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Knowledge and Experiences with Dropout Prevention Strategies of Virginia Secondary Administrators, School Counselors, and Graduation Coaches

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**KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES WITH DROPOUT PREVENTION
STRATEGIES OF VIRGINIA SECONDARY ADMINISTRATORS SCHOOL
COUNSELORS, AND GRADUATION COACHES**

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by
Cathy Bacote
December 2017

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by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to those who inspire and encourage students to remain in school and graduate.

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ABSTRACT

High school dropout is a national crisis, the effects of which disproportionately affect the most susceptible youth and vulnerable communities. There are many factors that contribute to student dropout. Dropout is influenced by individual and institutional factors, as well as academic and social problems; student dropout, in turn, impacts the individual and society. This study examined the knowledge and experiences of secondary school administrators, school counselors, and graduation coaches with dropout prevention strategies. Further, the study incorporated a survey to collect, analyze and present information. The survey was distributed to an intact group of secondary school administrators, school counselors and graduation coaches in a Virginia school district. The specific goal of the research was to determine the knowledge and experiences of the school professionals responsible for providing dropout prevention programs in their schools. Further, the study would determine the degree to which dropout prevention strategies are aligned with the research-based recommendations as identified in key findings and the Dropout Prevention Practice Guide (2008) published by What Works Clearinghouse and the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. After briefly summarizing an historical perspective on high school dropout, a review of factors related to a student's decision to leave school before earning a diploma

and research-based dropout prevention strategies were examined. The findings will provide educational leaders, school professionals and other stakeholders with evidence – based judgments.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Problem

Although there are more educational opportunities available today than in previous generations, there remains a high school dropout epidemic in America (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2006). Public schools seek to achieve social and economic goals while promising each student skills for success. Recent national graduation rates calculate that every 26 seconds one student fails to graduate (Bridgeland et al., 2006). A previous dropout report estimated that “every nine seconds a student in America drops out of school” (N. Martin & Halperin, 2006, p. vii) thus reducing the opportunities for employment and a high quality of life (Caputo, 2005; Levin, 2008). Each year, almost one third of all public high school students fail to graduate (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004; Swanson, 2004) and over one million ninth grade students will not meet the requirements to graduate with their peers in four (Stout & Christenson, 2009). Every school day, more than 72,000 students become at-risk of early withdrawal from America’s public schools, and it is estimated that 1.3 million students or three out of 10 members of the 2010 graduating class failed to graduate (Schoeneberger, 2012). The United States is the only industrialized country in the world in which today’s young people are less likely than their parents to graduate high school (Habash, 2008).

Consequently, the United States high school graduation rates rank among the bottom of developed nations, and the performance gap between the most and least proficient students is among the highest of the homogenous populations (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008).

Background of the Study

School attrition, as reflected in student dropouts, is a national problem with implications that impact both society and the individual (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Dunn, Chambers, & Rabren, 2004; E. J. Martin, Tobin, & Sugai, 2002). The effects of the dropout crisis fall disproportionately on the nation's most susceptible youth and vulnerable communities (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). Hirsch and Seglehorst (1995) considered the American education system as an institution that fosters inequality. It is further suggested that, "the highest rate of population growth in the future will be among the very groups who have been served least by our public school system" (Lunenburg, 2000, p. 39). Moreover, recent social observers in the United States have condemned the widening gap between the rich and poor, and noted its correlation with a gap in educational achievement (Levin, 2008; Somers, Owens & Piliawsky, 2008). These rapidly growing minority populations, which represent a disproportionate share of America's lowest achieving students, are projected to comprise more than half of the U.S. population by 2050 (United States Census Bureau, 2005).

Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education, stated, "education is the civil rights issue of our generation and "the surest path out of poverty in America" (Ballasy, 2011, p. 1). The growing disparity between non-White and White wage earnings can be largely attributed to ethnic minority groups that are, on average, less well-educated by the

schools and have less educational attainment (Knesting, 2008; Levin, 2008; Lunenburg, 2000). Educational institutions must better prepare future citizens to be equipped with the literacy, mathematical, and technological skills to sustain the nation (Comer, 2004; Kortering & Braziel, 2008; Kortering & Christenson, 2009). Student dropouts are leaving school without a diploma or the skills needed to be economically competitive in the workforce (Caputo, 2005; Kortering & Konold, 2005; Lunenburg, 2000). Employers are increasingly requiring a bachelor's degree for positions that did not previously require baccalaureate education. In other words, a college degree is becoming the new high school diploma and the minimum credential required to secure basic, entry-level employment (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Moreover, research identifies individuals without at least a high school education as those who will earn less money and are more likely to be unemployed (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Caputo, 2005; Christle, Jolivet, & Nelson, 2007). Therefore, political and educational leaders need to ensure that school systems educate all of America's children regardless of race, gender, or disability (Somers et al., 2008).

President Obama remarked, "there is no better economic policy than one that produces graduates...that's why reforming education is the responsibility of every American—every parent, teacher, business leader, every public official and every student" (Office of the Press Secretary, 2011). Recently, an emerging national and regional trend concerning the financial stress that dropouts place on the U.S. economy has surfaced. Dropouts cost our economy approximately \$300 billion in lost wages, lost taxes, and unproductive employment activity (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Moreover, increasing the high school completion rate by 1% for males 20-60 years of age

would save the United States \$1.4 billion (Rooney et., 2006). Balfanz, Bridgeland, Bruce, and Fox (2012) determined that if each state had a graduation rate of 90% then 580,000 additional students would have graduated in 2011 and, consequently, increased the GDP by \$6.6 billion and generated \$1.8 billion in additional revenue (Balfanz et al., 2012, p. 17). Stark et al., (2015) estimates that dropouts earn only about 60% of what high school graduates earn and only about 40% of those that attain a college degree—resulting in approximately \$50 billion in lost state and federal tax revenues each year.

Research estimated that approximately \$228 billion were spent on students who drop out via lost revenue, welfare, unemployment, and crime prevention (Kena et al., 2015). The cost to the public for crime and welfare benefits alone is close to \$200 billion annually. Each year the United States spends approximately \$9,644 per student as compared to \$22,600 per prison inmate (Swanson, 2009). Dropouts comprise a disproportionate percentage of the nation's prison population and death row inmates, wherein 82% of prisoners in the United States are high school dropouts (Stark et al., 2015). High school dropouts commit approximately 75% of crimes reported in the United States and are much more likely to rely on public assistance than those who complete high school (Lochner & Moretti, 2001; N. Martin & Halperin, 2006). Additionally, dropouts experience more health problems than non-dropouts and make up the highest percentage of the nation's institutionalized population (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008; (Pleis, Ward, & Lucas, 2010).

The consequences for students who drop out of high school are well known and have grown in their importance. Data extracted from the National Education Longitudinal Study ([NELS]; Ingels, Abraham, Karr, Spencer, & Frankel, 1988)

identifies the subsequent educational attainment and earnings of a nationally representative sample of students who were tracked from the eighth-grade in 1988 through 2000. Among students in the cohort, 84% earned a high school diploma, 9% earned a GED, and 8% never completed high school (Ingels, 1992). In 1999, the average earned income of a high school graduate that never dropped out was \$25,904 as compared to \$19,649 for students who dropped out at least once in their educational career (Rotermund, 2007).

Education is positively related to savings, investment management, and the willingness to take financial risk (Solmon, 1975). The better educated tend to be wiser spenders with fewer children, indirectly enhancing their incomes by 10-50%. Moreover, the work of the more educated is more interesting and challenging and more likely to lead to advancement (Leslie & Brinkman, 1988).

Statement of the Problem

For the first time in 40 years, there have been sustained improvements in the national graduation rate, which increased from 71.7% in 2001 to 78.2% in 2010. Balfanz et al. (2012) found improvements in graduation rates in a diverse assembly of states including Tennessee, Louisiana, Alaska, California, Texas and New York. However, Virginia was not among the states noted.

Nevertheless, the Commonwealth of Virginia affirms its commitment to providing quality education for all students where the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) asserts that a Virginia high school diploma: “tells potential employers that the graduate possesses the skills and knowledge required for success in the workplace. It tells colleges

and universities, and career technical schools that the bearer is ready for the rigors of post-secondary education” (VDOE, 2016, p. 1).

The purpose of this study is to identify the knowledge and experiences about dropout prevention programs and strategies in a Virginia school district from the principals’, school counselors’, and graduation coaches’ perspectives. This study will synthesize data collected from secondary school principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Overview of the Evaluation Approach

Evaluation has emerged as a critical area as societal groups increasingly commission evaluators to examine consumer programs, products and services (Stufflebeam, 2001). Given the prevalent implementation of school-based prevention and intervention and programs corresponding to recent legislation, evaluation research in education are considered important to internal and external stakeholders. Program evaluation is the process of making judgments about the merit, value, or worth of educational programs (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Tokmak, Baturay, & Fadde, 2013). At the most fundamental level, evaluation involves making a value judgment about information that one has available (Best & Kahn, 1990). Researchers have begun to examine the manner in which which educational programs are implemented and evaluated. Thus an educational evaluation study is one that is designed to judge and improve the worth of some educational object (Cook, 2010; Stufflebeam & Webster, 1980). An evaluation is undertaken to produce information specific to a particular setting or context and therefore, the evaluation process supports accountability while allowing

educators to gain useful knowledge about their program and sustain program development (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).

Frechtling (2002) presented a comprehensive definition that evaluation is “systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object” (p. 3). Key steps in program evaluation include eliciting input from others, focusing on desired outcomes before selecting instruments, considering the validity of trustworthiness of the data and pilot testing the evaluation process (Cook, 2010; Gall et al., 2007). Moreover, Stufflebeam and Webster (1980) assert that “evaluation is most effective when all groups who participate in making educational decisions are involved in the process” (p. 5).

Program evaluation model. Stufflebeam (1971) made significant contribution to program evaluation theory and practice. His recognized Context-Input-Process-Product Model (CIPP) will serve as a foundation for this evaluation study. The evaluation model for this study follows the *context* component of the CIPP Model developed by the Phi Delta Kappa Committee on Evaluation in 1971 (Tokmak et al., 2013). Stufflebeam (1971) described evaluation according to the CIPP model as a “process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives” (p. 267).

The CIPP model illustrates how evaluation can contribute to the decision-making process in program management. Each type of evaluation requires three comprehensive performance tasks that include delineating the kinds of information needed for decision making, obtaining the information, and synthesizing the information to make it useful in making decisions (Gall et al., 2007). The four evaluative components of the CIPP model have a significant role in the larger whole with the functions of each described below (Tokmak et al., 2013):

- *Context evaluation* serves planning decisions by identifying unmet needs, unused opportunities and underlying problems that prevent the meeting of needs or the use of opportunities;
- *Input evaluation* serves structuring decisions by projecting and analyzing alternative procedural designs;
- *Process evaluation* serves implementing decisions by monitoring project operations;
- *Product evaluation* serves recycling decisions by determining the degree to which objectives have been achieved and by determining the cause of the obtained results.

Focus of the evaluation. This evaluation focused on the *context* of the program. It gathered feedback from a particular group of stakeholders to include secondary school administrators, school counselors and graduation coaches to “gain further insight into the needs and assets of intended beneficiaries and potential problems for the program” (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 99). Using the CIPP model, this study outlined the context of the program including an overview of background information indicating how the use of the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Dropout Prevention Guide (Dynarski et al., 2008) fits into the School Division’s dropout prevention process. The objective of a context evaluation identifies (a) how the program results are used; (b) the inputs of the program including the program’s available resources; (c) the key program processes or activities of administrators, school counselors and graduation coaches; and (d) the program’s outcomes for students (Zhang et al., 2011).

Purpose of the evaluation. The study incorporated a formative evaluation approach in order to support the process of improving the effectiveness of the school district's current dropout intervention program. The dropout prevention program was derived from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Dropout Prevention Guide (Dynarski et al., 2008). The guide identifies interventions whose primary purpose is to affect behaviors that are correlated with staying in school or completing school. Moreover, the guide is "intended to be useful to educators in high schools and middle schools, to superintendents and school boards in planning and executing dropout prevention strategies" (Dynarski et al., 2008, p. 1).

The findings contributed evidence-based information for the purpose of managerial decision-making regarding, but not limited to continuation or modification of the program's implementation. Further, the study provided unique and significant data regarding the current dropout prevention program's implementation to discern congruence between the knowledge and experience of secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches with the recommended prevention strategies.

Program evaluation audience. The findings of the study inform internal and external stakeholders on three distinct levels. The first-level audience included the school district's central office accountability and program directors who make key decisions of authority regarding approved curriculum, intervention programs and funding decisions.

The second-level audience includes school-based administrators, counselors and graduation coaches who have a vested interest due to their direct implementation of programs, daily interaction and connection with students and parents. This group impacts

staff, instructional and professional development decisions that directly influence the level of implementation.

Lastly, the third-level audience includes the external stakeholders who support school activities and programs through community-based involvement. This audience serves as key partners with school leaders to provide work-related experiences such as internships, employment and post-secondary opportunities.

Evaluation questions. The program evaluation questions were designed to investigate secondary school principals', school counselors', and graduation coaches' knowledge and experiences of the dropout prevention strategies that are implemented in their schools to decrease dropout rates. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What research-based dropout prevention strategies do secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches implement in a selected Virginia school district?
2. What are the facilitating factors that secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?
3. What are the inhibiting factors that secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?
4. How does implementation of dropout prevention strategies vary by role and school level?

Significance of the Study

The reasons students fail to complete high school are complex and have been broadly categorized into student factors and school factors (Knesting, 2008; Rumberger, 2004a). If schools have the ability to contribute to a student's decision to leave school early, then schools have the potential to contribute to a student's decision to remain in school (Knesting, 2008). The challenge continues to be preparing schools to implement and sustain dropout prevention programs so they grow and demonstrate the ability to decrease the numbers of students leaving school prior to graduation (Bailey & Stegelin, 2003; Balfanz, 2009). Research findings pertaining to dropout prevention programs indicate there is no single program that meets the diverse needs of students at risk of dropping out (Dynarski et al., 2008). However, the most important aspect of dropout prevention is the identification of those most at risk for dropout (Azzam, 2007; Balfanz, 2009; Lunenburg, 2000). Research on effective prevention strategies is consistent, prevention programs need to be designed with the unique characteristics of students, parents, and the community in mind (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).

With the passage of the *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB) in 2001, schools are held accountable for the completion rates of all students, including students with disabilities, students of color, students who are English Language Learners (ELL), and students living in poverty. There is a critical need for research on high school dropouts that goes beyond individual student characteristics to include the influence of school factors on students' educational decisions (Baird, 2012; Scanlon & Mellard, 2002). A solitary focus on internal student characteristics may allow schools to escape having to confront the dropout issue (Christle et al., 2007; Knesting, 2008). Understanding the

problem of high school dropouts requires looking beyond the limited scope of individual student characteristics and includes examining school factors in students' decisions to continue or leave school. Attention needs to be given to the influence that schools, their organization, leadership, and teachers may have on a student's decision to remain in or drop out of school (Lunenburg, 2000; Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000).

There are diverse approaches to dropout prevention, however there needs to be change with local school and community members interested in consistent efforts based on empirical data (Baird, 2012; Bloom & Unterman, 2014; E. J. Martin et al., 2002). Gradual approaches to dropout prevention may appear effective, but rarely ensure the necessary outcomes (Kunfuju, 2013). States need to have a sustained focus on the policies and legislation that influence graduation outcomes. It is necessary for states to establish consistent policies for defining and calculating dropout and graduation rates of students (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000; Swanson, 2010). In order to maximize efforts of the nation's school divisions, states and districts should identify specific dropout prevention programs that yield intended results (Kortering & Christenson, 2009; Kunjufu, 2013; E. J. Martin et al., 2002).

There is a window of opportunity to intervene and support students at risk of drop out and redirect potential dropouts back onto the path. Effective research-based strategies and practices can improve behavior, attendance, and achievement. According to Neild, Balfanz, and Herzog (2007), "dropout is not fueled by students who lack the potential or desire to graduate, but rather by secondary schools that are not organized to prevent students from falling off the path to graduation or to intervene when they do" (p.

32). Schools must consider what students experience while in school. Students who are engaged in learning and in the social dimensions of school are less likely to leave school (Rumberger, 2007).

Definitions of Key Terms

Accountability. The responsibility for setting, achieving, monitoring, and evaluating the attainment of educational goals (U.S. Department of Education, 2017b).

Achievement Gap. Differences in academic performance among student groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2017a)

At-Risk Student. Student who has a higher than average probability of dropping out or failing school; young people who are unlikely to graduate on time with both the skills and self-esteem necessary to exercise meaningful options in the areas of work, leisure, culture, civic affairs, and interpersonal relationships (Bailey & Stegelin, 2003).

Cohort. A group of students tracked from the 9th grade to the 12th grade (VDOE, 2016).

Completion Rate. A measurement of students who complete high school diploma, a GED at an approved school district program, or a special education certificate (VDOE, 2016).

Dropout. A student, who was enrolled in school the previous year, fails to return to school by October 1 and does not receive a diploma (Planty et al., 2009). The term “dropout” is used to describe both the event of leaving school before graduating and the status of an individual who is neither in school nor a graduate (U.S. Department of Education, 2017a).

Dropout Rate. There is no commonly accepted measure of a dropout. Measures designed to describe dropout patterns include the event dropout rate (or the closely related school persistence rate), the status dropout rate, and the high school completion rate (Stark, Noel, & McFarland, 2015).

Event dropout rate describes the proportion of students who leave school each year without completing a high school program (Planty et al., 2009).

Status dropout rate represents the proportion of young adults ages 16 through 24 who are out of school and who have not earned a high school credential (Planty et al., 2009).

Cohort dropout rate measure what happens to a group of students from a single group or specific grade over a period of time; it provides an estimate of how many students fail to complete high school (Stark et al., 2015)

Diploma Recipient (District). A student who received a diploma recognizing the completion of secondary school requirements during the previous school year and subsequent summer school. It excludes high school equivalency and other high school completers (e.g., those granted a certificate of attendance; U.S. Department of Education, 2017a).

English Language Learner (ELL). “English language learner (ELL)” was formerly referred to as “limited English proficient (LEP).” Refers to students being served in appropriate programs of language assistance (e.g., English as a Second Language, High Intensity Language training, bilingual education). An English Language Learner does not include pupils enrolled in a class to learn a language other than English. Also, ELL students are individuals who were not born in the United States or whose native

languages are languages other than English; individuals who are migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who come from environments where a language other than English is dominant (U.S. Department of Education, 2017a).

Federal Graduation Indicator. High schools, school divisions, and the state also must meet annual objectives for the percentage of students who graduate with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. This Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objective is known as the Federal Graduation Indicator to distinguish it from the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI), which includes all Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Federal Graduation Indicator excludes Modified Standard, Special, and General Achievement diplomas because the United States Department of Education only recognizes Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas for accountability purposes (VDOE, 2016). A high school, school division, and/or the state meets the federal graduation benchmark for AYP if one of the following is met: At least 80% of students graduate with Standard or Advanced Studies diplomas within four, five, or six years of entering ninth grade for the first time; or the percentage of students not graduating within four years of entering ninth grade is reduced by at least 10%.

Graduation Rate. According to the VDOE (2017) website, Virginia calculates graduation “rates” for accountability purposes:

Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate is the percentage of students who graduate with a Board of Education approved diploma within four years of entering high school.

Federal Graduation Indicator is the percentage of students who graduate with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. It is used in calculating AYP ratings of high schools, school divisions, and the commonwealth.

Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) is an accountability measure for students who earn an approved diploma (VDOE, 2017). Beginning in 2011-2012 (based on 2010-2011 results), it has been used to determine the accreditation ratings of high schools.

Limited English Proficient (LEP). Limited-English Proficient refers to students for whom English is a second language and who are not reading and writing at their grade level (VDOE, 2017).

Local Education Agency (LEA). Locally governed agency responsible for providing free elementary or secondary education; includes independent school districts and those that are a dependent segment of a local government such as a city or county (VDOE, 2017).

Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate. A high school or combined school with a graduating class receives a “Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate” if students achieve adjusted pass rates of 70% or more in all four Standards of Learning content areas and a Graduation and Completion Index of 81-84 points (VDOE, 2016).

Standards of Learning (SOL). Virginia Public Schools describe the commonwealth’s expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education and driver education as Standards of Learning (VDOE, 2016).

VEWS. Virginia Early Warning System used by schools to identify students at risk of not graduating on time or dropping out (VDOE, 2016).

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

The decision to drop out of high school is the most devastating consequence of a student's frustration with the demands of schooling. Without a good education, today's student will not be prepared to meet the challenges of the new economy. The high school dropout rate is one measure of the success of elementary and secondary educational systems and forecasts potential future problems. Because high school graduates earn 70% more than dropouts, each dropout means a loss of gainful employment and tax revenue. Furthermore, dropouts today are more likely to be single parents, welfare recipients, involved in criminal activity, and go to prison (Rumberger, 2007; Schargel & Smink, 2013). Dropout prevention is an important area of study because the societal costs for individuals who drop out of high school can be estimated into the billions of dollars (Comer, 2004; Orfield et al., 2004; Swanson, 2009). The troublesome achievement and dropout numbers that have caught the nation's attention are largely from schools in communities that are dysfunctional for a variety of economic, and resultant social and psychological reasons (Comer, 2004). As the economy experiences financial crisis, funding aimed at crime prevention, jail programs, welfare programs, and unemployment programs become extremely costly, therefore, it is imperative for research to examine factors associated with dropout prevention and programs designed to reduce dropout rates (Crowder & South, 2003). As stated by Darling-Hammond (2012), "now more than ever,

high-quality education for all is a public good that is essential for the good of the public” (p. 24).

This review of related literature will address the following key issues related to student drop out from school: 1) theoretical perspectives for student dropout from school, 2) historical perspectives on student dropout, 3) factors related to student dropout, 4) research-based strategies for dropout prevention.

Theoretical Perspectives on Student Dropout

Theoretical underpinnings for the student dropout prevention presented in this study are based on two major theorists: James Coleman’s Social Capital Theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s Theory of Cultural Capital and Social Reproduction (Tzanakis, 2011). In democratic societies, education is meant to be a path to opportunity and to ensure that society continues to strive for equality. However, theorists argue that the democratic mission of education has failed because it has reproduced social and economic inequalities (Comer, 2004). Moreover, research offers evidence that the public education system appears to reinforce them and “education, even if it is not intended actually does something to reconstruct society” (Good & Teller, 1969, p. 537).

Social Capital Theory. According to conflict theorists, success through education is an obscure achievement due in part to important social forces, and they maintain that school systems serve the interest of the “dominant class.” Graham (1998) described schools as more important for the children of the poor than for the children of the affluent. School has been viewed as the the “only constructive educational experience that children living in poverty may have” (Graham, 1998, p. 231). According to Coleman (1988), the basic components of social capital include numerous relationships and

interactions among various people who are associated with one another. Within the educational setting, these interactions may take various forms including parent-child interactions, parent-school interactions, child-school interactions, and parent-parent interactions (Coleman, 1988). In addition to the challenges of academic struggles, environmental stressors may contribute to the decision to drop out of high school (Crowder & South, 2003; Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). Davis and Cole-Leffel (2009) argue that an evaluation of our education system presents an unconcealed reminder of persistent educational inequalities within all of its tiers (Davis & Cole-Leffel, 2009).

Sociologist James Coleman (1988) argued that human capital (parental education) and financial capital (parental income) were insufficient to explain the connection between family background and school success. He further argued that social capital, which is manifested in the relationships parents have with their children and schools, also influences school achievement independent of the effects of human and financial capital. Coleman's findings, in his landmark study, showed that attendance at Catholic schools increased social capital and thereby decreased the tendency to dropout of school (Coleman, 1988). Further studies concluded that students' mobility and low socioeconomic status decreased social capital and may increase the tendency to drop out of school (Coleman, 1988; Hofferth, Boisjoly, & Duncan, 1998; Swanson & Schneider, 1999). Recent studies have confirmed that strong relationships between students and parents reduce the likelihood of school dropout. The ideas support the fact that differences in dropout rates and other measures of educational achievement can be largely explained by differences in resources, and the human and social capital frameworks; these factors have a similar effect on all groups. Groups that lack human resources, financial resources

or social capital are more at risk for poor outcomes (Rumberger, 2004b). Baird (2012) admits “irrespective of a student’s background characteristics, more students aspire to and enroll in college, however the characteristics of those who attain a college degree remain strongly skewed by class” (Baird, 2012, p. 99).

Research indicates that the development of human capital through education is a critical step in securing and sustaining a nation’s long-term economic prosperity and in building the skilled workforce it needs to elevate its status in the global marketplace (Balfanz, 2009). As a consequence of failing to produce a sufficient number of highly prepared high school graduates, America may be at risk of not having the educated workers it needs to meet the workforce demands in the much needed fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM; Levin, 2008).

Cultural Capital Theory. Developed by Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital was viewed as “informal academic standards that are also class attributes of the dominant class, consisting of linguistic aptitude, previous academic culture, formal knowledge of general cultural, and diplomas” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 5). Cultural capital is what is valued socially or culturally that can be transformed into status, power, or economic capital. Bourdieu concluded that each class has its own cultural background, knowledge, dispositions, and tastes that are transferred through family, and argued that education played a role through teaching people to accept their place in the social strata (Rawolle & Wilkinson, 2010). Swartz (2003) similarly summarized the empirical work of Bowles and Gintis (2002) articulating the correspondence between schools, families, and the workplace that reproduced capitalist society. Through education, skills, values, and norms are transmitted to directly correspond to the needs in social class structures,

creating “docile workers or rebels and misfits” (Swartz, 2003, p. 173). In the lowest income quintile, dropout rates are four times greater than those in the highest income quintile. Consequently, schools are training young people for their future economic and occupational position according to their current social class position, and the economic futures of the students at the bottom of the human capital distribution are consistently dismal (Cullen, Levitt, Robertson, & Sadoff, 2013).

Social Reproduction Theory. Bourdieu, classified as a “conflict theorist,” provided research that asserts the existence of a perpetual class conflict to maintain economic inequality. The social structures included in the Social Reproduction Theory espouse the idea that inequality is continually reproduced or repeated because education systems are overlain with the ideology of the dominant class (Tzanakis, 2011). It offers a paradigm of class analysis that “explains persistent inequalities in educational stratification where the focus of the research is on the relation between education, family and social class” (Tzanakis, 2011, p. 76). Bourdieu examined the way that economics and educational training intersect in perpetuating unequal social conditions, and held ideology that different kinds of capital (e.g., cultural, economic, and social) can be transformed into one another. Social scientists have been unable to convincingly demonstrate the impact of neighborhood characteristics on high school completion outcomes (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003).

Classifying students at-risk for failure marks them as different, as lacking some moral or cultural capability to succeed in an assumed meritocracy, and in need of assistance from the dominant society (Loutzenheiser, 2002) Such a framing separates the students’ struggles from political, economic, and historical contexts, especially the

institutional and societal actions that contribute to their schooling difficulties. Labeling leads to stereotyping by such categories as ethnicity, class, and ability, but it also creates a category that is made to seem preferred (Smyth, 2012). Succeeding at school, for many students, means having to suppress their own identities and act within a narrowly defined and institutional view of what it means to be a good student, and, for these students, disengagement from school is a common occurrence. “Public schools are persistently beset through accountability regimes in ways that diminish and exacerbate the effects of inequality damaging the least advantaged students even further” (Smyth, 2012, p. 10).

Historical Perspectives on Student Dropout

“Research on school dropout extends from early 20th century pioneers until now, marking trends of causes and prevention” (Doll, Estami, & Walters, 2013, p. 1). History shows the issue of student dropouts has generated concern for decades, if not through all of America’s schooling history. The percentage of teenagers who graduated from high school increased dramatically from less than 10% in the early years of the 20th century to approximately 50% in the middle years of the century. The first federal aid to schools was the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 which provided funds for vocational education in the high school as an alternative to the traditional college-preparatory curriculum. The Life Adjustment curriculum at the end of the progressive education movement denoted the emphasis on staying in school (Dorn, 1996). The twentieth century American strategy was designed to keep children in school, diplomas were a goal and the intent was to prevent dropouts, and thus, antidropout programs were important (Graham, 1998).

From 1840-1890, school enrollment was small and less than 5% of teeneaged youth attended a public school during the post-Civil War era. Charles Eliot was president

of Harvard University during this time and the leader of the *Committee of Ten*, a group of college presidents assigned to organize and structure public school curricula. Eliot noted public school should provide rigorous subjects “no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be or at what point the education would cease” (Miriel, 2006, p. 2). In 1900, only 6% of teenagers graduated from high school and only 3% of young people graduated from college. During 1900-1925, schools were primarily expected to support and assimilate European immigrants and their children into American citizens (Good & Teller, 1969; Graham, 1998). Additionally, during the transition period from 1890-1910, the schools took the position that it was obligated to uphold academic standards. However, if the student enrolled in the high school ill-prepared, and if they did not succeed in the studies the high school offered, it confirmed to the school administration the student should not have enrolled in the high school at all. However, the public believed “the high school should serve the children, take them as they were and teach them what was best for them” (Good & Teller, 1969, p. 534).

The child labor laws in the 1930s and 1940s altered societal thought as schools became an appropriate setting where adolescents spent their teenage years (Dorn, 1996). In the 1940s fewer than half of individuals aged 25-29 had earned a high school diploma. Consequently, national interest in reducing dropout rates increased after 1950. Significant dropout reduction attempts occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. Educational reform with desegregation and compensatory education did not yield the results to dropout reduction as was desired for many minority groups (Baird, 2012; Duncan & Murnane, 2011). Among children born in 1950, test scores of low income children lagged behind their more economically-advantaged peers and income gaps grew (Duncan &

Murnane, 2011). Moreover, in the 1950s, a series of Congressional hearings focused on the “assumed link between mass media and crime committed by youth” which influenced students decision to exit school before completing high school (Dorn, 1996, p. 70). The problems identified during this decade such as absenteesim and dropout persist today (Balfanz et al., 2012).

For the duration of the 1960s, the American educational system was criticized because schools were portrayed as part of a larger system that maintained and perpetuated economic and class relations. By the late 1960s, the United States high school graduation rates ranked first among countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The increase was in proportion of the labor force that graduated from high school that fueled economic growth (Murnane, 2012). The term “dropout” emerged to describe students who left high school prior to earning a diploma. For the first time, students dropping out of school were thought to be an indication that the educational system was failing to meet the intended mission, to educate every child (Dorn, 1996).

In the 1970s, the NCES implemented a monitoring system that tracked high school dropout rates. Before 1992, educational attainment was based on the the response to questions on the highest grade attended and completed (Kaufman, McMillen, & Sweet, 1996). Phillip Kaufman, lead author on a number of the U.S. government’s official dropout reports, reported two changes to the reporting process: computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), resulting in higher completion rates but less reliable information, and a change to the benchmark year for the survey estimates.

The dropout rate among African Americans and Hispanics was high throughout the 1970s, 25-30% for each group. It rose toward the end of the decade, but was still lower among blacks at the end of the 1970s than at the beginning (Somers & Pillawsky, 2004). In the late 1970s, the Black and Hispanic rates diverged, while it peaked at close to 30% among Hispanics in 1985. The observed association between race/ethnicity and high school dropout rates may be explained in part by differences in residential location and in family and socioeconomic background (Hauser, Simmons, & Pager, 2004).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) released the glaring report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, ordered by the former U.S. Secretary of Education to define the problems affecting American education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The public's response at the report prompted a surge of media attention and criticisms of educational leaders on the state and local levels. As a result of the report, the government vowed to improve the quality of education for all students especially those living in poverty and most at risk of dropping out of high school (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Suh & Suh, 2007).

Kaufman (2004) stated the federal reports reflected an increase in dropout rates in the mid-to-late 1990s because of the data collection methods, making comparisons across time more difficult (Kaufman, 2004, p. 111). He further described the difficulties and inconsistencies among the various traditional methods of computing dropout numbers in federal reports and data series. It was difficult to determine the severity of student dropout because the process was complicated by school systems using different definitions and different ways of counting dropouts (Schargel & Smink, 2013). The criticisms regarding reported data prompted federal education initiatives and funding to

schools that were challenged by large numbers of poor children and communities laden with crimes committed by youth (Baird, 2012, p. 21).

In 2012, approximately 750,000 students failed to graduate, and according to national statistics released in 2014, graduation rates were the lowest in the District of Columbia (59%), Nevada (62%), Georgia (67%), and Oregon and Alaska (68%). The type of area where a student lives impacts the likelihood a student will fail to complete high school. The graduation rates for the 50 largest cities in the United States States cities was only 53%, compared with 71% in suburban America. Students from families in low-income brackets exhibited a greater risk of dropping out, five times higher than their high income peers. Further, the dropout rate for Hispanic students was 5.0%, 5.5% for Black students, and 6.7% for American Indian and Alaskan Native students (Kena et al., 2015).

According to the Child Trends Databank (2014), the dropout rate in 1972 was 21% among non-Hispanic Blacks, 12% among non-Hispanic Whites, and 34% among Hispanic youth. Dropout rates for Hispanic youth reached a peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s; rates have since declined substantially for each group (Aud, et al., 2013). The dropout rate for Black youth reached an historic low of 8% in 2011, while rates among Hispanic youth also reached an historic low of 12% in 2013 (Aud, et al., 2013 ;Child Trends, 2014). However, the long-term decline in graduation rates was at least in part related to increased incarceration rates among young Black and Hispanic males. The disproportionate juvenile occurrences affected dropouts and more than doubled between 1980 and 1999, removing these youth from the population base included in the estimates

(Child Trends, 2014). The changes during this period created a larger impact on the reported status rates than event rates.

In *The Condition of Education 2013* (Aud, et al., 2013) it was noted that 20% of high school students did not complete high school, representing 718,000 young people which was more than the total population in Wyoming and Vermont. Among these students, statistics reported a disproportionate number of Black, Hispanic, and Native American students, along with students from low-income families, students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities; not one of these groups reached a 75% graduation rate (Aud et al., 2013). In the United States, Latinos are a young population with 23% under the age of 17, and of those under 17, the dropout rate in 2012 was 19% (Grady & Bost, 2014). Robert Lucio (2014), argued that Latino males are “vanishing from the American education pipeline” so that high dropout rates among Latino males must become a national concern (p. 53).

Factors Related to Student Dropout

Influences on Student Dropout

Many of America’s most disadvantaged children grow up without the skills needed to thrive in the twenty-first century (Azzam, 2007; Balfanz, 2009). Whether in educational attainment between income groups, racial and ethnic groups, or across geographic locations, inequality persists (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). Although educators often believe dropping out is driven by personal and family circumstances unrelated to schooling, most dropouts exhibit highly predictive educational warning signs (Barro & Kolstad, 1987; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). Low socioeconomic status, substandard education, and the lack of capital required for social mobility continue to

pose harmful barriers to breaking the cycle of poverty in many American families. Educators, therefore, benefit from cultural competence to assess, understand, and work caringly with people of diverse backgrounds present in schools. (Davis & Cole-Leffel, 2009).

Dropout is influenced by both individual and institutional factors as well as academic and social problems (Balfanz et al., 2012; Rumberger, 2004b). Test scores and poor grades, while important, were not the only determinants of dropouts (Jordan, Kostandini, & Mykerezzi). The problematic attitudes and behaviors of students at risk of dropping out appear as early as elementary school (Kerr & Legters, 2004; Orfield et al., 2004). A fundamental finding explained the role of the middle grades as significant in determining the likelihood that a student will graduate from high school and their role in closing the achievement gaps (Suh & Suh, 2007). Middle-grade students, especially those attending high poverty urban schools with student bodies primarily composed of minority students continue to be the underperformers of the U.S. educational system (Balfanz et al., 2007; McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008; McKee & Calderella, 2016). Additionally, the transition from middle school to high school has been viewed as a critical point for those who have not experienced academic success and appear in the process of dropping out (McIntosh et al., 2008; McKee & Caldarella, 2016).

Early identification of struggling students can lead to timely and effective targeted interventions that improve the performance and increase the probability the student will complete high school (Balfanz, Herzog, & McIver, 2007; Rumberger, 2001; Smink & Schargel, 2004). Research shows the beginning of high school is a critical time for students and that a positive transition to high school helps students form lasting

connections to school and increases their likelihood of graduating (Kerr & Legters, 2004). Identification of high school students at risk for dropout by the first semester of ninth grade is crucial (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Schargel & Smink, 2013). When schools are unresponsive to students' needs, the risk of underachievement is increased (Shannon & Bylsma, 2005). While certain social, economic, ethnic, and racial characteristics increase the statistical likelihood that students will drop out, it is impossible to predict with any degree of certainty who will exit before completion (Balfanz et al., 2007; Bowers, Sprott, & Taff, 2013; Schargel & Smink, 2013). However, if schools identify students at risk of dropping out early in their educational careers, then early interventions could be developed to support students (Balfanz et al., 2007; Rumberger, 2007; Schargel & Smink, 2013).

Although certain characteristics increase the likelihood that a student will drop out, it is not a definite determination that students with these characteristics will exit school before earning a diploma. The most common explanations for dropping out focus on the personal characteristics of individual students and explain factors organized around comparisons of students who do and do not dropout (Bowers et al., 2013; V. F. Lee & Burkam, 2001). Additionally, the transition from middle school to high school has been viewed as a critical point for those who appear in the process of dropping out (McIntosh et al., 2008; McKee & Caldarella, 2016). Identification of high school students at risk for dropout by the first semester of ninth grade is crucial (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; McKee & Calderlla, 2016).

Risk factors associated with drop out that should be considered are often divided into two categories: social and academic (Lee & Burkam, 2001). Rumberger (2004a)

explained a perspective of understanding dropouts that designated the risk factors as status variables (social) and alterable variables (academic). The status variables include socioeconomic status, which is problematic and difficult to adjust. The plausible causes for status variables include demographics-poverty, family issues, race and ethnicity along with other possible causes (Neild & Balfanz, 2006). The alterable variables include school attendance and school engagement, which are not as difficult to influence and most often the focus of most dropout prevention programs. Researchers include, more specifically, alterable variables related to school factors such as school organization and size, location, high stakes testing, and teacher quality. Many of these variables are interrelated and indissoluble (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013).

Lagana (2004) conducted a study that sought to develop a model that would successfully predict the factors associated with dropout. With discriminant function analyses, Lagana's findings were almost identical to those in Rumberger's (2004a) study which predicted males with minimal adult or peer support, grade retention, students older than the peer group, and teen parents to be at greater risk to drop out. Additionally, lower intelligence scores placed students in the high-risk for dropout (Lagana, 2004).

Studies on high school dropouts have concentrated on the identification of characteristics associated with dropout risks and researchers have consistently found them in varied domains such as school, family, community, and the students themselves (Azzam, 2007; Balfanz et al., 2012; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Rumberger, 2007). Coley (1995) presented school related problems such as disliking school, receiving poor grades, not being able to keep up with school work, and not getting along with teachers as four of the top six reasons for dropping out. Devine (as cited in Suh & Suh, 2007) identified

parents' low educational attainment, the number of household members, and lack of motivation as reasons why students with low socioeconomic status drop out of school. Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986) found that dropouts tend to be racial minorities from poor families. Students' low level of engagement in their education has also been considered an important factor leading to higher dropout rates (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003).

Researchers have found that the combination of two or more risk factors increases the likelihood of dropping out (Suh & Suh, 2007). When a student is exposed to multiple risk factors, they are more likely to be less motivated to do schoolwork and to eventually drop out of school (Rumberger, 2004a; Suh & Suh, 2007). Researchers also examined the extent to which single and multiple risk profiles were evident in cross-sectional samples from inner-city and rural areas (Lagana, 2004). According to various research studies, it is essential to clarify the demographic characteristics that place students at risk of dropout; however, these factors do not necessarily cause students to drop out (Azzam, 2007; Barro & Kolstad, 1987; Crowder & South, 2003; Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Somers et al., 2008). Further, family level characteristics are more predictive of dropping out than geographic attributes and appear to operate across locations (Jordan et al., 2012). However, just because a student is poor, and Black or Hispanic, does not mean they are not fated to drop out (Christle et al., 2007)

Status Variables

Social risks. Social risk refers to demographic factors associated with a higher possibility of school failure such as parents' education, family structure and family income. These risk factors have been shown to negatively impact a student's academic performance thus linked to high school dropout (McKee & Caldarella, 2016).

The risk of dropping out increases when students engage in any deviant behaviors such as misbehaving in school, participating in delinquent behavior outside of school, using drugs and alcohol, engaging in sexual activity and getting pregnant (Rumberger, 2007).

Socioeconomic status and dropout. It is widely recognized that a large number of high school dropouts come from lower socioeconomic background (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Social economic status is often measured as the combination of income, education, and occupation, and conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group (Rumberger, 2007; Schargel & Smink, 2013). Socioeconomic status is often confused with income levels only. However, the definition of SES includes access, control over wealth, prestige and power (Murnane, 2012).

Several studies conclude that family income and socioeconomic status are important factors to the student's educational attainment. Poverty is one variable that several studies find with the strongest correlation to a student's decision to drop out of high school (Rumberger, 2001; Smink & Schargel, 2004). Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study[NELS] of 1988 (Ingels et al., 1988) which followed more than 20,000 eighth graders from 1988 through 1994 identified children from the higher income quartile have higher average test scores, were less likely to be retained, and less

apt to drop out of high school (Rouse & Barrow, 2006). Sacerdote (2004), a research economist examined the educational attainment of children adopted from South Korea who were randomly assigned to their families. He noted any relationship between the mother's innate ability and the child's innate ability was causal. Furthermore, he explained that under very strong assumptions his findings meant that 23% of educational attainment is determined by environment (Sacerdote, 2004). Morris, Duncan, and Rodrigues (2004) also examined how differences in income affect children's achievement. The research found that a \$1,000 increase in annual income over a three to five-year period increases achievement by 6% of a standard deviation for children who are two to five years old. Similarly, Dahl and Lochner (2005) found that \$1,000 increase in income raised math and reading scores by 2-4% of a standard deviation. Overall, the evidence suggests that parental income or socioeconomic status has a causal effect on children's educational outcomes.

Additionally, Nobel Laureate Gary Becker (1962) theorized that education provides skills or human capital that makes a worker more productive. Thus, the gap between the rich and the poor arises from a lack of skills among the poor (Becker, 1962). Nobel Laureate Michael Spence (1973) argued that education and income may be linked because people with greater *ability* complete more schooling and command a premium for their skills (Spence, 1973). Although these studies suggest that family economic conditions matter because they enhance the materials and resources for children, these studies do not convincingly establish that the effects are due to income rather than preexisting differences and values between families (Morris et al., 2004).

Poverty has a significant impact on individuals and society at large (Azzam, 2007; E. J. Martin et al., 2002; Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007). Impoverished families often have difficulty meeting the basic needs and resources for students. Children who live in poverty have an increased risk for academic failure. Many children from low SES backgrounds lack access to the resources and experiences, thus positioning children at risk for development problems. The limited educational foundation causes students to begin school with skills that lag behind other classmates. While before kindergarten, children from low SES do not demonstrate low self-confidence or a negative school attitude, these students begin to lose interest in education as their school years progress (Balfanz et al., 2012). Childhood poverty is troubling because of its effects on cognitive development and socialization. Children who grow up in poor households have a lower educational attainment and tend to suffer from greater degrees of social isolation (Cable & Tippett, 2012)

Balfanz and Legters (2004) found schools with eligible free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) programs provide an approximate measure for a greater concentration of low income students within a school (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). Low poverty schools can be defined as a public school where 25% or fewer are eligible for FRPL, and high poverty schools have 76% or more students eligible. In 2009-2010 approximately 25% of students attended low poverty public schools, and 19% of students attended high poverty schools. Moreover, the populations of low poverty schools varied by school level; there was a higher percentage of elementary students attending high poverty schools. At the secondary levels, there were higher percentages of Hispanic (21%), Black (21%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native (17%) students attending high poverty

schools than did Asian/Pacific Islander (7%) and White (2%) students (Child Trends, 2014).

Poverty has a significant impact on individuals and society, and imposes extensive hardships on children; research explains that poverty and school failure are strongly related (Christle et al., 2007; Rotermund, 2007; Shannon & Bylsma, 2005). Students from low-income families are more likely to drop out of school than are students from high-income families (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Barro & Kolstad, 1987; Fetler, 1989).

Family background and dropout. The influence of the family background on school success is undeniable; there are strong and direct effects on academic achievement, and its influence has been recognized as the greatest contributor to school success (Rumberger, 2004b). Families are fundamental socialization institutions that provide experiences to children that affect their lives indefinitely. The socioeconomic background of a family, commonly measured by parent income or educational level, has been consistently reported in literature as the most influential factor in determining whether a student will drop out of school (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Janosz, Archambault, Morizot, & Pagani, 2008; Knesting, 2008). Low socioeconomic status is shown to be a significant predictor in dropout, above the effects of academic achievement. Students from underprivileged families have a higher likelihood of being retained, and of falling behind in school. The dropout rates for students living in low-income families was approximately 10 times greater than that of students from high income families (Crowder & South, 2003; Dynarski et al. 2008; Rumberger, 2007).

Ethnicity and dropout. One of the most challenging educational issues facing the United States is the persistent disparity in achievement among racial and ethnic groups (Roby, 2003; Rumberger, 2004b). The dropout figures that have emerged across the nation identify an apparent crisis. Recent reports indicate that more than half a million people drop out of high school each year and the rate at which the dropout occurs has remained consistent for the last 30 years (Dynarski et al., 2008). In 2009, nearly one in four Americans and four in 10 minorities did not complete high school with their class. Research found the ethnic background of the student body was related to dropout rates in that the higher the dropout rates, the lower the percentage of White students (Christle et al., 2007). The data confirm that far too many school districts have insufficient supports to enable students to succeed and graduate from high school with a diploma.

The dropout rates for Black and Hispanic students are alarming (Grady & Bost, 2014). According to the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2016), the status dropout rates each year from 1990-2013, was lower for Whites than for Blacks and Hispanics (Kena, et al., 2014). Moreover, in 2014, 5% of Whites ages 16-24 were not enrolled and had not completed high school, compared with 7% of Blacks, and 11% of Hispanics. Asian youth had the lowest dropout rate of all racial and ethnic groups (Child Trends, 2014).

Data reports that the schools' poor, disproportionately Black and Latino urban children provide the evidence for those who observe an educational crisis in the United States (Neild & Balfanz, 2006). Schools of the more affluent, predominantly White children provide most of the success stories (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). Research indicates that both Black and Hispanic students tend to show detachment from academics

at levels that exceed that of Asian and White students. Calabrese and Poe (1990) showed that both Blacks and Hispanic students demonstrated similar levels of isolation and powerlessness, both of which are components of alienation from school (Calabrese & Poe, 1990).

Further research studies reveal that students identified as Hispanic and first-generation immigrants drop out of high school with greater frequency than students identified as “White” oriented (Perez, 2010, p. 151). Additional factors that contribute to students’ decision to leave school include not only language limitations, but also generational differences (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Perez, 2010).

Students with limited English proficiency. Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) have become a growing challenge that not only affects individual students, but the school system at large. The Department of Education noted that over 3.8 million public school students in the United States are identified as limited English proficient (Rooney et al., 2006). The number of LEP dropouts in certain states has increased, making it a critical issue that requires immediate attention. In 2012, 24 of the 47 states reported LEP student graduation rates at 60% or lower for the 2010-2011 school year (Aud et al., 2011; Scott, 2012). English-language competency directly relates to academic grades and mathematical achievement, and decreases the likelihood of school dropout. Further, English competency may relate to grade retention (Perez, 2010). Graduation rates differ dramatically for geographic regions of the country. In California, there were approximately 2.5 million LEP service recipients in 2006. Rumberger (2007) reported that almost half of Hispanic students fail to graduate high school.

Students with disabilities and dropout. Since the 1970s, the federal government mandated the provision of special education and related services to students whose learning, behavior, and/or physical differences negatively impact their academic performance in school. Although such services are mandated and provided, many students with disabilities do not remain in school or graduate (Grady & Bost, 2014; Harry & Fenton, 2016). In 1983, a provision in the Education of the Handicapped Act mandated that school divisions collect and report data on children with disabilities who were exiting the educational system by disability category and age. The data reported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) identifies that students with disabilities drop out of high school at higher rates than students without disabilities (Child Trends, 2014). The Individuals with Disabilities Education of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) made it mandatory for states to monitor the percent of students with disabilities that complete school.

The National Center for Dropout Prevention (NCDP) prepared and presented a report to OSEP identifying the 24 states made progress towards lowering the dropout rates; however, 18 states experienced a decline and increased dropout rates, and six states had dropout rates that remained the same as previously reported. The report noted discrepancies between the graduation rate, dropout rate, and census estimates. When compared to census estimates, the dropout rate seemed to underestimate failure for minority students with disabilities (Rooney et al., 2006; Toldson, 2014).

Further research examining the dropout rates of students with disabilities suggests that students in certain disability categories drop out at higher rates than others. The report by Balfanz et al. (2012) explained that students with learning disabilities or

emotional disturbances were more likely to drop out of school than students with other disability conditions, such as visual impairments or hearing impairments (Balfanz et al., 2012). With over 6.4 million students (13%) that receive special education services, the *Building A Grad Nation* showed that students labeled emotionally and behaviorally disabled and learning disabled have disproportionately high dropout rates of 51.4% and 27.6%, respectively, (Balfanz et al., 2012).

As reported in *The Condition of Education 2009* (Planty et al., 2009), the event dropout rate for students with disabilities was not significantly different from students without disabilities. From 1996-2006, the dropout rates for students who exited school before graduating decreased from 45.9% to 26.2% (Planty et al., 2009). Although minimal data was available, students with disabilities, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders appeared to be suspended and expelled, and arrested at much higher rates than students without disabilities (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). Lack of frequent access to curriculum led to minimal success with schoolwork and deprived students of the motivation to stay in school (Reschly & Cristenson, 2006). Consequently, students do not experience the immediate rewards of good grades, teacher praise, and positive school recognition when they are removed from school (McPartland, 1993).

Student Retention and Dropout

In theory, retention was supposed to increase student's success in school by allowing additional time for underachieving students to master content and skills. However, poor academic performance linked to retention in one grade has been identified as the single strongest school-related predictor of dropping out (Jimmerson & Whipple, 2002; Smink & Schargel, 2004). Slavin and Madden (1989) study identified "promoted

students perform better than non-promoted students in the next year on measures of academic achievement, personal adjustment, self-concept and attitudes toward school” (p. 104). Jimmerson and Whipple (2002) reported that retention does not improve achievement.

Table 1

Summary Findings of Status Variables Related to Dropout

Focus of Study	Study	Key Finding(s)
School building infrastructure (on student attendance)	Branham (2004) Christle et al. (2007) Rumberger & Thomas (2000)	The condition of school infrastructure has crucial consequences on dropout rates.
School Size	Slate & Jones (2011)	High school completion rates have been consistently higher in smaller schools.
	Werblow & Duesbery (2009)	Students in schools with a population of less than 1,500 were likely to stay in school.
Language Skills	Rumberger & Larson (1998)	“Limited English is a variable likely to have an impact on student attendance and dropout rates.” (p. 1118)
	Balfanz et al. (2007)	Failing English was a better predictor of not graduating than low test scores.
Family Background	Janoscz et al. (2008)	“A student’s background and environment may lead to a higher risk of educational failure” (p. 196).
	Anguiano (2004)	Parents with more education

		serve as role models towards school completion; two parent households were significant in students' decision to complete high school; parents' education and income were important factors whether students complete high school.
Social Economic Status	Kortering & Braziel (2008)	Social economic and academic pressures upon adolescents are creating a climate of fear, anxiety, and depression.
	Balfanz, Almeida, Fox, Steinberg, Snatos, & Hornig-Fox (2009a)	The one common feature shared by nearly all low graduation-rate high schools, educates primarily low-income students of color.
Motivation	Knesting (2008)	Students drop out of school because of lack of motivation, inadequate, personal coping skills, and lack of aspiration.
Demographic Factor	Rumberger (2007)	Longitudinal study of 8th grade students found 50% of students with three or more factors did not complete high school—single parent household, parents that did not graduate from high school, older sibling drop out, spending three or more hours home after school, limited English proficiency, and low income.
Gender	Kunfuju (2013)	Students who drop out are more likely to be male.
Ethnicity	Anguiano (2004)	The relationship between

		parental involvement and high school completion amongst various ethnic minority groups found that parental involvement increases the likelihood of graduation.
Ability	Swanson (2004)	Lower scores on measures of cognitive ability are associated with higher rates of drop out.
Disability	Lucio (2014)	The dropout rate for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities is approximately twice that of general education students.
	Kortering & Konold (2005)	The highest proportions of disabled youth who drop out of school are students with learning and emotional disabilities.
Poverty	Swanson (2009)	Poverty related stress on adolescent functioning causes immediate stressful life events; perceived stress by children of poverty experience physical and psychological effects that may contribute to drop out.

Alterable Variables

Student engagement and dropout. Student engagement is a principal contributor in preventing dropout among students and their promising academic achievement (Balfanz, 2009; Christle et al., 2007). Student engagement is defined as the time and participation level a student contributes to class and school. Furthermore,

engagement is contingent on how education is valued by the student, their understanding of how learning is relevant to future success, feelings of belonging, and the development of positive relationships with teachers (Appleton, Christensen, & Furlong, 2008). Finn (1989) refers to engagement as a two-dimensional construct of behavioral (participation) and affective (identification) components that influence school outcomes (Finn, 1989). It is further suggested that there are three dimensions of engagement: academic, social, and emotional engagement (Conner, 2011). Engagement is reflected in the educational and school environment through a sense of belonging, attitudes toward school, participation in extracurricular activities, relationships with peers and relationships with teachers (Sagayadevan & Jeyaraj, 2015; Stout & Christenson, 2009). While disengagement is characterized by separation, alienation, and detachment, engagement has been identified as a central theme in several dropout theories as a significant influence on a student's decision to withdraw from school (Finn, 1989; Rumberger, 2004b). Student engagement has also been shown to predict dropping out even after controlling for the effects of academic achievement and student background (Conner, 2011; Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

Further research suggests that students who showed higher school engagement and involvement in early adolescence had higher school completion rates (Conner, 2011; Rumberger, 2007). Negative bonds and relationships that were formed in the middle school setting, relative anonymity in a large high school, and the new influence of older students, can lead to academic failure, social alienation, or an increase in risk-taking behaviors in young adolescents (Janosz et al., 2008). As school size increased, participation in extracurricular activities decreased. Students in small schools are more

likely to be involved in extracurricular activities, and more likely to complete high school activities than students in larger cities (Balfanz et al., 2007).

Absenteeism and dropout. Attending school is considered the basic level of participation where absenteeism has been identified as the most common indicator of overall student engagement. Truancy is staying away from school without permission and considered a critical signal that a student has disengaged. Many studies identify truancy as a major predicting factor of student drop out and associated with other external problems such as family troubles, child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency, and criminal involvement (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

A student's sense of alienation is preceded by unsuccessful school experiences, such as poor academic achievement, failing classes, grade retention, absenteeism, behavior and discipline problems, and transfers from one school to another. It is asserted that student engagement and success in learning activities and the broader school environment are protective factors that educators can enhance in the educational experience for students (E. J. Martin et al., 2002).

In large, urban school districts serving high-poverty areas, where elevated dropout rates are common, schools and administrators often report high rates of daily absenteeism as a critical problem. Elevated rates of absenteeism are indicative of student disengagement from the educational process, including an increased likelihood of eventual high school dropout (Balfanz et al., 2007; Bear, Kortering, & Braziel, 2006; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). Poor attendance may suggest that students are uninterested in the educational environment, have competing interests that are external to the school environment, or that their family resources may be impeding their ability to

attend school on a consistent basis. Additionally, students may be avoiding negative or dangerous situations on the way to school (Balfanz, 2016). Consequently, “students that are not present for instruction are predicted to underperform, experience anxiety from their perceived lack of ability, and may eventually dropout of school” (Schoeneberger, 2012, p. 8). Researchers have also indicated that students who disengage develop patterns of chronic absenteeism as early as first grade, with increasing rates of absenteeism continuing throughout their academic careers. Student data indicators represent avoidance and feelings of inadequacy when absenteeism becomes a chronic situation (Aud et al., 2012).

Henry (2007) noted that schools with attendance court programs have a positive impact on school attendance. Students with chronic absenteeism have fewer opportunities to learn therefore experiencing lower achievement potential. According to (McCray, 2006) “poor grades encourage the cycles of poor attendance to continue” (p. 31).

Chronic absenteeism, class cutting, and truancy have proven to be detrimental predictors of high school dropout. Programs designed to improve student attendance fall into four broad categories: strict sanctions, academic enrichment programs, computerized attendance monitoring, and multiagency collaborative interventions (Henry, 2007).

School location and dropout. School location has an effect on dropout rates. The three major recognized school location types are urban, suburban, and rural. Historically, urban school districts have recorded the highest dropout rates of all school districts. Due to a number of economic and societal issues, a large number of students in urban schools who entered the ninth grade drop out before completing the 12th grade and

achieve a high school diploma (Azzam, 2007). Research shows that urban dropout rates are significantly higher than dropout rates in suburban and rural schools. Rural dropout rates are significantly lower than those in urban areas; however, rural dropout rates are nearly the same as the dropout rates in much more affluent suburban areas (Aud et al., 2012). Data identified similar dropout rates in rural and suburban schools mostly due to familial income.

School funding and dropout. A strong link between a student's educational outcomes is the school's reliance on local funding which makes the quality of education contingent on community resources. Studies show poor and minority students in the United States often experience the consequences of lower quality education (Aud et al., 2012; Suh & Suh, 2007). High poverty districts in the United States with characteristics such as the breakdown of community structures, violence and gang activity, poor housing, and poverty spend considerably less per student than districts with richer or whiter counterparts (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Somers et al., 2008). When comparing districts with high versus low minority populations, school districts spend almost \$1,000 less per student in high minority schools (Crowder & South, 2003). Consequently, minority school children that attend urban schools have reached a crisis point regarding the level of marginalized needs where studies have connected high poverty with lower student engagement (Balfanz & Legters, 2004).

School size and dropout. Determining the model size for high schools has been the focus of many research studies over the past half-century (Lindahl & Cain, 2012). During the 1960s, there was a shift away from larger high schools to smaller, alternative schools. Over the past decade, this movement has experienced a renewed thrust with the

development of schools within a school. The concept includes larger high schools subdivided into several smaller schools operating simultaneously in the same facility (Jacobson, 2001). Experiments in school reform nationwide, including those that emphasize smaller learning communities, have supported the hypothesis that schools with populations between 400 and 900 students are most effective in responding to the learning needs of high school students (Bloom & Unterman, 2014; Fitzgerald et al., 2013). In urban communities, financial economies have prompted school consolidation, therefore creating larger school populations. Urban schools were criticized for attempting to serve large student populations, which were believed to depersonalize the student learning experience. Planty et al., (2009) reported that 44% of regular secondary schools served 1,500 students or more.

Smaller schools were found to offer increased familiarity among staff and students, responsibility for student learning, increased connections between students and the community, and better teaching strategies (Fitzgerald et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009). V. E. Lee and Loeb (2000) define a small school as those with fewer than 400 students and large schools as those with greater than 750 students. The Gates Foundation recommends no more than 100 students per grade level (Vander Ark, 2002). However, the Department of Education set a limit of 300 through its *Small School Initiative* (Rooney et al., 2006).

Research studies have generally found that smaller schools are linked to lower dropout rates (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2011; Kuo, 2010; Vander Ark, 2002), but the relationship of high school size to dropout rates is inconclusive (Fetler, 1989; Fitzgerald et al., 2013; Werblow & Duesbery, 2009). The conclusion that the effect of school size

on achievement was significant, but small compared to the effect of other individual student factors such as socioeconomic status, race, and location. Cross-sectional studies of secondary schools find negative effects on increasing school size on student academic outcomes and school completion. A positive relationship was found between school size and dropout rate, which sustains the advocacy for smaller schools. Slate and Jones (2011) ascertained that high school completion rates have been consistently higher in smaller schools. Based on the results of Pittman and Haughwout (1987) study, it was estimated that an increase of 400 students in the enrollment of any high school would lead to a 1% increase in the dropout rate. In small schools with fewer than 667 students, attendance rates were consistently higher with 6.4% of students failed to graduate. In schools with more than 2,091 students, 12.1% of students failed to graduate. The rate of students who did not complete high school doubled as school size increased (Slate & Jones, 2011; Werblow & Duesbery, 2009).

Leithwood and Jantzi (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 13 empirical studies on high school size and dropout. The results of the study identified a positive relationship between dropout rates and school size; five studies found a negative relationship and three others found a nonlinear relationship (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009).

Districts with larger enrollments tend to have higher dropout rates. Reasons for these higher numbers vary from location to location. Alspaugh (1998) and Bloom and Unterman (2014) found as the student population in a school increases, the higher the probability that underlying factors associated with dropout rates will occur. Some of the larger schools have greater numbers of students that receive special education and LEP supports and services. Also, these schools have a greater number of students with low

socioeconomic background. Further examinations of larger schools shown to have more severe behavioral issues including truancy, disorderliness, physical conflicts among students, robbery, vandalism, alcohol and drug use, trespassing, verbal abuse of teachers, teacher absenteeism and gangs (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, 1998).

Fetler (1989) conducted a study of all public high schools in California and found that schools with smaller enrollments tended to have higher achievement scores although the relationship was not strong and the analysis did not consider student background factors. Additionally, Fetler (1989) found that higher dropout rates were associated with higher school enrollments, even after controlling for the poverty level of the school and the achievement level of the school (Fetler, 1989).

Walberg & Walberg (1994) used data from the 1990 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics assessment to examine relationships among size and achievement. Their analysis demonstrated that states with larger schools tended to score lower on the NAEP mathematics assessment, even after controlling for per-pupil expenditures and percentage of non-White students in the state (Walberg & Walberg, 1994). As school size increases, the negative correlation between the percent of students on free and reduced-price lunch and educational outcomes increases.

External school suspensions and dropout. The practice of external suspension from school is one of the most prevalent disciplinary actions in America's public schools where over 3.3 million students are affected annually (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). An out-of-school suspension is an instance in which a child is temporarily removed from the regular school for disciplinary purposes to another setting and is consistently associated with negative school outcomes for students,

including a greater risk of dropout (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014; Lee, Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011; Suh & Suh, 2007). Moreover, Doll et al. (2013) and Suh et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between suspension and dropout rates, and how student suspension impacts disengagement from school and the feeling of being “pushed out.” The final sample of 6,192 students reduced 180 possible contributing factors to 16 statistically significant predictors concluding a previous history of suspension stood as a predictor.

Table 2

Summary Findings of Alterable Variables Related to Dropout

Focus of Study	Study	Key Finding(s)
Family Involvement	Black (2005)	“increased chances of school completion when families are in the process.” (p. 2)
	Anguiano (2004) Fitzgerald et al. (2013)	Parental involvement is significant to a student’s educational success.
	Christle et al. (2007)	The rate of school attendance showed the strongest relationship to dropout.
Attendance	Henry & Huizinga (2007)	Truancy is predicative of maladjustment, poor academic performance, and school dropout substance abuse and delinquency.
Truancy	Schoenberger (2012)	“Longitudinal patterns of student absenteeism can be categorized into distinct groups that are predicative of eventual high school drop out.” (p. 12)
Longitudinal attendance patterns developing high school dropouts.	Klem & Connell (2004)	School connectedness is linked to engagement and
Connectedness		

		achievement.
	Azzam (2007) Dynarski & Gleason (2002)	Students that have positive experiences in school, have a positive adult relationship and participate in school activities.
Retention	McKee and Caldarella (2016)	A student who struggles in one course is more likely to struggle in all courses, and students who fail to earn sufficient credits to be promoted to the next grade level are far more likely to drop out of school.
Suspensions	Christle et al. (2004) Suh et al. (2007)	School suspensions are consistently associated with negative academic outcomes for individual students including greater risk of dropping out.

Research-Based Strategies for Dropout Intervention

Dropping out of high school is influenced by both individual and institutional factors therefore effective intervention strategies address the individual “values, attitudes, and behaviors that are associated with this decision” (Rumberger, 2004a, p. 243). Dropout prevention interventions most often include multiple components, and the effects of specific intervention components cannot be casually attributed to one component of an intervention. For any school program to assure the high academic achievement of all children there must be a partnership between the school and community to address the social, personal and academic needs of students (Drew, 2013). Further, intervention strategies can focus on improving environmental contexts of potential dropouts by

providing resources and supports that strengthen or restructure families, schools, and communities (Dynarski et al., 2008). Consequently, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) awards discretionary grants through the *High School Graduation Initiative* (HSGI) to State and local agencies to support the implementation of “effective, sustainable and coordinated dropout prevention and re-entry programs in high school with annual dropout rates that exceed their state annual dropout rate” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p.1).

What Works Clearinghouse Dropout Prevention Guide (2008)

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) published a practice guide to offer the best available evidence and expertise to address the types of “systemic” challenges that cannot be addressed by single interventions or programs (Dynarski et al., 2008). The guide formulates specific evidence-based recommendations for educators to utilize to reduce dropping out. The six recommendations for reducing dropout rates are divided into three categories to include (a) diagnostic processes, (b) targeted interventions and (c) school-wide reforms. The dropout prevention guide recommends:

Recommendation 1: Diagnostic approach- Utilize data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that identify individual students at high risk of dropping out;

Recommendation 2: Targeted intervention- Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out;

Recommendation 3: Targeted intervention- provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance;

Recommendation 4: Targeted intervention- implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills;

Recommendation 5: Schoolwide intervention- Personalize the learning environment and instructional process;

Recommendation 6: Schoolwide intervention- provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning; and provide the skills needed to graduate and serve them after they leave school.

The practice guide provides suggestions that address student's academic, behavioral and personal needs that promote student engagement with school. Additionally, it recommends steps for educators, administrators and policymakers to reduce dropping out aimed at individual students and schoolwide communities (Dynarski, et al., 2008). Consider the outcomes of dropout prevention strategies drawn from a sampling of studies presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary Findings of Research Based Dropout Prevention Strategies

Strategies	Study	Key Findings
Early Warning System	McIntosh et al. (2008)	Students with early difficulties in academics are at a greater risk of developing behavior problems; similarly, students with early difficulties in behavior are at a greater risk of suffering academically.
Student Advisory Programs	Prevatt & Kelly (2003) Somers et al. (2009)	Student Advisory Programs mentor and address academic achievement and

		social development.
Extra-Curricular Activities	Balfanz et al. (2007) Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christensen (2003)	Engage students in extracurricular activities to encourage the development of goals and interests (athletics, vocational activities) encourage positive peer relationships.
School-to-work programs	Caputo (2004) Neumark & Joyce (2000)	Examined transition related practices improved participating students' chances of success in school.
Monitoring Risk factors	Balfanz & Letgers (2004) Lehr et al. (2003) McKee & Caldarella (2016)	Attendance, behavior, and grades, which have a powerful influence on academic and social engagement.
Community Based Learning	Christle et al. (2007) Fantuzzo, Grim, & Hazan(2005)	Service-learning, career exploration and civic education, academic development led to improved grades and increased attendance; basic academic skills and "real world" activities.
Check and Connect	Dynarski & Gleason (2002) Lehr et al. (2003) Sinclair, Christenson & Thurlow (2005)	Encourage at-risk adolescents with learning and behavioral disabilities to remain engaged; individual monitor works with the same students and families over an extended period. The monitor regularly checks on student engagement with school and promptly intervenes if action if needed. The services are individualized. Check and connect students were significantly more likely to

		be enrolled in school and attending regularly.
Systemic Renewal	Azzam (2007)	Ensure a continual evaluation process of school policies, practices and organizational structures that impact students.
Mentoring/Tutoring	Somers et al. (2009)	Mentoring is a one-to one caring and supportive that focuses on academic and psychological well-being.
Alternative Schooling	Azzam (2007) Letgers & Balfanz (2010)	Alternative schooling provides a variety of options by building competencies through experiential learning.
Health and Wellness	Letgers & Balfanz (2010)	Health issues are shown to affect a student's academic performance, behavior, mental and physical health. Substance abuse, pregnancy prevention and counseling related to suicide prevention provide whole child intervention. Findings show that individuals who begin to meet obesity status at early adolescence are more vulnerable to dropping out of high school

Researchers conducted evaluations of programs and practices, designed to reduce dropout rates and to help students who are struggling in school. The causal link between specific programs and student achievement scores or graduation rates is critical.

Dropouts have dissimilar characteristics and therefore need different kinds of programs

that respond to their individual circumstances. More personal attention and adaptation of schooling practices to individual needs influence students' attitudes and commitment to school (Shannon & Bylsma, 2005).

Table 4

Comparisons of Dropout Prevention Variables and What Works Clearinghouse (2008) Recommendations

What Works Clearinghouse	Status Variables	Alterable Variables	Research-Based Strategies
1. Utilize data systems that identify and support students at risk of dropping out.	Demographic factors Gender Ethnicity Poverty	Family involvement Attendance	Early Warning System
2. Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out.	Family background	Family involvement	Check and Connect Mentoring
3. Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.	Language skills Ability Disability	Retention	Check and Connect Tutoring
4. Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills.	Motivation	Suspensions	Student Advisory Gang Prevention Health and Wellness
5. Personalize the learning environment and instructional process	School size	Connected with school	Extra-curricular
6. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction			School-to-work Community-based learning

Summary of Review of Related Literature

Research indicates that dropout risk factors are many and multifaceted (Smink & Schargel, 2004). Several studies focus on explaining why students drop out of school and

its link to disengagement. Early school failure and problem behaviors often produce disengagement and manifest itself in high absenteeism, failure to complete assignments and grade retention. Large, urban and public schools often include inadequate relationships and instructional supports that keep students on track for graduation (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). Numerous studies explain academic and social engagement in school are influenced by a student's background characteristics. These demographic variables include gender, race, and ethnicity and language backgrounds (Rumberger, 2001).

The likelihood of dropping out is attributed to both social and academic risk factors. The critical first step for preventing drop out understands who is at risk of dropping out. Dropout interventions should be matched to the characteristics, climate and practices of the school and its students who are at risk of dropping out (Dynarski et al., 2008). Moreover, because problematic attitudes and behaviors of students at risk of dropping out appear as early as early elementary school, dropout prevention should begin early in a student's educational career. Dropout prevention programs should target middle or high school students who may have experienced years of educational failure or problems (Rumberger, 2004a).

Effective dropout prevention and recovery approaches focus on comprehensive school reform or on programs that target individual students. Research suggests students at high risk of dropping out benefit from intensive, comprehensive and coordinated interventions (Dynarski & Gleason, 2002).

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This chapter presents the research design of the study, addressing its research strategy, sampling method, data generation and collection, and data analysis. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation developed in the *Program Evaluation Standards* provides a firm list of criteria for evaluation research (Gall et al., 2007). The pragmatic model, the “Use Branch” of program evaluation and the CIPP Model (Zhang et al., 2011) provided a basis for the evaluation. The evaluation incorporated a self-administered web-based survey to collect, analyze and present information. The survey was distributed to an intact group of 129 certified school personnel from three constituent groups: (a) secondary school administrators; (b) secondary school counselors; and (c) graduation coaches in a specific Virginia school district that will be referred to as *Happy School District*. The survey provided quantitative and qualitative data that allowed for statistical comparison between three constituent groups and measured levels of implementation of dropout prevention strategies. Additionally, the survey included three open-ended questions to generate qualitative data from each of the three constituent groups to serve as a secondary data source to support the data collected via forced-choice items. The response to the questionnaire and open-ended questions provides educational leaders, instructional school personnel and other stakeholders with evidence-based findings about the

knowledge and experiences of the dropout prevention program. The primary evaluation questions guiding this study included the following:

1. What research-based dropout prevention strategies do secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches implement in a selected Virginia school district?
2. What are the facilitating factors that secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?
3. What are the inhibiting factors that secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?
4. How does implementation of dropout prevention strategies vary by role and school level?

Perspective

In 2009, the State Board of Education strengthened Virginia's accountability program by requiring high schools to increase graduation rates. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, schools needed to meet an annual benchmark for graduation. Moreover, the revised accreditation standards for Virginia included a graduation and completion index. The VDOE relies on readily available data to predict which students are at risk for dropping out of high school. Therefore, school districts are required to

provide targeted resources at the school and district-level to support students not on track to graduate while they are still in school and before they drop out. Additionally, school districts are required to examine patterns and identify school climate issues that may contribute to disproportionate dropout rates (Virginia Department of Education, 2016). The Happy School District revised their dropout prevention program beginning in 2011 to meet the state's mandate and adopted the recommendations included in the *What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Dropout Prevention Guide* (Dynarski et al., 2008) to direct its prevention efforts. The dropout prevention guide connects research-based strategies with the VDOE mandate to reduce dropout rates.

The researcher believed the Dropout Prevention Program in Happy School District was fundamentally about change. The persons tasked with implementing and monitoring the program including the administrators, school counselors, and graduation coaches, along with a variety of internal and external stakeholders provided the focus, at least in part, on change. A program evaluation is an essential responsibility for any person overseeing an educational program. An evaluation can involve ongoing monitoring of programs, or one-time studies of program processes, outcomes, and or program impact (Frye & Hemmer, 2012; Gall et al., 2007). Therefore, an effective program evaluation would identify the nature and level of change that results from implementation of the program's features (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).

The purpose of this evaluation study was to identify and compare the knowledge and experiences of secondary school administrators, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches with dropout prevention efforts as recommended by the What Works Clearinghouse Dropout Prevention Guide (2008) and, ultimately, to determine if the

constituents are supportive of the dropout prevention efforts. In this study, it was important to determine whether certified school administrators, counselors, and dropout prevention specialists possessed knowledge of, and had experience with (a) implementing research-based dropout prevention strategies; (b) the facilitating factors; and (c) inhibiting factors of implementing the dropout prevention plan.

Mixed Methods Research

Descriptive research can be divided into two broad categories: quantitative research and qualitative research. Quantitative research consists of studies in which the data concerned can be analyzed in terms of numbers. Conversely, qualitative research describes events without the use of numerical data and is open and responsive to its subject (Best & Kahn, 1990; Patton, 2002). Quantitative and qualitative techniques provide a trade-off between breadth and depth, and between generalizability and targeting to specific populations (Frechtling, 2002). Surveys are typically selected when answers are needed to a clearly defined set of questions. Surveys are good tools for obtaining data on a range of areas. The use of open-ended survey questions to collect qualitative data demonstrates that the participant's perspectives are meaningful and can be made explicit (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Moreover, the participant's perspectives affect the success of the project or program (Patton, 2002).

Sample and Participant Selection

As described in the literature, "quantitative research attempts to discover something new about a large group of individuals by studying a smaller group known as the sample" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 166). A purposive sample of 129 secondary school administrators (principals and assistant principals), school counselors and graduation

coaches were recruited to participate in the study. The participants reflected a sample from a target population of all Virginia school districts, and constituted the entire available population of secondary school administrators (principals and assistant principals), school counselors and graduation coaches from the selected school district. The target and accessible population for this study included certified public school administrators, school counselors, and graduation coaches in a specific district located in Virginia (Table 5).

Table 5

Total Number of Target Participants.

Principals	Assistant Principals	School Counselors	Graduation Coordinators
16	53	51	9

The selection of the participants involved in the study was critical. The sample site for this study was a school district in Virginia. The targeted sample for the study specifically focused on 16 secondary schools located in the district, to include the principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches. In order to ensure anonymity, the school district was referred to as *Happy School District*.

Instrumentation

A web-based Dropout Prevention Survey served as the only data collection method. The survey instrument used a format with the participants rating their responses to the questions using a five-point scale: (1) This is a primary responsibility of mine; (2) This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity; (3) This is not a

responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school; (4) This is not a responsibility of mine and this does NOT occur in our school; (5) Unable to answer this item (Appendix A).

The quantitative survey questions were developed and organized following the six categories of research-based recommendations included in the WWC Dropout Prevention Guide (2008) as displayed in Table 6. Specifically, the survey questions 4-27 were created based on the identical wording and terminology included in the guides recommended practices and strategies as related to their respective category and focus areas.

Table 6

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Recommendation Categories

WWC Recommended Category	Questionnaire Items
Use longitudinal student-level data	4-8
Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out	9-11
Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance	12-13
Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills	14-17
Personalize the learning environment and instructional process	18-22
Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning	23-27

Further, the survey included three open-ended questions, items 28-30 at the end of the survey. The qualitative approach is based on the assumption that the worth of the

educational program depends heavily on the values and perspectives of those implementing the program and therefore, provide the respondent an opportunity to share information that was not included in the questionnaire, provide the respondent's opinion that may reveal information about the respondent understanding of the dropout problem and additional ways to prevent a student's early departure from school. The research questions are matched with the survey questions as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Matched Research Questions and Survey Questions

Research Question	Questionnaire Items
1	4-27
2	28, 30
3	29, 30
4	Part I of the Survey-Demographic Information (Participant's experience, position and school level) 4-27

To enhance reliability and validity, the researcher adhered to the following recommendations presented by Sanders and Sullin (2006) and Frechtling (2002):

- Seek high response rates;
- Conduct a pilot test and administer the data-gathering instrument;
- Provide a written summary of the data results;

- Communicate the results to the appropriate personnel in Happy School District.

Several steps were considered to establish methodological rigor and data trustworthiness. In order to validate the survey instrument, particularly, with regards to credibility and trustworthiness of the study the following steps were taken. As presented in Chapter 2 of this study, a literature review of research-based dropout prevention strategies was identified. The researcher did not alter the order or context of the research-based recommendations from the WWC Dropout Prevention Guide (2008) that were specifically used in the development of survey questions 4-27.

Validity is vital to research as it is commonly accepted that scientific inquiry is futile if not validated (Gall et al., 2007). Efforts to establish validation, integrity and trustworthiness of data will be made through consistency and dependability of the data collection methods. To ensure validity, the researcher used the identical order, wording and terminology of the research-based practices as presented in the WWC Prevention Guide (Dynarski et al., 2008) to develop each of the survey questions 4-27.

The questions were pilot-tested by a four-member review panel consisting of participants from each specific constituent group. The panel members are employed in a different school district, and have like professional roles that focus on dropout prevention strategies at their respective schools. The panel was given a copy of the survey to complete. Following feedback from the review panel, adjustments were made to the survey instrument. The survey instrument was then pilot-tested by administering the survey to a cohort of education professors in the department of Educational Leadership at Hampton University located in Hampton, Virginia. The cohort was asked to respond to

the following three questions: (a) What questions were difficult to understand and/or answer? (b) Was the format of the survey appropriate? (c) Are you able to answer the questions? Finally, following the content process, four teachers were given a copy of the survey and were asked to complete the survey to gauge the amount of time required to take the survey. To complete this task, each teacher was instructed to write down the time the survey was started and when it was finished. Using these content validity techniques, the researcher was able to validate the research instrument. Table 8 illustrates the feedback from the piloted survey and the modifications made to the survey based on the feedback.

Table 8

Survey Pilot-Test Feedback

Focus Group	Pilot Participant's Input	Survey Modifications
A: Principal, Assistant Principal, School counselor, Graduation Coach	<p><i>"Too early in the year to answer all of the questions."</i></p> <p><i>"I have implemented many of the strategies, but my role changed in different schools; different principal, different role,"</i></p> <p><i>"Do you want to know which strategies I plan to do?"</i></p> <p><i>"Grad Coaches do not have authority over class size and curriculum."</i></p>	Revise and use specific wording in the directions
B: College Professors	<p><i>"Questions are clear."</i></p> <p><i>"Format is appropriate."</i></p> <p><i>"What do you mean by facilitating factor; include a definition for the term."</i></p>	Clarified survey terms
C: Teachers (4)	<p><i>Teacher 1- completion time: 4 minutes</i></p> <p><i>Teacher 2-completion time: 7 minutes</i></p> <p><i>Teacher 3- completion time: 12 minutes</i></p> <p><i>Teacher 4- completion time: 9 minutes</i></p>	The email request participation included 15 minutes as the estimated time to complete the survey

Data Collection

For this study, the data collection relied primarily on an online survey instrument (Appendix A) designed to find out the knowledge and experiences regarding research-based dropout prevention strategies of secondary school administrators, school

counselors and graduation coaches. Participants were initially contacted via email (Appendix B) and provided a subsequent email (Appendix C) to encourage increased participation. A self-administered survey is more adaptable due to the personal nature of the questions. Further, the respondents have specific and unique roles and responsibilities in their respective schools.

In the survey, questions 1-3 pertained to the participant's demographic information to include: (a) current position, (b) years in current position, and (c) current school level assigned. The survey questions 4-27 were developed based on the 24 research-based recommendations specified in the WWC Dropout Prevention Practice Guide (Dynarski et al., 2008). In accordance with the practice guide, the recommendations include the following focus areas:

- use of longitudinal student data (Questions 4-8);
- advocates assigned to students at risk of dropping out (Questions 9-11);
- academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance (Questions 12-13);
- programs to improve students' classroom behaviors and social skills (Questions 14-17);
- personalized learning environment and instructional processes (Questions 18-20); and
- rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning (Questions 23-27).

Prior to beginning the data collection, the researcher sought approval from the Research Authorization Committee (RAC), as well as the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher completed the application required by Happy School District which mandates that all research applicants remain confined to the provisions outlined in the application and use pseudonyms in place of the school district's name. The study refers to the school district as Happy District. Moreover, data collection for this study began after approval from the International Review Board (Appendix D) and Happy School District (Appendix E). After approval was granted from the affiliated school district and Institute Review Board (IRB), the participants were contacted via email. The email served as consent and contained the elements of a consent form. The study then drew a small sample from a target population to maximize efficient time and expense in studying the entire population. The sample of 129 participants received an email through Happy School District's school server inviting them to participate in the survey. The email contained a link to the actual online questionnaire. The introductory paragraph of the questionnaire described the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. The reminder email was sent at intervals of 5 days . The constituents' responses were stored on the online server and downloaded at the end of the survey process. The data collection process was estimated to take approximately two weeks, however, in order to increase participation and seek a high response rate, the survey was available for three weeks. By generating data with varied informants using the survey, individual experiences are compared with others and, ultimately, a rich picture of the program to be investigated might be constructed.

The open-ended questions collected qualitative information that would broaden the scope of possible responses (Gall et al., 2007; Sanders & Sullins, 2006). Descriptive statistics are mathematical techniques for organizing and summarizing data. The participants' responses to the open-ended questions 28, 29, and 30 were reported verbatim and analyzed using descriptive analysis. The participants entered comments that provided insight and depth regarding the implementation of dropout prevention strategies. The researcher grouped the responses based on the frequency of the response, as well as the respondents' current school role, years in current position and current school level. The totals were compiled to provide a descriptive summary of the overall response numbers.

Data Analysis

In this study, the self-administered survey was used to gather descriptive data. Self-administered surveys yielded quantifiable data that reduced the chance of bias (Sanders & Sullins, 2006). Descriptive results were obtained using frequency distribution. The collected data compared the different populations to include school level assignments and current roles. The response patterns for the different groups were compared to each other to determine whether there were differences in responses.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data in the study and provided summaries about the sample and the measures. In this study, the distribution of responses by constituent group was the focus of the description. Categorical data were summarized by creating frequency counts by each constituent

group to identify the most frequently occurring dropout prevention strategy at specific school levels.

Statistical Significance

To develop the level of statistical significance of an observed difference between samples, chi-square analyses were used to determine whether response patterns differed by the independent variables of interest. In the t distribution, the lower the p value, the higher the level of a significant difference. If the number of responses in each category was insufficient to allow for statistical comparison, the report included descriptive information only. Lastly, the researcher recorded the responses verbatim and grouped the qualitative data from the three open-ended survey items 28, 29 and 30.

Table 9

Data Analysis Plan

Research Question	Source of Data	Test
1. What are the research-based dropout prevention strategies secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches implement in Happy School District as implemented to date?	Questionnaire Items 4-27	Descriptive Statistics
2. What are the facilitating factors that secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?	Questionnaire Item 28	Descriptive Statistics
3. What are the inhibiting factors that secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?	Questionnaire Item 29	Descriptive Statistics
4. How does implementation of dropout prevention strategies vary by role and school level?	Questionnaire Item 4-27	Chi-Square Analysis

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

Delimitations

This study was limited to public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia: the participants were official personnel, licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia, to include principals, school counselors and dropout prevention specialists.

Limitations

Limitations of a study are external factors beyond the control of the researcher. For this study, the limitations included the (a) the accuracy of information provided by the school district's website, (b) the participant's self-reported responses to the survey and, thus caution needs to be taken in interpreting the findings, (c) the response rate and sample size.

Assumptions

This study assumed that the dropout prevention plan, graduation rates, dropout rates and completion rates are reported accurately and consistently by the school district located in Virginia. It is further assumed the participants will answer the questionnaire truthfully and completely.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher assured the participants involved in the study that all data collected would remain completely confidential. To ensure confidentiality and maintain ethical integrity, the researcher ensured participants' identities were not revealed and the data collected was not released to a third party (Gall et al., 2007).

Participants were made fully aware of the purpose of the study, how it would be used, information sought, and the implications for them as contributors to the research (Best & Kahn, 1990). Participation in the study was not a requirement and participants were not penalized if they decided not to participate in the study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to identify the knowledge and experiences about dropout prevention programs and strategies in a Virginia school district from the perspective of current secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches. This study synthesized data collected from an online survey instrument designed to identify participants' knowledge and experiences regarding the implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies.

Chapter 4 reintroduces the research questions, reviews the demographics of the participants and presents the tentative findings of this study. Descriptive statistics are followed by data analysis and qualitative findings.

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What research-based dropout prevention strategies do secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches implement in a selected Virginia school district?
2. What are the facilitating factors that secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?
3. What are the inhibiting factors that secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors and graduation coaches

identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?

4. How does implementation of dropout prevention strategies vary by role and school level?

As indicated in Chapter 3, data were collected via a web-based survey.

Information included in Table 9 displays the major data sources that were used to answer each of the research questions.

Demographic Information

An email invitation was sent to 129 potential participants through the school district's email service. The survey instrument was made available to each secondary school principal, assistant principal, school counselor and graduation coach in Happy School District as identified on the school district's website. Ultimately, the sample of 129 participants yielded a return rate of 43% or 55 individual respondents as displayed in Table 10. High school participants had the highest representation, with more than half of the population represented (52.73%; see Table 10). Less than half of the middle school population was represented (47.27%). Variance between the high school and middle school participation could potentially introduce response bias.

Table 10

Survey Response Rates by School Level

School Level	Population	Respondents	% Response Rate
High School	61	29	52.73
Middle School	68	26	47.27
Total	129	55	43.0

The invited participants for the study included the entire population of secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches in Happy District. As illustrated in Table 11, from the 16 principals, nine (56%) responded; of the 53 assistant principals, 20 responded (38%); of the 51 school counselors, 17 responded (33%); and of the nine graduation coaches, 100% responded to the survey.

Table 11

Survey Response Rates by Current Role of Participants

Current Role	Population	Sample	Sample %	% Response Rate
Principal	16	9	16.36	56
Assistant Principal	53	20	36.36	38
School Counselor	51	17	30.91	33
Graduation Coach	9	9	16.36	100
	129	55	100	43

As illustrated in Table 12, the demographic information collected in the survey identified the *years in current position* from the participants. The data identified 15

respondents (27.2%) with more than 11 years of experience in their current role; 14 respondents (25%) with 6-10 years of experience; 24 respondents (43.6%) with 1-5 years of experience; and two respondents (3.6%) with less than 1 year in their current role. The respondents with 1-5 years of experience in their current role represented the largest response rate. The individuals with less than 1 year of experience represented the smallest response rate. For the total population of 129 individuals, the individual experience levels are not known; therefore, a comparison cannot be provided. There was no other demographic information collected.

Table 12

Survey Response Rates by Participants' Years in Current Role

Years in Current Role	Respondents	% of Respondents
+11	15	27.2%
6-10	14	25.4%
1-5	24	43.6%
Less than 1	2	3.6%

Findings for Research Question 1

What research-based dropout prevention strategies do secondary principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches implement in a selected Virginia school district?

The web-based survey yielded data regarding the specific dropout prevention strategies implemented in the school district. The research findings of each are presented using descriptive statistics, including means and percentages. As presented in Table 13,

of the 26 recommended research-based strategies, the majority of the strategies were being implemented in the respondents' schools. The identified areas appear closely connected to roles that have instructional responsibilities, provide individualized student supports and address specific concerns that occur in the classroom.

Overall, 78% of the respondents indicated *monitoring the academic and social performance of all students academically as a primary responsibility* of their job. More than 50% indicated *use of data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions; reviewing student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out before key academic transitions; monitoring students' sense of belonging and engagement in school; recognizing student accomplishments; and encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities* as a primary responsibility.

When results were analyzed according to the specific role of the respondent, principals saw eight dropout prevention strategies as primary to their job (*use of longitudinal, student-level data to get an accurate read of graduation and dropout rates; choose adults who are committed to investing in the student's personal and academic success, keep caseloads low, and purposefully match students with adult advocates; use adult advocates or other engaged adults to help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks; establish partnerships with community-based program providers and other agencies such as social services, welfare, mental health, and law enforcement; establish small learning communities; establish team teaching; create extended time in classroom through changes to the school schedule; and partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experience such*

as *internships, simulated job interviews, or long-term employment*). Further analysis revealed principals saw *create smaller classes* as a secondary responsibility to their job.

Both principals and assistant principals viewed *provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills* as a primary responsibility to their job. Assistant principals saw *establish a regular time in the school day to meet with the adult* as a secondary responsibility. Principals, assistant principals, and school counselors viewed *recognize student accomplishments* and *encourage student participation in extracurricular activities* as primary responsibilities.

Assistant principals and school counselors identified *monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school* and *communicate with adult advocates about the various obstacles students may encounter and provide adult advocates with guidance and training about how to work with students, parents, or school staff to address the problems* as primary responsibilities to their job. Furthermore, assistant principals and graduation coaches saw *use of data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions* and *review student-level data to identify students at-risk of dropping out before key academic transitions* as primary responsibilities. However, school counselors saw *host career days and offer other opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses* and *provide students with extra assistance about the demands of college* as primary responsibilities to their job.

It should be noted with caution that the survey options *Not a Responsibility/Does Occur* and *Not a Responsibility/Does Not Occur* allow the respondent to project about

these response options. Consequently, there is limited confidence in the percentages for these two rating options.

Table 13

Percentages of Participant Ratings by Survey Question

Survey Question	Primary Responsibility	Secondary Responsibility	Not a Responsibility/ Does Occur	Not a Responsibility/ Does Not Occur	Unable to Answer
4-Use longitudinal student-level data	41.82%	27.27%	12.73%	14.55%	3.64%
5-Use data to identify students with at-risk histories	58.18%	32.73%	5.45%	1.82%	1.82%
6-Monitor academic and social performance	78.18%	20.00%	1.82%	0.00%	0.00%
7-Review student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out	50.91%	34.55%	7.27%	7.27%	0.00%
8-Monitor student's sense of belonging	56.36%	34.55%	7.27%	0.00%	1.82%
9-Choose committed adults to invest in student's personal/academic success	38.18%	25.45%	25.09%	3.64%	3.64%
10-Establish regular time in the school day to meet with the adult	16.36%	38.18%	29.09%	7.27%	9.09%
11-Communicate with adult advocates about obstacles students may encounter	32.73%	38.18%	18.18%	7.27%	3.54%
12-Provide individual/small group support	29.63%	24.07%	44.44%	1.85%	0.00%
13-Provide extra study time for credit recovery	27.78%	22.22%	42.59%	7.41%	0.00%
14-Use adult advocates to help students establish attainable academic/behavioral goals	37.04%	33.33%	25.93%	1.85%	1.85%

15-Recognize student accomplishments	57.41%	35.19%	7.41%	0.00%	0.00%
16-Teach problem solving/decision making strategies	37.04%	37.04%	24.07%	1.85%	0.00%
17-Establish partnerships with community-based agencies	35.19%	33.33%	27.78%	1.85%	1.85%
18-Establish small learning communities	18.87%	30.19%	39.62%	3.77%	7.55%
19-Establish team teaching	33.96%	16.98%	49.06%	0.00%	0.00%
20-Create smaller classrooms	22.64%	28.30%	37.74%	3.77%	7.55%
21-Create extended classroom through changes to the school schedule	32.08%	9.43%	45.28%	7.55%	5.66%
22-Encourage participation in extracurricular activities	52.83%	33.96%	13.21%	0.00%	0.00%
23-Provide professional development for teachers	40.00%	18.00%	40.00%	0.00%	2.00%
24-Integrate academic/career based themes	30.00%	24.00%	40.00%	6.00%	0.00%
25-Host career days and offer work-related experiences/visits to post-secondary campuses	34.00%	28.00%	34.00%	4.00%	0.00%
26-Provide students with extra assistance/ Information about the demands of college	34.00%	30.00%	30.00%	4.00%	2.00%
27-Create local business partnerships for work-related/intern experiences	22.00%	26.00%	30.00%	20.00%	2.00%

Findings for Research Question 2

What facilitating factors do secondary principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?

Using content analysis to study the aspects of the participants' verbatim responses, the findings were derived from the open-ended questions. The specific responses present a more in-depth illustration about the facilitating and inhibiting factors regarding the implementation of dropout prevention strategies. The participants' responses are identified by current school role, years in the current role, and the current school level assigned. The researcher reported the terms and phrases from the participants' responses to develop a frequency count of the data. The frequency count is presented to identify similar responses.

Furthermore, the research study included an open-ended question in order to identify any other information about the participant's knowledge and experience with dropout prevention strategies to inform facilitating factors to dropout prevention in Happy District. This qualitative process was used to gain a deeper understanding of the dropout prevention strategies implemented in Happy District. In addition, the qualitative process helped the researcher identify whether other strategies were used. The results of the verbatim responses did not identify any additional strategies. However, regarding the responses, "the meaning is in the text *itself* and the meaning can be represented as discrete content variables and may be considered emergent" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 292).

As illustrated in Table 14, there were 32 total responses to the open-ended Question 28, which identified 19 facilitating factors regarding implementation of

research-based dropout prevention strategies. All of those who responded to this item reported 5 or more years of experience in their current roles.

Furthermore, the survey revealed eight verbatim responses that related to facilitating factors facilitating factors regarding implementation of dropout prevention strategies. The responses supported the following dropout prevention strategies:

- graduation coaches;
- experience as a school counselor;
- school wide strategies;
- alternative education programs;
- parent and student conferences;
- targeted academic supports;
- targeted personal supports; and
- credit recovery.

The middle and high school assistant principals shared the majority of the identified facilitating factors. The most frequently cited facilitating factors by the assistant principals included graduation coaches (N=4) and funding for learning beyond the classroom (N=3). The assistant principals and graduation coaches identified four facilitating factors: (1) mentorship programs, (2) the attendance officer, (3) youth development activities and (4) conferences with students and parents. The assistant principal and school counselors' responses identified 4 facilitating factors: (1) school board supports, (2) graduation coaches, (3) targeted personal supports, and (4) funding for learning beyond the classroom also facilitate dropout prevention. The school

counselors and graduation coaches agreed that school-wide strategies facilitate dropout prevention efforts.

Table 14

Self-Reported Facilitating Factors of Dropout Prevention Strategies

Facilitating Factors	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Response Count
School board support		H5	M5		2
Principal support			M5		1
Graduation Coaches		H6 M11 H5	H5		4
<i>"I have watched the Happy District graduation coaches work and help our middle school kids transition to 9th grade. I think they are a great resource."</i>					
Mentorship program		M11		H6	2
Experience as a school counselor					
<i>"As a school counselor, it is important to know the available resources."</i>					
Attendance officer		M6		H6	2
Strategies that support literacy		M11			1
School-wide strategies			M5	H6	2
<i>"The curriculum does need a more hands on approach to allow the students to be more active in their learning. The passive way we have learned for the past 100 years encourages drop outs and disproportionality."</i>					
Youth Development	M5	M11			2
Tutorials/ study groups			H5		1
Alternative Education Programs				H6 H6	2
<i>"Having taught elementary and middle and now having</i>					

the opportunity to work in high school I have personally seen that all of the dropout prevention strategies will not reach their full potential for those high school students in the most need if something isn't done in elementary and middle school other than push them along from grade to grade. Once an underachieving student has been identified in high school (repeating the same grade level 2 or 3 times) it must be realized that the particular student that does this is not going to be productive in the regular setting.”

Individualized Education Plans		H6	1
Parent/student conferences School/home communication	M11	H6	2
<i>“Relationships are very important in dealing with students and families.”</i>			
Targeted academic supports	H5		1
<i>“My experience has taught me all students want to succeed and feel good about their accomplishments; as educators it is important to understand that if a child cannot learn the way we teach, then we must teach the way they learn.”</i>			
Targeted personal supports	H5	H5	2
<i>“I find that most students in jeopardy of dropping out have needed assistance of some type for a long time: they were behind academically and socially in elementary and middle school; they are emotionally vulnerable to common issues</i>			

that occur during teenage years which derail them from being focused on academics, which in turn leaves them susceptible to academic failure, which in turn leaves them with low self-esteem and a tendency to settle for less.”

Funding for learning beyond the classroom		H5	M5		3
Credit recovery		H5			1
<i>“Offer every opportunity for students to achieve their graduation requirements.”</i>					
Data		H5			1
Trained/adequate personnel	M11	M11			2
Total	2	16	7	7	32

Note. M= middle school, H= high school. The number following school identifier pertains to years in current position. For example, M11 indicates a participant with 11 years of service in their current middle school position.

Findings for Research Question 3

What inhibiting factors do secondary principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?

There were 25 total responses to the open-ended question regarding inhibiting factors that impact implementation of dropout prevention strategies. The participants identified 20 inhibiting factors (see Table 15). There were no responses from principals; therefore, the principal group was not represented.

The majority of the responses to this item came from the high school graduation coaches’ responses and eight of the middle school assistant principals. Of the school counselor group, there were two middle school counselors; high school counselors did

not respond and are not represented. Two middle school assistant principals and one high school assistant principal identified the lack of parental or home support as an inhibiting factor. Additionally, the middle school assistant principal and the high school graduation coaches agreed the lack of parental communication and poor student attendance inhibited the dropout prevention strategies. One assistant principal and two graduation coaches identified poor attendance as an inhibiting factor.

The middle school assistant principals' identified five inhibiting factors that were not identified by the three other constituent groups: (1) lack of an effective reading instruction program, (2) large English and Math classes, and (3) the students' readiness when entering school. High school assistant principals identified (1) low student expectation, (2) learning disabilities, (3) inability to pass SOL tests, (4) disciplinary practices that remove students from school, and (5) adults who have little regard or patience for students who need more than others. The school counselor noted large class loads and funding as inhibiting dropout prevention.

In Happy District, graduation coaches that are assigned to each of the district's high schools noted six inhibiting factors that were not identified in other participants' responses: (1) lack of student interest, (2) off-track credit requirements, (3) poor class scheduling, (4) funding for alternative education, (5) unstable home environments, and (6) time.

Moreover, the research study included an open-ended question in order to identify any other information about the participant's knowledge and experience with dropout prevention strategies to inform inhibiting factors to dropout prevention in Happy District. Based on the verbatim responses, there were no additional strategies identified. The

open-ended survey revealed three verbatim responses that related to inhibiting factors regarding implementation of dropout prevention strategies. The responses supported the following inhibiting factors to dropout prevention were revealed: (1) degree of readiness of students entering school; (2) no funding for alternative education: and (3) unstable home or life conditions.

Table 15

Inhibiting Factors of Dropout Prevention Strategies

Inhibiting Factors	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Response Counts
Lack of parental/home support		M11 M11 H5			3
Lack of parental communication			M11		1
Lack of positive parental involvement		M11		H6	2
Lack of effective Reading Instruction program		M11			1
Exceptionally large English classes		M11			1
Large Math classes		M11			1
Degree of readiness of students entering school		M11			1
<i>“Dropout prevention is a real concern and although specific resources are in place at the high school level, I believe dropout intervention strategies must begin at the elementary level and middle level to ensure a higher graduation rate in our school system.”</i>					
Poor attendance		M11		H6 H6	3
Lack of student interest				H6	1
Off-track credits towards graduation				H6	1

Poor scheduling of classes			H6	1
No funding for alternative education such as online high school programs			H6	1
<i>If a student is retained, we all know that that student is more likely to drop out. There is no alternative curriculum to use in retention.</i>				
Unstable home/life conditions			H6	1
<i>“The environment outside of school plays an important part; the value of school begins at home and parents are tasked with instilling values of learning.”</i>				
Low expectations for students		H5		1
Learning disabilities		H5		1
Not able to pass SOL tests		H5		1
Disciplinary practices that remove students from school		H5		1
Adults who have little regard or patience for students who need more than others		H5		1
Funding for activities			M5	1
Time			H6	1
Total	n/a	14	2	9
				25

Note. M= middle school, H= high school. The number following school identifier pertains to years in current position. For example, M11 indicates a participant with 11 years of service in their current middle school position.

Findings for Research Question 4

How does implementation of dropout prevention strategies vary by role and school level?

Dropout prevention interventions most often include multiple components. The WWC Dropout Prevention Guide (2008) presented a series of six recommendations for reducing dropout rates that are divided into three categories: (1) diagnostic processes for identifying student-level and school-wide dropout problems; (2) targeted interventions for a subset of middle and high school students who are identified as at risk of dropping out; and (3) school-wide reforms designed to enhance engagement.

To examine how the implementation of dropout prevention strategies varied by role and school level, a question-by-question, cross tabulation analysis with an associated chi-square test was conducted to evaluate the relationships between the participants' current position, current school level, and level of responsibility with implementing specific dropout prevention strategies. These calculations tested the independence of two categorical variables. The first set of chi-square analyses, examined response pattern differences based on the respondents' current school role and the second set of analyses examined response pattern differences based on the respondents' current school level. The detailed analyses for each question are presented in Appendix G.

Chi-square Results Analyzed by Participants' Assigned Roles

The data analysis regarding the participants' current school role indicated a statistically significant response pattern in the implementation of the following dropout prevention strategies:

- establish small learning communities;
- establish team teaching;

- create smaller classes;
- create extended time in classroom;
- provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand knowledge and improve skills;
and
- host career days and other opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses.

Regarding the responsibility of *establishing small learning communities*, the survey response pattern showed that 66% of principals saw this strategy as primary to their role; 56% of assistant principals saw this as secondary responsibility, compared to only 6% of school counselors. None of the graduation coaches saw this as a primary responsibility. However, 56% of school counselors and 66% of graduation coaches did not see this as their responsibility at all, even though the strategy was happening at their schools.

The response patterns regarding the recommendation that pairs teachers as partners to *establish team teaching* revealed a difference by school position; whereas 77% of the principals and 57% of the assistant principals surveyed considered this as primary to their role, none of the school counselors or graduation coaches saw this as a primary role. Instead, 87% of school counselors and all of the responding graduation coaches indicated that this was not their responsibility but did occur at their school.

WWC (Dynarski et al., 2008) recommended *creating smaller classes* that lowering the number of students in the class allows teachers to interact with students on an individual level more frequently. Of those completing the survey for this study, 55% of principals indicated it as a secondary responsibility; 42% of assistant principals

identified this strategy as a primary responsibility to their role. There were no school counselors or graduation coaches who reported this as a primary responsibility. Rather, 56% of the school counselors and 77% of the graduation coaches did not consider this as their responsibility, although it was occurring in their school.

In terms of the recommendation to *create extended time in the classroom through changes to the school schedule* with features that extend the class periods and provide more time for student-teacher and student-student interactions during the school day, there was a significant difference between principals and assistant principals. Specifically, 77% of principals considered this as primary to their role; however only 47% of assistant principals considered this as primary to their role. School counselors did not report this intervention as a primary or secondary responsibility. Rather, 68% of school counselors and 77% of graduation coaches reported this was not their responsibility, but it was occurring in their school.

Research based dropout prevention recommendations involve academic curriculum and a variety of practical job-related applications. To improve classroom instruction, WWC (2008) recommends *schools provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school*. Analysis of survey responses identified three areas with response pattern differentials within this recommended strategy. In terms of implementing systems that *provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills*, 88% of the principals and 61% of the assistant principals considered the strategy as primary to their role. Graduation coaches did not see this strategy as a primary responsibility. Similar to other strategies related to teachers'

professional growth, 66% of school counselors and all of the responding graduation coaches reported that this strategy was not their responsibility, even though it occurs in their schools.

A second research-based intervention included in the dropout prevention plan incorporated career focused themes and provided students with exposure to community members who work in different fields to share their experiences. This intervention also facilitated student visits to college campuses. WWC (Dynarski et al., 2008) has recommended schools *host career days and offer opportunities to visit postsecondary campuses*. In contrast to previously discussed intervention strategies, approximately 66% of the school counselors surveyed considered this intervention primary to their role, but only 33% of the principal cohort reported it as a primary or as a secondary responsibility. Only 22% of the assistant principals saw this as a primary responsibility, and 27% considered this a secondary responsibility. There were no graduation coaches who saw this as a primary responsibility. Further analysis revealed school counselors did not see this as a responsibility although it occurs in their schools. Of those completing the survey, 87% of graduation coaches and 47% of assistant principals did not consider the strategy to be their responsibility, but acknowledged the strategy was happening in their schools.

Chi-square Results Analyzed by Participants' Assigned School Level

The second set of chi-square analysis data results were calculated to determine the response pattern difference in implementation of dropout prevention strategies based on the participant's current assigned school level (Table 16). There were four focus areas

that were identified in the analysis with a statistically significant response pattern differential in the implementation of the dropout strategies:

- use longitudinal, student-level data to get an accurate read of graduation and dropout rates;
- monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school
- provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning;
- partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experience such as internships, simulated job interviews, or long-term employment (Question 27).

The first research-based intervention in this grouping advises *schools and districts to utilize data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out*. The response pattern analysis showed that 55% of the respondents at the high school level saw this as a primary, while only 26% of respondents at the middle school level saw this as a primary responsibility. Further analysis showed 30% of the middle school respondents reported that this was not their responsibility and it did not occur in their schools at all.

A second response pattern regarding the survey respondents' school level was also shown to have a difference in terms of *monitoring students' sense of belonging in school*. The response pattern showed that 48% of the high school respondents saw this as a secondary responsibility, while 76% of the middle school respondents saw this as a primary responsibility at their current school level.

The third response pattern showed that regarding the strategy that *advises schools to partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work related experience such as internships, simulated job interviews or long-term employment*, 41% of the high school participants identified this as a secondary responsibility and supported the activity, while 30% of middle school participants saw this as a primary responsibility at their school level, while.

Table 16 summarizes the analyses regarding whether response patterns differ by the independent variables of current role and school level. Any statistical finding with $p \leq 0.05$ indicated a response patterns differential based on current role or current school level.

Table 16

Chi-Square Analysis Variance by Current Role and Current School Level

Dropout Prevention Strategy	Current Role		Current School Level	
	Chi Square	p-value	Chi Square	p-value
Q4-Use longitudinal student-level for accurate graduation and dropout rates	16.63	.17	14.14	.01
Q5-Use data to identify students with at-risk histories	11.45	.45	5.58	.23
Q6-Monitor academic and social performance	4.86	.96	0.95	.92
Q7- Reviews student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out	6.97	.86	5.19	.27
Q8- Monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school	8.43	.75	11.75	.02
Q9- Choose adults committed to students' personal/academic success	18.28	.11	5.57	.23
Q10-Establish regular time to meet with adult advocates	16.88	.15	6.41	.17
Q11- Communicate student obstacles with adult advocates	16.16	.18	2.29	.68
Q12- Provide individual/small group supports	8.68	.73	2.29	.68
Q13- Provide extra study time/credit recovery	8.13	.77	2.25	.69
Q14- Use adult advocates to help students attain goals	12.17	.43	3.30	.51
Q15- Recognize student accomplishments	14.00	.30	6.83	.15
Q16- Teach problem solving/decision	6.58	.88	1.40	.84

making strategies				
Q17- Establish partnerships with community-based agencies	21.28	.05	6.58	.16
Q18- Establish small learning communities	32.32	.00	8.17	.09
Q19- Establish team teaching	37.90	.00	7.50	.11
Q20- Create smaller classrooms	30.25	.00	1.58	.81
Q21- Create extended classroom time through changes to the school schedule	29.44	.00	7.73	.10
Q22- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities	15.43	.22	9.13	.06
Q23- Provide professional development for teachers	36.97	.00	6.04	.20
Q24- Integrate academic and career based themes	16.48	.17	2.72	.60
Q25- Host career days and offer opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses	24.04	.02	3.62	.46
Q26- Provide students with extra assistance/information about the demands of college	21.13	.05	1.11	.89
Q27- Create local business partnerships for work-related/intern experiences	17.98	.12	11.18	.02

Note. Chi square statistical finding with $p \leq 0.05$ indicated a response pattern differential.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Dropping out of high school has been a social issue dating back to the 1960s (Dorn, 1996). The effects to the economic and social aspects for both the student who drops out and society are substantial and affect every portion of America. Recent educational reforms have put immense pressure on school leaders to account for every child's success in school. With the implementation of education initiatives such as *No Child Left Behind* (2002), which has since been replaced by *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA)—signed in 2015 by former President Obama and the reauthorized *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA)—it is imperative for school leaders to understand the strategies that impact school dropout. ESEA, the nation's current education law, renews the commitment to equal opportunity for all students (Shoffner, 2016). In 2012, the Obama administration granted flexibility to states regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive plans that would close the achievement gaps and improve outcomes for all students. The law required that all students in America receive instruction that included high academic standards that would prepare them to succeed in college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2017a). The mandate advanced equity and upheld critical protections for America's disadvantaged and at-risk students. Moreover, the law maintained an expectation for accountability and action to affect positive change in districts with low graduation rates over extended periods of time. As a result, high schools throughout the United States

have continued implementing a variety of strategies in attempts to reduce the dropout rate (Balfanz, 2009).

Summary of Findings

This research study identified the knowledge and experiences of secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches related to dropout prevention strategies. It was the goal of the study to understand the facilitating and inhibiting factors that impact school leaders' dropout prevention efforts as communicated through the open-ended survey questions, as well as investigate whether the implementation of dropout prevention varied based on the participants' current school role (e.g., principal, assistant principal, school counselor, or graduation coach) and current school level assigned (e.g., middle school or high school).

School wide interventions include recommendations that advise schools and districts to personalize the learning environment and instructional process, provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning, and provide skills needed to graduate that serve them after the student leaves school. The recommendations included in the WWC Dropout Prevention Guide (Dynarski et al., 2008) recognize “dropping out is not entirely a function of the attitudes, behaviors and external environment of the students—that dysfunctional schools can encourage dropping out” (p. 30).

Evidence suggests that students can become alienated and uninterested if schools do not foster caring and supportive relationships (Davis & Cole-Leffel, 2009; Kortering & Braziel, 2008). Furthermore, a personalized learning environment can provide students with more attention from their teachers to increase engagement. Small learning

communities provide for more curriculum choice also aimed at student engagement (Davis & Cole-Leffel, 2009).

Summary and Discussion of Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 states: “What research-based dropout prevention strategies do secondary school principals, secondary assistant principals, secondary school counselors and graduation coaches implement in a selected Virginia school district?” Most of the participants were on the high school level. Assistant principals represented the majority of the participation group, however, graduation coaches represented the highest participation rate of their cohort sample group. In terms of years in current position, most participants had 1-5 years of experience in their current role.

Furthermore, Research Question 1 was addressed using the construct built around the questions included in the survey that asked participants to identify their level of support for the implementation of specific strategies. The results indicated that each of the recommended diagnostic, targeted, and school wide interventions was implemented, at least partially. However, the survey did not yield information that indicated all of the schools in Happy District were represented, therefore the data did not specifically reveal whether the activity is occurring in *all* of the schools in the district or in all of the schools represented in the survey. According to the results, the six recommendation categories were implemented in the participants’ school, but the survey does not identify the participant’s specific school. There were 18 strategies that were not implemented or *did not occur* in the respondents’ school; there were six strategies that participants identified as either *primary responsibility*, *secondary responsibility*, or *does occur in our school*:

- Monitor the academic and social performance of all students;

- Monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school;
- Recognize student accomplishments;
- Establish team teaching;
- Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills.

Monitor the academic and social performance of all students. Most of the principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches indicated the use of systems that monitor students' academic and social performance as a primary responsibility of their job. According to V.E.Lee and Burkam (2001), early warning systems should (a) track attendance, behavior, and grades; (b) determine who needs additional support in order to graduate; (c) track freshmen grades; (d) monitor end of year grades; and (e) monitor students who will not progress to the 10th grade due to course failure. Neild, Stoner-Bey & Furstenberg (2008) use the definition: "The most basic definition of being *off track* for graduation is not having earned sufficient course credits in the normally allotted time" (p. 19). Allensworth and Easton (2007) found that students who got off track during the ninth grade had a 22% on-time graduation rate, compared with an 81% graduation rate for students who were on track after their first year in high school.

An important factor in staying on track and graduating is attendance. Attendance rates have proven to be a reliable predictor of the risk level for not graduating from high school. A student's attendance patterns are the most accurate indicators that a student is falling behind academically and may drop out. Regular school attendance is foundational

to students' success, but school absenteeism is a critical problem (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Problematic school attendance is debilitating to many students and is most prominently linked to eventual school dropout. To stay on track, a student must attend school and monitors should be in place to oversee this area. Poor school connectedness, inadequate attention to individual students' needs, and neglectful attendance management practices propel absenteeism and later school dropout (Balfanz, 2016; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014).

Monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school. More than half of the principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation counselors saw monitoring students; sense of belonging and engagement in school as a primary responsibility. Youth who are disengaged from school are more likely to experience academic failure, school dropout and various negative psychosocial outcomes. "Active engagement in secondary school promotes the skills, competencies, and values that allow adolescents to successfully transition to adulthood" (Wang & Fredricks, 2014, p. 722). Researchers have demonstrated that students who feel connected to school have more positive academic and behavioral outcomes (Blum, 2005; Conner, 2011; Habash, 2008). Evidence suggests that students become increasingly disengaged as they progress through secondary school, with some researchers estimating that 40%-60% of youth show signs of disengagement (Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Risk-factors such as low bonding, low school attachment and low commitment to school increase the potential for school dropout. Increased student connectedness promotes classroom engagement and school attendance, which increases student achievement. Connected students have demonstrated

more focus, higher grades, and a stronger investment in school relationships (Blum, 2005).

Dropping out of school for many youth is not a sudden event, but rather the last step in a long process through which they have become disengaged in school. School engagement is considered a critical mechanism through which motivational processes lead to academic success. School engagement can function as a protective factor that prevents school dropout and encourages adolescents to stay in school (Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

Recognize student accomplishments. Student recognition communicates the value of accomplishment and success. Principals, assistant principals, and school counselors viewed recognizing student accomplishments as a primary responsibility of their job. The importance of recognizing accomplishments is a valued practice that applies not only to the classroom, but also across broad areas in the organization. Effective organizations make recognition and celebration a part of the everyday functioning (Mathis, 2016). Recognition has tremendous power to reinforce specific behaviors and actions that are most likely contributors to the achievement of personal and organizational goals. “Recognition, at times, can serve as a turning point in the life of a student who might not experience academic success often” (Levin, 2008, p. 42).

The ways students are recognized and celebrated is deeply embedded in the culture of the school and defines what is valued among students, teachers, and principals. Every adult in the school community should be given the opportunity to celebrate students for their contributions (Drew, 2013; Mathis, 2016). Recognition programs use experiences and artifacts to celebrate students who demonstrate academic achievement,

personify important attributes, and display tremendous efforts across domains (Mathis, 2016). The practice of including the external community may facilitate opportunities for students to access resources or experiences within the community (Comer, 2004; N. Martin & Halperin, 2006).

Establish team teaching. Team teaching is an instructional delivery system in which two or more professionals deliver substantive instruction to a diverse group of students. Principals viewed the activity of establishing team teaching as a primary responsibility of their job. However, most of the assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches did not see this activity as their primary or secondary responsibility, although they each admitted the activity occurs in their school.

The fundamental idea of team teaching is two or more teachers teaching together and sharing responsibilities for meeting the learning needs of students (Jackson, Willis, Giles, Lastrapes, & Mooney, 2017). Qualitative research identified several perceived benefits for students with disabilities, who historically have higher dropout rates than their peers without disabilities. Particularly in the middle and high school settings, where teacher's content knowledge is focused in a given content, two prominent benefits of team teaching include combined content knowledge and instructional strategies and smaller teacher-student ratios (Reschly & Cristenson, 2006). Furthermore, team teaching was reported as creating a positive climate for learning, establishing high expectations for both behavior and academic performance (Jackson et al., 2017)

Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities refer to adult-supervised activities that are external to core curriculum, provide opportunities for participants to develop skills or knowledge, and take place outside of

school hours. Principals, assistant principals, and school counselors viewed encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities as a primary responsibility of their job. These activities are organized by schools, youth organizations, and afterschool programs and may be a key factor in increasing students' sense of school belonging. Extracurricular activities have the broad goal of promoting positive development for children and youths (Seow & Pan, 2014). Evidence has shown that positive youth development is linked to the opportunities provided by schools, communities, and other developmental settings to (a) learn physical, intellectual, emotional, and social skills; (b) foster social integration; (c) offer adult guidance; and (d) enable physical and psychological safety (Snyder & Flay, 2012). Furthermore, activity participation by adolescents has been linked to higher educational attainment and achievement, reduced problem behaviors, and heightened psychosocial competencies (Battistich, 2008; Metsapelto & Pulkkinen, 2012).

Marsh (1992) argued that through extracurricular involvement, students experience a sense of meaning and purpose connected to the educational process, which increases their sense of commitment to the school. This results in shaping values and attitudes to become more consistent with academic school values and the academic process as reflected through lower school dropout rates and school attendance (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Marsh, 1992). Engagement in school extracurricular activities was linked to decreasing rates of early school dropout in both boys and girls (Craft, 2012). The outcome was observed primarily among students who were at risk for dropout. The association between reduced rates of early school dropout and extracurricular involvement differed for students based upon their risk factors. The association with

reduction in dropout rates was stronger for students having a greater risk when compared with students who had fewer risk factors. For students whose prior commitment to the school and its values had been marginal, such participation provided an opportunity to create a positive and voluntary connection to the educational institution (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997).

Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve skills. Professional development should be an ongoing part of every educator's professional life. "A teacher's understanding of subject facts, concepts, principles, and the methods through which they are integrated cognitively determine the teacher's pedagogical thinking and decision making" (Stronge, 2010, p. 19). Both principals and assistant principals viewed provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills as a primary responsibility to their job. Most of the school counselors did not view the activity as their responsibility but admitted the activity occurs in their school. None of the graduation coaches saw the activity as their responsibility. The emphasis on student achievement and a strong focus on accountability have schools searching for ways to improve student learning and achievement. Consequently, these efforts have led to increased interest in improving schools, having highly competent leaders and teachers, and fostering and implementing high-quality professional development for teachers and leaders (Moore, Kochan, Kraska, & Reames, 2011). The need for academic achievement has been emphasized most strongly for students who have been traditionally classified as underperforming in schools.

Effective professional development involves continuous teacher and administrator learning in the context of collaborative problem-solving (Gupton, 2003). Professional

learning needs to be sustained over time; aligned with the specifics of school and classroom contexts and other reform efforts; reinforced by research and practice-based evidence; and supported by professional learning communities, collaboration, and reflection (Mitchell, Riley, & Loughran, 2010).

Schools with principals and faculties who believe in their students, set high goals for students, and engage in professional development activities that promote supportive nurturing classroom environments have students with higher student achievement scores (Moore et al., 2011). Effective professional development is an essential element in promoting significant change in school leaders' practices, teachers' instructional practices and student learning. In order to establish conditions that promote the growth and development of teachers within a school and subsequently lead to improvement in student performance and achievement, leaders must promote a climate of professional growth through professional development activities that reflect the school's vision and mission (Mitchell et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2011).

Summary and Discussion of Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 states: "What facilitating factors do secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?" The respondents identified the following as facilitating factors:

- Graduation coaches;
- Funding for learning beyond the classroom;
- Mentorship programs;
- Attendance officer;

- Youth development activities;
- Conferences with students and parents;
- School board support; and
- Personal support.

The federal changes to education that have occurred in recent years require schools, communities, businesses, and governments to become committed partners to prevent high school dropout. Together, stakeholders can reach out to parents and youth to improve the learning process, increase achievement levels, and increase graduation rates. Although schools vary in terms of identified roles and approach to intervention, the participants in the present study identified facilitating factors that might develop and assist prevention efforts.

Graduation coaches. High school and middle school assistant principals, as well as a high school counselor identified graduation coaches as a facilitating factor in dropout prevention. However, principals did not identify graduation coaches, although graduation coaches are located in each of the high schools in Happy District. Graduation coaches work in high schools to identify, assist, encourage, and connect students at risk of not graduating with the options and resources needed to be successful. Students often have individualized plans to reach graduation. The graduation coach assists in the successful transition of all students and provides early intervention services to students who are struggling. This involves identifying the seniors who have not passed the required courses and are endangered through absenteeism or behavioral issues. The graduation coach may also identify freshmen or other underclassmen who need additional support

during the school year and provide resources to assist them, ultimately leading to their promotion.

Funding for learning beyond the classroom. High school assistant principals and a middle school counselor identified funding beyond the classroom as a facilitating factor of dropout prevention. Schools are under increasing pressure to demonstrate improved outcomes for students. Consequently, public funds should be used within public schools to advance curricular opportunities including authorized specialized public school programs that include career and technical education partnerships, dual credit programs, community college-high school partnerships, and high school-local business partnerships (Rice, 2006). In 2011, per-pupil spending in the United States was approximately \$12,300 per year (Aud et al., 2011). In the fall of 2015, the annual spending had increased to \$12,509 per public school student. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), the dollar experienced an average inflation rate of 1.63% per year; prices in 2017 are 3.3% higher than they were in 2015. Most recently, over 50 million students enrolled in approximately 98,200 public elementary and secondary schools for the fall 2017 term, with an estimated \$624 billion projected to be spent related student education (Kena et al., 2016). Researchers explained:

Any intervention that succeeded in reducing the dropout rate by a commensurate level would entail those same direct education costs. Compulsory schooling, then, is only expensive insofar as it is successful in keeping students in school, which, the economic evidence suggests, is a worthy goal. (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013, p. 61)

Traditionally, efforts to offer college-level courses to secondary school students targeted high achieving school learners. However, increased accountability to improve the transition of all secondary school students into two- and four- year institutions has resulted in increased offerings to previously underrepresented student populations. Online learning opportunities offer an important resource for providing course offerings that may not have been available.

Mentorship programs. A middle school assistant principal and graduation coach identified mentorship programs as a facilitating factor of dropout prevention. Principals and school counselors did not identify the resource as a facilitating factor. Mentoring, which typically involves a one-to-one, supportive relationship between a student and an adult, has been linked to positive outcomes such as improved connections to school and adults, lower dropout indicators and high achievement.

When integrated with national initiatives, mentoring has been shown to reduce truancy and improve school attendance. “The consistent enduring presences of a caring adult in a young person’s life can be the difference between staying in school and dropping out” (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014, p. 1). Mentoring relationships are widely accepted as positive for youth of all backgrounds and abilities. The mentor offers guidance, support and encouragement. The strategy has been successfully used in many schools. Theoretically, the mentor-mentee relationship is meant to foster the mentee’s ability to counteract negative consequences encountered in a student’s life (Calabrese & Poe, 1990). Research asserts, school based mentor programs increased as a primary intervention strategy designed to provide supports to those students deemed academically or socially at risk (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014).

Students across the United States, especially in urban areas are becoming disengaged and are dropping out of school. It is imperative that schools and school districts create programs to influence students to stay in school. Schools are needed to provide resources that are available during the required school hours. School mentors are resource persons who serve to support a positive school culture and provide positive relationships that promote student achievement. (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014; Calabrese & Poe, 1990).

Attendance officer. Attending school on a regular basis matters. A middle school assistant principal and graduation coach identified the attendance officer as a facilitating factor in dropout prevention. Principals and school counselors did not recognize the attendance officer as a facilitating factor. School districts with low graduation rates often have significant, chronic absenteeism in the middle grades (Balfanz et al., 2007). Chronic absenteeism is a critical driver of the nation's challenges with student achievement and high school graduation rates. Researchers have explained one major reason for this was that few schools, districts, or states routinely measure absenteeism (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013). If chronic absenteeism is not measured, it cannot be monitored or acted upon (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012b; BEREC, 2011). Poor attendance in high school not only impacts initial achievement levels in the ninth grade, but also impacts upper grade performance (Lehr et al., 2003). While relative improvements or declines in students test scores are predictive of students' progress towards graduation, changes in attendance during the middle grades were found to be equally predictive of the likelihood that students would be on-track in ninth grade to graduate from high school within four years (Kieffer, Marinell, & Stephenson, 2011). The Baltimore Research

Consortium ([BERC]; 2011) found a strong relationship between sixth-grade attendance and the percent of students graduating within one year of expected on-time graduation. Approximately, 51% of students missing more than 10, but fewer than 20, days graduated; but 36% of students missing 20-39 days of school and only 13% of students missing 40 or more days graduated (BERC, 2011). Analysis data from Chicago show that course performance in the ninth grade was the strongest predictor of whether students would graduate, and, in turn, school attendance was the strongest predictor of course performance (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012a).

Researchers have recommended that school districts conduct a school policy audit to make sure school policies encourage regular school attendance. Furthermore, districts should monitor school-level absenteeism and the strategies schools utilize to respond to it as one of the elements of principals' performance evaluation. Schools should hire an attendance officer who regularly reviews attendance data. During the school's response meetings, solutions to prevent and mitigate the impacts of absenteeism should be devised, assigned, and monitored in a coordinated fashion. Attendance officers should measure, monitor, and respond to chronic absenteeism with evidence-based strategies as part of a broader early warning system (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; McConnell & Kubina, 2014; Schoeneberger, 2012).

Youth development activities. A middle school principal and a middle school assistant principal identified youth development activities as one of the facilitating factors of dropout prevention. High school principals and high school assistant principals did not identify the activities as a facilitating factor. Additionally, neither school counselors or graduation coaches identified youth development activities as facilitating factors although

recent studies have seen a growing interest in strengths and promotion oriented interventions for youth, thus reflecting a move away from approaches focused primarily on prevention of specific problems or remediation of deficits (Debram, Johnson, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2014; Snyder & Flay, 2012). Consistent with the role of school as a major socializing influence on youth and the setting where youth spend a large portion of their time under supervision of adults, schools are a promising setting for providing youth with programmatic experiences and opportunities that promote positive youth development. Positive youth development refers to intentional efforts of other youth, adults, communities, government agencies and schools to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities. Researchers have shown that fostering positive youth development related characteristics can be enhanced in school-based interventions in an urban environment across the middle school years (Debram et al., 2014).

Effective youth engagement is not only about resolving behavior problems, but building and nurturing the beliefs, behaviors, knowledge, attributes, and skills that result in a healthy and productive adolescence and adulthood. According to Edwards and Cheeley (2016), there are five principles of positive youth development:

1. Connection with a feeling of safety, structure, and belonging;
2. Confidence and self-worth;
3. Competence—the ability to act effectively in school, social situations, and at work;
4. Character—taking responsibility; and

5. Contribution—active participation and leadership in a variety of settings to make a difference, caring, sympathy and empathy for others and commitment to social justice.

Positive youth development activities recognize the strengths and resources that are known to enhance the psychosocial and psychoeducational functioning of students and acknowledges the multiple risk factors students may encounter (Edwards & Cheely, 2016). The activities recognize what are considered risk factors such as disadvantaged backgrounds, low socioeconomic status, exposure to violence, and delinquency as challenges that young people can overcome. More significantly, these activities emphasize youth prosocial behaviors that advance well-being (Debram et al., 2014).

There is increasing interest in identifying the conditions and behaviors that promote positive adolescent development. Adolescents' connections to teachers and staff, such as school counselors and graduation coaches and their school engagement are considered critical elements that are often targeted to improve outcomes since they are predictive of increased graduation rates among (Edwards & Cheeley, 2016).

Participation promotes personal initiatives and self-concept, which in turn mediates positive effects on other academic outcomes. Further, participation may be a key factor in increasing students' sense of school belonging. Through specialized youth development activities, students' sense of meaning and purpose becomes connected to the educational process, which could increase their sense of commitment to school (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010).

Conferences with students and parents. A middle school assistant principal and high school graduation coach identified conferences with students and parents as

facilitating factors of dropout prevention strategies. Principals, school counselors did not recognize the activity as a facilitating factor related to dropout prevention. Parents entrust schools with education of their children, however parental involvement can make a difference in students' learning and their decision to remain in school to graduation (Black, 2005). According to Schargel and Smink (2013), children spend 91% of their time under the influence of their parents and only 9% in school. Families, schools and communities influence students' decisions to drop out in several ways. Dropouts are more likely to be from households where parents are less active promoting and helping with school. When students decide to leave, they often feel there is a disconnect or lack of support between themselves, their parents, and the school (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013).

Parental involvement has been observed to diminish as a child progresses through the educational system when students benefit from more support to overcome situations associated with peer pressure (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009). Ideally, middle grade students are strongly supported by their parents, families, and teachers, with the parents and teachers supporting each other. In practice, often as the result of miscommunication or lack of communication, the relationship can break down. However, parents need good information on their student's progress, interventions to help struggling students, and access to available resources that support student performance (Black, 2005). Students may not convey this on their own; therefore "active and evidence-based strategies need to be in place to increase family-student-teacher partnerships" (Balfanz, 2009, p. 13). Parents need to be actively involved through all levels of schooling. "Although many parents become more involved on learning that their child is considering leaving school,

they are often not aware of their child's poor performance until it is too late" (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013, p. 58). Information, knowledge and resources are critical for parents to intervene and support students. With parent-student meetings, students can have a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their education. Therefore, schools should consider the use of a variety of techniques, including technology, media, and print to facilitate the conference. Moreover, schools should draw parents into the school setting, recognize the constraints on a parent's time, and schedule parent-teacher meetings at a time parents are able to attend. When school administrators and educators communicate more regularly with parents regarding their child's progress and performance, they provide a means for parents to take an active role

School board support. A high school assistant principal and middle school counselor identified the benefit of school support as a facilitating factor regarding dropout prevention. Principals and graduation coaches did not identify the support of their school board as a facilitating factor of dropout prevention. According to the National School Board Association [NSBA], (2011), the school board represents the public's voice in public education, sets the standards for achievement in a district, and incorporates the community's view of what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. For school districts to be effective, superintendents and boards must have a common belief and value system. Quality organizations reach optimum productively when school board members, along with the constituents, work toward the same goal (Wong & Shen, 2003). The internal and external stakeholders look to the board for leadership and improvements in the instructional program because school boards are an integral part of the educational process (Ford, 2013; Wong & Shen, 2003).

In order to facilitate or implement reform efforts, superintendents and school boards must add to or expand their skills and competencies. Both entities must be aware of the program needs and must have the knowledge that enables an effective response. The common mission of state school boards associations and local school boards “is to improve the achievement of students and the opportunities available to them in the public schools” (NSBA, 2011 p. 14). In short, local school boards are responsible for defining the district’s needs and direction and supporting students’ growth in academic achievement. Consequently, the school board should be accessible and accountable for the performance of school in the district (Wong & Shen, 2003).

There is evidence that school boards can and do impact district academic outcomes through their governance behaviors. As stated, “districts that show a commitment to board development and strategic planning, exercise close relations with the superintendent, minimize conflict and maximize cooperation” (Ford, 2013, p. 168) improve outcomes for students.

Personal supports. A high school assistant principal and high school counselor viewed personal supports for students as a facilitating factor related to dropout prevention strategies. However, principals and graduation coaches did not identify this as a facilitating factor. Personal issues that enter students’ lives have also defined the at-risk population. In particular, low self-esteem exemplifies many of the at risk population (Ekstrom et al., 1986, Mitchell et al., 2010). These low self-esteem perceptions and concerns surround feelings of not fitting into the school environment may limit the student’s potential for success in school. Burrus and Roberts (2012) identified four factors that define the at-risk student: (a) feelings of not being cared for or of not having a

sense of belonging; (b) feelings of low self-esteem; (c) feelings of a lack of empowerment; and (d) feelings of lack of trust and hope in relationships among peers and educational staff. Further, personal issues can be commonly characterized as having drug and alcohol addictions, being a teen parent and engaging in criminal behaviors. Moreover, the supports are needed for mentally, physically, and sexually abused students that may accompany or are the root cause for the factors Bennett identified. Finally, personal supports are needed for students who have few positive role models, lack parenting in the home or have a problematic home life experiencing homelessness or having suicidal thoughts. Given the complexity of a student's personal decision to drop out of school, it is necessary that dropout prevention efforts consider the whole student and individualized needs for support.

Dropout rates are highest among students living in families in the lowest income levels (Morris et al., 2004). Students living with disruptive family stressors, minimal parental support and guidance are more likely to experience low academic achievement and are at a higher risk of dropping out (Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Habash, 2008).

Summary and Discussion of Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 stated: "What inhibiting factors do secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches identify regarding implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies?" The respondents identified: (a) lack of parental or home supports; (b) lack of parental involvement; and (c) poor student attendance as inhibiting factors. There were no responses from principals regarding inhibiting factors related to dropout prevention

strategies. The majority of the responses to this item came from the high school graduation coaches' responses

Lack of parental supports. Assistant principals were the only respondents that identified this area as an inhibiting factor of dropout prevention strategies. The literature identified factors related to dropping out include quality of parent relationships with the school, the family structure, and the quality of mother-child relationships. Students from families with poor relationships with the school, lack of parental involvement, and those from single-parent homes are more likely to drop out (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009; NSBA, 2011).

Furthermore, researchers explain that students from single-parent homes have parents with less time and fewer resources to devote to their children's education. Students with involved parents, regardless of their income or background, are more likely to graduate and go on to post-secondary education (Hauser et al., 2004). Effective parent involvement comes when a true partnership exists between schools and families (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009).

Lack of parental involvement. Many of the efforts to remediate dropout rates have come by increasing provisions for students through family involvement and the school's efforts to communicate student performance, progress, and resources that support the student to graduate. Parental practices appear to have significant effects on a student's decision to drop out or continue in school (Anguiano, 2004; Bowers et al., 2013). No single factor can completely account for a student's decision to continue or to quit school before graduation; at some point parental involvement and communication become a salient factor that appear to influence a young person's decision. Increased

efforts should be made to encourage communication between school and home, largely because it has the potential to increase the odds of students' well-being.

Poor student attendance. A middle school principal and graduation coaches identified poor student attendance as an inhibitor to dropout prevention strategies. Principals and school counselors did not recognize this issue as an inhibitor. Although school attendance is mandatory in every state, attendance remains a challenge for those who lack interest in school. To instill a commitment to school, attendance among developing youth is essential and fundamental to the student's ability to realize the benefits of education. Past studies have established that low levels of attendance are a strong predictor of academic or course failure (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012a; Balfanz, 2016). Academic failures, particularly in the ninth grade, are a strong predictor of future school dropouts. This study discussed the importance of including prevention strategies for absenteeism to avoid student dropout (Habash, 2008). Ultimately, it is critical for youth to sustain their attendance in order to graduate from high school.

Summary and Discussion of Findings for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 stated: "How does implementation of dropout prevention strategies vary by role and school level?" In the present study, middle school personnel roles did not have the same level of responsibility for dropout prevention as high school personnel. Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference among the various roles. This relates to findings from previous studies, where high school personnel perceived factors outside of the school were more influential on a student's decision to drop out (Knesting-Lund, O'Rourke, & Gabriele, 2015). Participants in the present study shared two central responsibilities related to preventing student dropouts: strategies that

monitor and help students overcome personal, family, and social barriers and strategies that create more engagement, such as smaller and more personal settings. Principals and assistant principals appeared to focus on strategies that monitored and addressed classroom settings. School counselors and graduation coaches appeared to focus on strategies that helped students deal with barriers and problems.

The majority of the WWC (Dynarski et al., 2008) recommended dropout prevention strategies identified were implemented in the respondents' current school. The identified items appear closely connected to instructional responsibilities and individualized student supports. There were differences regarding the levels of the respondents' specific responsibilities. The secondary school principals and assistant principals reported having specific strategies as their primary or secondary responsibility in all categories except when providing individual or small group support to students. The school counselors and graduation coaches reported similar responsibilities regarding classroom activities, including establishing small learning communities, establishing team teaching, creating smaller classrooms, and extending time in classrooms through scheduling.

As reported in Chapter 4, the results of the chi-square analysis showed differences in responses according to participants' various roles. The principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches differed significantly with the implementation of 7 out of 26 research-based strategies identified in the study. The strategies include:

- Establish partnerships;
- Establish small learning communities;
- Establish team teaching;

- Create smaller classes;
- Create extended time in the classroom;
- Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand knowledge and improve skills;
- Host career days and offer opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses;
- and
- Provide students with extra assistance and information about the demands of college.

Furthermore, school principals and assistant principals had the largest percentage of primary and secondary responsibility for each of the designated prevention areas and specific strategies. Survey constructs related to: (a) use of longitudinal student-level data for accurate graduation and dropout data, (b) monitoring students' sense of belonging, and (c) engagement in school and creating local business partnerships for work-related intern experiences reflected the greatest difference in terms of participants' school level. The identified areas having the smallest difference include (a) monitor academic and social performance, (b) teach problem solving and decision making, and (c) provide students with extra assistance and information about the demands of college.

Establish partnerships. A recommended strategy to partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experience such as internships, simulated job interviews, or long-term employment revealed a difference in terms of the school level. Middle school saw this activity as a primary responsibility in their job. High school participants did not see this activity as a primary responsibility, but instead a secondary or not their responsibility. Many schools and communities are involved in a

range of new school and community relationships to address various social, economic, and political challenges confronting schools and their students. When schools, families, community members, private organizations, public agencies, and civic entities work together learners tend to be more successful (Drew, 2013). As a response to new stakeholders' demands, a more rigorous and updated curriculum, school-community involvement policies since the No Child Left behind Act of 2001 (2002), technology trends, public school budget constraints, and more data-driven school systems, school partnership programs have increased across the United States (Murphy, Redding, & Sheley, 2011).

Variously referred to as *school-community partnerships*, *community involvement*, or *school-community connections*, relationships between schools and community institutions and organizations are purposeful interactions that could improve outcomes for children, families, and neighborhoods (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002; Murphy et al., 2002). School and community partnerships keenly differ in scope, services, and resources, and involve school personnel (e.g., principals, teachers, counselors) and community stakeholders. Further, school and community partnerships are being recognized as a significant component in school, family and community relationships.

In the 1800s, the ideas, goals, and active participation of parents and community members considerably influenced education because society viewed education as a mutual responsibility among schools, parents, and community (Epstein, 2001); Prentice & Houston, 1975; Rousmanere, 2013). Decreasing graduation rates and failing academic scores resulted in increased public concern about the decline in literate and highly skilled people able to work and compete in a global economy and society (Drew, 2013).

Moreover, education reform mandated requirements for parental and community involvement. Government initiatives sought to increase parent participation in order to improve attendance, behavior issues, academic progress, and student performance. During the 1980s and 1990s, the community and stakeholders not only gained access to students to improve social outcomes, but access to see academic results that would benefit the community (Murphy et al., 2011). The relationships have evolved where educators see community stakeholders have the potential to create greater opportunities for support and learning and to provide resources and additional help to increase post-secondary educational opportunities (Jordan et al., 2002).

Establish small learning communities. A small learning community is defined as “an interdisciplinary team of teachers that share students for instruction and assume the responsibility for their educational progress across years of school” (Oxley, 2008, p. 1). The findings identified a difference among the roles of the participants. The principals saw the activity as a primary responsibility in their job, however assistant principals view the activity as secondary; school counselors and graduation coaches did not see this as their responsibility. Small learning communities, once called houses and schools-within-schools appeared in the 1960s and then, in the 1980s and 1990s they were called magnet programs, career academies, and mini-schools. The term “small learning community” developed to include the structure, curricular specialization and choice with active collaboration between teachers and students. Moreover, the term refers to schools’ efforts intended to create smaller, more learning-centered units of organization.

Establish team teaching. The findings identified a difference among the roles of the participants. The principals and assistant principals saw the activity as a primary

responsibility in their job, however school counselors and graduation coaches did not view this as their responsibility. Team teaching or co-teaching is an instructional delivery system in which two or more professionals deliver substantive instruction to a diverse group of students in the general education classroom (Friend & Cook, 2013; Meehan, 1973). The fundamental idea of co-teaching is two or more teachers sharing responsibility for meeting the learning needs of students. Two teachers have the opportunity to alter and adapt the delivery of co-teaching practice through a variety a variety of models that better allow for shared responsibility of instruction and smaller teacher-student ratios, such as alternative teaching, station teaching, and parallel teaching. Team teaching models that utilize smaller student-teacher ratios have been shown to evidence greater student engagement rates and academic achievement (Meehan, 1973).

Professional literature suggests a number of factors that facilitate team teaching success to include voluntary participation, administrative support, collegial respect and parity, and adequate planning time (Friend & Cook, 2013). Qualitative research has identified several perceived benefits for students to include combined teacher content knowledge and instructional strategies, expertise in accommodations for students with disabilities and smaller teacher-student ratios. Furthermore, qualitative research findings have also reported positive perceptions by students by creating a positive climate for learning, set high expectations for behavior and academic performance. Finally, research findings showed that the average final examination scores of students receiving team teaching were higher than those of students receiving traditional teaching. The two teaching methods revealed significant difference in respect of students' achievement (Jang, 2006).

The purpose of a team-taught course from an educational standpoint is to push students to achieve higher levels of achievement. Team teaching boasts many pedagogical and intellectual advantages: it can help create a dynamic and interactive learning environment. However, the school counselors and graduation coaches in the study do not identify instructional activities as their responsibility.

Create smaller classes. The study revealed a difference among the roles of the participants. Principals saw this activity as a secondary responsibility; assistant principals viewed the activity as a primary responsibility in their job; school counselors and graduation coaches did not view the activity as their responsibility. Class size is an important determinant of student success, all else being equal, lowering class sizes will improve student outcomes. One of the earliest influential meta-studies by Glass and Smith (1979) statistically analyzed 300 reports involving almost 900,000 students. The study found once the class size fell below 15, learning increased progressively as class size became smaller. Another prominent study supporting smaller class sizes was the Tennessee STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio) experiment (Mostellar, 1995). The study followed students through grade 3 and found classes ranging from 13-18 performed substantially better by the end of the second grade and had fewer disciplinary referrals. Further, findings indicated the gains lasted and the students that had been assigned to smaller classes were more likely to graduate in four years and more likely to go to college. The positive effect was twice as large for poor and minority students who are at greater risk of drop out (Mishel, Rothstein, Krueger, Hanushek, & Rice, 2002).

Create extended time in the classroom. The amount of time scheduled for instruction is the one factor that has remained constant in the American school system. In

this study, the participants revealed a difference among roles. Principals and assistant principals saw this activity as primary to their jobs. School counselors and graduation coaches did not see creating extended classroom time as their responsibility. Time restrictions may impede educators from adequately preparing students to experience school success (Rocha, 2007; Stedron, 2007). Research supports offering extended learning time opportunities as one alternative to assist our at-risk students as they strive to make gains and persist toward graduation. According to Stedron (2007), “if states want to win big gains in education they need to commit to a complete restructuring of learning time—expanding education hours and incorporating opportunities so that students have many ways to learn and engage in broadening experiences” (p. 32).

Extended time may be necessary because the time constraints of the regular school day leave insufficient time to prepare students to pass mandated standardized tests (Rocha, 2007; Silva, 2007).

Maxwell (2006) suggested, “Adding time to the school day is especially critical as more schools fall behind on the academic progress” (p. 20). Moreover, students that participate in extended learning opportunities could be in a unique situation that leads to increased success for the student at risk of drop out, as well as a way to close the achievement gap, and increase graduation rates (Maxwell, 2006). Furthermore, Aronson, Zimmerman and Carlos (1999) explored the ways time could be a resource. Aronson et al. concluded that time is but one of many variables to be considered for raising student achievement and that time alone may not result in improvement in learning; it is also about what takes place during the extra time. Consideration should be given to the

effective use of time and the quality of students' learning experiences (Aronson et al., 1999).

Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand knowledge and improve skills.

Continuous high quality professional development focused on research-based strategies can increase student engagement and teacher competencies. In this study, there was a difference among roles. Principals and assistant principals saw this activity as a primary responsibility of their job. However, school counselors and graduation coaches did not see professional development for teachers as their responsibility. Changing dropout prevention practices requires investments in staff members' professional learning. Many schools that have shown significant achievement gains and progress towards decreasing school dropout rates by making strategic investments of time and resources to produce improved effects. Studies indicate a key feature of effective professional development is that staff members work collaboratively on a particular set of practices over a sustained period of time (Mitchell et al., 2010). Research consistently found that effective professional development required a significant amount of staff time, which could interfere with instructional time (Mitchell et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2011).

Research explained single workshops have a negative track record for changing practice (Gulamhussein, 2013). Furthermore, the greatest challenge has been implementation and therefore, the professional development should include significant and ongoing time to learn new strategies and time to contend with the challenges of implementation. Moreover, the teacher's exposure to strategies should be specific and engaging as well as modeled to increase its effectiveness.

Schools and districts may have challenges in implementing research-based strategies. There need to be new approaches to staff development that create meaningful changes to improve graduation rates. Further, districts need to create opportunities for teachers and staff to grow and develop in their practice in order to help students persist to graduation. High quality implementation of the strategies individually and as a part of a larger, comprehensive plan will require investments in professional development for teachers not only to promote staff skills, but also where necessary, to change staff behaviors and attitudes (Schargel & Smink, 2013).

Host career days and offer opportunities for work related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses. In the study, hosting career, work-related and post-secondary related activities revealed a difference among the roles of the participants. Principals saw this activity as both a primary and secondary responsibility, but assistant principals did not see this as their responsibility. Additionally, school counselors saw this as a primary responsibility in their job. Special attention should be given to students who have faced barriers to post-secondary transition (Comer, 2004; Orfield et al., 2004). Student assistance with transitioning to college is a critical activity for students who can benefit from services and supports that provide an organized, multifaceted approach to offering comprehensive academic enhancement activities outside of the traditional classroom setting. This practice can serve both economically disadvantaged, underprepared students and the general student population (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

Professional literature provided information regarding the skill, knowledge and dispositions that students need for successful transition from high school to college. Students are in need of skills to conduct effective searches and evaluate information

(Comer, 2004). Research further recommends states are held accountable for increasing the percentage of graduates who complete a curriculum that prepares them for post-secondary education. Further, it was recommended that states have governance mechanisms to align K-12 post-secondary planning and develop financial aid policies that provide incentives to complete post-secondary education programs (Ecker-Lyster & Niileksela, 2016).

Districts should ensure schools intervene early when students are developing their college and career ambitions. Moreover, it is critical to emphasize rigor and high expectations, appropriate counseling and other supports for all students (Calabrese & Poe, 1990). Districts and schools should collaborate with post-secondary institutions and economic development agencies to assist with providing an efficient transition to college. Transitions from high school to post-secondary education can be particularly challenging for students with disabilities who have enrollments well below their same-age peers. Many students with disabilities are often unaware of their potential and opportunity to attend post-secondary programs (Oxley, 2008). It is important to expose these students and their families early to resources and information that help them to develop decision-making and self-advocacy skills needed during the transition process (Calabrese & Poe, 1990; Oxley, 2008).

Counseling supports and specific interventions need to begin early in order to engage students when they are developing initial post-secondary education and career aspirations. Students must pass core subjects if they are to remain on track for high school graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Schneider, 2006). Schools must ensure students have access to the courses that keep the student on-track towards graduation.

Students should understand the importance of enrolling in the appropriate courses and passing the courses required for graduation (Schneider, 2006). High schools can provide a range of supports to assist students' preparation for college. Early and ongoing counseling and communication for students and their families is recommended (Ecker-Lyster & Niileksela, 2016).

Provide students extra assistance and information about the demands of college. The transition from high school into college marks a major developmental step from adolescence into young adulthood. Studies explained that most students begin considering the possibility of attending college as early as the eighth or ninth grade (Aidman & Malerba, 2017; Wimberly & Noeth, 2005). Each year thousands of students enter post-secondary education unprepared for the many academic, social and emotional challenges they will likely encounter. Aidman and Malerba (2017) indicated:

although the overall number of students enrolled in college in the United States has increased substantially over the past 30 years, low-income, first generation, Black and Latino students graduate from high school, are ready for college, enroll in college and persist and graduate from college at lower rates than other students. (p. 987)

Some students may perceive the acquisition of a higher education as a natural progression from high school to college. Others may need help in order to make a successful transition. Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper (1999) proposed that high school students experience high levels of stress and anxiety as they move through the process of taking college entrance tests, applying to colleges, applying for financial aid and worrying about

acceptance of denial. Further, students may be concerned about maintaining the high school grades required for college acceptance.

In addition to these concerns, students may lack the basic academic skills for successful college level coursework. Although developmental programs are not new to higher education, the numbers of developmental students have increased and the number of high school graduates taking college preparatory course have risen (Aidman & Malerba, 2017).

The prevalence and cost of college-level developmental education have forced the educational community to look closer at students' experiences in high school (Lieber, 2009). McDonough (2006) recommends that college preparation programs for minority and /or low-income groups attend to the cultural norms of the community and begin as early as possible (Hossler et al., 1999; Sokach, 2006). There is general agreement that college access programs and services targeted to underrepresented populations both school-based and community-based are most effective when they are comprehensive, include both academic and nonacademic support, raise college aspirations and knowledge, incorporate a consistent and supportive relationship with a caring adult, adjusted to meet students' individual needs and assist students and families in navigating the process (Sokach, 2006). Consequently, there must be a focus on readiness and provide multiple services over an extended period of time.

Implications of Findings

School dropout and failure depend on students receiving the necessary support to succeed from parents, caregivers, and educators. With varying estimates of the actual number of dropouts in the United States, along with an increase in school leader's and

policy makers' awareness of the problem, the graduation rate has gradually improved. However, the problem of high school dropouts persists. The reason dropout rates have not declined in all Virginia districts despite the use of numerous dropout prevention strategies remains unclear. Moreover, there are no published reports indicating whether or not any specific dropout prevention program has been successful in the Happy School District. The goal of the dropout prevention program was to support schools' attempts to decrease the dropout percentage. The findings of this study have produced data that may be beneficial to those developing, implementing or supervising dropout prevention and dropout recovery programs.

There were three open-ended questions included in the study provided to each participant. The same questions were asked of each participant with a specific purpose and intent, and were aligned with the two qualitative research questions. The questions were included to gather their personal opinions, knowledge, and experience regarding the facilitating and inhibiting factors of the dropout prevention program.

The participants believed the dropout prevention program had several facilitating factors. Recall from Chapter 2 that parental and familial stressors impact a student's decision to drop out of school (Anguiano, 2004), and that often students become disengaged from school because the only aspect of school they participate in is in the classroom (Balfanz et al., 2007). If they are not performing well in the classroom, then they may not engage in other activities that connect them to school. As reported, administrative supports, parental supports and involvement, targeted supports for personal concerns, and engagement are significant areas to address to support students to achieve in school. The inhibiting factors (lack of parent support, lack of parental

involvement and poor attendance) participants described were consistent with the literature.

Implications for Practice

Dropout prevention interventions almost always include multiple components, and the effects of a specific intervention cannot be causally attributed to one component of the intervention. A multidisciplinary approach for dropout may be what is most effective for at-risk students with and without disabilities. School districts should be looking at ways to ensure training and consistent supports are available for each school. This can make the dropout prevention program unsuccessful or less effective. The extent to which the interventions are systematically targeted requires closer examination suggests that many of these practices lack data or documentation to support effectiveness. The resources required for program implementation in terms of time, staff and funding point to the need for clear evidence of effectiveness. Factors and challenges unique to urban and minority youth must be considered as schools strive to improve the academic success of all children.

Numerous researchers assert that schools should look for ways to intervene early in the lives of children who might be at risk of drop out and also, school leaders must make an attempt to raise students' educational aspirations. A continuum of services can benefit students at risk of drop out. Although the dropout rate is highest in the ninth and tenth grades, the problem begins to manifest itself at the elementary and middle school levels. Early intervention strategies that focus on academics, with an emphasis on reading and writing are essential to eliminating at-risk behaviors before they become rooted (Smink & Schargel, 2013). Established programs should be communicated and

monitored regularly for strengths and weaknesses through formalized systems of data collection. Consequently, the district could benefit from strategic monitoring and adjustments in curriculum design processes, workflow design, staff training and the development of partnerships with key stakeholders to enhance dropout prevention.

Implications for Policy

With the demand from both federal and state governments increasing pressure on school districts to improve dropout rates, finding interventions for students at risk for dropping out is critical. It must be mandated that principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches track students from kindergarten through high school graduation. Schools should have systems in place that collect and utilize longitudinal data that give a diagnosis of the number students who drop out and identify individual students at high risk of dropping out. With the dropout crisis at hand, schools must raise and maintain these higher standards in response to federal mandates.

Policy makers often assume that teachers and administrators have a much greater capacity to implement reforms than may actually be the case. Consequently, school personnel are more apt to implement dropout prevention strategies when they are aware of the dropout prevention plan. As policy makers seek to improve schools by raising standards, setting national and state goals, by improving the quality of schools and teachers they must pay attention to the many young people who leave school. The resources must be provided in order to address the problem of dropout and support students and their families to persist to school completion. Therefore, districts must choose dropout prevention programs that work and implement the research-based strategies that have proven their effectiveness.

Implications for Leadership

Superintendents and local boards are responsible for the district's accreditation status. The superintendent and local board, in turn, look to the school principal to provide the leadership that will result in a school's dropout percentage remaining at or below the allowed rate. Under the current school management model, the principal is the administrator in close proximity to the potential dropout and is responsible for communicating and implementing the dropout prevention plan. Principals assume the administrative and instructional supervisory responsibility for planning, management, operation and evaluation of the school's educational program. The major responsibilities as related to dropout prevention include the supervision of all school activities involving students, teachers, counselors and other personnel. The district's accreditation status is based, in part, on the dropout percentage rates. Staff members who work with youth at high risk of academic failure and dropout need to feel supported and have an opportunity by which they can continue to develop skills, techniques and learn about innovative strategies. Therefore, school leaders must give dropout prevention training the high priority it deserves.

The population included in the study offered an often-overlooked resource for opinions on dropout prevention strategies and practices. The open-ended questions were provided to give the participants an opportunity to share information not included in the standardized survey regarding the participant's role in dropout prevention. The data illustrates disparity between the knowledge and primary responsibilities of implementing the dropout prevention program.

Discussion

High school dropout concerns have been an issue that has gradually plagued the educational system over time. It will take determined and informed leaders to continually work on this issue until a major impact is made. Educators need to understand the reasons why students do not graduate from high school in order to ensure effective strategies are in place to reduce dropout. Christle et al. (2007) explained that schools need to examine their organizations and ensure the environment is more student-centered to nurture all students. Effective schools are the key to increasing a student's persistence toward graduation. Research has shown that there are several similarities between effective schools and successful dropout prevention programs (Fetler, 1989). Characteristics of successful dropout prevention programs include: (a) quality leadership, (b) commitment and accountability, (c) attention to students' individual needs and (d) high levels of engagement in productive learning activities by staff (Balfanz, 2009; Christle et al., 2007).

The findings of the study support earlier studies that examine dropout prevention strategies. By definition, prevention efforts should occur prior to a dysfunction or problem, with the aim of these efforts focusing on mitigating risk factors, while reinforcing protective factors. It is critical that districts employ early warning systems. Simply identifying at-risk students does nothing to alleviate the risk these students face (Ecker-Lyster & Niileksela, 2016). The study can assist in producing increased awareness and knowledge of current dropout prevention and intervention. The research and knowledge included in this study may serve to support more collaborative intervention approaches to dropout prevention efforts. Further, the findings in the study

can improve programming and professional development that will address dropout prevention resulting in increased rates of high school completion.

An opportunity exists in Happy District to educate both middle and high school administrators and counselors on the importance of their roles and relationship to a student's decision to drop out. Additionally, the district should incorporate a multimodal approach to dropout intervention planning that extends across both middle and high schools. The findings in the study highlight the benefit of expanding the research to include middle school principals, assistant principals, and school counselors in identifying and intervening with students at risk of dropping out and the crucial emerging role of middle schools in preventing these students from dropping out and preparing the students to stay in school. A gap in the literature exists regarding the role of the middle school in dropout prevention because the focus has been on identifying students typically in high school. However, the results of this study show the middle school counselors recognize their importance and hold the strategies at the same level as high school counselors. Therefore, more emphasis should be given to develop the capacity of middle school counselors to support identification of students at risk for dropping out as soon as risk factors begin to manifest.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended this mixed method research study be replicated; however, modifications should be made regarding the qualitative component of the study. The study should maintain the use of a mixed methodology, but with the use of individual interviews of persons affiliated with the four cohort groups for the qualitative component. Replicating the quantitative component would allow the researcher to continue

investigation of the school division's use of the recommended research-based strategies that are utilized in the school district. Additionally, replication of the study would provide the researcher baseline data to compare response information. Interviews would offer a more in depth and rich perspective with detailed information allowing the study to go beyond what the researcher established.

The researcher relied on the survey as the data collection tool, which may have restricted the amount of data collected. There may have been a greater ability to amass more data in order to gain more information about the knowledge and experiences of secondary school personnel, however the findings provide a basis to activate discussion.

A second recommendation is to survey students regarding their preference, perspective and opinion about the dropout program's elements. A student survey would identify the programs' components that effectively accommodate their needs. Further, the survey could identify the staff member that most often and most effectively provides the intervention. The students' perspectives could help to identify the degree of consistency in implementation of targeted interventions, level of personalized supports, and the amount of exposure to postsecondary opportunities.

Given the relatively small sample size compared to the number of middle and high school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and graduation coaches nationwide, further research should replicate the study with a larger population—regional or statewide—in order to determine generalizable results. A broadened scope of data would provide an opportunity to compare the responsibilities and potentially modify the more primary responsibilities of secondary school principals, assistant principals, school counselors and graduation coaches.

A central question school administrator should seek to understand is what keeps students within the school environment. The findings of this study may serve as a tool for administrators, school counselors, and graduation coaches to evaluate current knowledge and practices designed to improve their students' persistence to graduate from high school. Districts spend a lot of resources on professional development to improve student achievement. It may be beneficial for the students of Happy District to have the district's leadership refocus efforts toward monitoring student-level data that identifies risk-factors as early as middle school, increasing parent involvement and communication, and improving community support and commitment.

Conclusion

Improving the lives and futures of children is a moral, social, and economic imperative in this country. Children cannot thrive without safe, effective places to learn and it begins with placing caring and competent adults close to the lives of students. The findings of this study might be used by educational decision makers to help develop early warning systems and alleviation programs that curtail dropout behavior in young people and by parents of students at risk as a way to help them identify the signs of dropping out. Additionally, the findings might support community organizations to help them create partnerships with schools and other community-based service organizations to determine possible resource needs and dropout prevention program support needs within the community. Given the complexities of the differing efforts by school districts to mitigate and prevent students from dropping out of high school, Dynarski et al. (2008) suggested that successful dropout mitigation efforts must be directed towards achieving local dropout aims and strategies.

Organizational practices directly impact environments that foster school dropout behavior in young people. Policies and practices often become the catalyst for a student's decision to drop out and create school environments that have a pushing-out effect on students already at risk of leaving school before completion (Azzam, 2007; Balfanz, 2009; Doll et al., 2013). Educational policymakers must take a systematic and strategic approach to increasing school completion rates for all young people in ways that coordinate all educational stakeholders to address the dropout crisis. WWC (2008) listed six recommendations for dropout prevention. These recommendations are only a part of a comprehensive approach to reducing dropout rates. However, the participants in the present study identified many perceived obstacles to effective dropout prevention that remain. In spite of this acknowledgement, the school leaders and individuals who are responsible for implementing dropout prevention strategies rely on this specific guide as represented in the survey responses. While maintaining a narrow focus is legitimate, a school district must expand the breadth of discussion and practice of research based dropout prevention.

The results from the study are important to educational leadership because effective dropout prevention require the findings can be used to facilitate changes in how the work of school counselors and graduation coaches are efficiently utilized in schools to augment the efforts of school administrators to decrease student drop out. As identified in the seven response patterns related to school-wide interventions, an opportunity exists to better inform both middle and high school personnel about the district's dropout prevention strategies that personalize the learning environment, instructional process and provide rigorous instruction that will increase student.

Respondents identified inhibiting factors that indicate how important is to have discussion to allow central office to examine the roles, responsibilities and necessary professional development provided to school based personnel. The respondents identified the need for resources and funding that support the dropout prevention plan with alternative curriculum and alternative opportunities to complete graduation requirements. The findings further indicate the need for flexible scheduling, an examination of student readiness, and resources that address reading and math instruction.

Moreover, results for the study can be used to determine areas of training needed for school administrators, school counselors and graduation coaches. The study revealed response patterns with differentials in the areas that target students who are the most at risk of dropping out by rigorously intervening in their academic, social and personal lives. Response patterns showed that school level roles differed in the level of their responsibility with use of longitudinal student level data to get an accurate read of the dropout rates. Middle schools could benefit from training that develops skills that provide specialized supports for students and their families. Positive identification of the students who are at risk can enable the implementation of intensive targeted intervention before middle school students transition to high school.

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Appendix A-Dropout Prevention Survey

Dropout Prevention Program Survey School Year 2016-2017

This survey is designed to identify your knowledge and experiences with dropout prevention strategies in order to decrease high school dropout rates. Your candid responses to this survey are an essential part of this research and will be held in the strictest confidence. The data is anonymous and is stored on a pass-word protected computer. If you have any questions or need assistance completing the survey, do not hesitate to contact me, Cathy Bacote, at (757)-570-1405.

If you have questions regarding the study, you may contact the project advisor, Dr. James Stronge at

757-221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with the study you may contact The College of William and Mary, School of Education, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Thomas Ward, at 757-221-2358 or tjward@wm.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and valuable participation.

Directions: For each item in the survey below, check the answer that best describes your understanding of responsibility for the activity.

1. Current Position:

Principal Assistant Principal School Counselor Graduation Coach

2. Years in current position: + 11 6-10 1- 5 less than 1 year

3. Current school level assigned: High School Middle School

Use longitudinal, student-level data to get an accurate read of graduation and dropout rates

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school
- () Unable to answer this item

Monitor the academic and social performance of all students academically.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Review student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out before key academic transitions.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.

- () Unable to answer this item

Monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out.

Choose adults who are committed to investing in the student's personal and academic success, keep caseloads low, and purposefully match students with adult advocates.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Establish a regular time in the school day to meet with the adult.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school
- () Unable to answer this item

Communicate with adult advocates about the various obstacles students may encounter and provide adult advocates with guidance and training about how to work with students, parents, or school staff to address the problems.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.

- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.

Provide individual or small group support in test-taking skills, or targeted subject areas such as reading, writing, or math.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Provide extra study time and opportunity for credit recovery and accumulation through after school, Saturday school or summer enrichment programs.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in school
- () Unable to answer this item

Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills.

Use adult advocates or other engaged adults to help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.

- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Recognize student accomplishments.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Teach strategies to strengthen problem-solving and decision-making.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Establish partnerships with community-based program providers and other agencies such as social services, welfare, mental health, and law enforcement.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Personalize the learning environment and instructional process.

Establish small learning communities.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Establish team teaching.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Create smaller classes.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Create extended time in classroom through changes to the school schedule.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.

- () Unable to answer this item

Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning

Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Integrate academic content with career and skilled-based themes through career academies or multiple pathways models.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Host career days and offer other opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.

- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Provide students with extra assistance and information about the demands of college.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

Partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experience such as internships, simulated job interviews, or long-term employment.

- () This is a primary responsibility of mine.
- () This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, but occurs in our school.
- () This is not a responsibility of mine, and does NOT occur in our school.
- () Unable to answer this item

7. What are the facilitating factors (i.e. supports, resources) regarding implementation of dropout prevention strategies?

8. What are the inhibiting factors (i.e. challenges, obstacles, constraints) regarding implementation of dropout prevention strategies?

9. Is there any other information you would like to tell me about your knowledge and experiences with dropout prevention strategies?

Appendix B- Participant Request Email

Good morning,

My name is Cathy Bacote. I am a graduate student in The College of William and Mary's Department of Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. Today I am writing you as a graduate student and researcher. I need your assistance to collect valuable data that will not only aid me to finish my doctoral degree, but will also enhance the quality of dropout prevention programs and interventions. I am asking school leaders like you, to participate in a brief survey designed to identify your knowledge and experiences with dropout prevention strategies in order to decrease high school dropout rates.

Your candid responses to this short survey are an essential part of this research and will be held in the strictest confidence. The data is anonymous and is stored on a pass-word protected computer. The survey should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the survey link into your internet browser).

INSERT WEBSITE

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. If you have questions regarding the study, you may contact the project advisor, Dr. James Stronge at 757-221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with the study you may contact the College of William and Mary, School of Education, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Thomas Ward, at 757-221-2358 or tjward@wm.edu.

Thank you in advance for participating in this study!

Cathy Bacote

Doctoral Candidate

The College of William and Mary

Appendix C- Participant Follow-Up Email Request

Good morning,

My name is Cathy Bacote. I am writing you as a reminder of an earlier request to assist my research to collect valuable data that will not only aid me to finish my doctoral degree, but will also enhance the quality of dropout prevention programs and interventions. School leaders like you, possess valuable insight and your participation is vital.

Your candid responses to this short survey will be held in the strictest confidence. The data is anonymous and is stored on a pass-word protected computer. The survey should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the survey link into your internet browser).

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. If you have questions regarding the study, you may contact the project advisor, Dr. James Stronge at 757-221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with the study you may contact the College of William and Mary, School of Education, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Thomas Ward, at 757-221-2358 or tjward@wm.edu.

Thank you in advance for participating in this study!

Cathy Bacote

Doctoral Candidate

The College of William and Mary

Appendix D: International Review Board Approval

From: WM Compliance <compli@wm.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2017 1:41 PM
To: crbaco@email.wm.edu; Stronge, James H; edirc-l@wm.edu
Cc: Stronge, James H; tom.ward@wm.edu
Subject: STATUS OF PROTOCOL EDIRC-2017-01-25-11695-jhstro set to active

This is to notify you on behalf of the Education Internal Review Committee (EDIRC) that protocol EDIRC-2017-01-25-11695-jhstro titled Knowledge and Experiences with Dropout Prevention Strategies of Virginia Secondary Administrators, School Counselors, and Graduation Coaches has been EXEMPTED from formal review because it falls under the following category(ies) defined by DHHS Federal Regulations: 45CFR46.101.b.1.

Work on this protocol may begin on 2017-02-14 and must be discontinued on 2018-02-14.

Should there be any changes to this protocol, please submit these changes to the committee for determination of continuing exemption using the Protocol and Compliance Management application (<https://compliance.wm.edu>).

Please add the following statement to the footer of all consent forms, cover letters, etc.:

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2017-02-14 AND EXPIRES ON 2018-02-14.

You are required to notify Dr. Ward, chair of the EDIRC, at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) and Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Chair of the PHSC at 757-221-3862 (jastev@wm.edu) if any issues arise during this study.

Good luck with your study.

Appendix E- Research Authorization Permission Granted

From: XXXXXXXX
Sent: Saturday, March 11, 2017 9:34 AM
To: Cathy Bacote
Cc: XXXXXX
Subject: XXXXXX Research Authorization Request

Good morning, Ms. Bacote –

The Research Authorization Committee (RAC) has approved your research authorization request for your study entitled *Knowledge and Experiences with Dropout Prevention Strategies of Virginia Secondary Administrators, School Counselors and Graduation Coaches*. Your Research Authorization Request Approval letter is attached and a hard copy of the approval letter will be placed in the mail on Monday. Please let us know if you have any questions or if additional support is needed.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXX

Appendix F- Research Authorization Committee Approval

[REDACTED]

March 10, 2017

Ms. Cathy Bacote
29 Wexford Hill Road
Hampton, VA 23666

Dear Ms. Bacote:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Research Authorization Committee (RAC) has approved your research entitled *Knowledge and Experiences with Dropout Prevention Strategies of Virginia Secondary Administrators, School Counselors and Graduation Coaches*. Please include a copy of this letter in any communication with the principal of the secondary schools in [REDACTED] regarding your study. Your research interests must remain confined to the provisions outlined in your approved research request application. Authorizations for additional research or changes in your current procedures must first be submitted to the RAC for review.

The RAC mandates that all research applicants use pseudonyms in place of the names of students, staff, schools, and/or the school division in any documentation produced from your study. The use of pseudonyms in your study must include any mention of [REDACTED] as this would inadvertently identify the school division. This precaution is taken to ensure the safety and anonymity of all persons participating in the study, safeguard the division from analyses produced from inaccurate and/or faulty methodologies, and add to the rigor and integrity of all reported results.

I wish you much success on your work, and look forward to reading the results of your final study. The RAC requests that a written final summary of all research be submitted to the chairperson upon completion. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Research Authorization Committee Chair

Appendix G- Chi-Square Analysis

Table G.1

Q4 Use longitudinal, student-level data to get an accurate read of graduation and dropout rates.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	3 33.33%	8 40.00%	5 29.41%	7 77.78%	23 41.82%	16 55.17%	7 26.92%	23 41.82%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	6 30.00%	6 35.29%	1 11.11%	15 27.27%	9 31.03%	6 23.08%	15 27.27%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	2 10.00%	4 23.53%	1 11.11%	7 12.73%	4 13.79%	3 11.54%	7 12.73%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	4 44.44%	3 15.00%	1 5.88%	0 0.00%	8 14.55%	0 0.00%	8 30.77%	8 14.55%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	1 5.00%	1 5.88%	0 0.00%	2 3.64%	0 0.00%	2 7.69%	2 3.64%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	9 100.00%

	Current position	Current school level assigned
Chi Square	16.53	14.14
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.17	0.01

Table G.2

Q5 Use data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavior problems, and retentions.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	4 44.44%	12 60.00%	8 47.06%	8 88.89%	32 58.18%	18 62.07%	14 53.85%	32 58.18%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	4 44.44%	7 35.00%	7 41.18%	0 0.00%	18 32.73%	8 27.59%	10 38.46%	18 32.73%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	1 11.11%	0 0.00%	1 5.88%	1 11.11%	3 5.45%	3 10.34%	0 0.00%	3 5.45%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 5.88%	0 0.00%	1 1.82%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	1 1.82%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	1 5.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.82%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	1 1.82%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	9 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	11.99	5.58
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.45	0.23

Table G.3

Q6 Monitor the academic and social performance of all students.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	6 66.67%	17 85.00%	14 82.351%	6 66.67%	43 78.18%	22 75.86%	21 80.77%	43 78.18%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	3 33.33%	2 10.00%	3 17.65%	3 33.33%	11 20.00%	6 20.69%	5 19.23%	11 20.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.82%	1 3.45%	0 0.00%	1 1.82%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	55 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	4.86	.95
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.96	0.92

Table G.4

Q7 Review student-level data to identify students at risk of dropping out before key academic transitions.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	3 33.33%	10 50.00%	8 47.06%	7 77.78%	28 50.91%	17 58.62%	11 42.31%	28 50.91%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	5 55.56%	6 30.00%	7 41.18%	1 11.11%	19 34.55%	10 34.48%	9 34.62%	19 34.55%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	2 10.00%	1 5.88%	1 11.11%	4 7.27%	2 6.90%	2 7.69%	4 7.27%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	1 11.11%	0 0.00%	1 5.88%	0 0.00%	4 7.27%	0 0.00%	4 15.38%	4 7.27%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	55 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	4.86	.95
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.96	0.92

Table G.5

Q8 Monitor students' sense of belonging and engagement in school.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	5 55.56%	14 70.00%	9 52.94%	3 33.33%	31 56.36%	11 37.93%	20 76.92%	31 56.36%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	4 44.446%	5 25.00%	6 35.29%	4 44.44%	19 34.55%	14 48.28%	5 19.23%	19 34.55%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.00%	1 5.88%	2 22.22%	4 7.27%	4 13.79%	0 0.00%	4 7.27%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	1 11.11%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 5.88%	0 0.00%	1 1.82%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	1 1.82%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	55 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	16.53	14.14
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.17	0.01

Table G.6

Q9 Choose adults who are committed to investing in the student's personal and academic success, keep...

Response	Current position					Current school level assigned		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	7 77.78%	9 45.00%	3 17.65%	2 22.22%	21 33.33%	9 31.03%	12 46.15%	21 33.33%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	1 11.11%	4 20.00%	6 35.29%	3 33.33%	14 25.45%	8 27.59%	6 23.08%	14 25.45%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	1 11.11%	5 25.00%	6 35.29%	4 44.44%	16 29.09%	10 34.48%	6 23.08%	16 29.09%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	2 10.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 3.64%	0 0.00%	2 7.69%	2 3.64%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 11.76%	0 0.00%	2 3.64%	2 6.90%	0 0.00%	2 3.64%
Total	9 16.36%	20 36.36%	17 30.91%	9 16.36%	55 100.00%	29 52.73%	26 47.27%	55 100.00%

	Current position	Current school level assigned
Chi Square	18.28	5.57
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.11	0.23

Table G.7

Q10 Establish a regular time in the school day to meet with the adult.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	4 44.44%	4 20.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	9 16.36%	5 17.24%	4 15.38%	9 16.36%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	3 33.33%	10 50.00%	5 29.41%	3 33.33%	21 38.18%	8 21.59%	13 50.00%	21 38.18%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	2 22.22%	2 10.00%	8 47.06%	4 44.44%	16 29.09%	9 31.03%	7 26.92%	16 29.09%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	2 50.00%	2 50.00%	0 0.00%	4 7.27%	2 50.00%	2 50.00%	4 7.27%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	2 10.00%	2 11.76%	1 11.11%	5 9.09%	5 17.24%	0 0.00%	5 9.09%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	55 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	16.88	6.41
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.15	0.17

Table G.8

Q11 Communicate with adult advocates about the various obstacles students may encounter and provide a...

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	4 44.44%	10 50.00%	1 5.88%	3 33.33%	18 32.73%	9 31.03%	9 34.62%	18 32.73%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	4 44.44%	6 30.00%	10 58.82%	1 11.11%	21 38.18%	10 34.48%	11 42.31%	21 38.18%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	1 11.11%	2 10.00%	4 23.53%	3 33.33%	10 18.18%	6 20.69%	4 15.38%	10 18.18%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	2 10.00%	1 5.88%	1 11.11%	4 7.27%	2 6.90%	2 7.69%	4 7.27%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 5.88%	1 11.11%	2 3.64%	2 6.90%	0 0.00%	2 3.64%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	17 100.00%	9 100.00%	55 100.00%	29 100.00%	26 100.00%	55 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	16.16	2.29
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.18	0.68

Table G.9

Q12 Provide individual or small group support in test-taking skills, or targeted subject areas such a...

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	1 11.11%	7 35.00%	4 25.00%	4 44.44%	16 29.63%	8 28.57%	8 30.77%	16 29.63%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	3 33.33%	5 25.00%	4 25.00%	1 11.11%	13 24.07%	5 17.86%	8 30.77%	13 24.07%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	5 55.56%	8 40.00%	8 50.00%	3 33.33%	24 44.44%	14 50.00%	10 38.46%	24 44.44%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	1 1.85%	1 3.57%	0 0.00%	1 1.85%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	8.68	2.29
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.73	0.68

Table G.10

Q13 Provide extra study time and opportunity for credit recovery and accumulation through after school...

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	2 22.22%	7 35.00%	3 18.75%	3 33.33%	15 27.78%	9 32.14%	6 23.08%	15 27.78%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	2 10.00%	6 37.50%	2 22.22%	12 22.22%	5 17.86%	7 26.92%	12 22.22%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	3 33.33%	10 50.00%	6 37.50%	4 44.44%	23 42.59%	13 46.43%	10 38.46%	23 42.59%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	2 22.22%	1 5.00%	1 6.25%	0 0.00%	4 7.41%	1 3.57%	3 11.54%	4 7.41%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	8.13	2.25
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.77	0.69

Table G.11

Q14 Use adult advocates or other engaged adults to help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with benchmarks.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	5 55.56%	8 40.00%	6 37.50%	1 11.11%	20 37.04%	10 35.71%	10 38.46%	20 37.04%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	8 40.00%	5 31.25%	3 33.33%	18 33.33%	8 28.57%	10 38.46%	18 33.33%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	2 22.22%	3 15.00%	5 31.25%	4 44.44%	14 25.93%	9 32.14%	5 19.23%	14 25.93%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.85%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	1 1.85%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	1 1.85%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.85%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	12.17	3.30
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.43	0.51

Table G.12

Q15 Recognize student accomplishments.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	7 77.78%	11 55.00%	11 68.75%	2 22.22%	31 57.41%	12 42.86%	19 73.08%	31 57.41%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	8 40.00%	5 31.25%	4 44.44%	19 35.19%	12 42.86%	7 26.92%	19 35.19%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.00%	0 0.00%	3 33.33%	4 7.41%	4 14.29%	0 0.00%	4 7.41%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	14.00	6.83
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.30	0.15

Table G.13

Q16 Teach strategies to strengthen problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	4 44.44%	8 40.00%	6 37.50%	2 22.22%	20 37.04%	9 32.14%	11 42.31%	20 37.04%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	3 33.33%	8 40.00%	5 31.25%	4 11	20 37.04%	11 39.29%	9 34.62%	20 37.04%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	2 22.22%	4 20.00%	5 31.25%	2 22.22%	13 24.07%	7 25.00%	6 23.08%	4 7.41%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	1 1.85%	1 3.57%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	6.58	1.40
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.88	0.84

Table G.14

Q17 Establish partnerships with community-based program providers and other agencies such as social services, welfare, mental health...

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	6 66.67%	4 20.00%	7 43.75%	2 22.22%	19 35.19%	6 21.43%	13 50.00%	19 35.19%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	8 40.00%	7 43.75%	1 11.11%	18 33.33%	12 42.86%	6 23.08%	18 33.33%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	1 11.11%	8 40.00%	2 12.50%	4 44.44%	15 27.78%	8 28.57%	7 26.92%	15 27.78%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	1 1.85%	1 3.57%	0 0.00%	1 1.85%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	1 1.85%	1 3.57%	0 0.00%	1 1.85%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	21.28	6.58
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.05	0.16

Table G.15

Q18 Establish small learning communities.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	6 66.67%	3 15.79%	1 6.25%	0 0.00%	10 18.87%	2 7.41%	8 30.77%	10 18.87%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	1 11.11%	10 52.63%	4 25.00%	1 11.11%	16 30.19%	7 25.93%	9 34.62%	16 30.19%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	6 31.58%	9 56.25%	6 66.67%	21 39.62%	14 51.85%	7 26.92%	21 39.62%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	1 11.11%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 11.11%	2 3.77%	2 7.41%	0 0.00%	2 3.77%
Unable to answer this item	1 11.11%	0 0.00%	2 12.50%	1 11.11%	4 7.55%	2 7.41%	2 7.69%	4 7.55%
Total	9 100.00%	20 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	54 100.00%	28 100.00%	26 100.00%	54 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	32.32	8.17
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.00	0.09

Table G.16

Q19 Establish team teaching.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	7 77.78%	11 57.89%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	18 33.96%	7 25.93%	11 42.31%	18 33.96%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	5 26.32%	2 12.50%	0 0.00%	9 16.98%	2 7.41%	7 26.92%	9 16.98%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	3 15.79%	14 87.50%	9 100.00%	26 49.06%	18 66.67%	8 30.77%	26 49.06%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	19 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	53 100.00%	27 100.00%	26 100.00%	53 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	37.90	7.50
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.00	0.11

Table G.17

Q20 Create smaller classes.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	4 44.44%	8 42.11%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	12 22.64%	5 18.52%	7 26.92%	12 22.64%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	5 55.55%	5 26.32%	5 31.25%	0 0.00%	15 28.30%	7 25.93%	8 30.77%	15 28.30%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	4 21.05%	9 56.25%	7 77.78%	20 37.74%	11 40.74%	9 34.62%	20 37.74%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.26%	1 6.25%	0 0.00%	2 3.77%	1 3.70%	1 3.85%	2 3.77%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	1 5.26%	1 6.25%	2 22.22%	4 7.55%	3 11.11%	1 3.85%	4 7.55%
Total	9 100.00%	19 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	53 100.00%	27 100.00%	26 100.00%	53 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	30.25	1.50
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.00	0.81

Table G.18

Q21 Create extended time in classroom through changes to the school schedule.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	7 77.78%	9 47.37%	1 6.25%	0 0.00%	17 32.08%	5 18.52%	12 46.15%	17 32.08%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	2 10.53%	1 6.25%	0 0.00%	5 9.43%	2 7.41%	3 11.54%	5 9.43%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	6 31.58%	11 68.75%	7 77.78%	24 45.28%	14 51.85%	10 38.46%	24 45.28%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	2 10.53%	1 6.25%	1 11.11%	4 7.55%	3 11.11%	1 3.85%	4 7.55%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 12.50%	1 11.11%	3 5.66%	3 11.11%	0 0.00%	3 5.66%
Total	9 100.00%	19 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	53 100.00%	27 100.00%	26 100.00%	53 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	29.44	7.73
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.00	0.10

Table G.19

Q22 Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	6 66.67%	12 63.16%	9 56.25%	1 11.11%	28 52.83%	9 33.33%	19 73.08%	28 52.83%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	3 33.33%	4 21.05%	7 43.75%	4 44.44%	18 33.96%	12 44.44%	6 23.08%	18 33.96%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	3 15.79%	0 0.00%	4 44.44%	7 13.21%	6 22.22%	1 3.85%	7 13.21%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	19 100.00%	16 100.00%	9 100.00%	53 100.00%	27 100.00%	26 100.00%	53 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	15.43	9.13
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.22	0.06

Table G.20

Q23 Provide teachers with ongoing ways to expand their knowledge and improve their skills.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	8 88.89%	11 61.11%	1 6.67%	0 0.00%	20 40.00%	6 2.50%	14 53.85%	20 40.00%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	1 11.11%	5 27.78%	3 20.00%	0 0.00%	9 18.00%	4 16.67%	5 19.23%	9 18.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	0 0.00%	2 11.11%	10 66.67%	8 100.00%	20 40.00%	13 54.17%	7 26.92%	20 40.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 6.67%	0 0.00%	1 2.00%	1 4.17%	0 0.00%	1 2.00%
Total	9 100.00%	18 100.00%	15 100.00%	8 100.00%	50 100.00%	24 100.00%	26 100.00%	50 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	36.27	6.04
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.00	0.20

Table G.21

Q24 Integrate academic content with career and skill-based themes through career academies and multiple pathways models.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	4 44.44%	6 33.33%	5 33.33%	0 0.00%	15 30.00%	5 20.83%	10 38.46%	15 30.00%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	2 22.22%	6 33.33%	4 26.67%	0 0.00%	12 24.00%	6 25.00%	6 23.08%	12 24.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	3 33.33%	4 22.22%	5 33.33%	8 100.00%	20 40.00%	12 50.00%	8 30.77%	20 40.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	2 11.11%	1 6.67%	0 0.00%	3 6.00%	1 4.17%	2 7.69%	3 6.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	18 100.00%	15 100.00%	8 100.00%	50 100.00%	24 100.00%	26 100.00%	50 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	16.48	2.72
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.17	0.60

Table G.22

Q25 Host career days and offer other opportunities for work-related experiences and visits to post-secondary campuses.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	3 33.33%	4 22.22%	10 66.67%	0 0.00%	17 34.00%	5 20.83%	12 46.15%	17 34.00%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	3 33.33%	5 27.78%	5 33.33%	1 12.50%	14 28.00%	8 33.33%	6 23.08%	14 28.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	2 22.22%	8 44.44%	0 0.00%	7 87.50%	17 34.00%	10 41.67%	7 26.92%	17 34.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.56%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 4.00%	1 4.17%	1 3.85%	2 4.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Total	9 100.00%	18 100.00%	15 100.00%	8 100.00%	50 100.00%	24 100.00%	26 100.00%	50 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	24.04	3.62
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.02	0.46

Table G.23

Q26 Provide students with extra assistance and information about the demands of college.

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	2 22.22%	4 22.22%	10 66.67%	1 12.50%	17 34.00%	8 33.33%	12 46.15%	17 34.00%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	4 44.44%	6 33.33%	4 26.67%	1 12.50%	15 30.00%	8 33.33%	6 23.08%	15 30.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	3 33.33%	7 38.89%	0 0.00%	5 62.50%	15 30.00%	7 29.17%	7 26.92%	15 30.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	0 0.00%	1 5.56%	0 0.00%	1 12.50%	2 4.00%	1 4.17%	1 3.85%	2 4.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 6.67%	0 0.00%	1 2.00%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	1 2.00%
Total	9 100.00%	18 100.00%	15 100.00%	8 100.00%	50 100.00%	24 100.00%	26 100.00%	50 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	21.13	1.11
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.05	0.89

Table G.24

Q27 Partner with local businesses to provide opportunities for work-related experiences such as internships, simulated job interviews...

Response	<u>Current position</u>					<u>Current school level assigned</u>		
	Principal	Assistant Principal	School Counselor	Graduation Coach	Total	High School	Middle School	Total
This is a primary responsibility of mine.	5 55.56%	3 16.67%	2 13.33%	1 12.50%	11 22.00%	3 12.50%	8 30.77%	11 22.00%
This is a secondary responsibility of mine and I support this activity.	0 0.00%	5 27.78%	7 46.67%	1 12.50%	13 26.00%	10 41.67%	3 11.54%	13 26.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, but this occurs in our school.	2 22.22%	6 33.33%	2 13.33%	5 62.50%	15 30.00%	9 37.50%	6 23.08%	15 30.00%
This is not a responsibility of mine, and this does NOT occur in our school.	2 22.22%	3 16.67%	4 26.67%	1 12.50%	10 20.00%	2 8.33%	8 30.77%	10 20.00%
Unable to answer this item	0 0.00%	1 5.56%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 2.00%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	1 2.00%
Total	9 100.00%	18 100.00%	15 100.00%	8 100.00%	50 100.00%	24 100.00%	26 100.00%	50 100.00%

	<u>Current position</u>	<u>Current school level assigned</u>
Chi Square	17.98	11.18
Degrees of Freedom	12	4
p-value	0.12	0.02

Cathy Rene Bacote

EDUCATION

College of William and Mary

Williamsburg, VA

Old Dominion University,
Norfolk, VA

**Master of Art
1998**

Special Education

Hampton University,

Hampton, VA

**Bachelor of Science
1985**

Nutrition Sciences

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Phi Kappa Phi National Honor
Society

College of William and Mary

Leadership in Special

Education Grant recipient

Newport News Public Schools

Aspiring Leaders Cohort

Professional Development

Institute Presenter

Curriculum Development

Committee

Career Pathways Development

Committee

Who's Who Among American

College and University

Students

Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society

EXPERIENCE

Newport News Public Schools

1995 – Present

Assistant Principal

2010 – Present

Provide instructional leaderships; development of school master schedule; teacher evaluations; promote positive school and community climate; support management and operation of school facility and campus; develop and implement substitute teacher procedures; promote positive school discipline; implementation of program budget; develop end of course test and exam schedule.

Special Education Lead Teacher

2005 – 2010

Implementation of federal, state and local special education policies; coordinate special education eligibility meetings and triennial reviews; administrative designee for Individualized Education Plan meetings; coordination and development of department master schedule; development of department school improvement plan; formulate and analyze data to implement interventions to ensure student success

Special Education Teacher

1995 – 2005

Develop and implement differentiated instruction to ensure student success; develop and implement student Individualized Education Plan; case manage individualized programs for students with disabilities; collaborate with administration and general education to ensure best instructional practices

Department of Education

2008

Adjunct Instructor, The College of William and Mary

1998

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Old Dominion University CSEEP Teacher Mentor

Regent University Teacher Mentor

Pathwise Teacher Mentor

The College of William and Mary Graduate Education Association

Hampton University Alumni Association

Old Dominion University Alumni Association

Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

National Education Association