, or thereafter.

At the end of the survey, educators were given the opportunity to include their email address to be a part of the interview process. The interview process was an opportunity for them to expand on their responses to the survey questions, their training, development, and understanding of trauma and how it is implemented in their schools. There was a total of 16 participants in the interview process. There were two charter schoolteachers, one charter school counselor, one private school counselor, one private school dean of student activities, one private school teacher, one public school AIC, one public school JAG specialist, one public school principal, and eight public school teachers. Once participants responded with their email information, the researcher contacted them through the university's email to set up their preference of video chat for the interview process. They were given the option of Zoom, Google Meet, or phone call. The interviews were conducted at different days and times following the survey.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions were investigated:

RQ1. How does the level of understanding of trauma-informed practices differ between administrators and others in the education system?

RQ2. How do public and private schools differ in their implementation of trauma-informed practices?

RQ3. In what ways do trauma-informed practices work to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

The hypotheses for this mixed method of study were as follows:

H1. There is a significant difference between public, private, and public trauma-informed practice implementation.

H2. There is a significant difference between the perception of those who are trauma-informed and how they implement trauma-informed practices and those who are not trauma-informed and their implementation of trauma-informed practices.

Data Analysis

Surveys were administered at the end of June and beginning of July 2020 to the entire participant pool generated by the researcher. Those who responded to the survey question consenting to the interview process, were sent an email following the survey to establish a time for a virtual meeting. Survey responses were coded for common themes. The first four questions on the survey are demographic questions about their positions, years of experience, and the populations of their schools. These questions were used for population samples and a level of experience in education for the participants.

To address RQ1, to analyze the differences in administrators and other staff members' responses, the researcher ran a report to include only those who responded as an administrator to separate their opinions from the other staff. Once the data were separated, the researcher used a variety of questions to look for common themes in understanding trauma-informed practices. The researcher asked about how they are meeting the emotional needs of the students, the definition of trauma, and if they support how leadership handles discipline. The open-ended questions created by the researcher discussed the definition of trauma, meeting emotional needs, and steps after implementing in class interventions to misbehavior. The researcher used a Likert scale to measure the support of leadership's approach in Question 17 (1- Strongly Agree, 2-

Agree, 3- Neither disagree nor agree, 4- Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree). During the interview, participants were asked “How do their definition of trauma-informed practices influence decisions they make daily for our youth?”

To analyze the level of understanding of trauma, research is looking for emerging themes that differ between staff and administration. “Leadership must actively participate in trauma teams, model a trauma-informed approach in their interactions with staff, and embody the principles of trauma-informed care” (DESE, 2019, p. 4). To decipher between the two roles, the researcher looked at three distinct aspects of understanding trauma-informed practices: the definition of trauma and how it influences daily decisions, emotional needs, and discipline processes. The survey asked the definition of trauma and how it influences daily decisions. Following the definition, the researcher used survey questions to ask how staff and administration meet the students’ emotional needs. Next, the researcher inquired about how discipline is handled beyond classroom interventions and after the school disciplinarian receives a written referral. After analyzing the different responses, the research looked to see if staff supported their leader's response to discipline. There should be some continuity in this process of applying trauma-informed practices daily within their roles as administration and staff and using them in every aspect of their decision making. When a behavioral challenge presents itself, a trauma-informed school is a safe and supportive school with clear expectations and systems to repair relationships and culture (DESE, 2019).

To address RQ2, the researcher analyzed the questions and compared how public, charter, and private schools differ in their implementation of trauma-informed practices. The research was analyzed in groups based on the public, private, or charter schools.

There was one respondent who classified their school as another, but did not specify. Therefore, their responses were excluded from data analysis. There were five questions total that focused on the programs that are implemented and how well they were understood, importance of relationships between teacher and student, as well as the percentage of connections teacher has to student, and the steps to take after they notice a student feuding with another student. Teachers were asked to rate their levels of understanding of the following programs: Response to Intervention, PBIS, 504 plans, counseling, homebound, in-school families, homerooms, extracurricular programs, mentoring programs, tutoring, professional learning communities, buddy rooms, or other using a scale of 1- I have zero understanding of this program, to 5- I fully understand this program. Following these questions, respondents were asked to rate these same programs using the level of implementation in their current school. 1- We do not implement these programs, to 5- We fully implement these programs in our school. The researcher used a ranking order question for participants to discuss the interventions used prior to writing an office referral. Using a Likert scale, respondents were asked to state the importance of building relationships with their students from 1- Strongly Agree, to 5-Strongly Disagree. The final survey question used for this survey was asking respondents what percentage of students they have a relationship with. During the interview, the researcher asked for specific challenges in their schools with implementing trauma-informed practices, how their students are treated through their discipline systems, and to define the uses of trauma-informed practices.

To break down the difference in implementation of different types of schools, the researcher looked at three distinct aspects of Trauma-Informed Practices: the importance

of relationships, the level of understanding and implementation of PBIS and RTI programs, and challenges faced when implementing. As stated in previous research, relationships and open lines of communication are important in building a safe, trustworthy, and collaborative community. Restorative justice is a practice where those who are affected by the misunderstanding come together to determine how to repair the harm (Gregory et al., 2016). Specific programs, such as Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Systems work to create a community around choice and empowerment. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports model (PBIS) are used by many school districts across the nation, designed to provide a safe and therapeutic classroom for our youth (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016).

To answer RQ3, the researcher used open-ended questions from the survey and interview process to answer the research question. The questions asked a range of information within their schools about policies, systems, discipline, procedures, and social/emotional needs. The open-ended questions asked surveyors how they believe trauma-informed practices have affected suspension and dropout rates, how they respond to students feuding in class, and what efforts they have made to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Participants were also asked to select the types of disciplines they use for students, as well as listing any other options that were not listed. During the interview, participants were asked about the types of disciplines or discipline systems used, if said discipline systems were consistent and students were treated fairly, how they believe trauma-informed practices impact suspension and dropout rates, how they combat the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and how students' needs are met who struggle with high suspension and dropout rates.

To address the hypotheses for this study, question numbers 7, 8, and 10, from the survey used a Likert scale. These questions address if participants would consider themselves trauma-informed, if they implement the strategies in their current role, and how often they are using these trauma-informed strategies. The responses from these survey questions and how the staff respond to misbehavior were compared to their understanding of trauma-informed practices. Following these questions, the researcher used the ranking order question of interventions they used prior to writing a referral.

> In the Psychological First Aid (PFA) developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress network and National Center for PTSD, "the first PFA core action refers to building a trusting relationship with a child and establishing contact so that he or she feels that someone is available and that an adult will listen, validate, support, and care for them. (Field et al., 2017, 174)

The hypotheses were analyzed using an ANOVA test. This test was used to analyze the three different subgroups.

Data Collection

The researcher emailed administrators, educators, and support staff that served middle and high school students within the city limits with a survey link using *Qualtrics* software. This email was sent to 3,997 staff members through a purposive, non-random sample. Of those emails sent, there were 268 started and 123 completed. This was a 48% completion rate for those who started the survey. Of those who completed the survey, there were eight administrators, 91 teachers, and 24 support staff. All completed surveys returned to the researcher were used in the study with a minimum sample size of 20. However, the respondents were well over the expected amount.

There is no relationship between the researcher and the participants in this study. However, the survey emailed the researcher's past, current, and future employers. This resulted in responses from previous or current colleagues to respond to the email and the interview process.

Participants were emailed a survey through the researcher's Lindenwood University email. The participants were not required to enter any personal information nor the institution in which they serve. However, participants were asked to state whether their school is of parochial, charter, or public setting. Following the survey, participants were to respond with an email address if they wanted to be a part of the interview process.

Conclusion

This study is embedded in research across different countries and serving different populations. The researcher used the research to create an original survey and interview to reach participants and show their use of trauma-informed practices in the schools. This study was based in St. Louis City Schools to show the importance of using restorative practices to create change in a city that struggles with poverty, incarceration, violence, and low performing academics. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data collected by the participants in the survey and the interview transcripts.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

The analysis in this chapter was conducted to explore how participants within different types of schools are aware of and actively using Trauma-Informed Practices. The study also analyzes understanding how different programs or procedures are being used to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline. The researcher utilized a mixed-method approach with an online survey using *Qualtrics*. The survey was sent out to teachers, support staff, and administrators in the St. Louis city area. The survey allowed participants to take part in an interview following the survey to elaborate on their schools. The researcher analyzed the survey results and stored the data in a locked location during the development of the study analysis. The researcher analyzed the open-ended questions and interviews to find common themes in the responses. In Chapter Four, the researcher presented the research questions and the hypotheses with a qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

Research Question 1: How does the level of understanding of trauma-informed practices differ between administrators and others in the education system?

To analyze the level of understanding of trauma-informed practices, the researcher asked questions regarding the definition of trauma and how it influences daily decisions, the emotional needs of students, and how misbehavior is handled. There are no specific programs that are implemented to be named a trauma-informed school, but instead a shift in understanding of why a child is behaving in that way. To be trauma-informed, schools should be using relationships to create a culture of joint decision making and the importance of community among administration, staff, and students. As

the research shows, schools are starting to use programs, such as PBIS to approach discipline in a different manner (DESE, 2019). The responses from administration and staff were split to find commonalities or differences in the understanding of trauma-informed practices, based on emerging themes.

Trauma and Trauma-Informed Practices

Staff Definition of Trauma

Respondents were asked an open-ended question from the survey to define trauma. Of the 51 responses, four were administrators. The remaining number of 47 were support staff and educators. The researcher composed the responses into three major themes: Psychological, Experience/Event, and Negative.

Psychological. Of the responses, a common theme was discussing the psychological or mental effects of trauma. When asked to define trauma one participant stated, ‘any incident having a lasting negative impact physiologically, psychologically, emotionally, socially, or economically.’ Another staff member followed by saying ‘psychological damage based on past negligent and violent behaviors.’ A different participant said, ‘trauma is anything that causes negative stress to the body or the mind. It can be physical, mental, or emotional.’ In addition, another participant said, ‘Mental and/or physical pain that varies for each individual.’ Another stated, ‘the psychological side effects or experiencing exceedingly difficult or tragic events.’ A staff member stated, ‘lasting mental, physical, or emotional pain caused by deeply stressful and upsetting events outside the victim’s control.’ The final participant stretched the definition by stating, ‘A disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress of physical injury.’

Experience/Event. This theme emerged from common responses defining trauma as an experience or event that occurred. A participant stated, 'Any event or situation causing stress, anxiety, fear, or grief.' Other participants used definitions, such as 'disturbing experience,' 'a difficult event that causes pain,' 'horrific experience that leaves one scarred,' 'something that happens suddenly,' 'an overwhelming experience,' 'a shocking experience,' 'detrimental events that happen to people,' and 'people who have had some detrimental experience that has affected them physically and/or emotionally.' Moreover, a participant said, 'life altering events that adversely impact one's ability to respond with resilience and self-regulation.' A participant stated, 'events outside an individual's control that influence a person's physical and emotional health.' A staff member defined trauma as 'an event that causes stress and/or makes an emotional impact on someone.' Other participants stated that trauma is 'an emotional response to a deeply troubling event in one's life,' 'the pain, upset, stress from experiencing any number of negative experiences, such as violence, poverty, and hunger,' 'an experience that causes a level of discomfort and/or disturbing to the individual,' 'a set of negative experiences that 'program' you to respond to maladaptive ways to scenarios that seems similar to your initial experience,' 'an unexpected experience that can cause severe physical, mental, or emotional harm to an individual,' and 'an event that causes physical and/or emotional distress.' Another participant stated, 'any experience that an individual experiences that causes them significant distress.' One participant exclaimed, 'trauma is an event that is experienced by an individual, either physically or emotionally, that has lasting harmful, adverse effects on the individuals functioning (including physical and social/emotional well-being).' Other staff members said similar responses, such as

‘events that occur that directly or indirectly affect how a person thinks, acts, interacts with others, etc.’ a distressing experience that affects a person's everyday functioning,’ ‘the brain’s response to life altering negative experiences,’ or ‘any event a person has difficulties processing which results in negative side effects. The final definition gave an example of such trauma by saying ‘action that interrupts your life such as death and COVID-19.’

Negative Effects. A common response among respondents when asked to define trauma was using other themes, but focusing more on the negative effects it leaves on multiple aspects of someone’s life. After asking to define trauma, a participant stated, ‘it is anything that causes an adverse reaction to the setting or situation one is in.’ Other staff members responded, ‘bad news,’ ‘extreme life disruption,’ ‘bruised,’ ‘threats or perceived threats to an individual’s safety to an individual’s safety or security,’ and ‘anything that causes emotional and mental effects to a person.’ Another person exclaimed, ‘I would define trauma as any occurrence in a student’s life which has or may create a lasting psychological, physical, financial, or emotional impact.” Furthermore, participants had a full understanding of the definition, as one response included, ‘Trauma is anything that negatively impacts a person. It can be an event that causes a person to be stressed or be unable to cope,’ Another added, ‘ongoing stressors that impact a person’s daily life (may need external force to help remove negative situations).’ Another participant stated, ‘trauma is anything that makes you feel helpless/no control over what is going on.’ Negative connotations in each staff member’s definition made the common theme of Negative Effects connected to the definition of trauma clear.

Administration’s Definition of Trauma

Experience. When administrators were asked to define trauma, a common theme was the theme ‘experience,’ by each respondent using that term in the definition. Three of the administrators used the word ‘impact’ in their definitions. One responded with ‘any event or experience that has a strong negative social-emotional impact on a person.’ Another administrator stated, ‘and experience that had a negative impact on an individual.’ Additionally, the other administrator defined trauma as ‘distress of troubling experience’ and ‘past experiences that adversely impact student’s lives.’

Staff’s Daily Influence of Trauma-Informed Practices

Respondents were asked in the interview, “How does your definition of trauma-informed practices influence decisions you make daily for our youth?” “Within a trauma-informed program, all staff having an understanding of the potential impact of trauma on clients and an ability to recognize signs and symptoms of trauma as well as client triggers” (Bulanda & Byro Johnson, 2016). There was a total of 17 respondents in the interview process. Of those who were interviewed, there was a total of 12 individuals who would be classified as staff, including teachers and a Jobs for American Graduates (JAG) coordinator. There was a total of five individuals classified as administrators, based on their roles in the organization. This included a principal, an academic instructional coach, two counselors, and a Dean of Student Activities. The emerging themes regarding how their definitions influenced daily decisions were: developing relationships, interacting with students, and community building.

Developing relationships. Almost half of the teaching staff responded by discussing the importance of learning their students by listening and cultivating relationships. ‘I try to listen to my kids. That is one of my personal goals,’ expressed an

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher. A public art teacher stated ‘You have to know them. If you do not get to know them, they are not going to trust you. They are not going to respect you.’ A teacher and academic interventionist found that ‘I have to continue talking to my students to learn about the traumas that they face so that I do not assume that I know what they are facing.’ The JAG coordinator expressed the impact the definition had on her by saying, ‘It has opened my mind and changed my opinion, gave a better understanding, and comparing me to understand how students will be or have been impacted in the past.’ Two teachers were aligned with other public school teachers’ responses by discussing ‘the language and verbiage I use with students. I always say, ‘what happened to you’ which leads to more conversation and explanation.’

Interacting with Students. Another teacher found, ‘I try to make decisions in the classroom with the understanding that what I receive from the students on a given day could be as a result of something that happens, is happening, or is continued to happen outside of my space.’ Another teacher stated how their actions were causally related to how they conduct their classroom in comparison to the pandemic by stating, ‘It is at the forefront. It is something I consider, say like right now, we are dealing with this unprecedented pandemic that is impacting the way we deliver our instructions. I was a little bit more flexible.’ The teacher, who was a public-school teacher for most of his career, stated,

> I am aware that many young people have gone through such difficult situations. That it is important to be alert when working in class to the fact that sometimes it affects the way they feel about themselves, the way they feel about school, how

> they feel about the world, and they can be substantially affected by things that don't have anything to do with their teacher or anything in the school.

The other teacher affirmed 'Be aware of how the effects of those traumas may manifest in my classroom in various ways. I have to understand the cycle of trauma and how I can work within that and make decisions to best support my students.'

Community Building. Other teachers discussed how they use their definition of trauma to help the students restore relationships that have been strained. For example, a teacher stated, 'My passion is helping students process their traumas that influence their daily decisions.' Another teacher expanded beyond talking to the student by saying,

> I think that being aware of what trauma is, which I probably wasn't a few years ago. That has really guided me to call parents, talk to counselors, talk to social workers, talk to the students themselves, you know to find out what is going on.

The participants in this study stressed the importance of building relationships with their students to meet their academic goals.

Administration's Daily Influence of Trauma-Informed Practices

The responses from administration were mostly aligned with the common theme that they use trauma-informed practices to adjust how they are interacting with students, except for the principal's perspective. The Academic Instructional Coach (AIC) states, 'My first question is 'What happened to you to cause this behavior?'' The School Counselor states that,

> it's just a daily reminder and I work really hard to pass it on to the teachers at school. You know to remind them that it is comes from a place of need. Students

don't intentionally misbehave and they're not intentionally working to manipulate the system.

The school counselor found 'I always remember that some children are still living in trauma so it's important to be neutral and sensitive to their individual needs.' The Dean of Student Activities at a private/catholic high school stated that 'I am always thinking about the well-being of the student.' The principal shared his perspective of using his definition by stating, 'My definition influences whether or not I create programming that targets students or if I need to target or address adult practice.'

The Emotional Needs of Students

A Trauma Informed School is one that is proactive in addressing the needs of students as they come to school with outside factors affecting their basic needs, emotional needs, and physiological needs. The goal of educators is to teach students grade level curriculum and push them to deeper levels of understanding. "Ensuring that students are able and ready to learn requires addressing those students' social and emotional needs" (DESE, 2019, p. 4).

Staff's Way of Meeting Student's Emotional Needs

Respondents were asked an open-ended question from the survey to ask how they connect with students who are struggling emotionally. Three administrators responded to this question out of 49 respondents. The remaining 46 respondents were support staff and educators. The researcher composed the responses into three themes: Conversation, Connection to Community, and Support. There were some responses that initially started with a conversation and then led to referrals connecting with other members of the learning community. Other responses encompassed all the diverse ways respondents meet

students' emotional needs by holding a conversation, using the community around them, and providing support in other ways. A few responses were not attached to a theme because they were unclear, such as 'background research,' 'personal relationships,' and 'don't know.'

Conversation. Many of the responses were based on following up with the student to have a 'conversation' or 'talk.' Most of the responses were limited to those two words with the occasional specification of 'one-on-one discussions' or 'talking privately.' There were a few responses that were specific to their approach to having a conversation. One respondent stated, 'Meet with them one on one to check in and listen to what they want to talk about. Reassure that they are in a safe place, and if needed, I ask if I may write info, they tell me down, so I don't forget.' Another staff member clarified that, 'One on one discussions, but they need to be frequent. Also, there should be a line of communication already established with the student prior to noticing problems in the classroom.' One respondent exclaimed, 'You have to talk to them. I let them know what I notice and that I care about how they are doing.'

Community. Other responses started with the conversation and followed up with community support. Responses included 'connect with other support,' 'refer to a social worker,' 'talk with another trusted adult,' and 'share my concerns with the social worker and the counselor.' A respondent stated, 'Talk it out, write it out, send them to the counselor.' One respondent described, 'I give the student choices about seating, amount of participation, and/or private discussion with me or the social worker.'

Support. There were several different responses that incorporated the other two themes, such as 'Daily check-ins, observe classes student is in, give food/comfort when

needed' or 'I will ask how I can best support them.' One respondent stated, 'Even if they say 'no,' sometimes I have them stay in the hall for another five minutes to regulate, get a drink, use the restroom, etc., so they are prepared to positively engage in the class when they return.' Other responses from staff were specific by stating how they address the student, 'I ask them to wait after class and I tell them what I observed and ask them if they me to help or talk.' One respondent stated, 'listen without judgement - allow the student to process their feelings and emotions.' Other responses included, 'show support, teaching coping skills,' and 'find as much common ground with the student as possible and make sure they know that I am there, as a regular human, for them to connect and touch base with.' A more specific respondent explained how they show support by 'meet individually with the student to see how I can help the child by just lending a listening ear, helping them brainstorm solutions/strategies, help them develop a plan of action, etc.'

Administration's Way of Meeting Student's Emotional Needs

Administrators' responses varied based on their position within the schools and how often they work with the student population. There were three total participants that identified as administrators. An assistant principal responded, 'conversations and connect with other support.' A principal followed by stating, 'Invite the student to share with me then, if they are willing, I invite a counselor or social worker.' The school counselor states, 'Ask what they need and how I can support.'

How Misbehavior Is Handled

This section included the analysis of two different sections that correlate with administrator and staff responses to their next steps, following a child whose behavior

continued to persist following classroom interventions and if participants support their leadership's decisions around discipline.

Staff's Response After Behaviors Persist

In the survey, respondents were asked to discuss the decisive step once their interventions were unsuccessful. This question had a total of 109 responses, which included five administrators. The responses of the staff members were analyzed into two different themes. Following their personal interventions to correct the behavior, respondents used a more restorative approach or a more disciplinary approach.

Restorative Approaches. Many of the respondents chose restorative approaches by using other staff members. Respondents discussed reaching out to other staff members such as 'another trusted teacher who has the student,' 'ask a coworker for assistance,' 'talk to teachers, 'collaborate with others,' or 'check with a peer or close friend for any additional information.' Many other respondents discussed teams, such as speak with the team about interventions successes,' 'contact our student CARE team,' and 'develop an intervention plan with the student support team.' Some respondents find using administration's direction by 'discussing strategies with administrators,' 'seek next best practices from administration,' 'have a meeting with administration,' 'set what my other options are,' and 'seek more counseling.' Some respondents' next step was to 'continue dialogue with child and parents/guardians if the relationship is positive,' 'follow up with family,' 'request a parent meeting,' and 'include the parents in everything.'

Disciplinary Approaches. The second theme emerged based on how respondents used more disciplinary referrals following the persistent misbehavior of students. One respondent stated, 'Students would remain outside my classroom for the rest of the

period, either with a trusted teacher/adult, or with an administrator.' Another respondent stated, 'Write a referral. If they continue to act out, they may have to work with a homebound teacher.' Some respondents stated, 'if behavior is disruptive and/or unkind, refer for discipline,' 'send him/her to the disciplinarian,' 'refer to the hotline if it is an emergency,' and 'have the student removed from my program.' Other respondents stated they would 'refer students to lunch detention programs or ISS' and 'contact safety officers.'

Administration's Response After Behaviors Persist

All the administrators responded to these behaviors by using restorative approaches. One administrator uses communication and relationship building by 'going back and checking with the child.' Other administrators discussed using their team for support, such as 'reach out to the behavior team' and 'care team.' The final administrator responded by stating, 'The student would have an intervention meeting with the teachers and administrators and be placed on a behavior contract.'

Staff's Level of Support in Leadership's Approach to Discipline

All staff within the building should demonstrate practices that reflect the needs of all students to reach the final stage of being Trauma-Informed (DESE, 2019). Discipline is handled on a unified front allowing collaboration between teachers and administration. Participants were asked if they support their leadership teams' approach to handling discipline in their school. This is essential when showing how well they are buying into the leadership team's approach to addressing behavior. There were 52 responses in total (n=52).

Table 1

I Support the Leadership Team's Approach to Handling Discipline in My School

Strongly Agree	13
Agree	24
Neither disagree nor agree	9
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	1

Research Question 2: How do public and private schools differ in their implementation of Trauma-Informed Practices?

To separate the data collected by the survey and the interview questions, the researcher separated the responses into three categories: Public, Private, and Charter. The researcher then used this information to analyze the difference in implementation of Trauma-Informed Practices by addressing the relationship between staff and students, the understanding and implementation of PBIS and RTI programs, and the challenges in implementing these practices.

The Importance of Relationships

Respondents were asked to respond to the following statement, 'It is imperative that I build relationships with the students in my building' using the following Likert scale of 1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4- Disagree, and 5-Strongly Disagree. Following this survey question, the respondents were then asked to select the percentage of students they have a relationship with between 0%-25%, 26%-50%, 51%-75%, and 76%-100%.

Public. Thirty-three public school staff responded to this question. Thirty-two respondents strongly agree with this statement. One respondent agreed with this statement. Fifty-eight members of the public-school community responded to this question. Seven respondents have a relationship with 0%-25% of their students. Thirteen respondents have a relationship with 26%-50% of their students. Nineteen respondents have a relationship with 51%-75% of their students. Nineteen respondents have a relationship with 76%-100% of their students.

Charter. Twelve charter school staff members responded to this question. All 12 respondents strongly agree with this statement. There were 38 responses to the next question who were staff members at a charter school. Three respondents have a relationship with 0%-25% of their students. Sixteen respondents have a relationship with 26%-50% of their students. Six respondents have a relationship with 51%-75% of their students. Thirteen respondents have a relationship with 76%-100% of their students.

Private. Six respondents to this question are charter school staff. All respondents strongly agree with this statement. Seventeen private school staff members responded to this question. Two respondents have a relationship with 0%-25% of their students. Seven respondents have a relationship with 26%-50% of their students. Three respondents have a relationship with 51%-75% of their students. Five respondents have a relationship with 76%-100% of their students.

The Implementation and Understanding of PBIS and RTI Programs

The survey question allowed the participants to select different programs offered in a school setting. To this study, the data analyzed the PBIS and RTI program. The survey used ranking order questions to address the level of understanding of said

programs and the level of implementation of said programs. Following the responses to these questions, the research looks at the order in which the majority is using positive behavior systems in the classroom prior to a written referral.

Public. Thirty-three public school members responded to this question. Of those 23 of them stated that they understand or fully understand these programs. Of those respondents, 20 responded that their schools mostly or always implement these programs. Of the five options given, interventions prior to writing a referral or sending a child to the disciplinarian, 16 respondents chose PBS as their first choice. While seven chose this as their second and third choice. Eight respondents chose this as their fourth intervention and 16 others chose this as their fifth.

Charter. Twelve charter school members responded to this question. Of those, 11 of them stated that they understand or fully understand these programs. One respondent stated they were in the middle of their understanding. Of those respondents, 6 responded that their schools mostly or always implement these programs. Five respondents said these programs are implemented sometimes. While one respondent found the programs were barely implemented. Thirty-eight Charter school respondents chose PBS as their intervention prior to a referral. Of the five options given, interventions prior to writing a referral or sending a child to the disciplinarian, 10 respondents chose PBS as their first choice. While four chose this as their second and six as their third choice. Seven respondents chose this as their fourth intervention and 11 others chose this as their fifth.

Private. Six private school members responded to these questions. Of them, one respondent chose each level of understanding except for the two who found that why they neither fully understand nor do not understand. Of those respondents, two responded that

their schools always implement these programs. One respondent found they sometimes implement these programs, two found that their school barely implements them, one found they never implement these programs. Seventeen Private school respondents chose PBS as their intervention prior to a referral. Of the five options given, interventions prior to writing a referral or sending a child to the disciplinarian, four respondents chose PBS as their first choice. One chose this as their second and two chose this as their third choice. One respondent chose this as their fourth intervention and nine others chose this as their fifth and final intervention prior to a written referral.

Challenges in Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices

During the interview process all participants were asked to identify challenges in implementing TIP. Eleven public school respondents answered this question. There were eight teachers, one principal, one Academic Instructional Coach (AIC), and one Jobs for American Graduates (JAG) coordinator. There were three respondents who worked in a private school including one teacher, one Dean of Student Activities, and one counselor. There were three respondents who were Charter employees, including two teachers and a Counselor.

Public. Public school teachers found several different challenges when implementing trauma-informed practices. The focus for the principal was around being 'equitable and effective.' Whereas teachers and the AIC discussed that 'resources,' 'time,' and 'content/standards,' are the greatest challenges in implementing trauma-informed practices. The AIC stated, 'the training does not seem to center around the type of trauma that we had.' There were four teachers who 'were not all that familiar with TIP,' or 'we haven't had any [training].' Two teachers discussed the lack of 'consistency'

and ‘organization’ to fully implement trauma-informed practices. One teacher elaborated on consistency ‘the challenge is truly enforcing it in one space, but if those processes are not followed across the board, they will have a challenging time sticking.’ All the responses varied in responses based on restrictions within the organization and lack of training.

Private. Three respondents to this question. One found ‘I do not have the opportunity to work with many students in the school.’ The school counselor found that ‘teacher buy-in' and ‘remembering in the heat of the moment’ were the two greatest challenges in training teachers to apply this knowledge. Another respondent stated, ‘It’s really not very difficult for me at all because I’m very aware of the problems in inner-city educational environments.’

Charter. The school counselor found that ‘parental consent for services’ is the toughest challenge. The two teachers had similar answers by discussing the multi-faceted effects of trauma. For example, ‘It makes it hard to put TIP in place, because everyone’s trauma is different and how they respond is different. There is no one solution to what practices do.’ The art teacher responded with, ‘I never know when to send the student to the counselor or take time out personally to get involved.’

Staff’s Perception of How the School Meets Student’s Emotional Needs

In the interview, participants were asked, “In what ways does your school meet the emotional needs of students?” Three respondents were unable to identify how or if their school meets the emotional needs of students. A public-school teacher stated, ‘I do not think the school does. I think the people in the building do. Many of them.’ Though she was initially in support of the efforts of some members of the school, she exclaimed

her distaste for others by using an example of hearing security yell at a student first thing in the morning, 'Take your [explicit word] shoes off now!' Another public-school respondent stated, 'I'm not sure I know how to answer that question. I mean we have the typical staff of teachers, guidance counselors, and caring teachers.' One private school responded 'not sure' when asked about their student's emotional needs. Of the 12 responses, nine were in full support of their school's use of staff, programs, or resources to meet the emotional needs of students.

Public. One participant stated, 'My school makes sure that teachers know that it is important to understand the whole child.' Another interviewee finds, 'as a unit, staff and admin perspective, we try to be aware of their whole experience and then surrounding them with love and support.' Other respondents discussed just having 'good relationships with teachers,' 'a really good social worker,' and 'a wonderful school counselor.' One teacher found that 'those persons [counselor, principal, and social worker] would be the only ones who have the experience to handle the trauma and what takes place.' Others responded by discussing students 'participating in the Black History Program' and 'sponsors' for after school programs. One of the administrators was vague in their response by stating they are 'accommodating to students' needs.' Other administrators used each identified theme in their responses. For example, administrators discussed their 'business management teacher who does a workshop for female students,' 'peer mediation and mentoring programs,' and 'career development classes.' A couple of administrators referenced their 'community partners' and 'yoga class that exists to them other coping strategies' as ways for meeting a child's emotional needs.

Private. One teacher discussed how the culture was created 'in which students are about each other, and there's a family kind of feeling that really allows everybody to be thinking about the emotional needs of kids far beyond just a score on a test or getting through a semester.' A few interviewees stated that their school provided programs for the student population but were not specific programs. For example, one teacher finds 'after school programs which has tutoring and homework help' to meet student's emotional needs. A couple of interviewees discussed having 'a lot of partnerships with social service organizations.' Their list of supporting staff members made up of 'counselors, learning consultants, dean of students, and principals,' and the 'care team.' One of the administrators supported their specific program by stating 'responsive classroom model.'

Charter. One respondent stated it is beneficial to 'provide resources including using school time to schedule psychological services that they would otherwise not get and have a supply of clothes and personal care items and laundry services for students on an as needed basis.' Another respondent described having 'other community resources that we use to assist us in supporting students.' 'Once you know the child, you must customize your approach to meet their needs,' was the only charter school administrator response.

Staff's Perception of Steps Following a Written Referral

To further analyze the different responses between administration and staff, the researcher used this question to study the procedures for handling a student who has a written referral. As stated in the Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools, a trauma-informed approach to behavior shifts from the mindset of rewards and punishment

towards a model of accountability (2019). The responses by support staff and teachers were analyzed by using four common themes. The following themes were found Consequences, Discussion, Systems, and Unknown because of limited communication. Some participants listed steps that included more than one theme.

Public. When participants were asked what steps were taken after the school disciplinarian receives a written referral, respondents stated, 'student assigned detention,' 'usually ISS, OSS, or PAN,' and 'contact student and/or parent.' Few participants used parents as the primary follow up to a referral. One participant stated, 'the student would be informed, and the parent/guardian is contacted. The disciplinarian would meet with the student.' One teacher exclaimed,

> I call home to let parents know that I have issued a referral. I also contact the disciplinarian and seek to understand what, if any, discipline actions are given to the student. Once the student is back in class, I give him/her a bit of space or grace or whatever you want to call it. I basically try to give him/her a fresh start.

The researcher found that most schools used discussion regularly but did not provide a specific system or program that is followed. A participant stated they 'talk with students, place them in a kind of think tank space.' Other participants responded that 'talk with the student about the issue and readmit them to class,' 'usually, just talk,' and 'let the student know that if they need help, I am available to help,' Two participants said, 'The responses vary, it could lead to a conversation with the student (with or without the person who referred the student present), it could lead to a "Student Court" date or no follow-up about the incident.' One participant explained that 'I would first have a conversation with the child making sure to listen to their point of view first as that is an

important part.' One educator found that administrators 'talk to the student and their parents (possibly) determine disciplinary measures that match the event' or 'Case-by-case situations.' One respondent stated, 'They don't give us this information.'

As the role of an administrator is to model trauma-informed practices, there should be a specific system to follow to show collaboration. An accountability model of discipline employs behavioral support and restorative practices to enable individuals to develop the skills they need to be successful in an educational setting (DESE, 2019). When administrators were asked about the steps following a written referral, their responses varied, but each administrator used discussion as their first response and sometimes their only response. For example, one administrator simply replied 'conference' with no specification of who the conference is with. Two other administrators stated they 'talk with the student.' In addition, another administrator said their referrals 'start with counseling, other resources, or parent contacts.'

Private. Participants stated that following a referral they involve the 'Care Team, Dean, have a discussion, and plan,' 'usually, they receive after school detention with a conversation about the nature of the behavior problem,' and 'discuss with the student.' Other respondents stated, 'meet with student, family, and others to plan an action plan,' 'may have an individual talk with the student or with student and teacher, and possibly a conference with parents,' and 'it depends. It would not be perfectly consistent.' Educators discussed specific systems implemented in their schools. For example, one respondent stated that 'every teacher is expected to write program notes in SKYWARD to document issues and coordinate teacher level collaboration.'

Charter. Some charter school participants said, ‘Generally they will call the parent with the student to discuss the referral,’ ‘level of consequence,’ and ‘report to administration.’ Many respondents were unsure of what happens after a referral is received. Additionally, a participant said, ‘the staff member would follow the PBIS expectations and more than likely let the classroom teacher know of the incident.’ There were six responses that stated, ‘I don’t know.’ One participant stated, ‘meet with student(s), ask the teacher for clarification, and assign a consequence or bring in for a restorative circle.’

Other respondents stated the steps following a written referral that started with a discussion but followed other procedures such as ‘First they meet with the student to discuss behaviors. They also contact their parents to let them know what is going on. They may need to work from home for a few days if they continue to break rules.’ One respondent stated their disciplinarian has a ‘meeting with the student, sometimes may not return until parent conference.’ One administrator stated that they ‘follow up one-on-one with the student and staff then have closure in a restorative meeting.’

Research Question 3: In what ways do trauma-informed practices work to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

The researcher used several different open-ended questions to interpret what schools are doing to consciously dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline. There were a range of topics in the survey questions and interview questions including programs for discipline or programs they thought to be beneficial to students, how their efforts to combat the School-to-Prison Pipeline differ from those in their school, their perception of the impact these practices have on suspension and dropout rates, and how their students

are treated. The responses to these questions revolved around three different themes: Logistics of the School, Alternatives to Discipline, and Social and Emotional Learning.

The results are written on those three themes. The research question pointed to three emerging themes. Respondents answered the questions referring to systems, alternatives to discipline, and social and emotional learning. The researcher used systems when respondents would reference the amount of training, policies, procedures, and the person equipped to implement said programs. When referencing alternatives to discipline, respondents discussed conversation, mediation, restorative justice, and community. The social and emotional theme emerged from staff discussing relationships, their perception of their students, and their initial response to misbehavior in class. The findings from these themes are found in Chapter Four.

Logistics of the School

After analyzing the survey questions, the researcher found that culture was a vital component. ‘By creating an environment where kids can open up about their trauma, it set a precedent to allow people into their lives to help them,’ stated one respondent. Another response was that ‘These practices have most likely begun to have effects on the pipeline by being responsive to the young people’s needs thereby helping them to cope with behaviors that could lead to prison.’ One administrator finds that ‘any program that has something that very relevant them and they can connect with the teacher.’ Another administrator stated, ‘any program that focuses on the whole child, not just the child as a student, but the child’s emotional, physical, and personal needs.’ One respondent found that creating ‘a family environment where kids feel cared about’ is how to dismantle the

pipeline. One interviewee expressed, ‘We many times give our students multiple opportunities to work out their problems before we part ways with them.’

Other respondents were more specific about programs and policies when responding to students as it pertains to their basic needs, such as ‘mobile market’ or ‘having two social workers.’ Other responses found specific programs, such as ‘TIPS Programs,’ ‘Responsive Classroom,’ or ‘PBIS’ were helpful in disrupting the pipeline. ‘The things like student court and peer mediation are the types of supports to help them better understand the impact of their decisions and how they affect other people and their environment,’ states a teacher. One counselor was hoping to purchase ‘a program to complete a school wide assessment for behavior, peer pressure, trauma, mental health, wellness, etc.’ Others discussed that when responding to misbehavior, they use their classroom or district protocol such as ‘reminding them of the expectations,’ ‘sending them to a buddy room or counselor,’ ‘de-escalating, moving seats, or ultimately removing the instigator to the disciplinarian,’ ‘de-escalation techniques,’ ‘providing an alternate workspace for one of the students,’ ‘inform admin and await instruction,’ or ‘using the Peace Corner.’ A few respondents discussed the levels of their responses and when to move forward. Though they had common responses, one teacher responded by stating,

> First, I attempt to stop the feud. If it seems serious or highly charged, I will take the two out of the room so that they can speak with me privately without the whole class looking on. I give each chance to speak their peace. If possible, I will try to mediate. I usually ask if either they want me to take this further with the disciplinarian or counselors. If it does not seem overly serious, I try to get each

> student to agree to take their disagreement so that we can get back to class activities.

Respondents made broad remarks to how schools have ‘community resources to supplement whatever students may need’ and ‘options so they are on a proper trajectory.’ It is evident that certain schools have created specific protocols for following the discipline that creates a fair and just system. Others are left to create their own pathway of discipline because of lack of structure or school members their relationships with colleagues to send the student out for misbehavior.

Alternatives to Discipline

Using different questions about discipline systems, responses to misbehavior, and the effects of implementing trauma-informed practices, the researcher found that respondents discussed separate ways that discipline is handled at their current school. There were few respondents who were able to identify a specific system for how discipline is handled within the building. In fact, one public school teacher stated, ‘I don’t know [if there is a discipline system]. People do their own things.’ One teacher explained that ‘If we understand the effects of trauma and how outside elements impact our students and those elements are different from student to student. Why would we try to resolve issues and conflicts the same way for everybody?’ One respondent stated, ‘I do not agree with the current practices and it's not consistent. The goal is to keep students in the class, but students need to understand the consequences.’ One respondent found,

> Students with high suspension rates are often seen as the ‘problem child’ and they are looked at differently by peers and teachers because people think they will

always be a ‘problem.’ I noticed teachers will skip the hierarchy often and call the student’s parents immediately every time.

Some respondents found that communication was an important part of the discipline. ‘Right now, we are dealing with this unprecedented pandemic that is impacting the way that we deliver our instruction. I have to adjust headlines and be a little bit more flexible,’ stated one public school teacher. Another respondent stated, ‘I understand structures, but we need to get to the root of the problem.’ A 20-year veteran teacher stated, ‘Well I think that being aware of what trauma is, which I probably wasn’t a few years ago, guided me to call parents, talk to counselors, talk to social workers, talk to students themselves, you know to find out what was going on.’ One teacher stated, ‘teachers are probably taking care of discipline in their own classroom. I always make it the students’ choice.’ One teacher proposed, ‘I think because of the growing effort of districts to inform their staff of these practices, suspension rates and dropout rates have decreased.’ One teacher discusses using ‘student court’ or ‘mediation,’ while others discuss helping them use ‘I . . .’ statements by modeling and reframing statements they said.

Others found that using restorative practices to build the relationships were helpful in disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline, such as ‘by identifying trauma, communicating, and meetings with social worker, other teachers, administration, and parents.’ Another teacher affirmed, ‘We should be warm but with elevated expectations for our students.’ One respondent stated, ‘You can develop the relationship the right way, but you got to be genuine.’ When asked how to reach emotional needs a respondent replied, ‘Those persons [counselor, principal, and social worker] would be the only ones

for me who have the experience to deal with the trauma and what takes place.' Some teachers are 'reminding them of abstract notions of respect, maturity, and self-control,' 'use the situation as a teachable moment,' or use their personal systems of 'moving seats,' 'behavior charts,' or 'demerits.' One teacher stated that 'instead of punishing you, let's see if we can work around that.' Others have found that counseling has helped this rate by 'students not leaving the school would be the counseling they received' and 'building better relationships with our kids and are better able to meet them where they are.' A public-school principal found that

> We take students' situations into account. It is not a one size fits all approach to discipline, but an individualized approach to each situation. We use a restorative process that allows students to receive consequences, however, we are able to work them back into the academic setting.

Another administrator stated, 'When students are suspended or even if they are expelled, we look at everything. We have brought students back who have previously had type I discipline action because we do not agree with the ruling.'

Respondents were asked to select the following disciplines offered at their school. The options were lunch detention, after school detention, in school suspension, out of school suspensions, restorative justices, and expulsion. Respondents were given a space to list any other additional disciplines. Other options participants listed were 'community service in school,' 'peer mediation,' 'demerits systems,' 'Saturday detention,' 'buddy rooms,' 'half days,' 'student court,' 'lunch study hall,' 'individual talks,' and 'incentive programs.' There was a total of 101 responses to this question.

Table 2

Which Following Disciplines Are Offered in Your School

Discipline	Percentage of schools that offer discipline
Lunch Detention	64.4%
After School Detention	34.6%
In School Suspension	100%
Out of School Suspension	100%
Restorative Justice Practices	57.4%
Expulsion	63.4%
Other	17.8%

Table 2 displays the types of disciplines offered in schools, based on participant responses. According to the survey, there are a limited number of schools offering restorative practices to supplement their array of harsher disciplines.

Social and Emotional

Using questions to understand how staff members and their schools are using trauma-informed practices to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline, one teacher stated 'I don't think that the school does. I think that the people in the building do.' The researcher found that staff members are using their perspectives and understanding of the effects of trauma to work with students to keep them in school versus disciplinary action. When asked how respondents' efforts do to combat the School-to-Prison Pipeline, responses were, 'I think we just try to keep trying, keep coming, and it never stops.' One respondent stated that,

> my efforts differ because of who I am as a black man, as a product of north city (where my school is), as someone who had circumstances growing up a lot like the students that I serve... I have more awareness possibly than other people.

One teacher found that her 'efforts are more intentional, personal, and aggressive than the school's efforts.' One teacher used her understanding of trauma to discuss what her students face, by saying,

> my students are living in an environment, or their conditions is gang violence, gun violence, or losing people to the pandemic because of COVID-19 or just natural cause in distress has accumulated, and there is the frustration. I could go on and on.

One respondent simply replied that 'More positive adults + mentors = more hope.'

Others have found that their relationships are their best way to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline by stating, 'If I have a student who is non-compliant, I try to understand why.' Another follows up with 'We are building relationships with our kids and are better able to meet them where they are.' One teacher stated, 'it is my teaching style. You know my students are high school, so as far as I'm concerned, I treat them as adults and their consequences go along with adulting.' One teacher explained, 'You have to know them. If you do not get to know them then they are not going to trust you. They are not going to respect you. You are going to get the bare minimum out of them.' One counselor uses relationships with students by 'treating the students like I treat my children.' One teacher stated, 'I am always thinking about the well-being of the student.' A veteran teacher exclaimed:

> That it's important to be alert when working in class to the fact that sometimes it affects, the way they feel about themselves, the way they feel about school, how they feel about the world, and so you know they can be substantially affected by the things that don't have anything to do with the teacher, or anything to do with what is going on in school.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis

Results from the qualitative portion of this study found that the systems in place to nurture and discipline children within the school system differ in the type of school, the opinion of the individual, and proved inconsistencies in using trauma-informed practices. By analyzing the different responses based on position and school type, the researcher found that school districts were not collaborative or creating a uniform program to meet the basic, emotional, and educational needs that students present with when arriving at school.

Quantitative Results

As stated in The Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools, Trauma-Informed Schools "infuse the science about trauma and its impacts into daily practice, program design, policy creation and implementation, and the culture of the school" (DESE, 2019, p. 3). This model also stated, "Beginning the journey to becoming trauma-informed will require the buy-in and work of all staff in a building" (DESE, 2019, p. 2). Therefore, it is the expectation that trauma-informed schools are using trauma-informed practices daily by every school member. The participants were asked three questions in the survey to test the correlation between the responses on how different types of schools are implementing trauma-informed practices. These questions asked if participants

identified as trauma-informed, if they implement these practices in their current role, and how often they implement these practices.

Null Hypothesis 1

The scores were analyzed to investigate if there was a difference in implementation between public schools (Group 1), charter schools (Group 2), and private schools (Group 3). The highest value was 5, and the lowest value was 1.

Null Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference between public, charter, and private schools' trauma-informed practice implementation.

The results of the scores from the survey question asked participants if they were trauma informed. The Likert scale used was 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. Individual scores using this scale for each response were tested using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the following table displayed the results for the participants who identify as trauma informed.

Table 3

Results From "I Am Trauma-informed"

Groups	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Group 1	59	237	4.0169492	0.4307423
Group 2	37	158	4.2702703	0.4804805
Group 3	17	70	4.1176471	0.4852941

Table 3 shows the number of participants who answered this survey question (count), the total level (sum), the average level (mean), and the amount of difference between the

level of each type of school (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for the response to the survey question asking if they implement trauma-informed practices in their current role using the same Likert scale of 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. The results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Results From "I Implement Trauma-informed Practices in My Current Role"

Groups	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Group 1	59	231	3.9152542	0.7340736
Group 2	38	163	4.2894737	0.64367
Group 3	17	65	3.8235294	1.0294118

The results of Table 4 show the number of participants who answered this survey question (count), the total level (sum), the average level (mean), and the amount of difference between the level of each type of school (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for the response to the survey question asking how often participants implemented trauma-informed practices. The options to choose from were daily, 1 to 2 times a week, 3 or more times a week, once a week, every other week, less than every other week. Participants were entered as 5 if they chose daily. Participants were entered as a 3 if they chose 3 or more times a week. If participants chose any other response, they were given a 1. The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Results From "I Use Trauma-informed Practices..."

Groups	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Group 1	58	208	3.5862069	2.8082275
Group 2	36	136	3.7777778	3.2634921
Group 3	17	57	3.3529412	4.1176471

The results of Table 5 show the number of participants who answered this survey question (count), the total level (sum), the average level (mean), and the amount of difference between the level of each type of school. For a more specific analysis an ANOVA test was completed. Table 6 displays the results from the first survey question.

Table 6

Results From "I Am Trauma-informed"

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Fcrit
Between Groups	1.4593708	2	0.7297	1.604	0.2058	3.079
Within Groups	50.045054	110	0.45496			
Total	51.504425	112				

The same ANOVA test was used for the response to the following survey question.

Table 7

Results From "I Implement Trauma-informed Practices in My Current Role"

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Fcrit
Between Groups	4.0584037	2	2.0292	2.718	0.0704	3.078
Within Groups	82.862649	111	0.74651			
Total	86.921053	113				

The same ANOVA test was used for the response to the final survey question.

Table 8

Results From "I Use Trauma-informed Practices"

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Fcrit
Between Groups	2.1688017	2	1.0844	0.344	0.7095	3.08
Within Groups	340.17354	108	3.14976			
Total	342.34234	110				

Table 8 shows the ANOVA results from public, charter, and private schools. Since the *F* value was less than the *F*-critical value, the researcher failed to reject Null Hypothesis 1. There is no significant difference between the different types of schools. This did coincide with the *p*-value. The *p*-value, ranging from 0 to 1, tests the strength of the evidence. A value of less than or equal to 0.05 shows strong evidence against the null hypothesis. The *p*-value for Question 7 was 0.2058, Question 8 was 0.0704, and Question 10 was 0.7095. Both values are greater than then 0.05, and hence do not show strong

evidence against the null. The researcher failed to reject the Null Hypothesis 1. There is no significant difference.

The following tables examine the difference of means between each school using the Scheffe test. This test is used when different sample sizes are used. There were no differences between the means of their level of implementation when examining Group 1 vs. Group 2, Group 1 vs. Group 3, or Group 2 vs. Group 3.

Table 9

Results From "I Am Trauma-informed"

Groups	F_s	F_{crit}	Significance
Group 1 vs. Group 2	3.2074273	6.158	No
Group 1 vs. Group 3	0.2941438	6.158	No
Group 2 vs. Group 3	0.5963889	6.158	No

To determine the significance level as a limit between the groups that show a significant difference or not, you examine the critical value (F_{crit}). Since the value calculated (F_s) is less than the critical value, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 10

Results From "I Implement Trauma-informed Practices in My Current Role"

Groups	F_s	F_{crit}	Significance
Group 1 vs. Group 2	4.3359149	6.156	No
Group 1 vs. Group 3	0.1487392	6.156	No
Group 2 vs. Group 3	3.4158748	6.156	No

To determine the significance level as a limit between the groups that show a significant difference or not, you examine the critical value (F_{crit}). Since the value calculated (F_s) is less than the critical value, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 11

Results From "I Use Trauma-informed Practices"

Groups	F_s	F_{crit}	Significance
Group 1 vs. Group 2	0.2588123	6.161	no
Group 1 vs. Group 3	0.2271123	6.161	no
Group 2 vs. Group 3	0.6616718	6.161	no

As seen in Tables, there were no differences between the means of the schools. Recommendations and a summary of the results of Null Hypothesis 1 are in Chapter Five.

Null Hypothesis 2

The scores were analyzed to investigate if there was a difference between the perception of those who are trauma informed and how they implement trauma-informed practices and those who are not trauma informed and their implementation of trauma-informed practices. The highest value was 5, and the lowest value was 1.

Null Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference between the perception of those who are trauma informed and how they implement trauma-informed practices and those who are not trauma informed and their implementation of trauma-informed practices.

The results of the scores from the survey question asking participants if they were trauma informed. The Likert scale used was 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. Using this information, the researcher separated those who identify as trauma informed by agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement (Group 1), those who neither did nor did not identify as trauma informed (Group 2), and those who do not identify as trauma informed (Group 3). The results of the scores from the response to the survey question asking if they implement trauma-informed practices in their current role using the same Likert scale of 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. Individual scores using this scale for each response were tested using an ANOVA, and the following table displayed the results for the participants who identify as trauma informed.

Table 12

Results From "I Implement Trauma-informed Practices in My Current Role"

Groups	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Group 1	106	443	4.1792453	0.5294699
Group 2	12	39	3.25	0.3863636
Group 3	4	7	1.75	0.9166667

Table 12 shows the number of participants who answered this survey question (count), the total level (sum), the average level (mean), and the amount of difference between the level of each type of school (variance). The same ANOVA test was used for the response

to the survey question asking how often participants implemented trauma-informed practices. The options to choose from were daily, 1 to 2 times a week, 3 or more times a week, once a week, every other week, less than every other week. Participants were entered as 5 if they chose daily. Participants were entered as a 3 if they chose 3 or more times a week. If participants chose any other response, they were given a 1. The results are displayed in Table 12.

Table 13

Results From "I Use Trauma-informed Practices"

Groups	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Group 1	104	386	3.7115385	2.9451083
Group 2	11	29	2.6363636	3.0545455
Group 3	4	4	1	0

Table 13 show the number of participants who answered this survey question (count), the total level (sum), the average level (mean), and the amount of difference between the level of those who identify as trauma-informed and if they implement practices (variance). For a more specific analysis, an ANOVA test was completed. Table 13 displays the results from the first survey question.

Table 14

Results From "I Implement Trauma-informed Practices in My Current Role"

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Fcrit
Between Groups	30.397464	2	15.1987	27.438	0	3.077
Within Groups	62.59434	113	0.55393			
Total	92.991804	115				

The same ANOVA test was used for the response to the final survey question.

Table 15

Results From "I Use Trauma-informed Practices"

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Fcrit
Between Groups	37.805871	2	18.9029	6.341	0.0025	3.077
Within Groups	333.89161	112	2.98118			
Total	371.69748	114				

Tables 14 and 15 listed the ANOVA result from those who identify as trauma-informed and those who do not. Since the F value was more than the F critical value, Null Hypothesis 2 was rejected. This coincides with the *p*-value. The *p*-value, ranging from 0 to 1, tests the strength of the evidence. A value of less than or equal to 0.05 shows strong evidence against the null hypothesis. The p-value was less than .05 and solidifies the rejection Null Hypothesis 2.

The following tables examine the difference of means between those who identify as trauma-informed and those who do not use the Scheffe test. This test is used when

different sample sizes are used. There were significant differences between those who identify as trauma-informed and those who do not when examining Group 1 vs. Group 2, Group 1 vs. Group 3, or Group 2 vs. Group 3.

Table 16

Scheffe Results From "I Implement Trauma-informed Practices in My Current Role"

Groups	F_s	F_{crit}	Significance
Group 1 vs. Group 2	16.803866	6.153	Yes
Group 1 vs. Group 3	41.063814	6.153	Yes
Group 2 vs. Group 3	12.185607	6.153	Yes

To determine the significance level as a limit between the groups that show a significant difference or not, the researcher examined the critical value (F_{crit}). Since the value calculated (F_s) is more than the critical value, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 17

Scheffe Results From "I Use Trauma-informed Practices"

Groups	Fs	Fcrit	Significance
Group 1 vs. Group 2	3.8574373	6.155	No
Group 1 vs. Group 3	9.4997818	6.155	Yes
Group 2 vs. Group 3	2.6347146	6.155	No

As seen in Tables 16 and 17, there were no differences when examining Group 1 vs. Group 2 and Group 2 vs. Group 3. The Scheffe test revealed a significant difference

between the scores between Group 1 vs. Group 3. Recommendations and a summary of results of Null Hypothesis 2 are in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed participants responses to different questions identifying where their school and themselves lie on the use of trauma-informed practices. The researcher used an array of questioning types to analyze how participants responded to the questions based on their knowledge of trauma. Using the interview process to elaborate in their understanding and implementation, the researcher found differences between the different types of schools and the position within the education system. The interview process included educators, support staff, and administration in public, charter, and private schools in the St. Louis city area. Using the analysis of the survey and interview, the researcher further discusses the study findings in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Overview

In Chapter Four, the researcher analyzed the findings of the study and presented the data. In Missouri there is a model for starting the journey to become a trauma-informed school. The model is not a requirement by the state nor is it advertised for school leaders to use when starting the process. The survey and interview questions were created by the researcher to view various levels of trauma-informed implementation in all schools across the St. Louis area. The research shows how administrators and staff view trauma in similar ways but differ in their implementation of trauma-informed practices. Therefore, they are not creating a restorative environment in which teachers and students are collaborating as a community. Aligned with differences in the implementation process among staff, public, charter, and private schools differ as well. Though in recent years and the current state of the country, there has been buzz around the word “trauma.” The research found that many teachers, while aware of the definition of trauma, were not aware of trauma-informed practices in their school or how they are used to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline. When examining those differences, administrators were more aware of the programs and policies implemented. Whereas many of the respondents were staff and were not able to support the idea that trauma-informed practices exist in their school, nor the system of discipline used to handle misbehavior. There was a large disconnect between the number of participants who were administrators and those who were teachers, counselors, or support staff. The public school district in the city has a wide range of implementation of trauma-informed practices across the various high schools and middle schools. There are no current programs implemented in each type of

school to set the expectation of being trauma-informed nor having data to reflect useful programs or training. There are several members in the education community who help students who have experienced trauma to the best of their abilities but do not feel supported nor capable of such tasks. When discipline decisions are made for students, there are a small number of our city schools who are using trauma-informed practices to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline and provide support to our students and teachers.

Teachers are required to do so much for their students on a day-to-day basis to educate them to the best of their abilities. Beyond their classroom, they have little to no input or involvement in what happens as a result of disciplinary action or experiences their students are going through. During virtual learning, there has been even further separation for the school's ability to reach and support the students emotionally in this time. The curriculum does not allow for the time to meet their emotional needs and set them up for academic success in the future. With the state of Missouri not demanding schools to be trauma-informed, there is a continuous cycle of students who are experiencing trauma and slipping through the cracks of behavior and/or academics. Without a plan to implement change in curriculum and structure, teachers are following behind students and experiencing secondary trauma with little to no support or insurance coverage to provide adequate mental health coverage to remain in these struggling communities and provide support to help shape our youth.

Discussion

Research Questions

RQ 1: How does the level of understanding of trauma-informed practices differ between administrators and others in the education system?

After researching how administrators view trauma, as well as teachers, there is no clear difference between how they use their knowledge of trauma when addressing student behavior, their level of understanding, and applying that knowledge. However, there is a disconnect in their level of understanding, as it pertains to implementation based on their role within the system. A veteran teacher says, 'I don't really know because I don't feel that I've been effectively trained.' Another respondent stated, 'I don't always know, I don't always know if student have had trauma, or are currently having trauma, or to what extent that trauma may affect their ability in the classroom.' For example, school leaders must create teacher buy-in unilaterally to implement this change (DESE, 2019). Teachers are not privy to the conversations students have with administration, counselors, and other personnel following the misbehavior. Many teachers are creating relationships, building with students, and disciplining, but are disconnected with students once they leave the classroom. Administrators who may know the family dynamics or previous traumas that the students have shared do not share the information with teachers as it is stated to be a need-to-know basis using their discretion. Teachers can seek out information, but their questions are not always answered. This disconnects teachers from the necessary tools to appropriately address the child or the child's misbehavior consistently.

Most of the respondents both in administration and other staff discussed having a conversation with the individual as a first or second option. Outside of writing a referral, there is extraordinarily little understanding or communication between the administration and their constituents following the incident. One participant affirmed that by saying, 'There's not a lot of support and communication between administrators, social workers,

and teachers about these students.' A few respondents discussed specific programs or guidelines followed within their school that is considered trauma-informed. For example, 'Restorative Justice practices' and 'TIPs program,' or calling the next adult on the tiered system of discipline by stating, 'Buddy Room.' However, if they did state the guidelines to follow misbehavior, they stated it was not consistent or justly enforced. One teacher's experience stated, 'I noticed teachers will skip the hierarchy often and call the student's parents immediately every time.' Following writing a referral, teachers stated, 'I have no idea' or 'I follow up' to know the outcome of the referral. When asked about the consistency and fairness of the discipline program, the respondent affirmed that 'No, it is not fair. I haven't seen one that is.'

Most of the teachers use relationships to support their needs in the classroom. They cannot control when the administration will step in and discipline students or if they will follow up about a student who was written a referral. Often teachers expressed that they were not trained to understand, define, or use trauma-informed practices nor were they aware of the School-to-Prison Pipeline. A little less than half of the participants stated that they were unsure if they participated in the training provided by the state or did not participate in the training. One administrator interviewee stated, 'I am uninformed regarding this pipeline.' Several respondents just stated, 'unsure.' There were a handful of teachers who stated this was a buzz word or they were recently trained or have become aware of the definition. The JAG specialist stated that she participated in the interview because, 'I recently attended a workshop outside of my school and this word was used. Prior to that, I never heard it.' However, following the initial professional development or

email, there was truly little conversation around handling this topic as it pertains to a full implementation in schools.

The idea of implementing trauma-informed practices and understanding the definition of trauma has been a topic of discussion for several years. However, there have not been any levels of accountability or programs that have been developed and proven to be effective. A school in the final stage of being trauma-informed does not reach completion. School environments, resources, and needs are always changing, there must always be an effort to address these changes through a trauma-informed lens (DESE, 2019, p. 6). Due to COVID restrictions closing schools across the country, participants could not show discipline data or the effects of the programs they had in place. In fact, many teachers could not identify the steps to their discipline program. One teacher stated, 'I'm not sure that I really fight discipline.' It is imperative that schools become the place to implement, create, apply, and adapt policies and curriculum to assess and use for our youth. Though members of the school community can regurgitate the meaning of the word, it does not mean that schools are shaping their curriculum around it. Currently, our nation is suffering from the effects of a worldwide pandemic. The shift to at-home learning causes students and parents to take full accountability to their and their child's education. Teachers are adapting their craft to reflect themselves from a socially accepted distance. Teaching in a pandemic has been a new experience for every member of the community. As the nation moves forward to heal, staff members in the education system will need to adapt and structure our school year to meet the needs of the students on several levels, due to the trauma suffered in the time of this pandemic.

While administrators and staff members were not aligned with understanding of implementation, they were using all their resources and personal interventions to keep children in school and using suspension as a last resort option. Though, this is not being trauma informed. A trauma-informed school never lowers its expectations for students impacted by trauma, but holds them accountable to their actions (DESE, 2019). One veteran teacher responded:

> Typically, we get an email every morning that says here is the list of kids that ISS every day. I am shocked at how many kids' names are on the list. It is a shocking number. At a school with 900-1000 kids and in my mind if we have 5 names on the lists that is a large number. There are days when there are 40 names on the list. Part of it is that our hands are tied with so much regarding discipline.

Another teacher stated:

> Horrible! Constant suspensions. Dropouts. Miserable kids that hate it here and are there only because they were forced to be there. It's been a struggle at …. to get connected to any of these ideas even though occasionally you'll have somebody say something about the fact that these kids are all ending up in jails.

One administrator stated, 'Suspension does not happen much in our school.' teacher stated, 'The ISS isn't structured with academic work. It fluctuates because I may not even know that the child is in ISS, or a teacher will call and let me know.' Reducing the number of suspensions does equal accountability, but rather a dismissal of their behavior, furthering the cycle of discipline. One counselor expressed the lack of accountability by saying, 'If I was a student, I would act crazy. I know of past experiences, I can put on a performance in class, go talk to administrators in the hall, and

return to class.' There were a few that had a huge concern with the number of students that were suspended in previous years, or the way other staff members respond to misbehavior by stressing 'control over my classroom.' Due to the switch to virtual learning in March of last year, there is no useful data around suspensions and dropouts to interpret for the purpose of this study to compare data on discipline. Each member reached in this survey and interview stated that the conversation was their first line of defense when trying to reach a student. Though they are using communication to better understand, they are not implementing these practices unilaterally at each school. For example, a teacher responded, 'I have not seen or participated in any formalized trauma-informed practices.' Schools are limiting discipline but are lacking in showing accountability and using the community outside of the counselor to meet students' emotional needs. Therefore, showing that, every middle school and high school in the St. Louis Metropolitan area represented in this study can define trauma, but are not consistently nor unilaterally implementing Trauma-Informed Practices.

RQ2: How do public and private schools differ in their implementation of Trauma-Informed Practices?

The research was organized by outlining the responses from members of the public-school community and the private. For this study, the researcher separated the responses from public, charter, and private schools to look at the difference in their responses. Since there is no accountability to uphold or implement the model in schools in Missouri, there is a growing need to address these concerns. ACE's have proven that trauma does not affect one specific class, race, or gender, but instead has been proven to affect all individuals. With the growing need to use the community as a resource to

combat this, schools should be at the forefront in adjusting their practices to meet the needs of students. One respondent stated that ‘There is a widespread feeling that the social and emotional needs of these kids to be addressed.’ One participant affirmed that by saying, ‘My students are living in an environment, or their conditions is surrounded by violence, gun violence, or losing people to COVID-19 or just natural causes and distress has accumulated.’

The growing concern of all individuals in the community is that these practices are not implemented with fidelity or consistency. A teacher responded, ‘I think that I would be naïve if I thought that was the case throughout the whole school. I can’t really speak about what’s happening outside. I don’t know about my colleagues’ interactions with kids and administrators.’ One teacher stated, ‘No, I do not feel the restorative justice is consistent.’ A common concern is that none of the teachers and support staff in the building are not buying-in to the importance of the practices. To take on this initiative, there must be a strong sense of teamwork and accountability among staff in order to hold students accountable for their actions in the hope of restoring the damaged community (DESE, 2019). If one individual in public stated their school uses peer mediation, another respondent stated that they use in-school suspension. The only commonality in the research is that all schools, public or private, are not trauma-informed because they are not working as a team. One participant stated, ‘The only thing that I have control over is myself, what I do, and everything else is not my control.’ One respondent found that these practices are necessary in the public schools, but not in private schools by saying, ‘much more prevalent in public schools than private schools,’ when discussing the need for trauma-informed practices. However, some public schools, while aware of the

definition, are not using this knowledge to implement these practices, because it feels like one more program to implement rather than a shift in mindset.

Public and charter schools were mostly aligned with respondents having a relationship with most of their students. Charter school respondents had fewer members that had a relationship with less than half of their student population. Private school respondents had fewer respondents that had a relationship with 75% or higher of their student population. Public and Charter schools have a clear connection in the importance of their relationship with students, as opposed to Private. Therefore, concluding that, it is not mandatory to have a relationship with a child in the private school community for them to perform. This information makes logical sense, because most private schools have tuition and have an application process where they can handpick their student population. A teacher identifying as trauma-informed stated,

> I think that in general our approach as a school is to try to make them feel safe and comfortable by having them understand that we want them in our space. This is to kind of offset their experiences that happen outside these walls.

Trauma-informed approaches to discipline allow the student to have their reaction to the event, but then follow up by addressing that behavior and making the child aware of how that event affected them and others. Students should be held accountable to their actions as well as offered a teaching moment of fixing the relationship that was broken. Students who react without fully understanding the magnitude of their behavior continue to repeat them until they are left without the opportunity to fix their mistake. Some programs such as PBIS and RJ have been deemed to be a form of trauma-informed practices. Many public-school respondents understand and always implement these

practices. Other teachers in this school stated, ‘They would love for me to say PBIS, but personally, I give my kids the benefit of the doubt.’ However, when responding to misbehavior in the classroom, the majority used PBIS as their third, fourth, or fifth intervention. The same trend follows throughout the charter school respondents. Though they know and understand these programs, they are not using them as their first or second intervention choice. In the private school community, there were only six respondents to the level of implementation of the programs. There were only two respondents who stated that they use PBIS or RJ, and many of the respondents chose these programs as their last two intervention options. To be trauma-informed is to “fundamentally change the way it works to promote healthy, resilient educators and learners capable of disrupting the cycle of trauma in their lives and communities and creating more equitable outcomes” (DESE, 2019, p. 3).

There were several responses from all three types of schools regarding their fabulous social workers or great counselors working on meeting students' emotional needs. Some respondents discussed the care team or discipline, but did not expand on how they apply trauma-informed practices. Collaboration uses every person within the community to pull resources to hold students accountable and help them learn how to work through their trauma in a healthy way. As a true trauma-informed school, students are all treated fairly, but there is no model for student behavior. There is no right answer, except that these things should be handled collaboratively. Trauma-informed practices approach tries to understand the child’s behavior to correct. The school is a great community because it reaches every student.

RQ3: In what ways do trauma-informed practices work to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

When responding to the survey questions about how trauma-informed practices were being used and how those practices affected suspension and dropout rates, respondents' different levels of understanding of trauma-informed practices were apparent. Due to the limited number of schools who were implementing these practices, the responses to this portion of the survey and interview were limited. There were also several interviewed who could not answer because they ‘were not familiar with that program’ and ‘I mean I have heard of it.’ To analyze the definitions and responses to these questions, the research looked at the programs offered to the school and used several interview questions. The themes that emerged were the logistics of the school, alternatives to discipline, and social and emotional. These practices can dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline by implementing programs that are empowering students and non-responsive to their misbehavior. When students are misbehaving, staff members should not use punitive responses that strip them of privileges or react aggressively.

The respondents exposed three ways to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline using trauma-informed practices. Adapting the logistics of the school to meet the needs of the students emotionally starts and ends with the staff. The staff members who are at the student level daily are responsible for responding to students appropriately. A trauma-informed school is one with policies and procedures in place to recognize the type of support students need to help achieve academically. The respondents who were teachers and support staff expressed that they do not have control outside of their classrooms. Therefore, they find a growing need to talk to students and use other qualified members

of the support team to address any concerns. The staff's knowledge and approach to students develops relationships that shed light on the student's individual needs. Participants identified that they were using alternatives to discipline. There were mixed responses on the effectiveness of limiting the out of school suspensions.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference between public, charter, and private schools' trauma-informed practice implementation.

Null Hypothesis 1. Through the examination of the survey questions, the researcher used the questions "I am trauma-informed," "I implement trauma-informed practices in my current role," and "I use trauma-informed practices." The first two questions were evaluated using the same Likert scale of 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. The final question is asking how often participants implement trauma-informed practices. The options to choose from were daily, 1 to 2 times a week, 3 or more times a week, once a week, every other week, less than every other week. Restorative Practices should be taught, emphasized, and exercised daily in schools (Kline, 2016). The researcher used an ANOVA analysis of the three different types of schools excluding the one participant who chose another as a type of school. After the statistical analysis of these three research questions, the data shows that the participants across three types of schools identify as being trauma informed, use trauma-informed practices in their current role, and implement these practices three or more times a week. The researcher fails to reject the Null Hypothesis. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to prove there is a significant

difference in how public, private, and charter schools implement trauma-informed practices.

Null Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference between the perception of those who are trauma informed and how they implement trauma-informed practices and those who are not trauma informed and their implementation of trauma-informed practices.

Hypothesis 2. Through the examination of the results in Chapter Four, the researcher evaluated the perception of those who identify as trauma informed and how they implement those practices. The results of the scores from the survey question asking participants if they were trauma informed. The Likert scale used was 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. Using this information, the researcher separated those who identify as trauma informed by agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement (Group 1), those who neither did nor did not identify as trauma informed (Group 2), and those who do not identify as trauma informed (Group 3). The results of the scores from the response to the survey question asking if they implement trauma-informed practices in their current role using the same Likert scale of 5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neither disagree nor agree, 2-Disagree, and 1- Strongly Disagree. Individual scores using this scale for each response were tested using an ANOVA, and Null Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Recommendations for Schools

The researcher has recommendations for public, private, and charter schools in the city of St. Louis working with kids who are middle school and high school age. As research has shown, trauma affects the community members in every race, age, and

gender. Although some populations struggle with adverse childhood experiences and trauma more than others, it is inevitable that schools are the central location to treat all students suffering from these experiences. Schools need to collaborate to create programs for consistency to hold students accountable to their actions. It is imperative that they document their discipline to determine the effectiveness of the programs in place and apply restorative practices to significantly decrease punitive measures against their communities. As a community, it is the school's responsibility to provide proper services to help every child. It would be beneficial to seek out other community programs to help families with proper therapy. During COVID, school leaders all around the United States were connecting to discuss their steps to protect kids. This brought together all the leaders to collaborate on best practices and how to move forward. If school leaders were collaborating on programs and combining their resources to meet the needs of students, it would change education. It would create a space for consistency in discipline and educating the whole child on a larger scale than just within their community. Until we teach our children how to rely on one another for success, we will not achieve unity.

Recommendations for Trauma-Informed Practices

The researcher recommends that PBIS and Restorative Practices are used with fidelity in every school across the city of St. Louis. Professional Development on this topic should be mandatory by training staff how to respond to misbehavior and apply trauma-informed practices to students. Due to COVID-19, students have switched to virtual learning. For students in poverty, this pandemic has greatly affected their exposure to community violence and for some their well-being. Specific interventions identified to help those who are suffering, as well as those who have discipline issues would be

beneficial to schools across the nation. Enforcing schools to move toward trauma-informed practices is the only way to create accountability for students and adults. The need for trauma-informed practices has been consistently proven through research and the current state of our country.

Recommendation for Future Research

In the future, this study should be implemented for school leaders to assess their staff's understanding of trauma. This tool can be used to align proper professional development for their staff. It is a great self-assessment tool for leaders to reflect on their mission as it pertains to educating the whole child by creating a safe space for young people to find themselves. By not addressing the social and emotional needs of our students we are doing a disservice to their future. Schools were made to educate children. Using trauma-informed practices to teach students how to adjust to adversities in their lives and process through their trauma in a healthy manner. Disciplinary actions are used as a punitive response to behavior. The cycle of systemic racism and the School-to-Prison pipeline leaves one specific community under constant duress. There must be responsibility placed in the hands of the schools to address this matter head on.

It is necessary to raise awareness of the effects of secondary trauma that staff are exposed to daily. To find the purpose in incorporating mental health services for children, parents, and staff. To embrace a trauma-informed community is to recognize all of those within that community. Teachers are on the front lines working with students when they are going through a range of emotions based on their growth and circumstance. Our teachers need support because they are people outside of the classroom and do not leave their work at work. The emotions that weigh on them while tending to their students. The

entire community needs healing after this devastation. The school reaches every child in every city and every state in the United States. The accountability of creating trauma-informed schools creates real change in the largest part of the community.

Conclusion

As the learning community continues to normalize in-person education and move forward following the separation of students from schools through COVID-19, school leaders should use this opportunity to create change within their schools. Through personal experience, evidence in research, and future planning, educators must apply this knowledge by embracing the need to establish trauma-informed practices in every school. Using trauma-informed practices can shift the perspective of teachers uniting the entire school community. In order to continue their work in the community, there has to be accountability for administrators, teachers, and students. It takes fidelity, collaboration, and support to establish this in the school community. Students exposed to many adverse or traumatic experiences outside of school directly affects their abilities in schools. It is the job of those who see them every day to step up, support them, and help them create the future that they want for themselves. As this researcher says, “Spread love.”

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

Q1: Consent Form (See Appendix C)

Q2: What is your current position?

- Administrator: If yes, please specify your role below.
- Teacher
- Support Staff: If yes. please specify your role below.

Q3: Please state the number of years of experience you have in the current role and any previous roles within the education system.

Q4: Please specify which type of school you are currently working in.

- Public School
- Charter School
- Private School
- Other

Q5: In your current school, what is the estimated enrollment of middle or high school age students?

- 0-100
- 101-200
- 201-300
- 301-400
- 500+

Q6: I completed The Trauma-Informed School Initiative training as a professional development given by the state.

- Yes, I completed the training.

- No, I did not complete the training.
- I am unsure if I completed the training.

Q7: I am trauma-informed.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q8: I implement trauma-informed practices in my current role at the school.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q9: Using your own words, how would you define trauma?

Q10: I use trauma-informed practices.

- Daily
- 1-2 times a week
- 3 or more times a week
- Once a week
- Every other week
- Less than every other week

Q11: In your opinion, in what ways do you feel trauma-informed practices have impacted suspension and dropout rates in our youth?

Q12: Please use the following scale to rate your level of understanding in the following programs implemented in schools. (1- I have zero understanding of this program, 5- I fully understand this program.)

- Response to Intervention, PBIS, and 504 plans
- Counseling
- Homebound
- In School Families or Homerooms
- Other extracurricular activities including athletics
- Community Service and Outreach Programs
- Mentoring Program
- Tutoring
- Professional Learning Communities
- Buddy Rooms
- Other. List all.

Q13: Please use the following scale to rate your level of understanding in the following programs implemented in schools. (1- We do not implement these programs, 5- We fully implement these programs in our school)

- Response to Intervention, PBIS, and 504 plans
- Counseling
- Homebound
- In School Families or Homerooms

- Other extracurricular activities including athletics
- Community Service and Outreach Programs
- Mentoring Program
- Tutoring
- Professional Learning Communities
- Buddy Rooms
- Other. List all.

Q14: Our school uses the following disciplines.

Select all that apply.

- Lunch Detention
- After School Detention
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Expulsion
- Other. Please list all.

Q15: Prior to writing an office referral or sending a child to the school disciplinarian, what interventions do you use? Please order them from first intervention to the last intervention you implement.

_____ Change of seat

_____ Phone call home

_____ One-on-one conversation

_____ Loss of privileges

_____ Positive Behavior Systems. Be specific.

_____ Other. Be specific.

Q16: After school disciplinarian receives a written referral, how would they address the behavior?

Q17: I support the leadership team's approach to handling discipline in my school.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q18: When I see that a child is having a rough day, I...

Rank in order from first intervention to last intervention.

_____ Check in with the child personally

_____ Hug the child

_____ Discuss it with a coworker

_____ Refer to a counselor

_____ Call home to discuss with parents/guardian

_____ Other. Be specific.

Q19: If the behaviors persists and I have implemented all of my interventions, I would then...

Q20: When there has been a shift in a child's behavior, I...

Rank in order from first intervention to last intervention.

_____ Check in with the child personally

_____ Discuss it with a coworker

_____ Refer to a counselor

_____ Call home to discuss with parents/guardian

_____ Refer to the individual who is responsible for discipline

_____ Other. Be specific

Q21: If a student in your classroom is struggling emotionally, in what ways do you encourage or connect to ensure that their emotional needs are being met?

Q22: If two students are feuding in class, I respond by...

Q23: It is imperative that I build relationships with the students in my building.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Disagree nor Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q24: I have a relationship with ____ of the student population in which I work.

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%

Q25: How do you feel trauma-informed practices have impacted the School-to-Prison pipeline?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What is your current role in the school?
2. What type of school are you employed in: Public, private, or charter?
3. What specific challenges do you find in implementing trauma-informed practices?
4. How does your definition of trauma-informed practices influence decisions you make daily for our youth?
5. In what ways does your school meet the emotional needs of students?
6. What programs do you find most beneficial to supporting our students?
7. What type of discipline system is used at your school?
8. Do you feel said program is consistent in which all students are treated fairly?
9. How do your efforts to combat the School-to-Prison Pipeline differ from those in your school?
10. Is there anything that you would do differently for our students that may not be currently supported in your school?
11. How do you feel trauma-informed practices have impacted suspension and dropout rates? Can you give any specific data on discipline in your school?
12. How are students with high suspension rates treated in your school? Do they get the same chances when exhibiting erratic behaviors?
13. How do you or your school help those who are at high risk for dropping out?

Appendix C: Consent Form

Survey Research Consent Form

A mixed-method study on trauma-informed practices currently used to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Public and Private Schools across the city of St. Louis

You are asked to participate in a survey being conducted by Jennifer Gabrian under the guidance of Robyne Elder at Lindenwood University. We are doing this study to analyze the implementation of trauma-informed practices used in public and private school settings within the city limits of St. Louis. Following the statewide trauma-informed school initiative, I am exploring how you implement trauma-informed care in your current position in education. The survey questions will cover your experience within city limits, your understanding of trauma-informed care, and what programs or interventions you use to meet the needs of your current students. It will take about 20-25 minutes to complete this survey.

Answering this survey is voluntary. We will be asking over a thousand other educators to answer these questions.

At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you are interested in participating in an additional interview by email. We will use a virtual platform such as Google Hangout or Zoom to conduct a video recorded and audio recorded interview. The questions would include specific programs used in the past to support students who have experienced trauma and your opinion of the effectiveness of said programs within your current employer or past employers. There will not be any specific questions that identify your current employer except the type of school you work in. This interview will be no longer than 30 minutes.

What are the risks of this study?

We do not anticipate any risks related to your participation other than those encountered in daily life. You do not need to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or you can stop taking the survey at any time.

We are collecting data that could identify you, such as the type of school you work in. Every effort will be made to keep your information secure and confidential. Only members of the research team will be able to see your data. We do not intend to include any information that could identify you in any publication or presentation.

Will anyone know my identity?

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

What are the benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

To thank you for taking part in our study, your name will be included in a raffle after you take the survey. The raffle includes two $50 gift cards to your store of the winner's choice.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Jennifer Gabrian directly at 636-288-2227 or jennifergabrian@gmail.com. You may also contact Robyne Elder at RElder@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that 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 consent form.

Vitae

Jennifer Gabrian jennifergabrian@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE

Northside Community School, St. Louis — 9*th Grade Algebra Teacher*

AUGUST 2021 - PRESENT

Northside Community School, St. Louis — *8th Grade Teacher*

AUGUST 2020 – JUNE 2021

La Salle Middle School, St. Louis — *6th Grade Teacher*

OCTOBER 2019 - JUNE 2020

SLPS, Northwest Academy of Law and Social Justice — Math Teacher

AUGUST 2013 - SEPTEMBER 2019

St. Louis College of Health Careers, St. Louis — *Adjunct Professor*

JUNE 2013 - AUGUST 2013

EDUCATION

Lindenwood University, St. Charles — *Educational Doctorate*

AUGUST 2018 - FEBRUARY 2022

Lindenwood University, St. Charles — *Education Specialist*

AUGUST 2018 - DECEMBER 2020

K-12 Administration

Lindenwood University, St. Charles — *Master of Arts*

AUGUST 2015 – AUGUST 2016

Gifted Education

Harris-Stowe State University, St. Louis — *Bachelor of Arts*

JUNE 2011

Middle School Mathematics

Mineral Area College, Park Hills — *Associate's Degree*

AUGUST 2015 - JUNE 2017

General Studies

CERTIFICATIONS

MO State Middle School Mathematics

January 27, 2116

MO K-12 School Leader

September 16, 2025

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"One of the goals of education should be to teach that life is precious."

– Abraham Maslow

"Where there is no vision, there is no hope."

– George Washington Carver

"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it."

– Marian Wright Edelman