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An Historical Study of Student Outcomes for School Improvement Grant Recipient Turnaround High Schools in the State of Missouri with Emphasis on Ninth Grade Achievement, Attendance, Discipline, and Graduation Rates

Juanita Chambers

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by:

Juanita Chambers

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

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degree of

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School of Education

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at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

Graham Weir	05/13/2022
Dr. Graham Weir, Dissertation Chair	Date
Sherrie Wisdom	05/13/2022
Dr. Sherrie Wisdom, Committee Member	Date
John E. Jackson	05/13/2022
Dr. John Jackson, Committee Member	Date

Declaration of Originality

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

Full Legal Name: Juanita Chambers

Signature:  Date: 05/13/2022

Acknowledgements

Matthews 19:26 says, “But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (*The Bible;* King James Version, n.d.).

This amazing scripture has sustained me.

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never too old to pursue your dreams in life. They preached us to never give up and to always strive for the top. "Do your best." Both of my parents emphasized the importance of church and God.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the implementation of the School Improvement Grant using the Turnaround Model to improve student academics, by looking at attendance, and drop out and graduation rates on ninth-grade achievement in Missouri. In the United States, within our urban schools, high school drop-out has been a serious, national crisis, which effects the graduation rate. Dropping out of high school has many unfavorable results that have negative effects on the economy, such as employment, crime, personal earnings, and health, such as in the lack of insurance. Students exhibit problems before they enter high school. Thus, as ninth graders, they struggle and often fall behind in this grade. Student outcomes in the ninth grade can be very detrimental to the graduation rate. Many more students fail this grade than any other grade in high school. Ninth grade establishes the tone, is the foundation for graduating high school and has the greatest effect on high school graduation.

A conglomerate of reasons exist that affect this problem in the United States, such as lack of parental involvement, school leadership, socioeconomics, demographics, inadequate educational standards and assessments, poverty among different ethnicity groups, and inadequate funding in education on the local district and state levels, indicating a reason to address the academic needs of our students. In previous years, the federal government established programs to address this problem. No Child Left Behind was an initiative that attempted to narrow the achievement gap between underprivileged students and high achieving students. Too many students were not graduating. To further address this problem, the School Improvement Grant, served as a vehicle for

states, beginning in 2010-2011 to turnaround schools that had performed in the bottom 5% for five consequently years.

For this study, two mid-western public high schools that received the SIG were Lewis M. Kyles High School, an urban high school and Samuel Lewis High School, a county high school. Both high schools implemented the Turnaround Model to turnaround student academic achievement. The research conducted was a quantitative study using secondary data collected from Missouri-Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The data represented were attendance rate, graduation rate, dropout rate, the number of discipline referrals, total enrollment numbers, the number of free and reduced lunch participants, and the Missouri MAP state assessment scores.

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Chapter One: Introduction

History of SIG Schools

One of the challenges educators in school districts face is preparing students for success after graduation. In 2009, under the direction of our past U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, President Obama launched the program, *Race to the Top for America.* President Barack Obama launched the $4 billion program as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), with the recognition that major improvements in education were needed to prepare all students for a globally competitive economy and to drive change for low-income students, students of color, and other groups of students for whom educational progress had come to a halt. Educational leaders – from classroom teachers to state officials – were brought together to improve education in their states and develop innovative plans that would lead to, in the President's words, "Better standards, Better teaching, Better schools" (Fundamental Change, 2015, p. vii). Support and funds from the U.S. Department of Education allowed states to develop local initiatives to address this problem. All 50 states and the District of Columbia were included in the Race to the Top (Fundamental Change, 2015).

As compared to Race to the Top, the School Improvement Grant (SIG), which the researcher has chosen to address for this study, was also a signature program in President Obama's administration. In the beginning, the SIG authorized under the NCLB (No Child Left Behind), received limited funding. In 2007, the SIG program received $125 million dollars, and in 2008 received close to a half billion dollars (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2011). This was followed by over $3.5 billion in 2009 because of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), where school turnaround was

given top priority, due to the failing schools in districts (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2011). During 2009, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) School Improvement Grant (SIG), as a Title 1 program, required individual districts within states to compete for the money, where low-achieving schools performed in the bottom 5%, and set specific guidelines for the schools that applied for the grants (Yatsko, Lake, Bowen, & Nelson, 2015, pp. 27-28). According to Secretary Arne Duncan, SIG funds should be used for dramatic change. In 2010, the U.S. Secretary of Education defined dramatic change as "when a school continues to perform in the bottom five percent of the state and isn't showing signs of progress or has graduation rates below 60 percent over a number of years, something dramatic needs to be done" (as cited in Yatsko et al., 2015, p. 28).

Statement of the Problem

High school graduation is especially important to compete successfully in the job market of this global society. Students who do not graduate from high school have little chance of sustaining themselves or a family in today's economy (Turner, 2007). Dropping out of high school becomes a serious problem for the individual, the school system, the community, and for society. These students are more likely to be unemployed, earn less than those who graduate, be on public assistance, and end up incarcerated (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007). The cost to society becomes a financial burden. As adults, these students are twice as likely to be to be unemployed, account for at least 70% of the United States prison population, and their life expectancy is almost 10 years lower than that of a high school graduate. Increasing the graduation rate by five percent could reduce the amount of money spent on crime (McBrady & Williamson, 2007). Without a firm educational background and attention to completing

high school, a student is at risk of not graduating. A school's success with ninth-grade students is a predicator of high school graduation (Roderick & Cameron, 1999).

The Department of Education created the School Improvement Grant to support K-12 school districts in the endeavors to improve school culture and academics and to progress toward the 100% proficient and advanced achievement goal, resulting from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Background of the Study

One of the most challenging phenomena urban education faces in the United States centers on the successful completion of high school by its graduates and the graduates' subsequent success in our current global and economic society. The ninth-grade year is an extremely critical and crucial event in the lives of students who transition from middle school to high school. Unlike middle school where students depend more on their teachers, parents, and friends for making educational decisions for them, in high school they are required to take responsibility for their own learning, where the schoolwork is more difficult and more time-consuming. Research shows that ninth graders often experience a decrease in their academic achievement, an increase in behavior problems, and often experience feelings of insecurity and alienation (Oakes, 2009). This has become a gloomy picture and has created much concern for our country. Our government saw the need to get involved.

As a result, the initiative on January 21, 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) released the final requirements for School Improvement Grants (SIG) authorized under Section 1003(g) of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Through the SIG program, the USDOE required state educational agencies (SEAs)

to use three tiers to prioritize funding to local educational agencies (LEAs) that had the lowest-achieving schools with the greatest need and demonstrated strongest commitment to use the funds to significantly raise the achievement of their students. The various districts in the state that applied for the SIG funds had to implement one of four rigorous school intervention models – Turnaround, Restart, School Closure, and Transformation – in each identified school (School Improvement Grants [SIG], 2011, 1003(g)). Fifteen LEAs from Missouri, which represented 32 school buildings that met the criteria were awarded these grants during the first year (SIG, 2011). The researcher selected and studied those high schools that implemented the Turnaround Model from 2010 to 2014.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to assess potential changes in Missouri High Schools resulting from the School Improvement Grant (SIG) fundings between the years of 2009 and 2014, measured by attendance rate, discipline referral rate, average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments, and graduation rate. A secondary purpose was to examine potential improvement in the sub-population of ninth grade students attending Missouri SIG schools. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA), the SIG funds were targeted to a small segment of low-performing schools, which were in the bottom five percent of performance for an extended period of time. These schools were required to implement one of the prescribed models: Turnaround Model, Restart School Model, Closure Model, or Transformation Model (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). Because the high schools in America faced the most challenging of improvements for student achievement, by seeking funding through the

SIG grants, this would allow them to implement various interventions to improve graduation rates.

Since 2009, School Improvement Grants have been awarded to school districts nationwide to provide financial help with their chosen school improvement models. As an educational facilitator (teacher, counselor, mentor, and instructional coach) for more than 30 years, the researcher views the role of the ninth grade as pivotal in evaluating the success of a high school. Data provided a cause for great concern and action. Ninth graders have lower attendance rates than students in other grades, which is a predictor of academic performance, the highest number of discipline incidents (detention and suspension), and the highest retention rate compared to other grade levels in high school. Thus, only 10% to 15% who repeat ninth grade graduate, and about 30% of these students nationwide fail one or more classes in the ninth grade. These descriptors are the main factors that contribute to the trend of low high school graduation rates (McBrady & Williamson, 2010).

Rationale

High school graduation is especially important for success in this global society. Students who do not graduate from high school have little chance of sustaining themselves or a family in today's economy (Turner, 2007). Dropping out of high school becomes a serious problem for the individual, the school system, and the community, as well as for society. These students are more likely to be unemployed, earn less than those who graduate, to be on public assistance, and end up incarcerated (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007). The cost to our society becomes a financial burden. As adults, these students are twice as likely to be unemployed, account for at least 70% of the United

States prison population, and their life expectancy is almost 10 years lower than that of a high school graduate.

The Department of Education created the School Improvement Grant to support K-12 school districts in their endeavors to improve school culture and academics and to support progress toward the 100% proficient and advanced achievement goal resulting from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Specific study of SIG recipient high schools in Missouri, along with an investigation of activities involving ninth grade students, as a part of the Turnaround Model chosen by the school, may identify successful strategies for suggestions to other high schools. For this reason, urban districts across the nation and governments have identified ninth grade as a critical and important time for students (McCallumore, 2010, p. 1). Success or failure during the freshmen year sets the tone for a student's high school education, as well as post-secondary education.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in attendance rate-to-year.

Hypothesis 1. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in attendance rate-year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 2: For each high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

Hypothesis 2. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

Null Hypothesis 3: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments year-to-year.

Hypothesis 3. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments compared to state averages year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 4: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in graduation rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 4: High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the graduation rate from year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 5: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 5: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 there will be a measurable change in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 6: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in Dropout rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 6: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the Dropout rate from year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 7: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

Hypothesis 7: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Because of the requirements of the School Improvement Grant, the sample population consisted of the ninth graders, who according to researchers (Allenworth & Easton, (2007), had the greatest impact on high school graduation rates. From the researcher's experience as a teacher and teaching ninth graders for many years, the freshmen grade had the lowest grade point average, the most missed classes, the majority of failing grades, the most discipline referrals, and the highest enrollment rate in the schools. Another limitation of this study was that the SIG targeted those lowest-achieving schools that were in the bottom five percent of performance and had been low performing for an extended time (USDOE, 2015). This could impact the study because of the large number of students who were already struggling to succeed and who had a history of low achievement.

In addition to the researcher being employed at one of the schools, the study was limited to its scope and ethnicity of students. All the students were ninth graders. Also, all of the ninth graders were of the same ethnicity group. Additionally, some teachers transferred from the school and were replaced by other teachers, which could have had an impact on the results. Furthermore, data for only Missouri state assessment courses were collected through End of Course Exams for Algebra 150, Communication Arts, and Biology. All three courses are mandated as Benchmark Assessments and End-of-Course (EOC) examinations for ninth graders.

Another limitation of this research was it only focused on those high schools that chose the Turnaround Model and thus was limited to two high schools from the same geographical region. The three other School Improvement Grant models, Restart School

Model, Closure Model, and Transformation Model were not part of this study. The researcher recognizes that there are many other ninth grade factors that can impact high school graduation rates other than those identified in this study, such as parent involvement, the amount of money that districts spend on each student, and the socioeconomic status of the school.

Definition of Terms

Attendance rate: Attendance represents the average number of days students attend school.

Adequate Yearly Progress: Defined by each individual State as the amount of yearly improvement and progress of each Title I school and district; originally required by NCLB to measure growth in each state; In 2013, NCLB was replaced with Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – Annual Measurable Objective (MODESE).

Comprehensive high school: A high school that specializes in academic preparation, some in remedial instruction, and some in vocational for students. A comprehensive high school has open enrollment for all students during the year.

CADRE: Categorization of Missouri Schools by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE), according to year 1 of receipt of School Improvement Grant money.

Dropout rate: For this study, calculated for grades 9 through 12 by the number of dropouts divided by the total of September enrollment, plus transfers in, minus transfers out, minus dropouts, added to September enrollment, then divided by two (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE, n.d.).

End-of-Course (EOC): Missouri Assessment Program that assesses students' progress toward mastery of the Missouri educational content standards. End-of-Course assessments are taken when a student has received instruction on the course-level expectations for an assessment, regardless of grade level (MODESE, 2009, para.1).

Local Educational Agencies (LEA): Local agencies or school districts that have identified the schools that are considered in the lowest performing five percent of schools.

School Improvement Grant (SIG): Authorized under Section 1003(g) of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act where funds are used for the implementation models; turnaround, restart, school closure, transformation, or charter schools (School Improvement Grants, 2010).

Turnaround Model: Replaces the principal and rehires no more than 50% of the staff, adopts a new governance structure, and implements a research-based instructional program (Saint Louis Public Schools - School Improvement Grants, 2010).

Restart Model: Reopens a school under an Education Management Organization (EMO) or Charter Management Office (CMO) that serves those students who attended before the restart within the grades the school serves and may implement any of the required and permissible activities under the transformational model (Saint Louis Public Schools – School Improvement Grants, 2010).

Closure: Closes school and enrolls students in other schools in the local educational agencies that are higher achieving that may be charter or new school(s), for which achievement data are not yet available and SIG funds may not follow students to their new school (Saint Louis Public Schools – School Improvement Grants, 2010).

Safe Harbor: Allows schools to meet Annual Yearly Progress without being penalized from the previous years' state assessments if 100% proficiency is not reached by producing a 10-percentage point decrease in students of any subgroup or subject matter (Guidance on Safe Harbor, 2015).

Transformational Model: Replaces the principal who led the school prior to the commencement of the transformation model, develop a teacher - and leader - evaluation system that takes student progress into account, with high quality, on-going, job-embedded professional development and increase learning time, and provide flexibility and support (Saint Louis Public Schools – School Improvement Grants, 2010).

Data Analysis

The data for this research was gathered from the (MODESE) and from the high schools that implemented the Turnaround Model that received the SIG funding for three years. The SIG schools were Vashon High School from Cadre 1 and Cohort 1 and Riverview Gardens Senior High from Cadre 2 and Cohort 2. Emphasis will be on ninth-grade achievement, such as average rate of proficient and advance on state assessments in Communication Arts and Math, attendance rate, discipline referral rate, and graduation rate.

Conclusion

The researcher responded to one of the nation's crises because of previous experiences and the problems that ninth graders encounter. Too many of these students get discouraged and drop out of school, not realizing how their lives can be affected. The SIG just scratched the surface of this dilemma. What happens to schools when the funding under the SIG longer exists? High School completion is a benchmark for

success. States must continue to investigate ways to fund school districts after the ninth grade.

Chapter Two will review what the literature and research state regarding (a) the causes leading to school failure of ninth graders which effects the graduation rate, (b) the effects of the dropout rate on graduation, and (c) the significance of the implementation of SIG Turnaround Model to improve graduation rates.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In the 21st century, educators are faced with increasing challenges in preparing students for success beyond graduation from high school. One of the challenges high schools face is improving student learning to meet the needs of employers around the world, who are seeking more highly skilled graduates. The absence of a high school diploma means that students have a lower chance of being independent or supporting a family in today's economy (Turner, 2007). This costs our country tremendously, such as through losing jobs to other countries with more skilled workers and through social benefits that must be paid out to support Americans.

Additionally, the federal and state governments demanded more from students through legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, and held high schools more accountable than ever before (Ryan, 2004). This was often being done through an increase in standardized tests required to earn a diploma (Schemo, 2004). The increased mandated high school graduation requirements were most salient in states that felt pressure to compete with employees coming from other countries.

One of the most critical challenges, especially in urban areas was the consistently increasing dropout rate. Over 7,000 students dropped out of school each day across the United States (McIvers, 2006). School districts and state boards of education across the country were struggling to redesign high schools, so that all their students find success and graduate. Many of these reforms focused on the ninth grade because of the importance of the transition from eight grade (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Success at retaining students at this level by schools is not only a predictor of high school

completion, but success in life (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Roderick & Cameron, 1999). More students failed in ninth grade than any other grade level (McIvers, 2006). In the 2012 High School Dropouts in American Survey, 513 participants who had not graduated from high school between the ages of 19 and 35 showed the following results:

- 23 percent – Lack of parental support or encouragement
- 21 percent – Becoming a parent.
- 17 percent – Too many absences from school
- 15 percent – Failing classes, uninteresting classes and suffering from a mental illness (Wynn, 2010, p. 1)

The results of this national survey indicated that lack of parental support and students becoming parents were significant reasons why young people dropped out of school.

Early Warning Indicators.

Research has shown before a student drops out of high school, that student has exhibited signs as early as in the elementary school. The student has displayed a plethora of disengagement behaviors: lack of involvement in either academic and or social activities; poor attendance; failure to turn in or do homework; and little or no participation in extracurricular activities (The National Academies Press OpenBook (2011). These behaviors led to excessive absences from school, retention in grades and often, constant transfers from one school to another. Early research has also shown that social and family background factors, such as socioeconomic factors like being poor, coming from a single-parent home, little or no support for education in the home, demographic factors, or born as a minority are also precursors that lead to school failure of ninth graders. As a result, ninth graders dropped out of school due to poor grades, a

dislike for school, poor academics, financial needs, and the school environment being irrelevant to their needs (2011). If there are no early interventions done to deter these behaviors and attitudes before the ninth grade, students face a greater risk of dropping out of high school. "The key to reducing the dropout rate is to notice these behaviors and intervene at a state when there is a chance for correction" (p. 1).

Neild (2009) examined four different theories why the ninth grade was such a difficult time and so challenging for some students. The theories are life-course changes, such as reduced parental supervision and more peer pressure, transferring to a new school from middle school and unfamiliarity with new teachers and peers, academically unprepared for high school, and inadequacy in the organization of high schools. Of the four theories, inadequate preparation for high school and the organization of high schools were the most prevalent reasons for failure in ninth grade (Neild, 2009).

Life-Course Changes

Life course changes are events that occur independent of academics; parents grant students more autonomy; reduction of parental supervision and support; increased peer pressure; increased risk-taking behaviors; and declining academic performance by students. There was evidence in a study done by Weiss and Bearman (2007) that revealed an increase in drinking, smoking and drug use among eighth and ninth graders, and development of intimate relationships. However, all evidence still does not explain the difficulty that students encounter in the ninth grade and cannot be explained, even with all the evidence indicating that students with inadequate academic preparation are most at-risk for getting off track during ninth grade. Certain aspects of high school

organization and curriculum could have a significant impact on academic success during the first year of high school (Neild, 2009).

Parental involvement was another factor and a strong predictor of academic achievement for students' success in high school and could be a determining factor that often led to high dropout rates in high school (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Research indicated that when parents are involved, students exhibit more positive behaviors and attitudes toward teachers, students and other staff members; great self-esteem; more confidence; high attendance and less cutting classes; and increases in academic achievement, regardless of their socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education (Chen, 2021; Edutopia, 2000; Waterford Organization, 2018). Studies have also shown that parental involvement has a magnificent affect with student outcomes and their perspectives, such as lower drop out and truancy rates (Sheldon, 2012).

Further studies investigated by Doll, Eslami, and Walters (2013) have explored the dropout factors that have been reported by students and administrators (Jordan et al., 1994; Watt & Roessingh,1994). The factors could be categorized as being either pulled, pushed, or falling out of school. Students are pulled out of school when financial problems exist, such as particular family needs, marriage or childbirth, employment away from school, and illnesses. These are all factors that distract students' attention from completing high school, and they give up. The student is the main agent. The second factor is where the student is pushed out of school, due to suspensions and attendance, inappropriate discipline behaviors and tests. The school administrators determine if the student remains in that school or is transferred to another. Finally, in the third factor

which is falling out, the student has not made enough academic progress by being behind in credits and below the minimum grade point average to graduate. As a result, the student becomes very apathetic or disappointed with completing school. These surmounting circumstances are ones neither the student nor school can overcome (Doll, Eslami, & Walters, 2013).

Transition to a New School

Transferring to a new school breaks social bonds that students had formed with their teacher and peers from middle grades. Students must form new social relationships and adapt to the policies and routines of that school (Neild, 2009). Evidence has shown that transition to a new school is not a major source of students dropping out in the ninth grade because at least 60% of them attended high school with their eighth-grade classmates, which is considered as a new school (Neild, 2009). Weiss and Bearman (2007) reported that students who attended a new high school had better outcomes than those students who stayed at the same school for eighth and ninth grade. Some students benefitted from this transition because they were not attached to eighth grade and their classmates who had a history of grade retention. This analysis, along with other data, shows that transition to a new school was less likely a strong indicator of students' getting off track in ninth grade (Neild, 2009).

Inadequate Academic Preparation

One major cause of ninth grade difficulty is the inadequate preparation for high school (Neild, 2009). As students transition from middle school into high school, ninth graders often lack skills or are below average in reading and math. Reading, which comprises fluency and comprehension, is so important, because it is a skill that is

important across all academic subjects. Success in math in middle schools allowed ninth graders to enroll in other advanced mathematics courses that were requirements in high school for graduation (Neild, 2009). “Studies of cohorts of Philadelphia students showed that failing math or English in the middle grades was a better predicator than standardized test scores of academic difficulties in ninth grade” (p. 62). However, students’ attitudes toward academics, behaviors, and coping strategies that have been developed before entering high school, all indirectly effect ninth-grade graduation. Sociological and psychological theories consider dropout as the result of a long-term process of students’ academic disengagement that begins early in a students’ academic career and is influenced by both in- and out-of-school factors (Lee-St. John et al, 2018).

Organization and Climate of High School

Another explanation suggests that the bureaucracy in the organization and operation of high schools can be a major source of the difficulty that some students encounter in ninth grade. In the organization that existed, teachers were usually assigned to one primary subject matter in departments. Therefore, each school year brings a different set of teachers who often do not have the experience or inclination to work with students who enter high school with weak or inadequate academic skills. As an experienced teacher with ninth graders, the view is that they are considered among the least favorite students to teach. Teachers were more likely to be inexperienced, compared to their senior colleagues to have the needed classroom management skills, mastery of instructional strategies for ninth graders who show deficits in their academic skills, and access to various material resources of the school. In addition, these students rushed

from either a 45 or 90-minute class period to another, often feeling alienated, frustrated, and anonymous (Neild, 2009).

High School Climate

Research also suggests that disorganization and chaos at the beginning of the school year has a negative effect on ninth graders' course performance. In a 1997 survey administered to a Chicago urban district, 40% of ninth graders reported that at least one of their classes lacked enough seating for every student during the first two weeks of school (Neild, 2009). Speculation is that this was intentional over-registering of classes on the assumption that many will drop out anyway. Two additional problems, which effected ninth grader performance were a change of teacher or a change of course schedule at the beginning of the year. Ninth graders who experienced any of these factors had lower GPAs, even considering the range of demographic and academic characteristics measured in eighth grade (Weiss & Bearman, 2007).

When students were surveyed, researchers in Chicago attempted to compare the relationship between the school climate and successful student outcomes. In schools where there were positive interactions and support by teachers – which students defined as personal attention in class, as well as encouragement and trust that the student would succeed – the students averaged 78% lower course failures. Similarly, in schools where teachers offered more help, and certainly provided incentives for the students to work hard and think about their future, the rates of success remained even after consideration of a student's socioeconomic status and prior achievement levels. (Allensworth & Easton, 2005).

In conclusion, Allensworth (2013) used a model from the Chicago schools that predicted graduation by factoring in students' reading and math test scores in eighth grade, as well as their gender, race, and age when they entered high school; socio-economic status, and mobility during the middle grades. Unfortunately, all this background information fails to predict whether that student will graduate. Instead, it suggests that these background factors are more likely to affect the student's performance in their classes, and accordingly whether they will remain in school, period. If a student failed to attain sufficient course credits after several years in high school, the dropout rate increased, and that student would not graduate (Allensworth, 2013).

Causes and the Impact of the Drop Out on Graduation

Over one million students in the United States make the decision to drop out of school each year. The graduation rate is constantly changing and affects more than students. "Though it is a personal decision, it has a far-reaching impact not only on the student, but on other students and the American education system" (Barrington, 2019, p. 1). Approximately 7000 students drop out of high school on a regular basis. For a while, the United States had some of the highest graduation rates among any developing country, but now we rank 22 out of 27 countries. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that students who drop out of school earn less than $670 per week, compared to high school graduates, which equates to $10,000 in a year (Barrington, 2019). The effects of the dropout rate on high school graduation have negative and adverse life-long consequences on a student's life and society. These consequences included limited employment opportunities, increased prediction of incarceration, more reliance on governmental assistance, and a greater likelihood of females being single parents.

The effects of high school dropout rates also have a national impact on graduation rates.

- Increasing the male graduation rates by 5% will result in an $18.5 billion reduction in annual crime costs
- The same 5% increase could result in a decrease in incidences of assault by 60,000 and larceny by over 37,000.
- The national spending average to educate a student is just over $12,600, while the cost to house an inmate is over $28,000.
- Cutting the national dropout rate would save the country over $7.3 billion in annual Medicaid spending.
- Increasing the national high school graduation rate to 90% would create over 65,000 new jobs, boosting the economy by as much as $10.9 billion, (Barrington, 2019, p. 1)

At the state level, from a financial status, there is the possibility that high rates of high school dropout rates can deter businesses from investing in financial developments, because there would be less funds available for the states to offer tax abatements to businesses. States would be spending more funds on social programs and criminal justice programs (Barrington, 2019).

In the United States, high school graduation rates are affected by socioeconomic factors, demographic factors, and ninth-grade factors, which include attendance, student engagement, and course failure (Neild, Stoner-Eby, & Furstenberg, 2013).

Socioeconomic factors which pertain to family income and structure of the family are the strongest predictors that effect whether a student drops out of high school. For

example, students from low-income families, where there are single unemployed mothers, tend to exhibit lower academic scores, more absences from school, and are special needs (Allensworth, 2013; Wynn, 2012). These students feel that they cannot succeed academically and that there is no connection between their academic life and "real" (Furger, 2008, p. 2). In actuality, the students have problems with boredom in school and see no connection with their peers, teachers, and other staff members at school (Furger, 2008)

Demographic factors, where a student resides, and families' economic status are major factors that determine if a student is successful. The geographical area influences the type of school that is in the area and if that school has qualified teachers, along with adequate resources for teaching and learning. Low test scores exist if the schools are not properly funded. Gender is another factor associated to high school graduation rates. Males had a higher dropout rate than females. In terms of race/ethnicity, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Hispanics, and African American students have the highest dropout rates, which include English Students of Second Languages (ESOL), students in foster care, transient students, and special education students. Asian and White students have the lowest dropout rates (2008).

Ninth Grade Factors

Ninth grade factors that influence high school dropout rates are reduced parental supervision, more independence, high expectations, peer pressure, new teachers, discipline referrals, failing classes, inadequate preparations for high schools, and the school lacking intervention programs to identify ninth graders having trouble (McIntosh & White, 2006). Research has shown that ninth graders, as early as in elementary and

middle school, display key factors or warning signs that influence dropout rates. In the early 2000s, researchers from the Consortium on Chicago School Research, the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University, and the Philadelphia Education Fund identified the key factors as attendance (missing at least 10% of the school days; discipline or behavior problems with two or more infractions; and failing two or more courses with a grade point average of less than 2.0 (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2011). Excessive absences or poor attendance makes it difficult for students to be engaged in high school instruction, and other activities. Absences mean students miss instructional time and student engagement, which can be traced to low motivation and a lack of interest in high school (Rumberger, 2012). Course failure indicates that students have not earned enough credits to proceed to the next grade, and if this continues without the proper interventions, students will be at a higher risk for dropout. Students are off-track and the odds of earning a high school diploma are low (Ritter, 2015). From the researcher's experience as a former secondary Biology and Physical Science teacher of freshmen, the students are often referred to as "reclassified," due to these factors. They are not considered as tenth graders, but "reclassified freshmen."

The reason for students dropping out of high school is complex and depends on the individual student circumstances, which can be related to home, school, and their community. Bridgeland, DiIulio, and Morison (2006) surveyed students and identified five major factors for students leaving school: "Classes were not interesting – 47%; Missed too many days and could not catch up – 43%; Spent time with people who were not6 interested in school – 42%; and Had too much freedom and not enough rules in my life – 38%; and was failing in school" (p. 3). These students in the survey were honest

and counseled others about their decisions, and shared and talked about their goals and dreams for themselves. They did not blame anyone and accepted their own responsibility for their decisions. Many of these students had passing grades and would stay in school, if they had chance to do it over again (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

To address these difficulties that ninth graders experience when they enter high school, researchers have shown that there are many ways to increase high school graduation rates and to deter students from wanting to drop out from school. They identified:

- **Identify and keep track of early warning signs when students are struggling**. Develop prevention programs, such summer bridge activities, ninth grade orientation programs, counseling and mentoring by staff that target these students.
- **Keep track of attendance**. Important to have methods in place to monitor absences, so that students are engaged in learning and feel successful.
- **Improve teacher's responsibility**. Develop actions-plans by providing teachers with data on incoming freshmen who are at risk of failing, dropping out, or inadequately entering high school below grade level.
- **Raise the bar for academic success**. Challenge students with rigorous core curricula that connect students to real learning experiences.
- **Create and foster positive relationships with teachers and staff**. Development cohorts with students and parents. Make sure that students have at least one staff in school whom they can seek help with their problems (Azzam, 2007).

- **Adjust disciplinary practices as needed.** Do not use school suspensions as the only means of discipline, because students who are at-risk or have low test scores lose instructional time and become very distraught (Neild, 2009; Barrington, 2019; Abbott & Fisher, 2012).
- **Positive communication with parents.** Collaborate and constantly communicate with parents on a consistent basis, not just at parent conference (Azzam, 2007).

Not graduating from high school influences the global economy. "The higher graduation rates mean more educated workers, more jobs, and a stronger economy" (Barrington, 2019, p. 6).

Implementation of the School Improvement Grant (SIG)

The SIG program is one of the federal funded programs that have been implemented to improve or solve low-performing schools. SIG allowed states to have more autonomy, where each state chose their most troubled schools, based on their own formulas that measured student learning growth (Jambulapati, 2011). For years as seen in the past, many school districts attempted to reform their schools. In 2009, the federal government under the Obama Administration released over $3.5 billion dollars to assist districts in 50 states, and Washington D.C., to turn around their worst performing schools. As an extension of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the (USDOE) School Improvement Grant was an established Title 1 program; still too many states had school districts receiving Title 1 funds that were still performing in the bottom 5% (Yatsko, et-al, 2015).

For the implementation of the SIG schools receiving funds in 2010, the funds were distributed and determined by each state's formula, based by Title 1 eligibility, targeting a small percent of low-performing schools in the bottom 5% of performance. The states that qualified for the SIG funding in 2010 could award the districts from $500,000 to $2 million per year for the fiscal years of 2010, 2011, and 2012 (Hurlburt, Therriault & LeFloch, 2012). The schools during the academic fiscal years 2010-2011 to 2012-2013 were implemented for a period of three years and were considered as Cohort 1 schools. During the fiscal year of 2010, the second round of SIG schools appropriated funds for the academic fiscal years, 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 school years. The targeted schools among the lowest achieving were prioritized in one of the three SIG Tiers; Tier 1, Tier 2, and finally Tier 3. And it should be noted that in each category, states had the option of identifying additional schools in each tier which may be outside their basic classifications. The definitions are as follows:

- **Tier 1** is defined as a Title 1 school that is one of the lowest-achieving 5 percent schools in the state; or is a high school where the graduation rate has been 60 percent for several years. These schools have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years.
- **Tier 2** includes any secondary schools that are eligible for, but not receiving Title 2, Part A funds and meet all the criteria delineated in the Tier 1 definition: and
- **Tier 3** are the remaining Title 1 schools that are not Tier 1 schools. Here states can decide whether to classify them as Tier 1 or Tier 2 because have not met AYP for at least two consecutive years or are not proficient according to

the state's definition. (Hurlburt et. al, 2012, p. 3); Institute of Education Sciences; 2015); USDOE, 2011)

Finally, those schools in Tier 1 or Tier 2 receiving the SIG funding must implement one of the four models:

- Transformation: Replace the principal who led the school prior to implementation of this model; provides rigorous evaluation system between principals and teacher; introduce significant instructional strategies; increase educational learning time and provide more flexibility and support.
- Closure: School completely close and students are enrolled in other higher-achieving schools.
- Restart: Convert, close or open schools under the management of an educational management organization or a charter management organization.
- Turnaround: Replaces principal is replaced, as well as 50% of the staff; high-quality reforms in professional development and implementation of instructional programs; establish increased learning time and provide flexibility and support for all individuals, (Holmes & Maiers, 2012, p. 4)

In the state of Missouri, those schools located in the Southeast, Kansas City, and St. Louis regions, who were recipients of the SIG grant were given additional assistance to help them implement whatever reform model chosen. Further support from the MODESE was provided to the local educational agencies (LEAs) to assist those lowest performing, five percent, schools (MODESE, 2011). The system of support included a rigorous plan: facilitated the LEA teams of the schools in implementing, developing, designing and evaluating their improvement, especially if the turnaround or

transformation model had been adopted by the school; facilitated services for professional development and technology; and provided assistance in meeting benchmark measures and budgeting, analyzing school data from various resources that helped in instructional decisions and measuring progress (MODESE, 2011). The representatives from MODESE who provided assistance to the LEAs also conducted defined, scheduled visits to denote the effectiveness and implementation of the improvement plan; scheduled and conducted monthly classroom visits with all faculty, staff, students and parents to track the changes in the implementation of the improvement plan; provided coaching teams to the LEA to improve student learning and teaching; and finally, analyzed, measured, and reported the progress of the LEA to determine if progress had been accomplished in meeting the specific indicators of improvement and AYP, as stated in the SIG application (MODESE, 2011).

Because the USDOE announced the SIG program in December 2009, many districts did not have ample time to negotiate with their unions. One stipulation in the SIG required the approval and signature of the teachers' unions. The recipients of the SIG were disclosed at the end of the year, allowing districts and schools only late spring and summer to prepare for the upcoming school year and for the teachers' unions to also sign the SIG application (Yatsko et al., 2012).

For this research, the implementation of the Turnaround Model was used by the low-performing high schools to improve student achievement and increase high school graduation rates.

History of Turnaround Model

The word "turnaround" has been used by businesses and other private organizations for years to promote and reform their operations and financial problems so that the business can be restored with focus on improving management, cash flow, revenue, and productivity. Because each business is different, none will incorporate the same strategy (Haus, The Business Sniper, 2019). School "turnaround" in education is a dramatic, swift, and significant approach to improving the academics and achievements in low-performing schools (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). The Turnaround Model is the most monumental, because it allows schools to overhaul and completely reform by replacing the principal, rehiring no more than 50% of the staff, adopting a new governance structure, implementing a research-based instructional program, increasing learning time for students, and providing more flexibility in the operation of the school (Jensen, 2013; National Center for Education Evaluation [NCEE], 2015). The success of this model focuses on strong and effective principals as leaders to turnaround low performing schools (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009).

Research indicates that there are five significant factors needed to successfully turnaround low-performance school:

- Strong leadership that raises expectations,
- Effective teaching with an emphasis on professional collaboration,
- Measurement and development effective learning behaviors and outcomes,
- Positive school culture, and
- Engaging parents and the community, (Hensen, p. 7)

Turnaround Leadership

Principals must be given autonomy and flexibility to create a vision and culture in schools to promote positive learning for students and teachers (American Institutes for Research, 2011). One of the key components in the No Child Left Behind Act was replacement of the principals in persistently low-performing schools, which is a requirement in SIG (Branch, Rivkin, & Hanushek, 2013). According to Friedman (2020), longevity of the principal in a turnaround school and collaboration and trust with the other stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, community, and district are crucial. Even though a principal has tenure at a persistently low-performing school, because of the criteria stated in the turnaround model, that principal must leave (Friedman, 2020). According to Barrett and Breyer (2014), principals must be able to demonstrate leadership skills and demonstrate efficacy in pedagogy that promote professional learning and growth among faculty. All of which promotes a positive, conductive, and stable environment for student learning. A strong school climate is the most essential for student academic growth. Principals who promote a strong climate develop goals for teachers to work collaboratively together; empower teachers and other staff members to take ownership in the vision and goals of the school; and through shared leadership, monitor the progress of the school by guiding, monitoring, and coordinating the efforts of the teachers and other leaders (Allensworth & Hart, 2018; Price, 2011). "Principals serve as bridges across a school" (Allensworth & Hart, 2018, p. 4).

In a research report from The Wallace Foundation (2013), there are five primary functions that effective principals must be able to perform well:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students.

- Creating a climate hospitable to education.
- Cultivating leadership in others.
- Improving instruction.
- Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. (The Wallace Foundation, p. 6)

Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, in a report where he addressed the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), reported that 70% of principals stated traditional school leadership training programs were, "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's schools" (Duncan, 2013, p. 1). In conclusion, Secretary Duncan stated, "Great principals nurture, retain, and empower great teachers. Poor principals run them off" (2013, p. 1). For this to occur, principals must be allowed to remain in their buildings for at least five years. In low-performing poverty schools, the number of principals leaving each year is 1 in 5. According to a research study completed in 2016-2017 by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), principals had a tenure of four years. Only 11% of the principals had tenure in their schools for 10 years or more. Thirty-five of the principals had tenure in their schools for two years or less. The average yearly turnover rate of principals was 18%, compared to principals in high poverty where the turnover rate was 21%. The annual turnover for teachers is 10% (LPI, 2019). As a result, high principal turnover rates are associated with lower student achievement and high teacher turnover because of the instability of the principal (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). It is imperative for local and state districts to allow principal to use their creativeness to turnaround low-performing schools to change this picture of doom. The

role of the principal is very crucial and significant that can affect the school's climate and culture, the retention of qualified teachers, and student academic achievement.

Managing Data and Processes

For principals to be effective leaders in the turnaround model, principals must be capable of using data to pinpoint, understand, and evaluate the progress in these schools. "When it comes to data, effective principals draw the most from statistics and evidence, having "learned to ask useful questions" of the information, display it in ways that tell "compelling stories" and to use it to promote "collaborative inquiry among teachers" (The Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 15, para. 1). Mattos (2013) cited that an effective way for principals and teachers to collectively monitor student achievement is through a professional learning community (PLC). In a professional learning community, principals and teachers decide on what strategies will be the most beneficial for their students; what content should be aligned to the curriculum to ensure that all students learn at high levels; administer formative assessments to monitor student's learning and to analyze the results collectively to determine if the students have become proficient; and allows teams to be accountable for the results.

Effective Teachers

According to the National Assessment of Education Progress, effective teaching is the most influential on student learning because teachers are constantly with the students (Benard, 2003). In low-performing, high poverty schools, effective teachers are extremely critical to success in turnaround schools. Just because teachers may have advanced degrees and many years of teaching experience does not necessarily correlate to improved student achievement, because of the criteria of losing 50% of the staff.

Effective teachers must be able to motivate the students, influence other staff, and constantly communicate with parents; have confidence and belief in his or her students; analyze and design solutions that are critical to instruction; and a powerful desire for students to achieve so that they are successful (Reform Support Network, 2014). The teachers are not just instructors, but powerful individuals who serves as confidants and positive role models for students. Turnaround teachers must be caring, attentive listeners and understand the talents of each student and display a sense of compassion with high expectations for all students that are student centered (Williams, 2003). As stated by Stronge (2018), "Teachers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students. They directly affect how students learn, what they learn, how much they learn, and the ways in which they interact with one another and the world around them" (p. 3).

Measuring School Turnaround Success

To measure success in turnaround schools, support is needed from state, district leaders, and other community providers where principals are given autonomy and the proper resources to make the drastic changes that are needed. The principals must be able to select a team of highly effective teachers where decisions can be made together in choosing the best policies, allocation of funds, and programs to support teaching and learning for all students (Lutterloh, Cornier, & Hassel, 2016).

According to Lutterloh et al (2016), there are three other elements that measure school turnaround success.

- Part 1 - School-Based Practices: How leaders utilize, collect, and analyze data; instructional practices where data is used to develop rigor in the curriculum; school climate and culture that embodies a safe and positive

environment conducive to learning and fosters emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development where families and the community are actively engaged in the turnaround school.

- Part 2 - Leading Indicators: Improved quality instruction – teacher effectiveness, attendance, turnover rate, instructional minutes; increased participation in school, such as student attendance, dropout rate, truancy; improved school culture which pertain to number of discipline referrals, positive participation of teacher, student, and parent; early achievement goals from periodic assessment tests and first year state assessment gains, from early years of assessments.
- Part 3 - Dramatic Gains in Academic Achievement Outcomes: Based on substantial persistent improvement in student proficiency in reading and math over four years; growth in closing the achievement gaps and reaching academic standards according to the specific state's percentile; increased graduation rate of students on time and high percentage of students prepared for colleges.

School turnaround success is not an easy task and may look differently for each state. Furthermore, states have different assessments tools and standards that are utilized for measuring school turnaround performance. According to Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmtullah, and Tallant (2010), schools, districts, and state levels should be working effectively together to improve and make a difference raising student achievement and thus, increasing the graduation rate.

Summary of Literature Review

The result of American students making the decision to drop out of high school creates a serious impact on the success and competitiveness of the United States to other countries. In 2013, research indicated that the graduation rate in the United States had reached its' highest, 75%, in 40 years, according to *Education Week.* The significant increase in the percentage rate included the fact that Latino students posted a graduation rate of 68% and Black students posted a graduation rate of 62% compared to White students with a graduation rate of 80% (Richmond, 2013). In 2015, according to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics the nation's graduation rate increased to 82%. "America's students have achieved another record milestone by improving graduation rates for a fourth year" (p. 2, para. 2).

Still, research shows that graduation rates fluctuate from year to year. Ritter (2015) addressed the most critical factors that have still influenced high school graduation and have not changed. They are:

1. Economic Factors and High School Graduation
2. The Importance of Ninth Grade on High School Graduation
3. The Attendance Factor and Student Engagement with School
4. Course Failure Factor as an Indicator of High School Graduation
5. Demographic Data. (p. 3)

These key issues are prevalent among those high schools designated as low-performance high schools that have received the School Improvement Grant.

In 2001, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which held schools accountable for

academic achievement for students and a commitment to close the achievement gap between poor and minority students. Even though the legislation addressed poor performance, still too many students did not achieve.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter Three analyzes and examines the School Improvement Grant funding for two high schools that implemented the Turnaround Model and determined the effectiveness of SIG funding on ninth grade achievement, such as average rate of proficient and advanced ratings on state assessments in Communication Arts and Math, attendance rate, discipline referral rate, dropout rate, and graduation rate. The researcher analyzed secondary data from the Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education from 2009 through 2015. These data were compared to each year after the SIG program was implemented using the Turnaround Model to improve student achievement for the two high schools in Missouri. The quantitative method was implemented to further understand if the significance of the implementation of SIG supported graduation rates.

Null Hypotheses and Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in attendance rate-to-year.

Hypothesis 1. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in attendance rate-year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 2: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

Hypothesis 2. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

Null Hypothesis 3: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments year-to-year.

Hypothesis 3. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments compared to state averages year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 4: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in graduation rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 4: High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the graduation rate from year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 5: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 5: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be a measurable change in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 6: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in Dropout rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 6: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the Dropout rate from year-to-year.

Null Hypothesis 7: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

Hypothesis 7: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

Research Setting

The data for this study were gathered from two high schools that implemented the Turnaround Model. The MODESE provided a school report card for both schools located in Missouri, which included Attendance Rate, Graduation Rate, Drop Out Rate, Disciplinary Actions, Map Assessments (MAP), Free and Reduced Lunch, and Amount of SIG Funding Per Year for each school and their students for this study. Data were also measured from within each high school on implementation for the SIG; such as different instructional programs and strategies, the longevity of the principal, the percentage of staff rehired, types of professional development, types of benchmarks or other assessments implemented within the high schools to measure progress toward their goals, types of professional development, increased learning time for students, and parent and community engagement in the implementation of the Turnaround Model.

Keith Lyles High School

At the time, these two high schools, located in the Midwest region of the United States, lost accreditation in the state of Missouri: Keith M. Lyles High School, an urban comprehensive high school, and Samuel Lewis High School, a county high school. In 2007, Keith M. Lyles High School lost accreditation, mainly because of poor attendance, low standardized scores, declining attendance/graduation rates, fiscal management, and unstable leadership. A special administrative board (SAB) was appointed to replace the district's elected board and manage the district. Although Keith M. Lyles High School was part of an urban district that had lost accreditation in 2007, the district was granted

provisional accreditation in 2012; and in 2017, the district was granted full accreditation (Taketa, 2017). After the school was designated as a low-achieving school by MODESE from 2007 to 2010, the high school applied for the SIG to help improve the overall performance and to improve the level of instruction.

At the beginning of the SIG in 2010, the school had 739 students enrolled, with an ethnicity breakdown of 98% African American, 2% Asian, Hispanic, and White; 17% of the students were in Special Education and 0.6% were ESOL students. The percentage of students who qualified and received free/reduced lunch was 91% (Accreditation Report, 2013). Safe Harbor allowed KMLHS to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals without meeting the standard assessment targets of the state of Missouri from the previous year.

Background of Researcher

From 2007 to 2009, the researcher worked as an Academic Instructional Coordinator at Keith M. Lyles High School, before taking the position as Instructional Coordinator during the implementation of the SIG from 2010 to 2013. This position allowed her the opportunity to assist teachers and support them by providing research-based instructional strategies and methodologies, conduct frequent walk-through and classroom observations, and to engage in professional dialogue with teachers centered on student achievement and Marzano's strategies, as outlined in the SIG. The strategies outline included: Identifying Similarities and Differences; Summarizing and Note-taking; Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition; Homework and Practice; Nonlinguistic Representations; Cooperative Learning; Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback; Generating and Testing Hypotheses; and Cue, Questions, and Advanced

Organizers (Marzano, 2001; MODESE, 2018). The school's average total enrollment was 806 students from 2010 through 2013 during the time of the SIG. The average percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch was 87.2% (MODESE, 2021). The researcher worked very closely with the Algebra 150 and Biology teachers, because these classes were part of the state End of Course assessments. The researcher worked as a secondary Biology teacher in an urban school district for many years.

Table 1

Keith M. Lyles High School Enrollment and Free/Reduced Lunch Percentage (2009-2014)

Year	Total Enrollment	Free/Reduce Lunch (%)
2014	864	91.9
2013	900	88.3
2012	828	88.8
2011	658	89.6
2010	739	81.5
2009	818	73.3
Total	4907	-
Average per year	817	87.2

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE), 2021

Keith M. Lyles High School was one of 18 urban high schools located in the Midwestern region of the Missouri. The district had 14 sixth through eighth grade middle schools, 35 pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools, and five pre-kindergarten through sixth grade elementary schools. Keith M. Lyles High School from 2009 through 2014 school years had an average enrollment of 817 students and a percentage of free and reduced lunch of 87.2% (Table 1).

Samuel Lewis High School

Samuel Lewis High School, also a recipient of the School Improvement Grant, located in the Midwestern region of the United States and part of a county district, lost accreditation in 2007. Unlike Keith M. Lyles High School, the high school was given two years to improve, or the state of Missouri would take over its school district and have another school board appointed. However, the state did take over the district in 2010 and a special administrative board was appointed (Griffin & Allington, 2007). During this period, the opportunity was given to parents for their students to transfer to other schools, while the district was unaccredited (Moxley, 2019). Samuel Lewis High School became unaccredited because of a decrease in student achievement scores, poor attendance, and increase in dropout rate and decrease in graduation (MODESE, SIG, 2011).

For this study, from 2010 through 2013, the average total enrollment was 1,533, and the average percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch was 82.7% (Table 2). During the time of this study from 2010 through 2013, the high school did meet the targets for Communication Arts and Mathematics (MODESE, SIG, 2011).

Samuel Lewis High School was the only high school located in this county district. "The district had seven kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools, two sixth through eighth grade middle schools and one high school, grades nine through twelve" (Joyner, 2019, p. 42).

Table 2

Samuel Lewis High School Enrollment and Free/Reduced Lunch Percentage (2010-2014)

Year	Total Enrollment	Free/Reduce Lunch (%)
2014	978	87.0%
2013	1,333	86.0%
2012	1.371	85.0%
2011	1,526	81.3%
2010	1,711	78.5%
Total	6,134	-
Average per year	1330	85.6%

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE), 2021.

Limitations

The researcher worked as an Academic Instructional Coordinator at Keith M. Lyles High School. The study was limited to its scope and ethnicity of students. All the students were African American ninth graders. Although the ninth graders were of the same ethnicity, some teachers transferred from the school and were replaced by other teachers which could affect the results. Data for only Missouri state assessment courses were collected: Algebra 150 and Communication Arts, Benchmark scores, and End-of-Course (EOC) assessments for ninth graders.

Another limitation of this research only focused on those high schools that chose the Turnaround Model to improve student achievement. The two high schools involved in the study were from the same geographical region. The researcher recognized that there were many other ninth grade factors that could impact high school graduation rates other

than those identified in this study, such as parent involvement, the amount of money that districts spend on each student, and the socioeconomic status of the school (Bottoms, (2017).

Summary

The researcher conducted a quantitative study to analyze and examine the SIG program of two high schools that implemented the Turnaround Model and determined the effectiveness of SIG funding on ninth grade achievement, such as average rate of proficient and advanced ratings on state assessments in Communication Arts and Math. The researcher also gathered secondary data from Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary School Report Cards to investigate how the SIG affected the attendance rate, discipline referral rate, graduation rate, dropout rate, state assessments, and total enrollment in the schools.

Chapter Four provides results of the analyzed data and addresses the research questions from the data.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to analyze and examine the School Improvement Grant funding for two underperforming high schools that had implemented the Turnaround Model and determine the effectiveness of SIG funding on ninth grade achievement, such as average rate of proficient and advanced ratings on state assessments in Communication Arts and Math. The researcher analyzed the data gathered from the MODESE from the 2010 through 2015 school years of two Turnaround high schools, one urban and one suburban. For the purpose of this research study several categories were analyzed to investigate if there was any significant change during the SIG in the participant schools for the time period 2009 to 2014. These were as follows:

Attendance rate

Discipline referral rate

Graduation rate,

Free and Reduced lunch rate,

Dropout rate,

Total student enrollment

Proficient and Advanced:

English I and II, Algebra I, Biology, American History, and Government. The schools that were analyzed were given the pseudonym of Keith M. Lyles (KMLHS) which was awarded the SIG from 2010 through 2013 school years. The second school given the pseudonym Samuel Lewis High School (SLHS) was awarded the SIG from 2011 through 2014 school years.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses 1: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in attendance rate year-to-year.

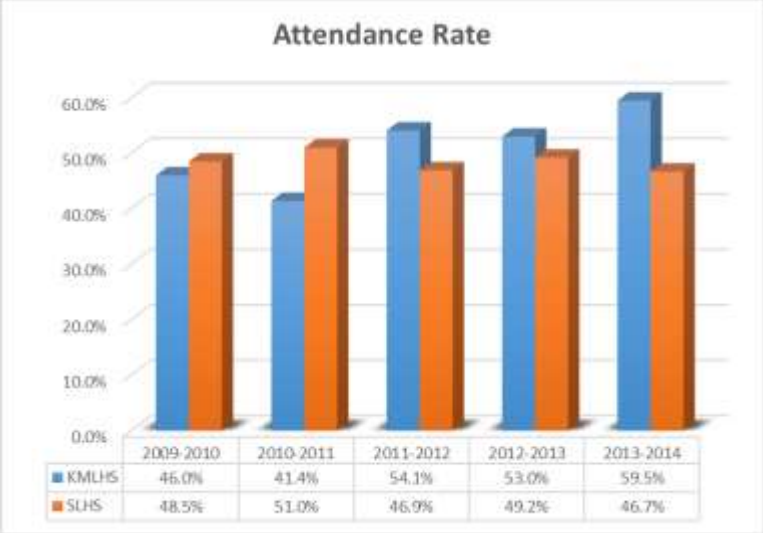
Table 3

Attendance Rate

Attendance Rate	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Keith M. Lyles H.S.	46.0%	41.4%	54.1%	53.0%	59.5%
Samuel Lewis H.S.	48.5%	51.0%	46.9%	49.2%	46.7%

Figure 1

Attendance Rate



To check for differences in attendance rates, year-to-year, an ANOVA was applied to the columns of data in Table 3, which represented the year-to-year attendance rates. *F*-Critical = 5.192, *F* = .0492; and *p*-value = 0.7435; therefore, the Null Hypothesis was not rejected. There is no significant difference in attendance rate from year-to-year.

Table 4

Attendance Rate: ANOVA

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	64.776	4	16.194	0.4929	0.7436	5.1922
Within Groups	164.265	5	32.853			
Total	229.041	9				

For KMLHS, the attendance rate for the year 2009-2010 before the SIG was 46.0%, which declined by 4.6% in the beginning of the SIG in 2010-2011. After the initial year, 2010-2011, of the SIG, there was an increase in attendance rate from 2011 to 2014.

For SLHS, the attendance rate for the year 2010-2011 before the SIG was 51%, which declined in the initial year, 2011-2012, to 46.9%. From 2012-2013, the attendance rate increased to 49.2% and decreased the following year to 46.7%. After analysis was completed, no significant change was noted.

Null Hypothesis 2: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

Table 5

Discipline Referrals

Discipline Referral	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Keith M. Lyles	10.5%	16.4%	9.7%	11.5%
Samuel Lewis H.S.	12.5%	5.5%	4.2%	5.4%

Figure 2

Discipline Referral

A comparison of percentages to the state average for each school year and each school, using a *z*-test for difference in proportions, yielded: $z \geq 10.325$ for each case. *z*-critical = 1.96. Both schools exhibited discipline referral rates significantly lower than the state average.

All values are well under the 36.8% average displayed for this time frame and reported for Missouri by Ibrahim and Ritter (2020).

Keith M. Lyles: 439 in 2018-2019

Samuel Lewis H.S. 377 in 2018-2019

In 2013, Missouri had 917.900 students enrolled in K-12 [(41 + 32.6)/2], a = 36.8% average for OSS during 2009-2014, for Missouri schools with high percentage of Black population.

A *z*-test for difference in proportion was applied to each of the eight values in Table 4, compared to the state-published Out-of-School Suspension average of 36.8% for Missouri schools with high percentage of Black population. The comparison of

percentages to the state average for each school year, for each school yielded a *z* - value greater than or equal to 10.325. These values, when compared to the *z*-critical value of 1.96, which rejected the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference between the discipline referral rates for the two high schools in each instance ($z \geq 10.325$ for each case; z – critical = 1.96). The discipline rates for both schools for each year were significantly lower than the state averages. The Null Hypothesis was not supported.

Both high schools exhibited discipline referral rates that were significantly lower than the state average. All values were well under the 36.8% average displayed for this time frame and reported for Missouri by Ibrahim and Ritter (2020). In 2018-2019, Keith M. Lyles High School had 439 discipline referrals and Samuel Lewis High School had 377 discipline referrals. In 2013, Missouri had 917,900 students enrolled in K-12. During 2009 through 2014, the average Out of School Suspensions (OSS) was 36.8% for Missouri schools with a high percentage of Black population (2020).

Null Hypothesis 3: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in graduation rate from year-to-year.

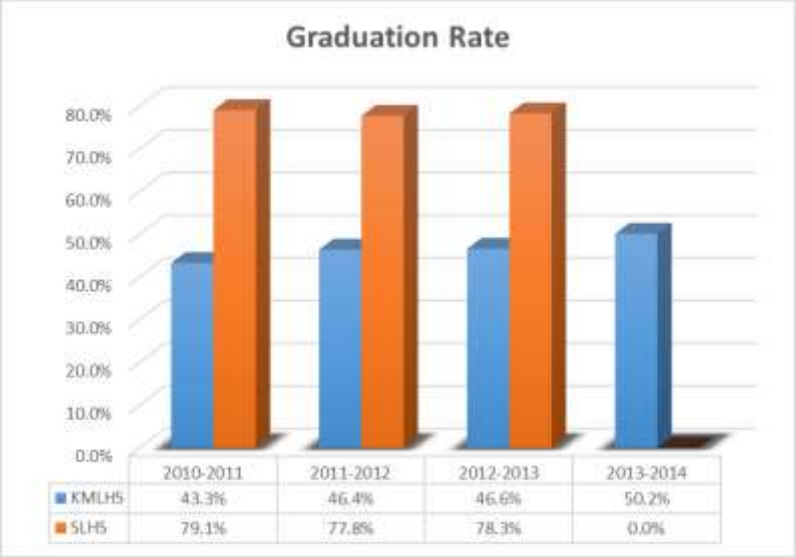
Table 6

Graduation Rate

Graduation Rate (%)	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Keith M. Lyles	43.3%	46.44%	46.62%	50.16%
Samuel Lewis	79.13%	77.78%	78.34%	

Figure 3

Graduation Rate



After applying an ANOVA, *F*-Critical = 9.552, *F* = 0.004, and *p*-value = 0.995 indicate that Null Hypothesis 3 is not rejected. There is no significant difference in graduation rate from year-to-year.

Table 7

Graduation Rate

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	4.46063	2	2.23032	0.0047	0.9953	9.5521
Within Groups	1416.85	3	472.282			
Total	1421.31	5				

Although the changes in graduation rate were not significant for both schools, the graduation rate for KMLHS tended to increase from 43.3% in 2010-2011 to 46.6% in 2012-2013, during the duration of the SIG and for the year after the SIG in 2013-2014, with an increase to 50.2%.

The graduation rate for SLHS for the period 2010-2011 before the SIG grant was 79.1%. From 2011-2013 during the implementation of the SIG, the data exhibited a fluctuation in the graduation rate from 77.8% for 2011-2012, with an increase of 78.34% for 2012-2013. MODESE showed no graduation rate for 2013-2014.

Null Hypothesis 4: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

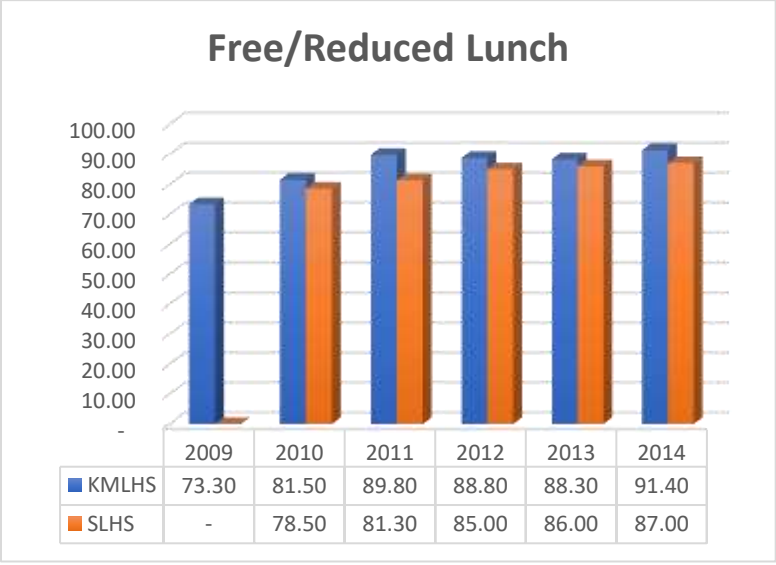
Table 8

Free / Reduced Lunch

Free/Reduced Lunch (%)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Keith M. Lyles	73.3	81.5	89.8	88.8	88.3	91.4
Samuel Lewis	-	78.5	81.3	85.0	86.0	87.0

Figure 4

Free / Reduced Lunch



After applying an ANOVA, *F*-Critical = 5.192, *F* = 2.060; and *p*-value = 0.223; therefore, the Null Hypothesis is not rejected. There is no significant difference in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Table 9

Free / Reduced Lunch: ANOVA

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	100.234	4	25.0585	2.0602	0.224	5.1922
Within Groups	60.815	5	12.163			
Total	161.049	9				

Although the difference in Free and Reduced lunch rate was not significant for KMLHS during the implementation of the SIG from 2009-2013 the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch increased from 81.5% to 88.3%, and the year after the SIG the percentage increased to 91.4%

For SLHS during the implementation of the SIG from 2011-2013 the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch increased from 81.3% to 86%, and the year after the SIG the percentage increased to 87%.

Null Hypothesis 5: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in Dropout rate from year-to-year.

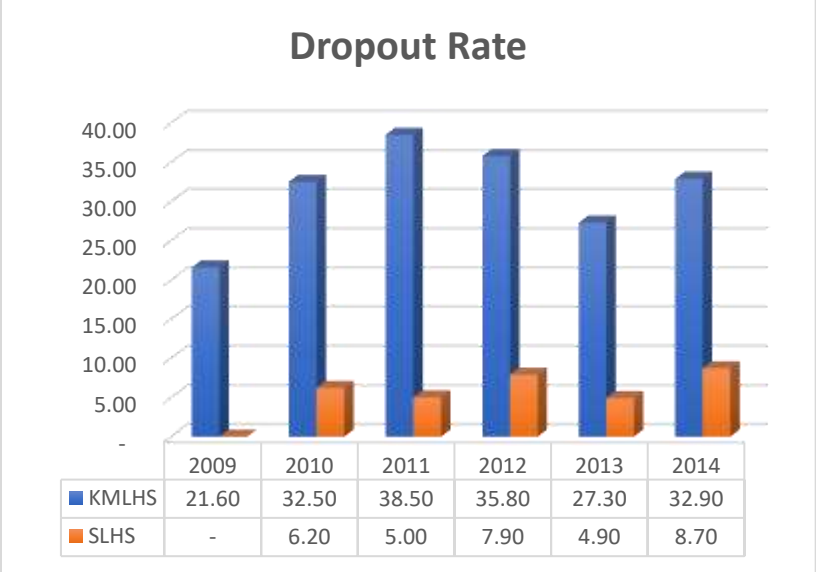
Table 10

Dropout Rate

Dropout Rate (%)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Keith M. Lyles	21.6	32.5	38.5	35.8	27.3	32.9
Samuel Lewis	-	6.2	5.0	7.9	4.9	8.7

Figure 5

Dropout Rate



After applying an ANOVA, *F*-Critical = 5.192, *F* = 0.692; and *p*-value = 0.628; therefore, the Null Hypothesis is not rejected. There is no significant difference in the Dropout Rate from year-to-year.

Table 11

Dropout Rate: ANOVA

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	983.506	4	245.877	0.6927	0.6281	5.1922
Within Groups	1774.88	5	354.975			
Total	2758.38	9				

Although the outcomes for the dropout rate were not significant there were notable patterns for both schools. For KMLHS the dropout rate in 2009 was 21.6% before the implementation of the SIG in 2010, which showed an increase to 32.50; 2011

an increase to 38.5% and a decrease in the dropout rate in 2012 to 35.80%, and in 2013 to 27.30%. The year after the SIG, the dropout rate in 2014 increased to 32.90%.

For SLHS the same pattern was observed as in KMLHS. The year before the SIG in 2010 the dropout rate was 6.20% and in 2011 the first year of the SIG the dropout decreased to 5%; increased in 2012 to 7.90%; and decreased in 2013 to 4.90%. The year after the SIG the dropout increased to 8.70%.

Null Hypothesis 6: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

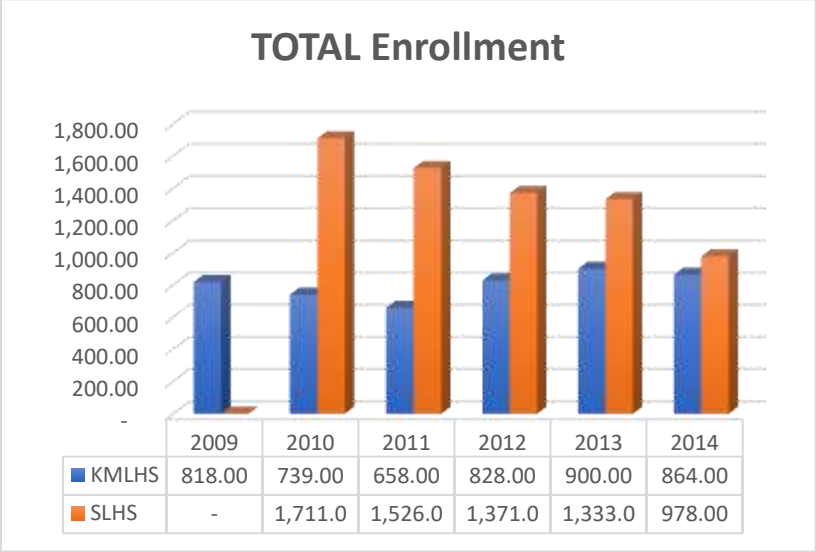
Table 12

Total Enrollment

TOTAL Enrollment	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Keith M. Lyle	818	739	658	828	900	864
Samuel Lewis	-	1,711	1,526	1.371	1,333	978

Figure 6

Total Enrollment



After applying an ANOVA, *F*-Critical = 5.192, *F* = 0.108; and *p*-value = 0.974; therefore, the Null Hypothesis is not rejected. There is no significant difference in Total Enrollment from year-to-year.

Table 13

Total Enrollment: ANOVA

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	95158.6	4	23789.7	0.1085	0.9743	5.1922
Within Groups	1096771	5	219354			
Total	1191930	9				

Although the enrollment fluctuations for both schools were not significant based on the test provided, there were patterns of change for both schools. The enrollment for KMLHS in 2009 before the implementation of the SIG was 818 students. During the SIG from 2010 – 2013 the enrollment fluctuated from 739 students in 2010; in 2011 a decrease of students to 658; in 2012 an increase of students to 828; and in 2013 an increase of students to 900. Then, after the SIG grant a decline in student enrollment occurred to 864. KMLHS was part of an urban district that lost accreditation in 2007, received provisional accreditation in 2012, and full accreditation in January, 2017 under the leadership of a Special Administration Board appointed by the State of Missouri. The students enrolled in the district did not transfer to other districts

The enrollment for SLHS in 2010 before the implementation of the SIG was 1,711 students. From 2011-2013 during the SIG, the enrollment of students steadily decreased. The year after the SIG there was a decrease in student enrollment to 978.

SLHS, as part of their district, lost its accreditation in 2007 due to misappropriation of funds by the superintendent and poor test scores. The students in the district were allowed to transfer to another school district at the expense of the school district through the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The district did not receive provisional accreditation status until December 2, 2016 (Potter, 2016).

Null Hypothesis 7: For high school participant in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no difference in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments year-to-year.

Table 14 and Table 15 display the assessment data for the proficient, basic, and below basic categories. The proficient categories did show change from year-to-year; however, the majority of the changes were not significant. Table 14 displays the proficient, basic, and below basic percentage rankings for Samuel Lewis in the areas of English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, American History, and Government.

Table 14

Samuel Lewis: Assessment Ratings

English I		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Advanced						
	Proficient	32.5			21.6	22.9	
	Basic	40.4			38.1	52.3	
	Below Basic	24.5			37.4	23.5	151
	LND						

English II		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Advanced	5.3					
	Proficient	48.1	30.6	28.3	19.5	36.3	40.1
	Basic	42.7	55.2	45.0	56.0	53.8	48.0
	Below Basic		11.4	23.7	23.7	7.1	
	LND		31.5	13.6			

Algebra I		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Advanced						
	Proficient	11.5	6.9	10.5	6.9		
	Basic	77.0	48.9	48.8	44.6	43.0	31.6
	Below Basic	11.5	44.4	40.1	48.5	53.5	42.5
	LND		12.7	14.1	6.0		2.3

Biology		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Advanced						3
	Proficient	17.6	10.7	10.6			33.3
	Basic	57.0	62.8	59.8			51.5
	Below Basic	24.8	36.0	29.1			12.2
	LND		21.1	17.3			

American History		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Advanced						
	Proficient	14.7			8.6	9.2	
	Basic	38.7			29.7	21.4	
	Below Basic	46.7			61.3	67.1	
	LND						

Government		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Advanced						7.9
	Proficient			6.7		11.1	32.6
	Basic			54.8	31.9	55.6	43.2
	Below Basic			38.3	66.3	33.3	16.3
	LND			20.1	14.0	10.0	2.6

An Advanced rating is indicated for Samuel Lewis students in three instances. In 2010, 5.3% of the students achieved the Advanced rating in English II. In 2015, 3% achieved the Advanced rating in Biology. And, in 2015, 7.9% achieved the Advanced rating in Government.

The percent of Samuel Lewis students who achieved a Proficient rating on the annual MAP exam in English varied throughout the studied timeframe with two areas

showing a significant decrease and one showing a significant increase. A t-test for difference in means was applied to yield the following results.

A significant drop in the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient range in English I was indicated in the interval between 2010 and 2013 (32.5% to 21.6%; *t*-value = -2.486).

In English II, there was a significant drop in the percentage of students achieving the Proficient rating between 2010 and 2011 (48.1% to 30.6%; *t*-value = -3.649) and between 2012 and 2013 (28.3% to 19.5%; *t*-value = -2.743).

There also was a significant increase in English II Proficient ratings between 2013 and 2014 (19.5% to 36.3%; *t*-value = 4.295).

The percent of Samuel Lewis students who achieved a Proficient rating on the annual MAP exam in Algebra, Biology and Government also varied throughout the studied timeframe with three areas showing a significant increase and one showing a significant increase. A *t*-test for difference in means was applied to yield the following results.

Proficient ratings in Algebra I exhibited a significant rise (6.9% to 10.5%; *t*-value = 2.049) between 2011 and 2012. Biology exhibited mixed results throughout the timeline, with a significant drop in ratings between 2010 and 2011 (17.6% to 10.7%; *t*-value = -2.283), followed by a significant rise between 2012 and 2015 (10.6% to 33.3%; t *t*-value = 6.343). Government ratings also indicated significant increases in the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient range, with a rise in percentage between 2014 and 2015 (11.1% to 32.6%; *t*-value = 2.731).

There were no significant changes in Proficient ratings noted for Samuel Lewis students within the American History assessment.

Next the researcher looked at the results of the assessment results for the Keith M. Lyle school.

Table 15 displays assessment results for Keith M. Lyle in the areas of English II, Science-Biology, Algebra I, and Government, indicating the assessment rates in the categories of proficient, basic, and below basic. The proficient rating category shows a variance in English II in 2013, in Algebra I for the year 2010 and in science for the years 2009 and 2010. In each case the varying rate was lower than the comparison years shown in the tables.

Table 15

Keith M. Lyle: Assessment Ratings

English I		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Advanced						
	Proficient					9.2	12
	Basic					41.7	59
	Below Basic					48.5	28.9
	LND						

English II		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Advanced						
	Proficient	26.1	26.3	41.4	37.9	24	23.7
	Basic	43.5	54.2	47.1	47.1	60.4	58.8
	Below Basic	28.3	16.9	9.2	12.6	15.6	16.4
	LND				16.3	5	

Algebra I		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Advanced						
	Proficient	11.7	7.9	20.2	17	7.1	8.3
	Basic	46.8	42.9	42.3	55.7	54.8	51.4
	Below Basic	38.2	49.3	34.6	24.5	38.1	38.2
	LND						

Science-Biology	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Advanced						
Proficient	6.8	9	16	14.4	29.3	15.8
Basic	43.9	42	58.5	38.6	49.1	54.4
Below Basic	48.5	49	25.5	23.4	18.6	29.7
LND				11.9	5.6	

American. History	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Advanced						
Proficient						7.8
Basic						18.2
Below Basic						74
LND						

Government	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Advanced						
Proficient				16.2		22.9
Basic		63.6	42.7	56.8	37.7	43.8
Below Basic		36.4	52.7	24.3	57.4	30.2
LND				19.6		

During the six years of data examined in this study, Kyle M. Lyle students did not have a recorded percentage scoring Advanced in any category. However, there were some significant changes in the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient category. As shown by a t-test for difference in means, there was a significant rise in the percentage of students scoring Proficient in English II between the years of 2010 and 2011 (26.3% to 41.4%; *t*-value = 2.29), followed by a significant drop in percentage from 2012 to 2013 (37.9% to 24.0%; *t*-value = -2.61).

As shown by a *t*-test for difference in means, there was also a significant rise in the percentage of students scoring Proficient in Algebra I between the years of 2010 and 2011 (7.9% to 20.2%; *t*-value = 2.834), followed by a significant drop in percentage from 2012 to 2013 (17.0% to 7.1%; *t*-value = -2.503).

Additionally, as shown by a t-test for difference in means, there was a significant rise in the percentage of students scoring Proficient in Biology between the years of 2012 and 2013 (14.4% to 29.3%; *t*-value = 2.876), followed by a significant drop in percentage from 2013 to 2014 (29.3% to 15.8%; *t*-value = -2.902).

There were no significant changes noted in the Proficient category for the subject areas of English I, American History, and Government.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze and examine the School Improvement Grant funding for two underperforming high schools that had implemented the Turnaround Model and determine the effectiveness of SIG funding on ninth grade achievement, measured by attendance rate, discipline referral rate, average rate of proficient and advanced ratings on state assessments, and graduation rate. The researcher analyzed the state of Missouri secondary data from the 2009 through 2014 school years in an urban and suburban high school. A secondary purpose was to examine potential improvement in the subpopulation of ninth grade students attending Missouri SIG schools.

The results during the implementation of the School Improvement Grant, Null Hypothesis 1 showed no significant change in the attendance rates for both high schools. KMLHS showed an attendance rate before the SIG in 2009 of 46%, decreased the initial year of the SIG grant to 41.4%, and increased in year-to-year from 2011-2014 to 59.5%. SLHS attendance rate before the SIG in 2010 was 51% and declined each year afterwards to 46.7% in 2014.

Null Hypothesis 2 for discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages was rejected. Both Keith M. Lyles and Samuel Lewis High Schools exhibited discipline referral rates significantly lower than the state averages. During the 2009 through 2014, the average Out of School Suspension (OSS) was 36.8% for Missouri schools with a high percentage of Black student population. During the 2009 through 2014 the OSS for Keith M. Lyle High School during this period was 14.7% and the OSS for Samuel Lewis High School was 7.8%.

Null Hypothesis 3 displayed no significant difference in graduation from year-to-year. The graduation rate for KMLHS increased slightly during the implementation of the SIG grant and the year after the SIG. The graduation rate for SLHS for the period 2010-2011 before the SIG was 79.1% and fluctuated from 2011-2013. However, MODESE showed no graduation rate for 2013-2014.

Null Hypothesis 4 showed no significant difference in Free/Reduced Lunch from year-to-year. For KMLHS during the implementation of the SIG from 2009-2013 the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch increased from 81.5% to 91.4%. For SLHS during the implementation of the SIG from 2011-2013 the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch increased from 81.3% to 87%.

Null Hypothesis 5 showed no significant difference in the Dropout Rate from year-to-year. The Dropout Rate for KMLHS and SLHS from 2009 to 2014 fluctuated from year-to-year. Data from MODESE showed that KMLHS with a school enrollment rate less than SLHS had a dropout rate higher than SLHS.

Null Hypothesis 6 showed no significant difference in Total Enrollment from year-to-year. During the implementation of the SIG, KMLHS was one of 17 urban high

schools in the district with an enrollment of 818 before the SIG. During the SIG from 2010-2013, the number of students fluctuated between 739 students enrolled in 2010 to 900 students enrolled at the end of the SIG. The year after the SIG for the year 2014, the number of students enrolled decrease to 864 students. SLHS is the only high school that exists in this particular suburban school district. During the first year of the SIG in 2010, there were 1,711 students enrolled at the high school. From 2011 to 2014, the total enrollment of students decreased from year-to-year to 978.

Table 14 displayed the Null Hypothesis 7 for Samuel Lewis High School and showed no significant difference in average rate of advanced on state assessments year-to-year. Only in 2010 did the students achieve Advanced rating in English II of 5.3%. In 2015, two years after the SIG, 3% achieved the Advanced rating in Biology, and in 2015, 7.9% achieved the Advanced rating in Government

Table 14 also displayed the Null Hypothesis 7 for Samuel Lewis High School and showed a variety of results for significant difference in average rate of proficient on state assessments year-to-year. The data displayed the advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic percentage rankings for Samuel Lewis High School in the areas of English I and English II, Algebra I, Biology, American History, and Government.

The percent of Samuel Lewis students who achieved a Proficient rating on the annual Missouri Annual Performance (MAP) exam varied throughout the study. A significant drop in the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient range in English I was indicated in the interval between 2010 and 2012 (32.5% to 21.6%). In English II, there was significant drop in the percentage of students achieving the Proficient ratings

between 2010 and 2011 (48.1% to 30.6%). There was also a significant rise in English II Proficient ratings between 2013 and 2014 (19.5% to 36.3%).

Proficient ratings in Algebra I exhibited a significant increase between 2011 and 2012 (6.9% to 10.5%). Biology exhibited mixed results throughout the research, with a significant drop in ratings between 2010 and 2011 (17.6% to 10.7%), followed by a significant rise between 2012 and 2015 (10.6% to 33.3%). Government also indicated significant changes in the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient range with a rise in percentage between 2014 and 2015 (11.1% to 32.6%). No significant changes in Proficient ratings were noted for Samuel Lewis students in the American History assessment.

Table 15 displayed assessments results for Keith M. Lyles High School in the areas of English II, Biology, Algebra I, and Government, indicating the assessment rates in the categories of Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. The proficient rating category showed a variance in English II in 2013, in Algebra I for the year 2010, and in Science for the years 2009 and 2010. The varying rate was lower than the comparison years shown in the tables. During the six years of data examined in the study, KMLHS students did not have a recorded percentage scoring Advanced in any category. There were significant changes in the percentage of students scoring Proficient in English II between the years of 2010 to 2011 (26.3% to 41.4%), followed by significant drop in percentage from 2012 to 2013 (37.9% to 24.0%). Algebra 1 between the years 2010 to 2011 showed a significant rise in the percentage of students scoring Proficient, followed by a significant drop in percentage from 2012 to 2013 (17.0% to 7.1%).

Additionally, as shown by a z-test for difference in proportions, there was a significant increase in the percentage of students scoring Proficient in Biology between the years 2012 and 2013 (14.4 to 29.3%), followed by a significant drop in percentage from 2013 to 2014 (29.3% to 15.8%). The analysis of all the data from the z-test indicated that the Null Hypothesis showed no significant difference in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments year-to-year.

Chapter Five will present the overview of the study, a summary of findings, limitations in the study, recommendations for future research, and final conclusions.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Findings and Implications

Ninth grade is a critical and crucial time for students. Ninth graders encounter physical, emotional, intellectual, and many social challenges that result in the feelings of being overwhelmed, isolated, and lacking in confidence (Cook, Fowler, & Harris, 2008). According to Smith (2007), ninth graders are expected to take control of their own learning and to be independent. The opposite occurs for these students. Ninth grade results in poor academic performance, discouragement, cutting classes, and eventually dropping out of high school. Usually, ninth graders have deficient skills, especially in Communications and Mathematics. These problems exist particularly in urban school districts. As a result, these students are discouraged and drop out. The researcher analyzed secondary data gathered in the state of Missouri from 2009 through 2014. The quantitative data allowed the researcher to examine the attendance rate, discipline referral rate, average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments, graduation rate and also to examine the potential improvement in the subpopulation of ninth grade students attending Missouri SIG schools.

Hypotheses

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to test the hypotheses in each of the areas: attendance rate, discipline referral rate, graduation rate, free and reduced lunch, dropout rate, total enrollment, and MAP state assessments.

Hypothesis 1. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in attendance rate year-to-year.

Hypothesis 1 was not supported for showing a measurable change in attendance rate from year-to-year.

The results shown in Table 3, indicated that there was no significance difference in attendance rate in Keith M. Lyles High School and Samuel Lewis High School. During the first year (2010-2011) of the implementation of the SIG using the turnaround model in the KMLHS, there was a decrease in the attendance rate from the previous year 2009-2010; during the second year (2011-2012) of the implementation of SIG using the Turnaround model, there was an increase in the attendance rate; and during the final year (2012-2013) of the implementation SIG using the turnaround model, there was an increase in the attendance rate. In 2013-2014, following the last year of the SIG, there was also an increase in the attendance rate at the KMLHS.

In comparison, Samuel Lewis High School showed a decrease in the attendance rate (2011-2012) during the first-year implementation of SIG using the Turnaround model; the year before the implementation of the SIG the attendance rate was higher; during the second year (2012-2013) of the implementation of the SIG the attendance rate increased; and during the final year (2013-2014) of the implementation of the SIG, the attendance rate decreased. An ANOVA test was applied to the data. The *p*-value of the test did not support Hypothesis 1. There was no measurable change in attendance rate for the duration of the SIG from year-to-year for both high schools.

These findings of no measurable changes were a surprise as the researcher surmised that the students, at both Turnaround high schools, noticed a difference in the climate of the school; a new principal and teachers displaying positive attitudes and beliefs in themselves, as well as the students; more instructional time; more creative

instructional methods; and a safe and orderly environment for learning. According to Ong (2014) and Christle, Jolivetta, and Nelson (2007), these are some of the attributes that motivate students to be successful and the desire to attend school daily. The Null Hypothesis was not rejected. Each high school participant in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will not show a measurable change in attendance rate year-to-year.

Hypothesis 2. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

Hypothesis 2 was supported for showing a measurable change in discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages.

According to the Table 4, a *z*-test for difference in proportion was applied to each of the eight values, compared to the state-published Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) average of 36.8% during 2009-2014 school years. The Null Hypothesis was rejected. The discipline rates for both schools, Keith M. Lyles High School and Samuel Lewis, for each year (2010-2014) were significantly lower than the state averages. All values were well under the 36.8% average displayed for this time frame and reported for Missouri by Ibrahim and Ritter (2020) and MODESE, (2021). The out-ot-school suspension rates have declined over the last 14 years (2004-2006 to 2018-2019), but large disparities exist between schools serving different populations of students. African American students and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds typically have higher expulsions rate than White students which indicates that these students have a greater percentage of absenteeism from school (2020; Barrington, 2019). Secondly, according to MODESE (2021), the discipline incidents are categorized in distinct types of

offenses, such as alcohol, drugs, cigarettes (E-Cigarettes and Tobacco), violent acts, violent acts with injury, and weapons. Discipline incidents in KMLHS and SLHS were categorized as in-school and out-of-school suspensions and Type 1 offenses which were related to drugs and fighting incidences. Both KMLHS and SLHS are equipped with metal detectors that students and staff must use daily.

Hypothesis 2 was supported. Each high school participant in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 did show a measurable change in the discipline referral rate in comparison to state averages. The Null Hypothesis is rejected.

For this hypothesis the changes made at the two high schools likely created a better school climate and culture with the influx of new teachers with positive attitudes, a safer environment, and a focus on supporting students in need rather than punishing them.

Hypothesis 3: High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the graduation rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported showing a measurable change in the graduation from year-to-year.

In Table 6, there was no significant difference in the graduation rate of Keith M. Lyles High School and Samuel Lewis High School during the implementation of the SIG funding. KMLHS showed a slight increase during the period 2010 to 2014, for each year. At SLHS, the graduation rate slightly decreased during the second year of the SIG and increased during the third year of the SIG.

According to the United States Department of Education, in 2012-2013, the high school graduation rose to 81%, due to methods states use to calculate their graduation

rates called the "Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR), Building a Grad Nation" (Richmond, 2013, p. 201). "The ACGR is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class" (ACGR, 2017, p. 9). The ACGR allows for students to transfer into the cohort and are subtracted from the cohort over the next three years for any reason. However, the graduation gap still existed for Black and Hispanic/Latino students, Richard Fry (2014). Richmond (2013) stated that the high school graduate rate had improved, and the graduating gap had narrowed showing Asians with highest graduation rate of 81%; Whites 80%; Hispanics/Latinos 68%; and Blacks 60%. The Null Hypothesis is not rejected. There is no significant difference in the graduation rate from year-to-year. SLHS is the only high school in their district. KMLHS is one of seventeen high schools that exist in their district.

Hypothesis 4: For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 there will be a measurable change in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 4 was not supported showing a measurable change in Free/Reduced Lunch from year-to-year.

According to Table 8, both Turnaround high schools, Keith M. Lyles and Samuel Lewis High School showed no difference in free/reduced lunches in the periods before the implementation of the SIG or after the end of the SIG grant. Both Turnaround high schools showed just a slight increase in numbers of students who received free and reduced lunches. The percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch is often used to denote the percentage of students living in poverty, and other socioeconomic status by race (Snyder & Musu-Gillette, 2015). These data must be used carefully, because it is just

an indicator of the number of students eligible for free/reduced lunch that meet the federal government poverty guidelines, which is determined by income. Free/Reduced Lunch does not portray the actual percentage of students in poverty enrolled in school. of poverty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The Null Hypothesis is not rejected. For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there will be no measurable change in Free/Reduced Lunch rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 5: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the Dropout rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 5 was not supported showing a measurable change in the dropout rate from year-to-year.

According to Table 10, Keith M. Lyles High School displayed a fluctuation in the dropout rate during the implementation of the SIG from 2010-2013. The Dropout rate spiked in 2011. The year before the SIG in 2009 the dropout was low and the year after the SIG from 2013-2014 the dropout increased.

Samuel Lewis High School showed a decrease in the dropout rate before the SIG in 2010. During the implementation of the SIG the dropout rate spiked in 2012 and the year following the SIG, dropout rate spiked again in 2014. There was not consistency.

The dropout rate in high school is an important indicator that affects the graduation rate. The researcher worked for six years as the Teaching and Learning Facilitator/Instructional Coach at Keith M. Lyles High School. The researcher witnessed the discouragement that these students endured. The decisions these students made for dropping out of school has been culminating before high school. These students faced surmountable pressures in their lives. Research has shown that those high school

students in large, urban, and public schools fail to graduate because of high absenteeism, discipline problems, and failure in classes (Abele & MacIver, 2009). When students were interviewed and asked why they dropped out of school, their responses consisted of class work not relevant, tests too difficult, lack of engagement with school, low expectations from teachers, did not like school, could not work/attend school same time, could not have a good relationship with teachers, and in some instances pregnancy (Adelman & Taylor, 2015).

"Over a lifetime, dropouts typically earn less, suffer from poorer health as adults, and are to wind up in jail than their diploma-earning peers" (Furger, 2008, p. 2)

The Null Hypothesis is not rejected. For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there was no measurable change in Drop Out rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 6: High school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

Hypothesis 6 was not supported showing a measurable change in the Total Enrollment year-to-year.

According to Table 11, there is evidence that Keith M. Lyles High School showed a significant measurable change in total enrollment during the implementation of the SIG 2010-2013. In 2011, there was a decrease in enrollment, however the total enrollment slightly increased, and the following year after the SIG, the total enrollment decreased. The enrollment before the SIG grant in 2009 decreased. The possibility for this decline in enrollment is because the high school is located in a blighted area of the city surrounded by vacant homes, store-front churches, and some businesses. At least 50% of

the students are bussed to the school and at least 25% of the students do not dwell in stable homes with their families. KMLHS is one of 17 high schools located in the districts and students often transfer to other comprehensive high schools when they relocate or suspended from the school.

The total enrollment for Samuel Lewis High School decreased during the implementation of the SIG from 2011 to 2014. In the year 2010 before the SIG, the total enrollment was the highest. Since SLHS is the only suburban high school located in the district, there is the possibility that families sell their homes and relocate to other suburbs. The location of SLHS is comprised of homeowners, apartment dwellers, and renters. There was a difference between the two Turnaround high schools, as for the total number of students enrolled at each high school. SLHS had twice as many students as KMLHS. The Hypothesis is not rejected. For high school participants in SIG funding from 2009 through 2014, there was no measurable change in Total Enrollment rate from year-to-year.

Hypothesis 7. High school participants in the SIG funding from 2009 through 2014 will show a measurable change in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments, compared to state averages year-to-year.

Hypothesis 7 did not show a measurable change in average rate of proficient and advanced on state assessments compared to state averages year-to-year.

Table14 and Table 15 display the assessment for the advanced, proficient, basic and below basic categories. Table 14 represents Samuel Lewis High School and shows that the students achieved Advanced rating in English II in 2015, 5.3%; achieved the Advance rating in Biology in 2015 of 3%, and in 2015, achieved the Advanced rating in

Government. The percent of SLHS who achieved a Proficient rating on the annual MAP exam varied throughout the studied time frame of the SIG, did not meet the NCLB proficiency targets of for either communication arts or mathematics (School Improvement Grant, 2013). However, under "Safe Harbor," which allows a school or district to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) without meeting the standard achievement targets of the state, SLHS met the proficiency targets for communication arts and mathematics relative to the state averages (Poiner, 2015; School Improvement Grant, 2013). Using Safe Harbor, the test scores from 2014-2015, 2015-2016, or 2016-2017 cannot be used to deny students promotion to next grade level or in any decision to grant the student credit for courses. For teachers, Safe Harbor cannot be used to assess student growth or be used in making decisions in teacher tenure, retention, dismissal, or determination in salaries (2015).

Table 15 displays the assessment for Keith M. Lyles High School in the areas of English II, Science, Algebra I, and Government, indicating the assessment rates in the categories of proficient, basic, and below basic. The proficient rating category shows a variance in English II in 2013, in Algebra I for the year 2010 and in science for the years 2009 and 2010. In each case the varying rate was lower than the comparison years shown in the tables. During the six years of data examined. KMLHS did not score Advanced in any category.

However, there were significant changes in the percentage of students scoring Proficient in English II, between the years 2010-2011. In 2010-2011, the proficient scores dropped in Algebra I, followed by significant drop in percentage from 2012-2013. In 2012 and 2013, the Biology proficient scores increased in percentage, and from 2013-

2014 the Biology proficient scores dropped. There were no significant changes in the Proficient category for English I, American History, and Government. During the implementation of the SIG, KMLHS was granted Safe Harbor in Communications and Math to meet proficiency targets in these two areas for the state assessments.

Limitations

The first limitation in this study was that the initial School Improvement Grant awarded during 2010 through 2014 was for three years. Three years was not an adequate amount of time to turnaround schools because administrators at both the state and local level said that there was not enough time to plan how to implement SIGs when the new funding became available the beginning in 2010. What happens when the resources are no longer available at the end of the SIG (Anrig, 2015)? However, since this research was conducted, in 2014 the United States Department of Education established new requirements for those schools receiving funds for the fiscal year 2015 which included the following changes:

SIG can be awarded up to five years of funding – LEA budget must include at least one year of planning, two or three years of full implementation, and two years of sustainability activities. The LEA doesn't have to use SIG funds for a planning year; however, after the planning year, the SEA will evaluate and review the performance of the LEA to determine whether the LEA is able to implement the plans in the application on the first day of the following year.

State determines the model a district adopts which is optional

Evidence-based whole-school reform model – The model chosen by the Local Educational Agency must be one that will improve all student achievement or attainment,

not just a particular subgroup of students; address school leadership which include the principal and administrators. The role of the principal matters and is the key to a successful school. Branch, Rivkin and Hanushek (2013) stated that "highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount" (p. 1). Teachers have a direct impact on student learning and achievement. According to Stronge (2018), effective teachers are able to dialogue with their students, administrators, other colleagues, parents in a positive respectful manner; exemplifies enthusiasm in the classroom by respecting, communicating clearly, displaying a sense of humor, and working with the students; great classroom management and organizational skills; organized lesson plans that can be understood and evidence of implementation in the classroom; and consistently monitor student progress and potential.

Focus on at least one full academic content area. The researcher, as Instructional Coordinator at Keith M. Lyles, was assigned a group of students in Biology to review content for the End-of-Course exam in Biology. The researcher focused on released content items in Biology provided by the state, previous benchmark tests given by the district, and emphasis on test taking strategies throughout the year prior to the scheduled End-of-Course exam.

Family and community engagement – Studies show that when families are engaged and concerned about their student outcomes, the students benefit and academic achievement increases. The socioeconomics of the students are not a factor. Students earn higher grades, their attendance improve, and extend into college

(#ReThinkHighSchool, 2020; Chen, 2021). Researchers have studied programs aimed at increasing family involvement. In the Chicago Parent Centers every year, a parent or guardian was involved in student learning, the high school graduation rate increased by 16% and increased to 80% when families were enrolled in the program for six years (2020). Some requirements embedded in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is that schools must effectively communicate with parents and provide whatever services are necessary for this to occur (transportation, home visits and childcare): schools must provide guidelines for parents on how to assist students with state standards (Chen, 2021). Parent involvement reduces truancy and absenteeism and changes the attitudes and behaviors of students indirectly because there is continuous communication between the parents and educational institutions (McNeal, 2014).

Community engagement - When the researcher taught middle school and high school during the late 1980's and through the 1990's, the researcher experienced the community learning beyond the classroom where students were engaged in research experiences through different universities, internship programs were offered to high school students during their Junior and Senior years, and middle school eighth graders attended Career Fairs held throughout the city. Businesses and universities in the local areas of the school provided many positive and useful opportunities for the schools. The researcher experienced, during the implementation of the SIG at Keith M. Lyles High School, where a prominent financial institution. Edward Jones, committed to working with students in Algebra 150 and English. Incentives were provided to the success of the students on their daily assignments, benchmark tests, and End-of-Course examinations. Wells Fargo sponsored field trips, scholarships, and tuition for students to attend the

community college for a dual enrollment. During the summer, Edward Jones gave some students a chance to enroll in their one-week Summer Boot Camp classes, such as budgeting, investing, and personal finances. Another institution, Better Family, worked with students during the Advisory Period to teach different life skills, health, and safety measures to promote healthy living as the students mature through life.

Early Learning Model - The School Improvement Grant stipulated that the LEA offer full-day kindergarten and an extensive high-quality preschool program. Belfield and Levin (2007) believe that investigating in preschool produces economic results later. These authors researched preschool models in California and the Chicago Parent-Child Centers to discover that the preschool program increased the high school graduation rates by 19% in California and by 11% in Chicago. Researchers followed over 1500 preschoolers for 25 years who had been enrolled in the early childhood program and found that the participants had a reduction in special education services by 41%; reduction in grade retention by 40%; an increase high school graduation by age 20 of 29%; a reduction in juvenile arrests 33% and a reduction of maltreatment court-reported cases of physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse by 51% (Child-Parent Center, 2015). Modifications for teacher evaluations and support for them (2014). Teacher evaluations should not be threatening, but used to improve to classroom management and instructions for students.

Another limitation of this research only focused on those high schools that chose the Turnaround Model to improve student achievement and was not compared to other high schools in the state of Missouri that chose another model. The research has shown that 71% of schools chose the Transformation Model which has the least rigorous

intervention and 21% of the schools chose the Turnaround Model (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2011). The two high schools involved in this study were from the same Mid-Western geographical region: Keith M. Lyles, an urban high school and Samuel Lewis, a suburban high school.

Thirdly, for this study the researcher focused on ninth graders who were of the same ethnicity subgroup and did not examine nor compare this subgroup to other ethnicity subgroups who were enrolled at the low performing schools where the Turnaround Model was implemented.

Finally, another limitation was that the SIG did address the disparities that exist among African American, Hispanics and White students.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, the researcher feels that for those schools receiving the SIG, videos or other recorded case studies that have had success should be available on-line, detailing the steps taken to transform that were successful; how principals created a culture of shared responsibility for academic success for all students; and what classrooms looks like when teachers use data to improve instructions. The federal government should make sure that the states, districts and schools collect and maintain data on school-based practices to determine if there is success of implementation of the SIG. It is difficult to measure school turnaround success because each state has different state assessments and standards for measuring school performance.

Secondly, leadership in the school matter and is extremely important and vital for ensuring student academic success. The role of the principal is the most effective in turnaround low-performing schools. Districts should allow principals more autonomy

because principals shape the vision for success for all students by creating a climate that promotes safety and a constructive learning environment in the school. The principal need to be an instructional leader that cultivate that role in teachers where they take ownership in the vision of the school, encourage teachers to do their best, and incorporate data and understanding of data to foster school improvement. The teachers need more support from principals because teachers directly interact and communicate with students on a daily basis. Professional development opportunities must be available locally, in state, and nationally for teachers to development skills when needed. "Teachers must be honest about their weaknesses and learn from those who are strong in that area. The "I know it all" mentality must be non-existence" (Jackson, p. 1). Teachers, along with other staff members, must consistently monitor attendance, behavior, student work, grades, test scores and other assessments to assist students to be successful.

Additional research should explore the need exists for more parent involvement in the education of students. Research has shown that when parents are involved and engaged in student learning the relationship with teachers are more positive, decrease in chronic absenteeism of students, students earn higher grades, more positive self-esteem, graduation rates increase, and the potential of attending college (McNeal, 2014; Waterford Organization, 2018). Parent-teacher communication is effective.

Finally, the researcher would recommend that this study include a quantitative approach which would include interviews and surveys from principals, teachers, administrators, students, and parents. The data collected would give insight into the effectiveness of the SIG.

Conclusions

All students in the United States are entitled to an equitable education, regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The School Improvement Grant was one of the programs implemented to address and target the lowest performing schools by the U.S. Department of Education. In looking at the impact of the School Improvement Grant on two high schools in the areas of attendance, discipline, graduation rate, dropout rate, and enrollment only a few changes appeared. The key area was discipline with marked improvement in both research sites in reducing the discipline numbers. Greater efforts to communicate with students and support them through counseling and relationship building likely supported these findings.

According to *2017 Building a Grad Nation* the goal is to raise graduation rates to 90% by the Class of 2020. "Progress since 2001 in raising high school graduation rates have resulted in 2.8 million more students graduating from high school rather than dropping out." This goal has not been reached. Since 2015, the national high school graduation rate has been 83.2 %. Still disparities exist among low-income students, Black and Hispanic/Latino students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities compared to White students. It becomes the responsibility of the states and local governments to ensure that the graduation rate continues to increase. "Improving student achievement in the ninth grade can lead to improved graduation rates and improved readiness for college and careers" (Bottoms, p. 1). There is still a need for the United States Department of Education to continue to invest in the education of our students, to implement strategies that improve achievement and close the achievement gaps that will promote equity and equal opportunities for all students.

From experience, the researcher would like to see districts and schools redesign conditions in the ninth-grade, such as developing transition programs from middle school to high schools; organize ninth-grade academies; more guidance support such as counselors, social workers and nurses; develop a non-zero policy requiring students to redo work to meet the grade standards; develop summer bridge programs that can address academic deficiencies of students, especially in reading and mathematics; make learning relevant (47% of dropouts left school because classes were boring and not interesting (Furger, 2008); provide mentors for students; communicate and keep parents engaged and involved throughout secondary school; implement advisories for students that meet regularly; provide relative professional development for all teachers and other staff members; establish relationships with the community; hire principals that can implement and maintain a positive culture that cultivate academic learning and achievement for students, teachers, and parents; and have a strong focus on technology, using data to improve the quality of teaching and learning by focusing on those students who are missing too many days of school and creating tutoring programs for students who score basic or below basic. The researcher experienced the school reforms at Keith M. Lyles High School through the School Improvement Grant implementing the Turnaround Model. To maintain that students in the United States continue to graduate and be prepared for careers, college and life, the School Improvement Grant and other financial sources from the federal government will be needed.

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Vitae

Juanita Chambers
916 Lordshill Street
St. Louis, Mo. 63119
jaznit28@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Ed.D.	Education Administration, Lindenwood University, 2022
M. A.	Education Administration, Saint Louis University, 2006
M.A.T	Science, Webster University, 1988
B.A.	Biology, Washington University, 1973

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Academic Instructional Coach, Saint Louis Public Schools, 2006-2013
Adjunct Professor, Biology Department, Harris-Stowe State University, 1993-1998
Biology Teacher, Saint Louis Public Schools, 1992-2006
Science Teacher, Saint Louis Public School, 1983-1992

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Chambers, J. (August 2015 – January 2016), Common Core Resource Training Math Institute, Saint Louis Public Schools, St. Louis, Mo.

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PROFESSIONAL CERTICATIONS:
Administrator's Certification, K-12
Missouri Reading Certificate K-12
Missouri Gifted Education Certificate K-12
Missouri General Science Certificate, 7-12
Missouri Biology Certificate, 7-12
Missouri Chemistry Certificate, 7-12
Missouri Elementary Education Certificate, 1-9
Missouri General Science Certificate, 4-8
Missouri General Mathematics Certificate, 4-8

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS;
National Science Teachers' Association, 1988-Present