

GIVING CREDIT WHEN CREDIT IS DUE: IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES IN
THREE DIVERSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO INCREASE ON-TIME GRADUATION

A disquisition presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of
Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the
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DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

21/22-credit plan: North Carolina's minimal graduation requirement.

90-Day Cycle: An improvement cycle that provides structures and phases for improvement.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC): This is an alternative setting within each high school in Wake County where a certified teacher works with students who struggle in their classes due to attendance, behavior, or academic progress.

At-Risk Students: Students who are in jeopardy of not graduating high school within four years.

Audit: Students may enroll in school beyond a time when they will be present to earn sufficient seat time. Therefore, they are scheduled to attend, but may receive no credit for the class.

Behavior Support Teacher (BST): A special education teacher who works with students who are diagnosed with Serious Emotional Disability (SED) or display chronic negative behaviors.

BlendSpace: BlendSpace is an easy-to-use platform for creating multimedia lessons that can be accessed online.

Cohort: A class of students that enters the ninth grade at the same time.

Course Equivalency: An allowable substitution for a graduation requirement

Course Exemption(s): This exempts a student from a graduation requirement.

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM): This option allows student to demonstrate mastery of a course's content for a class by taking an assessment and completing an artifact. This is governed by State Board Policy CSM-M-001013.

Double-Up-to-Catch-Up or Double-Block: This protocol was established April 9, 2015 for transfer students who transfer in from a 7-period day into a 4x4 block schedule. A student will be assigned to classes other than an End-of-Course (EOC) or Career and Technical Education (CTE) class. The student will take the course one period for credit, and be assigned for a second period as an audited class. This is a program assigned to provide required seat time to earn credit (See Appendix A).

Edgenuity: An online curriculum used for first-time course credit and credit-recovery

Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS): A data system used by the North Carolina Department of Instruction as a tool to evaluate teacher effectiveness and student success potential in specific courses.

EOC: Mandated state End-of-Course Exams

Exceptional Children/Special Education: Students identified through special education processes with learning and/or behavior exceptionalities.

GradPoint: A credit recovery program used to provide online instruction in core classes. Students may be assigned *GradPoint* during the school day, after school, or during summer sessions.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Federal legislation stating students with disabilities have the right to Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to meet their individual needs. (enacted in 1974; updated 2004)

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A written plan designed to outline how education will be provided to a special education student. Every student being served in special education must have an IEP.

ISS: In-School Suspension

Just-in-Time-Training: Streamlining professional development for the workforce by making training available to individuals as needed on their schedule.

LEA: Local Education Agency. This is the local school district.

Long-Term Suspension: A single suspension lasting more than ten (10) days in duration.

North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS): A virtual school operated by the North Carolina Department of Instruction, which provides courses, with a certified teacher, to students in North Carolina. Cost may be incurred by a school or a student.

On-Time Graduation: Graduation within four years of entering high school.

OSS: Out-of-School Suspension.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS): A mandatory military transfer.

Satellite Class: A class is physically offered on another school's campus.

Seat time: Students must receive 135 hours of instruction in class in order to receive credit.

Short-Term Suspension: A single suspension lasting less than ten (10) days in duration.

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED) Student: A student living below the poverty level.

Student Mobility: A student move involving school enrollment change at a time not required by the grade structure of the school system.

Study Island: An online study program that prepares students for their End-Of-Course exams.

Summer School: A structure to provide students time and instruction to earn and/or regain credits beyond the traditional school year.

Teleconference Class: A class offered through the school system, linked by telecommunication devices.

Waiver: The student is granted a waiver, usually based on the Military Compact, McKinney-Vento, or other legislation. This exempts a student from a requirement. Sometimes this is in the form of exemptions or a course equivalency.

ABSTRACT

GIVING CREDIT WHEN CREDIT IS DUE: IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES IN
THREE DIVERSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO INCREASE ON-TIME GRADUATION

Deborah Brooks Womble, Lisa Marie Anderson, and Christopher Ron Bradford, Ed.D.

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One of the most important measures of success of a high school is its graduation rate. There are many factors that influence whether or not students graduate in the traditional four-year schedule. Student motivation and achievement certainly are primary reasons students may meet this expectation, but oftentimes there are other issues that contribute to the delay of on-time graduation. Sometimes these factors are actually beyond the control of the student. Frequent student mobility, socio-economic disadvantages, and behavioral issues are reasons that often impede on-time graduation for students. Students affected by these issues desperately need schools to be flexible and find options to keep them in school and on course to graduate with their cohort. Of the students who eventually drop out, one-third are behind in their coursework in the 9th grade (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010)

The purpose of this initiative was to examine the impact of student mobility, socio-economic distress, and chronic negative behavior on on-time graduation, as well, evaluate and develop programs and protocols that provide options to help students retain and regain credits needed to graduate with their cohort. This work studied students and

personnel in three demographically different high schools in North Carolina: a large, urban school in Cary, NC drawing from an affluent area; a large school located near a military base in Fayetteville, NC; and a small, mountain school serving many students who are socio-economically disadvantaged in Murphy, NC.

Data were gathered through the spring, summer, and fall semesters of 2015. The research practitioners investigated data drawn from a variety of credit recovery and retention options, including, a personalized registration program and several on-line programs, such as *GradPoint*, *Study Island*, and *Edgenuity*. One research practitioner also identified effective strategies to create a training program for school counselors to assist students in retaining and regaining credits toward graduation. This qualitative data gives voice to the students who often have no voice when it comes to making decisions when they fall behind their cohort, and provides counselors with the tools to assist these students. Qualitative data were gathered through a variety of research methods, including surveys, interviews, case studies, and focus groups. These methods were selected because of their ability to solicit the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of those participating in the improvement change (Creswell, 2012). The intent of this work was to increase options for students at risk of not graduating on time, thereby improving their chance of staying in school and graduating with their cohort.

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

Ben, Christy, and Reggie

One of the most important measures of success for a high school is its graduation rate. There are many factors that influence whether or not students graduate in the traditional four-year schedule. Student motivation and achievement certainly are primary reasons students may meet or may not meet this expectation, but often times there are other issues that impede on-time graduation. Sometimes these factors are actually beyond the control of the student. Reasons such as student mobility, socio-economic disadvantage, learning disabilities, and behavioral issues often impede students from graduating on time. Students affected by these issues desperately need schools to be flexible and find options to keep them in school and on-track to graduate with their class.

Vignette 1: Ben

One such student is Ben. He and his mother sat across the desk from the assistant principal looking frustrated. They desperately hoped for some solution to their problem. School had begun six months ago, but Ben and his family had just moved here and were at school to register. Ben's mother explained that although Ben was an A/B student who should be a junior, he was only a sophomore. This was his third high school since Ben began his freshman year, three years ago. As the assistant principal looked through Ben's records, she determined that credits had been lost during transfer between schools with different scheduling formats. This time Ben was transferring from a seven-period traditional schedule to a four-period block schedule. Because he was transferring in February, he would not be able to get credit for all of his classes since he could only be placed in four of the seven classes from his previous school.

Vignette 2: Christy

Far across the state, in a small, rural, mountain school, Christy arrived at the guidance office for a meeting with her counselor. Christy was failing several of her classes. This has been an on-going problem since she began high school. This year Christy should be a senior, but is only classified as a sophomore. Christy has high absenteeism and cannot afford the time or the money to attend summer school since she must work to help support her family. Financial stress does affect her high absenteeism. After a long night at work she is often too tired to come to school in the morning, much less complete her homework in the evening. Additionally, she has to stay home to help with her younger siblings so her mother can work. Her mother views Christy's ability to be a caregiver for the younger children as a greater benefit than school, which is not a priority in their home. Her mother sees Christy's ability to stay home to supervise her younger siblings as a way to save money, extending her own minimum wage paycheck to pay the rent and put food on the table. However, this sacrifices Christy's ability to graduate with her class.

Vignette 3: Reggie

Near the state capitol, Reggie is sitting in the principal's office with an administrator and counselor. Reggie is a 19-year-old who is behind his graduation cohort by two years. This is due to consistent attendance problems and a history of inappropriate behavior that have resulted in loss of instruction due to in-school and out-of-school suspensions. He is easily influenced by his peers and often skips class with them, despite continued efforts by his guidance counselor and administration. Reggie

continues to fall further behind in his studies, and as with last year, may very well be retained.

Ben, Christy, and Reggie are like many students who fall behind in school. In 2015, North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction reported an 85.6% state graduation rate (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2015). The graduation rate for students who are considered socio-economically disadvantaged falls to a rate of 79.6%, and students identified by the special education program, drops to 67.3% (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2015). Issues such as student mobility, poverty, and negative behavior contribute to students slipping through the cracks of scheduling, missing days of school, and failing courses. This in turn causes students to fall behind, be retained, or even drop out of school altogether. These students often do not graduate within the prescribed four years. The circumstances in which these students exist present a dire need for alternative interventions to be developed and implemented to help students stay on course and graduate with their cohort. If schools continue to simply conform to the status quo, students like Ben, Christy, and Reggie may simply become another statistic on a dropout report.

This conceptual framework (Figure 1) provides an overview of the joint efforts to improve on-time graduation with these three at-risk subgroups. At Jack Britt High School research investigated the effect of frequent mobility on on-time graduation and counselor's ability to provide appropriate strategies, as well as developing a personal registration process and a training program for counselors. Murphy High School research investigated credit recovery options for socio-economically disadvantaged students. At Green Hope High School, research explored the structure of credit recovery programs

and implemented programs for students with behavioral needs and attendance problems. Through this improvement initiative, three research practitioners developed, implemented, evaluated, and created a variety of programs and structure to help these at-risk students increase the likelihood of on-time graduation.

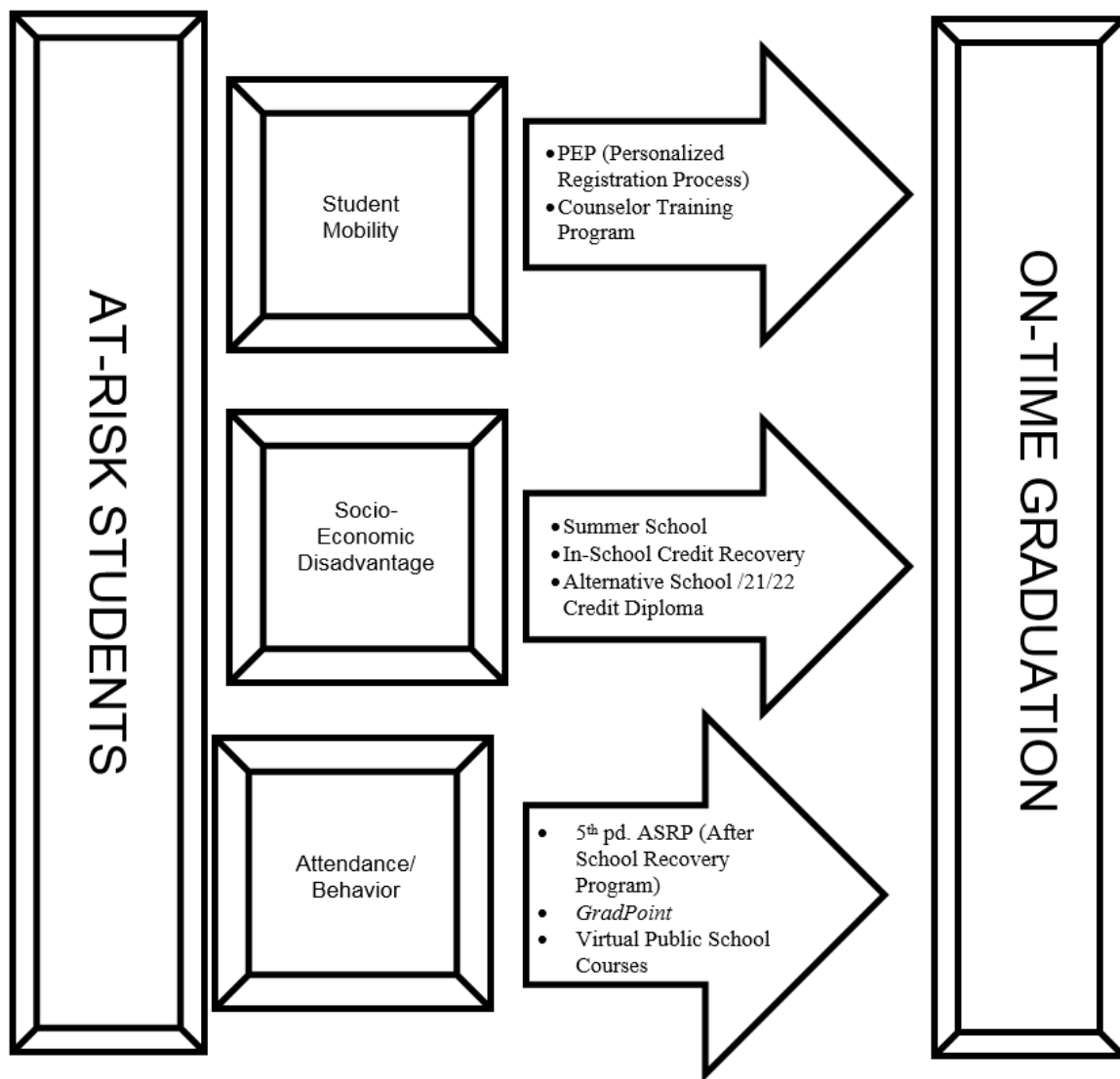


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Overview of the Improvement Initiative.

At-Risk Students Do Not Graduate On Time

Failure to graduate on time is indeed a serious problem, not only in these three schools but also in schools across our state and nation. Studies clearly identify the problem that these at-risk students are in jeopardy of not graduating from high school within the prescribed four years (Gruman, Harachi, Abbott, Catalano, & Fleming, 2008). Studies further identify reasons that students are considered at-risk. Some of these at-risk factors may include antisocial behavior, low-income status, and stress within the family (Gruman et al., 2008). These are issues that affect low performing students who fail or drop out. Factors causing students to drop out of school may include socio-economic distress, disciplinary issues, poor attendance, and negative influences of peers (Gruman et al., 2008). Many of these at-risk students do not receive support at home or they simply do not care about school. Some of these students come from families who struggle to make ends meet. Other students may fall behind because of learning difficulties, cognitive delays, or other behavioral problems identified through special education. Some students are at risk due to high absenteeism. And still others are affected by frequent moves where they are caught between conflicting types of schedules. Therefore, many students are already behind before they ever reach high school. Of the students who eventually drop out, one-third are behind in their coursework in the 9th grade (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010).

Highly Mobile Students

One problem contributing to students not graduating on time is student mobility. Student mobility is defined as “making a school enrollment change at a time not required by the grade structure of the school system” (Gruman et al., 2008, p. 1833). These moves

are often in reaction to a family situation that can be detrimental to students (Scherrer, 2013), which include military moves or moves necessitated by socio-economic issues. Although difficult to determine the exact factor for student mobility, a child's high mobility rate is often negatively correlated to low family income (Weisman, 2012). This problem is widespread. By the end of third grade, one in six US children had attended three or more schools, and during a four-year period, the proportion of students who remain in school for the full year can fall below 50% in many schools (Hartman, 2006; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). Student mobility is particularly devastating to the vulnerable children in our society, including homeless children, foster youth, socio-economically challenged children, children in single-parent households, migrant students, students in juvenile correctional facilities, and children of military families. These students not only have a higher rate of student mobility, but are also dealing with other stressors, including peer relations, financial insecurity, and family pressures (Weisman, 2012). With the current political state and military presence abroad, the military family is a growing subgroup. There are approximately 1.1 million dependents of military families in the United States enrolled in school. The average child in a military family will attend between six to nine different schools between kindergarten and the 12th grade. The longer the parent remains in the military, the more times a child is likely to change schools (Weisman, 2012). In fact, on average active duty military families will "PCS" (permanent change of station) every two years (Park, 2011). This mandatory relocation often does not provide a great deal of advance notice therefore education may be interrupted.

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students

In today's economy more and more families struggle to make ends meet. Since the 1960s, educators have identified socio-economic status as having a negative impact on academic achievement. Many families cannot afford basic necessities, and survival becomes more important than education. Sadly, it is often the students from these families who are in trouble or encounter serious life events that further derail plans to graduate.

According to research conducted by Johns Hopkins in 2008 there are four socio-economically based reasons why students drop out of school:

- Life events;
- Fade-outs;
- Push-outs;
- Failing to Succeed (Owen, Rosch, Muschkin, Alexandar, & Wyant, 2008).

Life events are a large part of socio-economic problems that students face. Life events, such as unintended pregnancy, loss of a parent, or going to work to help support a family often get in the way of on-time graduation. Fade-out students are those who end up behind on credit because they failed too many classes. Often these students have been socially promoted but lacked the content knowledge needed to perform with their peers. Push-out students often display behavioral issues. Often these students stay at home rather than come to school where they do not feel they fit in with their peers. The third group, identified as *failing to succeed students*, may be the easiest to identify (Rosch & Owen, 2008). These students have poor attendance, fall behind and fail classes, and often

fail to graduate. These socio-economic issues contribute to the reasons students fall behind and do not graduate.

Students with Behavioral or Attendance Concerns and Special Education

Another set of students in jeopardy of not graduating on time often has behavioral, attendance, and/or cognitive learning issues. These students often display significant negative behaviors, and consequently have attendance problems due to high suspension rates. When students miss class due to these behavioral needs they fall behind in their academics. Students miss instruction and often times do not make up missing assignments, causing them to fail and lose course credit. These behavioral concerns are often compounded by a variety of other at-risk factors, such as single-parent homes, poverty, and family backgrounds (Bear, Kortering, & Braziel, 2006; Reschly & Christenson, 2006). Based on data provided from the 1999 annual report of the Office of Special Education Programs, a paltry 40–42% of students with behavioral concerns graduate on time (Kortering, Braziel, & Tompkins, 2002).

In addition to this group of students, students with learning disabilities who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are often considered to be at higher risk to fail general education classes, posting only a 59% graduation rate in 2006 (Harrell, 2012). Despite having accommodations and modifications to help them, these special needs students often become disengaged when they experience failure (Bost & Riccomini, 2006). They may also act out, exhibiting negative behaviors, which leads to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion. As a result, this leads to an increase in the dropout rate by 34.4% (Harrell, 2012).

One significant negative behavior displayed is poor school attendance. While attendance rates for North Carolina schools were reported as 95% in 2013-2014, this does not account for the vast number of students who skip individual classes, which increases the absentee rate, and may result in loss of credits (NC School Report Card, 2014). Studies have shown that 13.1% of students in high schools admitted to ‘often’ skipping classes, and an alarming 54.6% admitted to ‘sometimes’ skipping classes (Guare & Cooper, 2003). When in class, these students often display other negative behaviors that disrupt the educational environment of their peers. These actions result in more time spent out of class, either in the office, in ISS, or suspended. Countless interventions and resources have been directed toward increasing student attendance in schools, yet minimal attendance gains are often reported (Reid, 2008).

Ultimately, students with IEPs and behavioral needs represent a large section in these dropout rates (Bear et al., 2006). Students with IEPs often begin to display negative behaviors as defense mechanisms, acting out in class, which leads to more suspensions. Many times, a lack of engagement in the classroom, compounded by other factors, pushes the student to become apathetic to school and they may choose not to attend classes or school altogether. As such, there is a need for alternative methods for these students to regain credits outside of the traditional classroom setting in order to maintain their progress towards graduation.

These subgroups of students are often faced with serious issues, often beyond their control. These issues do offer a reason as to why the graduation rate dips for these students. However, these reasons do not negate the need to maintain efforts to graduate these students on time.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

When it comes to school accountability, on-time graduation is one of the most publicized criteria of accountability. Ensuring that students graduate within a four-year cohort is essential for the success of a school. Many elements affect this on-time graduation, including making sure that all students have access to the classes they need to meet the minimum high school graduation requirements and providing for the services to keep students on track to graduate.

For schools striving to achieve standards of excellence, it is especially difficult in a time when not all students come to school prepared to learn. Some students are preoccupied dealing with issues at home. Socio-economically disadvantaged students may be more concerned with wondering where their next meal is coming from or where they are going to be living next week than with the state of their education. These students may sleep at school or may miss too many days due to family responsibilities or lack of support from home. Still other students come to school with cognitive delays or behavioral issues. These students are seldom prepared for the academic rigor of school and often find themselves academically behind. They may also be at-risk due to behavioral issues that impede their learning, often causing them to miss class. This may be due to apathy, truancy, or disciplinary actions as a consequence to their negative behaviors. Another group of students who may fall behind their peers are those students who are frequently mobile. These students move so often they lack consistency in pacing or scheduling. Because of this, these at-risk students fall behind in subject matter or in earning credits. With these groups in mind, this initiative focuses on developing and

evaluating interventions, options, strategies, and programs that provide opportunities for retaining and regaining credits to ensure on-time graduation.

The Challenge of Scheduling Formats

Background

One of the responsibilities to help students stay on track for graduation is scheduling. Scheduling has a direct impact on achievement for each student, as well as for the school itself. In order to schedule classes, schools work within two primary types of schedules - the block schedule and the traditional schedule. There are many variations of each of these schedules, including alternative or hybrid schedules. There are benefits and drawbacks to each of these schedule formats, but the biggest drawback may be the lack of standardized schedules and the effect it has on students who transfer from school to school at non-traditional times.

Traditional vs. Block Schedules

Because of the importance of scheduling, it is no wonder that there is a plethora of research on the best possible scheduling options for high schools. There are those who hail the benefits of the traditional year-long schedule (Queen, 2000), while others claim that the block schedule is far superior (Rettig & Canady, 2001).

A traditional year-long schedule consists of a school day divided into six to eight class periods, each lasting from 40 to 60 minutes in length. This schedule has been in existence since the early 1900s when the Carnegie Unit became the standard for earning credits toward high school graduation. With the Carnegie Unit, students had to complete 120 hours in each subject in order to receive a high school credit toward graduation (Pisapia & Westfall, 1997). In this format, classes meet four or five times a week for 40

to 60 minutes, for a period of time lasting from 36 to 40 weeks per year (Carnegie Foundation, 2002). For nearly a century, this was considered the standard for a high school schedule. Teachers and administrators touted this as ideal, reporting that classroom management was easily attended to in this short period of time, as students did not have time in class to become bored or act inappropriately (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006). Teachers reported that over the course of a year they were able to know their students better (Rettig & Canady, 2001), which also may contribute to the belief of better classroom management.

The block schedule, often referred to as the accelerated block or the 4x4 block, has only been on the American horizon for little more than 20 years. In 1988 block scheduling was offered as a positive school reform that would use strategies such as outcome-based education, alternative assessment, Paideia seminars, cooperative learning, technology, and other reform ideas (Pisapia & Westfall, 1997). This plan first surfaced as the Copernican Plan and offered a major revision in the way high school administrators viewed scheduling (Carroll, 1990). This plan provided for fewer classes and an increase in instructional time. This is the predecessor to the current 4x4 block schedule commonly used in high schools today. In the 4x4 block, each school year is divided into two semesters. During each semester, students take four classes, for a total of eight classes in a year. Each class lasts 90 minutes. This schedule is seen as desirable as it allows students to concentrate on only four classes at a time, develop stronger relationships with teachers, and it provides for more individual attention (Queen, 2000). Compared to the traditional yearlong schedule, there are many advantages to the block schedule. These include:

- Teachers teach only three classes a day, allowing them more time to focus on those classes and students.
- Students only have four classes a day; therefore, they have fewer classes with fewer homework assignments.
- Students may repeat classes they do not pass in the same year.
- Students have opportunities to take more classes over the four years.
- There is less transition time between classes, thus fewer behavior issues in hallways (Wraga & Hlebowitsh, 2000).

Rettig and Canady (2001) also support the 4x4 block schedule as a superior schedule.

They feel that this schedule provides quality time and a positive school climate; which in turn increases academic engagement, graduation rates, and grade point averages, while reducing dropout rate and school absenteeism. Queen (2000) also pointed to these advantages of block scheduling, but included:

- Lessons can be extended and maintained with greater continuity.
- When absent, students have fewer courses in which to make up work.
- Advanced students have the opportunity for acceleration and enrichment.
- Most schools using block scheduling are able to offer a wider variety of elective courses.

Block scheduling has become very popular, appealing to teachers, students, and administrators alike.

Alternative Schedules

It is clear that there are benefits of each of these plans, and that advocates for each will extol the virtues of one plan over the other. However, there are those who find

that while there are positive attributes to each plan, there are also pitfalls to each plan. Therefore, there are a variety of alternatives or hybrid plans. One such plan is the A/B Day schedule. Here students have classes year long, but alternate four classes on one day and four on the next day, allowing them to take eight classes over the course of a full academic year. While this increases the number of classes they may take and allows for the 90-minute class period, it does provide students and teachers with eight classes for which to prepare. Zepeda and Mayers (2006) warn that this schedule is problematic as teachers and students may be confused as to which class they should attend on any given day. They also cite the limited opportunity for students to repeat a failed class. Still other schools may use aspects of each of these schedules types, and create a hybrid program to suit their own needs. In this instance, variety seems to be a way to combine the best of each of these more traditional plans.

Problems of Scheduling Variety

This variety in schedules is an excellent way for each school system, and in some cases each individual school, to create the scheduling system that works best for them. They can use the traditional schedule, the block schedule, a hybrid, or a combination of schedules. In fact, many schools do have a mix of block and year-long A/B day schedules. In this way, schools can tailor their school day to meet the needs of their teachers and their students.

Despite the flexibility, this type of schedule does not take into account the need for consistency when students transfer from one type of schedule to another. Students who transfer between schools during the school year create an entirely new scheduling concern. When a student moves from a traditional to a block school during the year, it is

often difficult to match courses and schedules (Queen, 2000). Students may not have schedule choices, there may not be a comparative class, or students may be so far behind that they simply lose credit. It is this inconsistency in schedules that “makes it difficult for highly mobile students—who make frequent non-promotional school transfers during the school year—to obtain full or partial credit for successfully completed coursework, hindering progress toward graduation and increasing dropout rates” (Weisman, 2012). Park (2011) agrees that this is an issue, and in order to provide the best service to families and communities, acknowledges there should be better-coordinated programs.

Student Mobility and its Effect on On-Time Graduation

No student should have to lose credits because they must relocate, and generally, the students themselves have little to no choice in the matter of a move. Student mobility is defined as “making a school enrollment change at a time not required by the grade structure of the school system” (Gruman et al., 2008). Student mobility can be dichotomized as reactive and strategic. Reactive mobility refers to unanticipated change, often in reaction to a family situation, while strategic mobility is generally proactive change. It is the reactive mobility that can be detrimental to students (Scherrer, 2013).

Student mobility is widespread. Studies indicate that by the end of third grade, one in six U.S. children had attended three or more schools, and during a four-year period, the proportion of students who remain in school for the full year can fall below 50% in many schools (Hartman, 2006; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). Another study reported that 50% of all school-aged children in the United States moved at least twice before they were 18 years old and 10% moved at least six times (Rumberger & Larson, 1998).

These numbers seem to be high and widespread. While it is true that student mobility affects all communities, it is especially difficult for some of the most vulnerable children in our society (Weisman, 2012). Students who are affected by frequent moves often have many other risk factors, including poverty, stressful life events, and poor initial school performance (Gruman et al., 2008). Wright (1999) points to the strong correlation between low income and mobility. Wright notes that when comparing categories of mobility with frequency among students receiving free lunch, there were greater than expected frequencies. He acknowledges that these “high mobility” students are generally low-income, inner city, migrant, or limited English-proficient, and low achievers, who score lower on tests, and/or repeat a grade. It appears that those students who struggle are then often in double jeopardy, because not only do they have the stress of moving into an unfamiliar home and school, they also may be unable to evenly transfer courses, losing credits in school. Student mobility is therefore a serious issue, with potentially serious and pervasive consequences (Smith, Fien, & Paine, 2008).

The Struggle for Course Completion

Military Students

In a military town, the problem of school mobility is even more pervasive than in a non-military town. In fact, high school aged students in military communities move three times more often than their civilian counterparts (Park, 2011). It seems disturbing that there is a true dearth of research about the effects of student mobility and transfer issues to support military families. During this time of great patriotism and the call to “Support our Troops,” the issues of scheduling and student mobility are, in effect, harming the children of our troops.

There are approximately 1.1 million school-aged dependents of military families in the United States (Weisman, 2012). The average child in a military family will attend anywhere from six to nine different schools between kindergarten and 12th grade. The longer the parent remains in the military, the more times a child is likely to change schools (Weisman, 2012). In fact, on average, active duty military families move every two to three years (Park, 2011). The Department of Defense does provide schools for military families, but only approximately eight percent of children attend these schools, leaving 92% to enroll in public schools (Weisman, 2012). With numbers this staggering it is surprising that there is not more research on how to best deal with situations of student mobility and transfer standards for students of military families. There is a great deal of literature that suggest that students and their families need support in times of stress, including during transfers (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, & Lerner, 2013; Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Park, 2011), but there is very little to suggest that there is more than a cursory nod to the ideas of transfer between schools with differing schedule formats. There is minimal mention that due to different school and state requirements for course credits and course materials, frequent moves pose additional challenges for academic achievement and graduation by transferring students (Park, 2011).

Ironically, one article that discusses the determinants of excessive mobility claims that we can learn from the Department of Defense that operates many schools in and around military bases [and] has an excellent track record with regard to student mobility—transience being a way of life for military families (Hartman, 2006). Hartman claims the military schools have “clearly specified course transfer agreements and clearly articulated graduation requirements” (p. 23). Yet, only 8% of the military students are

enrolled in these Department of Defense schools, according to Weisman (2012), and many military bases, including Fort Bragg, the largest military installation on the East Coast, do not even provide schools above middle grades.

Frequent moves are stressful for teens in US military families. Adjusting to a new school environment is especially stressful. Issues such as gaps in learning, not meeting graduation requirements, not receiving appropriate services for special needs, and experiencing difficulty engaging in extra-curricular activities are specific stressors (Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum, 2010; Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). Yet these researchers also raise questions, such as, what happens when a move occurs in the middle of high school or multiple times during high school? And while these researchers point to the resilience of “military brats” and military families, they note that there are gaps in the research and in the programs to help students. But all agree the effects of student mobility can be detrimental to the student (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Park, 2011).

Socio-economically Disadvantaged Students

Students who are labeled as at-risk or socio-economically disadvantaged (SED), are students who are in jeopardy of not graduating from high school within the prescribed four years. Studies further identify reasons that students are considered at-risk. Some of these at-risk factors may include anti-social behavior, low-income status, and family stress (Gruman et al., 2008). Socio-economic distress, disciplinary issues, poor attendance and/or influences of friends are just some of the reasons a student may drop out of school. Many of these at-risk students do not receive support at home, have learning difficulty, or simply do not care about school.

Many of these at risk students are those who have attendance issues, live in poverty, are homeless, or have behavioral issues and/or are behind on credits needed to graduate. These students become frustrated and often drop out of school. Research shows that the dropout rate has remained the same for the past 40 years for the socio-economically disadvantaged students (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009).

One of the more severely affected subgroups of SED are the homeless. The McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of those students who are homeless. The act seeks to ensure homeless students receive a strong education by mandating that state governments write policies granting partial credit to students who are homeless. Further, the Act suggests states encourage schools to accept all transfer credits of McKinney-Vento students, regardless of whether the course is offered or not (National Center for Homeless Education, 2010). The McKinney-Vento Act suggests that proper training for teachers be provided so that the need for credit recovery is realized. All barriers should be removed so that all students can have the opportunity of graduating on time. Although this may allow students to retain credits, there are still concerns that the student may miss basic content required for graduation credits, thus may still fall behind in meeting on-time graduation.

Studies have also shown that intervention with SED students before they reach high school can promote on-time graduation (Henry, Cavanagh, & Oetting, 2011). Many SED students do not receive parental or family support at home, and therefore do not see the importance of achieving an education. The earlier parents invest in their children's education the more likely their children are to graduate from high school and graduate on time (Hill & Tyson, 2009). However, parental expectations for SED students from their

parents are lower than if the students were not classified as SED (Henry et al., 2011). Studies also show that there is a general disengagement from school with students who live in a one-parent household (Astone & McLanahan, 1991).

Unfortunately, many SED students attend low-performing schools. A low-performing school can contribute to the struggles of students who are behind on credits. Often lacking the resources to provide adequately for these at-risk students, schools must be creative in finding ways to help students recover credits.

Students with Behavioral and Attendance Concerns

Another group of students often in jeopardy of not graduating on time due to credit loss includes students who are classified as special education. These students frequently display chronic, negative behaviors, which often lead to loss of credits for a variety of reasons, such as numerous discipline referrals, suspensions, poor attendance, low grades, inability to connect with teachers, negative community influence, and criminal activity (Bakken & Kortering, 1999; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007). Students also may be identified through special education due to diagnoses such as Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or other issues that are not necessarily related to cognitive delays. While these students often receive additional school support by having a case manager, study skills classes, and inclusion classes, their problems are compounded by the fact that they often show additional risk factors, such as local student mobility, unemployment, and poverty, thus increasing the likelihood that they will not complete high school (MacMillian, 1991). As a result, many districts across the nation frequently suspended these students from school and equate their constant classroom disruption as “troublemaking.” Administrators regard

suspension as a way to get rid of these students rather than fully meeting their individual needs as outlined in the IEP (Bakken & Kortering, 1999). Such issues impact on-time graduation.

A case study in New Hampshire found that 57% of students classified as having behavioral and emotional needs in special education do not complete high school (Lichtenstein & Zantal-Wiener, 1988). Students with disabilities drop out twice as often as general education students, with roughly 50% of students with disabilities being labeled with an emotional/behavioral disability (Thurlow, Sinclair, & Johnson, 2002; Wagner, 1995). Harrell (2012) claims, students who have an IEP drop out at twice the rate of their regular education peers. The highest percentage of high school dropouts who had IEPs were classified as learning or emotionally disabled (Bost & Riccomini, 2006; MacMillan, 1991; Reschly & Christenson, 2006). These learning or emotionally disabled students then struggle in society, with an estimated 73% of those who drop out of high school being arrested (Wagner, 1995). This is an ongoing trend.

Students with a learning disability may not always show negative behaviors or have attendance issues that cause them to fall behind. Many special education students are simply well below their grade-level in reading abilities, and struggle to find success in the general classroom setting. This contributes to them dropping out of high school due to frustration from failing the same class multiple times (Bear et al., 2006). More often than not, this is a struggle that has followed these students from their elementary and middle school education (Bear et al., 2006). A study completed by Lichtenstein in 1993 found that many high school non-completers dropped out because of their consistent

failures and increased frustration with their lack of ability to complete the assigned work in high school (Kortering & Braziel, 1999).

Many of the protections for special education students are outlined in the IDEA. Bakken and Kortering (1999) argue there is a large gap between the original intent of IDEA and how local educational agencies (LEA) have maintained the legislation. This leads to an argument for the need for school systems to implement programs that close the gap and help more special education students' progress toward graduation. Much research has been given to these types of programs and many states and local agencies have begun implementing such programs. The systems with the most successes have provided structured environments that blend the use of a face-to-face teacher, who serves as a motivator and facilitator, with online instruction that is guided by the individual student's own progress (Dessoiff, 2009).

Meeting the Needs of At-Risk Students

To meet the needs of at-risk students, creative structures and protocols must be implemented. These options are widespread. In North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenberg School District uses both online and face-to-face learning to help students recover credit. In addition to these online classes, students in the blended learning environment have access to a certified face-to-face instructor (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). The district hopes that blended learning will help increase online course enrollment, on-time graduation, and college readiness (Corry & Carlson-Bancroft, 2014). In Iowa, the Keokuk School District offers two types of credit recovery; summer school and online credit recovery. Summer school recovery requires more effort from the student because it is very fast paced and taught by an academic content teacher. Those

students who attend summer school receive a student mentor, so both the student in credit recovery and the student providing the tutoring are receiving extra support in the subject area (Wolff, 2014). Texas has a program called, *Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program* (TDRPP), to help former drop-outs recover credits and receive their diploma. In two school years, 2008-2010, Texas saw 4,141 drop-outs enroll in the *TDRPP*. Only 36% of the enrolled students did not have success in either recovering their high school diploma or in becoming college ready (Zinth, 2011). These districts are pioneering credit recovery options for students by implementing non-traditional strategies. This may save funding and provide additional academic support and remediation for struggling students.

Suggestions, Implications, and Recommendations

The failure to graduate within the prescribed four years is a serious concern for schools. There are a wide variety of reasons why this occurs, many of which are beyond the control of the student. Cognitive and behavioral issues, which qualify students for special education services, are a prime reason that students become frustrated with school and drop out. Approximately 40-42% of special education students do not complete high school annually (Kortering et al., 2002). Additionally, student mobility is a serious issue that affects millions of students each year. Student mobility is widespread, affecting as much as 50% of students in many schools (Hartman, 2006; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). Students affected are those who are at-risk, such as “homeless children, foster youth, children from low-income and single-parent households, migrant students, youth in juvenile correctional facilities, and children of military families” (Weisman, 2012, p. 527). These socio-economically disadvantaged students struggle. As Maslow asserts, it is difficult for a student to be attentive and

productive in school when worried about where they are going to sleep or what, or even if, they are going to eat (Huitt, 2007). It is because many of these at-risk factors are affecting more and more students that students are taking more than four years to graduate, if graduating at all. The frustration they experience causes them to give up or act out, thus further jeopardizing on-time graduation.

There is no one answer as to how to fix this problem. When it comes to student mobility, some say that schools can place students who come into the school mid-year in an instructional support program to help those who are too far behind to catch up (Smith et al., 2008), but this does nothing to keep students from losing credits when schedules are inconsistent. For those who are connected to the military, the military has created *A Military Parent's Guide to School Policies & Transitions*, but that is little more than educational jargon, definitions, and some tips for day-to-day issues (Military Child Education Coalition, 2012).

There is a great need for more research as well as the development of more options to help those students affected by the issues beyond their control to achieve on-time graduation. To that end, we see that there is an immediate need for more training to be developed and implemented to assist school personnel in helping these students. While schools do often attempt to “mitigate the harmful effects of mobility and improve transitions by planning materials and activities for mobile students before they arrive, they are [often] limited in their ability to remedy the negative effects associated with student mobility” (Scherrer 2013, p. 11). Counselors and teachers need to be trained to identify credit transfer problems and immediately offer credit retention and/or recovery opportunities. Best practices for credit recovery opportunities need to be created and

tailored toward more individual needs. Those students who lose Advance Placement credit due to midterm transfers need options such as Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), online options, or other flexible options to complete a class. Students with special learning needs may need a transition program to help them recover gaps in learning until they are ready to join a regular, in-progress class. School personnel needs to be trained to watch for those signs of frustration before students give up or develop chronic negative behavior problems. Therefore, students should be provided with assistance rather than simply handing down punishment. School systems need to be more aware of student mobility issues due to socio-economic distress and provide solutions to help students stay in their home school, helping them maintain consistency in education. Although almost impossible to implement, optimally, a nationwide standardization of schedule formats would help to solve the problem of credit transfer. However, there is an immediate need for the creation of a standard policy for dealing with credit transfers and options for saving and recovering credits for those students lost in the shuffle.

Socio-economically disadvantaged students' credit recovery needs are dependent on their individual situations. There is a need for more support for students who are considered socio-economically disadvantaged when they fall behind and fail courses. These students often experience problems outside of their control that contribute to their disadvantages, and they are penalized in the school setting because of their family's socio-economic status. Combating this injustice makes the research of alternative settings and programs of utmost importance for this group of students.

While one student may benefit from summer school, another may need to transfer to an alternative school setting to recover more than one class, and still another may need

online options. Schools should explore options that are outside of the non-traditional setting to provide motivation to these students. Rather than forcing students into a specific type of credit recovery, schools should offer a variety of credit recovery options to allow all students the opportunity for on-time graduation.

When faced with students with behavior and attendance issues, again, there is no clear answer for promoting academic progress. Even though a special education student's IEP specifies accommodations and goals that focus on areas in which the student is struggling most, an IEP is not used to help a student regain credits. With students who have severe behavior issues, the answer is often an alternative placement at a school with fewer resources and more restrictions. Suspending students or placing them in an alternative setting has not proven successful. As such, school systems should look to other options that focus on credit recovery through the use of technology and creative methods of scheduling.

These programs must be adapted to the individual students' needs and expand into the regular education population of students who demonstrate negative behaviors and attendance issues. Again, oftentimes, these absences may be a result of even greater concerns, such as home issues, drug use, or the need to work. There should be a focus on programs that utilize demonstration of student mastery and provide structure in a supportive learning environment with a teacher who has demonstrated the ability to work with, and has shown success in, helping the students complete courses to regain their credits. In doing so, schools are able to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students and ensure they are prepared to graduate and pursue higher education, or join the armed forces or workforce.

Summary

It is clear that there is a strong correlation between at-risk issues such as special education identification, behavior and attendance issues, socio-economic distress, and student mobility affecting on-time graduation. While these issues may contribute to students' failure to graduate with their cohorts, with adequate support, flexibility, and individualized options, all students can earn their high school diploma and graduate with their original cohort.

CHAPTER THREE: THREE DIVERSE SCHOOLS

The three high schools involved in this initiative represent very different regions and populations of students, yet all strive to meet accountability demands of maintaining on-time graduation for their students. The following is a brief overview of each of the three schools: Jack Britt High School, Murphy High School, and Green Hope High School, as well as some of the obstacles they must overcome in order to graduate students on time.

Jack Britt High School

Background and History

Jack Britt High School (JBHS) is the largest high school in Cumberland County, NC. JBHS operates on the 4x4 block schedule, with nearly 2,000 students taking four 90-minute classes each semester. The enrollment number is constantly changing due to the high rate of student mobility. This is often influenced by the changes in population at Fort Bragg. Located within just a few miles of Fort Bragg, the largest military installation in the South East, JBHS has more than 47% of its students affiliated with the military and/or federal government (Appendix B). Although Fort Bragg does have an on-base school, it is only for grades K-8. Students in grades 9–12 attend public school provided by Cumberland County Schools. This is not unusual; nationally, 92% of military students attend public schools (Weisman, 2012). Although only 16 years old, JBHS has established a reputation of high academic standards, having been identified as a school of High Growth and School of Distinction under North Carolina's ABCs/Accountability Program for more than a decade. For 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 JBHS was rated as an 'A' school. Based on EVAAS data in 2013 and 2014, this school

was recognized as having the top academic growth of any high school in the state, and in 2015 was ranked as second in the state with 22% growth rate. JBHS maintains a graduation rate well above the state average and has ‘closed the gap’ between graduation rate for black and white students (Edtrust Foundation, n.d.). JBHS was the first school to be given the Governor’s “Real Deal Award,” and has been acknowledged on a national level, being awarded the *Dispelling the Myth* award by the Ed Trust Foundation in 2010, as well as being highlighted in Tom Brokaw’s book, *The Time of Our Lives*.

JBHS is a successful school; however, with the large number of military affiliated students, the issue of frequent student mobility is making it more difficult to maintain these standards. Nationally, with nearly 1.1 million school-age dependents of military families moving every two to three years, often attending more than six schools over the course of their scholastic career, this is a problem that affects, not only this school, but all high schools serving military families (Park, 2011; Weisman, 2012). High school aged children who are military dependents move three times more often than do civilian students (Park, 2011). Other than the emotional stressors of moving, there is also the educational concern as students transfer between schools and classes. These students are often caught in a trap between different types of school schedules, and/or moving between schools that do not offer the same classes. This then leads to gaps in pacing and learning, as well as students not meeting local graduation requirements. Although there are some safeguards in place to help protect these students, these interventions are often vague, ineffective, or undermined by limitations of the schools and their resources. JBHS is no exception to this dilemma. While JBHS does post an impressive graduation rate of 94% (North Carolina School Report Card, 2015a), the problem faced here is how to

accommodate the influx of transfer students and keep them on track to graduate. As Cumberland County only offers limited summer school options for credit recovery, students who have not actually failed a course where the credit was lost in transfer are unable to take advantage of this free summer school. Thus, in order to catch up, these students must often pay more than \$400 per course for a new credit course through another school's summer program. One exception to this was through collaboration with Fayetteville Technical Community College and Cumberland County Schools where opportunity for first time credit was offered in the summer of 2015. However, during the spring of 2015, this was publicized so late that many students or even school personnel, were unaware of the offering. Due to small enrollment, many courses were closed. The number of students needing to earn initial credit is fluid, due primarily to the issue of student mobility, but also due to the constant progress of students as they advance in their studies. Nonetheless, there is a need for proactive measures to ensure that all students are able to retain necessary credits on their path to graduation.

JBHS has a history of working with a transient population. However, this population can be subdivided into two groups: military children and non-military children. When it comes to helping these students transfer into a new school both sets of students have most of the same options. However, there are other considerations that must be made to align with the Military Compact that states that schools must be responsible for "facilitating the student placement process through which children of military families are not disadvantaged by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content or assessment" (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). Through this, military children may be accommodated through means not

afforded to all students, including substitutions, waivers or exemptions. It is encouraged that students should meet as many of the requirements through the more traditional means as possible. In order to do this, the administrative team and counseling department tries to provide support to assist students in retaining credits they are in the process of earning (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.).

JBHS has provided credit recovery options for its students. In the past these offerings included *NovaNet*, and more recently *GradPoint*. These programs have been offered during the summer or after school for students who have failed non-state End-of-Course (EOC) classes. In 2013-2014 JBHS implemented *GradPoint* as an option embedded into the school day. Students reported to the computer lab for *GradPoint* for one or more class periods. A teacher assistant served as *GradPoint* facilitator to work with students to track their progress and provide assistance. *GradPoint* after school was completely eliminated at Jack Britt High School in 2014–2015. One inherent problem with *NovaNet* and *GradPoint* has been that these are options used only after the credit has been lost. In other words, with little exception, a student must have previously failed the course in order to qualify. A student who is transferring into a new school and may be behind in seat time or grade; or cannot transfer all the courses he/she is in, but has not actually failed yet, may not partake in options such as these. Another alternative for upper grade students behind in credits, either due to failure or simply not having the required credit, is allowing them to double up on classes in back-to-back semesters in order to ensure the opportunity to graduate on time. Some students may be eligible for NC Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) or other online programs. This may be an option when the school may pay for the course, or a student may petition to be allowed to take

an additional class at their own expense. More recently some classes that are not offered on the JBHS campus have been made available via teleconferencing, allowing students remote access to a class that meets off campus. These options may allow students the opportunity to retain a credit that could be lost as a result of JBHS not providing the class on campus. While historically *NovaNet* and *GradPoint* have been the primary summer school options, students have also had the opportunity to petition the principal to take “paid” summer school classes at outside institutions. However, the cost is approximately \$400 per class and is viewed by teachers as having no rigor. Many of these programs are viewed as paying for the credit; students may receive the credit, but they do not build up deficits in their knowledge. With military families this is also an issue. While students may be afforded the opportunity to retain their credit due to exemption, waiver, or substitution, they often do not have sufficient subject knowledge to meet the course requirements; they may fail the class, and eventually lose the credit anyway. There is one new option just beginning to be used at JBHS—Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM). This option was first implemented in the fall of 2014 only for End-of-Course (EOC) subjects. Students must petition to take the CDM. It includes a portfolio artifact and passing the EOC exam with a five (5), the highest score possible. This is being expanded in the 2015–2016 school year. As this gains acceptance it has wider ramifications for those exemplary students who have a firm grasp of a subject, but insufficient seat time to meet requirements.

Methodology—Personalized Registration Process (PRP)

In order to ensure consistent delivery of a registration process, research practitioner, Deborah Womble, outlined a protocol that aids students in retaining or

regaining credits lost due to moves at non-traditional times (see Figure 2). This included the development of a menu of the options noted above. A counselors training program was created to develop counselor skills in evaluating student records and determining which option is most effective to help students stay on track to graduate on time. Students retain or regain credit through the implementation of these protocols in order to increase the likelihood of on-time graduation.

During the registration process at JBHS, students were identified to determine whether they were in jeopardy of losing credits due to transfer or grades. Several of these students were interviewed to better understand their experiences and to identify areas of concern. Counselors and administration reviewed records of those students transferring in to JBHS. Based on these records and meeting with the student and parents, students were scheduled for classes with potential for doubling up, alternative scheduling, online courses, or other options in order to retain or regain credits.

At the inception of the initiative, counselors were interviewed to gain their perspective of the transfer problem and identify possible solutions. As this work developed some of these counselors were surveyed and provided a training program to develop skills in evaluating student records, identifying students in jeopardy of losing credits, and determining the best course of action to help the student retain or regain credit. Counselors were asked to provide feedback on this program in order to improve the program.

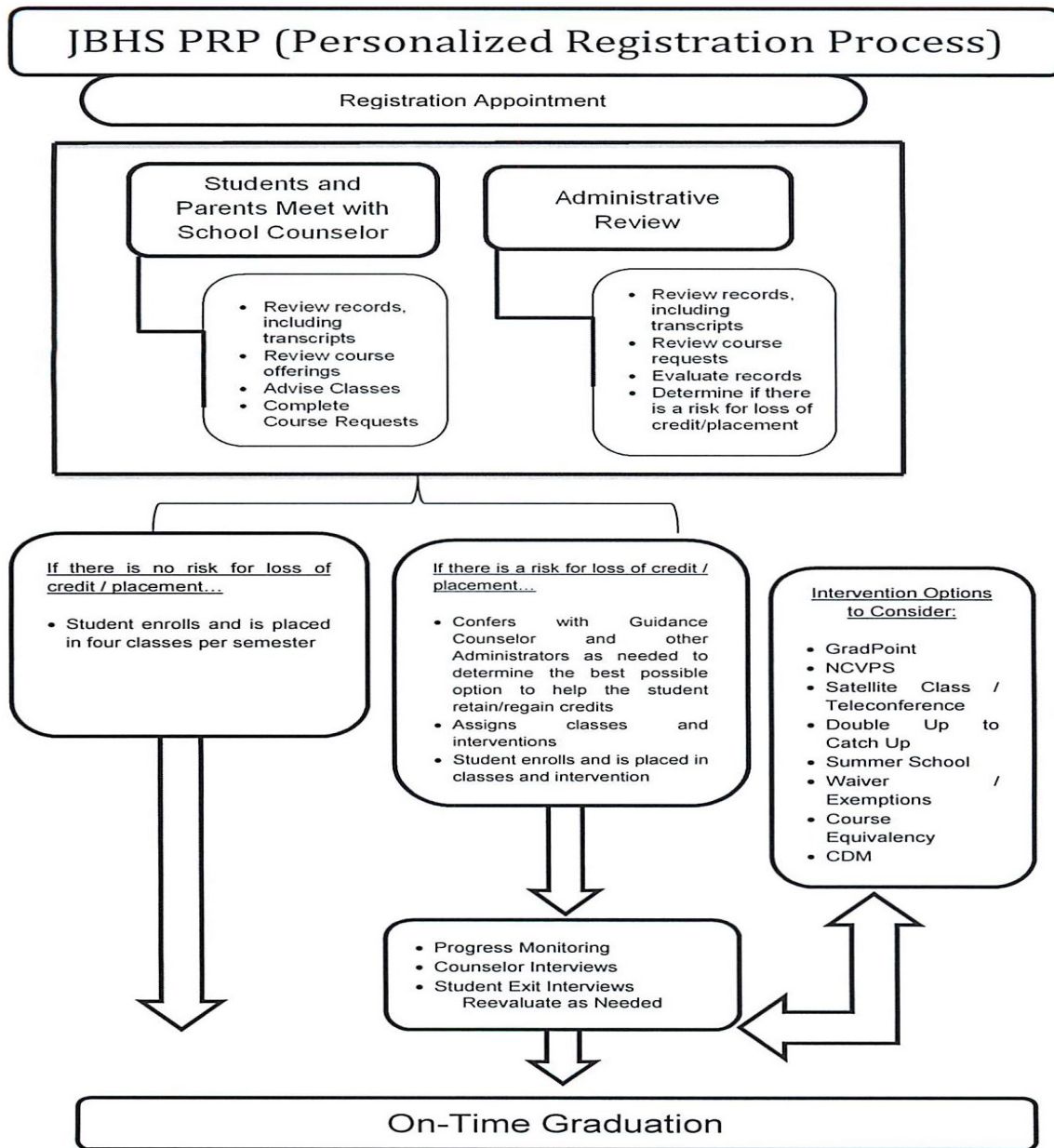


Figure 2. JBHS Concept Map: Personalized process implemented at JBHS.

Further counselors monitored these High Mobility Students (HMS) to verify they earn the course credit(s). In order to measure the effectiveness, and in an effort to determine consistency and fidelity, school counselors met with administrators to review the Personalized Registration Process (PRP; see Figure 2) options and consult on more

complex cases. Results were shared with JBHS counseling staff and administration, and feedback was solicited.

Implementation

The consultation team for JBHS included the JBHS Principal, the Lead Counselor, two other counselors, and Assistant Principal and research practitioner, Deborah Womble. These members were constant members of the consultation team, and as appropriate, the Exceptional Children's Case Manager, and the *GradPoint* Instructor were included. Student and parents were also involved in decision making as well.

As the process varied for each student, this initiative began with a survey of several transfer students. They were asked for background information as well as for their perceptions and experiences. Counselors continued to follow students through the remainder of the semester to ensure that the students remained on course to graduate. As the administrator, Womble provided consultation for many transfer registrations. This ensured that the counselors implement the procedures with fidelity. While the informal assessments included day-to-day dialogue, the formal assessment included group and/or individual interviews. Data generated through these interviews was used for program development improvement.

Murphy High School

Background and History

Murphy High School (MHS) is located in Cherokee County, NC and enrolls approximately 450 students annually. Cherokee County had 11 homeless students (Kids Count Data Center, 2013); 37.6% of its students are living at or below the poverty level (Kids Count Data Center, 2014). This was further evidenced as 55.73% of students in the

school receive either free or reduced lunch (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Financial and Business Services, 2013).

Those from poverty stricken homes typically have only a 25% chance of graduating from high school (Balfanz, 2011). The students from single-parent homes are considered less likely to graduate than a student from a home where both parents are present (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Many students do not live with their parents. According to recent PowerSchool demographics 7.4% of MHS's students lived with someone other than their parents. Quite often these students have limited support at home, as graduation may not be a priority. Those students from single-family homes may also fall into the poverty category. While Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED) students are encouraged to graduate from high school, some are far behind in earning credits towards graduation. Of the approximately 450 students enrolled at MHS, 5.5% are behind on one credit and one grade level, and 67% are behind more than one credit to graduate. Many students at MHS struggle due to other factors that affect their education (NC Schools Graduation Rate, 2013). The current overall graduation rate of MHS is high, with 95.5% students graduating in 2014; however, many SED students struggle to graduate on time or at all.

In MHS a limited number of initiatives have been implemented to help students recover credit and graduate on time. Historically, MHS has only used summer school and *Nova Net* to recover course credit. These limited options have not been successful in increasing on-time graduation for the students. Therefore, MHS now has had to search for new initiatives.

One of the limited options used in MHS has been *Study Island*. Teachers have always considered the use of *Study Island* as a credit recovery option as a program with insufficient rigor for students. The teachers report that the program does not challenge students, contrary to the program's proclamation of offering 'rigorous' content built from the Common Core Standards to prepare for the End-Of-Course tests" (*Study Island*, 2014). In this program students are given a content lesson then must answer a minimum of ten questions successfully before they can move on to the next lesson. Students do this through multiple-choice questions or games embedded in the program. Though *Study Island* states that it has rigor, teachers at MHS have reported that the program does not teach students the content they need to move on to a next level course. This in turn means that students have not been prepared for the next level of coursework, and the cycle of failure continues.

Summer school students are only required to attend 40 hours to recover credit, regardless of how far they progress in *Study Island* modules (Appendix C). Teachers began to question the rigor of this program prior to the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year. One of the more vocal complaints is that 40 hours is insufficient time to recover 90 days of instruction before moving on to a higher-level course. The teachers also noted that each level in *Study Island* is set for only ten questions and the students complete the modules quickly and they have an option of retaking the questions they missed. Teachers suspected students knew how to manipulate *Study Island* to complete a course in one day. Teachers requested another credit recovery option other than *Study Island*.

Prior to *Study Island*, *NovaNet* was the only other program used for credit recovery in MHS. A certified teacher facilitated these classes and students completed module-based curriculum within core-area subjects. *NovaNet* required students to complete modules before they receive credit for the course they have failed. While there is more rigor with *NovaNet* modules than with *Study Island*, and teachers reported more satisfaction with the program, lack of funding with the loss of the *Century 21 Grant*, deemed *NovaNet* too expensive. Therefore, *Study Island* became the only option during summer school 2014.

An option that has recently come available to MHS students has developed through a partnership with Mountain Youth School (MYS), the alternative school for Cherokee County. Through this partnership, students who are behind on credits can temporarily transfer to MYS to regain credits. After a brief time, they may transfer back to MHS. If they have recovered sufficient credits, they may graduate with a traditional 28-credit high school diploma. If they have recovered some, but not enough credits, they may remain at MHS until just a short time before graduation. At this point they transfer back to MYS where they can graduate with an abbreviated, 21/22 credit diploma. Although this diploma will not allow students to go directly into a four-year college, it will allow them to go to a community college and avoid being labeled a high school dropout.

Methodology—Changing Schools to Adapt to Need

At the beginning of the spring 2015 semester, research practitioner, Lisa Anderson, identified SED students behind on credits (see Figure 3). An at-risk list was developed to track student progress through the intervention process. Each student's

transcript was evaluated to determine the best type of credit recovery to benefit the student. Through this process, students were provided opportunity for initiatives to enable them to graduate on time. Credit recovery options included *Study Island*, summer school, and the 21/22 credit plan.

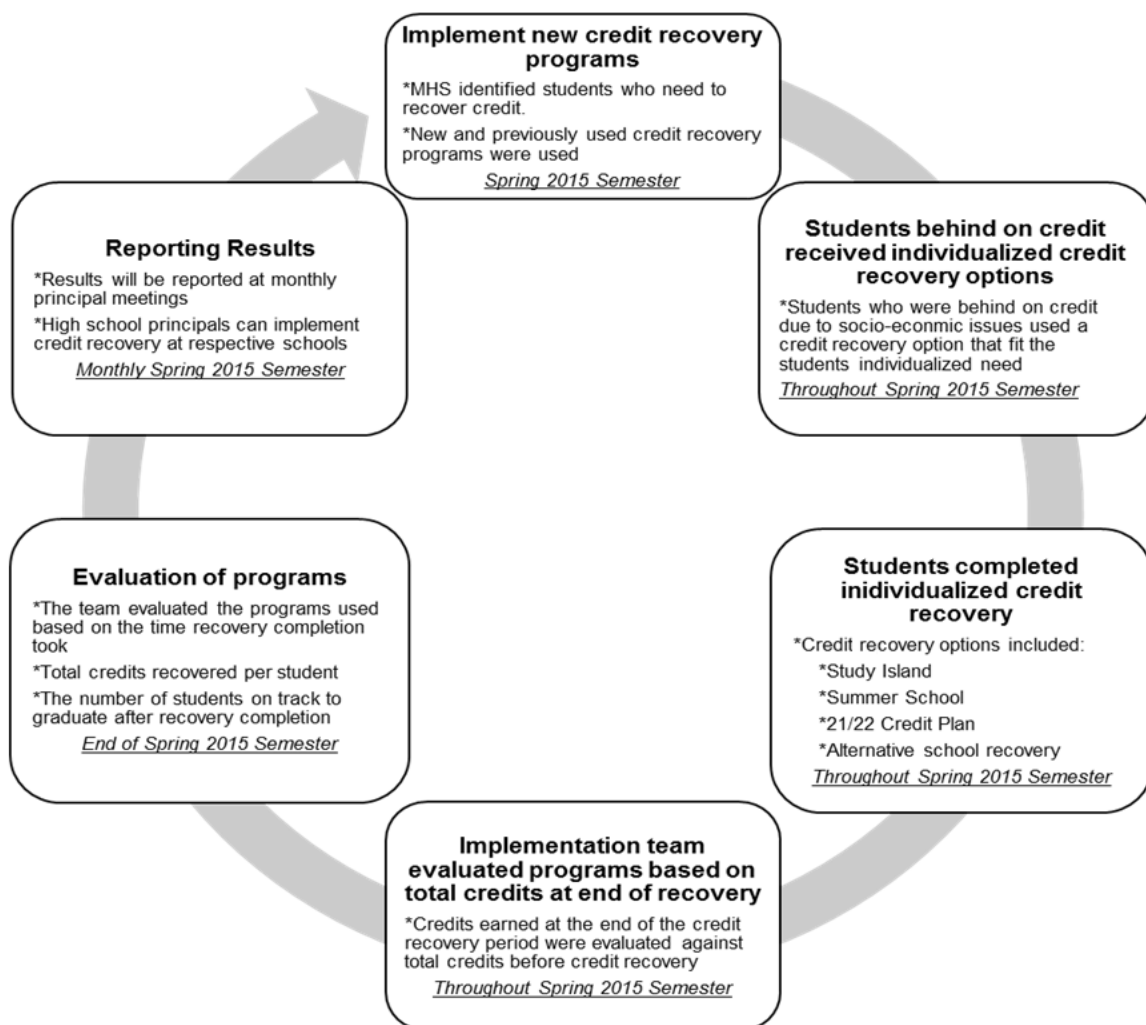


Figure 3. MHS Concept Map: 90-Day Cycle of the credit recovery improvements implemented at MHS.

Measuring the success of the credit recovery interventions was completed by comparing the number of credits a student had at the beginning and then at the end of the

credit recovery intervention. Counselors and social workers evaluated the credits recovered to determine if the student should be removed from the at-risk list of students. Results were presented to other high school principals in the LEA, to encourage them to use the credit recovery programs at their respective schools.

Implementation

The design team at MHS included two counselors, responsible for evaluating students' transcripts and corresponding with teachers to ensure the students are passing the classes and on track to graduate. The counselors contacted parents to discuss student progress and met with the student to discuss his/her academic progress. Other members of the team included:

- The Social Worker;
- A ninth-grade Language Arts teacher, who also works in the MHS summer school program, and is very outspoken about the rigor of MHS's credit recovery program;
- The Human Resource Director;
- The Student Services Director;
- The School Nurse.

The implementation process involved helping students recover credits through a variety of methods. To be eligible to recover a course a student must have failed the course at least twice, but have scored at least 60% as the final course grade in order to have sufficient content knowledge to be successful. While in summer school, students are required to score at least 80% on each objective in order to earn the credit. Summer school also includes those students who failed based on the attendance policy of the

county (Cherokee County Schools, 2015). Students make up hour-for-hour of time missed during the school year during summer school in order to receive credit for the course. This does make up seat-time; however, currently there is no proficiency requirement.

Guidance counselors provided a survey to each student who completed a credit recovery program. The survey rates the program itself and the support the student received throughout the credit recovery process (Appendix D). School counselors met with Anderson weekly to provide updates on student progress. Data collected from student surveys and meetings with school counselors were used for program improvement.

Green Hope High School

Background and History

Green Hope High School (GHHS), part of the Wake County Public School System, is located in Cary, NC. Since opening in 1999, it has grown to become one of the largest high schools in Wake County with a student enrollment population of over 2,400 students at the start of the 2014–2015 school year (Wake County Public School System, 2014). GHHS has an extremely diverse population, serving students from various cultures around the world. The school operates on a 4x4 block schedule with 90-minute classes and one SMART Lunch each day for 45 minutes. SMART Lunch is a period each day in which students may attend clubs and other student activities, eat lunch, or receive tutoring in their classes. Its main purpose is to provide enrichment and remediation opportunities for students during the instructional day.

GHHS has a long-standing tradition of meeting and exceeding expected growth for state testing and has double the percentage of students taking Advanced Placement courses (13%) than the state and district averages. SAT scores at GHHS in 2014 averaged 1,756, which was the highest in Wake County and higher than the state average of 1,456 (North Carolina School Report Card, 2015c; Specht, 2014). Outside of the classroom, students consistently excel in extra-curricular activities, including being recognized during the past six school years (2009-2010 to 2015-2016) by the North Carolina High School Athletics Association (NCHSAA) as the 4-A Wells Fargo Cup winner (NCHSAA, 2014). In addition, they have been acknowledged for their success with robotics, computer science, and countless other academic and civic organizations.

Despite all of these successes, the school still struggles to meet the needs of all their students due to multiple risk factors, and lack of credit recovery options available to students when a course is failed. With over 2,400 students at GHHS, 12.5% of those students have Individual Education Plans (IEP) and are served through Special Education (Wake County Public School System, 2014). However, within the special education setting, many of these students are behind their anticipated four-year graduation cohort. The vast majority of these students are classified as specific learning disabled in reading, writing, and/or math; other health impaired; or as having a serious emotional disability. They often struggle with attending class and school. In addition, approximately 8.5% of the students are listed as “at-risk” for failing based on many of the aforementioned risk factors (Wake County Public School System, 2014). The school’s cohort graduation rate of 93% is above the state average; however, the school district has been charged by the Superintendent with increasing graduation rate at all schools to 95%, leaving GHHS with

the task of developing a plan of action to help the at-risk and special education students reach graduation (North Carolina School Report Card, 2015c). Many interventions are provided to students during the school day, but they do not address the major concern of credit recovery while still progressing in current classes. There is a strong need to explore alternative methods for students to regain lost credits and be able to continue current classes, thereby increasing their likelihood of on-time graduation.

Within the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) many programs have been used to address the credit recovery problem in the past. Some of the programs implemented in this initiative have been used in the past in various formats some programs have been phased out or replaced. One previous program, *Step-Up*, was intended to return students to grade-level, then re-enter them into the regular class setting at their assigned school. The program targeted students who, while behind in grade-level, showed significant behavioral problems. The program removed students from their current school and provided a structured environment with teachers led instruction in a smaller setting. During the time this program was initiated, leadership was in flux; there was no fidelity in the program from the school and staff. Further, the location of the program was not centralized for the county to support all students. As a result, the program did not produce the quality results anticipated to support its continued funding.

NovaNet is another computer-based program once used at the alternative school and within high schools in the county to provide students a chance to regain credits. This program was the predecessor to the program used in the improvement initiative, *GradPoint*. A certified teacher (not from any specific curriculum area) facilitated these classes and students completed module-based curriculum within core-area subjects.

Students moved at their own pace with no direct instruction and often, once they completed the course, would leave campus and skip class. Since *Nova Net* was typically only used to replace a face-to-face class, its use at most schools did nothing to help a student increase the number of credits they could earn during a single semester.

Two additional programs currently used for students serving long-term suspension are *Infinity* and *Score*. *Score* serves regular education students who have been suspended long-term. The students are responsible for logging into a computer-based program to complete assignments at home. If a student does not have the resources necessary to do so, they have access to satellite sites that have been set up at churches and public libraries. The downside of this program is that with all instruction being delivered solely online, there is no direct teacher supervision of students, providing little accountability. Similar in use, *Infinity* is used for special education students. Housed in a separate wing of the alternative school, *Infinity* provides a certified teacher and program director to oversee the program and provide accountability. The program is used for students who are given long-term suspensions from their school and it provides instruction with a blended learning approach, including both a classroom teacher and online instruction.

North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) is used as a credit recovery method by some schools in WCPSS. NCVPS is offered during the school year at the county's expense and during the summer at the expense of the students. The cost of this course can sometimes be as high as \$430. This becomes a burden for school systems who are already strapped with budget cuts and overcrowded schools to support, especially in smaller counties. This course is run by the state, where a highly qualified

teacher in the specific subject area provides asynchronous instruction. The use of this program during the school year limits the number of classes a student can recover due to cost and the time- a full semester, required to complete each course. The use of this program provides rigor to students as the lessons are designed and carried out by certified teachers. The cost of this program and length of time it takes to complete a course do not help students increase their number of credits to move back towards on-time graduation.

GradPoint, a computer-based instructional program, is currently used across WCPSS. This program is the replacement for the previously used *NovaNet*. In Wake County, high schools use *GradPoint* as a summer school method for credit recovery. In addition, *GradPoint* is used during the school year in smaller settings for course failures, but it is a recovery course in core areas and still does not provide an opportunity for a student to gain more than the traditional four courses during a semester. Only students who have failed a course can be enrolled to retake the course, as they have already received direct teacher instruction and seat time required. A certified teacher is used to facilitate this program, but their certification area varies based on the availability of teachers. There are several benefits to this program, including the ability for multiple students to be enrolled at one time in a variety of core subjects. Further, students can complete one course and move directly to the next course in an effort to recover multiple credits, although most high schools do not currently utilize this aspect. One concern is the lack of rigor provided in a computer-based program. This stems from the concerns that students can search for answers on the Internet and enter them as their own. Teachers also believed the tests are easier for students, as they can continually retake them until they pass. In addition, teachers who have worked with the program have

complained about the lack of student motivation and increased behavior problems. This is due to the fact that students are able to complete the course in a short amount of time and then have downtime during the class, nevertheless they are required to be on-campus in the classroom setting with little to do, or they wait until the end of the semester to rush through the course for completion.

NCVPS is used primarily at GHHS as a first-time credit program for courses not offered at the school in the face-to-face setting. *GradPoint* is used as a credit recovery option only during the school day. NCVPS is another option. This instruction occurs through courses during the school day and in summer school. These options are facilitated with minimal teacher interaction. NCVPS courses last an entire semester and are controlled by a highly qualified teacher outside of the school. *GradPoint* is managed by a teacher who facilitates student progress from module to module. Students have the entire semester to complete the course. The combination of *GradPoint* and NCVPS offerings provide GHHS students increased opportunity to earn or regain credits needed to graduate.

Methodology—After-School Recovery Program (ASRP)

At the initial onset of this initiative, school staff members familiar with *GradPoint* and NCVPS were given a survey (Appendix E). This was given to gain knowledge of the rigor of the NCVPS and *GradPoint* courses. This survey provided meaningful data that allowed the intervention team to explore how the curriculum aligns with standard classroom curriculum, and identifies specific roadblocks encountered with the programs. These data provided an opportunity to make the improvement initiative

more effective in helping teachers unfamiliar with the programs view these program as a resource they could incorporate in their classrooms to assist struggling students.

GHHS administration, counselors, and intervention team members identified students who were considered “at-risk” for failure or currently behind their graduation cohort. Identification criteria included discipline referrals, number of credits needed to reach graduation, and number of years in high school. These students were already on a “watch list” and many had been receiving in-class interventions from their teachers, such as extended time for assignments and Academic Recovery Plans (ARPs). The ARPs were designed to help the students recover their 3rd quarter grades in order to improve their chance of passing their current courses, as they completed remediation assignments and attended tutorials with their teacher. These students were a blend of regular education and special education students.

Research practitioner, Bradford, met with the students to discuss an after-school program that allowed the students to gain more than the normal four credits during the school day by working with an after-school teacher on *GradPoint* and NCVPS courses. Students enrolled in the after-school program completed the entry survey (Appendix F) to provide background information as to why they were in credit recovery courses. The instrument allowed the team to explore any common themes within specific sets of students in an effort to provide the best possible program intervention.

Program results were monitored and reviewed every two weeks by administration. As results became available in 6-week cycles, progress reports were provided to parents. When students were progressing, they continued in the program. For struggling students, a meeting was held with the student to reassess goals and develop a revised plan of

action. Upon completion of the program, all students participated in an exit interview (Appendix G) with Bradford to discuss the program and provide insight for program modification for future use.

Students reached one of three outcomes by the conclusion of the program: (1) they have obtained all necessary recovery credits in order to graduate; (2) they have obtained all credits possible through credit recovery and have been exited from the *ASRP* while continuing their regularly scheduled classes; or (3) if they did not meet any of their goals, and consequently they were exited from the program with no credits earned. If a student completed the program, the credits were added to their transcripts.

A second credit recovery intervention was implemented in the 2015 summer school setting using information from the first intervention, including a strategic selection of teachers and a new presentation method of blended learning. A third intervention cycle was the implementation of an alternative credit program. This used a blended learning approach with strategically selected teacher, but also incorporated a grade recovery component. Figure 4 provides an overview of the differences made with each cycle implementation. In each cycle, adjustments were made based on lessons learned from the previous cycles to see if students responded more positively to the program and environment, thus gaining more credits towards on-time graduation.

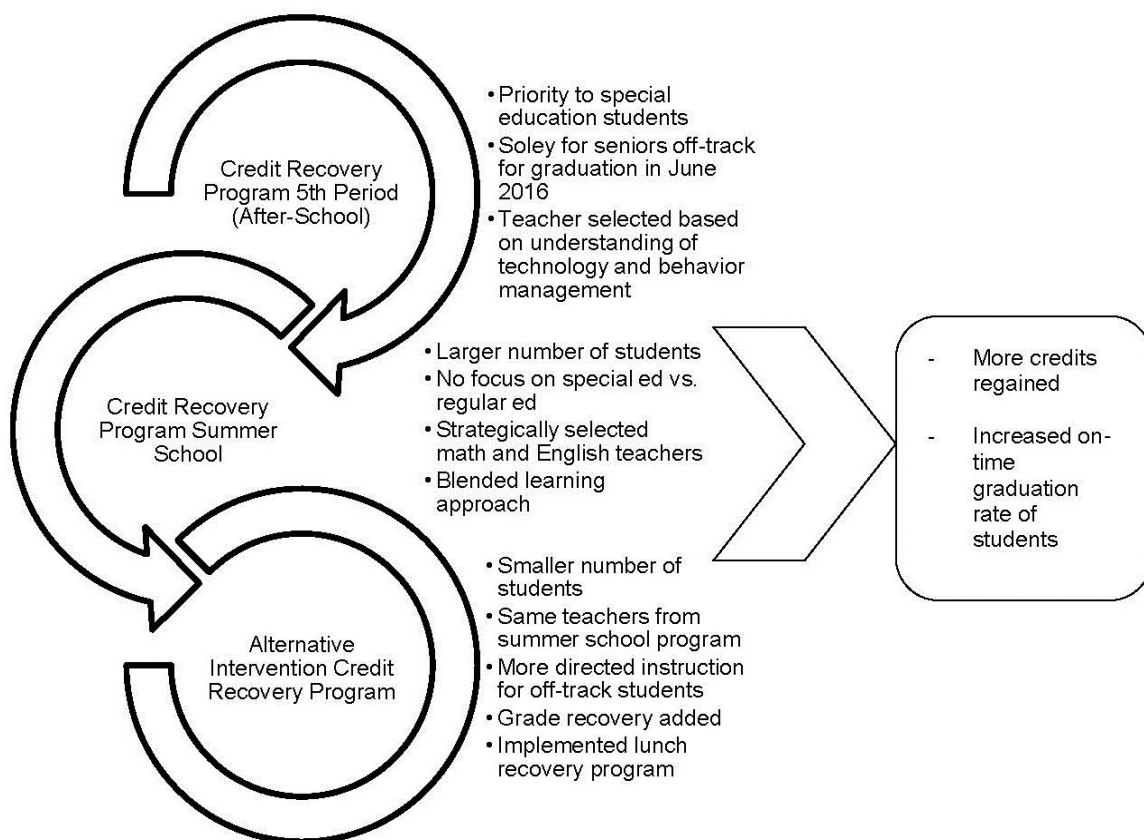


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework—Cycles of Credit Recovery Interventions at GHHS.

Implementation

The Intervention Team included central office personnel, school-based administration, school counselor, and the at-risk and intervention coordinator at GHHS. Central office personnel participating in the design of the program included a Senior Director within Special Education Services who was responsible for providing information about compliance and programs already available in the school for the intervention in regards to special education students. At the school-level, the Dean of Students, School Assistance Program (SAP) counselor, and Intervention Coordinator were involved in using specific data to identify students who were behind their graduation cohort or exhibited behavioral problems, and could be placed in the

intervention program. Once the students were identified, staff reviewed transcripts to identify the number of credits the participants had received and how many were needed to fulfill graduation requirements. As the school-based administrator and research-practitioner, Bradford worked closely as a liaison between central office personnel and school-based team members to ensure everyone fully understood the design and intent of the program.

The implementation team was responsible for carrying out the intervention in the school through the after-school program. In the intervention phase, two teachers at GHHS were hired to facilitate the program. One of the teachers was selected based on his knowledge of computers, while the other was a special education teacher who worked with students with behavioral concerns. The teachers worked with the identified students after-school in a small, structured environment as they completed courses for credit recovery through *GradPoint* and NCVPS shared courses. The teacher contacted parents concerning the progress of the individual students and worked with the counselors and administration to move students to new courses and ensure course credits were recorded on transcript. Along with the SAP Counselor and Intervention Coordinator, the teacher worked to ensure that the structure of the program met the individual needs of the students participating. As the school-based administrator and research-practitioner, Bradford served as the LEA for any parent meetings needed. Bradford also remained in contact with central office personnel and the school principal to provide progress reports and updates concerning the intervention program.

The implementation of this program involved identifying students who were behind their graduation cohort, had failed multiple classes in their high school career, and

displayed behavior problems, including poor attendance. These students may also have had IEPs. The students met with members of the implementation team to discuss the program and options available to help them maximize the number of credits they could earn through structured, online instruction in the after-school program. Goals were routinely set by the student and teacher during these meetings to keep students on track to recover as many credits as possible. This on-going communication, including the student, helped with credit recovery, as well as paving the way for future intervention.

Summary

In order to continue to ensure that all students have access to an appropriate education and support as they progress through high school, schools must become more aware of the challenges faced by students. Whether it is working with highly mobile students, socio-economically disadvantaged students, or students with special learning or behavior concerns, schools must seek new ways to reach all students. Ultimately, we hope to provide schools with a sufficient menu of options so that any student struggling to retain or regain credits finds a path and support that works for them to help them graduate with their class.

CHAPTER FOUR: JACK BRITT HIGH SCHOOL—CREATING PATHS TO HELP HIGHLY MOBILE STUDENTS RETAIN AND REGAIN CREDITS

Evolution of the Improvement Initiative

In the formative stages of this work, discussion centered on the difficulties Highly Mobile Students (HMS) encountered as they moved between schools with different schedule types. These difficulties ranged from problems with course selection to failing to meet graduation requirements. Therefore, the initial intent of this work was to examine the negative effect of moves between schools with different schedule formats on on-time graduation, identify interventions for, and develop programs that would have a direct impact on improving the on-time graduation rate for HMS. Specifically, in this setting, the purpose was to determine the effectiveness of procedures used at Jack Britt High School (JBHS) to evaluate whether or not these current protocols and processes were successful in assisting HMS to graduate on time. Preliminary investigation yielded the insight that in order to ensure graduation for HMS, the school must develop a program to assist counselors with the registration and scheduling process so that all students were consistently and appropriately scheduled.

When I, research practitioner Deborah Womble, began this work, the initial problem of practice was centered on how to help HMS who had lost credit(s) or were in jeopardy of losing credit(s) due to moves to retain and/or regain credits and graduate on time. I began with a review of the procedures in place at JBHS and various other schools to explore strategies used to help these students. During this initial scan of the problem, I saw that many schools in North Carolina used credit recovery options, such as *NovaNet*, *GradPoint*, Summer School, and other such credit recovery programs to help students

recover lost credits. These interventions are all successful, in varying degrees, in helping students to recover already lost credits. While a positive step in helping students graduate on time, it did not solve the problem of helping students before they reached the point where they had lost credit(s). This realization led me to address the credit recovery problem from an approach different from co-authors, Anderson and Bradford, in that I investigated what could be done to help a student before they lost credit.

The next step in the Focus phase of this improvement cycle was a review of the protocols in place at JBHS designed to help students during the registration process so that they could retain as many credits as possible. Based on this review I created a flow chart of best practices and interventions, which developed into the JBHS Personal Registration Process (PRP; see Figure 2, p. 52). The PRP became the focus of this improvement initiative. Both students and school counselors were interviewed to address qualitative research questions regarding their perceptions of the process. I hoped to identify which of these practices were most successful, as well as which were least successful. During this process, I realized that, at JBHS, school administrators were acutely involved with providing solutions to issues for many of the more uncommon or non-traditional transfer problems, but not all counselors readily identified these solutions to help students retain and/or regain credits.

As I interviewed counselors a larger concern began to emerge. Many of the counselors shared a common perception of lack of preparation to address problems that arise with registration and scheduling. They all noted they received no training during their academic preparation at their respective colleges and universities. It appeared the lack of academic training in counselor programs is commonplace. Counselors indicated a

lack of training in strategies, and felt frustrated and inadequate when it came to helping HMS. In fact, high school counselors enter the profession with a lack of training in many areas required of them on a daily basis (Goodman-Scott, 2013; Scarborough, 2005). This includes basic professional requirements, such as reading and evaluating transcripts and understanding how to navigate the more complex transcripts in order to help place students in the most appropriate classes and ensure they stay on track for on-time graduation. Counselors purport the only training for addressing issues with transcripts, curriculum issues, scheduling, and student transfers were during an internship, if their internship was primarily at a high school, or on-the-job training once they had been hired. The realization that counselors felt unprepared and frustrated led me to change the direction of my work, thus pushing me into a new improvement cycle.

In summary, the initial approach of this disquisition was to evaluate schedule types. This developed into an improvement of the processes used to help students ensure on-time graduation. However, in the interview phase of this initiative, it became clear that, while having these procedures in place is indeed important, there was a greater concern. Many counselors are not trained to appropriately address these issues. Therefore, as this improvement initiative evolved, I realized that a training protocol for high school counselors was needed to address this deficit. Based on this, it became necessary to redefine the problem of practice and this work's focus and approach to this problem.

Statement of the Problem

HMS do not often graduate on time because credits are lost or jeopardized due to transfer. Often counselors do not have sufficient training or knowledge of all the possible

strategies and interventions for credit retention and recovery in order to help students retain and/or regain these credits. Further, there is a dearth of structures, protocols, training, and materials for counselors or administrators to assist with early intervention.

In a school with 47.50% of its students identified as federal / military connected, the number of students moving in and out during non-traditional times was great. The October 1, 2014 Transiency Data Report showed that with an enrollment of 1945 students, there were 86 total enrollments and 138 withdrawals. Only 29 of these students transferred within the same school district (Appendix H). This issue of high student mobility was also recognized on the county level.

During the spring of 2015, Cumberland County Schools commissioned a committee to investigate the issues affecting students when they transfer in to a 4x4 block schedule from a traditional seven-period day. Two initiatives resulted from the work of this committee. First, a standardized pacing was required of all high school courses. This ensured that students who transfer between schools within the district are on pace with the curriculum in their new school. The second policy created through the work of this committee, and following a meeting with all high school counselors on March 4, 2015, was presented in a memo on April 9, 2015. This memo defined High School Enrollment Procedures for transfers into the county from out of county or out of state. This policy allowed for Double-Up-To-Catch-Up or Double Block strategies (Appendix A).

This is a larger problem for Cumberland County Schools. With an enrollment population of 51,675 students, there were 7,801 total enrollments and 7,989 withdrawals at non-traditional times during the 2014-2015 school year occurring after 10/1/14

(Appendix I). The extent of this problem was highlighted on a national level, when during the fall of 2015, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) recognized this as an area of great concern in Cumberland County, awarding a nearly \$1.5 million grant (Appendix B) for this purpose. This five-year grant, “*True North: Meeting the Individual Needs of the Military Child*” is intended to provide “social-emotional support to military-dependent students” (Appendix B). The press release for this grant states, “frequent moves, transitions schools, and recurring parent deployments are a few of the issues that can challenge and distract a military-dependent student” (Appendix B).

Purpose of the Improvement Initiative

The purpose of this work was to identify interventions and develop protocols and programs to help HMS who have lost credits or are in jeopardy of losing credits, often caused by the transfer, to graduate on time. This work focuses on developing structures and programs to adequately prepare school personnel in assisting HMS during the transfer process in order to ensure on-time graduation.

Guiding Questions

Throughout the improvement cycle, there were several questions that guided this revised work.

- What interventions, strategies, and processes are effective in helping HMS successfully transfer between schools in non-traditional circumstances?
- What are the skills and depositions needed by counselors to effectively help HMS in non-traditional transfers between schools?

- What can be done to provide counselors with the training needed to effectively resolve these situations?

Each of these guiding questions provided focus for the improvement initiative. These are analyzed in more detail later in this work.

Rationale

The structures built at the culmination of this work may benefit HMS, secondary students, and the families of these students. The implications and recommendations that indicate areas of need in schools and counselor training programs, as well as the development of these structures and programs, may also benefit current and future school counselors, school systems, and the universities that provide school counseling programs. First, the primary purpose of this initiative has been to help HMS retain and/or regain credits that are often lost due to frequent moves. The structures developed may further help HMS have a smoother transition between schools, as well as provide all secondary students with a more effective registration and scheduling process. By providing counselors with training and options for these students, the registration, scheduling, and academic counseling provided to these students will improve. Further, local school systems will be able to access a training program in order to provide counselors Just-In-Time professional development to develop the skills needed to effectively schedule students. Still further, this work may help university programs for school counselors see a disconnect between the academic preparation they are providing and the real world duties that counselors are called upon to perform, and to ameliorate their programs to meet these needs. Counselors-in-training and the school systems who hire them, benefit as they will be better equipped to perform the tasks required of counselors in schools

today, and therefore, provide better service to HMS to help them retain and/or regain credits, thus graduating on time.

Summary

This work has evolved from its original idea of creating programs and strategies to ensure highly mobile students graduate on time, through the realization that many counselors do not receive sufficient academic preparation during their Master's programs in order to be able to execute these strategies. In response to that realization, this work also evolved to develop structures, including the creation of a training program to provide this needed training to counselors to better enable them to perform these duties.

Additional Literature to Consider: School Counselors

As the scrutiny as to how to help HMS graduation on time evolved, and a deeper problem of practice emerged, a concern regarding counselor preparation emerged. It became necessary to research the issue of academic preparedness for school counselors. This literature is divided into two sections: 1. Historical View of School Counselors and 2. Academic Preparation and School Counselor's Perceptions of Academic Preparation of the Actual Job.

School counseling has been a field that has evolved over the years. The focus of counselors, as well as their occupational activities and expectations has changed drastically over time (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). In fact, these roles, expectations, and activities are still in flux, as many counselors continue to be unsure of their roles and continue to perform task not aligned with the Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP), including administrative, clerical, and fair share duties (Burnham & Jackson, 2000).

Historical View of School Counselors

School counseling has been in a state of constant evolution since its inception in 1889, when Jesse B. Davis introduced the first documented school guidance program, as part of his English class in a school where he served as principal (Coy, 1999). This profession was furthered by Frank Parsons, the “Father of Guidance,” who, in 1908, developed the first vocational program, considered to be a forerunner to today’s guidance programs (Coy, 1999). Since that time, the school counseling profession has undergone many changes, including changes in the focus, roles, and activities of a school counselor.

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, school counseling was seen as a response to the U.S. transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy. This transition created a need to help place individuals in jobs, which dictated a focus on vocational counseling and guidance, as well as academic placement (Herr & Erford, 2011). These counselors were often teachers who were given extra responsibilities, including post-school job placement for students. They provided this guidance based on student’s interest, ability, intelligence, and career aspirations (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Herr & Erford, 2011).

During the 1920s and 1930s, school counseling morphed to include diagnostic, clinical, and educational areas of counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). The influence of John Dewey brought an emphasis on the school’s role in promoting the students’ cognitive, personal, social, and moral development (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). This was a time when counselors began to question their professional identity. Other school specialists were hired, including school psychologist and social workers, which led to role confusion for counselors (Herr & Erford, 2011). The high

unemployment of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the large number of returning WWII veterans in the 1940s, who also needed jobs, significantly impacted counselors, and the counseling program once again emphasized vocational and employment counseling (Herr & Erford, 2011). The 1946 Vocational Education Act provided federal funds to support counseling programs, including funding for the training of counselors. The counseling field continued to develop a more humanistic focus, where counselors gave advice and developed more of a relationship with their client, which was in part due to the influence of Carl Rogers, a pioneer in the humanistic approach to psychology through much of the 1900s (Herr & Erford, 2011).

The 1950s saw the counseling field grow into a more professional and established profession. Professional organizations such as the American Counselor Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) were formed, and professional and ethical standards for practice and training were developed (Herr & Erford, 2011). The term 'guidance counselor' was established, and administrative tasks such as scheduling, as well as the advice-giving approach to counseling was emphasized (Herr & Erford, 2011). Career counseling was also an integral part of the job, and was strongly influenced by space exploration in the 1950s, as schools were encouraged to prepare students for careers in math and science (Herr & Erford, 2011; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

The events of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s brought a greater change of focus to the school-counseling program. With the diversity in the United States, the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Movement, and the Disabilities Movement, school counselors were faced with ever increasing complex issues. This was also a time where the profession

itself changed. Whereas counselors had been teachers and administrators, now counselors were being trained to focus on a range of services, including: individual and group counseling, appraisal, staff and parent consultation, placement, and orientation. With newly defined duties, preparation for the field changed, as did the professional identity (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). The Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP) was developed during this time, which included an accountability-based school-counseling framework. These best practices addressed student's academic, career, and personal/social development (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). However, with the decline in student enrollment and budget cuts, many school counselor jobs were eliminated. Counselors began to take on other school duties, including clerical and administrative tasks, in order to maintain their employment (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The 1980s brought a new set of issues to school counselors, with the emphasis on prevention efforts. These included substance abuse, child abuse, pregnancy prevention, and drop-out prevention (Herr & Erford, 2011).

The 1990s and 2000s brought more changes to the school counseling profession. Many of these changes were due to the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While NCLB did allocate some grants for the school counseling program, it also brought an increase in accountability, including a stronger emphasis on accountability to increase the focus on standards-based education, testing, and holding schools accountable for student achievement (Herr & Erford, 2011; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). With the increase in testing, often times counselors were assigned to be testing coordinator or other jobs dealing with testing. Counselors felt this deemphasized the importance of their primary responsibility to deliver school counseling services to students and maintain

direct contact with students (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006). Testing duties such as these were thought to be inconsistent with the role of a school counselor. Organizations such as College Board, ACA, and ASCA began to create reports to define the counselor's role (Dahir, 2001). The term 'school counselor' rather than 'guidance counselor' became the accepted term for this position (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). In 2006, the nonprofit organization, Education Trust, developed the Transforming School Counseling Initiatives (TSCI), which focused on reforming the counselor preparation program, increasing counselor's emphasis on data-driven practices, and emphasizing student achievement and Closing the Gap, with a focus on low-income and minority students. TSCI developed a plan focusing on being an assertive advocate, a leader, a team member, and a consultant (Edtrust Foundation, n.d.). The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs was released in 2003, and aligns with the national standards of CSCP and TSCI (American School Counselor Association, 2016). This National Model ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students, identifies the knowledge and skills all students will acquire as a result of the K-12 comprehensive counseling program, is delivered to all students in a systematic manner, is based on data-driven decision making, and is provided by a state-credentialed school counselor (American School Counselor Association, n.d.). This model suggests that school counselors should spend 80% of their time in direct or indirect counseling services for students. It provides a list of appropriate and inappropriate tasks (American School Counselor Association, n.d.).

Over the course of time, the school counselor role has continually evolved to meet the needs of society, leading to continuous changes in the roles and perceptions of the

school counselor. Understanding this ever-evolving role of the school counselor will go a long way to helping understand the dynamics of HMS and the challenges involved in addressing their needs.

Academic Preparation and School Counselors' Perceptions of Academic

Preparation and the Actual Job

Research has investigated school counselors' perceptions of their job activities (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008), as well as their perceptions of their academic preparation (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005). Although there are many professional organizations that describe the job of the counselor, these descriptions are not always aligned with the actual duties performed by the counselors (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). The recommended role of a school counselor centers around counseling, coordinating, consulting, and collaborating (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). However, counselors often spend a great deal of time in inappropriate activities, including scheduling, discipline, clerical duties, and fair-share responsibilities (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

There are several reasons for this disconnect between the actual job activities and those recommended by professional organizations. One reason may be that academic preparation programs have adopted a mental health focus, with much of the course work centered on counseling, rather than on education (Edtrust Foundation, n.d.; Schayot, 2008). Another reasons may be that school counselors work in schools or for administrators who are not familiar with the prescribed duties of a school counselor, and as such, may assign inappropriate activities to counselors (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). School administrators may have a different perspective

of what a school counselor's job is based on their own experiences. They feel that assigning clerical tasks, such as registration, scheduling, testing, student records, and other such tasks are appropriate tasks for a school counselor (Pèrusse & Goodnough, 2005). And counselors, often because they are people pleasers, tend to agree to accept these tasks rather than confront and educate these administrators (Schayot, 2008; Sears & Granello, 2002).

Counselors acknowledge that they are often assigned duties that are inconsistent with the recommended duties of a counselor. They also acknowledge a disconnect between the actual job and the academic preparation they receive in their Master's programs (Goodman-Scott, 2013; Pèrusse & Goodnough, 2005; Schayot, 2008). The standards established by the ASCA and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) were used to identify 30 roles of school counselors. While counselors perceived themselves to be somewhat prepared for many of their roles, they did identify several roles where they felt their academic preparation was insufficient (Schayot, 2008). Counselors recommended that training be more realistic, including providing counselors with training in scheduling and other clerical jobs (Pèrusse & Goodnough, 2005). A study from the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) noted nearly one-third of the participants in their national study revealed that they did not feel prepared for their actual job (National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, 2011). Often it is during field experiences and internships where counselors in-training are given the opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in the actual job (Schayot, 2008).

Summary

The field of counseling has been in a continuous state of flux since its inception. However, the academic preparation does not seem to have maintained a realistic view of the actual job. This has created conflict between the idealist academic preparation and the realities of the actual duties of the job. This opens the door for further research into the realities of the job and establishing the defined roles of school counselors, then develop ways to build the academic preparation of universities in order to meet those needs (Pèrusse & Goodnough, 2005).

Methods

This review of methodology is divided into five sections. The first section gives an overview of the 90-Day Cycle and the PDSA Cycle. Section two describes the improvement framework, identifies the students and counselors included in the improvement initiative, as well as outlining the interview used to collect data. The methods, including improvement framework, basic assumptions, and interview used to collect data are discussed in section three. Section four shares the procedures for this improvement initiative. Data processing and analysis are presented in section five.

The 90-day Cycle and PDSA Cycle

90-Day cycle. Prior to the start of the 90-Day research cycle, a Pre-Cycle led the development of this work. This phase began as conversation about the issues of students who transfer between schools with different schedule formats at non-traditional times, often leading to loss of credit, which in turn hindered on-time graduation. This evolved into collaboration between co-authors Lisa Anderson and Christopher Bradford, who were also concerned with the on-time graduation of their students. During this phase we

realized that many students had external circumstances that often contributed to them not graduating on time. Issues such as behavior resulting in suspension, learning difficulties, socio-economic distress, frequent moves, family issues, and many other external factors were considered. I identified my focus group as HMS who were in jeopardy of not graduating on time. Anderson, Bradford, and I began to discuss these circumstances, as well as some of the ways various schools attempted to work with these students to help them retain and/or regain credits to keep them on-track for on-time graduation.

Based on this, the 90-Day research cycle began with a Scan of the literature. While there was not a great deal of literature on HMS failing to graduate on time, it did confirm there was indeed a concern. However, there was a dearth of literature to prescribe ways to help these students. This led to discussions with members of the consultation team at JBHS who works with these HMS, as well as interviews with students and school counselors. These interviews substantiated that helping HMS stay on track to graduate on time was truly a problem. These interviews also brought to light another concern as counselors shared their frustrations of not being trained during their Master's programs in how to address such situations and help these students.

The Focus stage of the 90-Day Cycle led to discussion with the consultation team to determine if what is done at JBHS is effective. I identified these steps and best practices in the process used at JBHS to develop our registration protocol, the Personalized Registration Process (PRP) (See Figure 2, p. 51).

It was clear the PRP was generally an effective way to meet the individual needs of students. However, it seemed counselors were more likely to resort to credit recovery options for lost credits than to try to help students retain credits before they were lost.

Most of the JBHS counselors seemed unaware of other options to help HMS and often left potentially creative solutions to administrators.

The final stage of the 90-Day Cycle was to develop a training program and ensure that the training program was appropriate and helpful. Based on interviews and discussion with my consultation team, I identified the topics and skills that were necessary for a counselor to effectively help a student transfer. From that list I created a 12-module prototype for the training program. This prototype covered topics such as, NC graduation requirements, how to evaluate a transcript, how to place students in appropriate classes, how to identify course equivalency between similar courses, how to schedule students coming from a different schedule format, and more. Counselors with various levels of experience then reviewed this training program to examine its validity and usefulness. These counselors made suggestions for improvement. I analyzed their recommendations and amended the modules based on these suggestions. After working through this improvement cycle, the prototype for the training program was finalized and uploaded into *BlendSpace* (<https://www.tes.com/lessons/VSKQEu1zj5IQsw/edit>).

The flowchart in Figure 5 depicts the progression of the development of a counselor training program. It begins with the needs assessment, moves into gap analysis, develops a prototype, then following feedback, continues to improve upon the program. This process used an improvement science cycle in order to identify a need and move into the development of a program to meet that need.

After this improvement cycle, I reflected upon the process to develop suggestions and implications for future steps. During this process I was approached with request to

share the training program with other schools and school systems. This provides implications for future use and further improvement.

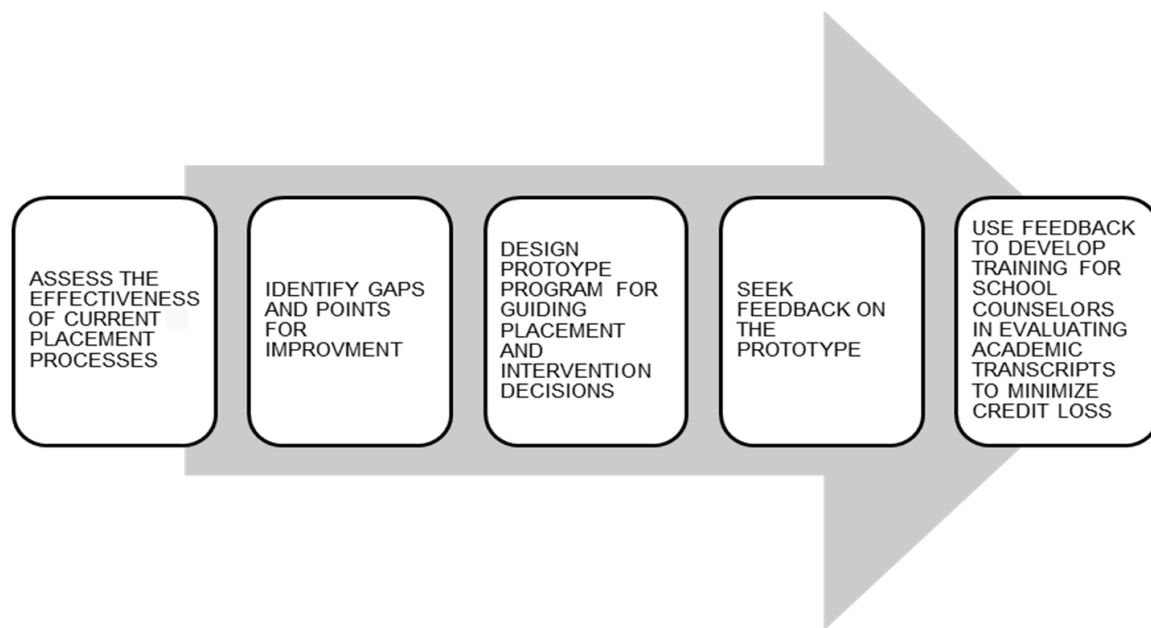


Figure 5. Evolution of Improvement Science for Creation of Training Program.

The Plan-Study-Do-Act (PDSA) Cycle. This research cycle was a continuous looping of PDSA cycles. The first PDSA cycle began as a review of the problem of practice at JBHS. During the Plan phase, I began with a review of literature to provide a deeper understanding of the problem. I also identified staff members to serve as a consultation team, including the (former) lead counselor at JBHS; (former), principal; Counselor 4, a new counselor; Counselor 1, a veteran counselor; the *GradPoint* instructor; and the Exceptional Children’s Case Manager. These individuals served as sounding boards for advice and suggestions. During the Do stage of this cycle, I developed a flow chart of the processes already in place at JBHS (Figure 2, p.51). As I moved to the Study phase of the cycle I interviewed students and counselors to further investigate their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Personalized Registration Process

(PRP). However, as I moved into the Act phase, I realized, based on the interviews of the counselors, that there was a more significant problem. This realization that counselors felt ill-equipped to meet the needs of transferring HMS students propelled me into another PDSA cycle.

In order to develop a gap analysis in this next PDSA cycle, I began the Plan phase by reviewing the notes from the counselor interviews. I also spoke with members of my consultation team to ensure that my understanding of the problem was in line with their perception. In the Do phase I identified the problem that counselors were not trained during their academic preparation for duties such as scheduling. Therefore, unless they had on-the-job training, many counselors did not feel adequately equipped to schedule students who posed non-traditional or unusual registration circumstances, and they generally relied on an administrator or lead counselor to handle these more difficult situations and provide solutions. However, as I moved forward, it became apparent that I had skipped a vital part of the Study aspect of this cycle. When I moved to the Act phase of the cycle I began to create a training program. As I began I realized there was a missing component to my process. I realized that other than the counselors at JBHS, I did not have sufficient evidence that this perceived lack of training was a problem. I returned to the Study phase of the cycle and began an additional literature review, finding several studies that confirmed that counselors do indeed identify a disconnect between what they study in school and what they actually do in their job. This includes evaluating transcripts to help students who transfer at non-traditional times and between different schedule formats (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Lambi & Williamson, 2004). After completing this, I moved back to the Act phase of this cycle and developed a training

program for counselors based on my findings in the literature, as well as from discussions and interactions with the counselors at JBHS.

As I began to plan a prototype for a training program, this overlapped into yet a third PDSA Cycle. I conferred with the counselors on my consultation team, as well as counselors at two other schools. I questioned them about their training, concerns about transfer students, and issue they face during the registration process. In the Do phase of the cycle I created this program. This 12-module training program began with very basic requirements of knowing the requirements for graduation in North Carolina, and moved through a series of increasingly more complex transcript issues that may plague counselors during a transfer registration, culminating in assessment activities to allow counselors to evaluate their effectiveness. The Study phase of this cycle included initial review of the training protocol. Counselors with various levels of experience went through an early draft of the training modules. They provided feedback. The final Act phase of the cycle involved the implementation of several of the recommendations in order to improve upon the prototype, followed by having the lead counselor for Cumberland County Schools provide a final review, and implementing her recommendations.

A logic model was developed, along with a conceptual framework to help maintain the focus of this improvement initiative. It became easy to veer into side topics, such as counselor preparation programs and counselors' perceptions of their jobs. I found that I spent several weeks researching these topics, only to realize when it came time to write about them that, although they were significant issues, they were not the primary issue regarding the problem of practice at hand. The logic model in Figure 6

helped me maintain a focus on the problem at hand. Within the logic model, a new conceptual framework was created to illustrate the phases of the PDSA cycles and objectives of this improvement initiative. This conceptual framework became, not only a visual depiction of the process of improvement science in the improvement initiative, but also a reminder of the focus of the problem of practice—helping HMS maintain on-time graduation.

Improvement Framework

This improvement framework used improvement science in order to examine the problem of practice, then create and implement a program so as to improve on-time graduation for HMS. The purpose of the improvement initiative was to investigate issues faced by HMS when they transferred to new schools and provide support to help them maintain on-time graduation. Interviews were used to identify counselor perceptions and gaps in knowledge and skills needed to do their job. The rationale for selecting this design was that semi-structured interviews were most appropriate for gathering the stories of the students and counselors. This provided evidence to support the perceived problem of practice. These interviews identified a need for a training protocol for counselors. Once this was developed, counselors were asked to review the modules and provide feedback. The counselors were given guiding questions, but were allowed flexibility in order not to prejudice the feedback. After analyzing the results of their written responses, these counselors were interviewed and given the opportunity to elaborate on their feedback. Based on the feedback, the training modules were revised. The lead counselor for Cumberland County Schools evaluated the program and identified

Purpose: Improve on-time graduation.

Problem: Student mobility hinders on-time graduation for many learners.

Improvement Goal: Create systems and tools to develop the skills of school counselors to use student transcript data to inform decisions regarding placement in classes or other intervention options that will increase the likelihood of on-time graduation.

Intervention: Use a 90-Day-Cycle to improve processes for retaining and regaining credits of highly mobile students at Jack Britt High School.

Phases:

- Identify existing placement tools
- Assess the effectiveness of existing placement tools
- Identify Gaps
- Design prototype program to improve counselor skills
- Collect counselor feedback on prototype
- Refine prototype

Outcomes: New tools are in place at Jack Britt High School to assist counselors in recommending appropriate interventions for retaining and regaining credits of highly mobile students.

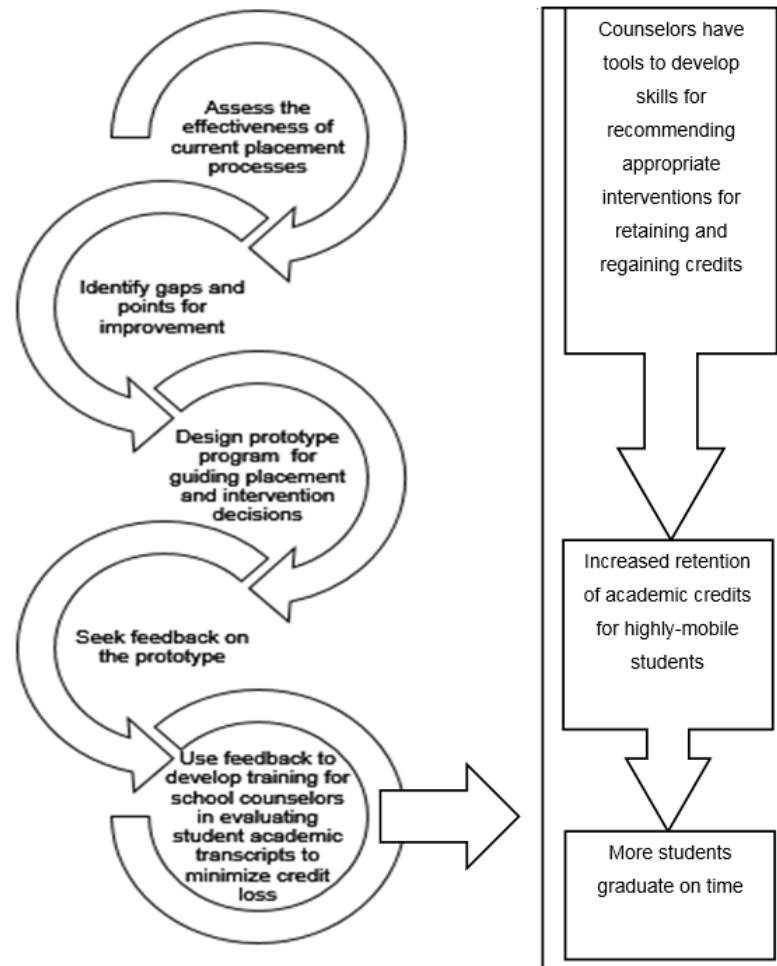


Figure 6. Logic Model.

additional areas for improvement. Based on this feedback, additional revisions are being made for future use in the county and across the state.

Identification of Population

The setting for this improvement initiative was JBHS. Here students were identified when, during the registration process, they spoke informally about their experiences with frequent moves. They were eager to seek me out to share their stories. I selected 20 students of various grades, academic achievement, race, and gender. These students were selected because of their frequent mobility. Of these, eight never returned their assent forms, and two students' parents/guardians refused to allow them to participate. From these, ten HMS at JBHS were interviewed. One interview occurred during the pre-cycle phase (Appendix J). This informal interview was with a student and his mother as they were preparing to move yet again. This student was interviewed well before the others and was not given the established interview questions of the others. This informal interview was the catalyst for the development of this improvement initiative, including the development of the interview questions. The other nine students were interviewed in the spring of 2015. Two were interviewed in a one-to-one setting. One of these students, Student 1 was a high school junior who had already attended three high schools and was planning to PCS (Permanent Change of Station move) in October to a fourth high school in Germany. The other student, Student 4, had only been in two high schools, but she was only a freshman. Two sets of students were interviewed as pairs. The first set included two juniors. Student 2 had been in two high schools and a total of five schools. Student 3 has been in three different high schools in his three years of high school, with a total of six different schools in his academic career. The other pair of

students, included Student 5, a junior who has attended four or five schools; and Student 6, a sophomore, who has attended three high schools, and possibly 11 or 12 schools over his academic career. The final group to be interviewed included three freshmen. Student 7, a repeating ninth grader, who had attended nine schools, including four high schools. Student 8, also a repeating ninth grader, had attended seven schools, two of which were high schools. She too is a repeat ninth grader. Student 9 has only attended one high school, but has attended eight schools over the course of his education.

In addition to students, counselors were also interviewed. JBHS has five full time school counselors, who range in experience from one (1) to 20 years. Two counselors are male and three are female. The lead counselor has been a counselor for eight years, and has been at multiple high schools. She received her Master's in Education with a specialization in School Counseling from Liberty University. She served as a pillar of my consultation team; however, she was not included in the interviews as she changed jobs prior to the end of this initiative. Two of the female counselors were interviewed. Counselor 2 has been a counselor for 20 years and has always worked in high school, with this her third school. Counselor 3 has only been at JBHS. She was a teacher at the school prior to becoming a counselor. She has been a counselor for eight years. Both of these counselors have a Master's degree in school counseling from the University of North Carolina–Pembroke, and Counselor 3 has an advanced Master's Degree in counseling from the University of North Carolina–Greensboro. Counselor 1 has been a school counselor for 10 years and has only served at JBHS. He also received his Master's degree from the University of North Carolina–Pembroke. Counselor 4, a first year a school counselor, has recently begun working at JBHS. Prior to this he worked in

public social work for Child Protective Services. His Master's degree is in Clinical Mental Health, and he is a lateral entry counselor. Both of the male counselors were further included, along with two additional counselors, as consultants to review and provide feedback on the training program. Both of these additional counselors are females, Counselor 6 with five years of experience, and Counselor 5 with eight years of experience. These counselors were selected based on personal conversations where they each had expressed frustration with registering and scheduling HMS and had expressed an interest in the training program during its planning stages. Although these counselors are not school counselors at JBHS, they do serve nearby high schools within Cumberland County. Including these counselors in this improvement initiative confirmed that this is not a problem exclusive to JBHS. One additional counselor, the lead counselor for Cumberland County Schools, evaluated the program after many revisions had been made.

Instrument Used: Student and Counselor Surveys

The interviews were semi-structured interviews, with guiding questions. The student interview consisted of ten questions. These questions provided background information, as well as information about the student's perceptions of the issues associated with the registration process and moving (Appendix K). Questions such as, "What have been the biggest challenges to changing schools?" provided students with the opportunity to explain their circumstances. The counselor interview gathered data about the counselor's education and experience, as well as insight into their ability to find solutions for students with complex registration processes. Counselors were asked to explain the process in place, as well as think of "outside of the box" resources.

Counselors were also asked about the training they received in order to do their job (Appendix L).

Three of the counselors who reviewed the training program were also asked to take a modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS: Scarborough, 2005; Modified SCARS, Goodman-Scott, 2013). This was initially used to confirm that the studies by Scarborough and Goodman-Scott had implications into this improvement initiative. I had thought I would administer this on a larger scale; however, after discussion with my disquisition chair, I realized that use of this survey and the evaluation of the data it would gather was veering away from the purpose of this improvement initiative.

The four counselors who tested the prototype were given a pretest to self-assess their proficiency in six skills necessary for evaluating records and registering a transfer student. These included the ability to:

- Read and evaluate a transcript;
- Enroll students from a different schedule format (i.e. - 7 period day to a 4x4, hybrid, etc.
- Compare course from different states with similar names to determine credit;
- Provide assistance for students following guidelines for McKinney-Vento, Military Compact, etc.;
- Maintain/Complete educational reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, dropout reports, etc.

This pretest used a Likert scale to self-assess their perception of their ability in these six areas (Appendix M). These six tasks were chosen based on conversation with counselors and situations where counselors had asked me or another administrator for assistance in registering students. Following the review of the prototype, the counselors were asked to self-assess again using this same instrument.

Reliability and Validity of Interviews/Surveys

The interviews used in this improvement initiative were created and evaluated during a doctoral course EDRS 803- Data Collection. Based upon the feedback from the instructor, these questions were revised. Having the lead counselors review them prior to distribution further validated the questions. As they were acknowledged to be clear and easily understood, these questions were used. The Scarborough SCARS and Revised SCARS used by Dr. Goodman-Scott were examined for reliability and validity through the use of a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient used to measure the reliability of the academic preparation items within each of the subscales (Goodman-Scott, 2013; Santos, 1999). However, this instrument was only used to validate the consistency of the counselors reviewing the training prototype to the national results of this instrument. The interview questions used to guide counselor feedback were developed with the help of the lead counselors as we identified the components on which each counselor should comment.

The Development of the Counselor Training Prototype

The original intent had been to develop a program all counselors could use, identifying strategies and interventions to help students graduate on time. In the spring of 2015, I interviewed four of the five counselors at JBHS in order to better understand the

registration process from their perspective. I hoped to identify many of the strategies and interventions used to help properly schedule the many HMS who enrolled each year at Jack Britt. The training program that developed as a product of this disquisition grew from a need identified during these interviews.

Each counselor was adamant the coursework provided during their academic preparation did not train them for the day-to-day operational duties required on the actual job. Counselor 1 explained he received, “outside of my practicum... minimal training specific to high school.” He said he took a course that “dealt a lot with planning interventions, but most of it seemed more appropriate and geared towards elementary school-aged students, the type and level of intervention would be more . . . like you tell the classroom teacher for a third grader who was having trouble not sniffing glue.” He stated that most of his knowledge came from “professional development” and from “one of my mentors early in counseling [who] was a secondary lead counselor . . . and was able to work one-on-one with [him] on things like evaluating transcripts, using technology to sort of manage your caseload, scheduling decisions, that sort of thing.” When asked about preparatory training for the day-to-day duties, such as evaluating transcripts and making scheduling decisions, Counselor 1 replied, “I don’t believe we’ve received any, except for on occasion, when we go to our regular staff development with the County Office, sometimes those things are discussed. As far as my graduate degree, none of that was ever mentioned.” Counselor 3 affirms this, saying “our undergraduate did not train us for evaluating any kind of transcript at all.” She continued to explain that all counselors, regardless of their grade level preference, take the same coursework. And since lower grades do nothing with transcripts or that level of scheduling, it is “not

something they consider.” Counselor 3 also confirmed “its OJT . . . that part, in Practical or whatever they call it, whatever school you go to. That part is the part that’s supposed to train you for that. In the classroom they do not cover an iota, at least, not the ones we were in and we’re at the same classroom.” Counselor 2 agrees. “They train us to be school counselors, to counsel children. . . . Not how to do a transcript and schedule.” Counselor 3 says that those “specific things I got, that were hands-on, were when I actually had been doing them in the schools.” Counselor 4 shared that he had received no preparation in his Master’s program, however his Master’s degree is in Clinical Mental Health.

Counselor 2 says that they have had some staff development at the county level where they “sometimes [go] over some of this type of information. Unfortunately, it’s not often enough or thorough enough, but at least they do cover it on occasion.”

Counselor 3 noted,

We have, recently had something at staff development that, basically was what we were doing. We helped other people, because we are at a very good school. It definitely is not something gone over, except when you’re in your school. When you’re doing your internship at the school, and then people teach you. In classroom, no . . .” (Appendix L)

It was rewarding to hear her mention the recent professional development because this was presented by counselors, including our lead counselor, following a discussion she and I had previously held regarding the need for this type of professional development. Based on our conversation and suggestion about using transcripts and having counselors review what to do and have discussions comparing this, she had actually tested this during the spring professional development. She had reported back that this was

successful and well received. However, hearing it from other counselors who attended affirmed this was the type of staff development that was needed.

This feedback confirmed that there is indeed a strong need for training for high school counselors in order for them to be able to proficiently meet the day-to-day demands of the job. Therefore, the product for this disquisition, a counselor-training program, began as a response to a topic identified during interviews with counselors.

Over the course of the summer, we registered nearly 300 students. Since only two counselors worked during the summer months, and one of them was Counselor 4, a counselor with only one year of experience, I was often consulted about the registrations. I began to document some of the skills needed to go into the registration and scheduling process. Some of the following were most noted:

- Knowledge of the NC high school graduation requirements;
- Reading a transcript;
- Using the transcript to identify what is needed to graduate and properly placing a student in their correct grade;
- Identify course equivalencies and understanding the difference between course equivalency and courses which are similar but do not meet graduation requirements;
- Transferring between Common Core Standards and other Essential Standard Curriculums;
- When to place a student in Honors or AP level courses;
- When to place a student in Foundations of Math as opposed to Math 1;
- How to handle half credits or classes that earn more than a single credit.

As the school year began, I continued to oversee many of the registrations, especially when there was a non-traditional situation. During the fall, I noticed other issues that were problematic for students and counselors. This included:

- How to transfer students from a traditional 7-period day into a 4x4 block schedule program;
- How to schedule a student coming from a class that we do not offer;
- How to schedule a student who has failed part of the course, but been awarded partial credit;
- How to help a student regain credits they have previously lost;
- Placing students in *GradPoint* credit recovery or NCVPS as an option.

I held on-going conversations with members of my consultation team about these issues and to determine if there was a true need for them to be included in the training.

From this point I began to collect transcripts from students who were transferring in to JBHS. I searched for transcripts that highlighted the identified problems. After redacting the names or identifying features, I made notes about the issues faced by each transcript. I conferred with members of the counseling staff or consultation team to validate that my proposed solutions to best serve these students were accurate. At this point some of the counselors were bringing me registration packets where they struggled to find a viable solution or were uncertain about their authority to apply some of these non-traditional strategies. I used these encounters to discuss these issues with the counselors. I documented the issues that were confusing or for which they did not seem to have a solution. I kept a folder for each of the identified topics, and as I found examples of student transcripts or counselor registrations that exemplified these topics, I

made photocopies and put them in the folder with notes as to the problem or ways to approach the problem. This began the basis for the training modules.

The Training Prototype

As the prototype for the training evolved, including an introduction, there were 12 modules created (Appendix N). Each module was developed into a PowerPoint. Additionally, a consultative checklist, and a PRP flow chart was revised for inclusion as a resource. See Appendix DD for descriptors that provide an overview of each of the modules.

Chronology of the Improvement Initiative

The chronology section details the improvement initiative in chronological order. First permission to conduct this work was obtained from the Institutional Review Board. In addition, the principal of JBHS also acknowledged assent to conduct this improvement initiative. I solicited counselor and student participation via personal communication and followed this with assent forms. In the case of students this assent form had to be signed by the student and their parent/guardian.

During the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015, the pervasiveness of the problem became exceeding clear. I began discussions with members of the consultative team and conducted an extensive review of the literature on the subject of HMS and their struggle to maintain on-time graduation.

Initial interviews were conducted in the spring of 2015. I began with student interviews. Students were selected based upon their frequent mobility. Many of the students who were initially broached to participate in the initiative were recent transfers. Either they were enrolling in school during this semester or their counselor had asked me

to review their registration for the upcoming year in order to arrange a course or implement an intervention in order to catch the student up and remain on track to graduate on time. As I reviewed the student's records, I sought to meet the students. I originally spoke with 20 students. Students were asked to come to my office where I explained the initiative and process. Students were given an assent form to take home to review, sign, and have their parent/guardian sign. Ultimately, only nine students returned the Assent Forms granting permission to be interviewed. Students met with me in my office. I again explained the procedure and asked if they had questions. Three students interviewed as a group, two sets of students interviewed as pairs, and two students interviewed independently.

I followed a similar format for counselor interviews during May and June of 2015. Of the five counselors, four returned the assent form. The lead counselor, who actually served on my consultation team, did not return the form. Although she continued to say that she wanted to participate, she accepted another job before she returned the form. Each counselor who completed the assent form was interviewed. Two of the counselors were interviewed together. The other two interviewed independently. The interviews were translated (Appendix O).

I recorded the interviews, and had them transcribed (Appendix O). During July and August of 2015, I used an informal coding process to identify recurring topics in the interviews. This helped me to narrow my focus of research, and later provided support for the development of the training prototype.

Over the course of the summer and fall, I reviewed these interviews and had further discussion about transfer students with counselors and my consultation team. I

identified a variety of topics that needed to be addressed in the counselor training.

During the fall of 2015 I began to create a training program. This went through several stages of revision before sharing it with a guidance secretary for editing and feedback in October 2015. I selected this secretary as someone who had some experience with transcripts and enough knowledge of the registration process that she could identify gaps in the program or make suggestions as to the organizational elements of the program. While many of her suggestions were typographical or cosmetic, there were two topics, which she identified as confusing. Based on this, I made minor revisions to the program prototype.

Following this, in October and November 2015, the program was given to four different counselors with varying levels of experience. Initially three of the counselors who reviewed the training program were also asked to take a modified version of the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (Modified SCARS, Goodman-Scott, 2013; SCARS: Scarborough, 2005). The intent of this instrument was to examine the roles and perceptions of training and determine if the study by Scarborough and Goodman-Scott had implications into this improvement initiative. I had planned to administer this on a larger scale, however, after discussion with my Disquisition Chair, I realized that use of this survey and the evaluation of the data it would gather was veering away from my purpose. Therefore, I did not continue with the distribution of this survey.

Prior to the testing of the prototype, each counselor was given a pre-assessment. In this they rated their proficiency in six tasks required to register transfer students. Each counselor was provided with the prototype of the training program on a flash drive and was asked to work through each module in the training. To prepare the counselors for the

training program, I spoke with each one. I informed them of the format of the program, and reminded them that this was a draft. I further provided them with guiding questions to consider in developing feedback. These questions were purposively open to allow for personal reflection and not prejudice their thinking. This also allowed counselors flexibility in how they wished to respond. These guiding questions asked counselors to comment on the order and difficulty level, identify missing components, and offer other interventions or suggestions. These questions were provided again in an email (Appendix P). Counselor feedback was received as written notes that commented on the positives attributes of the program and identified areas for improvement. Each of these counselors was later interviewed and asked to elaborate on their feedback and suggestions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Although many of the findings were cosmetic in nature, there were some elements which required me to reevaluate, reconfigure, and revise the training program. After these adjustments were made to the training modules, the program was uploaded into *BlendSpace*. It was then shared with these same counselors for a final review.

All data were collected and stored on flash drives; a password protected personal laptop computer; and in DropBox, a password protected online storage unit. No personal identification information or names were released.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that the transcript information sent to the receiving school from sending schools is up-to-date and accurate.
2. It is assumed that participants during the interviews will answer the questions to the best of their ability and honestly.

3. It is assumed that participants took the time to go through each of the modules carefully and provide input to the best of their ability.

Summary

This chapter provides a description of the methodology used in the improvement initiative. Identification of subjects and instruments used to investigate the problem of working with HMS to ensure they retain and/or regain credits jeopardized because of frequent moves were illustrated. Further included are details of the development of the training program created in order to provide counselors with the needed skills to help ensure the on-time graduation of these students.

Findings

In this initiative, data from interviews with school counselors showed a disconnect between counselors' training and the activities they routinely are expected to do in the job, specifically those tasks required to register and work with HMS who transfer in and out of schools, and due to these frequent moves, are often at risk for losing credits and failing to graduate on time.

Qualitative Data Presentation and Analysis of Topics

- What interventions, strategies, and processes are effective in helping HMS successfully transfer between schools in non-traditional circumstances?
- What are the skills and depositions needed by counselors to effectively help HMS in non-traditional transfers between schools?
- What can be done to provide counselors with the training needed to effectively resolve these situations?

Analysis: Topic 1. What interventions, strategies, and processes are effective in helping HMS successfully transfer between schools in non-traditional circumstances and maintain on-time graduation?

To analyze this topic, 10 students were interviewed. One student was an early, informal interview (Appendix J). It is from his interview that the development of this problem of practice began. He transferred before the formal interview process was in place; therefore, he was not included in this improvement initiative. Nine other HMS were interviewed. The same questions were posed to each of them during a face-to-face interview. Some students were interviewed individually; others were interviewed in pairs or small groups. All participants were transfer students to JBHS. The participants remain anonymous, and identified as Student 1 to 9 (see Table 1). Documented in the following sections are some of the candid responses of the participants. The complete interviews are included in Appendix Q.

During the interviews, students were asked to identify:

- Number of schools and moves, as well as when they moved;
- Reasons for the moves;
- Benefits to frequent moves;
- Challenges to these moves;
- Information about the registration process and counselor assistance; and
- Recommendations to assist other HMS.

Each student provided feedback about each of these topics, however, in so doing, several of these topics were divided, and sub-topics were further identified.

Table 1

JBHS Demographics of Students Interviewed

Student	Age	Grade	Gender	Ethnicity	# of schools attended	# of high schools attended	Reasons for moves
1	17	11	Male	Hispanic	9—will attend one more prior to graduating	3	Military PCS
2	17	11	Female	Caucasian	5	2	Military PCS Then finally a job with stability
3	17	11	Male	Caucasian	6	3	Financial—better job
4	14	9	Female	African-American	4 (?)	2	Family/Financial
5	15	10	Male	Asian	11–12	3	Military PCS/Military Contractor
6	17	11	Male	African-American	3	4–5	Military/Family
7	15	9	Female	Multi-Racial	9	4	Military PCS
8	15	9	Female	Caucasian	7	2	Moved to live with various family members
9	15	9	Male	Caucasian	8	1	Military PCS

Students mentioned two specific benefits to frequent moves. One was making new friends and the other was experiential. Student 1 noted that “you expand your horizon of how to socialize with people.” And, “you get different environments.” Student 2 also claimed a benefit is “just seeing the new cultures around and making new friends and making more relationships with others.” Student 6 concurs, saying “I have a wide range of friends that I’ve met over the years, and I honestly say that I wouldn’t have that if I didn’t move a lot.” When asked if it was easy for him to make friends, he

responds, “Oh yeah, I’m a very likable person.” Student 8 also acknowledges meeting “really good friends.” Student 7 agrees, “we get to experience new things and we get to meet new people.” Student 5 identifies benefits as “being able to adapt to your surroundings . . . [and] fit in with the school.” Student 3 also said “the advantages to learning are getting to experience different places, different kinds of people, different types of classes and types of learning.” Student 9 says, “you’re always able to be inspired everywhere you go, meet some new good people, and in time you need a recommendation for a move in a new place you can always go back to the people that you met.” Student 4 identifies a benefit as, “you get a new start.” Student 8 echoes this thought, adding that she had been arrested and done some “bad things,” but was able to come here and have a fresh start. And although not mentioned as a benefit, students identified adaptability and/or resilience as trait among HMS. This is certainly a benefit to students as they adjust to new situations.

In addition to these benefits, students shared several struggles. Each student mentioned that it was difficult to leave friends behind. Student 6 says, “it’s kind of sad leaving friends that you’ve got to know personally and got to personally know you. It hurts kind of, but then at the same time you’re just going to meet more people in life. It’s just a stepping stone.” Student 7 agrees that losing “some of your closest friends” is difficult. Student 2 also commented “it’s hard leaving behind all of your old friends.” Student 1 states that it is more than just close friends, “there’s different crowds of people, there’s different social groups. . . . As well, classes and teachers.” Student 9 agrees including that “it’s also challenging to make sports teams wherever you move.”

These nine students also self-identified five various components to academic struggles, including:

- Conflicts in transfer between various schedule formats;
- Loss, or threat of loss, of credits;
- Not meeting graduation requirements;
- Pacing issues;
- Current classes not offered at a new school.

Several of these issues stem from transfer between various scheduling formats, which jeopardizes credits. This puts students behind in meeting graduation requirements, which places them at risk to not graduate on time. Student 1 shared that he transferred in to this school from a high school on a different schedule format.

I had to move mid-way through the semester, which cut my credits in half, basically only giving me half credits and not the whole class. Then I had to retake what is biology, math 1, English 1, and history. Doing that, I'm also behind on my history currently, so then I have to make that up before I graduate since it's a requirement. (Appendix J)

A bigger issue for this student is that he will not graduate from Jack Britt. Even as he enrolled in this school in the spring of 2014, he knew he would PCS again in the fall of 2015 since his brother, who is his guardian, would be deployed to Germany for at least a year. He shared his frustration with this, saying, "At first I was confused and I didn't know what had happened, but then as I progressed, I could see that it was half the semester, so it was half the class, although I do see it as a big setback because that's a whole semester that I have to retake." Student 2 had a similar concern about courses not providing graduation credit. She too had some half credits, and had been in a school where a science class counted as an environmental science toward a graduation

requirement, but would not count for that here, only as a science elective. There were other classes she had, such as religion seminary class, which counted as an extra social studies in her previous school that only gave an elective credit here. Student 6 also had an issue with science classes. He said, “Well, I was in astronomy and geology at my old school. . . . But when I came [here, they] didn’t have astronomy or geology and that’s like one of my favorite things.” Additionally, these courses would count toward graduation credits in his previous school, but do not count, except as a science elective here. Student 6 was already behind in science because when he transferred in he transferred in only a half credit of biology, and he enrolled too late to earn seat time in many classes, having to audit English, health and PE, math, and a computer class. She comments that she “wasted a whole semester doing nothing.” Student 6 lost four credits upon transfer.

Student 5 lost three credits because

when I was at my previous high school, I was taking auto tech, Algebra II, English II, team sports (which is a half credit to balance out the health class), a business class, a state history class, and then a physics class, and the class that I am currently taking here is business class, second period is gym slash health, third period would be English II, and then my final class would be physical science, which is a combination of physics and chemistry. (Appendix O)

Student 3 also mentioned concerns with the way some classes transferred. Although he is an honor student, he struggled. He said, “some of my math classes were messed up. I’m usually pretty good at math, but I’m confused at times on which math I’m supposed to be taking. I am pretty sure I’ve repeated some math classes at some point.” This may be due to different pacing schedules, or even transferring between states who offer common core Math I, II, and III, as opposed to the traditional, Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II sequencing. Students 7, 8, and 9 are all freshmen, but some are not first-year freshmen.

Student 7 said she had to “double up on classes because they didn’t have the same classes

I was in on my old school, and I didn't get all my credits." She specifically mentioned business classes. Student 8 also noted that she will have "to redo ninth grade next year because I have some credits that wasn't transferred through or that I failed during the time that I was on another school." She shared that some of these struggles were personal problems, and that "since I have gotten to high school I've done some bad things. I was arrested . . . So during that time I wasn't making the grades." Although Student 9 is a stronger student, he too was in danger of falling behind. Fortunately, he was able to take a course on-line through NCVPS so as not to lose credit. These students are acutely aware of the real struggle to meet the requirements of various schools and states in order to graduate on time.

Students were also asked about their experiences during registration and possible recommendations to help other students who also must deal with mid-year transfers and frequent moves. Student 1 said that the counselors are "very understanding of the situations, and they did try to catch me up as much as they could." He recommends that all schools be on a "uniform schedule, as well as uniform classes that you have to take for whichever grade you are in, I think that would help a lot, the students that are moving constantly throughout the country." Student 2 and Student 3 both note that they are resilient and can adapt, but recommend that everyone needs to have patience as they are working through the transfer process. Student 4 did not seem to be aware of her options or the process with the counselors. She stated that she did not want to go to summer school. She did acknowledge that although she was not fully aware, her parents were. She commented that "kids like me . . . need a lot of help with their classes like I do because I know I'm struggling and stuff." She recommends a tutor or other help. She

too wants counselors to know what she is going through. Student 8 commented that it was “really hard going to a school that doesn’t really care about you to a school that cares about you a lot, so it’s like really hard. Sometimes I just wish that you’d be, almost, like a rule that’s easy on me, but that’s not really possible.”

Student 6 also commented on the caring attitude within the school. She was “really like taken off guard by the welcoming I got” from the guidance counselor who registered him. He was given options for auditing classes and summer school. He commends the process saying, “the whole process is cool, but just the auditing thing I think people should know that before they move, so then the schools that they’re in before they come, they’ll be able to be like okay, you need to do so and so before you go there so you won’t lose your credits and you’ll have everything ready.” Student 5 agreed that, “since you’re moving you have no idea when you’re going to move and then all of a sudden you’re getting transferred out to a new school, and you have no idea if you’re going to keep or lose the credits that you accumulated over the semester to be transferred into this next school. Basically it doesn’t get less like a wakeup call to like do the stuff that we need to do to get those credits and try to graduate on time.”

Analysis: Topic 2.

- What are the skills and depositions needed by counselors to effectively help HMS in non-traditional transfers between schools?
- What can be done to provide counselors with the training needed to effectively resolve these situations?

To analyze this topic, interview questions (Appendix L) were developed in order to gather perceptions and opinions of the school counselors at JBHS. Four of the five

school counselors were interviewed in a face-to-face setting, responding to the same questions. Two were interviewed together, and the other two were interviewed individually. The participants remain anonymous, and identified as Counselor 1 to 4. Documented in the following sections are some of the candid responses of the participants. The complete interviews are included in Appendix O.

During the interviews with the counselors five key topics emerged which were pertinent to this work. These included:

- Lack of academic training;
- Informal training, including On-the-Job training, internship, mentors, or work driven professional development;
- Interventions and/or strategies used to help students;
- Concerns for transfer students, personal or academic;
- Personalized attention to students and registration;

When I originally began coding these interviews, I had identified seven topics. One of these identified components was a point of interest, in that many of the counselors could not accurately identify the number of students who transferred in to the school in any given time frame. The other topic was a concern with pacing, however this falls under academic concerns.

When these interviews began, I perceived the overall goal of my work was to develop a program identifying the strategies and interventions to help transfer students retain and/or regain credits. As I was acutely aware of the large number of HMS transfers, I found it interesting that the counselors did not have a clear concept of the number of students who transferred in to their school each year. Counselor 4 estimated

that during the school year he had “about maybe four or five students that would transfer at inopportune time.” But when asked how many he registered since October, he said he “did many,” but that only “three or four” were in jeopardy. Counselor 2 admitted she had “no idea. Every month is different. We have a large quantity transfer in over the summer and throughout the school year. I haven’t any idea of the actual statistic for that.”

Counselor 1 estimated he had from “three to six a semester. Usually more in the fall, fewer in the spring, so maybe call it five or six a year.” But later said with all the “other counselors would put us 30 at weird times; I’d estimate we probably had another 30 that would . . . be conservative.” This was interesting to see their perceptions of the number of students who transfer in and out. The Transiency Data Report (Appendix H) reports 86 enrollments and 138 withdrawals. The counselors greatly underestimate the number of transfer problems. This may be due, in part, to the administrative role in finding solutions for these students.

Another topic discussed included the problems facing these transfer students. Some of the issues suggested were social, including general issues like adjusting to a new school, making new friends, and such. However, they identified more specific issues concerning academics. Some of these included the transfer between different schedule types, such as moving into our 4x4 block schedule from a more traditional 7-period day. Each counselor identified this as an issue. Counselor 4, Counselor 3, and Counselor 2 elaborated on this as concern because, depending on when the student transferred they may not get credit for a class due to insufficient seat time. Counselor 1 and Counselor 4 also mentioned with loss of seat time, students may simply be placed in a class to ‘audit,’ but would not receive credit since they would not have enough seat time to earn the

credit. Pacing was another issue each counselor identified as a problem when moving, not only among different schedule types, but even between schools on a common schedule format. Counselor 1 also identified a problem where, when transferring from a traditional schedule, a student may bring half-credits. He also elaborated on how to select which of their seven classes to drop when they could only move into four. He also elaborated on making sure to identify which courses to place them in for credit, making sure to “take the course, the four strongest courses, that they were doing well in [and balance the schedule] . . . to pick at least two electives.” Although the number of transfer students were not accurately identified, the social, emotional, and academic issues were easy for counselors to identify.

When asked about strategies to help these students, counselors consider several options. To assist students who are behind due to changes in pacing, all four counselors identified tutoring—either teacher tutoring or a peer tutoring program. Counselor 1 and Counselor 3 also identified *GradPoint* as an option to recover lost credits. Counselors noted that *GradPoint* may be in the summer, after school, or during the day. Counselor 3 also identified NCVPS as an option. Ironically, Counselor 1 is responsible for enrolling students in NCVPS in this school, but did not mention that as an option to earn new credit. He did mention summer options, noting that it “would be helpful if we knew what summer options would be available earlier in the year.” Counselor 3 also identified summer options, saying,

Also, we have a couple of outside schools. If they want to pick up something in the summer, which is New Life. Also, I’m in charge of people that are testing from an outside school, the parent has to pay for it, but it’s through BYU, and it does have a lot of half credits, so some kids will come in with a half credit of French, or something like that. They do have those and that is an accredited situation. (Appendix Q)

Counselor 2 identified doubling up students on core classes as an option to keep them on track for on-time graduation. She noted that she has the student and parent “sign a statement” because we would not “normally allow” them to take more than two core courses in a semester, but “she was a military child and she did transfer in. In order to meet the graduation requirements . . . [it] was the best case for her.” Counselor 2 passionately advocated for meeting the needs of each student, but did not share many examples of strategies to work with them. Counselor 1 and Counselor 3 were able to identify more of the specific issues and strategies to work with these students. It was not surprising that the counselor with less than a year of experience, Counselor 4, was not able to articulate specific strategies. Rather he detailed step-by-step details of the registration process, noting that when he had questions he would ask his co-workers. Each counselor was able to identify several strategies to help students, but no one counselor identified all of the strategies used in the PRP.

Identifying what is best for the individual student and ensuring that each counselor noted personalized service was a common theme among the counselors. They all shared examples of working with specific students and looking at the individual needs of each student. Counselor 2 explained the data gathering aspect of the registration process, but noted “we try to help the student to the best of our ability.” She continued, “We’re here to advocate for the child. Our most important goal, of course, is for them to be safe, healthy, and happy, and to get their high school diploma.” “We try to consider all kinds of different angles.” Counselor 1 agrees, saying “much of the time, we try to do our best to fix it so they can graduate on time without needing a summer school.” Counselor 4 was adamant that, “the student is the one. . . . We really look at the student.”

He noted that his job is “more of a support for the student.” It was this idea of personalized registration that led me to develop the PRP. However, during this interview process, I learned more about how counselors are trained and the knowledge, skills, and overall competency required in working through the process of registering students. I saw how passionate these counselors are about helping students. This was a catalyst in my decision to create a structure and training program in order to help them better serve their students.

When the interviews began, counselors provided basic background information, including, years of experience, and the academic program from which they graduated. Counselor 4 was completing his first year of experience. Counselor 1 had ten years of experience. Counselor 3 had 15 years of experience in school, but only eight of those were as a counselor, the other seven were as a teacher. Counselor 2 had 20 years of experience. Both Counselors 2 and 4 had previous experience in social work; only Counselor 3 had previous teaching experience. Each counselor had only worked as a counselor in the high school setting. All of these counselors had graduated from UNC-Pembroke, but Counselor 3 also had an advanced degree from UNC-Greensboro. Counselor 4 is considered a Lateral Entry counselor. His original degree is in Criminal Justice, with a Master’s in Clinical Mental Health.

When talking about their preparedness for this job, Counselors 1, 2, and 3 explain that the counseling programs are designed to provide K-12 training. They each explain that there was a lack of training specific to high school professional requirements. There is “minimal training specific to high school. We did take a course that dealt a lot with planning interventions, but most of it seemed more appropriate and geared toward

elementary school-aged students,” said Counselor I. As a Lateral Entry counselor, Counselor 4 has had to take some additional coursework. He says this has only taught him “book knowledge,” adding that he “really didn’t learn what I needed to learn about being a counselor until I was actually a counselor.” Counselor 3 confirms that, “It’s OJT... That part, in Practical or whatever they call it, whatever school you go to. That part is the part that’s supposed to train you for that. In the classroom they do not cover an iota, a least, not the ones we were in and we’re at the same classroom.” Counselor 1 agrees that it was not the classroom, but rather,

Professional development. One of my mentors early in counseling was a secondary lead counselor. . . . And was able to work one-on-one . . . on things like evaluating transcripts, using technology to sort of manage your caseload, scheduling decisions, that sort of thing. [He] would offer that sort of stuff we did one-on-one to other counselors in other schools through professional development, but I was fortunate enough to be able to get that directly in-house. (Appendix Q)

Counselor 4 agreed that “what prepared me . . . is just being on the job and hands-on learning.” These responses were my first realization that while counselors may want to help students, they may not be adequately trained to do so. It was comments such as these that led me to realize there was a disconnect between what counselors learn in school and the tasks which they are actually required of them on the job. Furthermore, there is little professional development that actually fills in the gaps.

Summary of Interviews

The objective of conducting these interviews was to determine whether maintaining on-time graduation for HMS was indeed a pervasive problem, and if so, what interventions were effective in helping students retain credits, as well as the impact of the Personal Registration Process (PRP) on the on-time graduation rate of HMS at JBHS. In

coding these interviews, several common themes emerged. What emerged was the realization that:

1. Many of these HMS, especially military students, are extremely resilient. They take pride in the fact that they take these moves in stride.
2. While HMS are resilient, they do worry about meeting graduation requirements and graduating on time. They worry about having to retake classes or losing credits.
3. While HMS do realize there is a problem, they do not have a solution to solving this problem. They do encourage counselors to listen and help them, but they cannot really give a concrete way that the counselors can help.
4. Many counselors do not realize how pervasive the problem is. Many thought they had just a few students each month. They are not aware of the actual numbers.
5. Many of the PRP interventions could be effective, but were not often identified by many of the counselors.
6. Many counselors are not fully aware of how to best use 'out of the box' interventions to help students retain and/or regain credits.
7. Academic preparation in universities does not adequately prepare their students for the actual duties and responsibilities of a school counselor.
8. Because counselors are not adequately prepared for their actual roles, counselors are often at a loss as to how to meet the needs of these HMS.
9. Many counselors do not learn necessary skills other than through mentors, on-the-job training, and professional development.

The overall student and counselor perception is that there is indeed a fundamental problem with the system, and they are frustrated because there is not a workable solution to correct this problem. This realization fed into a new 90-Day Cycle. These interviews became the Scan phase of that cycle.

Building Upon the Interviews

In response to the realization that high school counselors did not receive adequate training in the duties required of them on a daily basis, I began to research counselor's perceptions of their academic preparedness and their actual responsibilities as school counselors. An earlier study by Dr. Janna Scarborough measured counselor data as to how they spend their time in relation to their actual job activities as compared to their preferred job activities (Scarborough, 2005). Dr. Emily Goodman-Scott built upon this by modifying Scarborough's School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) and adding a measurement to compare these activities to how effectively they perceived their graduate program to prepare them for the job (Goodman-Scott, 2013). This was examined for reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the academic preparation items within each of the subscales, (Goodman-Scott, 2013; Santos, 1999). To measure for validity, Dr. Goodman-Scott pre-tested the instrument with three school counselors (Goodman-Scott, 2013). While I did not continue to use this instrument, I was not surprised to see that the counselors' responses were in-line with the national results of Goodman-Scott.

As I began to investigate this topic, I gave this scale to three counselors. Each of the counselors' responses were similar to the findings of Goodman-Scott, noting that the activities they were asked to do were not the activities for which they received training in

their counseling programs. I began to delve further into this improvement initiative, and sought permission to distribute it to all counselors in my school system. However, after conferring with my disquisition chair, I realized that this was moving away from the intent of this improvement initiative, so I did not continue to pursue this.

I returned to the work of developing the prototype for the counselor-training program. With 12 modules in progress, I began to put these into a PowerPoint format. Once these were complete, I contacted four counselors to provide an external review of the program. Three counselors who had taken this survey, along with one additional counselor then reviewed the program. These counselors were asked to participate by working through the modules and provide feedback. They were given some basic guiding suggestions to provide feedback. Their feedback provided insight into the pros and cons of the program. They identified aspects that were especially helpful, as well as areas of concern. Some of them also made suggestions for additional topics to be included in the program. Following the improvements made to the training modules, the lead counselor for Cumberland County Schools was asked to review the modules and provide feedback. Her feedback provides more detailed clarification on some of the same topics that the other counselors had mentioned, such as the Foundations of Math counting as a fourth math in some cases. However, she suggested additional modules, such as providing for undocumented ESL students. Her feedback is under review for further development to use these training modules for counselors in Cumberland County.

Reliability and Validity

To measure validity of the training program, the prototype was given to four counselors with various levels of experience. Two of the counselors had been included in

previous interviews. These two counselors work at JBHS. The other two counselors work at other schools in the Cumberland County School District. This allowed for input from counselors other than those who work under my supervision.

Training Program—Reviewed and Revised

Initially these four counselors, as well as a high school guidance secretary and a high school teacher reviewed the 12 modules. The teacher and counselor provided external readers who could offer insight for those new to the profession who may not be as familiar with the jargon and procedures. They assessed the training to ensure it made sense. The secretary also provided insight because of her experiences working through the registration process with counselors and students. The four counselors were asked to take notes and comment, providing feedback that would help improve the training. They were admonished not to “worry about hurting my feelings” because I needed constructive criticism.” In addition to asking for additional suggestions, they were asked:

- Is it helpful? If so how?
- Is it too difficult? Too easy?
- Is there anything missing? If so, what?
- Does the order/flow make sense? Should the order change? If so, why?
- Is there anything that is overdone? Under represented?

They were also asked to provide their overall opinion, as well as specific suggestions for additions or improvement. The counselors provided feedback in written form through basic note taking on each module. Some of this was provided through email. After reviewing the feedback, each counselor was interviewed (Appendix Q). Counselor 6’s interview was not recorded as this interview was conducted on the phone.

All of the reviewers of this training module were very complimentary. Counselor 6 said, “I like it. I think it will definitely be helpful!” Counselor 4 said, “This presentation as a whole explained in detail how counselors are to help maximize students’ education and prepare them for promotion and graduation. As a new counselor these modules were very helpful, and [a] seasoned counselor could use these modules as a source of reference. Again very well presented.” However, my favorite response was simply the comment he made when he handed me his written feedback. He exclaimed, “Jesus, I wish I’d had these last year!” When I asked him why, he said he would have “known how to do my job . . . If I’d of had these last year I wouldn’t have screwed up so much.” Counselor 5 was also complimentary, saying that she “really liked it” and was going to use the checklist and PRP in her school next year. She has recently been contracted to provide professional development for Asheville City Schools and wants to use the program in that training. Her husband delivered her written feedback to me. As he handed it to me he said, “I’m not sure what all this is, but [Counselor 5] said she was going to steal this.” Counselor 4 said,

About me being a new counselor, I don’t think I can say what could be added, but far as the whole 12 modules, it really allowed me to look at transcripts more efficiently and effectively, as far as the . . . How it would better help a student towards promotion or graduation, and far as classes what they would need. It really helped me out in the area of credits, as far as half credits and whole credits. It really helped with a student coming in from a 7-day period, taking 7 classes, which they go to school all year around. That really helped me the most and let me know what it is that once they come into a 4 by 4 schedule, what courses that they would need to continue to stay on track for graduation or promotion. It really helped me with just being able so now I can talk with parents more confident, and with explaining that situation. (Appendix Q)

He said that he had used the information he learned from the modules that very day with two sets of students enrolling, both coming from a 7-period day. Counselor 4 added another component of the program that he found especially helpful was,

. . . the McKinney-Vento Act thing, I was really lost with that one because mostly our social worker handled that, but the slides that . . . you had on that really put it in plain black and white. [As] far as the military kids, and being at several different schools, and how they have the classes they may not take may not [be] in line with ours. We have to look at course description. I really didn't know about course description. I was just basically looking at the name of the courses. But when you went into depth to make sure that the course curriculum, that the course description meet the course description of what they taking, and it could be a possibility that they could have credits. I think that if I would've had those 12 modules back in 2014 when I started, I would've been a little bit more aware of what I needed to do far as registrations and helping military families and McKinley Veto families. My job as a counselor . . . I felt like I could've been . . . that I would've done more and been more aware, and more experienced in what I need to do to help those kids. (Appendix Q)

The initial response from each counselor was positive.

While I was pleased to hear that this program was so positively received, I was also glad that I had tested this prototype on several reviewers. They provided me with several good suggestions. Many of these suggestions were simply cosmetic. The teacher and guidance counselor both noted:

- Places where specific identifiers of schools were listed;
- Transcripts were blurry;
- An error where a quiz answer was the same for two different questions;
- A font was not easy to read;
- Some typos, including Melissa's name being spelled two different ways.

In addition to these, the counseling department secretary also mentioned that it was difficult to comprehend the explanation of how to determine the number of credits needed for a student transferring in from out-of-state and the module referencing the

Military Compact and being able to graduate based on the sending school's graduation criteria. All of these points were corrected before the program was uploaded into *BlendSpace*.

The counselors noted some of the same surface issues. All of the counselors stated they would like to see the quiz as interactive rather than just having a key to check your answers against. I agreed that this was an excellent point and made that change. Counselor 1 also felt that the writing in Module 4 did not seem as 'crisp' and 'direct' as the others. As I reviewed this module I found some redundancy and repetition, which I corrected. I also rewrote several sentences to provide more direct language.

Counselor reviewers also commented on content. Counselor 1 noted an error in the first module. This module said the transcripts include additional information such as test scores, attendance, awards, etc. He reminded me that while the transcript we use at JBHS includes this, not all transcripts do. Both Counselor 1 and Counselor 5 suggested a correction in the introduction module. Both pointed out that this said that Foundations of Math does not count as a math, but rather as an elective. Counselor 5 said, I don't know if I would say it doesn't count [as a math] because it does." She said, "I mean, I know it's one that principals don't tend to lean to, so if it doesn't help, it's for math rigor. She elaborated, ". . . somebody who's really struggling in math, you can still graduate them with" the math substitution. She said in her school they use this,

frequently, I could ease them in, so, it's very commonplace over there. Again, I know principals don't like to give it because it doesn't help you with math rigor. What we were also trying to do is still trying to push that kid through Math 3 if possible. Yeah, so, I don't know if I would put out there that it does not count, because it actually does. (Appendix Q)

While this is true in most cases, both of these counselors reminded me that it is a math elective, and in certain cases, it can count as a math in a math substitution pathway. I took this feedback and amended the modules to reflect these suggestions.

Counselor 5 made another recommendation that I mention the use of US History as an allowed substitution for American History 1, but only for out-of-state transfer students. This led us into a discussion of the importance of knowing the curriculum.

Counselor 5: Okay. A student coming in with US History credits would have the same. Let's say a student comes in, maybe they're 11th grade here. They already have credits for US History and they're coming from out of state. This will only work for out-of-state students. You can actually count that US History as American History 1.

Me: Okay. Now, why American History 1 instead of American History 2? Most of the US history is the latter part of what we do in American 2.

Counselor 5: I understand that, and I tried to go back and find the in-house correspondence I got from my [lead] counselor. Everything that I found from her said it counted for American History 1. However, . . . we really did want the curriculum to lean more toward American History 2, and we have proof of that, and we should've. Lately, we've been counting it as American History 1. It's just easier to put them in American History 2 for scheduling purposes. I guess it's kind of like if you look at the curriculum, and you've discussed it, and you feel like it does meet American History 1, I guess you could go either way. For us, it's this . . . We just have been counting it as American History 1.

This seemed to be an example of why knowledge of the curriculum and comparing objectives is so important. This school is doing what is "easier" for counselors. Review of the US History and American History 1 and 2 curriculums show that US History does not typically begin until the mid to late 1800s. Although it will leave out some of the curriculum, this is much more in line with the American History 2. Casting this as American History 1 omits everything from early colonization through reconstruction.

Otherwise a student is duplicating much of the same content and not truly learning the entire curriculum. We discussed this as a problem in another area, where she mentioned the ‘Double-Up-To-Catch-Up’ strategy.

Counselor 5: Yes, so the four-period day, coming from a traditional. Cumberland County has developed a policy where what we’re doing is, if they’re coming, we have a cut-off. I want to say the cut-off is around sometime in October. If they come in after October sometimes, what we’re having to do is double block them. Let’s say they’re in World History for example. They’ll take World History two periods a day, and then they’ll take Earth Science two periods a day. Then, at the end of the year, what we’re doing is we’re adjusting their credits for promotion standards. We make notes on it, and we send a note to Dr. Black. She has to be made aware of this. I don’t know if your counselors would know this or not, but they should.

Me: Yes. That was the April . . . That came out in April.

Counselor 5: Yeah.

Me: How do you deal with the fact, though, that those kids may be sitting in the class twice, but they’re behind on the content?

Counselor 5: [We are] creative with our teachers. This is where you have to have a really, really good relationship with the teachers. They are being creative. Sometimes they’ll ask the student to stay after school or come a little bit early. This does take work for the teachers, and that’s why they kind of roll their eyes when we tell them, “Hey, we got a student coming in from a 7-period day, but they’re having to make up that time, so . . . The content like you said. What they’re doing is . . . Again, the double blocking does seem to help some, because they’re getting to hear the material twice. Anything that they’re missing, I’ve had a couple kids that had to stay after school and help her tutor and just make up whatever’s missing during that time. It’s been working. So far it hasn’t been an issue.

This confirmed that, although an attempt to help these students retain credits during the transfer process has been attempted, although meeting the letter of the law, does not provide for the intent. In other words, while it does provide the seat time required to earn

the credit, the student will not have learned the entire content. This puts the student behind when they move into the next level or a course, or even when they must take the NC Final Exam. For the purposes of this training module, it reinforces the need to have the modules about researching curriculum that seems similar.

Counselor 6 asked about the issue of seat time. She commented that it “may help to explain how much seat time is required to earn credit.” This was not covered because, although the state of NC recommends 135 hours of class time to earn credit, there is variance between schools and districts for implementation and accountability. She also asked about auditing, saying, it would be “helpful to explain . . . what exactly auditing a class looks like.” Yet realizing, “I have learned that schools [and] counselors audit differently.” Because this is so true, I have not included a training module about auditing or seat time, but I have gone back and added a reference to these and the importance of knowing the policies and procedures in the school and/or LEA where the counselor is employed.

Counselor 6 also made note of an issue that was unclear to her. She said Module 7 gave no explanation for how the counselor determined credit for each course, the slide “just jumps right into the Health/PE question.” My intention in this slide was to simply cover the issue presented by the Health/PE concern, but I see the need to go in to clarify this.

Counselor 1 had some excellent suggestions for additional modules. He stated “I think as a stand-alone, just in terms of helping counselors deal with the technical aspects of it, it was really, really solid.” But felt the program omitted the ‘human side,’ saying,

the other con that I would see in there is that when working on technical things like credits, graduation requirements, etc., it can become easy for a counselor to

become immersed in the details of the technical side of it and neglect the human side of it. From the perspective of helping a counselor sit down and figure out the transcript on their own, to prepare to go through it with parents in terms of the preparation, it's excellent. In terms of the nuts and bolts, actually how to walk a parent through the conclusions that the counselor drew, it may be that because the counselor felt so prepared on the technical aspects of it, that they would neglect the human aspects of it, which in terms of conveying what's going on to the parent, could be the most important. In general, a parent does want to make sure that you know your stuff, but it's like the saying in education, they have to know you care before they care what you know. I think that there were things in there throughout the presentation that you may want to put that in a module of its own, either at the front or the conclusion or both to stress that in terms of the face-to-face interaction.

He advised that counselors should do all the "technical part" before the appointment.

That way the counselor can connect with the student and the parent during the appointment.

Along with this Counselor 1 suggested the addition of a slide or module discussing the need to prioritize what a student needs and how to place them in classes.

He advised that counselors must consider how the student will integrate with his/her classmates. He said,

The other component that I think could make it a little bit stronger is in terms of a priority or sort of a rubric for when deciding which courses to pick and which courses to punt, looking at things like keeping them on track, keeping them tracking for graduation, keeping them tracking with their peers, keeping them from being overloaded so they get that, and how do you balance that. It's not always intuitive. That may be a thing where an additional module could be made. For that one, it wouldn't even necessarily have to be one that included different course titles. It could just be you're coming from a 7-period day with the exact same course titles, exact same course content, various performance in the grades. Which ones do you pick, which ones do you punt, and why?

This counselor noted that part of this rubric could include making sure that if a student transfers in as a junior, but is missing classes like health/PE, civics, and such, it would be easy to simply put the student in those classes to try to catch them up. However, if you put them in "all lower grade classes . . . [the] student would be miserable. They would

never meet kids his own age... his peers.” But realized you do have to weigh that with keeping him/her on track to graduate.

Another aspect of this prioritized rubric would include keeping student in those markers to stay on grade level. One requirement for promotion is English, so a sophomore must take English 2. Then a counselor must look at ensuring a balanced schedule, with two core classes and two electives, as is possible, each semester.

Counselor 1 also mentioned prioritizing for the school to meet the required markers.

Counselor 5 also suggested adding a slide or module about Markers. For NC, these Markers include students taking English 2 by 10th grade, Math 1 by 10th grade, and Biology by 11th grade.

Counselor 5: Oh, I think I remember something . . . somewhere in the presentation, you . . . talk about markers. Where students have to be in Algebra 1 by 10th grade, and English 2 by 10th grade. That was something we got dinged on at Smith. I know it’s not an issue at Britt, but for some of your more transient schools and low-income schools, you got kids more all around. We really had to keep a track on making sure they’re placed in biology by 11th grade. I know that sounds crazy, that we do have kids who’ve never taken biology, and they’ll come to us and never had it. Or they come from out of state, and what have you never been placed in the correct marker for our school. That’s something I really have to work on with our counselors. We have two new counselors at our school, and we really had to drill that into them. You’re looking for markers. If they’re a 10th grader, they’ve got to be in Algebra 1, got to be in English 2. If they’re left grade 10 had biology yet, they’ve got to have it by the end of the year. I don’t know if that’s something you want to mention.

This is a very important topic that I made only a reference to, but had to go back and add more information. This is something extremely important for counselors to prioritize as they enroll transfer students. If a student does not meet these markers, a school is negatively assessed by the state when records are audited. The idea of prioritized

scheduling, both for the student and the school, is a very important module that I had not included. With these comments in mind, I went back to create a new module. This became the new module 12, therefore the program ended on this human side of scheduling, before moving to the assessment in module 13.

When asked about the difficulty level of this program, Counselor 1 thought it might be a bit ‘overwhelming’ for a new counselor. He suggested I “consider cutting down on some” of the module. They could be simplified and some of the depth could be moved to an appendix or “for further practice” module. I asked the newest counselors, Counselor 4, who has one year of experience, and Counselor 6, who has 5 years of experience to comment on this. Counselor 4 said that the modules were interesting, adding, “It was nothing that I was bored or felt sleepy as I was reading it. It was really informative information. It really helped me a lot even now in how I talk and the parents and talk with kids or students.” He did not feel it was overwhelming. Likewise, Counselor 6 did not feel overwhelmed. She did like the audio component and wished that each module had an audio component. She also wished there was a checklist available for each module. Other reviewers had also mentioned this would be helpful. Three of the reviewers also mentioned that the PRP slide was difficult to read in a PowerPoint and would like to see it as an attachment. I agreed having these two documents would be helpful, and added a PDF of the checklist and PRP to the *BlendSpace* training. This way counselors may either print it off, or have it opened on their screen beside the PowerPoint they are viewing. This would make accessing the program and following along with the modules, especially the audio, a simpler process.

I opted to house this program in *BlendSpace* because of its ease of access. Both Counselor 1 and Counselor 4 mentioned the online venue as a good way to distribute the information. They each also mentioned that this would be excellent professional development Counselor 1 felt this training program

could be the kind of thing that would be useful for presentation at the North Carolina School Counselor Association Annual Conference. I haven't been for a few years, but I've presented there before, and there's usually a healthy appetite for this sort of stuff, practical things that enable counselors to deal with sticky issues that aren't covered in graduate school. I would say something like that where you are having counselors from all across the state come to get together, that that would be a useful. (Appendix Q)

He also felt that another good option would be "regional presentations where people are coming in for CEUs, it may be the sort of thing that would be appropriate at a professional development thing, in a county professional development. I think they're always looking for content, especially things that could help counselors." But realizing that professional development and conference funding have been cut from so many budgets, he said,

depending on how it was written up or what it was done, it may be possible for it to be an online professional development that a counselor could do for something or the other. I don't know the ins and the outs of what you would need to do to qualify for a professional development sort of thing, particularly if there were some way to include a technology component to it, because that can be a difficult one for people to acquire in a way that's meaningful. I think those would be the sort of places because there are a lot of times where counselors are looking for things to improve themselves professionally, and the options sometimes that we get are not fantastic. Having something like this that is high quality, on topic, useful, could hit the sweet spot. (Appendix Q)

Since this time, we have discussed refining the program for a state level counselor conference.

After speaking with each of these counselors and reviewing their written feedback, I realized that the only substantial constructive criticism I received was from

Counselor 1, Counselor 5, and the Cumberland County lead counselor. Counselor 1 had eight years of experience, and Counselor 5 had ten years of experience. Counselor 4, with one year of experience, and Counselor 6, with five years of experience, both provided a lot of praise for the program. Both of these counselors expressed a desire to keep this to use to help them. Counselor 6 noted a few surface errors, but neither of these two counselors provided substantial feedback. This confirms that with experience comes in-depth knowledge of the situations and understanding of how to help these students. While the inexperienced counselors have superficial knowledge, they in essence, they don't know what they don't know.

Discussion

This improvement initiative has several limitations that may have impacted the findings. One limitation to this improvement initiative is that the four counselors interviewed have worked together for many years and have had experience with many of the practices found in the PRP. While they have different levels of skill in working with HMS during the transfer program, they all feel they are, as a collective group, more skilled than most.

Additionally, most of the counselors attended the same university, therefore they received the same academic preparation. This provides a very narrow view of counselor preparation. In order to account for this, the Scarborough/Goodman-Scott study was used in an attempt to provide greater evidence of the disparity between counselors' academic preparation and the responsibilities of the actual job.

Another limitation to this improvement initiative is that the four counselors initially interviewed, although prompted to give their honest feedback, may have felt

inhibited, as I am also the administrator who supervises and evaluates them. This may have caused them to feel unsure of how honest they could actually be in their response.

Another limitation is that the four counselors who reviewed the training prototype were given only two weeks to review the program. Directions were intentionally crafted in an open manner in an attempt to avoid prejudicing the counselors and allowing for greater latitude to their response. However, this may have left the counselors unsure about how to respond.

One final limitation may be that of bias. As has been, and continues to be, a problem of practice for me in my daily responsibilities, I find that I am often called upon to review and/or provide interventions for the more difficult registrations. It still remains a concern that some counselors are not adequately prepared, even with their years of on-the-job experience, to confidently and successfully help these HMS transition in to the new school.

Implications and Recommendations

Ensuring on-time graduation is one of the hallmarks of a quality school. This is often publicized in school report cards, newspapers, and online school rating sites. This is a key component of the NC School Report Card, as well as of NCLB.

On-time graduation is often made more difficult as at-risk students are often in jeopardy of not graduating within the prescribed four years (Gruman et al., 2008). One of these at-risk factors is making a school enrollment change at a non-traditional time (Gruman et al., 2008). With one in six U.S. students attending at least three schools during a four-year period, the responsibility of graduating these students on time is weighty (Hartman, 2006; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). This frequent mobility

is especially hard on vulnerable children, including homeless children, socio-economically challenged children, and children of military families, among others (Weisman, 2012). Military students moved three times more often than their civilian counterparts (Park, 2011). With more than 1.1 million school-aged dependents of military families in the U.S., who will average anywhere from six to nine different schools during their academic career (Weisman, 2012), this is a problem that spans far beyond the walls of JBHS, or even North Carolina. These moves are further complicated as students move between a variety of schedule formats, course offerings, and state graduation requirements.

Providing supportive service to students is not only a priority for counselors, but also a matter of institutional self-esteem. However, this may be difficult for counselors, especially inexperienced counselors, who often notice a disconnect between their actual duties and what they are prepared for through their graduate work (Goodman-Scott, 2013; Pérusse & Goodnough, 2005). Additionally, other than on-the-job training, there are few resources available to fill the gaps in counselor skill sets. As such, they do not feel trained to manage many of their professional responsibilities. This is evident both in the interviews of this initiative and in the work of Scarborough (2005) and Goodman-Scott (2013). The counselors at JBHS also acknowledged this gap between their academic preparations during their Master's programs.

It is positive that the counselors at JBHS report feeling the PRP provides effective strategies for registering and scheduling transfer students, but disappointing that they acknowledge that other schools do not have the same level of proficiency. Reviewing counselors in other schools commented they would like to see the PRP as the streamlined

process for the school system. This implies that counselors desire a structured process. This is further confirmed through counselor interviews where Counselors 5 and Counselor 6 both make statements about wanting to use the PRP and the Checklist in the training program in their own schools.

In an effort to provide stronger support and training for counselors, it became imperative that a training protocol be created. The content of this program was informed through the day-to-day situations presented by transferring students and by the interviews with HMS. Through these interactions and interviews I was able to identify many of the common non-traditional circumstances facing students and counselors that may hinder on-time graduation. Through these interactions it became clear there was a need for a training program like the one created through this improvement initiative. This program was further refined based on the feedback from the counselors who tested the prototype.

It is positive that the counselors who reviewed the training protocol felt that it was a valuable tool. These counselors expressed a desire to use this program as a resource and to share it with others. Counselor 5 has been contracted by Asheville City Schools to provide training such as this to the counselors in that district. The lead counselor for Cumberland County Schools has indicated a desire to use this as a standard training for counselors. And Counselor 1 has expressed a desire to see this presented at state level conferences. This indicates that the need for this training spans beyond the realm of Cumberland County Schools.

With this in mind the following recommendations are offered:

- Training Protocols, such as this one, should be developed and shared with high school counselors.

- Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) should revamp their school counseling programs to adequately prepare school counseling students to be able to perform the tasks they are actually required to do in the actual day-to-day duties of a school counselor.
- School counselors at different school levels must, and do, perform different activities. This has been documented in literature (Scarborough, 2005; Goodman-Scott, 2013). Therefore, counseling programs should provide different academic experiences for each school level.
- To facilitate differentiation, IHEs should have counselors choose an area of concentration (elementary, middle, high) and vary course content and elective courses in each area to focus on those tasks specific to that area. For example, counseling students who elect to concentrate in high school focus should be provided with instruction in reading and evaluating transcripts, scheduling students, counseling in academic advisement, implementing interventions for credit recovery, and other specific grade level activities.
- Further research could investigate the counseling programs at various universities where counselors indicated that they were well prepared for the job. This research could identify best practices of these universities to determine what they do to prepare their students.
- As IHEs do not currently provide this differentiation, LEAs should make available adequate professional development as part of an orientation, and then on-going updates, to help counselors within LEA perform the duties required of them.

- A further recommendation is that LEAs take trainings such as this and further develop them to be more inclusive of topics that are indicated by their counselors to support new counselors and provide resources and updates for veteran counselors.

Summary

The purpose of this improvement initiative was to approach the problem of HMS not graduating on time by providing a series of interventions to help them retain and/or regain academic credits jeopardized by frequent moves. In order to do so, a school counselor-training program was developed to provide counselors with the knowledge and training, as well as the structures, needed to best serve HMS.

School counselors are often charged with providing students with a wide variety of strategies and services, yet are often limited by lack of training, inhibiting district policies, being overworked, and carrying large caseloads with limited time to know the students. Just-In-Time on-line trainings, such as the one created in this improvement initiative, provide counselors with the ability to implement successful interventions that will allow HMS to graduate on time.

Implementation of this training program and the recommendations suggested will not only help schools increase on-time graduation for HMS, but will also provide a positive financial and civic impact for the schools and communities in which these students will become productive citizens.

CHAPTER FIVE: MURPHY HIGH SCHOOL—CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAMS:
ENSURING ACADEMIC RIGOR FOR SUCCESSFUL CREDIT RECOVERY

Evolution of the Improvement Initiative

As I, research practitioner, Lisa Anderson, began my work my intention was to determine the best way to award correct credit to those students whose previous school systems were on different schedules from Murphy High School (MHS). As the work evolved I realized that beyond the plight of transfer students, currently enrolled students were also behind on credit. The problem students faced was a lack of consistent and appropriate credit recovery programs and protocols. I found the current method used to handle credit recovery at MHS did not help students' master lost content knowledge in order to be successful in sequential courses. While they completed a course, there was an insufficient content rigor to prepare them for the next level of work. I began to focus on current students' credits as I examined the best way to implement programs and structures to help MHS students, not only regain credit, but successfully advance in their studies, so as to avoid a vicious cycle of failure.

Statement of the Problem

To ensure students achieve on-time graduation, school administrators must ensure that students who are enrolled in credit recovery programs receive sufficient curriculum content to be successful in future courses. A problem identified in this initiative was that credit-recovery programs do not offer rigorous curriculum content accountability; therefore, students do not learn enough content in the curriculum to be successful in the subsequent course. This causes students to fall further behind in content knowledge, thus often failing the subsequent course and further jeopardizing on-time graduation.

Purpose of the Improvement Initiative

The purpose of this initiative was to implement or redesign current credit recovery programs at MHS so that students achieve on-time graduation. This purpose was accomplished by testing different credit recovery methods and programs, with socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) students. This allowed MHS students who are behind on credit the opportunity to recover lost credit so they may achieve on-time graduation.

Guiding Questions

I considered two questions to guide this improvement initiative.

- How can alternative scheduling and credit recovery methods be used to increase graduation rate for SED students?
- How can these scheduling and credit recovery methods ensure that rigor is maintained?

Rationale

Students at risk for not graduating on time may benefit from this work. This initiative may help students not only regain lost credits, but also ensure that they receive appropriate curriculum review to increase their content knowledge. This initiative may help students gain sufficient knowledge to be successful in sequential courses.

Summary

This work evolved from the concept of evaluating transcripts and credit recovery options to ensure students received credit earned, and through implementation of a more rigorous credit recovery program, students learn the content necessary to successfully advance in their course work. I began by having counselors audit the transcripts of current students to ensure that all students were on grade level and scheduled to graduate

with their cohort. Once students were identified as needing credit recovery, a more rigorous program was made available to students.

Additional Literature to Consider: A Review of Credit Recovery Programs

Schools seek to find appropriate credit recovery methods, not only to help students, but also to improve their graduation rate. In order to help students graduate, schools search for the most effective, efficient, and economical credit recovery options. However, there is a variety of credit recovery options, as well as opinions as to the worthiness of each program. Chester E. Finn, Jr., president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute in Washington, DC, said there is little “usable data” about the effectiveness of credit recovery through online programs (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014). When credit recovery is completed outside of a normal school-year setting, there was no real evidence of seat time. As such, teacher judgment may not be used as a way to determine if credit recovery had been obtained, because the online credit recovery programs offered very little interaction with a real teacher and the programs can be manipulated by administrators (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014). Finn blamed the move to online recovery, versus traditional summer school or retaking a failed course, on the pressures of accountability measures, such as College and Career Readiness and No Child Left Behind, to maintain a high graduation rate. School administrators may manipulate the results or devise shortcuts to graduate students on time (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 88% of U.S. school districts offer credit recovery and researchers at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) claimed as many as 75% of school districts have students enrolled in online courses (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014). Although many schools use credit recovery,

there is a great deal of controversy surrounding this use. There is concern as to whether students actually learn material in online credit recovery programs that they did not learn the first time they took the class (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014). Some feel schools use credit-recovery programs as a way to avoid state and federal accountability (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014). Although no thorough study has been published outlining a comparison of online credit recovery with face-to-face credit recovery, AIR released preliminary data from a study in Chicago showing credit recovery rates in face-to-face courses were higher than the rates in online courses because students felt the online course was too difficult (Finn, 2012; Sapers, 2014). In another example, the Birdville Independent School District in Dallas moved away from a credit-recovery program based strictly on student seat time, implementing *Compass Learning Odyssey* software (Sapers, 2014). Because the former program failed to prepare students for the next course as indicated by failed state tests (Sapers, 2014). Since using *Compass Learning Odyssey*, Birdville's credit-recovery enrollment doubled; however, the passing rate of the state exams remained the same (Sapers, 2014).

Not all students who fail one class may be at risk; however, a student who has failed several classes is an at-risk student (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). But the numbers identified are staggering as almost one-third public high school students are considered at-risk, and nearly half of all African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans fail to graduate with their class. Of those who do graduate, only half had the skills they needed to succeed in college or work (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Because of the pressure of increasing dropout rates, many school administrators have chosen to use programs that do not require students to demonstrate proficiency, but rather prepare to

help students pass and recover credit (Bridgeland et al., 2006). These mixed reviews helped inform my understanding of credit recovery options. This research proved useful as I considered the options for credit recovery.

This also pushed me to seek credit recovery programs and structures beyond those currently used at MHS. Many school systems throughout the United States have implemented credit-recovery programs that go beyond traditional summer school. For example, a New Orleans charter school, NET Charter High School (NET), promotes a minimum credit graduation option using *Edgenuity* to allow at-risk students to recover credits and work toward graduation at their own pace (Carr, 2014). Most of the students enrolled at NET are below grade level in reading and math (Carr, 2014). Some students have dropped out of school or were at risk of dropping out because they were already behind on graduation credits (Carr, 2014). Although the students were able to work at their own pace to catch up, being educationally behind their grade level could hinder quick advancement (Carr, 2014). Elizabeth Ostberg, principal at NET said,

The difficulty is that [the online courses] are at the high school level, [and] there are very few kids that we can plug into the computer and have them take this class. There's a reason they dropped out of school. (Carr, 2014, "Aiming Too High," para. 2)

However, as with *Study Island*, educators at NET debated the amount of rigor offered by the program (Carr, 2014). Some students had no difficulty working through the courses; however, others struggled. This struggle may be attributed, in part, to the online format, where students did not have access to ask the teacher questions, because the teacher existed only in video (Carr, 2014). Another flexible option was found at Hamilton High School where during the summer of 2013, this Ohio school piloted online courses via *Edgenuity* for credit recovery. The school administrators allowed students to work from

home with the online platform (Poturalski, 2013). Many students did this in order to advance more quickly. Hamilton High School counselor, Beth Smith stated, “It’s such a rigorous program, it’s meant to last the full six weeks” (Poturalski, 2013, para. 11).

Edgenuity allows parents, students, and teachers to track the student’s progress, including grades, time spent working, and the last time the course was accessed (Poturalski, 2013). Hamilton High School principal, Nancy Hulshult believed that teachers teaching summer school would actually be able to work more closely with the students than they could in previous years (Poturalski, 2013). Hulshult explained, “Last year, teachers spent more energy in lesson planning and grading” (Poturalski, 2013, para. 6). With *Edgenuity*, the preparation time would be reduced; therefore, teachers would be free to assist students on the areas where they needed help. Hulshult added that students were only allowed three attempts on assignments, and if a student was not successful by the third attempt, a teacher could help tutor the student through the curriculum with which the student was struggling (Poturalski, 2013).

My investigation of credit recovery options has been timely. Since beginning this initiative, Cherokee County Schools purchased the online program, *Edgenuity* for Mountain Youth School (MYS). The purchase of *Edgenuity* was made in September 2015. Prior to this investigation, I was unaware of *Edgenuity* and the program’s effect on credit recovery. Because *Edgenuity* was purchased, my future goal will be to determine if, *Edgenuity* will be more effective than our previous options.

Methods

At the beginning of the spring 2015 semester, I evaluated student transcripts for proper grade level and current earned credits, in order to identify SED students who were

behind on credits. To identify how a student was considered SED, I met with the counselors and received a list of students who were eligible to receive fee waivers for college applications. Students were further identified as each student's transcript was evaluated according to current grade level and current earned credits. Typically, this evaluation occurs at the end of each semester when counselors evaluate each student's transcript to verify the student is on track for on-time graduation. In order to be considered on track for on-time graduation, rising 10th graders must have a minimum of seven credits, rising 11th graders must have a minimum of 14 credits, and rising 12th graders must have a minimum of 21 credits. The minimum required credits ensure on-time graduation with students' cohorts. This evaluation process accelerated to identify and help students and provide appropriate credit recovery options in order to regain on-time graduation.

Credit-recovery options include *Study Island*, traditional summer school, and the 21/22 credit plan offered at MYS, the alternative school. I identified *Study Island* and *GradPoint* as the two credit recovery programs with which I was most familiar. MHS had used *Study Island* for some time. My co-authors both used *GradPoint* in their schools. At this point in my work I was unaware of the program *Edgenuity*; therefore, I did not include this program in my survey questions.

In order to create individualized credit-recovery options that differ from traditional summer school, using *Study Island*, I considered two guiding questions. First, I identified whether the student was too far behind on credits to graduate with his/her class? If a student was too far behind to graduate with his/her cohort, he/she may be referred to the alternative school and graduate with the state minimum graduation

requirements of 21 or 22 credits. Because so many of these students are SED, I had to determine whether the family could afford to provide the student's transportation to summer school? Cherokee County's summer school requires students to provide their own transportation. If a student cannot afford the transportation to summer school, the student will immediately be assigned to *Study Island* to begin recovering the course during regular school hours. A student who cannot afford transportation may also be referred to the alternative school for one grading period to recover the previously failed courses.

The credit-recovery options identified for this improvement initiative included *Study Island*, traditional summer school, or transferring to MYS to graduate on the 21/22 credit plan. MHS teachers questioned whether the *Study Island* program provided sufficient rigor. MHS teachers did not feel that *Study Island* had sufficient rigor to warrant earning credit for a course failed. The teachers wanted to know how the questionable rigor would be addressed during the summer school credit-recovery process, especially with the limited use of *Study Island* to provide course content. The *Study Island* website claims that "*Study Island* offers rigorous content built from the Common Core Standards to prepare for the End-Of-Course tests" (*Study Island*, 2014, para. #1). Teachers did not agree that there was sufficient instruction or rigor, agreeing that the program focuses more on test preparation than on credit recovery.

For credit recovery in *Study Island*, students are typically assigned a lesson and then must answer a minimum of 10 questions successfully before they can move on to the next lesson. Students can do this through multiple-choice questions or games that are embedded in the program. However, before a student may move to the next level, the

student had to be considered proficient at the current level. I met with our summer school facilitator and asked her how high we could set the achievement levels in *Study Island*. The facilitator was able to set the achievement level at 90%. Unfortunately, there were only 10 questions per level, and this could not be changed. We did adjust the passing rate to 90%. Each student had to receive a “blue ribbon” on each level, showing he/she had mastered 90% of the content taught in that particular level of the course. Thus, with the requirement change, the rigor portion of summer school was maximized to the highest level within the control of MHS. This did not negate the limitation of questions; therefore, teacher concerns for rigor were not appeased.

Another option for students transferring to MYS is enrollment in a program using *Edgenuity*, an online curriculum used for first time course credit and credit-recovery. Here students work with a facilitator to complete the course recovery. Students must complete the recovery at MYS within one 9-week grading period. At the end of the grading period, the student transfers back to MHS. If a student is so far behind on credits that they cannot graduate with his/her cohort, the student completes the minimum 21/22 credit graduation requirements at MHS and transfers to MYS approximately three weeks before the scheduled graduation date. MYS is the only school in Cherokee County that offers the NC minimum 21/22 credit graduation diploma. Complaints about fairness and rigor also plague this abbreviated graduation requirement.

Measuring the success of credit recovery was accomplished by comparing the number of credits a student had at the end of the recovery session against the number of credits a student had before entering a credit-recovery program, and determining student performance in a sequential course. Counselors and social workers evaluated the credits

recovered to determine if the student could be removed from the list of students at risk to graduate.

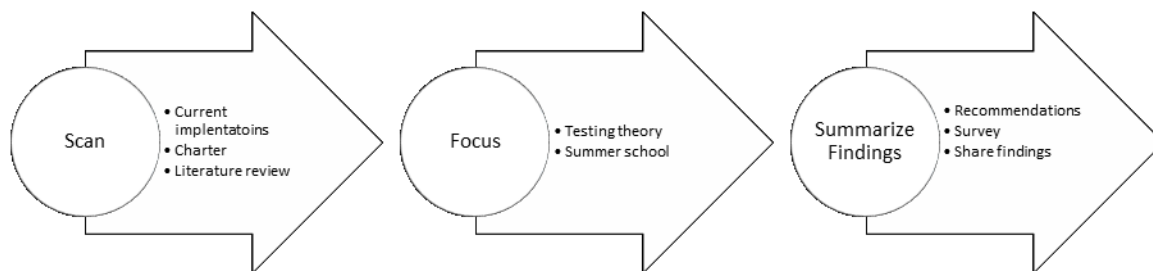
For this initiative, every student who completed a credit recovery program filled out a survey to rate the program he/she completed. The students were asked if he/she felt confident in the knowledge gained from summer school and if he/she felt ready to move to the next level of the course. In addition, teachers, counselors, and administrators across the state were surveyed to compare *Study Island* to a more popular credit-recovery program, *GradPoint*. Those surveyed were able to elaborate on their personal experiences with both *Study Island* and *GradPoint*.

Results of this work are presented to other high school principals in the Local Education Agency (LEA) at the monthly administrators' meeting so that they may consider implementing the credit-recovery programs at their respective schools. Based on the improvement initiative results, Cherokee County high school principals will be able to implement a more effective credit-recovery plan, which may enable students to complete sequential classes successfully and graduate on time.

90-Day Cycle

The goal of this improvement initiative was to improve the credit-recovery process currently used by MHS and Cherokee County Schools. Based on the literature review, I determined the best way to evaluate which program was most effective for credit recovery was to use the 90-Day Cycle from the Carnegie Foundation (Park & Takahashi, 2013), while integrating the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle (Park & Takahashi, 2013). The 90-Day improvement cycle provides a guide for improvement science and includes three phases; including a scan of what is currently implemented and

an assessment of what needs to be improved (Park & Takahashi, 2013; see Figure 7) and a summary.



Adapted from Park and Takahashi (2013).

Figure 7. MHS 90-Day Cycle of Improvement Initiative.

During this process I gathered an improvement team and developed a charter (Park & Takahashi, 2013). This phase of the improvement cycle, the Scan phase included a study of the literature, a review of current practices, and the development of a charter (Appendix R). In the next phase, the Focus phase, I tested my theory that students did not receive sufficient content knowledge through *Study Island* to allow the students to succeed in the sequential courses. All students who participated in summer school were given a survey to examine satisfaction with credit recovery. The final phase of the improvement initiative, the Summarize phase, was to submit recommendations. Accordingly, I prepared recommendations for the credit-recovery process at Cherokee County Schools. The recommendations included survey responses from school administrators across North Carolina who used *GradPoint*, *Study Island*, or both. I shared my recommendations with other Cherokee County School administrators at the November principal's meeting. My recommendation to other principals in Cherokee

County is to move to the more comprehensive credit-recovery program, *Edgenutiy*. A graphic showing the 90-Day Cycle can be found in Figure 8.

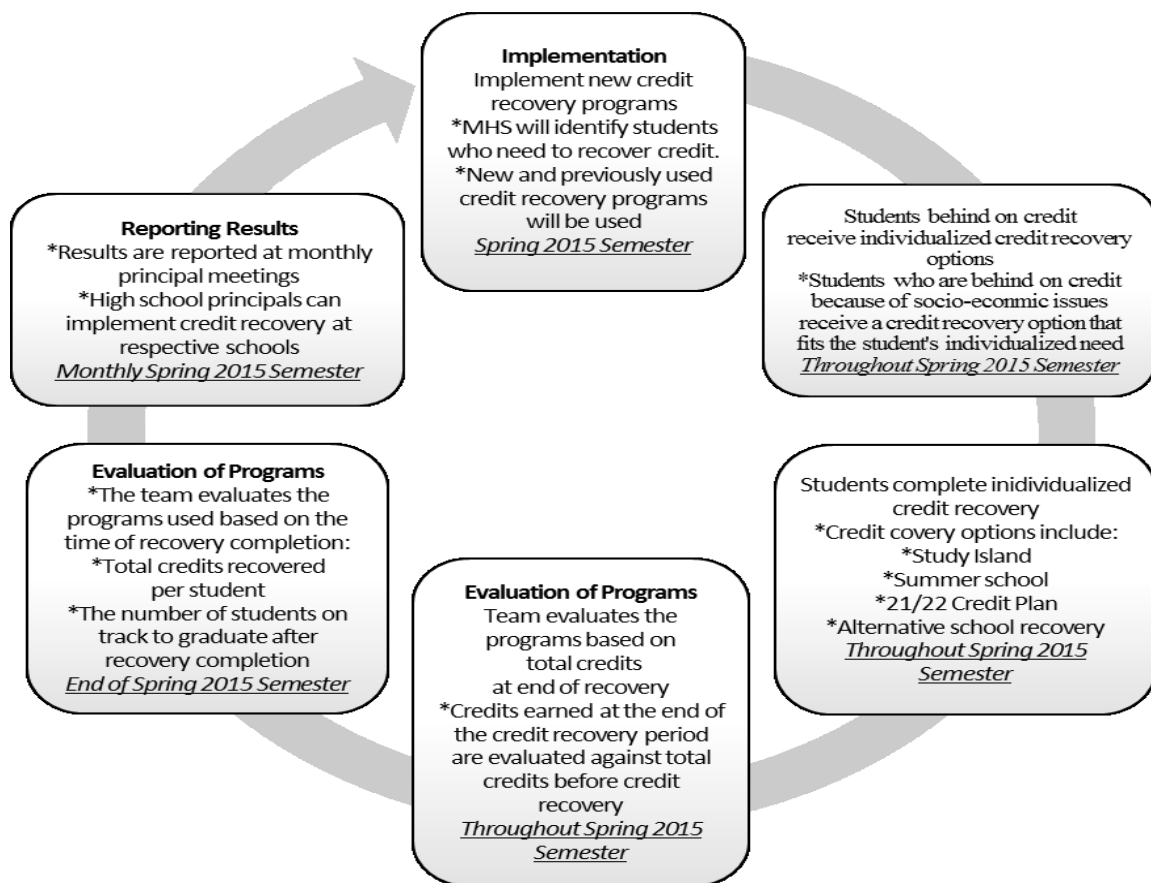


Figure 8. MHS Conceptual Framework.

Improvement Framework

To investigate the effectiveness of the credit-recovery process during the spring semester of the 2014–2015 school year, I identified SED students behind on credits. Counselors began checking first semester grades. I identified two seniors at MHS who were not on track to graduate because of failing courses during first semester. Because the students needed all four of the courses scheduled for second semester, the only option was for the students to complete credit recovery outside of regular school hours.

Completing credit recovery at home during the semester would allow these students to be included in the graduation rate for the class of 2015. Without this, the alternative was waiting until summer school and not participating in the graduation ceremony with their class, as well as counting against MHS in the graduation report data. I approached these two students and offered them the option of credit recovery during the school year so that they could graduate on time. They accepted, electing to work in *Study Island* to recover lost credit.

At the beginning of the spring semester, I created a schedule for the students to begin working on *Study Island*. One of these students is a black male who lived with his grandparents and received government assistance. The other student was a white female, who just returned to school, giving birth in December. Both students were not slated to graduate because of previously failed courses. The male student had to recover World History, and the female student had to recover Advanced Functions and Modeling. Through *Study Island*, the students were required to complete the pretest and all objectives with a minimum of 90% accuracy, including the post-test assessment. The students were given until May 1, 2015 to complete the program. When this recovery was completed successfully, unless either student failed a class during second semester, these students would both graduate with their cohorts. The students were required to complete all of the recovery on their own time after-school, as well as maintain their current schedules of four face-to-face classes.

Working with the design team, I monitored the two students' progress weekly to ensure they were progressing. Both students completed the course objectives out of order. The courses are designed to match Common Core, so the curriculum builds on

previously taught material. Completing sections non-sequentially may cause students to take longer to master the objectives. However, these two students had approximately three and a half months to complete the recovery, as opposed to the two weeks provided in summer school. This was not the issue that I had expected based on previous experiences with summer school.

By May 1, 2015, both students had successfully completed the credit recovery via *Study Island*. Both students completed the survey (Appendix D) by May 18. The last day of school was June 6, when the teachers had to finalize all grades. Both the students completed the credit recovery program and passed all four of their classes. They were eligible to graduate with their cohort. Placing these two seniors in this credit recovery program during the actual school year rather than holding them until summer school alleviated the problem of these students not graduating on time.

On June 5, 2015, all grades were reported for the spring 2015 semester. Data indicated that 53 students failed at least one course. Of those, 33 were eligible for summer school. Summer school was to run from June 8 to June 19 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each day. In order to attend summer school, students could not be absent or tardy on any of the days, in addition to following all rules and policies for MHS (Appendix C). In order to be proficient in summer school and recover the credits lost, students were required to obtain a blue ribbon in every course or complete 35 hours of seat time. Superintendent, Jeana Conley, who supervises high school curriculum, determined the requirement of 35 hours needed to recover the failed course. Because the students in summer school did not have as much time to master each objective, members of the design team and I met to adjust the passing rate to 70% proficiency for each unit.

We did this in spite of teachers' complaints that *Study Island* was not rigorous for student recovery of a course. We felt that some students did not receive as much remediation as a student would have received in a face-to-face summer school program, we had adjusted the requirements in order to set obtainable goals for standards. Although the first two students who worked the entire semester to complete their credit recovery had to meet 90% proficient in each objective, we considered this an unrealistic goal for those who only had 10 days to complete the program. We felt this adjustment would help students perceive the process as achievable instead of hopelessly out of reach.

Instruments Used

The design team sought student input as to the process, rigor, and success of the credit-recovery process. We opted to survey each student as they exited the program to determine if the process was successful or needed improvement. Parent assent was required. Surveys were an efficient way to gather the information we sought. We also decided to provide this survey immediately upon the conclusion of the credit recovery intervention. This provided immediate feedback and promised a higher return of the completion. At the end of the final day, those students still working were also asked to complete the student survey. The survey was designed to identify student perception of the appropriateness of the credit recovery program and determine if students felt comfortable with the content knowledge they had gained. The students' survey responses are presented in later in this work.

An administrator survey (Appendix S) was designed to ask administrators which method of credit recovery, *Study Island* or *GradPoint*, they felt was the best credit recovery program for students. The administrator survey was created by the design team

and sent to every LEA that subscribes to *GradPoint*. The local *GradPoint* representative provide me with all the North Carolina school districts that subscribed to *GradPoint*. I emailed the survey to the principal or contact address available on the particular school district website. The survey was sent to 46 administrators across the state. Only 22 completed the survey. While this survey was intended to serve as an expedient way to gather information, the less than 50% return rate was disappointing. I was also surprised to see that so few of those surveyed had much knowledge of *Study Island*, as that was the credit recovery tool to which I was accustomed.

In addition, I surveyed teachers. The teacher survey was a simple email (Appendix T) sent to current teachers of students who attended the 2015 summer school session at MHS. Thirteen teachers received the email, but only three teachers responded to the questions in the email. The ten teachers who did not respond received two follow-up emails, as well as a face-to-face reminder at a football game. Each of those responded with “I have been meaning to respond to your email,” but then listed various reasons as to why they had not had time to do so. The teacher survey was designed to discover if students who attended summer school and are now enrolled in the next level course to the one recovered have enough course knowledge to be successful.

Limits to my investigation included limited response from teachers, budget constraints within Cherokee County Schools, and few credit recovery options for students. Only programs subscribed to by the school system could be involved in the improvement initiative. There may be many more credit recovery software programs available to school systems, and some software programs may be more effective than

others use. However, I could not review any software for which the school system did not have a license.

Findings

This section highlights the results of the student surveys. In the surveys students were asked to rate certain aspects of the credit recovery process. Twenty-three students were asked to complete the survey. All of the students who participated in credit recovery completed the survey. Two of the respondents were the seniors who completed credit recovery during the second semester, the other respondents were the students who attended summer school. The students were asked to respond to questions using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 reflecting *not applicable* and 5 *extremely helpful*.

Student Survey Results

The first survey question asked students to, “Please rate these aspects of the credit recovery services.” Table 2 depicts student responses concerning the flexibility of the credit-recovery services that each student received, as well as the options available to help the students be more successful in the course. Basic statistical data are provided.

Table 3 shows responses to, “Please rate these opportunities for success.” According to the data, students did not feel challenged regarding their ability to develop decision-making skills. Students also did not feel that they were able to develop test-taking skills. This was concerning since *Study Island* promotes their program as designed to enhance test-taking skills.

Table 2

Student Ratings of Aspects of Credit Recovery Services Offered

Q1	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
Choice of credit recovery options	2	5	4.22	0.72	0.85	23
Hours service is available	2	5	3.82	0.82	0.91	22
Use of Internet to complete assignments	2	5	4.17	0.97	0.98	23
Note taking option	2	5	3.15	1.08	1.04	20
Daily feedback	2	5	3.61	0.84	0.92	18
Clear objectives	2	5	3.76	1.19	1.09	21
I could go at my own speed	2	5	4.3	1.04	1.02	23
Many opportunities to improve my grade	2	5	4.43	0.8	0.9	23
Encouragement from teachers	2	5	3.64	1.29	1.14	22
Very well organized	2	5	4.17	1.06	1.03	23

Note. According to student responses, they were most concerned with improving their grade through credit recovery.

Table 3

Student Ratings of Opportunities for Success

Q2	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
Develop test-taking skills	2	5	3.41	0.82	0.91	22
I was able to use any computer to further my completion percentage	3	5	4.19	0.56	0.75	21
Develop decision-making skills	2	5	3.64	0.81	0.90	22
The completion process was thoroughly explained to me	3	5	4.19	0.56	0.75	21
I was given a Welcome Packet when I first signed up for the class	2	5	3.50	1.44	1.20	18

Note. According to student responses the majority of students liked the fact they could complete credit recovery from any computer.

The results for “Please rate these responsibilities you were asked to accept” are shown in Table 4. Students agreed that the credit recovery was a convenient way to recover their lost credits. Students liked the availability of completing their assignments for credit recovery independently. Students did not appreciate the fact that they had to keep all food and drink away from the school owned computers.

Question 4 asked students to “Please rate the existing credit recovery support you received.” Table 5 depicts the support that students believed they received while completing their credit recovery. According to the responses, the students believed they received their credit recovery in a manner that was specific to each individual. Each student strongly agreed that their learning style was met through their credit recovery. A

majority of the students did not rely on outside sources to help them complete their credit recovery.

Table 4

Student Ratings of Responsibilities of Credit Recovery

Q3	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
Cherokee County computer policy was adhered to	2	5	3.68	1.18	1.09	22
I signed in on the attendance roster daily	2	5	3.56	0.93	0.96	16
Complete all assessments with a score of 70%	2	5	3.68	0.89	0.95	19
Take e-notes on all lessons	2	5	3.35	1.24	1.11	17
Attempt all homework/online content	2	5	3.86	1.13	1.06	21
Assignment completion independently	2	5	3.84	1.36	1.17	19
Minimize disruptions	2	5	3.82	1.01	1.01	22
Adhere to cell phone/electronic use policy	2	5	3.57	1.36	1.16	21
Consume food or drink away from computers	2	5	3.05	1.73	1.32	20

Note. According to student responses they agreed that all content had to be attempted.

Table 5

Student Ratings of Support for Credit Recovery

Q4	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
Credit recovery offered credits I needed for graduation	2	5	4.30	0.77	0.88	23
There were an infinite number of opportunities to pass assessments and assignments	2	5	3.86	1.08	1.04	22
Assignments were presented in many ways, supporting my learning style	2	5	3.95	0.75	0.86	21
Teachers were available to assist at all times	2	5	3.48	1.16	1.08	21
Credit recovery hours of operation accommodated my schedule	2	5	3.55	1.31	1.14	22
I was encouraged to use e-notes and other sources to complete assignments	2	5	3.37	1.58	1.26	19

Note. Students agreed there were courses offered in credit recovery needed for graduation.

The fifth question asked, “How often did you take advantage of the credit recovery services.” Results are shown in Table 6. The students were split almost 50-50 on whether they worked during school or at home. These responses could also be interpreted as implying that in addition to working the four hours of summer school, the students worked at home to finish more quickly. Those who chose not to work on their

recovery afterschool may not have had access to a computer and/or internet access at home.

Table 6

Student Ratings of When Credit Recovery Services Were Utilized

Q5	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
During school	1	2	1.27	0.21	0.46	15
After school	1	2	1.23	0.19	0.44	13

Note. The majority of students worked on credit recovery during summer school hours, while at school.

The responses for the final question, an open-ended question, asking students to “Please share any suggestions that you may have to make your credit recovery services more successful” are presented in Table 7. Although only three of 23 students actually typed a full response, two of those responses requested that only a 70% be required to pass the class. These two responses seem to be from the two students who completed the program prior to graduation. While we did make this adjustment during summer school, we felt that for a full semester if the pass rate were lowered to 70%, then the program would not be taken as seriously. This was a concern voiced by teachers.

Table 7

Students’ Suggestions about Credit Recovery

Q6. Responses
I have no suggestions
N/A
Make it to 70%, not 90% to get a palm tree
Make it to 70% and not 90% to pass
Scientific calculators would have made the math portions of <i>Study Island</i> much easier

Note: Only two students provided suggestions on how to improve summer school.

Based on the responses from students who participated in summer school, 65% of the students (15 of 23) liked the fact that they could work at their own speed. In addition, the overall responses showed that students were happy with using *Study Island* as a credit-recovery tool.

Administrator Survey Results

My design team and I sent a survey to every school in North Carolina that purchased the *GradPoint* program for credit recovery. I asked those surveyed to compare education and remediation between *GradPoint* and *Study Island*. Although *GradPoint* and *Study Island* are used in a similar fashion for credit recovery, overwhelmingly *GradPoint* provided a more extensive review of the course and helped the students learn to take better notes. Although I was disappointed by the lack of participation, there were two counselors, three regular education teachers, and 13 school administrators who completed and returned the survey.

I sent this survey in an attempt to determine how familiar other North Carolina high schools were with the curriculum in on-line credit-recovery programs. I used a Likert scale in which 1 represented *no knowledge* and 10 represented *extensive knowledge* with a particular credit-recovery program. The administrator responses to Question 2 are listed in Table 8. Over one-half of those who returned their survey had little or no knowledge of *Study Island* being used in credit recovery, with only one administrator saying they had used *Study Island* for credit recovery. Only four administrators had used *GradPoint* for credit recovery.

Table 8

Administrators' Knowledge of Credit Recovery Programs

Q2		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	<i>GradPoint</i>	2	0	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	2	17	6.71
2	<i>Study Island</i>	5	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	14	4.07

Note. More school officials were aware of *GradPoint* than they were with *Study Island*.

Table 9 depicts answers from administrator Question 3, an open-ended question which respondents asked to assess the *GradPoint* courses with which they have experience. According to the majority of responses, those responding had experience with all North Carolina courses required for graduation. One administrator states that they do not believe *GradPoint* helps improve student skills, and the sole purpose is strictly to regain credit. All other administrators who provided a written response shared that *GradPoint* was used to help recover a variety of courses in their respective schools.

Table 10 illustrates the responses from Question 4, an open-ended question asking which *Study Island* courses the respondents have used. Responses indicate that *Study Island* was not used for credit recovery in these school systems. Some administrators noted that *Study Island* was used strictly for classroom curriculum support.

To determine ways *GradPoint* may be used, Question 5 asked the administrators how they have interacted with the program. While only five administrators elected to elaborate on their personal use with *GradPoint*, those who did elaborate noted that *GradPoint* has been used for both credit recovery and enhancing classroom material.

Table 11 shows the administrators responses.

Table 9

Administrators' Familiarity with GradPoint Programs

Q3. Responses

We offer a variety of courses through our Alternative Learning Center and Credit Recovery

All of them that are available for high school

Math II, Math III, English III, English I, English IV, Earth/Environmental Science, Civics and Economics, American History I, Physical science, US History, and World History

Academic Enrichment World Geography World Religions Math I, Math II, Math III Biology Chemistry Health/PE

I do not work directly with *GradPoint*. I know that we use the program to assist with students that have failed a course with an average between 60–69 in core courses only. I have found that completing the program does not help a student improve skills—it just helps to get a credit.

Physical Education English1, 2, 3, and 4 Math I, II, III, Advanced Functions Earth Science, Astronomy, Physical science, Biology Spanish I, II, III Microsoft Word, Personal Finance, Entrepreneurship

Geography, Math 1, Math 2, Math 3, Sat and ACT, All the English's 1-4, World History, Chemistry, US History, Physical science, Biology, Earth Science, Civics and Economics

English 1,2,3,4, Physical science, Civics and Economics, Biology, U.S. History, Statistics, Creative Writing

English I and IV Music Appreciation Math II Physical Science Veterinary Science

Just credit recovery in all areas

Math Science English History

Math III Advanced Functions Physical Science

English IV Physical Science Fundamentals of Algebra Geography

None

English and Science

Note: A majority of school administrator responses detailed courses they were familiar with in *GradPoint*.

Table 10

Administrators' Familiarity with Study Island Programs

Q4. Responses

Reading/writing

Biology and physical science

All of them that pertain to high school

None

k-5 curriculum

We do not use *Study Island*

None

English II

None

Mostly academic areas such as Biology, English I, and Math I

No

6th-8th grade science chemistry

We have not used *Study Island* for credit recovery. We have only used it for classroom review.

Civics & economics

NA

None

Note. A majority of school administrator responses detailed courses they were familiar with in credit recovery.

Table 11

Administrators' Interaction with GradPoint

Q5. Responses	Frequency	%
1 I have taught the course (I led the instruction and was responsible for grading).	3	17%
2 I have facilitated the course (I oversaw a classroom of students taking the course but was not responsible for grades or direct instruction).	6	33%
3 I have used modules as extensions of my own classroom teaching/curriculum for credit/grade recovery or remediation.	0	0%
4 Students were enrolled in my class and <i>GradPoint</i> at the same time (e.g., students took English III on <i>GradPoint</i> for recovery, while taking English IV with you).	1	6%
5 I have no experiences with the courses on <i>GradPoint</i> .	8	44%
Total	18	100%

Note. The majority of administrators surveyed had no experience with *GradPoint*.

To continue my comparison of *Study Island* and *GradPoint*, Question 6 asked the administrators to identify ways they interacted with *Study Island*. Only one administrator had used *Study Island* for credit recovery. Two administrators identified *Study Island's* as a tool to review curriculum previously taught. Using *Study Island* to review and remediate is the original intent of the program. The results are shown in Table 12.

In order to better understand and compare *GradPoint*, I wanted to know exactly how those who have used the program rated specific curriculum alignments with the program. According to responses, administrators agreed that *GradPoint* modules are rigorous and aligned with Common Core standards. Administrators also agreed that the

tests students must pass in order to complete each unit accurately reflect concepts taught.

The answers from administrator Question 7 are shown in Table 13.

Table 12

Administrators' Interaction with Study Island

Q6. Responses	Frequency	%
1 I have facilitated the course (I oversaw a classroom of students taking the course but was not responsible for grades or direct instruction. This would be a blended learning experience).	2	12%
2 I have integrated the courses into my classroom for a review of the curriculum (e.g., students had a login and were required to score a certain percentage on given objectives).	4	24%
3 I have used the course for credit recovery (students reviewed all objectives in the course in order to receive credit for a course previously failed by the student).	0	0%
4 I have no experiences with the courses on <i>Study Island</i> .	11	65%
Total	17	100%

Note: Only three respondents had experience with *Study Island*, but none using *Study Island* for credit recovery.

At the time of this work, my knowledge of credit recovery was limited to *Study Island*. I sought to determine how others viewed this program so I could compare *Study Island* with *GradPoint*. Just as administrators were also in agreement as to how well *GradPoint* helped with credit recovery, they were in agreement that *Study Island* was not beneficial for credit recovery, with many responding that *Study Island* simply provides busy work. Administrators' views of *Study Island* (Question 8) are shown in Table 14.

Table 13

Administrators' Responses Regarding GradPoint Curriculum Alignments

Q7. Responses	SD	D	N	A	SA	TR	M
1 The course is self-paced.	0	0	2	11	4	17	4.12
2 The course is rigorous.	0	0	7	9	1	17	3.65
3 The course is user-friendly.	0	0	5	10	2	17	3.82
4 The modules are well explained.	0	1	6	9	1	17	3.59
5 The course provides individualized assistance to students.	0	5	6	4	1	16	3.06
6 The modules are too difficult.	0	5	9	2	0	16	2.81
7 The modules are too easy.	1	5	10	1	0	17	2.65
8 The course is aligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	0	3	4	8	2	17	3.53
9 The course requires little to no assistance from a face-to-face teacher.	0	5	6	6	0	17	3.06
10 The course can be accessed at any time or place.	0	1	3	8	5	17	4.00
11 The program motivates students.	0	3	6	7	1	17	3.35
12 The text used is on grade level for students.	0	0	8	9	0	17	3.53
13 The text is easily understood.	0	0	8	9	0	17	3.53
14 The tests are an accurate reflection of concept mastery.	0	0	10	6	1	17	3.47
15 The activities are "busy work."	1	8	6	2	0	17	2.53
16 The course is financially beneficial.	1	1	9	5	1	17	3.24
17 The modules are too lengthy	2	6	6	3	0	17	2.59
18 The course prepares student for future courses.	0	4	5	7	1	17	3.29
19 The courses align with the EOC (Biology, English II, and Math I).	1	2	4	9	1	17	3.41

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; TR = Total Responses; M = Mean. Only one respondent was neutral that *GradPoint* modules were too easy for the students.

Table 14

Administrators' Views of Study Island

Q8. Responses	SD	D	N	A	SA	TR	M
1 The course is self-paced.	1	0	6	3	1	11	3.27
2 The course is rigorous.	1	0	6	4	0	11	3.18
3 The course is user-friendly.	1	1	5	4	0	11	3.09
4 The modules are well explained.	1	1	6	3	0	11	3.00
5 The course provides individualized assistance to students.	1	2	5	3	0	11	2.91
6 The modules are too difficult.	1	3	6	1	0	11	2.64
7 The modules are too easy.	1	3	7	0	0	11	2.55
8 The course is aligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	1	0	6	4	0	11	3.18
9 The course requires little to no assistance from a face-to-face teacher.	1	2	6	2	0	11	2.82
10 The course can be accessed at any time or place.	1	0	3	5	2	11	3.64
11 The program motivates students.	1	0	4	6	0	11	3.36
12 The text used is on grade level for students.	1	0	4	6	0	11	3.36
13 The text is easily understood.	1	0	4	6	0	11	3.36
14 The tests are an accurate reflection of concept mastery.	1	2	3	5	0	11	3.09
15 The activities are "busy work."	0	3	4	2	0	9	2.89
16 The course is financially beneficial.	1	0	4	6	0	11	3.36
17 The modules are too lengthy	1	4	5	1	0	11	2.55
18 The course prepares student for future courses.	1	2	5	3	0	11	2.91
19 The courses align with the EOC (Biology, English II, and Math I).	1	1	5	4	0	11	3.09

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; TR = Total Responses; M = Mean. Only 11 administrators were familiar with *Study Island*.

In order to compare *GradPoint* and *Study Island* adequately, I surveyed administrators about both *GradPoint* and *Study Island* as credit-recovery methods. The comparison between the two programs found that administrators did agree that *GradPoint* was a better program for credit recovery. While *GradPoint* can be used for first time credit, administrators did not believe this was an effective way to earn first time course credit. The results from administrator Question 9 are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Administrators' Opinions of GradPoint and Study Island for Credit Recovery

Q9	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Responses	Mean
1	<i>GradPoint</i> is a good course/program for students to use in credit recovery.	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	4	5	3	17	7.88
2	<i>Study Island</i> is a good course/program for students to use in credit recovery.	0	0	0	1	4	1	1	2	2	2	13	7.00
3	<i>GradPoint</i> is a good course/program for students to use for first time credit.	3	1	0	1	2	1	3	1	4	1	17	5.88
4	<i>Study Island</i> is a good course/program for students to use for first time credit.	0	1	0	1	6	1	0	2	1	0	12	5.58

Note. Respondents were more familiar with *GradPoint* for credit recovery than *Study Island*.

Finally, Question 10 was an open-ended question where administrators shared relevant information about one or both credit-recovery options, *Study Island* and *GradPoint*. The information shared by administrators overwhelmingly revealed that *GradPoint* as the program to use for credit recovery, and *Study Island* is best used to

enhance material being taught, but does not contain enough rigor to justify course credit, whether as credit recovery or first time course credit. The responses are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Administrators' Open-Ended Comparison of GradPoint and Study Island for Credit

Recovery

Q10. Responses

We are not allowed to use *Study Island* for credit. We are for *GradPoint*. We use *Study Island* for teacher unit recovery only.

A face-to-face teacher is needed to make sure the program is effective.

GradPoint has helped my students learn to take notes. I like the fact that *GradPoint* takes them through step by step. The students who take notes and really try score high on the EOCs. I like the fact that after the pretest, it takes away modules that they understand. I have had English teachers come in and help some students and they are very surprised at how rigorous the curriculum is—they do not even teach all of the material in the course. They only drawback is with the Math, sometimes the students need to know some short cuts to help them because they are not strong in math. So I have to watch and see when they need help because they do not ask. I also have to watch for cheating due to they like to Google answers; but you find that in any online course, even the AP courses through NCVPS. Due to I am in a classroom with the CR and AP students mixed, which I think helps the students also. We also use the courses as a Lab. So they take the course while taking it F2F. For those who we know will struggle, this has helped the students learn in a different way. Then how the teacher taught and helps learn to take notes. Teachers see an improvement with the students who use it correctly. We just look up what they are doing and we find it in *GradPoint*.

I have more extensive knowledge of *GradPoint*. We have used this program the past 3 years. I would say that it has served its purpose but should be re-evaluated and changed to suit the rigor that our students need to see and possibly work to better align the program to NC standards and expectations. Many times we find ourselves removing components and wishing to add components to the programs to suit our students credit recovery needs. As of now, for both full credit and credit recovery needs, our district will be moving to the use of *Edgenuity* this year.

None @ this time.

Note: One respondent specifically mentioned they are not allowed to use *Study Island* for credit recovery.

Teacher Survey Results

Based on the results of the survey collected from administrators across the state, it appears that *Study Island* is not as effective for credit recovery as is *GradPoint*. *Study Island* does not address rigor and depth of learning of course objectives. To illuminate the problem further, I surveyed current teachers whose students had attended summer school and received their credit recovery via *Study Island*. My goal was to determine if these MHS teachers believed the students who completed credit recovery through *Study Island* were on grade level and could successfully perform in their current courses.

Of the 13 teachers questioned, three returned their surveys; however, their answers included responses for four of the 23 students who attended credit recovery. Of the 23 students, three had graduated and current performance could not be tracked, four had moved to new schools, including home school, and their current progress could not be tracked. This left 16 students whose current performance could be tracked. Because I received responses that covered four students, I was able to track 25% of the students who were enrolled in summer school credit recovery. Two of the teachers who responded identified attendance as an issue with who recovered Math I and Earth/Environmental Science. The student in question was currently failing two of his four classes, including a Math III class and American History I. This student, according to his current teachers, “will not do very much work” but “often scores higher than other students in his class on his tests.” One teacher stated that the student’s grade in Math III should be a lot lower, but the teacher admitted to eliminating several incomplete assignments in an effort to help the student pass the course. Another teacher stated that a student who recovered American History II seemed to understand the concepts in the

Biology class. Although there was no subject connection between American History II and Biology, reading comprehension can play a large part in a student understanding the concepts (K. Palmer, personal communication, October 20, 2015). The teacher stated the student understood the concepts in Biology, but he was often lazy. One teacher stated that a student in Biology who recovered Earth/Environmental Science and English I seemed to be “doing fair.” The teacher stressed that reading comprehension seemed to be very low for this student. The teacher believed that despite having recovered English I, the student’s reading comprehension did not improve.

Reliability and Validity

The survey questions measure the effectiveness of credit recovery programs. Members of the design team, including the school social worker and two school counselors, validated the questions for all surveys used in this improvement initiative. Each member tested the reliability of the questions to ensure they were easily understood. The same student surveys were reviewed after the first two students completed credit recovery and the survey further determined that the questions were easily understood.

Summary

Based on teachers’ observations of their summer school students and administrators survey of credit recovery program, I concluded *Study Island* was not effective in helping students with comprehension of the material. *Study Island* did not teach the material to students; however, *Study Island* helped students learn how to take tests successfully. By transferring students to Mountain Youth School, the only school in Cherokee County that can graduate students on the 21/22 credit track, the alternative

schedule that MYS provide can keep SED students in school and help those students graduate on-time, increasing the graduation rate.

Study Island, no matter how high the achievement level is set, does not provide sufficient credit recovery for students. Based upon administrator's responses on the survey, a program with more breadth than *Study Island* must be used to ensure that the curriculum maintains rigorous academic standards.

Another Option for Credit Recovery: *Edgenuity* and Mountain Youth School

Based on feedback from administrators across the state and from MHS teachers who were currently teaching students at the time of this initiative, for summer school students in sequential courses, *Study Island*, in its current form, was not effective for credit recovery. Administrators believed that *Study Island* was a valuable tool for immediate review of a lesson, providing remediation or enrichment, but not to earn credit for an entire course (see Tables 15 and 16). Although *Study Island* was the program with which I had most familiarity, other schools across the state used programs such as *GradPoint*. In fact, both of my co-authors use and shared experiences with *GradPoint* within their schools.

I began to search for information about *GradPoint*. I learned a great deal about, not only the program, but the different ways it is used in various schools. I learned that many schools, such as those of my co-authors, embed *GradPoint* into the school day, some provide this as an after school learning experience, while others use *GradPoint* as a platform for summer school.

During the course of my research, I began to hear about a program called *Edgenuity*. This program is also used for credit recovery. This research became very

timely for me, as, during the summer of 2015 I was moved to Andrews High School (AHS) as principal. Although not yet implemented at AHS, I learned that MYS was using *Edgenuity*. Though MYS students were able to graduate on a 21/22 credit diploma; many teachers have complained over the years that this was unfair to exempt students from requirements and water down the curriculum. This complaint was furthered by use of programs such as *Study Island*. In the face of these complaints, I was interested to see how *Edgenuity* would work at MYS. Initial reports were inspiring. I began to consider implementation of *Edgenuity* at AHS. I began to read more about *Edgenuity*, and I began to encourage others at AHS to look to *Edgenuity* as a new alternative for AHS for credit recovery. As a new principal I was given some latitude to try new things, including being given five licenses for *Edgenuity*.

Ironically, as I began promoting *Edgenuity* in my school, it dawned on me that my entire disquisition was focusing on a comparison of *Study Island* and *GradPoint*. I began to realize that by promoting *Edgenuity*, I have compared two programs, and will actually use and recommend a third program. This is a bit like comparing the pros and cons of vanilla versus chocolate ice cream, but saying I prefer strawberry. The program was new, thus I had no firsthand data. Therefore, I began to read more of the research regarding *Edgenuity*.

I began to see *Edgenuity* as an alternative for Cherokee County Schools, including MHS, which had been using *Study Island* for something other than the intended purpose of the program. Through my reading I now understand that *Study Island* was never intended to be used for credit recovery. *Study Island* is a good program for remediation and enrichment of curriculum content inside the classroom. Many schools use *GradPoint*

for credit recovery. *GradPoint* provides more rigor than *Study Island*. However, there are still those, including one of the administrators surveyed (see Table 17), who feel that *GradPoint* does not provide the rigor needed to meet the curriculum requirements.

Opponents say that students can complete *GradPoint* too quickly because the depth and breadth of curriculum that is needed by schools is not available in the program. These naysayers have opened a door for *Edgenuity*.

Recently MYS and now AHS have both adopted *Edgenuity* for credit recovery. MYS and AHS will be using *Edgenuity* this spring. Beginning February 1, 2016, students who need to recovery lost credits may attend the AHS campus in the evenings of spring semester to recover courses that they previously failed. The MYS principal feels that *Edgenuity* is far above other programs (Appendix U). The initial response from the users of *Edgenuity* has been favorable. *Edgenuity* appears to have the depth and breadth of curriculum that is needed for students to complete credit recovery and be successful in a sequential course. Students must spend more time in the program in order to accomplish the goals or objectives of the particular course.

There are still limitations with *Edgenuity*. Once a student has completed the orientation training of the program, students can work from home. Theoretically a student can go home on Friday and work all weekend on the program and recover a course. *Edgenuity* does have a review of progress that administrators can activate. Once activated, a student cannot move forward in the program until an administrator approves the grade on the current task and unlocks the next task. Activating this feature can slow down the pace of the students and require them to spend more quality time learning the materials.

Edgenuity has many more features than does *Study Island*. One feature in *Edgenuity* is that a program that teaches the entire curriculum of any subject to students (Edsurge, n.d.). Another improvement is that, whereas *Study Island* is strictly question-based and focused on reading for review, *Edgenuity* is a video-based curriculum (Edsurge, n.d.). This holds student interest and provides greater depth of content. Another positive feature of *Edgenuity* is that, unlike other programs, *Edgenuity* uses certified teachers, with a minimum of three years of teaching experience. These teachers are available for any questions the student may have. The teachers also grade reports and lab work assignments, which vary by course. These teachers will also contact the school facilitator and/or parents if the student begins to struggle in the classes. The state-certified teacher records the lesson on video for the students (Edsurge, n.d.). Following this direct instruction, students complete assignments, quizzes, and tests based on the lesson they just watched (Edsurge, n.d.). Before students can move forward in a course, they must achieve a minimum mark of 60, which is a D- on the new North Carolina grading scale, on assignments, quizzes, and tests (Edsurge, n.d.). A teacher is also available for questions, and to communicate with students, parents, and school administration regarding the student's progress (Poturalski, 2013). Using *Edgenuity* to provide credit-recovery also saves schools instructional money. Instead of paying a teacher to teach summer school, an aide can facilitate the online learning that *Edgenuity* provides. This reduces the cost of salaries paid for teachers. One lab can host multiple lessons with a classified staff member facilitating. Yet students still have access to a certified teacher at all times. Students can keep notes on their progress, and progress

reports can be generated from the program (Poturalski, 2013). This also makes parents and school counselors happy, as they remain informed as to their student's progress.

Although this program has just begun at AHS, the students I have placed on *Edgenuity* have commented that it is actually more difficult than the face-to-face class. Although students work at their own pace, they have until the end of the semester to complete the credit recovery program. I can go online at any time and review students' progress and grades. With *Edgenuity*, an administrator can change the weights of each assignment, including quizzes. *Edgenuity* can be manipulated for the best interests of the students and the schools. In addition, a read-aloud function is available for those students who struggle with reading. Other accommodations can be made with *Edgenuity* so that if student have individualized educational plans (IEP), their learning needs can be addressed.

By using *Edgenuity* during the Fall 2015 semester, I was able to continue testing my theory that *Study Island* was not effective. *Study Island* is clearly a program designed to enhance the current curriculum already in place. *Edgenuity*, in contrast, is designed to teach and reteach courses that students failed. Focus can be placed on specific objectives students struggled with in their face-to-face classes.

Edgenuity has recently been implemented in Cherokee County Schools. The principal at MYS uses *Edgenuity* in two different ways. The first way was with students who have been referred to his school for credit recovery because they were not on-track to graduate with their class. The students are able to work at their own pace while having a real teacher who actually teaches the course. Students may repeat lessons as needed, until they have mastered the content. The second way the MYS principal uses *Edgenuity*

is to give students a full course, a required course for graduation. The students must view all lessons, quizzes, labs, and tests successfully before credit can be earned for the course. To help students who are behind their cohort to graduate on time, MYS introduced evening courses four nights a week, this gives students more time to recover credits lost and earn new credits. I interviewed the principal when I learned of this program (Appendix U). The principal shared that the flexibility of *Edgenuity* was one of the top reasons why he chose this program for his students. The principal referred to the ability of students to repeat any lecture at any time as being an advantage for those students who may struggle with their academics. The principal also expressed that he feels confident that students who recover credit through *Edgenuity* will be successful in sequential courses.

So, while *Edgenuity* is new to AHS and Cherokee County Schools, it appears that initial implementation of this program will be a great benefit to the students in their quest to recovery credits, but also appease those who claim online platforms do not provide rigor and sufficient curriculum content.

Limitations, Implications, Recommendations, and Next Steps

This improvement initiative is not without its limitations. The obvious limitation is the lack of practical use of *Edgenuity*. The original intent of this work was not to recommend this program. However, the organic nature of this improvement initiative led me in a direction different from my original vision. This is, in all actuality, a very good thing. Without a focus on credit recovery, I would not have investigated *Edgenuity*, and it appears that this is an excellent product to meet the needs of students, teachers, and school systems.

Another limitation of this work is the lack of hands on use of *GradPoint*. My original vision was to implement *GradPoint*, then show more actual data of the students at MHS. As this improvement initiative moved in another direction, that did not occur. Therefore, my data was of existing data and through a limited survey from those who had used the program.

Sample size was also a limitation. Only two students participated in the initial credit recovery program. Only 22 *GradPoint* administrators returned their survey. And only three teachers returned their survey. Only two students participated in the semester long credit recovery program and only 23 attended summer school. While each of these participants provided me with important information, it was disappointing not to have a greater sample size.

Nonetheless, this improvement initiative has yielded a positive step for credit recovery for students in Cherokee County Schools. I propose that instead of waiting until the end of the 2015–2016 school year, that Andrews High School, with the help of Cherokee County Schools, implement an after-school credit-recovery program using *Edgenuity*. This after-school credit-recovery program will be designed to help any student, regardless of grade level, recover credits that was lost during the first semester. By implementing an after-school credit-recovery program, students will not have to wait until summer school to recover credit. Having an after-school credit-recovery program using *Edgenuity* can also provide real-time intervention for those who are at-risk of failing an enrolled class. The program may prevent students from failing the class because the students will be doing extra work and lessons for a curriculum in which they are currently studying.

This program can be very effective for credit recovery. If students can contribute six hours a week—three hours a day twice a week—then a course could be recovered in six weeks, meeting the 35-hour requirement. However, a diligent student may recover the class in less time. As students successfully complete objectives with the required passing grade of 60, which is a D- on North Carolina’s new grading scale, they can move forward in the curriculum. In short, the harder students work, the faster they can successfully recover lost credits.

Although a good program, there are concerns about implementing *Edgenuity*. Cost is a major issue, as *Edgenuity* is twice the cost of *Study Island*. *Edgenuity* charges \$6,000 for 15 concurrent licenses, whereas *Study Island* is only \$8.99 per student per year. One of the limitations for implementation for a school is that concurrent means that only 15 licenses can be used at one time. This limits credit recovery programs to 15 seats at a time. Many schools run two sessions, which seems as if they could then host 30 students, however, no more than 15 students may be logged in at the same time, limiting students from working after hours (Edsurge, n.d.).

Although the cost may be prohibitive, I recommend *Edgenuity* for use in all Cherokee County high schools. Based on my knowledge of *Study Island*, the new knowledge I have gained of *Edgenuity*, and feedback from educators across the state concerning *GradPoint*, I recommend that Cherokee County Schools purchase concurrent licenses of *Edgenuity* for each school. I believe that the graduation rate will increase and the dropout rate will decrease. The reason the dropout rate will decrease is that, in addition to courses for credit recovery, full-length courses are available, and those students can take advantage of the full-length courses in order to acquire more than four

credits in a given semester. Students can proceed at their own pace so the learning process is truly in their hands.

Cherokee County Schools Superintendent, Jeana Conley has agreed to pay a supplement to an on-staff teacher who will supervise the after-school credit-recovery program. Beginning in the spring 2016 semester, students will have the opportunity to recover credits and receive extra tutoring in courses in which they are at-risk of failing. Implementing this program will allow not only those who need credit recovery to enroll, but also allow those who are in danger of failing a current class to enroll. Thus, the numbers of students needing credit recovery will begin to decline because an intervention was made to help those students who struggle.

Since this program will be implemented in Cherokee County, an important next step in establishing the most effective credit recovery program, an investigation as to the effectiveness of this program, as compared with the more commonly used *GradPoint*, would be warranted. Comparing the objectives, course content, and student preparedness for a next level of the subject would be of significance

It is imperative to have a good program for credit recovery in a school system. The program, depending on type, can help prepare the student for a sequential course or ensure a student struggles in sequential courses. The goal of an education entity is to provide a good quality education and prepare students for their future.

Having a good quality credit recovery program is imperative to help all students become successful not only in school but to feel secure knowing they were able to receive their high school diploma. Implementing a program such as *Edgenuity* will ensure that students received the knowledge required to be a high school graduate.

CHAPTER SIX: GREEN HOPE HIGH SCHOOL—CREATING CREDIT RECOVERY

PROGRAMS OUTSIDE OF THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL DAY

Evolution of Improvement Effort

The important initiative began as an effort at Enloe High School (EHS) in Raleigh, NC to explore options for alternative settings outside of the traditional face-to-face classroom for special education students with behavioral problems who were consistently failing courses and have fallen behind their graduation cohort. Through this exploration, I, research practitioner Chris Bradford, hoped to discover different pathways to help students who were struggling in the traditional classroom due to behavioral problems find success and implement them in order to increase their likelihood of on-time graduation. Student engagement contributes to poor behaviors in school, often resulting in the student being suspended from school. At the inception of this research, a conversation with a Behavior Support Teacher (BST) at EHS led to a discussion of alternative means to reach these students. Through this collaboration, a plan was developed to modify schedules and have those students facing suspension for minor behaviors in the classroom complete *GradPoint* and North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) courses with the BST during the school day. Since many of the potential targeted students had minimal outside access to computers and the internet, the plan would also allow them to stay after-school two days a week to work with the BST after-school and complete their coursework.

During this time, conversations began with Central Office administrators for special education, student services, and technology services within the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS). These conversations provided me with a stronger

insight of the programs currently being used by WCPSS for credit recovery. Further discussion was devoted to investigating the current alternative schools, of which only two existed; one with a later start time for non-traditional students such as pregnant students or those with young children needing childcare; and a special education school with a more structured environment for students who have behavior needs. Both of these schools have capacity limits and require an application process and student transfer. Neither addressed the problem of credit recovery to help students maintain on-time graduation.

Before starting my improvement initiative, the logistics of the recovery program to be used in this report were discussed and approval was given by the Special Education Department in the WCPSS Central Office to try the program with two students facing potential long-term suspension. During this time, the two students were placed on modified days, attending only a half-day of school, but enrolled in four core courses, including English, math, science and social studies. The students worked on their courses on the virtual program at home as well. Modified days require that an IEP team meet to discuss the implications of placing a student on a shortened day for medical or behavioral reasons to ensure the student's needs are still being met. The students both showed success in the trial run, earning four of four credits and three of four credits, respectively.

This positive response to the intervention led to discussion of potentially creating a "school within a school," in which students would qualify based on having a high number of discipline referrals, suspensions, absences, and at their current pace would not graduate on time in the traditional setting. The plan would be that these students would complete assignments on the half-day model within the *GradPoint* curriculum with a

certified teacher who has demonstrated success working with students who have behavior problems. During this time, I accepted a position at another school and was unable to implement the full research. A modified version of the program was used at EHS following my departure. The program was modified due to funding and staffing issues at the school.

I transferred to Green Hope High School (GHHS) in February 2015. I found GHHS presented a different problem in regards to the on-time graduation of students. Special Education students at Green Hope are often removed from their classes for negative behaviors, but not removed from school. Rather, they spend multiple class periods in the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) or the Behavior Support classroom where they complete online assignments. Discussion with the ALC teacher provided me with the insight that often assignments were not sent for students in the ALC setting. This was further compounded by high absence rates for the students. The problem at GHHS appeared just as prevalent as that of the EHS student negative behaviors. Poor attendance is a specific issue with special education students, which often causes them to fail courses and fall behind their cohort for on-time graduation. At GHHS students are only given a credit recovery course during the traditional school day but are unable to make-up any courses that would positively place them back on-track for on-time graduation and limited by the ability to gain only four credits per semester. As a result, I began working with the school's principal to address the problem of finding alternative ways to help students regain additional credits within a semester to move closer towards on-time graduation by creating and instituting a "5th Period" after-school program

focused on providing students an opportunity to regain up to two additional credits each semester.

Statement of the Problem

Across the nation, schools are faced with growing pressures to provide rigorous and differentiated instruction to students and maintain their progress towards on-time graduation. WCPSS is not immune to this problem, and to meet the challenge, recently revised its Strategic Plan. Termed “Vision 2020,” the plan is geared towards increasing the graduation rate of Wake County from 82.9% to at least 95% by the year 2020 (Hui, 2015). For a successful school like GHHS with graduation rate of 93% in 2014, one may wonder why this is a problem (NC School Report Card, 2014). While it is true that a 93% graduation rate is admirable, when charged with meeting the district goal of at least 95% of students being prepared to enter the global society, the needs of the 7% not graduating on time must be addressed and alternative means of reaching these students must be implemented (Wake County Public School System, 2015b).

Conceptual Framework

This improvement initiative sought to improve the structure used for credit recovery within GHHS in order to provide a greater chance of students increasing on-time graduation as compared to previous models that only allowed a student to regain the credit, but not earn additional credits within a semester. This program’s goal is to provide an opportunity for students to regain credits through an after school recovery program known as “5th Period” and through summer school with strategic selection of teachers to protect the rigor of the classroom through a blended learning approach. The

original conceptual framework model illustrates the first PDSA Cycle implemented for 5th Period is shown in Figure 9.

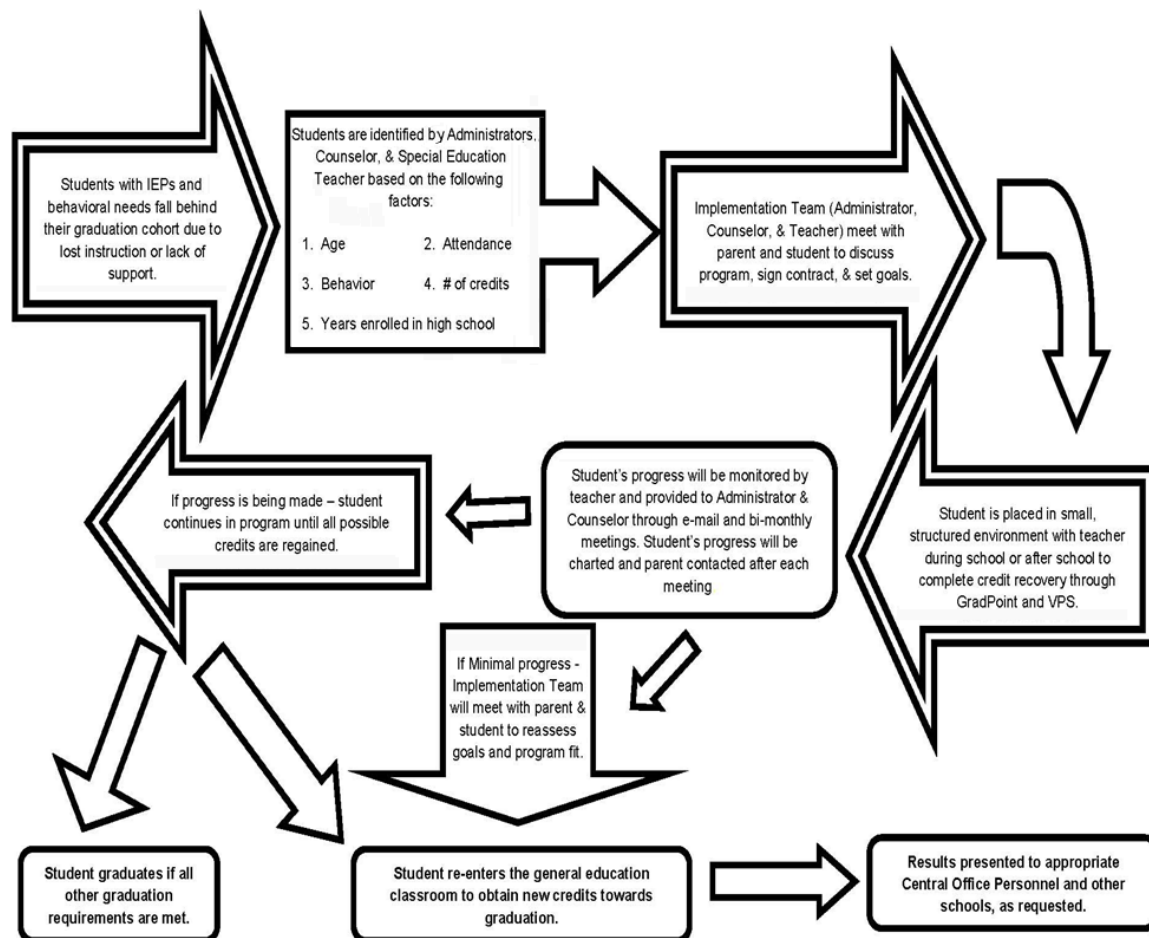


Figure 9. Original Conceptual Framework of Improvement Initiative.

Given the complexity of this model and that it only addressed one PDSA Cycle, a more simplified framework was developed to demonstrate the focus of the original PDSA Cycle. This is represented in Figure 10. The figure outlines a new conceptual framework for my work by incorporating the additional Intervention Cycles and how they differed from the original cycle.

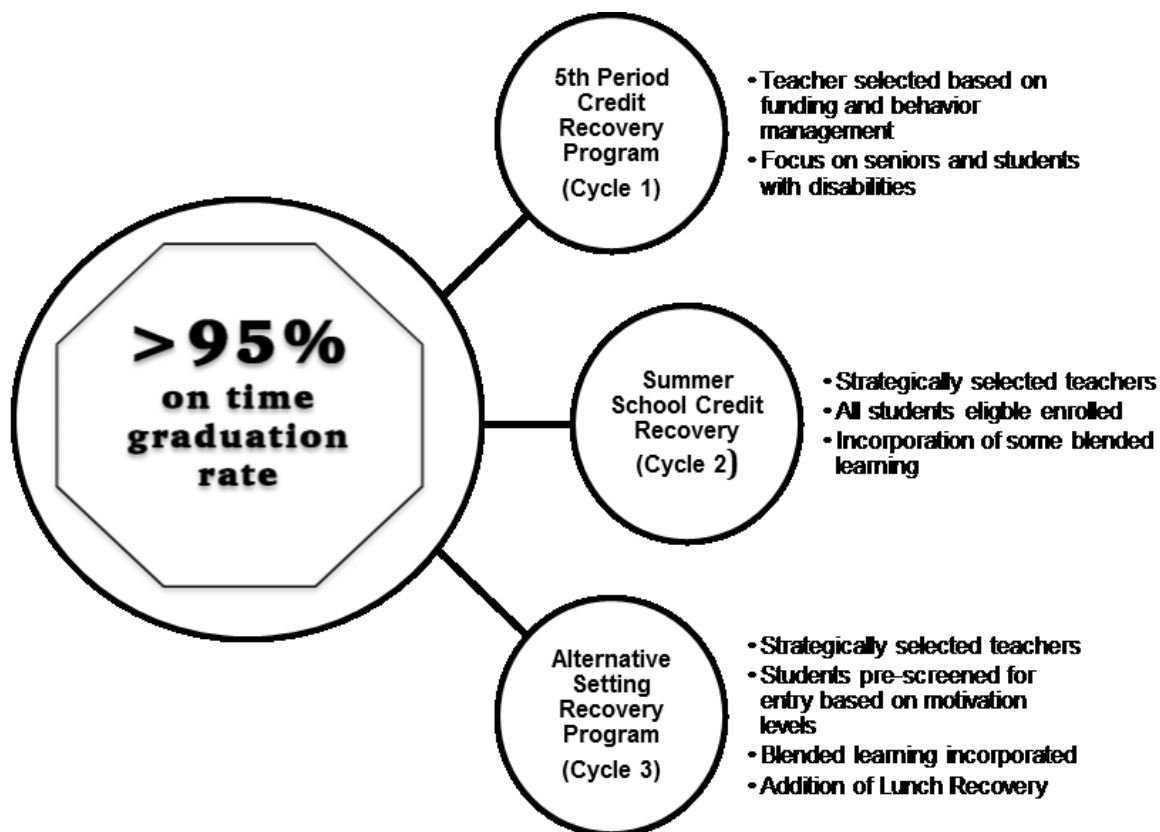


Figure 10. GHHS New Conceptual Framework for Improvement Initiative.

Purpose of the Improvement Initiative

The purpose of this improvement initiative is to address the needs of special education students who have behavioral and attendance problems, which jeopardize their on-time graduation. This work focuses on students who are not served through special education, but are not on the pathway to graduate on time due to behavioral concerns and poor school attendance. The improvement effort seeks alternative ways to support students to regain and retain credits. Using non-traditional classroom settings, such as blended learning through NCVPS “shared courses,” and *GradPoint*, the anticipated aim is that students will regain the maximum number of credits possible through the program and move closer towards on-time graduation.

The Goal of Improving Credit Recovery

This improvement aims to create ways to ensure that rigor and relevance of online programs is protected in the credit recovery setting. By strategically selecting teachers and monitoring student performance, the teachers will be able to see where students are struggling and provide additional support and remediation to ensure they fully understand content material. It is my aspiration that the strategic selection of teachers will help increase student success in the course and better prepare them for future courses.

This program also aims to create a structured environment that provides a student an opportunity to gain additional credits, along with the traditional eight potential credits in the 4x4 block schedule. Through the use of the “5th Period” After-School Recovery Program (*ASRP*), students can remain scheduled in regular classes and work on their recovery courses after school. This will provide them a stronger likelihood of regaining credits so they are on track for graduation with their cohort.

Guiding Questions

Two questions guided the efforts of this improvement initiative.

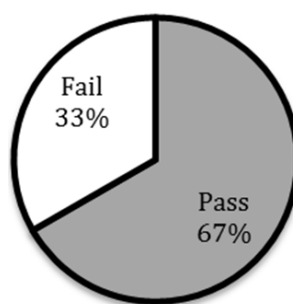
- Can alternative programs and structures, such as online and blended learning be used to help a student regain credits to ensure on-time graduation?
- Does the strategic selection of teachers impact a student’s potential for success in a non-traditional classroom setting to regain credits for graduation?

Rationale

Traditionally, GHHS has been limited to credit recovery only during the school day to replace core classes. In other words, instead of a student taking a course they failed in the regular classroom setting, they would take the same course in the *GradPoint*

credit recovery setting. This allows for smaller face-to-face class sizes, but does nothing to address the problem of a student regaining any additional credits to return to an on-time graduation pathway. A major limitation in the current process only allows students to receive four credits each semester. The program initiated for this improvement effort aims to help students by providing a structure for regaining more credits than the traditional four classes per semester currently offered by the block schedule.

A review of recent data from the 2014–2015 school year show that students enrolled in *GradPoint* during the day with a physical education teacher had a success rate of 67% in their courses, with 14 students failing courses (see Figure 11). Given concerns that 33.3% of the students failed their courses in *GradPoint* during the school year, the statistical review of how the program was used at GHHS provides support to implement a revised structure for the use of credit recovery at GHHS.

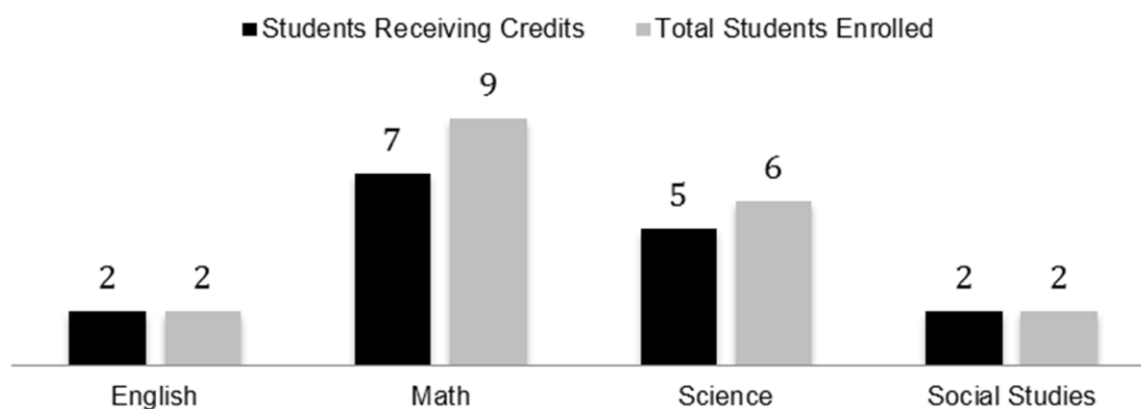


Source: Wake County Public School System (2015a)

Figure 11. 2014–2015 *GradPoint* Data of 2014–15 school year.

During the 2013–2014 school year, 19 students enrolled in the summer school credit recovery program, which used a certified physical education teacher for one session and a certified special education teacher for the second session. 84% of the students enrolled successfully completed courses, however a review of the data show 250

traditional face-to-face courses were failed during the spring semester of that year. These failing students were eligible to take a course in a summer school program that utilized *GradPoint* with an enrollment cap of 25 per session (see Figure 12). These data signal a strong need for revision of credit recovery program processes at GHHS. This work provides an opportunity to help students achieve on-time graduation status by providing a structure for regaining credits outside of the traditional day.



Source: Wake County Public School System (2015a).

Figure 12. 2014–2014 Summer School Data of Credit Recovery programs.

Summary

Risk factors will always continue to impact students by contributing to their unsuccessful academic progress. There is a great need for school districts to assess how they are meeting the needs of these students. A closer review of programs that address the problem of providing students a true opportunity to regain credits and catch-up with their cohort to graduate on time supports that alternative models are needed. Programs that are flexible enough to meet the needs of different learning styles while still maintaining rigor within the curriculum presentation need to be developed. This

dilemma requires districts to explore the options available or create new programs for meeting the high demands of students who are off track and face delayed graduation.

Additional Literature to Consider: Matching Online Credit Recovery Program

Attributes to Student Characteristics

Negative Behaviors

School administrators consistently look at predictors for student dropout and a student's likelihood to graduate within four years. Much research has been devoted to examining the various factors that lead to students not graduating on time. Behavioral concerns have long been exposed as a primary factor preventing students from graduating on time (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007). These behaviors often lead to suspensions, forcing a student to miss valuable instructional time.

Student behavior has a negative impact on a student's likelihood to graduate as early as elementary lower grades. Students who had more discipline problems in lower grades were more likely to drop out in high school. Research showed that prior to dropping out of high school, these students spent an average of 6.2 school days suspended from school (Hickman & Garvey, 2006). A study in 2007 stated students who were suspended also faced up to 16 other at-risk factors and warranted more and stronger supports to decrease the likelihood of dropping out of high school (Suh et al., 2007). The likelihood of not completing high school was even greater for teenage boys, who were 17 times more likely than girls to dropout when they had behavior problems in school (Hickman, Bartholomew, Mathwig, & Heinrich, 2008).

Attendance as a Negative Behavior

Student attendance is one behavior impacting a student's ability to successfully complete courses and continue on a path for on-time graduation. Throughout the United States, it is estimated that approximately 33% of students are truant from schools each day in the urban setting (Newsome, Anderson-Butcher, Fink, Hall, & Huffer, 2008). A review of literature completed in a recent study during 2008, explored how behavioral factors in specific grades impact academic success in high school (Hickman et al., 2008). They used this information for their study, in which they found the largest correlation was in 1st grade. When students missed classes in 1st grade, there was a stronger propensity to drop out than students in the same grade who had minimal absences. It would be impossible to know the breadth of truancy on any given day, due to the varied definitions of absenteeism, but said large districts throughout the United States report thousands of absences each day (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001). The U.S. Department of Education estimates 5–7.5 million students are chronically absent each year, meaning they miss more than 18 instructional days within the school year (Balfanz, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Fox, 2013; The White House, Office of Press Secretary, 2015). Attendance can be used as an indicator of potential high school drop-out as early as Kindergarten. Two studies reviewed explored the comparison of attendance problems in Kindergarten and the relation to high school success (Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbini, 2001; Lehr, Sinclair, & Christianson, 2004). They found a strong correlation between students missing 16 or more days in Kindergarten and the likelihood of dropping out increasing by as much as 30% (Hickman et al., 2008).

Oftentimes, high absenteeism is related to low academic performance and other problem behaviors (Newsome et al., 2008) that can impact a student's ability to progress towards on-time graduation. One study shows that students chronically absent from school were more likely to demonstrate other negative behaviors, such as physical aggression and substance abuse (Eaton, Brener, & Kann, 2008). This aligns with another study which linked high absenteeism to an increased likelihood of failing to graduate on time or graduate at all (Sinclair, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2005). Even more alarming are statements from the U.S. Department of Education saying, "A student who is chronically absent in any year between the eighth and twelfth grade is seven times more likely to drop out of school" (The White House Office of Press Secretary, 2015). With statistics such as these, the call for programs and new ways to reach these students before they drop out is as great as any time in the history of education.

While there are many other factors that impact a student's potential to graduate on time, it is evident that one of the largest behavior impacting on-time graduation is poor student absenteeism. In 2015, President Barack Obama initiated the "Every Student, Every Day Initiative" as an effort to decrease student absenteeism. This initiative pushed states to reduce absenteeism by ten percent (The White House Office of Press Secretary, 2015). While this did provide support for students to stay in school, it did not focus on helping students who were already behind in regaining their status and potential for graduation. This topic is of national importance and presents a great need for research to look at new, innovative programs and ideals or the restructuring of current programs to address this specific need for students who are off their graduation track due to the chronic absenteeism.

Students with Disabilities Struggle to Graduate on Time

Students with disabilities often struggle more instructionally than their regular education peers. It was reported that 66% of students with disabilities will not graduate high school (Balfanz et al., 2013). A focused study of students with disabilities and their likelihood of graduating from high school discovered an alarming statistic that only 57% of students with disabilities graduated with a full high school diploma in the 1999–2000 school year (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2004). A student with an IEP has almost double the likelihood of dropping out as a regular education student (Bost, 2006). Regardless of varied programs that have been implemented to help students with disabilities, the pervasive problem has remained special education students are at a higher risk of not graduating from high school than almost any other subgroup (Bost, 2006). In multiple studies, it was discovered that students with disabilities had a high school completion rate of 72% as compared to 78% with non-disabled students (Laird, Cataldi, Kewal Ramani, & Chapman, 2008; National Longitudinal Transition Study 2, 2005; Repetto, Cavanaugh, Wayer, & Lui, 2010). The struggle to support students with disabilities is a local, state, and national concern.

Exploring Online Credit Recovery Programs

One way to help these students may be through credit recovery. Credit recovery programs are defined as any program that provides students an opportunity to complete courses they have previously failed in order to gain credit towards graduation (Powell, Roberts, & Patrick, 2015). These programs include platforms such as *NovaNet*, *GradPoint*, *Study Island*, *Apex Learning*, *Edgenuity* and a host of other computer-based software programs that provide curriculum and instruction to students in a virtual setting.

The benefits of using these online programs are the personalization and flexibility of the program tailored to each student's individual needs (Watson & Gemin, 2008).

Studies have been conducted in the past to review the impact credit recovery programs have on graduation rates (Hughes, Zhou, & Petscher, 2015). However, I was unable to find any practitioner-based studies specifically addressing *GradPoint* as used in alternative settings. There has been a concerted effort in recent years devoted to making sure ninth graders do not fall behind their graduation cohort, as the likelihood of high school dropout increases if a ninth grader is retained (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). These studies, focused on ninth-grade success, have explored freshman courses, specifically math courses, and the use of credit recovery to help students achieve greater success in their courses to prevent failing courses (Heppen et al., 2012).

One common theme in many of the studies is the impact of the strategic use of a teacher in these programs. While different districts may create varied models, this common element of a successful program is that a teacher is present to facilitate the instruction and provide student support (Desoff, 2009). The Florida Virtual Public School has discovered courses taught by full-time, certified, and highly-qualified teachers provides the maximum support possible for students (Desoff, 2009). The teacher's ability to differentiate the program and step in to help a student when he/she is struggling and explain or provide a varied way of understanding the material is also paramount to student success (Desoff, 2009).

In addition to providing structured student learning, many districts have turned to the use of online credit recovery programs, due to their flexibility and cost effectiveness, as well as ability to provide more courses to students at any given time than the

traditional classroom setting. It has also been discussed that online credit recovery gives students an opportunity to re-engage themselves in the learning environment when they may have “burned bridges” with previous instructors and carry a negative stigma with them to future instructors (Desoff, 2009).

Educators feel the non-traditional student who exhibits these at-risk factors often associated with dropouts can benefit from the use of credit recovery when they fail a course in order to maintain on-time graduation (Watson & Gemin, 2008). The main focus of credit recovery courses is not “seat time,” rather a focus on students being able to demonstrate mastery of content sufficient to meet the requirements needed for graduation.

Summary

Regardless of why a student has failed, be it absenteeism, apathy, student mobility, negative behaviors, resulting in suspensions, special education status, or any other reason, schools must seek solutions to help students regain their on-time graduation status. The desire is to provide the student the best opportunity possible to regain the credit and be promoted to the next grade in hopes of on-time graduation (Desoff, 2009). The need to find a solution to keep students on track for graduation is immense as dropouts are eight times as likely to be incarcerated than their peers who gain a high school diploma (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Credit recovery programs should be varied based on individual student needs, including the time and location of the programs (Watson & Gemin, 2008). In addition, the main goal should be to integrate the student back into a more traditional setting classroom, once all credit recovery courses are completed successfully.

Methods

This improvement initiative used interviews from students and staff working with the *5th Period After-School Recovery Program (5th Period ASRP)*. The data provided a guide for structuring practitioner-based research to implement a change to the way *GradPoint* and other credit recovery programs are used to help students move towards on-time graduation when they fail courses.

90-Day Cycle

The 90-Day Cycle for improvement science was implemented in this work. The initial 30 days consisted of an overview of literature pertaining to the need for improvement within the structure, the use of *GradPoint* and NCVPS, and studies investigating how to help students regain credits and increase their likelihood of on-time graduation. The literature review also provided an opportunity to explore previous programs that had been utilized in school districts around the United States. During this first 30-day phase, I used information to develop an outline on why programs in other school districts have been successful. This information was used to develop the original model used in the first phase of the improvement initiative.

During the second phase, staff members were surveyed within the district to gain knowledge of their perception of the *GradPoint* curriculum and its meaningfulness and appropriateness for replacement of courses towards graduation credit. Much research had been dedicated to proving the rigor of online courses is not “watered down,” and thus was appropriate. The survey given to the staff provided more feedback as to the thoughts and ideas of WCPSS staff for the use of the programs and was used to plan the implementation of the improvement cycles.

Given the focus on graduation from the district, the main focus of the first PDSA Cycle was students who could graduate in June 2015, if they successfully completed the courses they enrolled in during the *5th Period ASRP*. The students were selected for this program based on their grade-level, with seniors receiving priority, followed by their special education status. Teachers for the program were hired based on decisions made prior to the implementation of the program and their background of working with students who have behavioral needs. The teachers provided a strong understanding of technology and the *GradPoint* program, as well as behavior management techniques. Upon completion of the first cycle, student interviews were completed to gain more insight on student perception of the program's strengths, as well as improvements that could be made to make the program more successful. This information was analyzed in comparison to staff perceptions. Adjustments were made and initiated in the second and third PDSA Cycles. Figure 13 provides a visual representation of the 90-day cycle for improvement change implemented during this work.

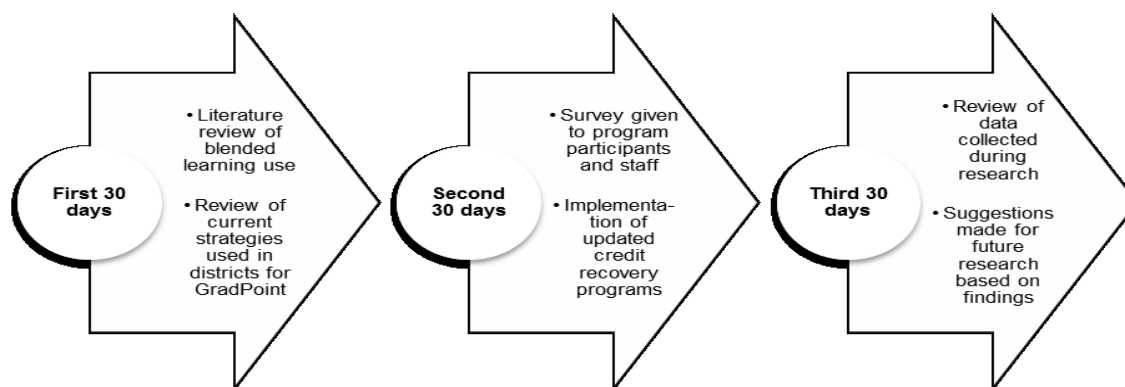


Figure 13. GHHS 90-Day Cycle of Improvement Initiative.

Using information from the first PDSA Cycle, a second cycle was developed. This cycle centered on strategic teacher selection and was implemented in a summer

school setting. A concerted effort was made to increase the number of students in the program without specification for regular or special education students. These students were divided into Math/Science and English/Social Studies sections. Strategic selection of a math and English teacher, who could provide more thorough support through blended learning in core classes was important. This provided support for students to maintain their path to on-time graduation. The teachers were purposefully selected in this cycle based on their licensure in subject areas and EVAAS data depicting successes with lower level students. They monitored student progress closely and worked with students for intensive support when they struggled with specific concepts within the program. The second PDSA Cycle was also modified to fit the requirements of the county's summer school program since funding was already available for this program.

The third PDSA Cycle focused on a smaller number of students in the after-school setting, along with the use of the same teachers from the second cycle. These teachers provided the same blended learning experience for students as they did during summer school by supplementing instruction from *GradPoint* when a student struggled with a specific module. Each teacher exhibited success with students completing courses in summer school. The third PDSA Cycle also provided a grade recovery component, at the request of the school's principal and intervention team, to address the struggles of students prior to failing a course.

During the third phase of the 90-day Cycle, information was recorded within the disquisition and a guide for improvement initiatives were suggested. During this time, information was shared with other schools through Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings and with the appropriate WCPSS District Office personnel. This information

included the successes and limitations of the work and will be discussed later in this writing.

PDSA Cycle one: Exploring after-school recovery. The goal of the this first PDSA Cycle was to focus on the immediate graduation of senior students who were not on track for graduation and would not do so without the additional support through the *5th Period ASRP*. Six students without IEPs and five students with IEPs were selected to participate in the first cycle. Through a review of their cumulative student files and their transcripts, the Dean of Students and I identified these students as being able to graduate in June, three months following the initiation of the program, if they successfully completed. A special education teacher with licensure for behavioral support was identified to facilitate the program to students with IEPs. Students without IEPs were enrolled with a second teacher who was selected by the school principal prior to the start of the program to facilitate after-school detention. Given his teacher certification, knowledge of computer engineering, and understanding of the *GradPoint* program, this teacher was able to provide technology assistance to students who struggled with the program interface.

The students participated in the program, which began in April 2015 and continued through the final exam period in June 2015. Students were required to attend sessions two days each week from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Each student worked with the assigned teacher using *GradPoint* or the NCVPS shared courses computer-based instruction programs to recover credits. No progress reports were provided to parents, and students were only able to monitor their progress through the *GradPoint* and NCVPS programs. Students primarily completed assignments through self-paced courses, using

only the computer instruction as their guides. The teacher provided technology and software support, supervision of the students, and to ensure integrity and fidelity he provided oversight of all tests and quizzes taken for the courses.

PDSA Cycle two: Strategic selection of teacher. The purpose of the second PDSA Cycle was to increase the number of students enrolled in credit recovery and explore the impact of the blended learning environment with strategically selected math and English teachers facilitating instruction with *GradPoint*. In the second PDSA Cycle students were identified for the program based on their academic performance in their fall and spring courses. Some of these students had failed courses due to attendance and missing assignments, while others failed due to lack of demonstrated mastery of content. Students who failed a course that would prevent them from being promoted to the next grade were invited to attend summer school. This cycle differed from the initial cycle as the teachers selected for the program were chosen based on their content-area licensure. One teacher has Math certification and the other has English certification. These teachers also had a good overall rapport with students, as evidenced in their teacher observations in Standard Two of the NC Teacher Evaluation Rubric, which states “teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of learners” (NCDPI, 2015). In addition, the structure of the program was modified to be that of a blended learning course that used the *GradPoint* program, but utilized teacher content knowledge in providing additional content support.

Forty-two students took classes for one month from July 9, 2015–August 7, 2015 and were divided into two sections, one session from 8:00–11:30 a.m. and the other session from 12:00–3:30 a.m. These two sections were almost double the size of any

other cohort of students taking summer school at GHHS. The classes were limited to 30 students in each session, but every student who applied was accepted. Twenty students in the morning session were placed with a certified English teacher and only English courses were offered. This teacher has demonstrated success in working with special education students in smaller classes and demonstrated this consistent success on his teacher evaluations in regard to positive rapport with students. In the afternoon session, 22 students taking Math and Science courses met with a certified Math teacher. This teacher had no experience teaching *GradPoint*, but has demonstrated success teaching low-level Math students in small groups, as evidenced by her teacher evaluation and EVAAS data. During these sessions teachers monitored student progress and provided support to individual and smaller groups of students with direct lecture instruction to reinforce the content. Progress reports were provided to parents and students each week.

PDSA Cycle three: Improving the setting. During the final PDSA Cycle, the focus was to provide a smaller setting for students, using strategically selected teachers, who would provide more direct instruction to ensure students fully understood the content. There was also a grade recovery component added for students who were struggling in classes and needed support to be proactive prior to them potentially failing a course. This cycle incorporated successful strategies from the first two cycles. In this cycle, students were enrolled in the *5th Period ASRP* from 2:30–4:30 pm Monday-Thursday each week during the 1st quarter from August 2015–December 2016. This was similar to the structure of the first cycle. Students selected attended a session two days a week, either on Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. The same teachers from the summer school recovery program were used and chosen based on their success rates in

the summer program and willingness to provide blended instruction to students by working with small groups to reteach content not mastered in the *GradPoint* program. The students selected needed credits in order to graduate on time. In addition, this cycle involved a pre-meeting with the Dean of Students and me to assess a student's motivation to complete the program. In addition, further meetings with me and the Dean of Students took place, if a student began falling behind in their program. Progress reports were provided every ten days to parents and students. A conceptual framework is provided below displaying the key differences between the three cycles (see Figure 14).

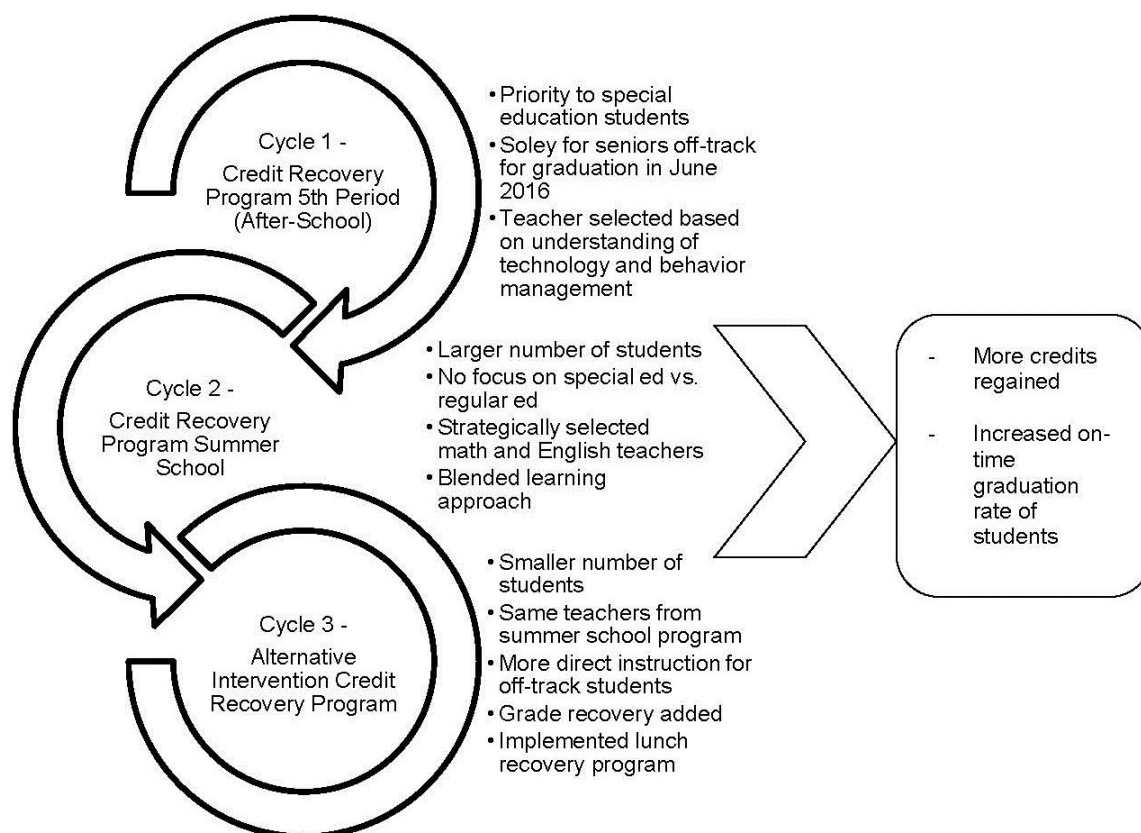


Figure 14. GHHS PDSA Cycle of Improvement Initiative.

Improvement Framework

Student selection. The students chosen to participate in this first phase of this improvement initiative were purposefully selected based on criteria including the student's graduation cohort year, the number of credits they needed to meet graduation requirements, age, and behavior/attendance records. The students selected in each subsequent cycle were based on motivation levels and ability to attend summer school.

Computer-based program selection. *GradPoint* is an online program that offers over 180 curriculum courses through online instruction that are self-paced and focused on student credit recovery and remediation to prevent student drop out. This program was selected because it is funded by the Wake County Public School System and is approved for credit recovery courses that meet graduation requirements for the state of North Carolina. The program has traditionally been used during the traditional 4x4 block schedule day with a student taking the course in lieu of face-to-face instruction. In reviewing the structure, of this program, this seemed like a minuscule use of a program that truly had the potential to help students get back on-track for graduation. After discussion with the implementation team, including district office personnel, it was determined that this program could also be used for first-time credit with school principal approval and a teacher certified in the curriculum facilitates the course.

North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) was created as a way to provide opportunities for students across the state to access curriculum that may not be taught within their school buildings. It has grown to be the second largest, state-led virtual school in the nation and serves over 55,000 students (NCVPS, 2015). Each of these

courses cost the school district money and as such are often not used for the benefit of all students in school districts

In reviewing programs for this improvement initiative, it was discovered that some of the courses offered on NCVPS were considered “shared courses.” These shared courses were funded using state monies and can be accessed to provide support to teachers and students throughout the state (NCVPS, 2015). The courses are available free of charge to school districts across North Carolina, provided they are taught with a certified content area teacher in that district/school. The courses include American history 1 and 2; biology; chemistry honors; civics & economics; English 1, 2, 3, and 4; and world history. A quick analysis of data for courses the students identified for the program were lacking supported the use of this program.

As more research was completed on the NCVPS shared courses, it was determined the computer interface of transfer from MOODLE, which is the platform used by NCVPS; and Blackboard, the platform used by WCPSS, did not convert easily. Since the platforms did not align, English IV and civics and economics were used in this improvement initiative. For students needing first-time credit in other courses, approval was given by the principal and facilitated by the content teachers selected for the program as teachers of record. For these purposes, only math and English courses were offered for first-time credit.

Instruments Used

Surveys. Upon completion of the program, students were asked to complete a survey that asked questions about the online learning experience and its comparison to the course offered with direct instruction from a teacher (Appendix F). Five students

were selected based on their demographics and background to complete an interview with me, and I inquired as to their motivation for the course and how course delivery in the past had impacted their success. Of these 12 students, seven actually enrolled in the program after returning their consent forms. These students were strategically selected based on their motivation levels, as the second PDSA Cycle of open enrollment produced results questioning if all students are capable of being successful in a credit recovery program or some need to remain in the traditional classroom setting for the most support. The questions in the survey were validated through collaboration with the disquisition chair, district level administration, and the school's intervention team.

In addition, a survey (Appendix E) was given to teachers and other staff in the Wake County Public School System who have worked with *GradPoint* or NCVPS in various degrees to assess their knowledge of the programs, curriculum, and thoughts concerning the rigor and use of the programs in schools today. These were validated through a review by the disquisition chair and district level administration.

Student interviews. Students who participated in the first *5th Period ASRP* were interviewed after completion of the program using scripted questions to start the interview (Appendix G). During the interviews however, student responses led to other questions being asked. The interviews provided insight to student thoughts on the *5th Period ASRP* as it compared to their in-class experiences in the traditional setting. Only three of the five student interviews were audible enough to transcribe. Once they were transcribed I reviewed them to determine any commonalities in themes as to why the program was more successful in their eyes as compared to the previous credit recovery methods and traditional classroom setting (Appendixes V, W, and X).

Assumptions

1. It is assumed the participants will give a full effort to complete the program, in which they are enrolled.
2. Is it assumed the participants of the survey will take time to thoroughly read and complete the surveys.
3. It is assumed the participants in the interviews will answer the questions honestly and without apprehension due to me being both the researcher practitioner and their administrator.
4. It is assumed the students have a basic understanding of computer knowledge to navigate the online programs.

Summary

This improvement initiative incorporated the use of surveys, interviews, and three PDSA Cycles of improvement science as practitioner-based research. The aim of the work was to place students who were at risk for not graduating on time in a program that would provide them an opportunity to gain up to two additional course credits and increase their likelihood of on-time graduation.

Findings

Teacher Survey Results

Rigor and relevance. One of the constant arguments against the use of online programs is the lack of rigor within the program. The previously used online program in WCPSS was *NovaNet*. Teachers and staff felt this program neglected the rigor of face-to-face, classroom instruction. There were never substantial results from the *NovaNet* program. A 2001 report completed by the Educational Research Department of WCPSS

concluded that only 73.8% of courses taken through *GradPoint* were successfully completed in a 3-year span from 1997–2000 (Faircloth & O’Sullivan, 2001). This program may have been considered in a negative light as it was one of the initial online programs used. However, the next generation of online programs have received more positive reviews as found in surveys of student and staff participating with the program, including the theme of “second chance,” and having a teacher who “cared enough to give me a chance” (Faircloth & O’Sullivan, 2001).

As a part of this work, surveys were given to the students and staff members familiar with the online curriculum in *GradPoint* and NCVPS. The surveys were completed in an effort to determine the effectiveness and rigor of the program in comparison to direct instruction. These staff members included school-based administrators, teachers, and central office personnel who have interacted with one or both of the programs. Specifically, the teachers surveyed have facilitated the *GradPoint* curriculum and taught the same course in direct, face-to-face instruction.

Within the survey, 80% of staff respondents felt the *GradPoint* curriculum was aligned with the Standard Course of Study taught in the classroom. Ninety percent of the respondents stated the modules were explained thoroughly enough for students to be able to understand with minimal teacher interaction; however, there was notation that face-to-face interaction was still beneficial to the student in understanding the material.

The survey also examined the rigor of the courses. Eighty percent of the respondents in the improvement initiative agreed or strongly agreed that the *GradPoint* curriculum was rigorous and comparable to face-to-face instruction. One teacher, now teaching *GradPoint* after 15 years of experience teaching math in the classroom stated,

Prior to working with *GradPoint*, I had many negative preconceived dispositions regarding the rigor and the appropriateness of the instruction offered via the digital interface. However, now that I've had more exposure to *GradPoint* specifically, I now see more value behind the program particularly if used effectively.

The teachers surveyed also praised the flexibility of the program and the easy access at any given time for students to work. One theme all teachers resounded was the need to ensure testing fidelity. As such, the practice of using password protection for tests and having students complete all tests in the classroom with a teacher to insure the integrity of the program is upheld.

Staff survey results found staff agreement with

1. The curriculum being easily accessible for students;
2. Outlined in a manner that provides students with enough instruction to understand;
3. How to navigate;
4. Rigorous and aligned with the SCOS in the direct-instructed classroom;
5. Flexibility of the program;
6. Being able to work at various times of the day and week;
7. Providing highly at-risk students who have jobs or have to support their families with an opportunity to complete their studies in an alternative manner.

Table 17 details the responses of the staff from the survey and their feelings on the programs to be used in the improvement initiative. Responses from staff solidified that the program is user-friendly, adaptable to meet each student's pace and needs, and rigorous, aligning with the standard course of study. This information provided

knowledge to help plan the program in an effort to assuage staff concerns about the fidelity and rigor of the program.

Table 17

Staff Survey Results

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The course self-paced.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%	40.00%
The course is rigorous.	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	60.00%	20.00%
The course is user-friendly.	0.00%	10.00%	20.00%	50.00%	20.00%
The modules are well-explained.	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	90.00%	0.00%
The course provides individualized assistance to students.	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%
The modules are too difficult,	0.00%	50.00%	20.00%	30.00%	0.00%
The modules are too easy.	0.00%	40.00%	30.00%	30.00%	0.00%
The course is aligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	70.00%	10.00%
The course requires little to no assistance from a face-to-face teacher.	0.00%	70.00%	0.00%	20.00%	10.00%
The course can be accessed at any time or place.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
The text used is on grade level for students.	0.00%	0.00%	11.11%	77.78%	11.11%
The text is easily understood.	0.00%	30.00%	20.00%	40.00%	10.00%
The course is unaligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%	30.00%	10.00%
The tests are an accurate reflection of concept mastery.	0.00%	20.00%	10.00%	60.00%	10.00%
The modules are too lengthy.	0.00%	60.00%	10.00%	30.00%	0.00%
The course prepares the student for future courses.	10.00%	10.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%
The course aligns with the EOC.	0.00%	30.00%	20.00%	50.00%	0.00%

The teachers surveyed rated the *GradPoint* program as 70% effective for students who are at-risk for not graduating on time. One teacher reflected, “*GradPoint* is an effective program, if there is accountability, high expectations, and consistency.” The

teacher continued, “*GradPoint* can be more effective than other online programs, such as North Carolina Virtual Public Schools, since there is a teacher present in the classroom to provide support to the curriculum in *GradPoint*, when needed.”

Summary of Student Surveys

Each student in the initial PDSA Cycle was given an entry survey (Appendix F) prior to beginning the *5th Period ASRP*. The students were questioned as to their historical educational experiences, motivation, and why they felt they struggled in school. Of the initial ten students participating, 78% had an IEP and once cumulative discipline and attendance records were reviewed, all were found to have some form of attendance problem, including tardies and frequent absences or suspensions (see Table 18). Through this survey, it was discovered that 50% of these students were from single parent homes. All students participating were minority students, identifying as African-American, Multi-Racial, or other when asked about their race/ethnicity.

Further information of importance from the survey included 70% of the students in the first PDSA Cycle said they were not going to graduate on time, as of the time of this improvement initiative, due to failing or being retained in a previous grade in middle or high school. The other 30% were not considered off-track, because they had only failed courses in high school, but not enough to impact their graduation status.

The students also recorded in which classes they had struggled and failed, leaving them at risk to not graduate on time. Overwhelmingly, English and math stood out as key classes that caused a student to get off cohort from graduating on time (see Table 19). This provided justification for the hiring of a certified English and math teacher to oversee the program.

Table 18

Student Demographics Data

Q #	Demo Statement	# Responding	Percentage
1	I have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).	7	78%
2	I have an Academic Recovery Plan (ARP).	6	67%
4	I have been promoted with interventions in the past.	5	56%
3	I live in a single-parent home.	5	56%
8	I have been placed in ALC or ISS at least three times during a semester in high school.	3	33%
7	I have been suspended at least twice in high school.	1	11%
5	I have switched schools due to housing relocation at least once during high school.	1	11%
6	I have missed more than 15 days in a school year during any single high school year.	0	0%

The alarming information gained from the student surveys shows the number of at-risk factors each of the students involved in this program have, and it magnified the need to discover an alternative means for them to regain credits in order to graduate on time. Further, all of these students were at least one year behind their original cohort graduation class, over sixteen years of age, and 70% reported having been retained in at least one grade throughout their K-12 educational career. Through this survey data, I was able to justify the need to explore alternative ways to utilize an effective program to help students recover the maximum number of credits possible in a semester in order to have an opportunity to graduate on time.

Table 19

Course Failure Information from Students Enrolled in First Cohort

Course	Percentage of students who failed a course in the subject area
Math	70%
English/Language Arts	90%
Science	50%
Social Studies	50%
Other	20%

As a key theme, when asked what motivated them to learn, the students provided positive responses to having a teacher who was supportive and engaging present in the program. This supports the need to hire teachers with strong backgrounds of building rapport with kids (see Table 20).

Table 20

Motivation of Students

Q #	Theme	Percentage
1	Interesting content/curriculum	56%
2	Use of technology in the classroom	56%
3	Personal goals/ambitions in life	56%
4	Engaging teacher	67%
5	Supportive teacher	89%
6	Family	33%
7	Extra-curricular activities	44%

Figure 15 shows a conceptual model developed at the conclusion of the work outlining the three key factors noted by students during exit interviews as to why they were able to successfully complete courses within the *5th Period ASRP* that they had previously failed in the face-to-face classroom setting. These three themes all play a major role in ensuring students are successful in credit recovery efforts. The three themes are a guideline that proved to provide success to students in the in the improvement initiative and are foundations that should be used in building any credit recovery program.

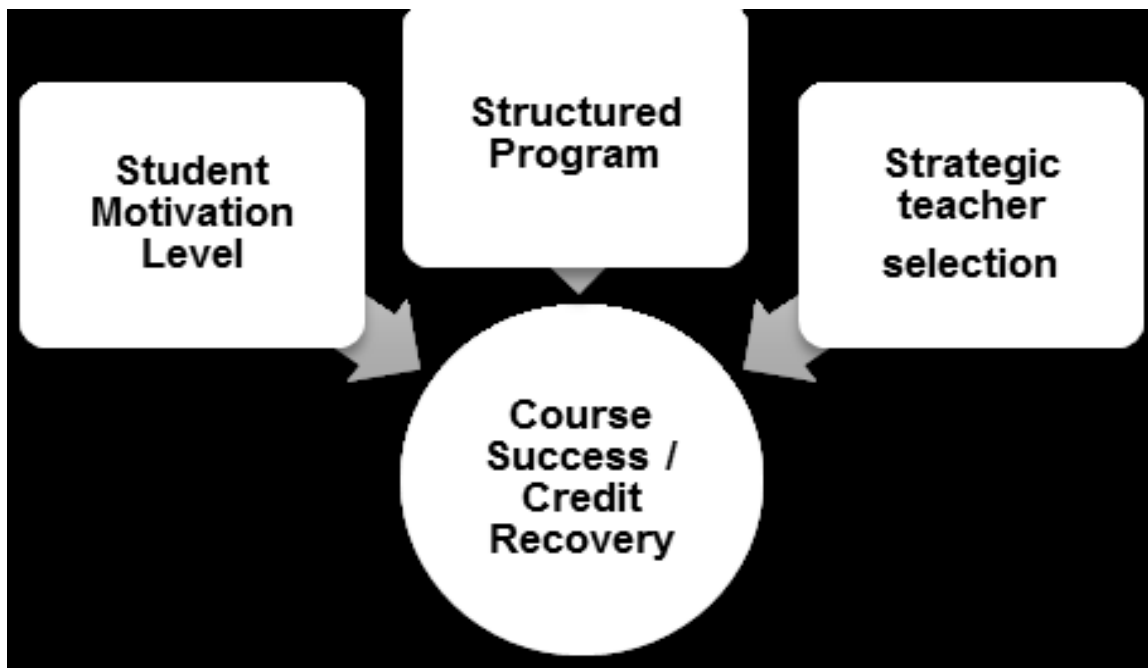


Figure 15. Program Success Themes.

Improvement Cycle Results

During the first PDSA Cycle, I sought to discover if the use of *GradPoint* and NCVPS outside of the traditional classroom setting, with a more strategically selected teacher would increase the rate of success for students, thus increasing their likelihood of

on time graduation. A small sample size of students was used in the first PDSA Cycle to also assess the programs and give the teachers an opportunity to familiarize themselves more with the curriculum to have a stronger understanding of the alignment with the standard course of study students are expected to learn in the traditional classroom setting.

During the first PDSA Cycle, eight students took 10 courses. Of the eight students, four students had IEPs and four did not. All students had displayed attendance problems and behavior needs during their high school careers, leading to course failure and putting them at risk for not graduating on time. Four of the ten students would not graduate at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year if they were unable to successfully complete the courses. The number of credits obtained in English were two for English IV using NCVPS, and one for English I using *GradPoint*. One credit was gained for world history using *GradPoint* and one credit was gained for common core math II using *GradPoint*. Science credits gained include two for physical science and two for earth science. The one course failed was an upper level math course on *GradPoint*.

Of the classes taken, only one student was unable to successfully complete the course in which he was enrolled. All other students demonstrated a 70% or higher proficiency in each course they attempted, leading to a total of nine credits being regained. This allowed four of the students to graduate in June 2015 on time with their graduation cohort. The success of this sample allowed me to expand the program in the summer and do further investigation on the impact a strategically selected teacher had on the success of students in their respective content area.

In the second PDSA Cycle, 35 students were enrolled in a total of 45 courses overall. Of those courses, 15 were in math, 14 in science, 11 in English, and five in social studies. I selected a certified math and a certified English teacher to support students in math/science and English/social studies respectfully. There were seven other students excluded from the improvement initiative in the summer school program because they were taking courses other than the areas of certification for the teacher. The improvement initiative included 22 students in the math/science class and 20 students in English teacher's section with English/social studies courses. Some students were enrolled in a morning English course, as well as an afternoon math/science course. In all, 31 courses were successfully completed while only 14 courses were failed. During the morning session, the English teacher employed a strategy of blended learning into his instruction, as he monitored student progress. When he noticed struggling students, he pulled them off the computer program and taught the material in a traditional classroom format, then had students re-complete the module. In the afternoon session, the math/science teacher provided more direct one-to-one support rather than re-teaching complete concepts to the students. In comparison, the full re-teaching of concepts produced more success, as only two students failed the English course and twelve failed a math or science course.

In the final PDSA Cycle, the seven students were enrolled in a total of eight courses (one student took a course during both session). Of those eight courses, seven credits were gained. One student did not meet attendance requirements for the program and thus was removed from the program. The program again was presented in a blended learning format. Since the teachers had taught the program in the second cycle, they had

a stronger knowledge of the *GradPoint* curriculum and were able plan and provide more effective remediation for students. Courses were taken specifically in math (3), English (3), and science (1) courses. The courses are added to a student’s transcript at the conclusion of each year and were not readily available at the time of this publication at the end of the first semester.

Figures 16 and 17 are graphic representations of the number of credits gained through all three cycles in each content discipline. There is currently no rationale for the high volume of students passing Science courses, as compared to the other courses.

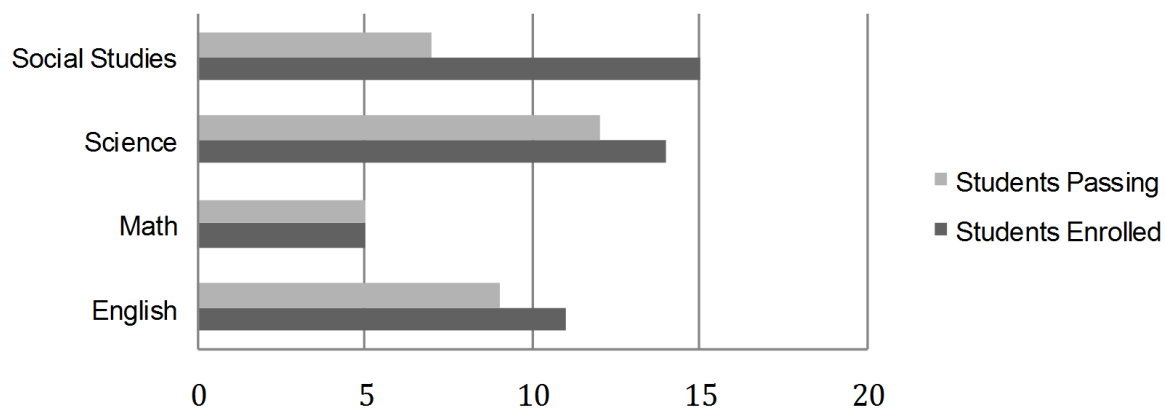


Figure 16. 2015 Summer School Results of Cycle Two.

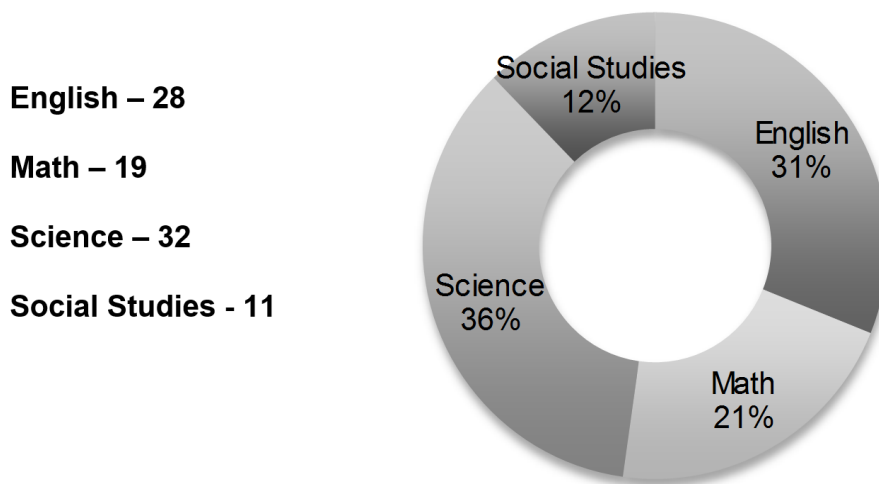


Figure 17. Credits Recovered through Improvement Cycles.

Reliability and Validity Issues

To address reliability and validity with the surveys, they were reviewed by a Western Carolina University professor during doctoral coursework, when taking the EDRS 803 Data Collection course. They were also reviewed by central office personnel with extensive knowledge of *GradPoint* and other virtual learning programs prior to being distributed. Based upon feedback from both parties, the questions were revised before being used in the work. To address validity with the *5th Period ASRP* program, consultation with central office personnel in Student Services, Intervention, and Technology Services validated that the program's usage and structure were within the guidelines required for credit recovery courses for graduation.

Summary

During this improvement initiative, educators familiar with the *GradPoint* and NCVPS programs completed a survey to provide feedback on the rigor and relevance of courses in the virtual setting. Overwhelmingly, teachers felt the *GradPoint* program was rigorous enough to be considered for a student's mastery of content if successfully completed. Students completed a survey to gain insight as to why they failed courses and needed credit recovery. Improvement science included the use of three PDSA cycles where students completed credit recovery courses in non-traditional settings, such as the *5th Period ASRP* and summer school. Each cycle provided valuable data that were used to adjust the next program and review results. Students in the first cycle completed exit interviews and these interviews were used to build a conceptual framework of student success from the program, detailing three common themes, which included a student's

motivation level for completing the program, strategic teacher selection, and a structured setting for the program.

Case Studies from Improvement Initiative

Through these programs, there were many highlights and key findings from various participants. Four case studies have been selected and will be discussed further, including excerpts from interviews of the students to exposes their thoughts on the successes and shortcomings of the improvement initiative and program. Student progress in the program and courses recovered as a result of each of the cycles are outlined in the attached appendices of student transcripts (Appendix Y).

The following case studies outline specific students who participated in the program. Each student displayed unique situations and needs to be enrolled in the program. Based on their interviews after completing each cycle, each student provided valuable insight to the changes within the cycles. An overview of their cases is outlined in Figure 18.

Case One—“Hiro”

Hiro, an 18-year-old Asian male, is a senior who has failed multiple courses during his high school years. He frequently misses school due to his job. He feels his job provides him a secure lifestyle and he enjoys going to work at the gym every day. Most of his academic success has been through the support of his BST, based on his IEP since his sixth-grade year. He was selected to serve as a case study for this work based on his class attendance, being served through special education, his historical behavior problems in school, and his current off-track status for graduation. His case presented an opportunity to explore how a student would respond to working with a teacher who has

experience in working with students who have behavior needs, while closely monitoring progress, and success.

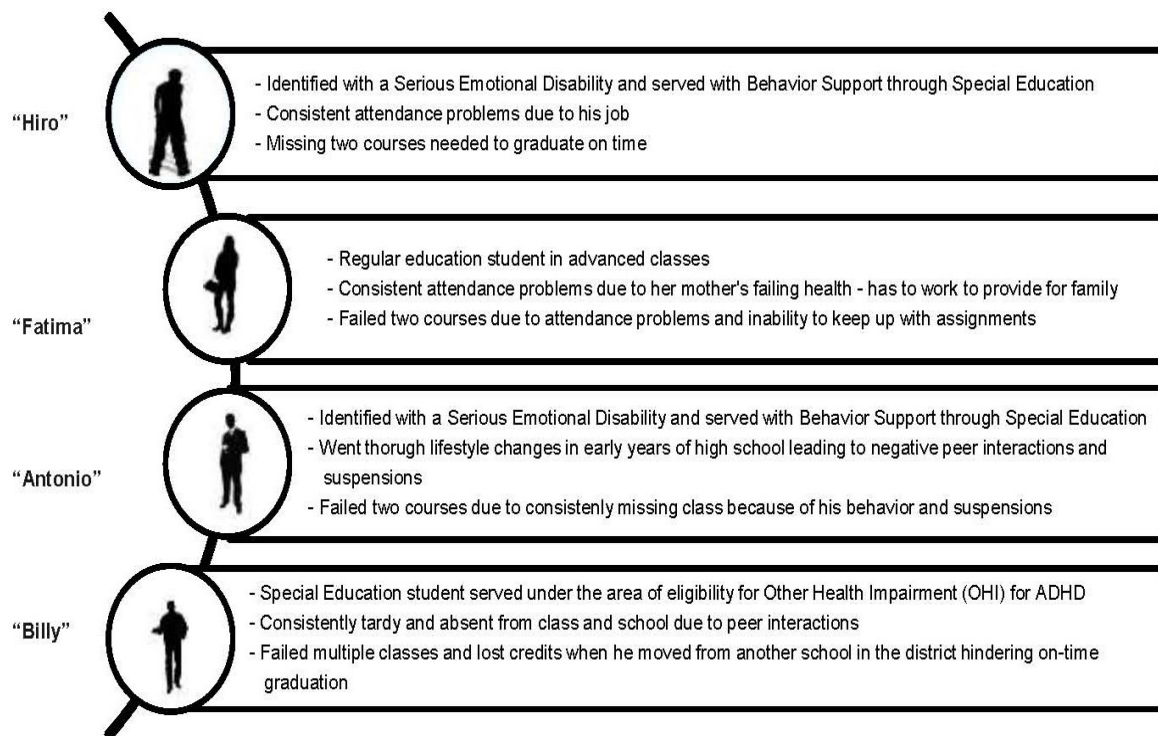


Figure 18. Case Study Overview.

Hiro was enrolled in a *GradPoint* course of physical science, when a review of his records determined he was lacking one credit toward graduating on time, if not able to regain one credit before the end of the school year. If Hiro was not enrolled in the *5th Period ASRP*, he would not be able to graduate. Therefore, he would need to attend summer school or return for one class the following year in order to gain his high school diploma, which he had already stated he would not do.

Hiro stayed after school in a small-group setting with the BST. During this time, he worked with four other students, who were enrolled in physical science, as well. The teacher provided minimal direction in terms of content and allowed the *GradPoint*

program to self-guide Hiro. The teacher did provide motivational support and helped Hiro and other students develop goals and roadmaps to keep him on track to complete the program.

Hiro completed the course and obtained the credit for graduation. Following his completion of the program, I interviewed Hiro, where he shared many details as to why he was able to attain success in the *5th Period ASRP*. A recurring point in the interview with Hiro was how the program's structure benefited his success. He stated, "I like to talk to people in the regular class and in this program, the smaller class did not give me that chance" (Appendix V).

Hiro also felt the flexibility of the *GradPoint* course helped him be successful. "The ability to work at my own pace and not have to worry about the teacher moving on without you understanding helps with the *GradPoint* program." The flexibility was something he deemed of great benefit since he had missed so many days of class due, to his job and lack of motivation in the regular classroom setting.

Since he participated in the first phase of this initiative, one support put in place for Hiro was having the BST, who had no certification in the core content, as his instructor. The teacher was to provide motivational and behavior support, as well as technical assistance. Hiro noted this as a disadvantage, "the teacher had to read the problems in the *GradPoint* course and isn't as advanced in that area as my regular classroom teacher." The teacher's rapport with the student was a benefit, as he understood Hiro's disability and was flexible and "always on top of me to push me through and help me be successful."

Hiro was able to successfully complete the physical science course and he passed all of his other courses during the regular school day. His transcript confirms that he not only recovered this credit, but met NC graduation requirements to graduate on time (Appendix Z).

Case Two—“Fatima”

Fatima is an Arabian female student, who is a senior and has demonstrated academic success in the past. Within the past two years her mother has become ill, forcing Fatima to miss numerous instructional school days in order to work and provide a second income for her family. When her mother became ill, Fatima attempted to graduate a year early and her graduation date was changed to reflect her as a part of the class of 2015. However, her lack of attendance in school caused her to fall behind and she failed the psychology and math courses needed to graduate. Her teachers reported that she struggled to make-up assignments and successfully complete the course. Fatima shared with the Dean of Students during a meeting, “I need to graduate before the end of summer 2015 in order to provide financial and emotional support to my family.”

Fatima needed to take psychology and an upper level math course. She was enrolled in the psychology course through *GradPoint*, and she worked after school in the *5th Period ASRP* during the first PDSA phase. She completed this course with minimal problems and made a grade of 80%. Following completion of the first course, Fatima was enrolled in Summer School, where she took a first-time discrete math credit with a certified math teacher through *GradPoint*. During this course, the teacher reported Fatima struggled and she spent much time explaining concepts to Fatima. As time progressed, the teacher reported Fatima’s confidence grew and she successfully

completed the course with an 83%. More importantly for Fatima, by graduating in August, she was able to devote more time to her ailing mother and still attend community college courses. Fatima and her family said at the summer school graduation, “we are appreciative of the school’s understanding of our situation and your support to Fatima to help her graduate.” Fatima’s courses completed are noted on her transcript. Fatima gained enough credits through the programs used in this improvement initiative to graduate in August 2015 (Appendix AA).

Case Three—“Antonio”

Antonio is an African-American senior served through special education. He struggled to find himself early in high school and this led to poor choices of friends and in his behavior. His desire to be accepted, as others questioned his sexual orientation, led to numerous outbursts and fights with other students, resulting in suspensions. His IEP identifies him as having a Serious Emotional Disability (SED) and he receives support from his Behavior Support Teacher for social interaction and organizational skills. During the exit interview, Antonio noted he had been a part of the BST Program for most of the school years he could remember due to his anger issues and getting into fights and confrontations.

Antonio was a part of the first PDSA phase and was enrolled in a *GradPoint* physical science credit recovery course, as well as an English IV first time credit course through the NC VPS shared courses that was co-taught by the BST teacher, who is also certified as a highly-qualified English teacher at GHHS. The BST teacher completed the courses with Antonio and maintained the self-guided pace mindset in regards to instruction. Antonio stayed after school for every possible session beginning in April

2015 – June 2015. In addition, Antonio reports he spent time at the community library and his home on weekends and nights to complete assignments for both courses. Antonio was able to successfully complete and meet all requirements necessary for NC graduation, as he celebrated walking across the stage and getting his diploma in June 2015 with his friends (Appendix BB).

Like many other students and teachers participating in this investigation, Antonio indicated that having a strategically selected teacher made a large impact on his ability to succeed. Antonio said of the teacher, “I had the teacher’s full attention and didn’t have to wait for a teacher to come talk to me; he was right there.” The teacher also provided motivation and “tough love,” as Antonio added, “The teacher wouldn’t let me quit. He told me they aren’t even going to consider you for graduation if you do not get this assignment done. So, he kept me on it.” He added, “It was easier to focus and he is more understanding than most teachers I have had in the past.” He continued, “The smaller setting with less kids was a big help to me because there were fewer distractions” (Appendix Z).

Case Four—“Billy”

Billy is a Caucasian male, classified as a junior. He is an unmotivated student. He is off cohort and will not graduate on time. He has an IEP and struggles with completion of assignments. He has attendance issues, including tardies and absences, often related to his focusing more on his relationships with his peers than school. Specifically, he is often found skipping class with his girlfriend. He is easily influenced by his peers and often makes poor choices, such as skipping classes. He has lost multiple credits through a school transition and his attendance. In reviewing files, it was

determined he needed ten credits to graduate on time, and with only eight classes possible during the regular school day, he would be short two credits.

Billy was enrolled in the summer school, 2nd PDSA cycle for credit recovery biology and English III. Each of these credits were needed in order for Billy to maintain the potential for graduation on time in June 2016. During the summer school PDSA phase, Billy logged 50 hours of instructional time in three-hour sessions over seventeen days. During this time, he was able to complete the courses and regain the necessary credits to possibly graduate during the 2015–2016 school year.

Once Billy began the 2015–2016 school year, he quickly began struggling with his courses and he was identified as needing the 5th Period program in order to complete his math credit and remain on track for graduation. Unfortunately, Billy's attendance to the program was intermittent and he fell further behind leading to him failing the math course. He was unable to complete the program due to his absences and could not gain the credit. As a result, Billy will not be able to graduate on time with his cohort. His courses recovered and unsuccessful completions are noted in his personal transcript (Appendix CC).

During an exit interview with Billy, following the completion of the summer program, Billy expressed his disinterest in school and desire to get a job. He said the only class he feels comfortable in during school is his woodshop class, where he can use his hands and build. He stated one of the biggest reasons he is more successful in some classes over others is "because the teacher cares." This reinforces a strong theme throughout the research process that a caring teacher is a key component of motivating students who are at-risk to complete courses.

Summary

Four students were selected from the interviews completed during the improvement initiative to serve as case studies due to the uniqueness that each case presented. These students provided invaluable information through their interviews and stories of how the program impacted and provided them with an opportunity to regain enough credits to graduate on time. Their interviews further validated the use of the program in developing a way to allow students to gain credits outside of the traditional school day.

Limitations, Implications, Recommendations, and Next Steps

Limitations

Although important information was gathered, sample size was a limitation of this work. This was due to lower numbers of students needing credit recovery. Future improvement initiatives would be needed within a school setting with a larger population of students who are off-track for graduation. It would be interesting to further dissect the groups examining correlations between ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status and its impact on success rates in similarly structured programs.

Further, this research was focused on students with behavior issues, specifically in regards to attendance. In order to better validate the results, the programs would need to be expanded to reach a larger group of students who may be struggling to complete their coursework for other factors that make a student at-risk for failing courses.

This work also provided information on implementation of the program in a large, urban high school. The impact the program would have on smaller school or schools in a rural setting will need to be examined further. In addition, further research may be

needed at schools with different demographic and socio-economic statuses than those of the students at the school within the improvement initiative.

Implications and Recommendations

This improvement effort has given many students struggling to reach on-time graduation with a pathway to get back on-track. One of the most notable findings within this process was the impact the structure and use of the *GradPoint* program has on student motivation and success. Consistently throughout the improvement initiative, a common theme of having a strategically selected teacher who genuinely cares about students is needed in order to motivate students to complete the course. “Hiro” noted in the first case study that the teacher pushing him to meet his goals was essential to his success in completing courses and graduating. Further, having a teacher who is certified in the content area, in order to provide support to students when they hit curriculum roadblocks is essential to helping students complete courses and regain the necessary credits towards graduation. “Fatima” struggled with completing her math course early in the program, but intensive one-on-one support from the certified math teacher facilitating the program helped her better understand the content and complete the *GradPoint* course. The teachers used in these improvement efforts demonstrate a willingness to work with their students in the program and not just use the *GradPoint* class as a chance to “sit back and relax.” They genuinely encompass the mindset of a blended learning course by providing direct instruction to students, when the computer fails to meet its desired outcome.

Another key component to the success of credit recovery is a student’s motivation. Throughout surveys of teachers and students and review of results, it was

determined that a student must have a personal desire to regain his or her graduation status with the appropriate cohort in order to show success. This is evidenced in the case study with “Billy,” whose focus was on his peer interactions, rather than his studies in the course. When considering the students who failed in all of the cohorts, most have faced suspensions for drug violations, are frequently caught skipping class, and display an overall apathetic approach to school. In exit interviews, these students had no thorough response for why they were struggling in school, nor for what their goals were after high school. Most just mentioned, “living in the moment.”

The evolution of this work has continued beyond the point of the research, as the program continues to be improved each semester to meet the needs of as many students as possible. Following the conclusion of the PDSA cycles studied, I was provided with more information from our district office concerning the credit recovery methods available and in a meeting with the principal and Dean of Students a modification was made to help students who may have only failed courses by a few points. These modifications of how this program can be used to impact a broader group of students without having them take an entire course are outlined in Figure 19, which is a flowchart for *GradPoint* and “5th Period ASRP.”

An analysis of the data gives positive reason to believe that if the programs for credit recovery are used with the correct combination of staff and environment, it could strongly impact a student’s opportunity to regain credits outside of the traditional classroom and ensure that more students remain on track for on-time graduation. These programs could be similar to the ones within this improvement initiative or could lead to further research on how a separate alternative school devoted solely to credit recovery for

students with attendance problems may positively impact on-time graduation rates.

Feedback from teacher surveys and student interviews support the recommendation that *GradPoint* and other similar credit recovery programs be used in a structured environment outside the traditional classroom with a true blended learning approach.

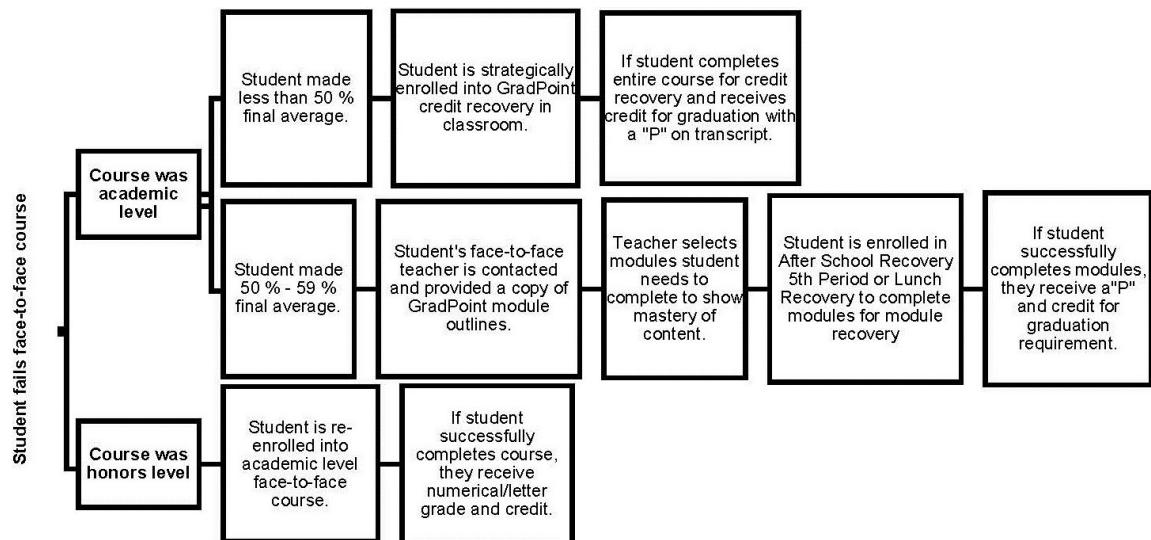


Figure 19. Updated Flow Chart of Improvement Initiative.

This moves towards a future improvement initiative to investigate whether a student's age or grade level has a direct correlation to success within the credit recovery program. Despite a consistent focus in education on freshmen the success of students in their first-year of high school, this investigation showed that freshman struggled more in the credit recovery courses than upperclassmen. Given this information, perhaps the online and blended learning programs are better suited for older students.

The number of credits regained by students and success of this program could provide insight for investigation focused on exploring the use of alternative school settings for students who have attendance problems or need an alternative time period of the day to complete their course work. Given our ever-changing population of students

and the responsibilities they have outside of school, further exploring the use of the blended learning approach and possibly dedicating specific schools solely to this purpose could benefit the Wake County Public School System and other districts in meeting the needs of all their students.

In future improvement initiatives, another area to explore would be how students perform once they reenter future classes. Specifically with math, teachers have long argued students who complete credit recovery miss the basic foundations needed to be successful in future courses. However, the use of a strategically placed math teacher in credit recovery courses that can provide blended learning and ensure concepts are mastered provides additional support. With this support, further research would be needed to track a cohort of students from *GradPoint* into future courses and measure their success rates in those courses. This has been implemented at GHHS for the spring semester of 2016 and data will be tracked to measure student success after completing *GradPoint* math.

Based on the results of this work, it would be advantageous for further improvement efforts to be directed towards analyzing why there were a larger number of credits gained in science courses than other content areas. There was no true rationale for this in the results, and teachers working with students in those courses stated their knowledge of the content was limited. These are typically vocabulary heavy courses and future improvement initiatives could explore how the material is explained in the science courses as compared to the face-to-face, traditional setting to determine if any strategies used in the *GradPoint* course may be implemented in the regular classroom to prevent student failure of the course.

The difference between previous studies and the improvement change implemented at GHHS focuses on how all students can have an opportunity to recover credits and get back on track for on-time graduation. Future studies should continue to explore how this program can impact each grade level.

Summary

The research completed during this improvement initiative at GHHS provides a strong foundation for supporting the strategic selection of teachers when working with the *GradPoint* program. The strategic selection of the teacher provides an opportunity to support the *GradPoint* curriculum through blended learning when a student struggles, which provides fidelity to the rigor of the content. The research has demonstrated the potential success for programs outside of the traditional school hours, such as a 5th period, to provide students an opportunity to gain an additional credit and place them in position for on-time graduation.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Overview

One of the most important measures of success for any school—be it in Cherokee County, Wake County, or Cumberland County, is graduation rate. However, there are many external factors that impede on-time graduation for many students. Some of these include high student mobility, socio-economic disadvantage, as well as poor attendance and other negative behaviors exhibited by the student. This work examined this problem of practice in three demographically diverse schools in these counties. While each school posed different factors hindering on-time graduation, each also struggled to find strategies and interventions to meet the needs of all of their students. The co-authors of this work sought to approach this problem through the use of improvement science, a staple of the disquisition. The purpose of this disquisition has been to evaluate and create interventions, protocols, and programs that contribute to increasing on-time graduation.

The Disquisition

The disquisition process of Western Carolina University has illustrated the adage that new structures require new ways of learning. This also means a new way of approaching a problem, and as such, collaboration is necessary. When this research began in the fall of 2013, one research practitioner, Deborah Womble, was working on issues of scheduling in her school, especially with the ever-increasing number of students, particularly military students, who moved into the area at non-traditional times. Conversation with research practitioner, Christopher Bradford, revealed that he too struggled with similar issues in his school; however, he was more concerned with keeping special education students and those with behavior issues in school. These two

researcher practitioners, adopting the collaborative nature of the disquisition, began supporting each other as they began their individual investigations. This was a supportive partnership, and with both research practitioners living within driving distance, the collaboration nature of the process grew. In the spring of 2014, a third research practitioner, Lisa Anderson, began to join the conversations, as she too struggled with issues of scheduling. Although on-time graduation was her main concern, her focus group was students living in poverty. Although living more than seven hours away, through interactive technology and monthly face-to-face meetings, this collaboration began to grow from three individual researcher practitioners into a true partnership.

In the action-based research of the disquisition, as opposed to the traditional dissertation, creative and collaborative ways of approaching a problem of practice are encouraged. This “action research places the individual practitioner, or some small group of practitioners, at the center” of a problem (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2011, p. 33). In this model of the disquisition, we were able to implement improvement change in our own schools with problems of practice that were meaningful and relevant to us, and to our profession as high school administrators. Improvement science provides a proven framework for practitioner based inquiry, ‘Learning by Doing’ (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). These models for improvement provide flexibility for improving quality and productivity in diverse settings (Langley et al., 2009). This framework emphasizes the PDSA Cycle to not only make change, but to understand that the changes are indeed an improvement. “The Practitioner Based Thesis’ (PBT) goal is decisions, changed practices, and better organizational performance” (Archbald, 2008, p. 719). Through this model of action-based research, we were able to

directly impact our own organizations to improve the systems and structures currently in place within each of our respective topics on increasing the on-time graduation rate.

It is this level of improvement science that separates the disquisition from the traditional dissertation, and the Ed.D, from the Ph.D. The Carnegie Project on the Educational Doctorate (CPED) provides a definition of Ed.D. as “The professional doctorate in education prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation of new knowledge, and for the stewardship of the profession” (The Carnegie Project on the Educational Doctorate, 2015). To this end, this disquisition indeed exemplifies that collaborative nature, as well as creativity that focuses on having an impact in the educational field. The collaborative model of research from the Carnegie Project provides an opportunity for individual practitioners to use their own strengths for research. By working together, practitioners are able to learn from each other, while “anchor[ed] in a common narrative of an enlightened purpose or a common enemy” (Bryk et al., 2011, p. 33). Through this collaborative process, three leaders from diverse schools were able to bring their ideas together and develop programs that not only apply to their schools and school districts, but impacted each other through the change process as concepts from models began to overlap within the schools. This in turn will have greater implications for improvement in all schools. This idea aligns with Archbald’s proposal that practitioner-based research should benefit a larger community (Archbald, 2008). This would never have been possible without the extensive collaboration that occurred during the research process.

This disquisition indeed exemplifies that collaborative nature, as well as creativity. This disquisition has many of the traditional elements of a dissertation as each

researcher practitioner has developed their individual improvement efforts. However, through the creative and collaborative nature of the disquisition, these three initiatives are woven together to provide multiple pathways to approach the problem of practice—maintaining on-time graduation.

Reflection

Each of the research practitioners found this disquisition process to be an on-going cycle of reflection. Some of this reflection has been about the work itself. Bradford feels that if given the opportunity to go back and change something about this initiative and his work, he would have hired subject area teachers in each area of credit recovery in order to provide students more support from the beginning. He also would have also implemented a structure to better keep track of student progress as they worked through the credit recovery programs. This would have included more collaboration with counselors, students, and parents.

For Anderson the transition between schools during the initiative was an issue. She wishes she had been at AHS from the beginning of the work, rather than transferring to AHS from MHS near the end of the improvement cycle. AHS is a Title 1 school, and has been for much longer than MHS. As such, this initiative would have been able to make a greater impact. Not only was this move a timing issue, but Anderson feels that had she learned about *Edgenuity* sooner she would have compared this program with *GradPoint* and *Study Island*. Another issue beyond her control was funding. Had funding not been an issue, having several license for each of these the programs in order to have first-hand experience with each of the programs would have been helpful to better evaluate the programs.

As the case with her co-authors, Womble also would have done things differently if given the opportunity. Like Anderson, much of this reflection is about timing. Womble wishes she had realized the gap between counselors' training and understanding of the skills and dispositions needed in their true professional responsibilities, as opposed to what they were taught in their Master's programs. Had this been the case, she would have created the Counselor Training Program sooner, and had each counselor go through the training modules. This would have added a deeper level to the improvement initiative, as an added component of the improvement initiative could have then identified, followed, and compared HMS helped by these counselors prior to taking this training and after taking this training. It would be interesting to see if the services provided by counselors was truly better after the training. If time were not an issue, it would also be interesting to follow these students until graduation to determine whether, in response to counselor interventions, they actually graduated on time.

Lessons Learned

In addition to reflecting, these three research practitioners learned many lessons. Many of the lessons learned were directly related to the problem of ensuring on-time graduation, however, there were many lessons which grew from the collaboration of working with others from very different settings to accomplish a common goal. The researcher practitioners who undertook this challenge had no idea that reaching across the state could provide such an extension to the understanding of the problem or depth of thought in developing possible solutions. Although each researcher developed and implemented their own improvement initiative, it was through the collaboration of all

three that the depth and breadth of the improvement initiatives and understanding of the findings evolved.

From the work at JBHS, these research practitioners realized that HMS struggle, not only socially and emotionally, but also academically because of moves which are often beyond their control. Often times the students affected by these moves are either SED students or military affiliated students. Dependents of military families account for more than 1.1 million school-aged children in the US. Many of these students will move anywhere between six to nine different schools over the course of their academic career (Weisman, 2012). This is a challenge, not only for the student and their parents, but also for the schools who serve them.

While school counselors have received training in school as to help HMS with many of these social and emotional issues, they do not receive training to help them navigate the issues of transfer between schools. The issues which these HMS must battle may involve transfer between schools with different schedule formats, transfer between schools who do not offer the same classes, transfer at a non-traditional time so that they may not receive credit for a class, and transfer between states with different graduation requirements. High school counselors often feel frustrated as they try to help these HMS, but do not have sufficient training to adequately help these students during the transfer process so that the student retains and/or regains as many credits as possible.

Sometimes the best way to help students is to help the faculty and staff who work with the students. Through the use of a 90-Day Improvement Cycle and spiraling PDSA Cycles, the discovery of the need for and the creation of a training program for high school counselors, while not a one size fits all training, is a step in the right direction to

prepare counselors and counselors-in-training assist these HMS through the transfer and registration process.

From the reflection of the improvement initiative at MHS, the authors of this disquisition agree, having the best, well-trained personnel in a school is essential for student success. But it is equally as important to have the best product and/or program to meet the needs of these students. Often times, when a school administrator is isolated in a small area, it is difficult to know what those effective programs are. This is the very situation when networking and use of improvement science is needed. By collaborating and reaching out to others beyond the walls of the school, or even the county, administrators can find a variety of tools and programs. By examining each of these through a PDSA Cycle, the best fit for the school and the students can be found. This is the path that led Anderson to compare three programs, seeking to find the fit of convenience for the school, content for the students, and rigor to appease the teachers. This is how the discovery of, review of, and implementation of *Edgenuity* came to fruition for AHS.

Additionally, each of the research practitioners understand that, even as the writing of this disquisition comes to an end, the work does not end. GHHS is a prime example of this. Beyond finding the best programs, it is crucial to find the best way to use the program. While GHHS has had the *GradPoint* program, finding the most appropriate way to use the program has been, and continues to be, an on-going concern. While use of PDSA Cycles have led to creation of programs such as *5th Period ASRP*, the future development of this program continues. Even as this disquisition moves toward publication, GHHS has begun to explore another option, *Lunch Recovery*. This

program will provide even more options for students, especially those for whom transportation or work schedules prevent them from attending after school recovery options.

All three co-authors agree that properly trained personnel are paramount for the success of any program, and most especially for a credit recovery program. Without the properly trained teacher, regardless of the rigor of the credit recovery program, any effort may become ineffective. Without rigorous, well-aligned curriculum, students may earn a course credit, but they may not gain sufficient knowledge to break the cycle of failure as they move to a second level course, where they again fail. Providing more options and more flexible options, such as through a menu, provides for a student-centered program. In order to do this there must be more support and funding.

All of these are important realizations learned through the process, but possibly one of the most important lessons learned was about the process of improvement science itself. While each of the researcher practitioners had a vested interest in increasing on-time graduation, each was concerned with a different focus group. Still, all three of the researcher practitioners used the 90-Day Cycle and the PDSA Cycle to review a problem and develop a solution or structure to help ameliorate that problem. Although the three improvement initiatives in this disquisition have different products, each used the same scan, focus, and summarize cycle proposed by The Carnegie Foundation. Each found that this 90-Day Cycle consisted of looping of a series of PDSA Cycles. Interestingly, each research practitioner realized that after months of work, these improvement science cycles became second nature as a way to approach any problem of practice.

Additionally, although creating very different products, many commonalities in, not only the approach to solving a problems of practice, but also within the findings of the work.

What Did Not Work

Anderson, Bradford, and Womble also realized that not every aspect of these improvement initiatives worked. Each of these initiatives were a step in the right direction, but there are still issues that even the most flexible credit recovery options cannot overcome. Although Bradford has created structures to provide flexible options for students to retain and/or regain credits, there are still roadblocks to serving all students. First there are external factors that keep students from attending after school programs. These factors may include lack of transportation, the need to work, care for family members, or simply a lack of motivation. Further, although an effort is made to improve rigor and align content with the standard curriculum, a credit recovery program, particularly a self-paced credit recovery program, cannot equal the instruction of a full course with a certified, face-to-face teacher.

Anderson agrees with Bradford that the more flexible a credit recovery program, is, the better; however, when working with SED students, those external factors are even more prominent. Many MHS and AHS students are unable to attend summer school or after hours programs because they do not have transportation or because they must work in order to help supplement the income of their family. Additionally, many of these students must hurry home after school to care for younger children in the home. Each of these contributes to the cycle of failure. Breaking that cycle could contribute to breaking the generational poverty that exists in Cherokee County.

Also agreeing with co-authors Anderson and Bradford, Womble too recognized external factors contribute to continued gaps in meeting the needs of all students. Working with HMS not only means working with the aforementioned external factors, but there are many other external factors, often beyond the control of the student, parents, or school. This is especially true of military students who regularly PCS, and often with limited advanced notice. While providing structures and training programs to help counselors better serve these students, issues such as the inability to control the time of transfers, the issue of transfer between a variety of schedule formats, and the difference between course options between schools.

Common Findings

Although these three improvement initiatives were quite different, common issues emerged. Each school noted that, although their current graduation rate was commendable, students still failed to graduate on time due to various external factors. Interestingly, many of these common factors overlapped. At JBHS, where the primary focus was student mobility, it was observed that most of these highly mobile students were either military affiliated or socio-economically disadvantaged. These socio-economically disadvantaged students were often either forced to leave their homes, moving in with family, and/ or relocating to a better home situation. This problem was also evident at MHS, where often students were moving to live with different family members. Many of these students also had high absenteeism, which was a primary focus at GHHS. Here high absenteeism was due to socio-economic distress, but other times it was simply due to negative behavior choices. These students all had one thing in

common - they often fell behind their graduation cohort and did not graduate on time. This was a common concern in all three settings.

As this was a common problem of practice, each researcher practitioner had the common goal to improve the situation and sought to provide strategies and interventions to overcome this problem. As such, each researcher practitioner began to investigate credit recovery and retention efforts. In this, the three practitioners diverged, investigating different options. Lisa Anderson, from MHS and Christopher Bradford, from GHHS evaluated programs like summer school, *Study Island*, NCVPS, *GradPoint*, *Edgenuity*, and an alternative 21/22 credit graduation options. Bradford considered various ways of implementing *GradPoint* and NCVPS in various formats within his school for both credit recovery and earning first time credit to allow students to catch up with their cohort. He collaborated with Womble to explore the evolving use of *GradPoint* at JBHS. *GradPoint* was new to Anderson, who reviewed several options, but provided in depth comparison of *GradPoint* with *Study Island*, then further evaluating Edgenuity. Deborah Womble investigated a variety of options, developing the Personalized Registration Process (PRP), including a menu of strategies and interventions for credit recovery and/or retention. Additionally, she developed a training program for counselors to help improve skills and knowledge in dealing with nontraditional transfers where students are in jeopardy of losing credits.

As the three collaborated they realized that each of their individual initiatives had implications to help each of the schools. When Anderson began her work, she focused on the Alternative 21/22 Credit Graduation Plan, summer school, and *Study Island*. Through discussion with Bradford she began to investigate *GradPoint*, then learned about

Edgenuity. Neither Bradford nor Womble had heard of *Edgenuity*, but are investigating this as options for their schools and systems. Womble and Bradford found similarities in the use of *GradPoint*, and collaborated to find better ways to use *GradPoint* in their respective schools. The PRP checklist was taken by both Bradford and Anderson. Both Bradford and Anderson agreed that counselors in their schools were not adequately training to handle complicated issues in transfer or with credit recovery issues. Each of these practitioners expressed a desire to use the Counselor Training Program developed by Womble in their schools.

While each of these researchers realized they had a common problem of practice, none of the practitioners imagined that the focus of their problem, considering their individual schools, with such diverse cultures, populations, and areas of focus would coordinate so well with the others. Over the course of the past year, these practitioners were surprised by the way their problems of practice, findings, and implications for future improvement initiatives intertwined so closely.

Recommendations, Overarching Implications, and Next Steps

As each of these three improvement initiatives within the disquisition was designed around different areas of focus and subgroups, there are several unique recommendations for each of the research practitioners, as outlined in chapters four through six. However, once again, there were many commonalities between the recommendations of these initiatives. All three researcher practitioner adamantly support the need for programs and protocols to assist these vulnerable populations of students and provide options to help them reach on-time graduation status. Each practitioner agrees that one of the key components to facilitate success to their implementation plan is the

use of strategically, well-trained personnel. Both Bradford and Anderson agree that the need for a knowledgeable, caring teacher/facilitator to work with credit recovery options is mandatory. This idea of caring, personal service, provided by well-trained personnel is also the key component of both the PRP and the Counselor Training Program created by Womble. Each of these researchers concur that, while these programs are effective for the target population, these also will benefit the greater population of students in each school.

This disquisition highlights the need for programs and protocols in schools to provide support for highly mobile students, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and student who display chronic attendance problems and negative behaviors. However, as the studies were based on small samples, further research is needed to explore the effects and benefits on a larger population. This is also true of the training program for the counselors. Providing the pre/post assessment, along with the training program, to a large number of counselors will help validate the need for it beyond the current setting. The pre/post assessment was based on a modified SCARS assessment, and amended to include tasks specific to this training. However, the modified SCARS, if given to a larger section of counselors, would highlight the need to develop programs like this to be implemented in universities with school counseling programs, as well as in schools for Just-In-Time training for new counselors.

Providing professional development for the teachers is a crucial aspect of ensuring that students are provided with appropriate credit recovery course and a rigorous education. Beyond training faculty and staff, a further step to help these students to graduate on time is to provide training for parents, not only about the options for credit

recovery, but in an attempt to break the patterns which cause students to fail classes. This may be about the importance of coming to school or about opportunities that are afforded them post-graduation.

Beyond training, it important to continue to create structures for schools and students in order to provide optimal services for students. In order to provide even more flexible options to help students retain and/or regain credits, establishing a school, or even a “school within a school” devoted to students who have attendance problems would provide opportunities for flexible learning options, as well as staff to motivate and encourage better attendance. This idea of proper personnel for these students is essential.

Much thought and effort must continue to reinforce the opportunities for students and schools. However, many aspects that affect these programs lie beyond the authority of the schools. There is a great deal that needs to be addressed about local and state policy regarding credit recovery. This goes beyond simply providing funding. Standard guidelines for rigor and standard curriculum would do much to ensure that students do not just receive a credit, but also an education.

Summary

When this journey began, none of the three practitioners realized the depth of understanding and extension that could be gained through a collaborative process such as the disquisition provides. However, through these new structures and ways of learning and working together, exemplified by the model of 21st century learning, this disquisition epitomizes the impact of these three school leaders as a collaborative team to address a problem of everyday practice. As this disquisition exemplifies, collaborative work between scholar practitioners has a stronger impact than the traditional model of working

in isolation. Thus, this has the potential to revolutionize how school leaders address problems of practice in education as a whole, and in particular, this has the potential to better serve more students in their quest for on-time graduation.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: DOUBLE-UP-TO-CATCH-UP



Cumberland County Schools

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 SUPERINTENDENT

High School Enrollment Procedures

April 9, 2015

All high school counselors were invited to meet on March 4, 2015 to discuss the current enrollment standards for students who transfer into the county from out of county or out of state. Below is what has been approved:

Scheduling for 1st Semester transfers:

1. If a student transfers in mid-October or later and comes from a traditional 7 period day, the counselor will assign them two classes for credit (elective or cores based on counselor judgment, but not including EOCs or CTE) and then the same two classes to audit to make up the seat time.
 - a. **Schedule Example:** 9th grade freshman comes in with seven classes, two of which are World History and Earth Science. Student is now given World History 1st period & 2nd period (audited - no grade) and Earth Science 3rd period & 4th period (audited - no grade)
 - i. Very important to communicate with your data manager about this so student doesn't earn any extra credits.

Or

9th grade freshman is given World History 1st period, 2nd period Student Assistant assigned to same World History class, 3rd period Earth Science, 4th period Student Assistant assigned to same Earth Science class.

- i. Student Assistant is a pass/fail class where credits are not awarded.
2. If a student transfers in November or later and has not been enrolled in school, the counselor will assign the new student to two elective classes for credit (I.E. Arts or PE) and have them audit those same two classes to make up seat time (see schedule example above).

*Also check with the Coordinator of Counseling Services or the Associate Superintendent for Student Support Services depending on the circumstance and why the student has not been in school.

Scheduling for 2nd Semester transfers:

1. If a student transfers in mid-March or later and comes from a traditional seven period day, the counselor will assign them four of their seven classes for credit (elective or cores based on counselor judgment, but not including EOCs or CTE).
2. If a student transfers in April or later and has not been enrolled in school, the counselor will assign the new student to two elective classes for credit (I.E. Arts or PE) and have them audit those same two classes to make up seat time (see schedule example from 1st semester above).
 - * Also check with the Coordinator of Counseling Services or the Associate Superintendent for Student Support Services depending on the circumstance and why the student has not been in school.

Appointing Credit and Determining Potential Credit Procedures:**1st Semester Transfers:**

N/A - follow scheduling procedures

2nd Semester Transfers:

1. If the student arrives from a traditional seven period schedule with credits from their previous school, the counselor will award those credits, which will also get added to the four potential credits from Cumberland County for the spring semester. This formula will determine the total number of potential credits the new student can earn for that year.
 - a. I.E. earned 3.5 for fall semester + 4 from CCS spring semester = potential 7.5 credits that school year.
2. If the student arrives from a traditional seven period schedule with no credits:
 - a. Contact the previous school and see if they will award credits
 - b. If the previous school will not award credits, hold the student to only four potential credits (from CCS spring semester) for that school year.
3. If a student arrives and has dropped out, hold them to their full potential for that school year.

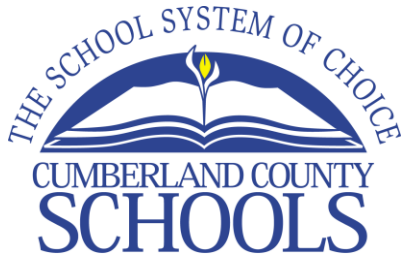
Promotion and Graduation Requirements:

Based on School Board Policy 3420, "students transferring into a Cumberland County school who have been promoted under their previous school's standards will retain their pre-transfer grade level. Transfer students must then meet local promotion standards for subsequent grade level promotion. North Carolina state and local graduation requirements must be met in order for students to obtain a Cumberland County School's diploma."

Students who have different credit graduation requirements and don't fit the promotion standards need to be identified by the counselor and reviewed with Counselor Coordinator and the Associate Superintendent for Student Support Services.

APPENDIX B: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GRANT

NEWS RELEASE



2465 Gillespie Street

Fayetteville, NC 28306

Contact: Rebecca C. Legan, M.Ed, MCASP Project Director -- 910-678-2454

E-mail: rebeccalegan@ccs.k12.nc.us

Website: <http://www.ccs.k12.nc.us>

For Immediate Release:

October 30, 2015

Cumberland County Schools Awarded 1.5 million DoDEA Grant

Fayetteville, NC — Cumberland County Schools (CCS) is pleased to announce the receipt of a grant

award from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) totaling nearly \$1.5 million. The 5-year grant titled “True North: Meeting the Individual Needs of the Military Child” will provide social-emotional support to military dependent students in

CCS. Considering nearly 1/3 of the students in CCS are military dependents, it is easy to see the tremendous impact educators and military families alike should expect to see from this program.

Military dependent students face challenges that few other students experience. Frequent moves, transitioning schools, recurring parent deployments are a few of the issues that can distract a military dependent student. The project will increase support services for military connected students in CCS to reduce the number of office behavior referrals by providing two additional Military Student Transition Consultants (MSTC), and Student2Student programming at targeted schools. Counselors will assess the social-emotional needs of incoming or referred military students, and transition action plans will be developed and monitored.

Additionally, “True North” will support CCS faculty and administrators by providing professional development regarding addressing behavior issues and the needs of military students and families.

For additional information regarding the DoDEA Grant, contact CCS’ Military-Connected Academic and Support Program Project Director, Rebecca Legan at 910.678.2454.

**Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)
Military-Connected Academic and Support Programs (MCASP)
Full Application 2015**

Cumberland County Schools
“True North: Meeting the Individual Needs of the Military Child”
 2465 Gillespie Street
 Fayetteville, NC 28306
 Tel: 910.678.2794
 Web: <http://www.ccs.k12.nc.us>

Primary Point of Contact

Name: Frank Till
 Title: Superintendent
 Telephone: 910.678.2312
 Email: franktill@ccs.k12.nc.us

Alternative Point of Contact

Name: Andrea Quick
 Title: Grants Coordinator
 Telephone: 910.678.2794
 Email: andreaquick@ccs.k12.nc.us


DUNS: 040050676000

Total Funds Requested: \$1,491,600

Military Installations Served: Name(s): Ft. Bragg

Grant Grade Levels and Program Area(s): Grades 6-12, Student Support Programs and Counseling

Target School Enrollment	Grades	Impact Aid/Enrollment, Verified by Impact Aid Survey October 14, 2014					% Impact Aid
		Military-Connected	Federal-Connected	Total Impacted	Non-Connected	Total Enrolled	
Jack Britt HS	9-12	665	257	922	1019	1,941	47.50%
Westover MS	6-8	148	51	199	502	701	28.39%
71st HS	9-12	316	204	520	1,121	1,641	31.69%
Hope Mills MS	6-8	141	42	183	502	685	26.72%
Southview HS	9-12	289	137	426	1,348	1,774	24.01%
Douglas Byrd HS	9-12	79	84	163	1,028	1,191	13.69%
Douglas Byrd MS	6-8	60	80	140	606	746	18.77%
Ireland Drive MS	6-8	28	32	60	296	356	16.85%
TOTAL		1,726	887	2,613	6,422	9,035	28.92%



 Dr. Frank Till, Superintendent, Cumberland County Schools



 Date

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Section II: Needs Assessment

Cumberland County Schools (CCS) is the fourth largest Local Education Agency (LEA) in North Carolina. CCS is a PreK-12 public school district, serving 50,986 culturally diverse students (45% African American, 11% Hispanic, 33% Caucasian, 2% Asian, and 9% other) of which 16,197 (31.27%) are military dependents.

Student Need/Risk Factors

- Thirty-one percent of students have a parent or parents serving on active duty in the U.S. Military.
- Fifty-seven percent of our student population is considered economically disadvantaged.
- Approximately one in four are worried about having adequate meals.
- Thirty-two percent average mobility rate with some schools experiencing over 40% transition rates

Deployment and reintegration challenges have had, and are having, direct impacts on educational outcomes. Not only can the stressors associated with the deployments of a parent and the related uncertainties affect a child's ability to function optimally in school, there are also implications for the overall wellbeing of these military-connected students. Accumulated length of combat deployment during a child's lifetime has been correlated with depression and anxiety in the child. These concerns are prevalent in the ongoing struggle to address and meet the needs of those students enrolled in the identified target schools.

Multiple deployments over time can have a significant effect on the mental health of a child leading to increased child depression, externalizing behaviors, maltreatment, lower achievement scores, increased suicide ideation and lower quality of life (Chandra et al., 2010; Chartrand et al., 2008; Lester et al., 2010; Reed, Bell, & Edwards, 2011; Richardson et al., 2011). Children and youth who experience multiple school transitions encounter substantial barriers to well-being. Results from the national survey revealed that after controlling for demographic variables, students who moved three or more times in their lifetime were more likely to repeat a grade, be suspended or expelled, and had higher scores on the Behavior Problems Index than students who never moved (Simpson & Fowler, 1994).

The student support programs in CCS are currently inadequate for building high levels of school connectedness to help transitioning students. Counseling staff available for direct counseling services are limited given the wide range of other duties; the ideal amount of time counselors spend directly supporting students' social and emotional needs during transition would be 35-50%. Given the scope of their current positions, the CCS counselors are not able to provide counseling services to incoming or referred military students and build social capacity, or connectedness to their new school and peers. Not only are the counselors limited in the allocation of time dedicated to supporting transitioning students, but the counselor to student ratio at CCS is below the national average ratio (see Table 1). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2005) recommends a ratio of one counselor to 250 students; however, the Cumberland County School ratio of targeted schools is 1:357. An additional ten counselors would be needed to meet the recommended 1:250 ratio. The proposed project will help CCS progress toward

closing this gap with the *Support Goal* of increasing the level of social and emotional supports for military connected students in the CCS by implementing a peer support program and hiring two additional counselors specialized in supporting highly mobile students.

Table 1. Discipline Referral and Counselor Ratio Data by Campus

Campus	# Impacted Students	# In School Suspension Actions <i>SY14-March</i>	# Out of School Suspension Actions <i>SY14-March</i>	# counselors	Student/ Counselor Ratio
Jack Britt HS	921	141	118	5	1 to 378
Westover MS	194	175	172	2	1 to 352
Seventy-First HS	504	635	403	4	1 to 388
Hope Mills MS	183	272	159	2	1 to 340
Southview HS	424	469	319	5	1 to 343
Douglas Byrd HS	121	301	422	4	1 to 272
Douglas Byrd MS	95	301	422	2	1 to 349
Ireland Drive MS	41	169	99	1	1 to 351

School connectedness can also be improved with the implementation of peer support programs. This project will establish Student2Student programs with processes and procedures in place as well as a dedicated person to sustain, promote, and encourage student engagement in the Student2Student campus programs.

Prior Efforts

Cumberland County Schools was awarded a DoDEA grant in 2009 focused on enhancing students' math and science achievement through the use of research-based practices. The grant highlighted the importance of building a program that assumes transiency. Cumberland County Schools not only experiences high attrition of students due to being a part of a military community, but also retaining school personnel. As a result of the grant, Cumberland County Schools implemented a system-wide plan of ensuring that as school staff leave, others are ready to step in assume their roles. The district also built a digital library of training materials to prepare new school personnel and maintain a high standard of staff.

Cumberland County Schools recognizes the need to change the instructional delivery model to incorporate technology. With Race to the Top funds, Cumberland Schools became wireless in the entire district. Every teacher was given a laptop, and in some cases tablets. We have developed a system of telecommunication that was developed to allow student access to all classes and communicate in real time with all schools. The new technology infrastructure enabled Cumberland Schools to provide professional development district-wide in real time as well as communicated between their Professional Learning Communities (PLC). There is an ongoing effort by the central staff to expand the real time professional development technology

to create a repository of trainings to provide staff development available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

A teacher advisory committee was created that meets quarterly to discuss issues and give direct feedback to the superintendent. The staff is redesigning the curriculum to better meet the needs of the transitional student. Schools are organized into K-12 vertical teams and professional development is customized to the various vertical teams. The principals are organized into advisories to give input in topics that range from budget to curriculum.

All school staff are required to spend time in data analysis. Resources are moved to programs that yield the highest return. The lowest performing schools are designated as Superintendent's Schools and their Professional Learning Communities are more directed.

Section III: Project Goal

Goal: To increase the level of social and emotional supports for military-connected students

Office referrals for behavior are high among students in the targeted campuses in Cumberland County Schools, and the ratio of students to counselors is significantly higher than the recommended 1:250 (see Table 2). The goal of this project is to increase support services for military connected students in the Cumberland County School District to reduce the number of office behavior referrals by providing two additional student counselors and Student2Student programming at targeted schools. The two strategies accompanied with professional development for school staff will decrease the number of behavior referrals for military-connected students by 25% by August 2020.

Table 2. Discipline Referral Data by Campus

Campus	# Impacted Students	# In School Suspension Actions <i>SY14-March</i>	# Out of School Suspension Actions <i>SY14-March</i>	# counselors	Student/ Counselor Ratio
Jack Britt HS	921	141	118	5	1 to 378
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Ireland Drive MS	41	169	99	1	1 to 351

Goal Outcome

1. By June 2016, **baseline data will be established** for the behavior referrals of military-connected students.
2. By June 2017, behavior referrals of military-connected students will **decrease by 10%** from the baseline.
3. By June 2018, behavior referrals of military-connected students will **decrease by 15%** from the baseline.
4. By June 2019, behavior referrals of military-connected students will **decrease by 20%** from the baseline.
5. By June 2020, behavior referrals of military-connected students will **decrease by 25%** from the baseline.

Goal Strategies

The goal will be attained by (1) providing peer support programs at targeted high schools and (2) providing counseling to incoming and referred military-connected students through Transition Counselors. The peer support program Student2Student will provide support to military students struggling with issues regarding military life, specifically moving to a new school.

The Transition Counselors will utilize the BASC Behavior and Emotional Screening System (BESS) to screen the social and emotional needs of incoming or referred military students and offer individualized transition action plans. The BESS is a normed screener that identifies student strengths and weaknesses regarding both externalizing and internalizing behaviors. Results indicate three levels of wellbeing: Normal, Elevated, and Extremely Elevated. These data will help the Transition Counselor group students for counseling sessions. Frequent moves and multiple deployments over time can have a significant effect on the mental health of a child

leading to increased internalizing (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression). The goal of this project is to decrease the number of externalizing behaviors, as measured by In School Suspension and Out of School Suspension behavior referrals.

The individualized transition action plans will be developed and monitored, and professional development will be provided to teachers regarding the needs of transitioning military students and families (see Table 3).

Table 3. Alignment of Project Goal, Strategies, and Major Activities

GOAL	STRATEGY CATEGORIES	MAJOR ACTIVITIES FOR EACH STRATEGY
Increase level of support and student engagement	#1: Provide peer support programs to students	#1: Establish Student2Student clubs on targeted campuses to welcome each new student and provide opportunities to foster connections among peers.
		#2: Student2Student clubs meet monthly to review and plan activities of outreach, service, and leadership.
		#3: Provide training for Student2Student student leaders and club sponsors on supporting transitioning students at a minimum of twice a year.
	#2: Provide counseling to incoming and referred students	#1: Provide two Transition Counselors who assess the social and emotional needs of incoming or referred students using the BESS screener, within 10 school days of arrival to the district.
		#2: Develop a targeted social and emotional transition action plan , through (1) a parent-teacher communication and (2) selecting appropriate interventions for the identified student based on BESS screener: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Extremely elevated” level of risk are offered one-on-one counseling with Transition Counselor and notification of results to school counselor b. “Elevated” level of risk are offered small group counseling with Transition Counselor c. “Normal” level of risk are offered pairing new student with student mentor and referral to Student2Student program
		#3: Provide counseling sessions according to transition action plans using research-based curriculum.
		#4: Monitor student progress of transition action plan at the end of each semester.
		#5: Sustain, promote, and encourage student engagement in the Student2Student campus programs.
		#6: Provide professional development for and build capacity among teachers on strategies for supporting the needs of transitioning students and their families. May be delivered during summer, after school, conference hours, or scheduled district professional development days.

Section IV: Project Plan and Leadership Roles

The success of the proposed project will rely heavily on the Project Director and External Evaluator. It will be the responsibility of the Project Director to manage the planning, implementation of the project, and the appropriate professional development to implement the project strategies with fidelity.

Project Director Criteria

The planning and implementation of the project, as well as managing the necessary professional development will be the responsibility of the Project Director. The Project Director has not yet been identified. The Project Director will be responsible for the successful execution of grant activities, reporting, and communication. Cumberland County Schools will hire a Project Director that will provided a minimum of .50 FTE time commitment to the project and work to establish a collaborative climate among the project staff and community stakeholders.

Authority. Upon hiring, the Project Director will have the authority to direct the project to ensure timely implementation and fidelity of project activities at the eight targeted campuses in Cumberland County Schools. The Project Director will report directly to the Superintendent. The Project Director will be attuned to both the nuances of the community and target schools as well as the perimeters of the project that are set forth within this grant. During the planning year, the Project Director will work with the district leadership and human resources to set the criteria for project positions and expectations for roles and responsibilities. The Project Director will be responsible for the alignment of job descriptions to project personnel and contracted agencies to ensure competencies of project implementation and achieving stated outcomes. Using a goal-setting rubric to be reviewed at the completion of each semester, the Project Director will offer fair and productive supervision for all project staff.

Collaborative. Vital to the success of this project will be the scheduling and facilitation of formal “In Progress Review” (IPR) meetings with relevant personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators, external evaluator) to establish an open, collaborative work environment to discuss progress towards the project’s goals, project priorities, solve problems quickly and effectively, and re-evaluate course of actions. In addition, the Project Director will also lead informal weekly project staff meetings as well as monthly informal meetings with the external evaluator. This will ensure the fidelity of implementation and allow for proper management of the project budget.

Communication. The Project Director will understand the importance of communicating with all participants, including DoDEA, about the project’s purpose and the progress of its implementation. The Project Director will serve as a nexus between DoDEA, the school campuses, the military installation, and the military-connected students and their families. He/she will coordinate and support efforts to: assess the needs, build awareness of the resources, and provide possible solutions to military-connected students and their families via professional development and engaging directly with military connected students and their families.

Summary of Project Director Position

The Project Director will work with the External Evaluator, Superintendent, and key stakeholders to ensure all grant objectives, job requirements and responsibilities of participating schools are reflective of DoDEA standards. A five-year forecasting document will be used to communicate expectations and monitor progress. In conjunction with the Cumberland County Schools, the Project Director will advertise, hire and provide the appropriate training to a certified counselor to serve participating schools in a timely manner.

Planning Year

The Project Director will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring progress of the 2015-2016 planning year.

Major milestones will include:

- Hire a Transition Consultant to provide social and emotional support to incoming or referred military-connected students
- Develop measures with External Evaluator
- Establish Student2Student clubs that meet monthly to review and plan activities of outreach, service and leadership
- Provide professional development for and build capacity among teachers on strategies for supporting the needs of transitioning students and their families

Project implementation

The Project Director will host a monthly planning meeting to ensure fidelity and progress of planning activities to provide peer support programs; counseling to incoming and referred military-connected students; and professional development training are on track.

Benchmark activities will be planned around:

- 100% of targeted campuses trained in the Student2Student Program
- 100% incoming military students are welcomed by the Transition Counselor within 10 school days
- 100% incoming or referred military students are offered a transition action plan within 20 school days
- 100% transition intervention plans reviewed at the end of each semester
- 100% of targeted campuses trained

Professional Development Implementation

The Project Director will be the authority in regards to using the information provided by teachers to determine and maintain appropriate types of professional development. Through the assessment done in the planning year, the Project Director will be able to identify possible in-house experts available for providing professional development. Outside vendors will also be identified during the planning year and revisited as options upon annual project review. In conjunction with the external evaluator, the Project Director will establish evaluation tools and

activities to determine the effectiveness of implemented professional development on changing educator practice.

External Evaluator Criteria

The external evaluator is currently a Professor in Special Education at Texas A&M University, teaching qualitative and quantitative research methods courses, writing papers and books on qualitative and quantitative research methods and training teachers, applied behavior analysts, counselors, school psychologists and statisticians to work in education related fields and use data for decision making. She has nearly 30 years' experience in classrooms and school districts. She is an experienced teacher and grant evaluator. She has directly served children who are military dependent as a classroom teacher and has successfully led grant teams as a principal investigator for more than 3.5 million dollars in federal funding. She has successfully worked in very large school districts such as LA Unified and very small parishes in Louisiana including urban schools such as Boston, Miami, and LA, and small rural schools in Texas and New York. She has direct experience evaluating and directing successful grants to reach intended goals and nearly 100 scholarly works reflect successful research and applications in schools. These papers, books, and software programs are based on identified needs and solving problems including issues of implementation fidelity, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, reliability, treatment acceptability, social validity and emotional and behavioral interventions such as PBIS, daily behavior report cards, check in check out, self-monitoring, peer tutoring as well as academic interventions, evidence based practices and changing teacher behavior. Her key strengths are her ability to problem solve while maintaining the integrity of the data and the purpose of the grant. She is an expert with formative and summative data and extremely committed to improving the lives of military dependent children and youth.

Evaluation Responsibilities

The evaluator will be responsible for aggregating and analyzing the data collected by the grant personnel and project director. Any barriers to data collection will be addressed collaboratively for timely resolution prior to evaluation periods. Onsite visits for collaboration will occur at regularly scheduled times across the academic year and summer. Direct observations and interviews will be used to triangulate with quantitative data. Student data from academic and social/emotional measures will be provided to the evaluator by the project director de-identified and categorized by disaggregation codes for grade, military/non-military for analysis. Quarterly analysis prior to federal reporting will occur in conjunction with collaborative stakeholder meetings to provide actionable information for improving implementation.

Data on proportion of military dependent students will be disaggregated for each outcome measure as military/non-military for each school campus. Within military dependent student populations, data will be stratified when sample sizes allow assessing for differences across ages or level of participation in programs. For example, answer questions if low-frequency participant is in peer support groups vs high-frequency participants demonstrate differences in social

emotional wellbeing or satisfaction with program availability. Data for professional development outcomes will be collected, summarized, and communicated to the project coordinator at the school district office. Quarterly routines for analysis of data will include all stakeholders involved in the process. Overall, the outside evaluator will observe and assess each aspect of measurement reliability and validity. She is responsible for analyzing process data monthly and communicating with key stakeholders in regular feedback loops in addition to summarizing data, collecting summative data and writing reports.

Section V: Project Evaluation

Table 5. Fidelity of Implementation

Goal 1: to increase the level of social and emotional supports for military-connected students				
Strategy 1: to provide peer support programs to incoming or referred students				
Strategy 2: to provide counseling to incoming and referred students				
Fidelity of Strategy Implementation				
Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Activities	Data Collection Instruments	Benchmark Indicators	Data Collection Schedule
Strategy 1 Has the strategy been implemented according to plan?	Count Student2Student clubs established at identified campuses	Monthly meeting minutes and calendar of events	100% Student2Student clubs established at identified campuses	End of semester report provided to Project Director and External Evaluator
	Count Student2Student club meetings	Student2Student club roster	100% Student2Student clubs conduct monthly meetings	
	Count and list service activities	PD Sign in sheets	100% Student2Student clubs engage in semester outreach activities for new students to connect to their peers	
	Count and list outreach activities		100% Student2Student clubs engage in semester service projects	
	Count Student2Student students and sponsors trained		100% Student2Student students and sponsors trained	
Strategy 2 Has the strategy been implemented according to plan?	Count incoming military-connected students	Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS; norm-referenced) student self-report	100% incoming military students are welcomed by the Transition Counselor within 10 school days	As they occur and within 10 school days
	Compare number of incoming military students to those			Monthly reports provided to

	welcomed by the Transition Counselor within 10 school days	New Student Intake Form	100% incoming or referred military students are offered a transition action plan within 20 school days	Project Director and External Evaluator
	Count transitioning students engaged in transition action plans	Transition Action Plan Form <i>(to be developed in baseline planning year)</i>	100% transition action plans reviewed at the end of each semester	As they occur and within 20 school days
	Calculate percentage of transition action plans reviewed at the end of each semester	Transition Action Plan Review Rubric <i>(to be developed in baseline year)</i>	90% of students are aware of the Student2Student program	End of semester reports provided to Project Director and External Evaluator
	Compare Student2Student sponsor to student member ratio	Marketing materials distributed	Student2Student sponsor to Student2Student member ratio decreases every year	
	Count professional development opportunities	Student2Student monthly meeting minutes and calendar of events	100% of campuses trained	
	Count participants at professional development opportunities	Student2Student roster	Successful completion of "training" competency via 80% or better score on exit test	
	Assess average competency of PD exit tests or survey	PD Sign in sheets		
		Training surveys to be developed during baseline planning year		

Table 6. Progress Monitoring

Goal 1: to increase the level of social and emotional supports for military-connected students				
Strategy 1: to provide peer support programs to incoming or referred students				
Strategy 2: to provide counseling to incoming and referred students grades				
Progress Monitoring of Ongoing Implementation				
Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Activities	Data Collection Instruments	Benchmark Indicators	Data Collection Schedule
Strategy 1 Did outreach/availability of services increase?	Confirm Student2Student clubs are established at each identified campus Review the number of Student2Student club service and outreach activities	Student record system Student2Student club welcoming practices and policies Student surveys/ interviews on awareness of Student2Student	100% Student2Student clubs are established at identified campuses 100% of incoming military students are welcomed by Student2Student club 90% of students are aware of the	End of semester report provided to Project Director and External Evaluator

	<p>Compare the number of new students to those welcomed by the Student2Student club</p> <p>Determine students level of awareness of the Student2Student club and activities</p>		Student2Student club and activities	
<p>Strategy 1 Did service delivery improve?</p>	<p>Compare the number of Student2Student student members to sponsor(s)</p> <p>Compare the number of Student2Student student members participated in monthly meetings to baseline data</p> <p>Review the Student2Student club's service and outreach activities</p>	<p>Student2Student club roster</p> <p>Monthly meeting minutes and calendar of events</p>	<p>Student2Student student to Sponsor ratio increases as more students join the club</p> <p>100% clubs engage in semester outreach activities for new students to connect to their peers</p> <p>100% clubs engage in semester service projects</p>	<p>End of semester report provided to Project Director and External Evaluator</p>
<p>Strategy 2 Did outreach/availability of services increase?</p>	<p>Compare the number of incoming military students to those welcomed by the Transition Counselor</p> <p>Compare the number of incoming military students to those offered a transition action plan</p> <p>Compare the number of incoming military students to those who accepted a transition action plan</p>	<p>Student record system</p> <p>Transition Action Plans</p> <p>Student surveys/ interviews on awareness of Transition Counselor</p>	<p>100% incoming military students are welcomed by the Transition Counselor within 10 school days</p> <p>100% incoming or referred military students are offered a transition action plan within 20 school days</p>	<p>As they occur and within 10 school days</p> <p>Monthly reports provided to Project Director and External Evaluator</p> <p>As they occur and within 20 school days</p> <p>End of semester reports provided to Project Director and External Evaluator</p>
<p>Strategy 2 Did service delivery improve?</p>	<p>Compare teacher usage and knowledge of transition strategies to baseline data</p> <p>Review teacher self-report data on implementation of new strategies opportunities</p>	<p>Training survey(<i>to be developed in baseline planning year</i>)</p> <p>Teacher self-report survey(<i>to be developed in baseline planning year</i>)</p>	<p>Teachers demonstrate knowledge of transition strategies with 80% competency on training survey.</p>	<p>End of semester reports provided to Project Director and External Evaluator</p>

Table 7. Summative Evaluation

Annual Summative Measures	
Final Support Outcome Target: By June 2020, behavior referrals of military-connected students at each campus will decrease by 25% from the baseline year.	
Goal 1: to increase the level of social and emotional supports for military-connected students	
Interim Indicators	
1) Planning Year (June 2016)	By June 2016, baseline data will be established for the behavior referrals of military-connected students.
2) June 2017	By June 2017, behavior referrals of military-connected students will decrease by 10% from the baseline.
3) June 2018	By June 2018, behavior referrals of military-connected students will decrease by 15% from the baseline.
4) June 2019	By June 2019, behavior referrals of military-connected students will decrease by 20% from the baseline.
5) June 2020	By June 2020, behavior referrals of military-connected students will decrease by 25% from the baseline.

Section VI: Budget Narrative and Sustainability

Overview

Cumberland County Schools prides itself on providing quality educational experiences for children. Due to the vast amount of military-connected students that comprise the district, Cumberland County Schools recognizes the importance of easing the challenges that military-connected children face due to their parents' military service. We are seeking funding to 1) increase the level of social and emotional supports for military-connected students, and 2) provide professional development for and build capacity among teachers on strategies for addressing behavior issues and supporting the needs of transitioning students and their families. In support of this effort, grant funds will be used to cover the cost of supplies (at no more than 1% of the total grant award per year) as well as:

Cumberland County Schools Support Personnel

- Project Director (0.5 FTE), \$25,000 per year
- Finance Director (.05 FTE), \$3,000 per year
- Superintendent (.05 FTE), \$6,000 per year
- Teacher Stipends (Six Peer Support Program Sponsors), \$3,000 per year

Contracted Services

- Transition Counselors (1.0 FTE), \$95,000 per counselor per year. Two full-time, highly specialized education professionals will work directly with military-connected students and parents on a daily basis on a contractual basis. The cost per counselor includes annual training and supervision provided by the contractor
- Peer Support Training and Boosters for three targeted high schools (3.6% of total award)
- Professional Development for school personnel on addressing student behaviors

- External Evaluator from Texas A&M University (5.9% of total award)

Sustainability

Grant funding will allow Cumberland County Schools five years to properly implement strategies that will provide a positive transition experience for military-connected students through two contracted transition counselors and peer support programs. Through the in-depth evaluations that follow the implementation phase and the annually reduction of behavior referrals, this grant will produce data-driven evidence to justify the future use of district funds for sustained implementation. By increasing the level of student and parent connectedness and assimilation into the local community, this project will reduce student and parent turmoil and improve the overall school climate. Through the Project Director's establishment of relationship building efforts in regards to the community and maintaining evaluation tools and activities to determine the effectiveness of the different types of professional development provided to educators, significant strides forward will occur, leading to systemic change.

APPENDIX C: CHEROKEE COUNTY SUMMER SCHOOL RULES

Summer School 2015
June 8th - 19th
8am-11:30am each day

Summer school students must have either 40 hours of seat time in their course and/or their course module completed with blue ribbons in every module.

If a student completes their course before they reach 40 hours, then they have completed summer school.

Cell Phones **cannot** be **on or seen** during Summer School hours. Students must follow School Board Policy concerning *Cell Phones & Dress Code*.

Breaking this policy will result in DISMISSAL from Summer School. You will be at a computer so there will be no need to use your cell phone to look up information pertaining to your class.

Students are NOT allowed to leave campus during summer school hours

No absences, no tardies, and no early dismissals. Any infraction will result in DISMISSAL from summer school. Discipline referrals will

AUTOMATICALLY result in DISMISSAL from summer school

No Food or Drinks allowed around the computers

DRESS CODE MUST BE FOLLOWED

APPENDIX D: STUDENT SURVEY

Q1. Please rate these aspects of the Credit Recovery Services.

	N/A (1)	Didn't Matter Much (2)	Moderately Helpful (3)	Helpful (4)	Extremely Helpful (5)
Choice of credit recovery options. (1)					
Hours service is available. (2)					
Use of internet to complete assignments. (3)					
Note taking option. (4)					
Daily Feedback. (5)					
Clear Objectives. (6)					
I could go at my own speed. (7)					
Many opportunities to improve my grade. (8)					
Encouragement from teachers. (9)					
Very well organized. (10)					

Q2. Please rate these opportunities for success.

	N/A (1)	Didn't Matter Much (2)	Moderately Helpful (3)	Helpful (4)	Extremely Helpful (5)
Develop test-taking skills. (1)					
I was able to use any computer to further my completion percentage. (2)					
Develop decision-making skills. (3)					
The completion process was thoroughly explained to me. (4)					
I was given a "Welcome Packet" when I first signed up for the class. (5)					

Q3. Please rate these responsibilities you were asked to accept.

	N/A (1)	Didn't Matter Much (2)	Somewhat Helpful (3)	Helpful (4)	Extremely Helpful (5)
Cherokee County computer policy was adhered to. (1)					
I signed in on the attendance roster daily. (2)					
Complete all assessments with a score of 70% (3)					
Take notes on all lessons. (4)					
Attempt all homework/online content. (5)					
Assignment completion independently (6)					
Minimize disruptions. (7)					
Adhere to cell phone/electronic use policy. (8)					
Consume food or drink away from computers. (9)					

Q4. Please rate the existing Credit Recovery support you received.

	N/A (1)	Didn't Matter Much (2)	Moderately Helpful (3)	Helpful (4)	Extremely Helpful (5)
<p>Credit Recovery offered credits I needed for graduation. (1)</p> <p>There were an infinite number of opportunities to pass assessments and assignments. (2)</p> <p>Assignments were presented in many ways, supporting my learning style. (3)</p> <p>Teachers were available to assist at all times. (4)</p> <p>Credit Recovery hours of operation accommodated my schedule. (5)</p> <p>I was encouraged to use enotes and other sources to complete assignments, (6)</p>					

Q5. How often did you take advantage of the Credit Recovery Services?

	Daily (1)	Weekly (2)	N/A (3)
During School (1)			
After School (2)			

Q6. Please share any suggestions that you may have to make your Credit Recovery services more successful.

Q7. What number was given to you when you were asked to complete this survey?

APPENDIX E: GHHS STAFF SURVEY

Default Question Block

What is your current role within the county?

Counselor
 Regular Education Teacher
 School Administrator
 Central Office Administrator
 Special Education Teacher
 Intervention/ALC Coordinator

Please rate your knowledge of curriculum in the following on-line instructional programs (1 being no knowledge; 10 being extensive knowledge).

	No Knowledge			Average Knowledge				Extensive Knowledge			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GradPoint											
North Carolina Virtual Public School (NC VPS)											

Which GradPoint courses have you had experience with? (List all that apply)

Which NC VPS courses have you had experience with? (List all that apply)

In which of the following ways have you interacted with Gradpoint?

- I have taught the course (I led the instruction and was responsible for grading).
- I have facilitated the course (I oversaw a classroom of students taking the course but was not responsible for grades or direct instruction).
- I have used modules as extensions of my own classroom teaching/curriculum for grade recovery or remediation.
- Students were enrolled in my class and Gradpoint at the same time (e.g. Students took English III on Gradpoint for recovery, while taking English IV with you).
- I have no experience with these courses.

In which of the following ways have you interacted with North Carolina Virtual Public School (NC VPS)?

- I have taught the course (I led the on-line instruction and was responsible for grading).
- I have facilitated the course (I oversaw a classroom of students taking the course but was not responsible for grades or

direct instruction. This would be a blended learning experience).

- Students were enrolled in my class and NC VPS at the same time (e.g. Students took English III on NC VPS for credit, while taking English IV with you).
- I have no experienced with these courses.

Rate the following in regards to GradPoint courses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The course self-paced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is rigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is user-friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are well-explained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course provides individualized assistance to students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too difficult.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is aligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course requires little to no assistance from a face-to-face teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course can be accessed at any time or place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The program motivates students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The text used is on grade level for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The text is easily understood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is unaligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The tests are an accurate reflection of concept mastery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The activities are "busy work."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is financially beneficial.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too lengthy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course prepares the student for future courses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course align with the EOC.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rate the following in regards to NC VPS courses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The course self-paced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is rigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is user-friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NC VPS is a good course for students to use for first time credit.

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Please provide any relevant and useful information you would like pertaining to the use of GradPoint or NC VPS for on-line credit recovery and instruction.

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APPENDIX G: *ASRP* EXIT INTERVIEW***ASRP (After School Recovery Program) Exit Interview***

1. What did you find most beneficial about the structure of the program?
2. Which computer-based programs did you use to take classes? (*VPS* or *GradPoint*)
3. How would you compare the rigor (level) of this program to the regular classroom? (Were assignments easier or tougher?)
4. What were some plus/deltas for the program?
5. How effective was the teacher in helping you monitor your progress and provide assistance on assignments when you struggled?
6. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not helpful, 5 being very helpful), rate the following:
 - a. Self-paced instruction
 - b. Rigor (level) or the work
 - c. User-friendly program
 - d. modules well-explained
 - e. More 1-1 Instruction from teacher
 - f. Could complete some work at home
 - g. Program was engaging and motivating
 - h. Use of technology
7. Is there anything you would structure differently in this program for future students?

APPENDIX H: TRANSIENT MILITARY DATA

15-16

Transiency Data- 2014-2015 School Year (after 10/1/14)												
		Enrollment as of 10/1/2014	Total Enrollments	Total Withdrawals	E1 Initial enroll - after 10/1/15	E2 Initial Enroll from Non-NC school	R2 Transfer within same LEA	R3 Transfer from another LEA	R5 Re-enroll- Previous W1	R6 Re-enroll- Previous W2	Transfer Withdrawal (W1)	Early Leaver Withdrawal (W2)
364	Alderman Road Elementary	655	97	92	6	16	50	23	2		92	
374	Alger B. Wilkins High School PLC	149	52	106	12		29		2	9	66	40
302	Alma O Easom Elementary	276	65	44	5	17	31	10	2		42	2
336	Anne Chesnutt Middle	527	38	76		12	16	3	7		75	1
306	Armstrong Elementary	413	58	48	22	5	20	10		1	46	2
308	Ashley Elementary	224	25	27	1	6	14	3	1		27	
312	Beaver Dam Elementary	92	17	7	5	6	2	4			7	
414	Benjamin J Martin Elementary	522	175	122	50	34	65	20	6		121	1
367	Bill Hefner Elementary	781	163	144	20	64	52	18	9		135	9
320	Brentwood Elementary	540	98	118	17	19	43	12	7		114	4
342	C Wayne Collier Elementary	541	75	51	12	29	22	11	1		51	
325	Cape Fear High	1540	109	169	18	21	30	27	10	3	131	38
338	Cliffdale Elementary	652	164	153	26	41	70	19	8		150	3
340	College Lakes Elementary	433	93	99	18	29	31	13	2		97	2
354	Cross Creek Early College	245	0	8							8	
347	Cumberland International Early Colle	234	2	5	2						5	
348	Cumberland Mills Elementary	650	92	127	4	24	41	15	8		127	
352	Cumberland Road Elementary	422	61	60	5	12	36	8			59	1
356	District No 7 Elementary	256	23	28	7	3	4	9			28	
322	Douglas Byrd High	1194	170	310	9	44	72	21	19	5	234	76
321	Douglas Byrd Middle	740	102	150	3	24	38	24	12	1	147	3
398	E E Miller Elementary	544	55	57	6	25	13	7	4		55	2
359	E E Smith High	1058	255	183	101	47	70	27	5	5	150	33
397	E Melvin Honeycutt Elementary	780	100	76	11	50	24	13	2		75	1
332	Eastover-Central Elementary	436	15	28		9	4	1	1		28	
370	Ed V Baldwin Elementary	650	140	71	73	18	36	9	4		71	
326	Elizabeth M Cashwell Elementary	693	136	151	7	31	61	31	6		149	2
361	Ferguson-Easley Elementary	337	51	58	4	5	30	8	4		58	

		Enrollment as of 10/1/2014	Total Enrollments	Total Withdrawals	E1 Initial enroll - after 10/1/15	E2 Initial Enroll from Non-NC school	R2 Transfer within same LEA	R3 Transfer from another LEA	R5 Re-enroll- Previous W1	R6 Re-enroll- Previous W2	Transfer Withdrawal (W1)	Early Leaver Withdrawal (W2)
373	Gallberry Farm Elementary	903	137	93	46	22	41	20	8		93	
363	Glendale Acres Elementary	245	58	35	29	4	19	6			34	1
375	Grays Creek Elementary	422	35	33	4	8	13	9	1		33	
357	Grays Creek High	1321	116	152	12	26	39	23	9	7	105	47
362	Grays Creek Middle	1052	97	85	13	18	37	26	3		82	3
368	Hope Mills Middle	682	69	69	15	7	25	16	6		68	1
700	Howard Health & Life Sciences	159	2	6	2						6	
366	Howard L Hall Elementary	610	59	75	7	24	19	8	1		69	6
371	Ireland Drive Middle	354	62	64	4	15	23	11	9		64	
344	J W Coon Elementary	230	63	51	8	10	27	15	3		49	2
416	J W Seabrook Elementary	285	48	42	19	8	17	4			42	
318	Jack Britt High	1945	86	138	1	40	29	10	3	3	118	20
369	John R Griffin Middle	963	87	88	13	23	33	11	7		85	3
407	Lake Rim Elementary	679	94	84	9	28	46	8	2	1	75	9
372	Lewis Chapel Middle	579	115	109	3	34	49	22	7		108	1
316	Lillian Black Elementary	222	66	57	5	17	32	11	1		56	1
380	Long Hill Elementary	500	46	48	1	23	13	8	1		48	
310	Loyd E Auman Elementary	577	133	89	41	29	56	5	2		88	1
382	Lucile Souders Elementary	468	114	69	59	6	37	11	1		69	
358	Luther Nick Jeralds Middle	543	124	122	11	23	62	23	5		122	
383	Mac Williams Middle	1166	102	109	9	23	33	25	12		109	
402	Manchester Elementary	365	106	87	56	7	23	13	7		83	4
386	Margaret Willis Elementary	336	74	82		24	40	9	1		82	
396	Mary McArthur Elementary	442	78	68	4	19	32	17	6		67	1
388	Massey Hill Classical High	340	11	23	10					1	20	3
400	Montclair Elementary	459	109	99	31	15	50	11	2		99	
401	Morganton Road Elementary	499	115	115	15	39	42	16	3		115	
403	New Century International Elementa	740	65	80	8	17	22	17	1		79	1
417	New Century International Middle	409	30	27	5	5	12	6	2		27	
413	Pauline Jones Middle	12	209	80	4	6	178	11	10		78	2

		Enrollment as of 10/1/2014	Total Enrollments	Total Withdrawals	E1 Initial enroll - after 10/1/15	E2 Initial Enroll from Non-NC school	R2 Transfer within same LEA	R3 Transfer from another LEA	R5 Re-enroll- Previous W1	R6 Re-enroll- Previous W2	Transfer Withdrawal (W1)	Early Leaver Withdrawal (W2)
408	Pine Forest High	1591	162	253	10	30	60	34	16	12	190	63
406	Pine Forest Middle	729	70	81	2	22	31	10	5		78	3
410	Ponderosa Elementary	370	89	63	29	15	27	16	2		58	5
365	R Max Abbott Middle	905	102	138	8	29	48	13	4		138	
412	Raleigh Road Elementary	219	53	32	23	13	7	9	1		32	
449	Ramsey Street High	39	262	153	2	11	217	9	10	13	126	27
411	Reid Ross Classical High	320	6	7			3		3		7	
419	Reid Ross Classical Middle	407	7	26	3				4		26	
415	Rockfish Elementary	723	145	92	45	25	43	29	3		92	
418	Seventy-First Classical Middle	514	0	28							27	1
424	Seventy-First High	1623	160	289	15	36	49	39	16	5	223	66
426	Sherwood Park Elementary	409	85	57	28	17	26	8	6		55	2
427	South View High	1782	173	275	14	46	57	31	14	11	195	80
425	South View Middle	689	104	102	1	22	55	21	5		101	1
428	Spring Lake Middle	491	85	90	5	27	36	16	1		89	1
430	Stedman Elementary	288	30	27	1	2	14	9	4		27	
432	Stedman Primary	171	29	9	7	3	14	4	1		8	1
434	Stoney Point Elementary	794	77	58	21	21	24	11			58	
440	Sunnyside Elementary	361	83	74	7	17	43	14	1	1	73	1
444	Teresa C Berrien Elementary	162	57	34	19	5	25	7	1		34	
446	Terry Sanford High	1287	127	193	9	25	55	25	5	8	151	42
448	Vanstory Hills Elementary	475	68	62	5	17	27	15	4		60	2
405	Walker Spivey Elementary	341	116	88	41	12	50	8	5		77	11
450	Warrenwood Elementary	451	107	100	42		57	5	3		99	1
452	Westarea Elementary	582	133	144	19	17	60	22	15		142	2
455	Westover High	1131	188	266	11	55	67	38	14	3	215	51
454	Westover Middle	701	159	159	20	21	76	39	3		144	15
404	William H Owen Elementary	470	85	107	2	9	55	15	4		105	2
459	William T Brown Elementary	559	98	135	11	26	44	14	2	1	132	3
	TOTALS	51675	7801	7989	1288	1634	3223	1179	387	90	7283	706

APPENDIX I: MILITARY/FEDERALLY CONNECTED COUNT

Military/Federally Connected Count
By School for October 13, 2015

<u>School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>EC Military</u>	<u>Non EC Military</u>	<u>Total Military Connected Percentage</u>	<u>Civilian Employed On Federal Property</u>	<u>Civilian Employed On Fed Prop Percentage</u>	<u>Low Rent Housing</u>	<u>Low Rent Housing Percentage</u>	<u>Total Federally Connected</u>	<u>Total Federally Connected Percentage</u>
Abbott, Max Middle	849	9	90	11.66%	55	6.48%	30	3.53%	184	21.67%
Alderman Road	722	10	88	13.57%	27	3.74%	0	0.00%	125	17.31%
Armstrong	440	10	55	14.77%	17	3.86%	0	0.00%	82	18.64%
Ashley	212	1	22	10.85%	10	4.72%	4	1.89%	37	17.45%
Auman, Loyd	547	10	110	21.94%	34	6.22%	8	1.46%	162	29.62%
Baldwin, Ed	670	14	127	21.04%	34	5.07%	0	0.00%	175	26.12%
Beaver Dam	94	1	1	2.13%	2	2.13%	0	0.00%	4	4.26%
Berrien, T.C.	171	0	2	1.17%	0	0.00%	42	24.56%	44	25.73%
Black, Lillian	226	7	30	16.37%	14	6.19%	0	0.00%	51	22.57%
Brentwood	559	13	45	10.38%	13	2.33%	40	7.16%	111	19.86%
Brown, W.T.	487	6	53	12.11%	23	4.72%	14	2.87%	96	19.71%
Byrd High	1143	14	65	6.91%	41	3.59%	49	4.29%	169	14.79%
Byrd Middle	709	9	48	8.04%	25	3.53%	41	5.78%	123	17.35%
Cape Fear High	1553	12	119	8.44%	90	5.80%	8	0.52%	229	14.75%
Cashwell	741	10	65	10.12%	20	2.70%	1	0.13%	96	12.96%
Chesnutt, Anne Middle	412	15	97	27.18%	44	10.68%	4	0.97%	160	38.83%
Cliffdale	658	19	95	17.33%	27	4.10%	5	0.76%	146	22.19%
College Lakes	435	16	78	21.61%	18	4.14%	4	0.92%	116	26.67%
Collier, C.W.	535	5	83	16.45%	25	4.67%	0	0.00%	113	21.12%
Coon, J.W.	223	4	14	8.07%	4	1.79%	2	0.90%	24	10.76%
Cross Creek Mid. Coll.	259	0	34	13.13%	32	12.36%	0	0.00%	66	25.48%
Cumberland Intl	247	0	50	20.24%	31	12.55%	6	2.43%	87	35.22%
Cumberland Mills	639	4	118	19.09%	28	4.38%	0	0.00%	150	23.47%
Cumberland Road	415	2	19	5.06%	8	1.93%	27	6.51%	56	13.49%
District 7	251	5	16	8.37%	4	1.59%	0	0.00%	25	9.96%
Easom, Alma	272	2	59	22.43%	8	2.94%	0	0.00%	69	25.37%
Eastover	426	7	64	16.67%	28	6.57%	0	0.00%	99	23.24%
Ferguson-Easley	298	3	19	7.38%	5	1.68%	5	1.68%	32	10.74%

Military/Federally Connected Count
By School for October 13, 2015

School	Enrollment	EC Military	Non EC Military	Total Military	Civilian Employed	Civilian Employed	Low Rent	Low Rent	Total	Total Federally
				Connected Percentage	On Federal Property	On Fed Prop Percentage	Housing	Housing Percentage	Federally Connected	Connected Percentage
Gallberry Farm	921	21	177	21.50%	50	5.43%	0	0.00%	248	26.93%
Glendale Acres	244	3	28	12.70%	12	4.92%	13	5.33%	56	22.95%
Gray's Creek Elem.	432	6	86	21.30%	34	7.87%	0	0.00%	126	29.17%
Gray's Creek High	1370	22	220	17.66%	102	7.45%	0	0.00%	344	25.11%
Gray's Creek Middle	1026	17	182	19.40%	79	7.70%	0	0.00%	278	27.10%
Hall, Howard	627	20	222	38.60%	51	8.13%	0	0.00%	293	46.73%
Bill Hefner Elem	767	19	216	30.64%	45	5.87%	0	0.00%	280	36.51%
Honeycutt, Melvin	834	35	277	37.41%	65	7.79%	0	0.00%	377	45.20%
Hope Mills Middle	621	11	125	21.90%	44	7.09%	0	0.00%	180	28.99%
Health & Life Sciences	155	0	30	19.35%	19	12.26%	1	0.65%	50	32.26%
Ireland Dr Middle	298	7	20	9.06%	9	3.02%	18	6.04%	54	18.12%
Jack Britt	1966	29	605	32.25%	242	12.31%	1	0.05%	877	44.61%
Jeralds Middle	508	7	28	6.89%	12	2.36%	26	5.12%	73	14.37%
John Griffin	922	28	284	33.84%	100	10.85%	0	0.00%	412	44.69%
Jones, Pauline	22	1	0	4.55%	1	4.55%	0	0.00%	2	9.09%
Lake Rim	675	20	236	37.93%	47	6.96%	1	0.15%	304	45.04%
Lewis Chapel Middle	560	16	70	15.36%	29	5.18%	11	1.96%	126	22.50%
Long Hill	453	15	137	33.55%	38	8.39%	0	0.00%	190	41.94%
Manchester	364	6	80	23.63%	27	7.42%	0	0.00%	113	31.04%
Martin, Ben	556	10	113	22.12%	30	5.40%	1	0.18%	154	27.70%
Massey Hill Classical	345	9	96	30.43%	42	12.17%	3	0.87%	150	43.48%
McArthur, Mary	458	8	19	5.90%	14	3.06%	11	2.40%	52	11.35%
Miller, E.E.	566	18	139	27.74%	50	8.83%	3	0.53%	210	37.10%
Montclair	468	10	69	16.88%	12	2.56%	3	0.64%	94	20.09%
Morganton Road	507	15	100	22.68%	28	5.52%	0	0.00%	143	28.21%

Military/Federally Connected Count
By School for October 13, 2015

School	Enrollment	Military		Total Military Connected Percentage	Civilian Employed On Federal Property	Civilian Employed On Fed Prop Percentage	Low Rent Housing	Low Rent Housing Percentage	Total Federally Connected	Total Federally Connected Percentage
		EC Military	Non EC Military							
New Century Elem	753	20	215	31.21%	57	7.57%	9	1.20%	301	39.97%
New Century Middle	401	4	94	24.44%	40	9.98%	0	0.00%	138	34.41%
Owen, W.H.	429	3	29	7.46%	20	4.66%	7	1.63%	59	13.75%
Pine Forest High	1598	19	261	17.52%	176	11.01%	5	0.31%	461	28.85%
Pine Forest Middle	699	23	175	28.33%	75	10.73%	0	0.00%	273	39.06%
Ponderosa	370	7	64	19.19%	16	4.32%	4	1.08%	91	24.59%
Raleigh Road	222	3	76	35.59%	8	3.60%	0	0.00%	87	39.19%
Ramsey St. Alt.	35	3	0	8.57%	4	11.43%	0	0.00%	7	20.00%
Reid Ross Classical	318	1	27	8.81%	36	11.32%	7	2.20%	71	22.33%
Reid Ross Middle	399	4	57	15.29%	34	8.52%	7	1.75%	102	25.56%
Rockfish	681	13	157	24.96%	24	3.52%	0	0.00%	194	28.49%
Sanford, Terry High	1299	13	153	12.78%	99	7.62%	35	2.69%	300	23.09%
Seabrook, J.W.	274	0	11	4.01%	7	2.55%	0	0.00%	18	6.57%
Seventy-First High	1553	32	246	17.90%	174	11.20%	15	0.97%	467	30.07%
Seventy-First Middle	484	4	89	19.21%	65	13.43%	3	0.62%	161	33.26%
Sherwood Park	389	8	37	11.57%	11	2.83%	3	0.77%	59	15.17%
Smith High	1057	33	237	25.54%	48	4.54%	16	1.51%	334	31.60%

Military/Federally Connected Count
By School for October 13, 2015

<u>School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>EC</u>	<u>Non EC</u>	<u>Total Military Connected</u>	<u>Civilian Employed On Federal Property</u>	<u>Civilian Employed On Fed Prop Percentage</u>	<u>Low Rent Housing</u>	<u>Low Rent Housing Percentage</u>	<u>Total Federally Connected</u>	<u>Total Federally Connected Percentage</u>
Souders, Lucile	499	2	56	11.62%	19	3.81%	9	1.80%	86	17.23%
South View High	1808	32	246	15.38%	139	7.69%	1	0.06%	418	23.12%
South View Middle	676	11	106	17.31%	42	6.21%	1	0.15%	160	23.67%
Spring Lake Middle	462	1	47	10.39%	43	9.31%	3	0.65%	94	20.35%
Stedman Elementary	302	9	16	8.28%	7	2.32%	1	0.33%	33	10.93%
Stedman Primary	172	1	10	6.40%	1	0.58%	0	0.00%	12	6.98%
Stoney Point	854	36	309	40.40%	54	6.32%	0	0.00%	399	46.72%
Sunnyside	377	8	48	14.85%	22	5.84%	26	6.90%	104	27.59%
Vanstory Hills	513	8	99	20.86%	28	5.46%	2	0.39%	137	26.71%
Walker-Spivey	371	0	1	0.27%	6	1.62%	173	46.63%	180	48.52%
Warrenwood	427	9	39	11.24%	9	2.11%	1	0.23%	58	13.58%
Westarea	531	4	38	7.91%	11	2.07%	26	4.90%	79	14.88%
Westover High	1168	25	176	17.21%	82	7.02%	10	0.86%	293	25.09%
Westover Middle	732	15	96	15.16%	35	4.78%	6	0.82%	152	20.77%
Wilkins	122	1	11	9.84%	7	5.74%	4	3.28%	23	18.85%
Williams (Mac) Middle	1132	10	105	10.16%	58	5.12%	9	0.80%	182	16.08%
Willis, Margaret	337	1	24	7.42%	5	1.48%	4	1.19%	34	10.09%
DISTRICT TOTALS	51,302	924	8,580	18.53%	3,311	6.45%	769	1.50%	13,584	26.48%

APPENDIX J: STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Transcription of Interview

Interviewee: Benjamin S and his mother (Lori)

Interviewer: Deborah Womble (DW)

Date: June 13, 2014 (following email from June 3, 2014)

DW: Thank you for taking a few minutes to chat with me. I am working on research for my dissertation, and Col. Underwood suggested you would be a wonderful source.

Let me start by asking you an easy question. What grade you are in?

Lori and Ben: 10th grade

DW: And how many schools have you attended during your high school career?

Ben: This is my second, but I was only in the first for like a couple of months

Mom: Yes, my older son went to four different high schools. We thought, well, we were hoping that Ben would get to stay in one place for his entire four years. I guess that was not meant to be.

We are getting ready to PCS because Brett, that's my husband, is being promoted.

DW: Well, congratulations!

Lori: Yeah, we leave at the end of June to head to Washington DC. My husband will complete a fellowship there in a War College equivalent program at the US Institute of Peace. We follow that assignment with a move to Ft. Campbell in the summer of 2015.

Sigh..... long pause.....

Benjamin will be in 3 different high schools before he graduates, unfortunately!

DW: That must be very difficult

Ben: Yeah. It sucks, but you kinda get used to it.

Lori: Ben's professional goal is to serve his country as an army officer. His dream is to receive a commission to West Point or the Naval Academy.

DW: That is awesome. I'm sure you are both proud of him.

Mom: Naturally. You understand how difficult and rigorous the application process is . . . (pause) . . . and some of what the admission board is looking for in a young man with the potential to lead soldiers.

He's been keeping his grades up to try and meet USMA academic standards and playing sports to meet fitness standards. He volunteers as a youth board member at our church and works part time as a soccer official and is growing his leadership skills and building character within these responsibilities.

DW: Wow! That is a lot of work for you Ben.

Ben: laughs

Lori: And now, just as he is getting settled into a routine, it is time to move.

We all know that this transient military lifestyle has its blessings . . . and its challenges. One of Ben's challenges is that it will be difficult for teachers and community leaders to get to know him when he is constantly moving. He will be in two different high schools his junior and senior years. It will be difficult to find teachers who really know him well enough to write those letters of recommendations. It will be difficult for him to advance in class rank.

DW: What type of setting will Ben be going into? In other words, what type of schedule will he have at his new school?

Ben: Uh . . . I'm not sure. Aren't they all pretty much the same?

DW: No. Here you have been on a 4x4 block schedule. You take four classes each semester. Other schools may have what they call a traditional schedule. You may take seven classes a day. Others mix it up and have some of each—like our AP Lang and US history.

Ben: Oh, I'm not sure what they have.

Lori: I really haven't looked either since we are moving over the summer. It won't really affect Ben this time. But his older brother ran into that problem. When we PCS'ed here we came from Georgia, and they were on the schedule where they had seven classes all year. When we enrolled here, he lost three classes.

Ben: Uh, if that happens, will I graduate?

Lori: Because of what happened with your brother, we are trying hard to make our moves happen in the summer time.

Lori: (to me): His brother lost credits more than once. We moved from a school where he was taking a drafting class and moved to a school where they didn't have it. They didn't have a class for him to take, so they stuck him in a PE class. He loved PE, but it seems that every time we move and there is a snafu in the schedule, he gets another PE class. He could major in PE.

DW: Did he graduate from Britt?

Lori: No, we were only here for one year, then we PCS'ed again.

DW: Do you know how many classes transferred between the moves?

Lori: Not off the top of my head, but I'm sure we have the records. We are lucky to be able

to arrange the moves for each summer so Benjamin will not have the same issues.

DW: Col. Underwood is right. This is exactly the reason that I want to study this problem.

Lori: I hope you can fix it. Too many military kids are caught in this transfer trap. I can give you the names of some military families who have had this same experience. . . . But, they don't all go to Britt. Is that alright?

DW: Laughing . . . Well, I'm not sure about fixing it, but I would love to get their information.

Ben: Yeah, it is rough thinking about it. I might not graduate on time.

Lori: Yes, you will. We'll make sure of it. When his brother was in jeopardy of not graduating, we talked about home schooling him to catch him up. But I'm afraid I wouldn't be good at that. In fact, (laughing), I'd probably kill somebody if I had to do that. Thankfully we were able to send him to summer school, but he hated that.

Ben: I don't want to have to give up my summer because we have to move.

DW: I understand that. We are trying to look at options to help other students in that boat. You are lucky your folks can schedule their move.

Lori: Yes. We weren't going to go through that again. If we have to stay behind for a while to make sure Benjamin stays on track we will.
He really wants to go to West Point.
I'll do whatever I can . . .

DW: Well I certainly can appreciate that. I know it is tough. I appreciate not only your husband's service to our country, but that of your entire family. I know you all sacrifice. And, I appreciate you talking with me today.

APPENDIX K: JBHS STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Student Interviews

Name:

Age:

Grade:

How many high schools have you attended?

How many schools total?

Why have you changed schools?

What have been the benefits to changing schools?

What have been the biggest challenges to changing schools?

So, how have your grades been?

Have you ever had grades drop because of a move? Explain.

Have you ever transferred between schools with different schedules – like from seven period or A/B day to a 4x4?

Have you lost credits because of this?

Have schools had procedures in place to help make sure you didn't lose credits or to help you save them?

APPENDIX L: INITIAL COUNSELOR INTERVIEW

Counselor Interviews:

Please state your name and how many years you been a school counselor?

Has it always been at this school? If not, where else have you been? Has it always been high school?

What preparatory program did you attend to prepare you for this career?

Considering your training to be a counselor, tell me about the preparation you received to help you evaluate transcripts and make scheduling decisions for students.

Let's talk about these highly mobile students. (Those students who transfer in at non-traditional times during the school year.)

Approximately how many transfer students do you register in a given month?

What are the issues/problems you see facing these students – both academically and otherwise

Share the registration process

What are the strategies you have for those students who are transferring in from a different type of schedule?

When 'thinking outside of the box' in helping students to retain or regain credits, what are the options you can think of? Which do you use? How often do you use them?

What about when you know pacing is different?

How much input do you feel that you have in making decisions about their placement/schedule?

How much input does the student and/or their parent have in this?

What training, resources, etc. do you need to help you better serve these students?

APPENDIX M: COUNSELOR PRE/POST ASSESSMENT

Pre-Assessment:

On a scale of one (1) to five (5), with five (5) being the highest, rate how your proficiency level in each of the following tasks

Task	1 Poor	2 Fair	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Not Sure/Not Applicable	Comments
Read and evaluate a transcript						
Enroll students from a different schedule format (i.e. – a 7 period day to a 4x4, hybrid, etc.)						
Compare courses from different states with similar names to determine credit						
Determine credit for half credits, multi-credit classes, etc.						
Provide assistance for students following guidelines for McKinney Vento, Military Compact, etc.						
Maintain/Complete educational reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports, etc.)						

Post-Assessment: After completing the modules, please respond to each of the following.

On a scale of one (1) to five (5), with five (5) being the highest, rate how your proficiency level in each of the following tasks

Task	1 Poor	2 Fair	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Not Sure/Not Applicable	Comments
Read and evaluate a transcript						
Enroll students from a different schedule format (i.e. – a 7 period day to a 4x4, hybrid, etc.)						
Compare courses from different states with similar names to determine credit						
Determine credit for half credits, multi-credit classes, etc.						
Provide assistance for students following guidelines for McKinney Vento, Military Compact, etc.						
Maintain/Complete educational reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports, etc.)						

APPENDIX N: MODULES FOR PERSONALIZED REGISTRATION PROCESS

Counselor Training Protocol

Training

This training is intended to help counselors who are new to the high school counseling program or those who just want a refresher or a measure, understand how to read and evaluate transcripts in order to appropriately place students in classes in order to ensure on-time graduation.

This training is based upon the requirements for a traditional high school diploma from a traditional high school. Most of the scenarios are based on the 4x4 block schedule used in most NC high schools.

This is not intended as a final answer for any situation. Always consult your policies from your school and LEA.



Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

- How many math classes are needed for graduation?
Four (4) math classes are required: Math 1, Math 2, Math 3, and a 6th level/higher level math class.
- Does Foundations of Math 1 count as a math class?
No. Foundations of Math does not count as a math. It may count as an elective. The purpose of this class is to prepare students for high school math classes by providing support for deficits in math.
- How many science classes are needed for graduation?
Students need a minimum of three (3) science courses. They must include an earth and environmental class, which could be Earth and Environmental Science, AP Environmental, or another option which meets NC requirements; a physical science, which could include Physics, Science, Chemistry, Physics, or another option which meets NC requirements; and Biology.



Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

- Is chemistry required for graduation?
Chemistry is not required for graduation. It will count as a physical science toward the science graduation requirement.
- How many foreign language classes are needed for graduation?
No foreign languages are required for graduation. However, the UNC system does require two (2) units of the same foreign language in their admission standards.
- How many English classes are needed for graduation? Four (4) units of English are required for graduation.



Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

- True/False
- A student must have a minimum of three social studies classes to graduate.
False. A student must have four social studies to graduate. These include: World History, Civics & Economics, American History 1, and American History 2. A student who takes AP US History may substitute that course plus a fourth social studies elective in lieu of American History 1, and American History 2.
 - A student must have one elective from the arts classes to graduate. False.
There is not a requirement from the arts for high school graduation.

Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

- All students must have 28 credits in order to graduate from high school.
False. Most schools require students who have been enrolled for four years at a traditional high school on the 4x4 block schedule to earn 28 credits for a traditional diploma. However for other diploma tracks, for students who have transferred in from a schedule other than the 4x4 block schedule, or some systems, a minimum of 22 credits are required for graduation. For more information, go to: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/data/cumulative/home/graduationrequirements.pdf>

Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

10. Students may take weight lifting or team sports in lieu of health and PE to meet the graduation requirement.

False. Students must have the health component to graduate from high school. Students who have a PE credit may be eligible to take a .5 credit health class, combined with their PE credit in order to meet this requirement.



Module 1

THE BASICS

What is required for graduation in NC?



What are those specific courses?

The image shows a screenshot of the "High School Graduation Requirements" table from the North Carolina Department of Education website. The table is organized into columns for "Subject Area", "Required Courses", and "Credits". It lists various subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health, Art, Music, and Foreign Languages, along with the specific courses required for each and the number of credits. A URL is provided at the bottom: <http://www.ncde.edu.gov/graduation/gradreq.aspx>

Reading the High School Transcript

A high school transcript is a complete record of high school grades and credits, class rank, GPA, and class rank. It may also include standardized test scores, academic awards, etc.

Many think high school transcripts are only used by college admissions offices to determine college acceptance, but high school counselors also review transcripts every day for a variety of reasons.

School Counselors review student transcripts to determine if a student is eligible for graduation, making sure they have enough credits and have met graduation requirements.

School Counselors also evaluate transcripts when a student transfers into a new school in order to determine grade and placement.

The Registration Process

Once it has been determined that the student is eligible to be enrolled in school, most schools use a registration appointment. The prospective student and family either request records are sent to the new school, or they bring them to the appointment.

As the counselor evaluates the transcript they must check to ensure that the student is on track to meet each of the requirements for graduation.



Let's take a look at a transcript...

The image shows a sample high school transcript for a student named "CHRISTY WILSON". The transcript is organized into columns for "COURSE NUMBER", "COURSE TITLE", "CREDITS", "MARK", "WORLDWIDE", "ALTERNATIVE", "GRADE POINTS", and "PLAN". It lists various courses such as English I, English II, English III, English IV, Mathematics I, Mathematics II, Mathematics III, Mathematics IV, Science I, Science II, Science III, Science IV, Social Studies I, Social Studies II, Social Studies III, Social Studies IV, Physical Education I, Physical Education II, Physical Education III, Physical Education IV, Health, Art, Music, and Foreign Languages. The transcript also includes a section for "COURSES TAKEN AT OTHER SCHOOLS" and "COURSES TAKEN AT COLLEGE". A URL is provided at the bottom: <http://www.ncde.edu.gov/graduation/gradreq.aspx>

Graduation Check List

Were you able to use this check sheet and go through this student's transcripts to find his requirements?

If so, great! If not, you may want to go back and review these requirements outlined in this module one more time.

The the social studies requirement was a little tricky, but student transcripts are often a puzzle you will have to solve. The following modules will point out some of these issues and help you develop strategies to work with these students to ensure they graduate on time.



Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Requirement	Completed	Notes/Comments	Final Status
English I		4 credits (English I, II, III, IV)	
English II		4 credits (English I, II, III, IV)	
English III		4 credits (English I, II, III, IV)	
English IV		4 credits (English I, II, III, IV)	
Math		3 credits (Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry)	
Science		3 credits (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	
Social Studies		5 credits (World History, US History, Government, Economics, AP/IB)	
Physical Education		1 credit (PE)	
Art		1 credit (Art)	
Foreign Language		2 credits (Spanish, French, Latin, etc.)	
Health		1 credit (Health)	
Electives		12 credits (Various)	
Total Credits		44 Credits	

All Requirements Met
 All Requirements Met - Pending
 All Requirements Met - Incomplete
 All Requirements Met - On Hold

Student is Unable to Meet Requirements
 Student is Unable to Meet Requirements - On Hold

Module 2

Determining Requirements

Once you know what requirements are missing for on-time graduation, you still need to determine what level of class is required. Let's take a look at the same examples. Then decide how to schedule the student. In each example ask yourself:

- In what class would you enroll the student?
- Should the student be in a standard level class or an honors level class?
- What else would you customize the schedule?

Jessica

Enrolled:

- English I
- Health and Physical Education
- Visual Arts
- Self-Environmental Science
- Career Design I
- Math I
- Visual Music
- World History

Still needs:

- American History
- English II
- Math II
- Foreign
- PE II
- Civics and Government
- Visual Music

What does Jessica still need for graduation? What level of course would you suggest she take?

Paul

Enrolled:

- Algebra I
- Chem (Beginning)
- Self-Service: Honors
- English II Honors
- Foreign: Marketing
- Health/PE
- Math
- World History Honors
- Theater Arts

Still needs:

- Applied/Trade
- Civics/Government
- English II Honors
- Foreign I
- Math I
- Marketing
- Math II Honors
- Physical Science

What does Paul still need for graduation? What level of course would you suggest he take?

Determining Requirements

Of course, each school and school system may have their own guidelines and protocols for determining placement. You should always consult these when making your decisions.

You should also discuss these decisions with the student and their parents or guardians. Motivation, life events, and other such data may not be as measurable as grades and attendance, but may impact your decision.

As a counselor, one of the most important jobs you have into ensure that students are in the correct classes to stay on track for on-time graduation. Using the strategies, along with personal discussions with the student and parents, will help make sure that this happens.

Module 3

The Transfer Process

It would be great if you could transfer to your school just like you would, using credits and grades, just like your school. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Other times, students transfer from a school period day, where they take one class each day, for the entire year, to a full block schedule, where they take four classes each semester.

Sometimes, there are differences in schedules even when students transfer to a full block schedule or an online. This is because a job to cover the transfer of credits and just because. If a student has earned a half credit for English 1 class with a school for 2014-15, the transfer student would have to be considered as a transfer student to develop the best possible plan of action.



The Transfer Process

There are many things to consider. For example, is the student eligible for Credit Recovery options? Generally this is not an option because they have not actually failed the class. However, some schools do have on-line options where a student can complete the course. This too presents issues, because based on when the student transfers to your school, it may be too late to enroll them in those on-line courses, or your placement may be full.

Let's take a look at a student who has transferred in from a school on the across period day into a full block schedule day.

Ben 9th grade

Grade	Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Grade	Flag
Grade 9	2013/14					
30020	Algebra I	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	
30020	Algebra I	88	1,500	1,500	0.50	
30020	Biology	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	
30020	Biology	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	
9810200	Engineering Design	88	1,500	1,500	0.50	
1011200	English I	80	3,000	3,000	1.00	U
1181200	German I	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	
1181200	German I	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	
4700200	Humanities	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	U
6302200	Phys Ed (Block 9-12)	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	U
6302200	Phys Ed (Block 9-12)	96	2,000	2,000	0.50	U
40240	World History	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	
40240	World History	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	

Ben 10th grade

Grade	Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Grade	Flag
Grade 10	2014/15					
1002200	English I	88	1,500	1,500	0.50	U
1002200	English I	80	1,000	1,000	0.50	U
2000200	Common Core Geometry I	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	U
2000200	Common Core Geometry I	96	2,000	2,000	0.50	U
1182200	German II	70	2,000	2,000	1.00	U
6302200	HEALTH (HEALTH AND FITNESS)	88	1,500	1,500	0.50	U
6302200	HEALTH (HEALTH AND FITNESS)	88	1,000	1,000	0.50	U
1402200	Physics	70	2,000	2,000	1.00	
9810200	Local Elective I (Video Communications I)	96	4,000	4,000	1.00	
4700200	Humanities (Block 10-12)	88	1,000	1,000	1.00	U

Ben 11th grade

Grade	Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Grade	Flag
Grade 11	2014/15					
2000200	Common Core Algebra II	60	0,000	0,000	0.00	U
	Algebra II					
4304200	American History I	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	
4304200	American History I	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	
9810200	Local Elective I (Art Appreciation)	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	

Ben 11th grade continued

1402240	Chemistry	70	2,000	2,000	1.00	U
9610249	Local Elective / Computerized Art	88	1,500	1,500	0.50	
9610240	Local Elective / Digital Photography	88	1,500	1,500	0.50	
9610240	Local Elective / Engineering Design	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	
9610240	Local Elective / Engineering Design	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	
1023240	English II	70	1,000	1,000	0.50	U
1023240	English II	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	U
9610240	Local Elective / Green Technology / Engineering	80	1,500	1,500	0.50	

Ben

As you see, this student has earned many half credits. To further complicate matters, he has been in a school that moved to the Common Core curriculum during his 10th grade year.

First, we must determine how many credits does Ben need to graduate?

Ben

Remember the ben on our chart?

The chart is useful as we calculate Ben's credits. It is also good documentation that we have carefully reviewed Ben's transcript.



Ben

Use that chart to answer the following questions:

- What does Ben need to graduate?
- In what area subject is Ben behind?
- How can you catch him up?
- In what level of the subject would you place Ben?

Using our chart not only assists that we account for each credit and half-credit, but gives a visual reminder for us, as well as for Ben and his parents or guardians.

Module 4

Scenario

Here is an example of a 9th grade student who has transferred in to a 4x4 block schedule from a seven period day schedule. In further complicate matters, he has transferred in to his new school right before Thanksgiving, so more than half the semester has passed, and his previous school has just completed their first quarter. And to further complicate matters, this school does not offer Woodwork, the student's favorite class, and only class in which he is doing well.

Scenario

Of course, even when there are different schedules or half credits involved, when the student is a good student, and they transfer in at the start of a school year, it is easier to keep them on track. But how do you accommodate a student who is not doing well? And to further complicate matters, they transfer in more than half way through a semester.

Kendall

9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade
- Advisory	- Algebra I CP	- AP
- Algebra I CP	- Art I	- AP
- Art I	- English II CP	- AP
- English I CP	- Phys Ed	- AP
- Phys Ed	- Woodwork	- A
- Woodwork		

Kendall

If you are the counselor who has to register this student, what will you do?
 Will he receive any credit since he does not have the semester?
 In what courses will you place him?
 Why?



Melissa

9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade
- Math I	- AP World History	- AP Language
- Dark Science Honors	- Biology Honors	- AP US History
- English I Honors	- English II Honors	- Chemistry
- Fine Arts Elective	- French I	- Fine Arts/C
- Health PE	- Health PE	- Math III
- Science Elective	- Math III	- Personal
- Theater Arts I	- World Lit	- Personal
- World History Honors		- Woodwork

Melissa

Melissa is obviously a strong student. She takes honors and AP level classes. However her hybrid schedule and time of transfer presents quite a problem.

Consider the following questions:

- Looking at the courses that she completed at her previous school, is she eligible to earn credit for any of the classes?
- What do you do if you do not offer the hybrid AP Biology and AP Language and Composition in your school?
- What do you do if you do not offer French in your school?
- What systems do you have to help Melissa stay on track for on-time graduation and providing the best possible schedule for the year?



Often times counselors must review all options, even thinking outside of the box, in order to best serve students. Knowing your school's and system's protocol, and working with your administrator will help make these options more concrete plans, and help students like Kendall and Melissa.

Module 5

Mobile Students

Often students, especially highly mobile students, such as those who are affiliated with the military, attend multiple high schools. Students may present transcripts from more than one school.

In this case, you may be faced with multiple schedule formats, not to mention, students who have been working to fulfill graduation requirements for different states. The often cause students to struggle to meet the graduation requirements of your school.



Mobile Students

This is complicated further as different states, who do not have the same graduation requirements, do not even call subjects by the same name. Or even more confusing, using names which appears to be similar, but are not the same.

In this case, a counselor may have to pull the course catalog from the transferring school system and evaluate the course as it compares to the course required to meet NC graduation requirements.

Mobile Students

One example of this that often occurs is World Geography. While the course to be a ready for World History, the comparison of course descriptions in the catalog show that they are not the same.

For example, in Georgia, the course description for World Geography explains that the course, provides students with an introduction to both physical and cultural geography. After an introduction to geography, students study each major region of the world. For each region, students learn about the importance of the physical geography and its impact on the region's development. Students study cultural aspects of each region and examine the influence of geography on the cultural development of each region.

<http://www.georgia.gov/standards-and-assessments/standards-for-learning/geography>

Mobile Students

While the NC description for World History gives an overview, which states:

The "World History course will address six (6) periods in the study of World History, with grouped in a way that reflects accepted periodization by historians."

<http://www.dpi.nc.gov/nc-department-of-education/standards-standards-for-learning/world-hist/>

Further, each of these courses have several objectives which must be met. A counselor may need to research the objectives for each of these courses. Comparing the objectives side by side, it is clear that these are not the same course.



Mobile Students

A similar situation appears when students transfer in with a course in Civics. While this is an important part of the social studies requirements for the state of NC, it does not meet the Economics requirement.

The NC Course, American History: The Founding Principles, Civics and Economics Course often referred to as Civics and Economics, requires three credits. Not only does the course cover the basic tenets of American Government and government, it also covers a broad in general Civical theory and economics. This course as Civics provides students with an understanding of the role economics Civics play in making economic decisions, the ability to reason logically about key economic issues and the knowledge and skills needed to manage personal financial resources effectively for lifetime financial security. Taken together, these three credits should help to prepare students to become responsible and effective citizens in an interconnected world.

<http://www.dpi.nc.gov/nc-department-of-education/standards-standards-for-learning/social-studies/civics-and-economics/>

Mobile Students

Again, it is the responsibility of the counselor not to simply take the course title at face value, but to research the objectives to ensure that the intent of the course has been covered.

Let's look at an example of a student who has transferred to multiple high school over the course of his high school career.

Jose

11th and 12th grade

COURSE	PREREQ	CR	WT	COURSE	PREREQ	CR	WT
ALGEBRA 1 HONORS	A	1.00	Y	ACCOUNTING I	A	1.00	Y
AMERICAN STUDIES 2 HONORS	A	1.00	Y	BIOLOGY HONORS	A	1.00	Y
ART I	A	1.00	Y	COMMON CORE ALG 1 H	A	1.00	Y
ENGLISH HONORS	A	1.00	Y	ENGLISH HONORS	A	1.00	Y
FOUNDATIONS OF TECH	A	1.00	Y	FITNESS FOR LIFE	B	0.50	Y
HISTORY HONORS	A	1.00	Y	GOVERNMENT - HONORS	A	1.00	Y
LAB SCIENCE	A	1.00	Y	HEALTH	A	0.50	Y
PHYS ED	A	1.00	Y	SPANISH 1	A	1.00	Y
SPANISH 1	A	1.00	Y	SPANISH 2	B	1.00	Y
		Credit: 6.000				Credit: 8.000	

Jose

- 11th grade
- American History I
 - Biology
 - Math II
 - Math III
 - Principles of Business and Finance
 - SC/TC III
 - Spanish



Jose

Let's consider this student's academic history...

- What did you expect?
- Does he have all the very dense Honors? (What was missing?)
- What is "Classical Latin"? How do you know?
- In 11th grade he had American Studies 2 Honors, "Was an American Studies 1"? What if any credit did the school?
- Does he study the Health and PE credit?
- What if any does he Government - Honors class study?
- During his 10th grade he had 12th grade: "What if any credit did the school?"
- How would you consider these these questions?

Jose

Jose is obviously a strong student who makes good grades. However, due to frequent moves, Jose is behind in several key areas when it comes to NC high school graduation requirements.

Taking the time to research courses and compare objectives will ensure that you are able to help students like Jose make the proper choices for course selection and graduate on time.

Module 6

Rebeka

In addition to having similar names, some states have course names, which appear to be the same, but in actuality, do not mean the same thing. One example is in this transcript.

Rebeka

9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade
English 1 Honors Δ	US History 1 AP □	AP Language 1
Latin 1 □	English 2 Honors Δ	French 1 Honors 1
Chemistry 1 Honors □	Health Δ	Chemistry 1 Honors
PE Δ	Latin 2 □	Psychology 1 AP
Physical Science Δ	Algebra 2 Honors □	US Government and Politics 1
21- Century Geography Δ	Biology 1 Honors Δ	Nurses and Midwifery
Computer Apps Δ	US History 2 AP □	AP Language 2
State Testing Skills □	English 3 Honors Δ	French 2 Honors 2
English 2 Honors Δ	Life Guard Level 1 Δ	Chemistry 2 Honors
Physical Science 2 Δ	Latin 4 □	Psychology 2 AP
21- Century Geography Δ	Biology 2 Honors □	US Government and Politics 2

Rebeka

As in some of the previous modules, this student appears to have more credits than she needs for graduation. However, when reviewing the curriculum guide and course catalog, or calling the school, the counselor will learn that the student earns two credits for each core class.

However, the core classes are not listed with the same name. For example, the student appears to have completed all four (4) of the required English classes by the end of 10th grade. A call to the previous school reveals that English is broken into two (2) parts: English 1 and English 2 are the equivalent of North Carolina's English 1.

Based on what you have already learned, how would this transfer to a NC transcript?

Rebekah

If you said, this would be one (1) credit, you are correct!



The best rule of thumb is, when you are in doubt, do your research and/or call the sending school.

Module 7

Kitana

There are other issues which a counselor must resolve when registering a new student.

Year	Grade	Subject	Prerequisite	Grade	Prerequisite
10	10	English	None	10	10
10	10	Math	None	10	10
10	10	Science	None	10	10
10	10	History	None	10	10
10	10	Physical Education	None	10	10
10	10	Art	None	10	10
10	10	Music	None	10	10
10	10	Foreign Language	None	10	10
10	10	Health	None	10	10
10	10	Career	None	10	10
10	10	Community Service	None	10	10
10	10	Electives	None	10	10
10	10	Independent Study	None	10	10
10	10	Advanced Placement	None	10	10
10	10	International Baccalaureate	None	10	10
10	10	Other	None	10	10

Kitana

What do you notice about this transcript?

- Did you notice that most of one (1) credit for his courses he transferred to?
- What is he taking?
- How would a counselor react to that?



Kitana

This is actually not a big problem. Most a counselor would simply use the equalization conversion if the receiving school grants one (1) credit for English 1, then this would convert to one (1) credit.

Year	Grade	Subject	Prerequisite	Grade	Prerequisite
10	10	English	None	10	10
10	10	Math	None	10	10
10	10	Science	None	10	10
10	10	History	None	10	10
10	10	Physical Education	None	10	10
10	10	Art	None	10	10
10	10	Music	None	10	10
10	10	Foreign Language	None	10	10
10	10	Health	None	10	10
10	10	Career	None	10	10
10	10	Community Service	None	10	10
10	10	Electives	None	10	10
10	10	Independent Study	None	10	10
10	10	Advanced Placement	None	10	10
10	10	International Baccalaureate	None	10	10
10	10	Other	None	10	10

Kitana

The counselor would then use the converted credits to complete the chart on our graduation check list. He had the opportunity to earn six (6) credits in 9th and 10th grade, then transferring to our NC school on a dual schedule, he would be able to earn eight (8) credits each year. Therefore he will need a minimum of 24 credits to graduate.

This can become more difficult when the sending school uses a variety of credits for course credit.

Year	Grade	Subject	Prerequisite	Grade	Prerequisite
9	9	English	None	9	9
9	9	Math	None	9	9
9	9	Science	None	9	9
9	9	History	None	9	9
9	9	Physical Education	None	9	9
9	9	Art	None	9	9
9	9	Music	None	9	9
9	9	Foreign Language	None	9	9
9	9	Health	None	9	9
9	9	Career	None	9	9
9	9	Community Service	None	9	9
9	9	Electives	None	9	9
9	9	Independent Study	None	9	9
9	9	Advanced Placement	None	9	9
9	9	International Baccalaureate	None	9	9
9	9	Other	None	9	9


Maria

Year	Grade	Subject	Prerequisite	Grade	Prerequisite
9	9	English	None	9	9
9	9	Math	None	9	9
9	9	Science	None	9	9
9	9	History	None	9	9
9	9	Physical Education	None	9	9
9	9	Art	None	9	9
9	9	Music	None	9	9
9	9	Foreign Language	None	9	9
9	9	Health	None	9	9
9	9	Career	None	9	9
9	9	Community Service	None	9	9
9	9	Electives	None	9	9
9	9	Independent Study	None	9	9
9	9	Advanced Placement	None	9	9
9	9	International Baccalaureate	None	9	9
9	9	Other	None	9	9

Maria

You immediately notice that Maria is granted more than one (1) credit for each of her classes, however, upon closer inspection, you note that some courses received four (4) credits, while others received five (5) or six (6) credits.

How will a counselor determine how many credits to give for each of these classes?



Maria

However in this instance, you notice that it isn't the student's choice to be made, as she only transferred in 0.5 credits of Health and PE. How did the counselor make sure the student met the graduation requirement? What are the options?

Course	Grade	Credits	Prerequisites
Health	10	0.5	
PE	10	0.5	
Math	10	1.0	
Science	10	1.0	
English	10	1.0	
History	10	1.0	
Art	10	0.5	
Music	10	0.5	
Physical Education	10	0.5	
Health	10	0.5	
Math	11	1.0	
Science	11	1.0	
English	11	1.0	
History	11	1.0	
Art	11	0.5	
Music	11	0.5	
Physical Education	11	0.5	
Health	11	0.5	
Math	12	1.0	
Science	12	1.0	
English	12	1.0	
History	12	1.0	
Art	12	0.5	
Music	12	0.5	
Physical Education	12	0.5	
Health	12	0.5	

Maria

This student may be required to take Health and PE to earn the full credit.

The student may be allowed to take just the Health portion of a Health and PE class.

The student may enroll in a "pass" summer school to take the course on his or her own.


A school system may offer summer school courses for credit.

Maria

In this case, you notice a half credit for Health.

This counselor was able to enroll the student in an abbreviated Health course, earning a half credit through NC Virtual Public Schools. NC Virtual Public Schools is just one on-line option to provide additional options for students to earn credits to stay on track to graduate on time.

Thinking outside the box, as this counselor did, opens a variety of options for students who need something beyond the norm of registering for in-school classes. NC Virtual Public Schools is not the only on-line option; there are many others offer on-line credits for students.



Maria

Additionally, there are in-school credit recovery options through programs such as Edgenuity and GradPath for students who have failed a course and need to catch up.

Some schools allow students to take these classes during the school day, after school on the school campus, or allow the student to work on classes on their own time.

Again, in each of these cases, it is imperative that counselors know the policy for their school and system in order to be able to recommend options that will be accepted.

Module 8

Teresa

Another situation that occurs is when a student enrolls himself or herself for registration coming from a private school or a home school setting. Often these schools offer courses which, although required for them, do not count as anything other than an elective in a NC public school.

This is only a concern if they have taken so many that they have to double up in core classes in order to graduate on time.

Teresa

Official Transcript				
Year	Course name	Final Credit	Final Credit	Grade
2012-2013	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2013-2014	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2014-2015	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2015-2016	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2016-2017	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2017-2018	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2018-2019	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2019-2020	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2020-2021	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2021-2022	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2022-2023	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2023-2024	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2024-2025	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2025-2026	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2026-2027	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2027-2028	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2028-2029	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2029-2030	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2030-2031	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2031-2032	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2032-2033	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2033-2034	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2034-2035	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2035-2036	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2036-2037	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2037-2038	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2038-2039	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2039-2040	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2040-2041	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2041-2042	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2042-2043	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2043-2044	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2044-2045	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2045-2046	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2046-2047	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2047-2048	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2048-2049	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2049-2050	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2050-2051	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2051-2052	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2052-2053	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2053-2054	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2054-2055	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2055-2056	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2056-2057	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2057-2058	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2058-2059	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2059-2060	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2060-2061	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2061-2062	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2062-2063	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2063-2064	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2064-2065	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2065-2066	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2066-2067	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2067-2068	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2068-2069	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2069-2070	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2070-2071	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2071-2072	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2072-2073	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2073-2074	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2074-2075	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2075-2076	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2076-2077	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2077-2078	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2078-2079	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2079-2080	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2080-2081	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2081-2082	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2082-2083	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2083-2084	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2084-2085	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2085-2086	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2086-2087	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2087-2088	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2088-2089	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2089-2090	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2090-2091	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2091-2092	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2092-2093	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2093-2094	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2094-2095	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2095-2096	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2096-2097	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2097-2098	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2098-2099	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2099-2100	Advanced Math	B	B	B

Teresa

Year	Course name	Final Credit	Final Credit	Grade
2012-2013	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2013-2014	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2014-2015	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2015-2016	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2016-2017	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2017-2018	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2018-2019	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2019-2020	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2020-2021	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2021-2022	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2022-2023	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2023-2024	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2024-2025	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2025-2026	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2026-2027	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2027-2028	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2028-2029	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2029-2030	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2030-2031	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2031-2032	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2032-2033	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2033-2034	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2034-2035	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2035-2036	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2036-2037	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2037-2038	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2038-2039	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2039-2040	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2040-2041	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2041-2042	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2042-2043	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2043-2044	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2044-2045	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2045-2046	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2046-2047	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2047-2048	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2048-2049	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2049-2050	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2050-2051	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2051-2052	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2052-2053	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2053-2054	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2054-2055	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2055-2056	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2056-2057	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2057-2058	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2058-2059	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2059-2060	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2060-2061	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2061-2062	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2062-2063	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2063-2064	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2064-2065	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2065-2066	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2066-2067	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2067-2068	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2068-2069	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2069-2070	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2070-2071	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2071-2072	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2072-2073	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2073-2074	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2074-2075	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2075-2076	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2076-2077	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2077-2078	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2078-2079	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2079-2080	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2080-2081	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2081-2082	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2082-2083	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2083-2084	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2084-2085	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2085-2086	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2086-2087	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2087-2088	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2088-2089	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2089-2090	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2090-2091	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2091-2092	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2092-2093	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2093-2094	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2094-2095	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2095-2096	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2096-2097	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2097-2098	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2098-2099	Advanced Math	B	B	B
2099-2100	Advanced Math	B	B	B

Teresa

This student is coming to a NC public school from a private school with a religious focus. The student took course in Bible study that counted toward their requirements for graduation in that private school setting.

Teresa

Based on the transcript submitted, are the completion of their 10th grade year is this student on track to graduate? Are they behind in any of the NC requirements for graduation?

-Answer: If you noticed in their 9th grade year they did not have Health and PE or a social studies, you are correct.

Based on the transcript, what would you recommend they take during their junior year?

-Answer: They are behind in Social Studies, so they should take both Civics and Economics and American History 1. They also need Health and PE.

Teresa

Can they take a half credit Health class since they already have a Phys Ed I class?

-Answer: No. They only received 1/2 credit for that class. They must have a minimum of a half credit for PE and half credit for health. The only way they could take the half credit Health class would be if they took another PE class.

Where do I count the classes such as Greek, Jesus in Scripture, and Safety Ed?

-Answer: These count as electives. Just be sure to count the correct credit total.

Teresa

Using the check list, go back through and turn your dolls.
Identify what this student needs to graduate.

Requirement	Completed	Not Completed	Notes
English I			
English II			
English III			
English IV			
Math I			
Math II			
Math III			
Math IV			
Science I			
Science II			
Science III			
Science IV			
History I			
History II			
History III			
History IV			
Physical Education I			
Physical Education II			
Physical Education III			
Physical Education IV			
Health			
Art			
Music			
Foreign Language			
Electives			
Senior Project			
Community Service			
Character Education			
Attendance			
Behavior			
Graduation Requirements			


Teresa

It is situations like this one that make having a check sheet so important. It would be easy to simply transfer the course title, but not the proper credit total. The student could move all the way through the remainder of their high school career, only to find, upon senior audit for graduation, that they were missing a required credit.

Module 9

Kendall

Another side of the multiple schedule issue is when a student transfers from a 60-block schedule into a 7 period day class. This becomes increasingly more and more difficult as the year progresses.




Kendall

Section	Teacher	Block	Attendance	Classifications	Credits	Prereq.
10100001
10100002
10100003
10100004
10100005
10100006
10100007
10100008
10100009
10100010
10100011
10100012
10100013
10100014
10100015
10100016
10100017
10100018
10100019
10100020
10100021
10100022
10100023
10100024
10100025
10100026
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10100086
10100087
10100088
10100089
10100090
10100091
10100092
10100093
10100094
10100095
10100096
10100097
10100098
10100099
10100100

Kendall

Code	Year	Class	Credits
10100001	2024	Art Functions and Modeling	0.5
10100002	2024	Art Functions & Modeling	0.5
10100003	2024	American History II American	0.5
10100004	2024	History II	0.5
10100005	2024	English III English III	0.5
10100006	2024	Health and Safety	0.5
10100007	2024	Health and Safety	0.5
10100008	2024	Local Studies Study Skills I	0.5
10100009	2024	Local Studies Study Skills I	0.5
10100010	2024	Local Studies Two-Writing	0.5
10100011	2024	Local Studies Two-Writing	0.5
10100012	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100013	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100014	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100015	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100016	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100017	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100018	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100019	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100020	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100021	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100022	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100023	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100024	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100025	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100026	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100027	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100028	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100029	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100030	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100031	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100032	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100033	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100034	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100035	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100036	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100037	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100038	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100039	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100040	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100041	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100042	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100043	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100044	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100045	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100046	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100047	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100048	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100049	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100050	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100051	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100052	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100053	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100054	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100055	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100056	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100057	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100058	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100059	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100060	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100061	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100062	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100063	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100064	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100065	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100066	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100067	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100068	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100069	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100070	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100071	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100072	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100073	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100074	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100075	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100076	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100077	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100078	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100079	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100080	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100081	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100082	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100083	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100084	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100085	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100086	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100087	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100088	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100089	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100090	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100091	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100092	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100093	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100094	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100095	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100096	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100097	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100098	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100099	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5
10100100	2024	Local Studies Civics/Health	0.5



Kendall

If the transfer occurs at the semester break, the good news is that the student *does* have a credit for those four classes, but what can a counselor do for the remainder of the year?


What happens if the transfer takes place in October, mid-way through the first semester? The student has not completed the class, so they do not have the credit?

What happens if this move takes place in March? Depending on when they move in, the student may be very behind, or very ahead, of students in a yearlong course.

Kendall

Depending on the policy of the school system, the student may be eligible to take those four (4) classes for credit, and enroll in those (2) additional classes. Each school system should have a protocol in place to determine at what point in the semester it is too late to earn credit.

If the transfer occurs in March, the student *should* be eligible, depending on local policy to complete the four (4) classes he/she is currently taking to receive credit. However, it would be too late to earn credit for additional classes. The school may opt to have the student audit the other classes for no credit for the remainder of the school year.



Module 10

Compact Rules

For students who are highly mobile there are other considerations. Some of these students may be homeless. As such, they are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act of 1987. This Act seeks to remove barriers which may impede students from receiving an appropriate education.

This is detailed in the section of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/enshrinell.html>, which provides that a student who presents himself or herself as homeless must be immediately enrolled:

Compact Rules

(C) ENROLLMENT: (i) The school district in accordance with the paragraph shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to provide records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.

(ii) The receiving school district immediately enroll the student attended by the child or youth within relevant academic and other records.

Compact Rules

Therefore, most school districts have a policy in place for enrolling students who fall under the McKinney-Vento Act. It behooves a counselor to act quickly and attempt to locate records so that a student may be enrolled properly as soon as possible.

Another group of students who are often highly mobile are military-affiliated students. These students often attend two, three, or more high schools over the course of their high school career. These students are also protected under the Military Compact.



Compact Rules

This document seeks to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents.

This document not only provides for "Facilitating the timely enrollment of children of military families and ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records from the previous school district," but it also seeks to ensure the on-time graduation of these military-affiliated students.



Compact Rules

As the McKinney-Vento Act, this Compact provides that schools accept unofficial records and register students with these pending receipt of official documentation. It further requires the receiving school to honor the student's placement as provided by the sending school.

Whenever possible the most significant transfer of this document must, "in order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families states and local education agencies shall incorporate" certain procedures. This includes, but is not limited to:

Placement flexibility – Local education agency administrative officials shall have flexibility in varying course program prerequisites, or other preconditions for placement in courses programs offered under the jurisdiction of the local education agency.

Compact Rules

Waiver requirements - Local education agency administrative officials shall waive specific courses required for graduation if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another local education agency or shall provide reasonable justification for denial. Should a waiver not be granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the local education agency shall provide an alternative means of acquiring required coursework so that graduation may occur on time.

Compact Rules

Exit exams - Seniors shall accept: 1) exit or end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; or 2) national norm-referenced achievement tests or 3) alternative testing, in lieu of testing requirements for graduation in the receiving state. In the event the above alternatives cannot be accommodated by the receiving state, for a student transferring in his or her Senior year, then the provisions of Article VII, Section C shall apply.

Compact Rules

Transfers during Senior year - Should a military student transferring at the beginning or during his or her Senior year be ineligible to graduate from the receiving local education agency after all alternatives have been considered, the sending and receiving local education agencies shall ensure the receipt of a diploma from the sending local education agency if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending local education agency. In the event that one of the states in question is not a member of the compact the member state shall use best efforts to facilitate the on-time graduation of the student in accordance with Sections A and B of this Article.

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde/pubs/compacts/Compact5_Requirements01108.pdf

Kareem

Most Kareem.

Kareem is a student who qualifies for the protection of the Military Compact. Not all students who are military affiliated are from a Department of Defense (DoD) school. Many students who are part of a military family attend local schools.



Kareem

Grade	Course	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score
9th	Spanish I	D	85	10th	Spanish II	D	85
9th	Language Arts I	B	90	10th	Language Arts II	B	90
9th	Algebra I	A	95	10th	Algebra II	A	95
9th	Geometry	A	95	10th	Geometry Lab	A	95
9th	PE-Fitness	A	95	10th	PE-Nutrition	A	95
9th	PE-Sports	A	95	10th	Biology	A	95
9th	Physics Apps	D	85	10th	World History: The Modern World	C	85
9th	World History	C	85				

Kareem

- 9th grade
- Spanish I D
- Language Arts I B
- Algebra I A
- Algebra I Lab A
- PE-Fitness A
- PE-Sports A
- Physics Apps D
- World History C
- 10th grade
- Spanish II
- Language Arts II
- Geometry
- Geometry Lab
- PE-Nutrition
- Biology
- World History: The Modern World

Kareem

Since Kareem is not a senior and has time to meet the graduation requirements for North Carolina, some of this is not applicable to him. However, there is a serious issue: Kareem is transferring from seven (7) period day into a dual block schedule in November. He will not have sufficient seat time to earn credits.

As his counselor, does Kareem have any protection under the Military Compact? Are there any concessions that can be made for him?

Kareem

Although counselors do have to work with their local educational agencies, schools may have to have alternate requirements allowing students such as Kareem to remain in classes for credit, providing certain work.

Thinking outside of the box, a student may be allowed to enter the class, complete the work, and take the end-of-course assessment. If this is successful, they may earn the credit.

Depending on the amount of time missed, schools may have a policy allowing students to take the course on site or dual enrollment. This depends, but could be considered under the Military Compact. There are provisions in the statute that allow students to take study while also for additional support to be made up and earn all of these students of the law. Agreements upon depend on the policy of the school.

Module 11

Thinking Outside Of The Box

While consistency is very important, it is equally as important to consider the needs of each student. So how do these two ideas work in tandem?

Using a Personalized Registration Process with protocols in place in order to help meet the needs of the student will help each counselor provide the best possible experience for the student and their family.

The following flow chart provides an example of a protocol that could be used in schools to help students through the registration process and maintain on-time graduation.

Personalized Registration Process



Module 12

Revise.... Create to meet Human Side of Counseling Prioritizing

The other con that I would see in there is that when working on technical things like credits, graduation requirements, etc., it can become easy for a counselor to become immersed in the details of the technical side of it and neglect the human side of it. From the perspective of helping a counselor sit down and figure out the transcript on their own, to prepare to go through it with parents in terms of the preparation, it's excellent. In terms of the nuts and bolts, actually how to walk a parent through the conclusions that the counselor drew, it may be that because the counselor felt so prepared on the technical aspects of it, that they would neglect the human aspects of it, which in terms of conveying what's going on to the parent, could be the most important.

In general, a parent does want to make sure that you know your stuff, but it's like the saying in education, they have to know you care before they care what you know. I think that there were things in there throughout the presentation that you may want to put that in a module of its own, either at the front or the conclusion or both to stress that in terms of the face-to-face interaction.

Let me scratch that. The other component that I think could make it a little bit stronger is in terms of a priority or sort of a rubric for when deciding which courses to pick and which courses to punt, looking at things like keeping them on track, keeping them tracking for graduation, keeping them tracking with their peers, keeping them from being overloaded so they get that, and how do you balance that. It's not always intuitive. That may be a thing where an additional module could be made. For that one, it wouldn't even necessarily have to be one that included different course titles. It could just be you're coming from a seven period day with the exact same course titles, exact same course content, various performance in the grades. Which ones do you pick, which ones do you punt, and why?

Speaker 1: That's a good point.

Speaker 2: Matter of fact, that might be one that could be an earlier one because there are fewer moving parts. The only different factor would be that they're coming from a seven period day, but no differences in terms of the course titles or things like that. We'd have to do a few things and introduce that.

Module 13

Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

1. How many math classes are needed for graduation?

Four (4) math classes are required: Math 1, Math 2, Math 3, and a 4+ level / higher level math class.

2. Does Foundations of Math 1 count as a math class?

No. Foundations of Math does not count as a math. It may count as an elective. The purpose of this class is to prepare students for high school math classes by providing support for deficits in math.



Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

3. How many science classes are needed for graduation?

Students need a minimum of three (3) science courses. They must include an earth and environmental class, which could be Earth and Environmental Science, AP Environmental, or another option which meets NC requirements; a physical science, which could include Physical Science, Chemistry, Physics, or another option which meets NC requirements; and Biology.

Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

4. Is chemistry required for graduation?

Chemistry is not required for graduation. It will count as a physical science toward the science graduation requirement.

5. How many foreign language classes are needed for graduation?

No foreign languages are required for graduation. However, the UNC system does require two (2) units of the same foreign language in their admission standards.

6. How many English classes are needed for graduation? Four

(4) units of English are required for graduation.

Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

True/False

7. A student must have a minimum of three social studies classes to graduate.

False. A student must have four social studies to graduate. These include: World History, Civics & Economics, American History 1, and American History 2. A student who takes AP US History may substitute that course plus a fourth social studies elective in lieu of American History 1, and American History 2.

8. A student must have one elective from the arts classes to graduate. False.

There is not a requirement from the arts for high school graduation.



Test Your Knowledge Traditional High School

9. All students must have 28 credits in order to graduate from high school.

False. Most schools require students who have been enrolled for four years at a traditional high school on the 4x4 block schedule to earn 28 credits for a traditional diploma. However for other diploma tracks, for students who have transferred in from a schedule other than the 4x4 block schedule, or some systems, a minimum of 22 credits are required for graduation. For more information, go to:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/home/graduationrequirements.pdf>

Transcript # 2

Year/Trm	Sec	Course	Course	Dist	Final	A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	F	W
10-11-02	10	1000000	English 1	SLA	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	8040000	Health and Physical Education Gr 10	HEB & PE	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	Modern History	Mod Hist	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	8010000	Physical Science	Science	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	8010000	Principles of Business & Finance	Princ	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	8010000	Team Sports	Team Sports	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	Algebra 1	Math	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	Geometry	Math	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	Calculus III	Math	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	Engineering	Math	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	English 1	SLA	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	8000000	Physical Education	PE	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
10-11-02	10	4000000	US History	US Hist	3.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Transcript # 2

- Did you notice that this was James' third high school in his high school career?
- Did you notice that he didn't complete courses at his first school, but received credits at his second?
- Did you notice that he had several half credits?
- Did you notice that he does not have a Health and PE credit?
- Did you notice that he does not have American History, but rather one credit of US History and Government?

Transcript # 2

How would you discover if either of those classes counted toward a social studies credit required for graduation?

- Did you say you would look up the course descriptions and objectives? Great
- Did you say you would ask the sending school's counselor? Great

Sally, James, a military affiliated student was only at this, his third high school in one semester before moving yet again.

Transcript # 3

Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Final	Grade
0000000	72			1.00	S
0000000	71	1.000	1.000	1.00	S
0000000	71	2.000	2.000	1.00	S
0000000	80	3.000	3.000	1.00	S
0000000	80	4.000	4.000	1.00	S
0000000	71	1.000	1.000	1.00	S
0000000	80	3.000	3.000	1.00	S
0000000	71	1.000	1.000	1.00	S

The student has enrolled and is requesting to take Honors Level classes. What do you do? Her mother says she is as decided as James on it. What do you do? Do not check out a book on the way home in Combs, some studying, having to move.

Transcript # 3

What is your school policy? Her grade do not support being in honors classes. However, if she has been identified as ADG, she may have to take honors level classes. It does not appear from the transcript that she was in honors level classes last year. However, you do need to review all school records to confirm this and that she is indeed currently identified as ADG. If there is an ADG coordinator at your school, you should consult with them.

Transcript # 4

Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Final	Grade
0000000	76	3.00	3.00	1.00	S
0000000	80	2.00	2.00	1.00	S
0000000	80	3.00	3.00	1.00	S
0000000	78	1.00	1.00	1.00	S
0000000	76	1.00	1.00	1.00	S

This student has transferred in from another (2) grade level in a local school district. She enrolls in February and has earned some half credits. What should you substitute her for?

Transcript # 4

If you selected English as one that you would schedule her for that is great. She will need that in order to be promoted and since she already has a half credit she can finish the semester to receive her full credit.

She can do the same for Physical Science.

She has a half credit for Intro. to Fine Arts and a half credit for Visual Art. If she wanted to take an art class, she could earn the full credit for Visual Art.

She has a half credit for Lifetime Wellness. This is a PE class. If you enroll her in a PE class she will have a full credit.

Transcript # 4

Depending on how your school provides instruction in Health and PE, if there is a class where the Health component has not yet begun, she could take that in order to satisfy the Health and PE credit.

Since she has failed the first part of her Algebra class she can wait and take that next year. Or instead of her Art or PE, you may have her audit a Foundations of Math 1 class to support her math deficit; then take Math 1 next year.

Four-Year Plan -Checklist

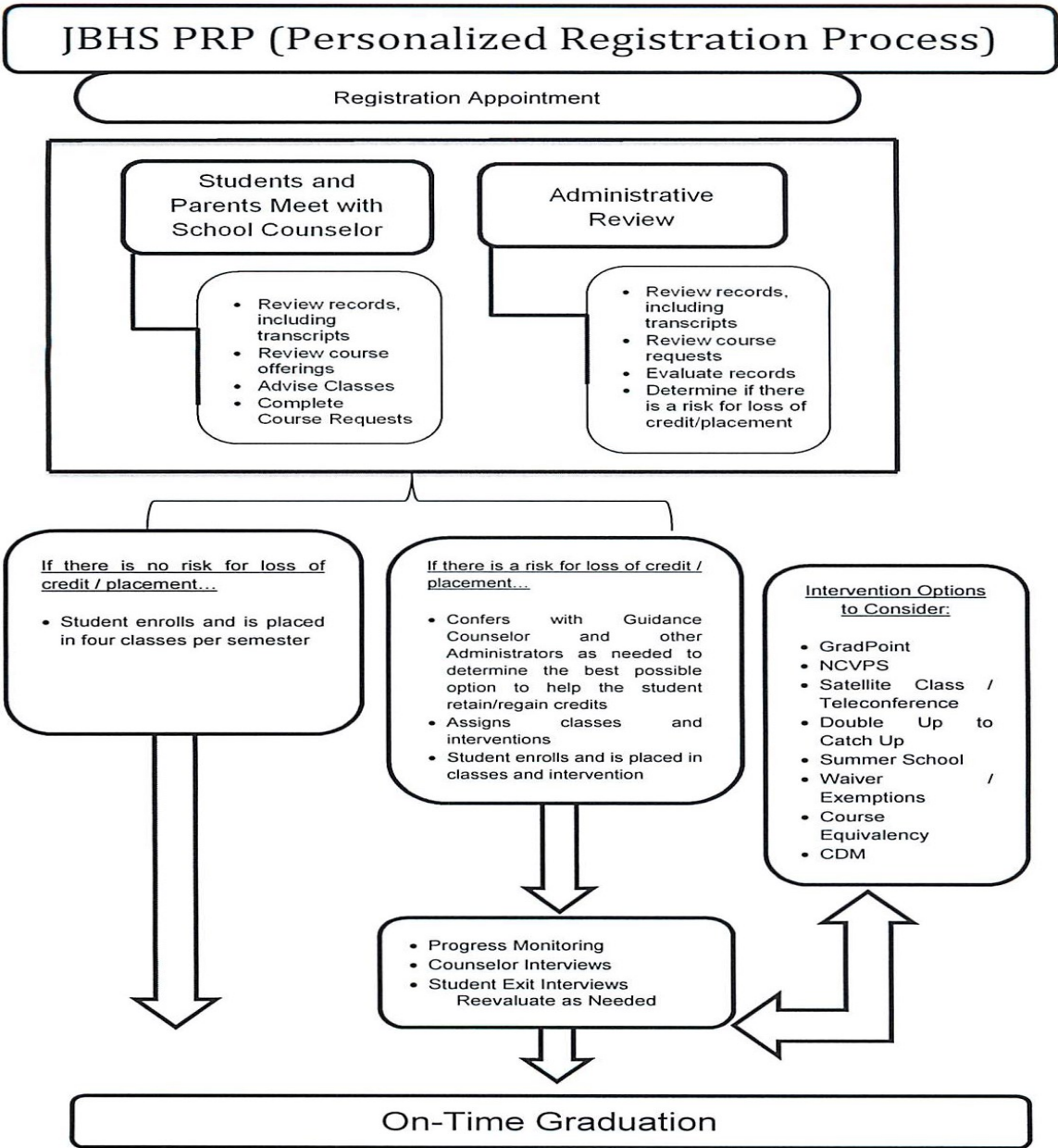
Student's Name: _____ Counselor: _____
 Student Number: _____ Grade: _____

Required Academic Core Subjects:		Electives:	
Course Name:	Credit Earned:	Electives Categories:	Credit Earned:
English 1 English 2 English 3 English 4		2 elective credits of any combination from either: --Career & Technical Education --Arts Education --Second Languages	
Math _____ Math _____ Math _____ Math _____		4 electives from one of the following Career Clusters or Concentrators: --Career & Technical Education --Arts Education --Foreign Language (w/in same language) --Advanced Placement --College Connection (Community College)	
Earth Science Biology A Physical Science		8 th Grade Credits: Math: _____ _____	
Health & PE		Foreign Language: _____ Other: _____ _____	
Electives: (P = Pending / In Progress)			
9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade

Calculating Credits Needed to Graduate:

9th Grade Total Possible Credits: _____
 10th Grade Total Possible Credits: _____
 11th Grade Total Possible Credits: _____
 12th Grade Total Possible Credits: _____
Total Possible Credits: _____

Subtract 4 credits from Total Possible Credits
 =Total Credits Needed to Graduate: _____



APPENDIX O: COUNSELOR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Speaker 1: Okay. If you would, start by stating your name and spelling your last name.

Counselor 1: [REDACTED]

Speaker 1: How many years have you been a school counselor?

Counselor 1: I've been a school counselor for ten years now. Speaker 1: Has it always been at this school?

Counselor 1: It has always been at this school. Speaker 1: It's always been high school?

Counselor 1: Yes.

Speaker 1: Even including your practicums before?

Counselor 1: I did my practicum at [inaudible 00:00:29].

Speaker 1: Okay. What preparatory program did you attend to prepare you for this career?

Counselor 1: Master's degree in school counseling program at [REDACTED]

Speaker 1: Consider your training to be a counselor. That program. Tell me about the preparation you received there to help you prepare for high school counseling. Particularly think about things like evaluating transcripts and making scheduling choices.

Counselor 1: Outside of my practicum, there was minimal training specific to high school. We did take a course that dealt a lot with planning interventions, but most of it seemed more appropriate and geared towards elementary school-aged students, the type and level of interventions would be more . . . like you tell the classroom teacher for a third grader who was having trouble not sniffing glue.

Speaker 1: What about professional development since you've been in the program to help you prepare for things like that?

- Counselor 1: Professional development. One of my mentors early in counseling was a secondary lead counselor for counseling in and was able to work one-on-one with on things like evaluating transcripts, using technology to sort of manage your caseload, scheduling decisions, that sort of thing would offer the sort of stuff that we did one-on-one to other counselors in other schools through professional development, but I was fortunate enough to be able to get that directly in-house. I have done some professional development with the new Power School, when that program was implemented, so I've had some training with that as well.
- Speaker 1: Okay. As you know, one of the things I'm working on with my studies deals with highly mobile students, those students who move a lot and especially those that move at non-traditional times, not at the end of the year. Let's talk about those for a minute. Just approximately, how many transfer students do you feel like you have in a given month, or do we as a school have?
- Counselor 1: A rough estimate, I think spring semester . . . Are we talking transfer in . . . not at the beginning of a semester but within a semester?
- Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Counselor 1: I would say I probably average about anywhere from three to six a semester. Usually more in the fall, fewer in the spring, so maybe call it five or six a year.
- Speaker 1: Then we take into account all the other counselors and those who come at the semester mark too.
- Counselor 1: All the other counselors would put us 30 at weird times, I'd estimate we probably had another 30 that would . . . be conservative, maybe another 20 that would start at the actual beginning of the semester.
- Speaker 1: Okay. What are the issues or problems you see facing these students who are transferring in?
- Counselor 1: Well, the [big 00:04:08] thing is you have got all the social aspects of moving, going to a new place, and it's difficult. Anyone in a new situation, depending on how outgoing they are might experience issues. We'll put those to the side. When you go from state to state, there can be different graduation requirements. When you go from often a traditional school to a four by four block, there could be issues with the amount of credit that you receive with your courses lining up with the curriculum. There could also be issues with us simply not offering a

course that they were taking. Often, it can result in students having to kind of go back and take a course from the beginning when they'd already gone half-way through it or then not being able to continue with an elective that they really enjoyed. A lot of transition issues relating to academics.

Speaker 1: Okay. When a student transfers in, share with me your perception of the registration process. Take me through a registration process.

Counselor 1: Okay. In the middle of the school year, or at any time?

Speaker 1: Right, not a summer time or something like that.

Counselor 1: If we're looking at a student. Let's say they are coming in the middle of the fall semester. One of the first things I would do would be to take a look at where we were in the semester. In order to receive credit, you have to be a certain amount of seat time to receive a [inaudible 00:05:36] worth of credit. We'd have to kind of . . . sometimes it gets a little bit tricky when you get into late October, early November, you kind of have to look at when did their school start, when did ours, to kind of work it out. Past November, a lot of times it would be difficult for them to earn credit for the courses because they just simply would not be able to get in that seat time. In some cases, we're able to do some creative things. For example, if the student was a seven period day, they were taking . . . One of their periods was health, one of their periods was PE, they'd actually have the seat time in our health and PE class.

Other times, we're just unable to do a creative thing like that, so we might have to look at them auditing classes. Assuming that they were going to be able to get credit, and again, it's fall semester, let's say it's very early October, it's the end of September. They haven't gone quite too far, so as long as their attendance is good, they can hope to earn credit. They would be taking seven courses. Going from taking seven courses to four courses. What I would look for in that circumstance would be to take the courses, the four strongest courses that they were doing well in. I'd want to pick at least two electives, and I would try to find the core classes to keep that they would be strongest in. For a math course, I would prefer to punt it to the spring if we could work with that simply because a lot of times the math curriculums don't line up exactly, and I'd rather them be in there from day one so they are able to fully get the course.

In the spring time, if they move in the middle of the spring, it becomes a little different. Perhaps they are bringing half-credits with them from

their old school, perhaps not. If not, then they are only going to earn four credits for the year. We'd want to try to keep them in the courses that would keep them tracking for promotion, but in terms of the electives and core courses, I would still prefer to keep a balanced schedule. I find that when students have three core courses or especially four core courses, that that can really keep them from doing their best, and it can exacerbate, making transitions that may be difficult already, even more so.

Again, you would want to look at what grade they were in. You wouldn't want to take away a chance for a senior who had a legitimate chance to graduate, you wouldn't want to do that. Especially if someone were a freshman, you wouldn't want to set them up for failure where they had a schedule that was way too difficult when they had plenty of time to maintain on-time graduation. That would kind of be my rubric with that.

Speaker 1: Okay. You kind of touched on my next question a little bit, which is what strategies do you have for students who are transferring in from different schedules? I'm going to kind of combine that with my follow-up. With thinking outside of the box for some of those, think of some of the things that you do, and one of the things I appreciate about you is when you come to me, and I've told you this before, when you come to me with a schedule thing, you don't just bring me problems. You bring me possible solutions. Thinking about some of these possible solutions, especially these outside of the box ones, what are some strategies that we can put in place here, or that you have thought about or attempted in order to help these students retain and regain credits?

Counselor 1: Okay. I think we're doing a lot of the things that we can already. Some of the things I've said . . . a lot of it just comes to paying attention to detail. I will give an example. We've found students that have transferred in from out of state, and they have got a missing half-credit somewhere. Their ninth grade year they took world history. They passed one semester, didn't pass the next semester, and they never made it up. With something like . . . we have grad point. We say, "Okay, which semester did you not pass? Second semester, we'll get you in grad point part b, which is a credit recovery program, and then you have got the credit without having to dedicate one of your eight slots here at school or four slots per semester to a course that messed you up in the ninth grade and that you have actually sat through and done."

We've done some things before where a student moves in that particularly late time in the year, especially if the student had experienced failure and had them do grad point all day because they

would not be . . . otherwise they would be auditing classes because they didn't have enough seat time, but this way they would be able to recover credit. We did that with one young lady who was able to complete one class and then complete a second class, and so rather a situation where she would kind of audit four classes because she came in April and didn't have seat time, this way she was able to actually recover and progress and move on.

Speaker 1: Okay. One of the problems of transferring, even within the district, and our district is looking at that now, is difference in pacing, even if it is the same course. How do we deal with those kind of issues?

Counselor 1: Well, we are fortunate at our school that all of our teachers . . . let me step back. I think all of our academic teachers, the expectation is that they are going to offer tutoring and work with students. In my experience, they all do. Now, it may be that it's morning or afternoon. It may be certain times a week, but I think it's pretty generous that students have opportunities to work directly with their teacher if they are coming in at a different time period, then they do that. I do see that sometimes, for example, a kid coming in, military move . . . maybe they've done algebra I and they are looking at math two. One of the things to mention is that you may need to go in for tutoring. It is available.

There could be times when you were doing . . . your class is doing review of stuff that you had not been taught, and you would need to go and get that. We also offer peer tutoring after school for that. If there's a difference in pacing, I mean, really, the only thing that you can do is pick up your pace. If it's something that you have to know that's on the exam, that you'll be tested on that you need to learn to be successful to complete the course, you have to get it. Now for military students, there could be . . . there is some tutoring available, especially . . . military tutoring opportunities that are offered too.

Speaker 1: That's a tongue-twister.

Counselor 1: Yes.

Speaker 1: Thinking about the registration and scheduling, how much input do you think the student and the parents have in the process that we have here?

Counselor 1: Nobody really has a whole lot of, and from Miss [00:12:54] on down, nobody really has a whole lot of flexibility when someone moves in at the middle of the year in terms of scheduling. Everybody involved is having

to make the best of a situation. For example, if a student comes in in the spring, we can only offer them, realistically four classes. There's not a great way to do more than that. Our options are necessarily limited. The options could be further constrained by things like just our schedule here, when courses are offered. Sometimes students have to pick and choose. They can't take both because they're offered at the same time. It's just not available.

Over the summer, we've got the ability to re-adjust the schedule, but in the middle of the year, you can't switch a class around. It's unavoidable. If there's conflict, it's conflict. Compared to the ability that students and parents do, when they are registering over the summer or for the next school year, the parents' and students' input is constrained. However, we do, and as counselors, kind of walk them through their opportunities and one of the big things for me is I just want to be mindful for them. A lot of it is new. They may have never been to a four by four before. I don't want them to feel . . . Any time I'm encountering something that's brand new, I get a little maybe frightened, a little nervous, and I want to make them feel comfortable when I'm explaining the new things for them.

If I can get them to understand how everything works, what they are going to need to graduate, I usually will drop the four-year plan so I can say, "here's what we're going to get. Here's what we need to get to graduate. Here's what we're going to get this semester. Here's what we'll get next semester or next year." It can kind of take a little bit away. Sometimes it is a little bit like if you are working with a . . . find out whether you want to wear the blue sweater or the red sweater, but I want to do my best to help them feel comfortable with working with the possibility of lack of options.

Speaker 1: I know with our schedule that after you deal with registration, you have to bring them to me. How much input do you feel that you have in working through or designing a schedule for the students and placing the students?

Counselor 1: I feel like I've worked at [inaudible 00:15:36] for ten years, so I kind of know the way Mr. (00:15:39) and Miss, they're and you, because you are doing scheduling as well, the thoroughness and the sort of rubric that you guys are using for scheduling. I know how much work you guys put in over the summer looking over schedules, making sure that everything is right, so when I'm helping to design a schedule for the students and working with them, I'm thinking, "I know that Miss know that Miss (00:16:08) have the best interests of the students at heart, and I know

that they are looking,” . . . what you guys are looking for, your considerations.

There are not too many times when I come over here and I feel like the schedule that I’ve laid out is not a workable one. I would say nine times out of ten when I come over here, it’s . . . and it’s a situation where I don’t know . . . I’m much more likely to go over and say, “I’m not sure if we should do biology or if we should do math II. Let me ask my principal what she think would be better for it,” and the parent’s like, “That sounds reasonable,” versus [me 00:16:58] coming over here with, “I think this is the greatest idea,” and just getting shot down. I don’t really see that happening, far and few between.

Speaker 1: One thing that I notice even today, like about the summer school thing we were talking about earlier, when I’ve been interviewing some of our students who could have been in that initial credit, no one spoke to these students about that as an option. What kind of follow-up is there after the registration with these students, these highly mobile, at-risk, transition students?

Counselor 1: To be candid, I don’t think we have any system set up in place specifically for students who transferred in that is different than what we are doing to help all students that we notice that are at-risk. A student transfers in and I see the grades drop, I’m following all my students’ grades. Absences and things like that. In terms of summer school opportunities, particularly for with the credit recovery, not the credit recovery, but the initial credit . . . Can’t speak for the other counselors, but for me, part of the time table problem with it is that when we get . . . it would be helpful if we knew what summer options would be available earlier in the year, for example at registration so that when we sat down and came up with the plan with the families, we would be able to include possible summer school opportunities in there.

Much of the time, we try to do our best to fix it so that they can graduate on- time without needing a summer school. That’s usually not . . . I could be wrong. I can’t think of too many . . . I hope I don’t have egg on my face, though . . . any of my kids that I was like, “Gee, sorry, you are going to have to do summer school this summer or you’ll be held back.” In terms of systematic follow-up, for example, . . . I mean I do follow-up with my kids because I want them to kind of integrate, but once I see that they’re doing well, all right. It would be helpful if we knew more about what the summer options were in advance. I know that that’s unavoidable too. The county doesn’t realize . . . not realize. It’s the wrong word. Funding might not be there. There may be different

dictates from Raleigh that would determine what we could or couldn't do.

Speaker 1: That kind of leads in my last real question here, and that is, thinking about all of this, what training, what resources, what do you need to better serve these students?

Counselor 1: I came up with an idea. I can't implement it. I'm an idea person. It would involve people with skills and resources beyond me. Is it all right if I share it?

Speaker 1: Absolutely.

Counselor 1: Are you familiar with the common application that students use for college? They create an account. They can put their personal information into the account, essays, things like that. They can invite a counselor or teachers to upload recommendations and documents to that account and then they can authorize colleges to download and see the various packages and things like that. What I think would be helpful for highly mobile students, particularly ones that are moving a lot, like military kids . . . if they had a thing like the common app . . . I don't know, you came up with a cute name for it . . .

Basically when they were out of school and they were going to transition to a new school, they could come up with they personal account and then they could invite a coach or a teacher or a counselor of things like that to upload things to the secure site, academic documents, volunteer hours, NHS membership, any kind of things like that, so that when they went from one school to another, people could already put their things there. Then when they got to the new school, they could see, this is the access code. You've got everything, and it's got the email addresses of the people I worked with said that if you need to do that, they could share with teachers. They could share that with administrators. Then if they went to the next school, they could do the same thing. It could be kind of a rolling portfolio that they could create and allow them to not have to . . . you're coming from Japan. How are you going to get your NHS certificate? It can be very difficult. It could even have a thing where they could upload things like the course selection manual. There are all sorts of things that you can do with them. That's my idea.

Speaker 1: It's not too shabby there. Anything else you feel like I need to know or that you want to share?

Counselor 1: No.

- Speaker 1: Okay. Well, thank you very much.
- Speaker 1: Country bumpkins. Okay, we are rolling. Thank you both for letting me interview you. I've got a few questions. What I'd like you to do is, when you get ready to speak, if you would just say your name. I'm going to first ask you to say your name, how long you've been a counselor here and what you did before that. Then, when you speak, if you would just say, this is Counselor 2, or this is Counselor 3, to start with. Start with Counselor 2, name, how long you've been a counselor, and what you did before this.
- Counselor 2: My name is Counselor 2. I've been a high school guidance counselor for 20 years. This is my fifth year at [REDACTED]. Before I came here I was at [REDACTED] working in admissions and before that Department of Social Services, and before that many other jobs.
- Speaker 1: Counselor 3.
- Counselor 3: Okay. I'm Counselor 3. I have been at [REDACTED] 15 years, eight years a counselor, seven years a teacher.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Just for my transcriber, if you would spell your last names.
- Counselor 2: [Spells last name]
- Speaker 1: And Counselor 3.
- Counselor 3: [spells last name]
- Speaker 1: Okay. My first question, you've talked about it a little bit, have you always been at this school? If you haven't already answered this, where else have you been and have you always been in high school? Counselor 2, you talked about that already.
- Counselor 2: As a guidance counselor, I have always worked in the high school. This is my third school.
- Counselor 3: As a guidance counselor, I've always been at this school and high school. Before that, when I was a teacher, I also taught middle school.
- Speaker 1: Okay, we'll start with Counselor 2 again. What preparatory program did you attend in order to prepare to be a guidance counselor. Where was it, and just tell me a little bit about it.

- Counselor 2: I received my undergraduate degree in Psychology at [REDACTED] I went to [REDACTED] at night, and received my Masters in School Counseling.
- Counselor 3: As far as degrees, I have a degree in Business, an undergraduate degree from [REDACTED], I have a teaching certification, post-baccalaureate from [REDACTED]. Then I have a Masters in Counseling from [REDACTED] and an advanced Masters in Counseling from [REDACTED].
- Speaker 1: Is that the degree that you've just recently been working on?
- Counselor 3: Yes, it is.
- Speaker 1: Okay, good. Consider your training that you went through to be a counselor, or even any particular professional development you've been to. Tell me about the preparation that you received in order to help you evaluate transcripts and make scheduling decisions for students.
- Counselor 2: I don't believe we've received any, except for on occasion, when we go to our regular staff development with the County Office, sometimes those things are discussed. As far as my graduate degree, none of that was ever mentioned.
- Counselor 3: That's why me . . . I'm Counselor 3. Same thing, our undergraduate did not train us for evaluating any kind of transcripts at all. We have, recently, had something at staff development that, basically, was what we were doing. We helped other people, because we are at a very good school. It definitely is not something gone over, except when you're in your school. When you're doing your internship at the school, and then people teach you. In classroom, no, none of that.
- Speaker 1: In those prep programs, in your universities, you do not select, "I'm going to be elementary, or middle, or high school." It's just general counseling. Or do you select your area that you're going to go into?
- Counselor 2: No, you're qualified to be K-12.
- Counselor 3: Yeah, we're both K-12.
- Speaker 1: So . . .
- Counselor 3: Some of those, of course, you won't use a transcript anyway. I don't know [crosstalk 00:03:47].

- Speaker 1: Since scheduling is such a big part.
- Counselor 3: It's not something they consider [crosstalk 00:03:51].
- Counselor 2: It's not something we're trying to do.
- Counselor 3: It's OJT. That part, in Practical or whatever they call it, whatever school you go to. That part is the part that's supposed to train you for that. In the classroom they do not cover an iota, at least, not the ones we were in and we're at the same classroom.
- Counselor 2: I think it's different, in every county and every state, how school counselors are utilized.
- Counselor 3: Right.
- Counselor 2: A lot of schools have registrars and other people that do different types of jobs.
- Counselor 3: That's true.
- Counselor 2: They train us to be school counselors, to counsel children.
- Counselor 3: Right, generally. It's a general.
- Counselor 2: General, exactly. Not how to do transcript and schedules.
- Counselor 3: Not specific things. The only specific things I got, that were hands on, were when I actually had been doing it in the schools.
- Speaker 1: Wow.
- Counselor 2: Our staff development, at the county level, sometimes goes over some of this type of information. Unfortunately, it's not often enough or through enough, but at least they do cover it on occasion.
- Counselor 3: I just feel that we're lucky we're at a school that we're at. If somebody walks in here new, say [REDACTED], he's got people that can put him where he needs to be.
- Speaker 1: Okay, let's talk, for a minute, about the highly mobile students that we have. How many a month do you think we have?

- Counselor 2: I have no idea. Every month is different. We have a large quantity transfer in over the summer and throughout the school year. I haven't any idea of the actual statistics for that.
- Speaker 1: How do you work with those students when they come in?
- Counselor 2: We complete their registration [inaudible 00:05:36] probably give me a hard time, but I spend a lot of time trying to get to know the student, where they've been, what their situation is. We contact the school if we have questions about their transcripts and their credit detail. Ask the parents. We look at their testing. Look at what they've had in the past. Try to gather as much data and as much information as we can to try to help the student to the best of our ability.
- Speaker 1: Counselor 3, what about you? Do you have an idea of how many of these frequently mobile students we have transferring in and how do you deal with those students?
- Counselor 3: Again, I don't know a number because it varies all the time. Yeah, we research it, when they come in. We'll pull up a curriculum from their school if we have to, online, we'll call, we'll do whatever we need to do to try to be as accommodating as possible. We do have the compact for those that are military, they'll work with us, as well. We do everything in our power to try to help out and be fair to the student. That's enough, with all the moving that they do.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Share with me what your registration process is for a student who comes in like that.
- Counselor 3: Could you be a little more specific?
- Speaker 1: If I am one of those highly mobile students, and I come into your office wanting to enroll in February.
- Counselor 3: Okay.
- Speaker 1: Tell me how you see that registration process?
- Counselor 3: Okay. It will also depend on what grade and how many schools they've been in through high school. If they're ninth grade, it's not quite as bad. If they've have been in a 4x4, it's not difficult at all. Now, if they're in a seven period day, we have to look at seat time. Every student is treated differently, depending upon what they have, where they're coming from.

Again, I think we try to be as accommodating as possible. We also come and talk to administration and say, "Hey, what can we do for this kid? Should we stick them in a grad point class? What can we do to get them the most credits?" That's all I can think of that we do.

Speaker 1: Counselor 2, did you want to add anything to that?

Counselor 2: Just, we're here to advocate for the child. Our most important goal, of course, is for them to be safe, healthy, and happy, and to get their high school diploma.

Also, to look at what their goals are, where they're going from high school. Some kids come that are very academically strong, some are very weak. We try to consider all kids of different angles. We have to look at whether they're exceptional. Maybe student services might need to intervene, they might need a referral to the AIG program. There's such a wide variety and different components of things that we have to get involved with. We just try to be as thorough as we possibly can, with the time that we have and making sure that the child is looked after. Every child is different, every situation is different. There's not a blanket statement where we can say the exact . . . [crosstalk oo:ok:21] Because we don't do the same thing with every child. They're all very important.

Counselor 3: If I can add, we also try to set them up so if they come their freshman year, and then they're leaving their junior year, we'll talk to the parent and say . . . I've, on several occasions, given my card saying, "Have the new counselor contact me if there's anything I can do, so they don't end up in the same situation. They can graduate in four years from being at three or four schools."

Speaker 1: Okay. You've talked about some of the strategies you use. You've mentioned Grad Point, and some of the others. What other strategies do you use to help them retain or regain these credits?

Counselor 3: There's NCBPS, which isn't as much. Also, we have a couple of outside schools. If they want to pick up something in the summer, which is New Life. Also, I'm in charge of people that are testing from an outside school, the parent has to pay for it, but it's through BYU, and it does have a lot of half credits, so some kids will come in with a half credit of French, or something like that. They do have those and that is an accredited situation, they can take that, Miss [REDACTED] will accept those credits, as well.

- Speaker 1: Thinking outside of the box, are there any particular unusual things that you have done or could do to help these students, other than those?
- Counselor 2: I have one, this semester, that we allowed to double up on Core. She was allowed to take more Core classes than we normally would allow. I had her sign a statement, she was a military child and she did transfer in. In was the best case for her. We will do anything we can positively think of to try to help the child to the best of our ability. We offer tutoring. All the teachers are wonderful at Jack Britt about tutoring in the mornings. A lot of them will tutor in the afternoon, as well. We also have peer tutor available in the library after school, Monday through Thursday.
- We have various summer programs to help kids get the credits they need to catch up or to get ahead. Then during the school year, some years, we're able to have *GradPoint*, after school, so that kids can possibly get a fifth class. NCBPS, is available, for a select few, if needed. They can do that work at home.
- Counselor 3: Yeah, and the *GradPoint*, during the day. This year, she did allow them to take more than one, if they needed to. That did help a couple get what they needed in time to graduate.
- Speaker 1: How do you work with kids? Because we have a lot of kids that transfer from other schools, even within our district. Pacing is not the same. I know our district is doing some things to help alleviate that, but how do you deal with situations where kids are transferring in pacing wide? I know we had one in pre-cal this year that, especially, stood out to me.
- Counselor 3: Tutoring is about the only . . . The best, I don't know if it's the only, but between the teacher tutoring, and then I have had kids come in and work with a peer tutor. I had one that couldn't come after school, I had a peer tutor come in, in the morning and work with him in the career center and try to get him caught up. Some of them are just not where they're supposed to be, coming from other places. We don't often have anybody ahead of us. I think, basically, that's what we have to do. There's no other way . . .
- They can't be pulled out of the class and put in a lower class if they've already taken that class or started it, because then they don't get any credit. We try to get them in the best situation possible, in order to pass that class.
- Speaker 1: When thinking about making these schedules, how much input do you feel that you actually have in designing the schedules for the kids?

Counselor 3: That's a tough one. When a freshman comes in, they're pretty set. You know what I mean? Granted, some of them, if they're AG, they need an honors class, or they need this or they need that. I don't really worry about them. I think that I would like a little bit more flexibility helping some of the students with classes like . . . You don't talk to every one of them, unfortunately. Some of them think they should be taking stuff and it doesn't always work out that way. It would be nice if we would be able to individually meet with them. Unfortunately, with the amount of students we have, that's very difficult.

Speaker 1: What about you, Counselor 2? How much input do you feel like you have?

Counselor 2: I feel like I have a lot of input, at times. Sometimes I do get frustrated, because my ideas may not be the same as someone else's. A lot of times, it's based on availability of classes. A lot of times, we have overcrowded classes. Whereas, in my heart, I want to put that kid in that class, logistically, it's just not possible. We can't crowd our classes but so much. A lot of times we have teacher shortages going on.

Counselor 3: Unfortunately, we get parents, [inaudible 00:13:15] parents that get upset, as well. For one instance, ROTC, is probably more popular here than almost any school you can go to and it's so hard [crosstalk 00:13:26] people and we have such a military community, their parents want them to be in that class. Sometimes it's just not available to them. That one, I think, is the worst one for me, because I think it's a great class, teaching leadership for some of these kids that they need and stuff like that. I think it would be great if we could get another half time teacher in here, because I'm sure we could fill it. I'm sure we could.

Counselor 2: If there was more money in the budget in County, we might could accommodate these kids better. However, we try to do the absolute best we can with what we've got. We try not to overcrowd the classes.

Speaker 1: For the teachers, yeah.

Counselor 2: We try to distribute the children to the best of our ability. We try to make sure kids are in classes they qualify for, which sometimes parents don't understand. Sometimes they're very weak students, but yet, the parent wants them to be in something, or even the student, wants them to be in something that's not practical, and they might not be successful in. Sometimes they get a little upset, but we do the absolute best we can for the students.

- Speaker 1: Do you feel like the parents have input in . . .
- Counselor 2: The parents do have input, but they, a lot of times, don't understand the requirements. They don't understand the curriculum, and they don't understand the ability of their student.
- Counselor 3: They don't understand the ability of their student.
- Counselor 2: They're very impractical, sometimes, with what they want.
- Counselor 3: We can offer them.
- Counselor 2: They think it's Burger King and they should get it their way. Sometimes, they get very upset with us, but we absolutely try to do what's best for the child, at all times, if at all possible.
- Speaker 1: Speaking of that, I know that we've talked a lot about scheduling. There are other problems that affect these highly mobile kids. How do these fall into affecting the student's schooling?
- Counselor 2: It's hard to put all the kids in one category of highly mobile.
- Counselor 3: Right.
- Counselor 2: They're all different. They all have different circumstances. Some of them are highly mobile, because the parents don't put education first. Some are highly mobile because they're impoverished.
- Counselor 3: Some are military.
- Counselor 2: Some of them are military, but may transfer during the summer. I don't see the kids that transfer during the summer as being as much a problem as those that move any time of year with no thought to finishing out a semester. To me, we still try to help those kids to the best of our ability, but they have a harder time.
- Counselor 3: I agree with that. The fact that, the also difference, like Counselor 2 mentioned earlier, is the fact that the highly mobile kid that comes in is, they're all individual, as well. Some are high motivators, some are low motivators. Some of them have IUP's and you have to work through that. Try to get the IUP from the last place. What we do, in our department, is we do try to take each case separately and do the best we can for that student with what we have to offer.

Speaker 1: My last question. Think about your preparation for the job, in your universities. Think about staff development, think about resources. What training, or resources, or information is needed to better prepare, and equip, and empower counselors for this part of their job? To better serve these students?

Counselor 3: I don't think you're ever going to get that out of your school. When you're in college, it's too general. They're not going to pull out the kind of student that's a mobile student, I don't think. I don't know. What do you think of that one? Do you [inaudible 00:17:04].

Counselor 2: I think a lot of the things we do require hands on, on the job training.

Counselor 3: Training, yeah. We do get that here. I had great counselors when I got here, when I first started and I was new. The counselors here were very experienced. It always seemed that we have someone experienced when we got here, which would help us with that. I think that was the best part of my training, when I got into the department and people helped me. I got and people who had been in the system forever and really knew how to help out. I would say, I feel bad for those who get to schools that do not have that, because they didn't have the training at school either, and then they don't have it where they're working. That's where things fall through the cracks.

Counselor 2: [inaudible 00:17:45] an internship, for me, was very helpful. I also was hired before I completed my degree, but was very lucky, in that I too, had a great mentor and a very strong department, at the time, when I started. It helped a lot. I think that having someone that is willing to work with the new counselor is the most important thing and to explain things. There are a billion websites that you can look at nowadays, with computers, to learn more. Also, is finding out what the principals perspective is on what matters. Finding out what the county and what the state expect and what counts for accountability, because you're not just looking at the individual student, unfortunately, you're looking at the big pictures and you have so many more things to consider.

I think that they need to continue a staff development training us on how to do credit detail and how to do scheduling. I think that needs to be updated every year, because every year it changes. There are also important things that we have to be trained to do, like handle suicide intervention, and handle alcohol awareness, and drug awareness. We deal with a variety of situations, not just scheduling.

Counselor 3: Right.

Counselor 2: It's a tough job, but it's just not something that you can train for with one class.

Speaker 1: Okay. Well, that's all I have, unless you have anything else you feel like I should know. Or you want to share.

Counselor 2: That we're tired and we're trying to get promotions or intentions done for the day.

Counselor 3: We're going to graduate, woo!

APPENDIX P: COUNSELOR EMAIL

Email sent to three counselors to review:

I just wanted to say Thank You for agreeing to review the rough draft of my training modules.

Please jot down any notes you have that would improve this training. Don't worry about hurting my feelings. As I explained, I really want constructive criticism so that I can make it better.

The focus will be to help counselors enroll students, especially students who move a lot / transfer in.

Specifically

Is it helpful? If so, how?

Is it too difficult? Too easy?

Is there anything missing? If so, what?

Does the order/flow make sense? Should the order change? If so, why?

Is there anything that is overdone?

Is there anything wrong?

Do you have better suggestions?

Do you notice any specific identification (names, schools, etc. . . .)?

Anything else you can tell me . . .

This is a rough draft, so I will make all content adjustments before I enhance it with images and such. I do know there are some transcripts that are difficult to read; I will try to improve that quality as well.

If I can get this by the end of the week, so I can work on it next week, that would be wonderful. Once you have finished let me know. I will give you a call and we can talk. You can also send me any written feedback through Ike.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

APPENDIX Q: COUNSELOR POST INTERVIEWS—ANALYSIS OF PRP AND
COUNSELOR TRAINING MODULES

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: Okay, so if you would just tell me your thoughts. I know you gave me your feedback in writing, and we talked briefly the other day. I would just like you to elaborate on some of the pros and cons. Some of the things you think I could improve upon, anything you feel like was missing. Anything that you felt was especially helpful.

Speaker 1: Okay, so did you see my notes about the whole math-op-out? I think you put a lot [inaudible 00:00:28] that Foundation of Math will not count. I don't know if I would say it would not count, because it does.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 1: Right. I mean, I know it's one that principals don't tend to lean to, so if it doesn't help, it's for math [rigor 00:00:42]. Again, somebody who's really struggling in math, you can still graduate them with the other the [charge 00:00:49].

Speaker 2: With a math substitution?

Speaker 1: Correct, correct.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: What we do frequently, I could ease them in, so, it's very commonplace over there. Again, I know principals don't like to give it because it doesn't help you with math rigor. What we were also trying to do is still trying to push that kid through Math 3 if possible. Yeah, so, I don't know if I would put out there that it does not count, because it actually does.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: Could you re-word a different way? I don't mind how you make it sound, but try to shy away from [inaudible 00:01:22]. If you say things like "It won't count." Not so definite.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: That's not true.

Speaker 2: Okay, I can do that. What else?

Speaker 1: Okay, I'm . . . Let me see. I don't know if you want to dive into this, but a lot of kids, the whole four social studies thing. If you have a high-achievement student, they want to take AP US History. I think you may have mentioned that.

Speaker 2: I did.

Speaker 1: Okay. A student coming in with US History credits would have the same. Let's say a student comes in, maybe they're 11th grade here. They already have credits for US History and they're coming from out of state. This will only work for out-of-state students. You can actually count that US History as American History 1.

Speaker 2: Okay. Now, why American History 1 instead of American History 2? Most of the US history is the latter part of what we do in American 2.

Speaker 1: I understand that, and I tried to go back and find the [house 00:02:20] correspondence I got from my counsel for a [inaudible 00:02:25]. Everything that I found from her said it counted for American History 1. However, she did say in her [inaudible 00:02:32] incentive, we really did want the curriculum to lean more toward American History 2, and we have proof of that, and we should've. Lately, we've been counting it as American History 1.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: Just for the [inaudible 00:02:44] purposes. It's just easier to put them in American History 2 for scheduling purposes. I guess it's kind of like if you look at the curriculum, and you've discussed it, and you feel like it does meet American History 1, I guess you could go either way. For us, it's this [inaudible 00:03:02]. We just have been counting it as American History 1.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: Yeah, yeah. I think they would have. I felt like the Power Point was very easy to follow. It was very simple, wherein it was . . . necessarily confuse a first-time counselor, or a new counselor. I thought it was good in that. The other stuff that I mention, I guess it just comes with experience and learning how to maneuver schedules and how to read transcripts. That's something I had to learn. It did take time. Then, coming from a school like mine, where you have very creative, you do get kind of creative, especially

when we have a lot of transient students like . . . Just ask me some questions. I'm trying to remember everything I jotted down for you.

Speaker 2: You had talked about . . . I know a couple of the transcripts were difficult to read and that we've worked on those and fixed those. You had . . . One of the things that I had talked about in there some was the transferring into a four-period day, but I didn't go a whole lot into the auditing classes. What are your thoughts about that? You had mentioned something about that.

Speaker 1: Yes, so the four-period day, coming from a traditional. Cumberland County has developed a policy where what we're doing is, if they're coming, we have a cut-off. I want to say the cut-off is around sometime in October. If they come in after October sometimes, what we're having to do is double block them. Let's say they're in World History for example. They'll take World History two periods a day, and then they'll take Earth Science two periods a day. Then, at the end of the year, what we're doing is we're adjusting their credits for promotion standards. We make notes on it, and we send a note to Dr. Black. She has to be made aware of this. I don't know if your counsel would know this or not, but they should.

Speaker 2: Yes, that was the April . . . That came out in April.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: How do you deal with the fact, though, that those kids may be sitting in the class twice, but they're behind on the content?

Speaker 1: What our [inaudible 00:05:22] creative with our teachers. This is where you have to have a really, really good relationship with the teachers. They are being creative. Sometimes they'll ask the student to stay after school or come a little bit early. This does take work for the teachers, and that's why they kind of roll their eyes when we tell them, "Hey, we got a student coming in for a seven-period day, but they're having to make up that [two 00:05:43] time, so . . . The content like you said. What they're doing is . . . Again, the double blocking does seem to help some, because they're getting to hear the material twice. Anything that they're missing, I've had a couple kids that had to stay after school and help her tutor and just make up whatever's missing during that time. It's been working. So far it hasn't been an issue.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: Oh, I think I remember something. I don't know if you were going to ask me this, but somewhere in the presentation, you guys talk about markers.

Where students have to be in Algebra 1 by 10th grade, and English 2 by 10th grade. That was something we got dinged on at Smith. I know it's not an issue at [Brent 00:06:29], but for some of your more transient schools and low-income schools, you got kids more all around. We really had to keep a track on making sure they're placed in biology by 11th grade. I know that sounds crazy, that we do have kids who've never taken biology, and they'll come to us and never had it. Or they come from out of state, and what have you never been placed in the correct marker for our school. That's something I really have to work on with our counselors. We have two new counselors at our school, and we really had to drill that into them. You're looking for markers. If they're a 10th grader, they've got to be in Algebra 1, got to be in English 2. If they're left grade 10 had biology yet, they've got to have it by the end of the year. I don't know if that's something you want to mention.

Speaker 2: It is, and I had not . . . I think I had made a slight reference to it in one slide, but had not gone into it in depth, but I think I really need to. I appreciate you catching that. Now, I know you said that you were going to be doing some training in Asheville. I will send you, once I get it finalized and put in Blendspace, I will send you my link to it, and you may use it all you want to.

Speaker 1: Yes, please. That would help me greatly. He has gotten the counselors. Has four more new counselors up there, and it's just they're brand new. They don't know anything. I don't mean to sound rude when I say that, but they just don't know anything. That would be very helpful, yes ma'am, please.

Speaker 2: Absolutely, and if you think of anything else that would help make it better, please let me know. Ultimately, my goal is that it is helpful.

Speaker 1: Right. I'm serious, Ms. [inaudible 00:08:06], I really like it. I just wanted to point out those critical areas that we run into in a school such as ours. I keep saying "A school such as ours," but you know what I'm saying, because it's very . . . The kids come to you in all kinds of shapes, so you really have to scrutinize your transcripts and just really make sure they're properly [suited 00:08:26]. It's something that I probably didn't experience as much at Jack [Bridge 00:08:29], but at Vinson I've learned a lot and [Smith 00:08:33] in that area, because when they come to you, they just [inaudible 00:08:37]. I don't mean to be rude when I say that, but I just have a lot of stuff going on with it. I've learned a lot about scheduling, markers, and all that good stuff.

Speaker 2: Oh, there was one other thing you talked about. You made a comment about that personalized registration process, and you said something about

putting that as an attachment separately so people could have that and everybody could use that to follow. I'm certainly going to take your advice on that. You did get the updated check off sheet?

Speaker 1: Yes, I did. Thank you. I'm going to keep that and probably use it for us next year sometime. Yes ma'am.

Speaker 2: Okay, well if you have any other suggestions, Please E-mail me, call me, send a note with Ike.

Speaker 1: Okay. I hope they would. Thank you

Response 2:

High School Training – Notes

PPT:

2. Test Your Knowledge Slide – Foundations of Math 1 does count as a math, it does not count for UNC system if it is the 4th math class, students must have a math higher than Math III to qualify for UNC system/4-year university

7. I would put in the social studies aspect that the 4 social studies credits are based on a 2012–13 9th grade entry date. Those who entered before only have to have the 3; however, if they did not complete the U.S. History they will have to take American 1 & 2

9. Each LEA determines the number of graduation requirements. The state of NC requires 22.

Did your research show that most schools are using the 28 credit requirement across the state?

We use the minus 4 rule. We look at the potential the student can earn over the first four years of high school and then subtract 4, but hold them to the state requirement of 22.

Check Sheet:

Add ROTC under elective requirements block, Missing Social Studies category. I am going to attach the audit sheet I have provided to the counselors in the county to use for comparison purposes along with the history work-up sheet.

JBHS Registration Review

Miss spelling – Administrative Review – (review is misspelled), this training might be necessary for administrators as well if they are reviewing transcripts and placing students in classes. I have seen where administration makes changes that end up impacting the student's graduation progress negatively due to not understanding credits, pre-requisites, courses and graduation requirements. Additionally, most schools have counselors select classes without administration input unless it is a special circumstance. Not sure what you have found in your research. I know you labeled it as JBHS procedures, but might not be as relatable to those that you are training.

Counselors are now known as professional school counselors. The word "guidance" is no longer applied. I would remove anything in documents referring to counselors as guidance counselors and replace with school counselor to be consistent with times and new role of the profession.

Module 1:

Registration: This is a "nit-picky" comment but not all schools are able to make appointments anymore, not really sure how many even are. Might want to make a statement about based on school policy instead of saying "most schools set a registration appointment" unless you know for a fact. I know Dr. Black does not believe in having appointments anymore because when a

student comes to enroll schools are now expected to enroll on-site no matter what they have in their hands.

I would put the checklist (slide 8) before you talk about what they used (slide 7). That way it gives them a chance to do it.

Module 2:

Module 2 is great – I like that you reference lea/school protocols as well as having a conversation with students and parents. Their input is just as important as meeting the requirements.

Module 3:

I would be careful with the statement about accepting .5 credits. We do accept them, but the student has to have a full credit (1.0) in order to meet the graduation requirement. I also like how you have them try and then put in audio.

Module 4:

Once again I like the use of the audio piece. I would use the questions first to see what the group thinks and then listen to your audio for the answer.

Module 5:

On top of using the course catalog from the other school I would also put something in there about contacting the school directly. Not to be hesitant about getting direct answers.

Jose doesn't have to have a 4th higher level math to meet requirements. The intro class counts for graduation, doesn't count for college/university. This will depend on what Jose wants to do after high school. On the slide with Jose 11th grade, you have Biology down, I think you meant to put down either Earth Science or Physical Science.

Module 6:

I am confused by slide 5 . . .

Module 7:

Kitana—the 5.0 actually equal .5 credits, as you see in the history work-up you pasted in the slide . . . there are 2 grades that end up equaling the 1.0 credit. I would suggest referencing this.

The language on slide 4 is also unclear.

Maria—NCVPS now offers a separate Health and a separate PE class.

Module 10:

I would also discuss your ESL students who have to flee from their county and come without documentation, or just those who arrive without documentation. Discuss the involvement of working with the district ESL department

Module 12:

Have a hard time understanding all of module 12. Slides are wordy and all over the place. I understand that main concepts, but feel like they can get/be cleaned up. I don't mind helping you with this if you would like.

Overall: I think you hit on really important parts when it comes to the registration process, selecting classes, and reviewing a transcript. It might be helpful to review how to transcribe a transcript as well as in order to get it into the computer. You have them using a check sheet for auditing, there is also a need to show them how to use the sheet to transcribe (I have an example if you need one)

I also think it would be helpful to discuss when students try to enroll without guardians or with an adult who isn't on their birth certificate. Can probably add this to module 10 when you discuss McKinney Vento.

Response 3:

Speaker 1: First, thank you so much for looking at this draft of the counselors training program. I know that you've given me in writing some of the suggestions that you had for it. I'd just like you to talk to me in general about the pros and cons of this, things that you found helpful, things that were not helpful.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Got it.

I would say one of the big pros is that [inaudible 00:00:27] a lot of attention in there and it really took counselors through some of the corner cases that we can encounter when we are evaluating transcripts and when we're enrolling students in the middle of the year. It's a very complicated and complex process, and I think that the level of detail that was involved in the presentations really gave counselors a good overview of the range of issues that can pop up.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: In terms of cons, there were two big ones that stand out. One was that the level of detail can be a little overwhelming and that in my advice for revisions would be to perhaps move some of the detail into supplementary things to enable counselors the ability to get an overview of the main concepts and then go back and refresh them.

I could see a counselor, especially one that was new or working independently and didn't have an experience staff to lean on getting overwhelmed about half

way through because some of the things just may be so different, whereas if the broad concepts could be explained first, then pull out supplementary, it could better enable them to do that. For a novice, it could be overwhelming. I think for a novice, it could be overwhelming, the level of detail. For someone that was intermediate, I think that would probably be more of an appropriate target because they would have some experience. They would be able to check it out. I think that just in terms of making sure that it hit all of the levels of people the training could be intended for, but it could be overwhelming for a novice.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: The other con that I would see in there is that when working on technical things like credits, graduation requirements, etc., it can become easy for a counselor to become immersed in the details of the technical side of it and neglect the human side of it. From the perspective of helping a counselor sit down and figure out the transcript on their own, to prepare to go through it with parents in terms of the preparation, it's excellent. In terms of the nuts and bolts, actually how to walk a parent through the conclusions that the counselor drew, it may be that because the counselor felt so prepared on the technical aspects of it, that they would neglect the human aspects of it, which in terms of conveying what's going on to the parent, could be the most important.

In general, a parent does want to make sure that you know your stuff, but it's like the saying in education, they have to know you care before they care what you know. I think that there were things in there throughout the presentation that you may want to put that in a module of its own, either at the front or the conclusion or both to stress that in terms of the face-to-face interaction.

Speaker 1: Okay. You have 10 years of experience. When you looked at the pre-assessment, you were at the top for almost everything except maybe working on things like dropout reports and that type of thing. Really, going through this presentation wasn't moving you up on that. It didn't help you learn anything new.

Speaker 2: In terms of technical things, probably not. I knew I was up to speed on most of the concepts and things like that in there. Of course, anytime you review something, you get new ideas and things like that.

Speaker 1: Okay. I just wanted to be sure there was nothing that would change from your pre-assessment to after watching that.
It's okay to say-

Speaker 2: No. I don't think so.

Speaker 1: Perfect. Anything else I should know?

Speaker 2: No. I mean, I think as a stand-alone, just in terms of helping counselors deal with the technical aspects of it, it was really, really solid. Some organizational tweaks here and there, like I said, to making sure the beginners aren't overwhelmed and

make sure that people can cover all of the main concepts and go through it without getting bogged down in the details.

Then, the only, like I said, piece of the puzzle to add would be some of the things just in terms of the how do you actually communicate this information with a parent.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: Let me scratch that. The other component that I think could make it a little bit stronger is in terms of a priority or sort of a rubric for when deciding which courses to pick and which courses to punt, looking at things like keeping them on track, keeping them tracking for graduation, keeping them tracking with their peers, keeping them from being overloaded so they get that, and how do you balance that. It's not always intuitive. That may be a thing where an additional module could be made. For that one, it wouldn't even necessarily have to be one that included different course titles. It could just be you're coming from a seven period day with the exact same course titles, exact same course content, various performance in the grades. Which ones do you pick, which ones do you punt, and why?

Speaker 1: That's a good point.

Speaker 2: Matter of fact, that might be one that could be an earlier one because there are fewer moving parts. The only different factor would be that they're coming from a seven period day, but no differences in terms of the course titles or things like that. We'd have to do a few things and introduce that.

Speaker 1: Awesome. Okay. Thank you. One last question.

Speaker 2: Yes ma'am.

Speaker 1: If you were in charge of the world and this was your produce, what venue would you say would be the best way to get this out to counselors?

Speaker 2: I think it could be the kind of thing that would be useful for presentation at the North Carolina School Counselor Association Annual Conference. I haven't been for a few years, but I've presented there before, and there's usually a healthy appetite for this sort of stuff, practical things that enable counselors to deal with sticky issues that aren't covered in graduate school. I would say something like that where you are having counselors from all across the state come to get together, that that would be a useful.

When you [inaudible 00:08:57] regional presentations where people are coming in for CEUs, it may be the sort of thing that would be appropriate at a professional development thing, in a county professional development. I think they're always looking for content, especially things that could help counselors.

Depending on how it was written up or what it was done, it may be possible for it to be an online professional development that a counselor could do for something or the other. I don't know the ins and the outs of what you would need to do to qualify for a professional development sort of thing, particularly if there were some way to include a technology component to it, because that can be a difficult one for people to acquire in a way that's meaningful. I think those would be the sort of places because there are a lot of times where counselors are looking for things to improve themselves professionally, and the options sometimes that we get are not fantastic. Having something like this that is high quality, on topic, useful, could hit the sweet spot.

Speaker 1: Awesome. Thank you so much.

Speaker 2: Your welcome.

Response 4:

Speaker 1: First, cannot tell you how much I appreciate you doing that for me.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: But I just want to get some feedback from you about the program that you looked at. I know it was in draft stage and everything, and you've given me some of your written feedback, but I would like to hear your feedback. The positives, the things that maybe need to be improved upon. Just your thoughts about it general. Its usefulness.

Speaker 2: About me being a new counselor, I don't think I can say what could be added, but far as the whole 12 modules, it really allowed me to look at transcripts more efficiently and effectively, as far as the . . . How it would better help a student towards promotion or graduation, and far as classes what they would need. It really helped me out in the area of credits, as far as half credits and whole credits. It really helped with a student coming in from a 7-day period, taking 7 classes, which they go to school all year around. That really helped me the most and let me know what it is that once they come into a 4 by 4 schedule, what courses that they would need to continue to stay on track for graduation or promotion. It really helped me with just being able to now I can talk with parents more confident, and with explaining that situation.

As a matter of fact, I just had two parents today that came by, and their students are coming from a traditional seven day. One parent said, "Well, I want him to come in January. How would he begin his semester here?" He was trying to talk about credits and stuff where he's from. I just basically told him that until we get those credits, that there's really anything that we can do, but if he's a 9th grader coming where he's from, we can't give credit. That was like a bad . . . That was really one of my weak points. I know that we don't give the credits, but I was

trying . . . I thought it was my job to try to find out if he got credits where they come from. But that's not our job. We just request those records. It really helped me, as far as explaining it to the parents, what would be in the best interest of their kid once we look at those transcripts.

The [McKinley Veto 02:38] Act thing, I was really lost with that one because mostly our social worker handled that, but the slides that what you had on that really put it in plain black and white. Far as the military kids, and being at several different schools, and how they have the classes they may not take may not in line with ours. We have to look at course description. I really didn't know about course description. I was just basically looking at the name of the courses. But when you went into depth to make sure that the course curriculum, that the course description meet the course description of what they taking, and it could be a possibility that they could have credits.

I think that if I would've had those 12 modules back in 2014 when I started, I would've been a little bit more aware of what I needed to do far as registrations and helping military families and McKinley Veto families. My job as a counselor . . . I felt like I could've been . . . that I would've done more and been more aware, and more experienced in what I need to do to help those kids. It wasn't a lot of information. It was nothing that I was bored or felt sleepy as I was reading it. It was really informative information. It really helped me a lot even now in how I talk and the parents and talk with kids or students.

Speaker 1: Is there anything that you still feel like you don't know that may be a program like this could help you with?

Speaker 2: I'm still kind of . . . Let me see. One of my main issues is the students coming in from a traditional 7 day to our 4 by 4. I think on the slide you said that if they came in before November, like if it's the fall semester, if they come in before, October November that they could probably get credit if they coming from another 4 by 4 block, or even if they coming from a traditional 7 day. They get in at least their core classes, if they have it, so they can continue. But it's still kind of . . . I'm still unsure about . . . It's really not that I'm unsure about it, it's just that I haven't had the experience of talking to a parent and a student about the situation. I guess when that time comes if a kid comes in, whatever time frame that they come in, it's more like a hands on thing. I really get it and what you said in the modules, but until I do it, you know, it's unsure of how I'm going to help the kid, because you can have 20 kids with 20 different scenarios coming in the same time, with the classes they take. It's just something that I'm just going to have to do, but you really explained it to where for 7-day versus our 4 by 4. It was really explained well.

Speaker 1: Anything else you think I should know about the program? The process?

Speaker 2: I think that you discussed . . . No. Nothing that I can think of. I'm pretty sure changes are going to come down the pipeline, but no changes are come yet. You hit everything that what I needed to know as a new counselor. Far as your

seasoned counselors, they can keep it because you know, because of the different changes, they can hold onto that as a reference to say, "Okay, well this hasn't changed. This is still the same." Because so many changes are coming. That can be a good reference even for a counselor that's been around for awhile.

Speaker 1: Let me ask you one more question then. Let's say this thing's all pleaded and ready to go out. What venue do you see it as a way to get this in the hands of counselors?

Speaker 2: I think that one way to get it to counselors is just through a web link. I guess you putting it in the way of letting them know what it is and the purpose of it in a web link, I think that would be . . . Or, you could just present it to the schools. Or present it to administration, and then allow administration to say, "Okay, look. This is what we had." Whoever the check counselor is can then distribute it. I mean, but there's no right or wrong way. I think the way of technology, the best way is through the internet, and links and stuff like that. However you do it, I know I want it.

Speaker 1: I appreciate it. Let's see if I can ...

Response 5:

Intro - Slide 3

- 3. Same answer for Found Math I course - change to science

Mod 2 -

- It would be nice to have a worksheet/checklist for each student example. I know
- Clean up "Jessica" transcript

Mod 3 -

- Benjamin 11th grade transcript - can we get the screen to not look chopped up?
- Final slide - this is when I wish I had a worksheet to listen to you talk through transcript

Mod 4

- Littleton H/S @ Killian Mermow listed on slide 4
- Maybe I missed it - may help to explain how much seat time is required to earn credit and what exactly auditing a class looks like - I have learned that schools/counselors audit differently 😊
- Marissa Tubman @ Clinton High - slide 6
- difficulty reading transcript

Mod 5

- Very difficult to read Jose's records
- It's probably more work - but it would be nice to have an audio explanation on each student slide - that way they can have a visual and audio to match

Mod 6

~~cannot~~ Can't read Rebecca's ~~base strategy~~ transcript

Mod 7

- Hard to read Kitana's transcript
- could supplement w/ audio
- Maria - no explanation given for how counselor determines credits for each course - next slide jumps right into #/PE question -

Mod 10

Kareem - lists specific Elem school (?)

Mod 11

- Has to read PRP slide
- would be a nice attachment -
- THOUGHT: should be a streamlined process for CES - so many diff ways each school registers new student - and so many diff. forms

Mod 12 - would be nice setup like an actual test/quiz! choose right answer - move on choose wrong answer - audio explanation of correct answer!

Response 6:

Ok making notes as I go through slides:

Foundation of Math 1, although it doesn't count towards admission to a UNC school, it will count to graduation. I understand principals don't like to use it because it counts against "math rigor"... However it can be used under " math substitution "...albeit not favorable for rigor, it will allow a struggling student to graduate on time. Let's not say " it won't count "

Slide 3, you copy and pasted the response from question #2 into question #3

Slide #5 statement 7 can we reword "a student who takes AP US History may substitute that course" its confusing. I like this better: A student mag decide to take AP US History instead of AHS 1&2 however that student must take an additional social studies elective i.e psychology, sociology etc

Have you considered including a slide briefly explaining how to place students who come from a 7 period day? Or are you not tackling that beast?? I only ask because in the last week alone, we enrolled 5 families who were military, who came from 7period day. It's challenging to account and address the "seat time". Luckily, CCS has a policy that addresses that BUT not all LEAs do. *just food for thought * :-)

I'll send the survey back by Ike tomorrow morning. Ask him for it. I'm sure he'll forget!

APPENDIX R: MHS CHARTER

Murphy High School Credit Recovery

A study of reasons students fail to graduate on time and the strategies implemented to support on time graduation

General Description (what are we trying to accomplish)?

This study seeks to improve the current systems and programs in place to help students who are in jeopardy of losing credits and not graduating with their four-year cohort. These students fall behind, often due to circumstances beyond their control. This includes socio-economically disadvantage students.

I will identify students in these subgroups who are at risk for losing credits, thus jeopardizing on time graduation I will develop a menu of credit recovery options to help students in jeopardy of not graduating retain and/or regain credits in order to increase graduation rate.

I will implement and test the impact of at least one option. Thus providing qualitative and quantitative evidence, I will be able to make recommendations as to which programs may fit the needs of specific groups of students.

Setting & Population

Improvement efforts will be implemented and tested on at least one credit recovery option in a rural North Carolina high school. This is a small, rural school located in Murphy. Within these settings we will focus on students with mobility issues, socio-economic problems and who receive special education services who, due to these circumstances, are at risk for losing high school graduation credits.

Expected Outcomes and Measures (How will we know that a change is an improvement)

Provide a menu of credit recovery options for students who are in jeopardy of losing credit and/or failing to graduate within the prescribed four years, including:

Credit Recovery Options:

Study Island (online during school semester)

Summer School (online during summer break)

Alternative School:

21/22 Credit Plan (graduate at Alternative School)

Summer School

Measuring each option will entail showing the student's current performance after credit recovery as well as the graduation rate.

As a result of these interventions I will have increased the support for students at risk of losing credits, thus

Increasing the number of credits obtained by students towards graduation

Reducing the number of students who are behind on graduation credits

Increasing the graduation rate for socio-economically disadvantaged students

Timeframe (when do we expect to have this implemented)

Within January through June 2015 I will identify students who are at risk for not graduating on time

By June 2015 we will develop a menu of credit recovery options

We will complete the improvement cycle by the fall semester of the 2015-2016 school year

Performance Measures and Goals

Current Graduation Rates			
	Approx. Population	Current	Predicted
Murphy High	450	95.5 %	+3%

The following table explains the number of Murphy High School students that either graduate with MYS under the 21/22 credit plan and the number of course credits that students recover during summer school

School	Measure	Current Performance	Goal (prediction)
Murphy High School	Number of students graduating with NC minimum requirements of 21/22 credits	<3	>3
Murphy High School	Number of credits recovered during summer school moving students closer to graduation	1	>2

Guidance (strategies for the effort, what to include, what to ignore, limitations, etc.)

These are the boundaries of the system and/or project to be considered:

Current use of specified programs online allows students to recover one course during summer school.

Some credit recovery options are cost prohibitive.

Some programs, such as *Study Island*, only allow course review/credit, not allowing first time credit such as the program *GradPoint* does

Traditionally students must follow courses based on prerequisites, therefore students may not be able to progress until completion of these courses

Many of these options, such as *GradPoint* or *Study Island*, are viewed by classroom teachers as having insufficient rigor to warrant award of credit

Many students identified in these subgroups may have high absenteeism or lack of follow through for completion

Some initial activities and potential cycles:

Survey teachers and administrators across the state regarding current credit recovery programs used in their respective school, include breadth of material, rigor, etc.

Interview students who are behind on graduation credits

Review student progress on credit recovery options provided by checking students' performance in the next sequential course

PDSA

<p><u>Plan:</u> I plan to identify students who fall into the subgroups identified in the study, review their circumstances, and identify possible options to help them retain/regain credits in order to identify the best possible options for the widest range of student needs.</p>	<p><u>Do:</u> I will implement more curriculum accountability through credit recovery programs with identified students.</p>
<p><u>Study:</u> I will review data from credit recovery options and make necessary changes to the credit recovery options for students who are unsuccessful.</p>	<p><u>Act:</u> Implementation of specific credit recovery options that show the most success with each subgroup.</p>

APPENDIX S: ADMINISTRATORS SURVEY

2/7/2016

Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

What is your current role within the county?

	Counselor	Regular Education Teacher	School Administrator	Central Office Administrator	Special Education Teacher
Click to write Statement 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate your knowledge of curriculum in the following on-line instructional/review programs (1 being no knowledge; 10 being extensive knowledge).

	No Knowledge				Average Knowledge				Extensive Knowledge			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
GradPoint	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Study Island	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Which GradPoint courses have you had experience with? (List all that apply)

Which Study Island courses have you had experience with? (List all that apply)

In which of the following ways have you interacted with GradPoint?

- I have taught the course (I led the instruction and was responsible for grading).
- I have facilitated the course (I oversaw a classroom of students taking the course but was not responsible for grades or direct instruction).
- I have used modules as extensions of my own classroom teaching/curriculum for credit/grade recovery or remediation.
- Students were enrolled in my class and GradPoint at the same time (e.g. Students took English III on GradPoint for recovery, while taking English IV with you).
- I have no experiences with the courses on GradPoint.

In which of the following was have you interacted with Study Island?

- I have facilitated the course (I oversaw a classroom of students taking the course but was not responsible for grades or direct instruction. This would be a blended learning experience).
- I have integrated the courses into my classroom for a review of the curriculum (e.g. Students had a login and were required to score a certain percentage on given objectives).

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- I have used the course for credit recovery (Students reviewed all objectives in the course in order to receive credit for a course previously failed by the student).
- I have no experiences with the courses on Study Island.

Rate the following in regards to GradPoint courses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The course is self-paced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is rigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is user-friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are well-explained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course provides individualized assistance to students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too difficult.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is aligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course requires little to no assistance from a face-to-face teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course can be accessed at any time or place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The program motivates students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The text used is on grade level for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The text is easily understood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The tests are an accurate reflection of concept mastery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The activities are "busy work".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is financially beneficial.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too lengthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course preparest student for future courses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses align with the EOC (Biology, English II and Math I).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rate the following in regards to Study Island courses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The course is self-paced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is rigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is user-friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are well-explained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course provides individualized assistance to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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students.					
The modules are too difficult.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is aligned with the classroom curriculum/Common Core standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course requires little to no assistance from a face-to-face teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course can be accessed at any time or place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The program motivates students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The text used is on grade level for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The text is easily understood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The tests are an accurate reflection of concept mastery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The activities are "busy work".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is financially beneficial.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The modules are too lengthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course prepares student for future courses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses align with the EOC (Biology, English II and Math I).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rate the following on a scale of 1-10 (1 being you do not agree at all, 10 being you strongly agree).

	Strongly Disagree				Neutral				Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	4	8	9	10
GradPoint is a good course/program for students to use in credit recovery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study Island is a good course/program for students to use in credit recovery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GradPoint is a good course/program for students to use for first time credit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study Island is a good course/program for students to use for first time credit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide any relevant and useful information you would like pertaining to the use of GradPoint or Study Island for on-line credit recovery and instruction.

APPENDIX T: TEACHER FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

On Mon, Oct 19, 2015 at 5:56 PM, ANDERSON,

LISA <lisa.anderson@cherokee.k12.nc.us> wrote:

Good Evening,

Good Evening,

As I am sure you are aware, I am completing my dissertation on students who completed credit recovery with MHS last year. I am trying to determine if Study Island is indeed the best credit recovery option for Socio-Economic disadvantaged students, or would another program that provides more instruction/review be more beneficial to students.

While you may not teach the next sequential course to determine if indeed your student was prepared for the next level course, you may teach a course that is similar in demand such as required readings.

Please let me know how prepared you feel Study Island made your student ready for the current course you are teaching.

Student: _____

Current Course: Chemistry and Honors Math III

Recovered: American History II

Please know that a copy of my approved IRB is on file in the superintendent's office.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Lisa M. Anderson

Principal

Andrews High School

50 High School Drive

Andrews, NC 28901

Office: [828-321-5415 ext. 2101](tel:828-321-5415)

Cell: [828-557-4582](tel:828-557-4582)

Fax: [828-321-3986](tel:828-321-3986)

“Dream More, Learn More, Care More, and Be More!” . . . Dolly Parton

On Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 2:53 PM,

hello.

___ is doing fine. I don't know that I can say that study island has helped him, but he seems to understand the concepts we have been covering in biology.

He's really smart, just lazy, I think.

___ . . . I can't really say. He seems to struggle with math concepts in chemistry and if he did study island for American history then I can really see much of a correlation. His reading skills and reading comprehension seem to be at grade level.

___ is doing fair. I don't think this child can read very well or at all. I have watched her several times when taking a test or a quiz and I just don't think she can read. We were doing a crossword puzzle one day and she had her vocab

words and definitions, and she was counting the letters in puzzle boxes and trying to match it up with the word in the vocab with the same number of letters. Not a good sign. She hasn't passed a test all semester. It seems that if she did study island for English I she should be able to read some. Maybe it is the comprehension...?

Date: Fri, Oct 23, 2015 at 10:45 AM

To: "ANDERSON, LISA" lisa.anderson@cherokee.k12.nc.us

Sorry, I should have replied to you when I first read this because I should have known I would forget. ___ had a 50 the first nine weeks in my class and he has missed 16 days. That grade was really lower I just didn't count several of his zeros so that he may have a chance to pass in the end. He is a bright kid but I just can't get him to do very much. He often scores higher on tests than several of the other students in the class.

Date: Thu, Oct 22, 2015 at 2:32 PM

To: "ANDERSON, LISA" <lisa.anderson@cherokee.k12.nc.us>

___ problem in my class is that he does not come very often. It's very hard to determine what impact Study Island might have made. It certainly didn't solve the problem of attendance.

APPENDIX U: MYS PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

- Speaker 1: Why did you decide to use *Edgenuity* at Mountain Youth School?
- Speaker 2: We looked at some different solutions, we looked at Novanet, we looked at Study Island and we looked at Apex. I had some previous experience with *Edgenuity* at another alternative school that I worked with and we just liked it better, and the reason we liked it better was because it had an actual teaching component where a teacher was on the screen talking to the students and the students could rewind and fast forward, do what they needed to do inside that video to get the instructions as many times as they needed until they actually got it. It also gave us a lot of flexibility on how to structure courses, so those are two of the biggest factors on why we went with *Edgenuity* instead of other providers that we looked at.
- Speaker 1: Okay, you mentioned you had looked at Study Island. Had you ever used Study Island, and what ways?
- Speaker 2: We had used Study Island, but primarily it was just used as a tool to get kids ready for the integrated tests, the NC final exams, we had looked at a little bit for benchmarking at another place where I'd been an administrator, but felt like it was kind of limited for what we were wanting to do ours at Mountain Youth.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Have you ever used Grad Points?
- Speaker 2: We have not used Grad Points.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Comparing *Edgenuity* to *Study Island*, which program would you think is more rigorous for students?
- Speaker 2: I would definitely say that *Edgenuity* is. *Edgenuity* falls in line with the common core and North Carolina standards, so the instruction, the kids really can move as fast or slow as they wanted to. We found that in all courses it was extremely rigorous, especially in English and Math, which are kind of struggles for a lot of our students, but it was definitely extremely rigorous.
- There is an ability for administrators to go in and make it more rigorous, so to speak, or even to maybe lighten the load for students in the classes we set up as far as the selection, the number of units and things that they would have to do.

Speaker 1: If for example, if a student had failed Math I and they did credit recovery through *Edgenuity*, would you feel comfortable that that student could be successful in, let's say, a sequential course such as Math II?

Speaker 2: Absolutely. Absolutely. Especially I think it kind of falls on the administrators and the people who are providing oversight, but we use 40-hour measuring stick, for the 40 hours, the kids went through the class once in forty hours, through *Edgenuity* and their credit recovery. That's what was good about *Edgenuity* was if you get to through the Math I class, you have the option to give the full Math I class, which would be way more than 40 hours.

Credit recovery, you could do credit recovery A, credit recovery B, so you can really hone in on the areas, like maybe they had a good first nine weeks but bad second nine weeks. Maybe credit recovery B is what they need to get them to where they need to be as far as going on to the next course. I feel very confident with *Edgenuity's* ability to provide that.

Speaker 1: Is *Edgenuity* user friendly?

Speaker 2: I think so, very much so. What's neat about *Edgenuity* is when we sign up a kid on *Edgenuity* in the virtual setup, there's some boxes you can check and there's actually a five-minute introduction to the student on how to use *Edgenuity*. Every kid that starts with us watches that five-minute tutorial on how to get through and navigate and operate on *Edgenuity*. As well as easy to work with teachers and administrators. We go in, modify, and look at students' work.

We adjust the assignments as needed and have nothing but good things to say about it. Plus, if you ever have problems, we've never had problems with technology, but any time we've ever had any issues, they've been very, very accommodating or very quick to fix anything. We've been in our nice little program with *Edgenuity* now for three weeks and luckily we have not had any issues at all, and things have went very smoothly.

Speaker 1: Okay. Great. Based on your use of Study Island, the other programs that you mentioned, and *Edgenuity*, you would recommend *Edgenuity* for credit recovery over the other programs?

Speaker 2: Absolutely, without a doubt. That teaching component, I can't tell you, it means so much having a teacher on the screen. They switch up teachers so they're not hearing the same voice for the whole course, or seeing the same face. It keeps them interested and engaged in what they're trying to learn.

Speaker 1: Okay, thank you very much.

Speaker 2: You're welcome.

APPENDIX V: HIRO INTERVIEW

“Hiro” Interview

- Bradford: Today is May 27th. The time is approximately 10:30 and Mr. Bradford is interviewing “Hiro.”
- Bradford: “Hiro” it is my understanding that you participated in a credit recovery program. What program did you use?
- “Hiro”: Nova Net Grad Point.
- Bradford: Okay, Grad Point. What was the course that you were taking?
- “Hiro”: Physical Science [inaudible 00:00:26]
- Bradford: What did you find most beneficial about the structure of the after school credit recovery program?
- “Hiro”: It was easy to concentrate.
- Bradford: Explain that for me.
- “Hiro”: Being in a classroom with Teacher 1 one on one, he could break things down versus if I did that in a CA classroom, he has other kids assigned in a CA classroom so he has to give his attention equally to everybody else versus after school, if I stay after school a day [inaudible 00:00:54] he says sit down one on one and read out loud the questions and explain and break down the ...
- Bradford: First off let me ask you, did you take physical science in the classroom and fail it?
- “Hiro”: I did.
- Bradford: Okay so how would you compare the [crosstalk 00:01:10]
- “Hiro”: Not even a point, all I had to sneeze and I passed.
- Bradford: How would you compare the rigor of this program ...
- “Hiro”: The rigor?

- Bradford: The rigor means the content. So was the work in Grad Point [crosstalk 00:01:26] how would you compare that to the classroom? Was it easier? About the same or tougher for you?
- “Hiro”:
- The classroom has its perks because you have a teacher who knows what the subject is so it’s like when you ask the questions the teacher knows right away what it is. Versus Grad Point, Teacher 1 has to read problems too, he’s not advanced in those things but he can help me out. That’s the disadvantage of it, there’s no teacher there that really knows it. In the classroom you have classmates that you can look over and ask for help too. Then the Grad Point physical science is really good is you work at your own pace, but you have a deadline, you work at your own pace, there’s not a lot of pressure and you can take your time to read the passages. If you don’t understand the passages, you can go back and read it versus in the classroom the teacher has an agenda to keep it moving and you just have to follow along. If you’re behind, you’re behind. I do like Grad Point though.
- Bradford: Okay. So what were some, outside of the things you already mentioned, were there any other positives for the program?
- “Hiro”:
- Positives? Oh yeah.
- Bradford: All right, tell me what they were.
- “Hiro”:
- Work at your own pace. Stay after school, work on that and read and they have like a little play recorder button and they read out the passages to you. They break things down. You can replay. Retake the quiz. They don’t let you move on until you make a 70 so you keep taking a quiz over and over until you reach a passing grade. If it takes you ten tries to get a 70, nine times out of ten you’re going to remember something. You know what I’m saying?
- Bradford: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You mentioned as a delta or as a negative not having a content teacher in there. What other negatives would you say were with this program?
- “Hiro”:
- I like to talk to people so there’s no other classmates to talk to. Except yourself and the computer, but honestly I need that though personally.
- Bradford: So it gave you more focus?
- “Hiro”:
- It really did.

- Bradford: Okay. Question number five is really looking at the specific teacher that worked with you and that's Teacher 1. How would you rate him on a scale of one to five, one being it wasn't helpful and five being it was very helpful? The effectiveness of having him monitor your progress and there to provide you assistance?
- "Hiro": Five, and I'm not just saying that because he's my teacher.
- Bradford: Specifically, what makes Teacher 1 a five do you think, in regards to this program?
- "Hiro": In regards to this program?
- Bradford: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- "Hiro": In regards to this program, he's always on top of it. He makes sure you're doing your modules. If you need help he's going to do his best to help you. If that requires both of us sitting down and reading it together and figuring out what, we'll do it. Stay after school, give you that one on one attention.
- Bradford: Do you feel like I could have placed any teacher in this building in there and it been as successful?
- "Hiro": To me?
- Bradford: To you or any student.
- "Hiro": No.
- Bradford: So are there specific characteristics that you think a program like this, when somebody's working with a student for credit recovery need to have?
- "Hiro": They need to have that, what's it called, you need to feel comfortable with the teacher, whoever is helping them or monitoring them in the program. It's like any other class, especially it's on the computer and you need help with the modules and quizzes. Like he [inaudible 00:05:17], he doesn't know half of this material so if requires someone to sit down with you for half an hour and read through something, I'm not going to lie, if there's someone that I don't feel that comfortable with, uh uh. I'll figure it out on my own, thank you. It makes things a lot easier when there's someone like Teacher 1 who's flexible, who's patient in working with you.

- Bradford: I'm going to ask you a series of questions now and I want you to rate them one to five. One is not helpful, five is very helpful and it can fall anywhere in that spectrum. These are all specific to Grad Point.
How would you rate the self-paced instruction of Grad Point?
- "Hiro": How would I rate the self-destruction?
- Bradford: Self-paced instruction. So in other words, that you were able to work at your own pace. How would you rate that?
- "Hiro": Six and a half.
- Bradford: Okay. How would you rate the user friendliness of this program? Was it easy for you to understand or did you have to have a lot of help to understand the actual program and how to use it?
- "Hiro": It took me about an hour to figure out how to use it, like any other program.
- Bradford: So would you say one, two, three, four or five?
- "Hiro": I'll give it a four.
- Bradford: Okay, because it took you a few minutes?
- "Hiro": Took me a few minutes. It wasn't like one, two, three, done.
- Bradford: How would you rate ha "Hiro" g the one to one instruction?
- "Hiro": The one to one . . . Oh five. Five's good, right?
- Bradford: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Five is really good. Do you feel like this program was engaging and motivational to you? One to five?
- "Hiro": Five.
- Bradford: We talked about the rigor earlier, okay? So how would you rate the rigor, one to five.
- "Hiro": Rigor again?
- Bradford: Means the toughness of the content. So in comparison to the real class, was it harder, easier or about the same?

- “Hiro”: About the same.
- Bradford: Okay so you would say that’s probably a three-four?
- “Hiro”: About the same yeah, three, four, three and a half.
- Bradford: How would you rate the modules’ explanations? In other words, if Teacher 1 would not have been there with you to explain the modules when you were going through it. If he just said here’s the computer program and said do it on your own.
- “Hiro”: Three and a half, four.
- Bradford: You think you still would have been able to understand them?
- “Hiro”: Yeah, I mean I can figure it out. It would take me another minute but I’ll figure it out.
- Bradford: Gotcha. Did you work any on the outside of school on this?
- “Hiro”: Oh yeah, you have to.
- Bradford: Okay so the flexibility to work out of school was that one or five?
- “Hiro”: Oh definitely five. If you’re ha”Hiro”g a lazy day at school but you know you can go home and you have a weekend and knock it out. Hey, why not? Not hard. You can go ahead, you can go behind.
- Bradford: Finally, how beneficial was this program being on the computer for you or the use of technology did that make it better or worse?
- “Hiro”: Five.
- Bradford: You have access to a computer, right, outside of school?
- “Hiro”: I do.
- Bradford: Did you only use a computer? Did you use any other devices to access it?
- “Hiro”: I used my phone but I mean that strains your eyes.
- Bradford: Okay, too small on the phone. All right, last question here. If there was anything else that you wanted to provide for me, if you were making

changes to this program for future students, is there anything that you would do differently or suggest doing differently?

“Hiro”:
Yeah.

Bradford:
What would you do?

“Hiro”:
If you already, I mean, because you’re retaking the class because you obviously failed it, there’s some things that maybe you already remember from the class and you already knew in the previous class already, so it’s no point of wasting 20 minutes going through the whole lessons when you can just take the quiz and get 100 or a 90 on it versus, you know the material, you’re already going through the quiz, the study guide, and you’re like I know this but they don’t let you skip right to the quiz. I would like them to let you skip right to the quiz.

Bradford:
So in your program, you started at module one and went all the way to the last module in the program?

“Hiro”:
[inaudible 00:09:22] physical science because I retook physical science. I did a pretest first. The pretest let the system know how much I knew and whatever I knew they knocked out all of the stuff I knew.

Bradford:
Okay.

“Hiro”:
Then they only left the ones that I did not know. There was like five quizzes on module two and if I knew three out of the five, they would knock out three and I only had two lessons to really go through to do.

Bradford:
Okay, perfect. All right, good deal. That is the end of our interview,

APPENDIX W: ANTONIO INTERVIEW

“Antonio” Interview

- Bradford: Today is May 27 around approximately 9:55 AM. Mr. Bradford is with “Antonio.”
- Bradford: “Antonio,” if my understanding that you participated in the Virtual Public Schools English class for English 4 as well as credit recovery through Grad Point for Physical Science. Is this correct?
- “Antonio”: Yes, sir.
- Bradford: Let’s talk first about the overall structure of the credit recovery program. You stayed after school with Teacher 1 to work in a structured environment. Talk to me a little bit about what you felt was beneficial about that atmosphere for the program.
- “Antonio”: It was helpful because in a classroom setting, it’d be a lot of pressure on certain students like me, because I don’t like to answer certain questions if I feel like I can’t answer a certain question for the teacher, and it’s embarrassing. Staying after school and doing it is a lot easier. You can focus more, get a lot done, and it’s I guess more understanding because sometimes teachers are very, it’s hard for them to explain certain stuff and everybody take in certain stuff differently.
- Bradford: Okay. You said in that response there that sometimes you don’t want to answer questions. What makes you not want to answer questions in class, do you think?
- “Antonio”: I guess, think you’re going to get it wrong and then just being embarrassed because I guess my generation you’ve got to always be right if you answer something or you get listed as dumb or don’t know that stuff.
- Bradford: Okay. Do you feel like the smaller setting of the program helped you as well as working with someone who was flexible like Teacher 1 is?
- “Antonio”: Yes, sir, it helped a lot, actually.
- Bradford: Okay.
- “Antonio”: If I didn’t have the program I probably would be listed as a senior right now if I didn’t do it. It helped a lot and I learned from it. In the classroom

setting it's hard for me to stay focused and learn because- It helped a lot, basically. It was fun, it was a lot more [inaudible 00:02:07].

Bradford: Okay. "Antonio," do you know why you're listed in the behavior support program?

"Antonio": Yes, sir. I think I do.

Bradford: Tell me why you think you're in that program and have the support of Teacher 1?

"Antonio": Because when I was, I've always been in a program like that all throughout school. Dealing with my anger issues and not being staying focused and always joking around and stuff. I can say I'm mature for me. I don't really do that as much now, but that's one of the reasons why I got in the program or my mom put me in the program.

Bradford: Okay. We talked about using VPS and Grad Point, so I'm going to ask you a few questions specifically to your English course in public schools. How would you compare the rigor, and that means how tough the class was, the content, to the regular classroom? Do you feel like the assignments were easier? Were they harder, or were they they same? You can compare it to previous English classes.

"Antonio": Previous English classes. My English classes are harder, but online it's a lot easier. You just have to read and pay attention, that's all. That's all they asking from you is to pay attention. All you can do in class too, but in class, it's a whole other way of explaining it, and it's just simpler to do it on the computer. It's a lot easier. Well, for me it was, anyway.

Bradford: For Grad Point, when you were looking at working with the physical science content, because you were doing it while you were in the class there. How would you have compared the rigor of the questions? I know it wasn't somebody giving you the material, but how did you, when you read the questions, how did they align with what you had done in Mr. Science teacher's class?

"Antonio": With Mr. Science teacher, he's a okay teacher, but you got to be like really on top of it. He's no slacker. He's always on point. You saw how quick I got it done online. It was a lot easier for me online than it is in class.

Bradford: Did you feel like the questions were harder online? Were they easier, or were they about the same?

- “Antonio”: Probably about the same.
- Bradford: Okay.
- “Antonio”: It just worded differently.
- Bradford: Then again, just the online structure benefited you, you think? Okay. When we look at the overall structure of this program, my goal is maybe take this program in another step next year with more students. What would you say, when we look at the after school structure, what were some positives to that structure? You’ve mentioned a few of these already, but I’m going to get you to say them again.
- “Antonio”: You’re more focused. You get a lot of work done, and even can sometimes be a good thing for when you just live in a bad neighborhood, being around bad influences during school, just learning instead of being around dumb stuff. It’s a lot easier and it’s just more helpful.
- Bradford: Okay. If you were running this program like Mr. Bradford is, and you wanted to make some changes next year, what are some areas that you would look at changing potentially for that program?
- “Antonio”: To be honest, everything is okay with me. In my eyes, everything is fine.
- Bradford: Would you have started it earlier, do you think it would benefit to start it earlier in the year?
- “Antonio”: Yeah. Or at least do the options out there. [inaudible 00:06:10]
- Bradford: Did you experience any trouble in regards to transportation with it being after school? You did?
- “Antonio”: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Bradford: All right, that’s fine.
- “Antonio”: I ride the cab, so they won’t let me take the bus, and the cab won’t come back around here and pick me up.
- Bradford: Okay. Teacher 1. How effective was he in helping you monitor your progress throughout the—
- “Antonio”: Teacher 1 is A1, always on his game, good at what he did.

Bradford: Okay.

“Antonio”: Helped me for four years. He’s, if it weren’t for him encouraging me and telling me, “Hey, this needs to be done, or they’re not even going to consider you graduating.” He kept me on it. That’s the only reason I got it done so fast.

Bradford: As far as the after school program providing assistance with you and helping you, how would you rate that?

“Antonio”: 100.

Bradford: (chuckles) Okay.

“Antonio”: 10, 100. It’s like awesome.

Bradford: Do you feel like the selection of a teacher for such a program, it has to be strategic? Do you think I could have picked anybody in the school and put them in there and had the same results?

“Antonio”: No. I feel as though a teacher that’s going to be, they need to have patience, be willing, I guess understand a teenager’s point of view, not know stuff that- You couldn’t put Mr. Science teacher in that program and ask him to run it. It wouldn’t run smoothly at all. Somebody that’s understanding and has patience because half these teachers don’t have patient at all.

Bradford: Okay. I’m going to ask you about 8 questions and I want you to rate these on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 means that it wasn’t helpful at all, and 5 means it was very helpful.

“Antonio”: Okay.

Bradford: Based on your experience in Virtual Public Schools, how would you rate the self-paced instruction, meaning you could pace how you went?

“Antonio”: 5.

Bradford: 5, okay. How would you rate the user-friendliness of the online program for VPS?

“Antonio”: 5.

Bradford: All right. How would you rate the 1 to 1 instruction from your teacher?

“Antonio”: 5.

Bradford: How would you rate the program’s engagement and motivation for you?

“Antonio”: 5.

Bradford: How would you rate the rigor or the level, the toughness of the content between 1 and 5?

“Antonio”: Probably a 4, but it’s all common sense. You just got to pay attention.

Bradford: Okay. Outside of Teacher 1 actually explaining the content to you, with the VPS program for English, how well would you rate the modules being explained just in what was in the program?

“Antonio”: Oh, that was a 5.

Bradford: Okay.

“Antonio”: Simple.

Bradford: Did you work any outside of school?

“Antonio”: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bradford: What was the flexibility level, 1 to 5, for you to be able to work outside of school?

“Antonio”: It was probably a 3 because it’s the only thing that gets you is the post test, if you take it twice and you fail it the second time, you get stuck on it and you can’t go on. They have to pass you through it. With the post test, but the quizzes you can take them until you get a 70, 80 on them.

Bradford: Okay. Then the use of technology with the program, would you rate that as a 1, meaning it wasn’t helpful, or was it a 5, being that it was very helpful?

“Antonio”: Considering you just have to use a computer, you can’t even do it on a tablet or a cell phone or nothing else.

Bradford: So the programs are only accessible on a computer?

“Antonio”: On a computer.

Bradford: Oh, okay. Knowing that, what would you rate it?

“Antonio”: Probably a 3.

Bradford: Okay.

“Antonio”: Would be more helpful if I could do it on my phone or something and not just sit here, not doing anything.

Bradford: All right. Well, final question for you here, is there anything else that you would tell me in regards to future students in this program that would help it?

“Antonio”: You’re pretty good at what you do, and it’s okay.

Bradford: Okay.

“Antonio”: Doing wonderful so far helping me out.

Bradford: All right. That is the conclusion of the interview, at 10:06 AM.

APPENDIX X: BILLY INTERVIEW

“Billy” Interview

- Bradford: Today is May 27th, the time is approximately 10:15 and Mr. Bradford is meeting with Billy. What program did you participate with teacher 1 after school? What class did you complete?
- “Billy”: It was biology and American History 2
- Bradford: On grad point?
- “Billy”: Grad point., yes.
- Bradford: So what did you find most beneficial about the structure of after school credit recovery?
- “Billy”: Having more time to sit and focus.
- Bradford: As far as comparing the rigor, the rigor means the level of the class, so was it tough to understand, things like that. How would you compare that to the actual biology class with the science teacher?
- “Billy”: I think the grad point was better. I actually looked at it and read it and learned information that I was getting.
- Bradford: What were some positives to either the grad point program or the program as a whole? Meaning being after school, working specifically with teacher 1, things like that.
- “Billy”: I enjoyed being after school working with Teacher 1. Overall it helped me pull my grade up. Me learning the information at like a fast pace.
- Bradford: Let’s say the program was run by someone other than Teacher 1, do you feel he was essential to you being successful in this program?
- “Billy”: Yes, sir.
- Bradford: Can you explain to me why?
- “Billy”: Well at first I didn’t think it was really going to work out but he was actually like a good person to show us how the program worked. He explained

everything to us and as soon as he got us into the program, I was passing through it like . . .

Bradford: Have you done grad point in the past?

“Billy”:

Yes, sir.

Bradford: How did this experience with grad point compare to that one?

“Billy”:

It was different because I had a little, a time frame where I had to be done in a certain time. With the grad point last year, it wasn't like that. I had the whole semester.

Bradford: So you took grad point during the school day.

“Billy”:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes, sir.

Bradford: So because you had the entire semester, did that motivate you more or less to complete the program?

“Billy”:

It actually motivated me more because I finished the course way before the class was even over.

Bradford: Okay but this one here, do you feel like it motivated you more because you had a shorter period of time?

“Billy”:

It didn't honestly. It was helpful.

Bradford: Okay, good. Do you feel like a specific type of teacher, as far as their attitude, is needed in this type of a program? Do you think I could pick any teacher in this school and put them in there and it would be as successful as it was with you?

“Billy”:

Yeah.

Bradford: You do?

“Billy”:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Bradford: Do you think all students would respond like that?

“Billy”:

[inaudible 00:04:03]

- Bradford: Do you think that maybe a specific type of teacher is needed for that program? Are there some certain characteristics that a teacher needs? Think about those teachers that you don't feel would be successful with the program and tell me why.
- "Billy": I think that certain teachers could do it but I think the ones in my head that I'm thinking about now, I don't think they could because it's all in how you explain things. If you're not really a good person with instructions, then everything goes downhill. I think if simple directions, I know how to follow them.
- Bradford: Okay. So now talk to me maybe about some things that could be adjusted in the program. Is there anything that if you were designing this or restructuring it for the future that you would do differently?
- "Billy": No I wouldn't do anything different. The program is perfect. It gives you more than enough time to catch up.
- Bradford: Okay. So on a scale of one to five with one kind of being the lowest and five being the highest, how effective was Teacher 1 in helping you monitor your progress in that program and making sure that you stayed on track to complete it?
- "Billy": He's a five.
- Bradford: The next few questions I'm going to ask you, again, I'm going to ask you to rate them on a scale of one to five. One is it was not helpful at all. Five being it was very helpful. It's all going to be revolving around the structure of grad point, the actual computer program that you were involved in. Okay?
The first one is how helpful was the self-paced instruction? One, two, three, four or five?
- "Billy": Four.
- Bradford: So you liked being able to do it on your own and on your own pace, okay. What about the user friendliness of the program? Was it easy for you to navigate?
- "Billy": Yeah, five.
- Bradford: The structure of the program itself, being that it was a smaller setting, do you feel like it was more beneficial to have that one to one instruction?
- "Billy": Yes [inaudible 00:06:30]

- Bradford: On a scale of one to five, rate the engagement and motivation of that program.
- “Billy”: [inaudible 00:06:41]
- Bradford: On a scale of one to five, rate the rigor or the level of the content. So how do you feel like it challenged you as far as the learning piece?
- “Billy”: Four.
- Bradford: Had Teacher 1 not been in that classroom, how would you have rated the modules explanation? So if had just got put on grad point and nobody explained it, you just had to figure it out on your own, how would you rate that?
- “Billy”: Like a two.
- Bradford: Okay, that’s fine. What about the flexibility to complete the work outside of school?
- “Billy”: A five.
- Bradford: Did you work outside of school?
- “Billy”: Oh yeah, of course.
- Bradford: So with technology, the use of technology, that program specifically would you give it a one, two, three, four or five?
- “Billy”: Five.
- Bradford: Five okay. Do you have a computer at home?
- “Billy”: Yes.
- Bradford: So you accessed it on the computer. Okay. Did you ever try to access it from your phone or a tablet or anything?
- “Billy”: I tried to on my cell phone but it was too slow.
- Bradford: Okay gotcha. So final question here, if you were restructuring this program, would you do anything differently at all? There’s no right or wrong answer here so be very candid with me.

“Billy”: Would I do anything different? What I would do different is I would try to move myself on to pass something that I probably got stuck doing it but, two or three times, say for instances a test, the post test. You only take a posttest two times. So I would make it more easier to move yourself on.

Bradford: What happens if you fail the posttest twice?

“Billy”: The teacher has to move you on or probably reset it for you to take it again but it's only meant for you to take it two times.

Bradford: Okay. All right, well that's the conclusion of the interview.

APPENDIX Y: SAMPLE OF ALL STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS

January 6, 2016				Student No: [REDACTED]		
Student Name: [REDACTED]				School No: 920441		
Green Hope High						
Green Hope High 2500 Carpenter Upchurch Road Cary, NC 27519 (919) 380-3700 Official NC Transcript						
01/06/2016						
STUDENT INFORMATION						
Name: [REDACTED]		Student No: [REDACTED]				
Address: [REDACTED]		Birthdate: [REDACTED]				
		Gender: Male				
		Graduation Date: 06/08/2015				
		Course Of Study: Future Ready Core				
		Endorsement(s): No				
		CTE Concentrator: HOSP, HOSP				
		Math Rigor: No				
SCHOOL INFORMATION						
Contact: Karen Summers		School No: 920441				
(919) 380-3700		Grades: 9-12				
L.E.A.: Wake County Schools		Accreditation: SA				
(919) 431-7400		College Board Code: 342709				
CREDIT HISTORY						
Grade	Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Earned Credits	Flags
Grade: 9	2011/12					
	20212AF ALGEBRA I: PART I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	20222FS ALGEBRA I: PART II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
	10212E ENGLISH I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	90112A HEALTHFUL LIVING I	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
	10512B SPANISH I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	40245D WORLD HISTORY (HONORS)	D	2.000	1.000	1.00	U
	30405A EARTH SCIENCE (HONORS)	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
	70452A FOODS I-FUNDAMENTALS	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
Grade: 10	2012/13					
	79802F NETWORK ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY I - CISCO	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
	61452I CAREER MANAGEMENT	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
	30402G EARTH SCIENCE	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	10222Y ENGLISH II	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	66702A SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING I	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
	66712A SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING II	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
	40525A CIVICS & ECONOMICS HONORS	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	U
	20302B GEOMETRY	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	U
Grade: 11	2013/14					
	23005X0 Common Core Algebra II Honors / ALGEBRA II (HONORS)	C	3.000	2.000	1.00	U
	10232X0 English III / ENGLISH III	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	FN425X0 Foods II - Enterprise Honors / FOODS II - ENTERPRISE (HONORS)	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	
	11422X0 Spanish II / SPANISH II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
	33205X0 Biology Honors / BIOLOGY (HONORS)	D	2.000	1.000	1.00	U
	34205X0 Chemistry Honors / CHEMISTRY (HONORS)	D	2.000	1.000	1.00	U

1/6/2016

NC Transcript

BM102X0	Microsoft Word and PowerPoint / MICROSOFT WORD POWERPOINT PUBLISHER	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
43015X0	U.S. History Honors / US HISTORY (HONORS)	A	5.000	4.000	1.00	U
Grade: 12 2014/15						
24002X0	Adv Functions and Modeling / Advanced Functions & Modeling	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
BB305X0	Business Law Honors	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	
42085X0	Contemporary Law and Justice Honors	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
35352X0	Marine Science / MARINE ECOLOGY	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
10245X0	English IV Honors	WF	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
10242X0	English IV / English IV Online	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
96042X0	Teacher Cadet I	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
10242X0	English IV / CR English IV Online	P	0.000	0.000	1.00	EU

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS REMAINING**

English IV

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Cumulative GPA Total Points are Calculated as of the end of 01/06/2016

Cumulative GPA Weighted:	2.1667	Total Points Weighted:	65.0000
Cumulative GPA Unweighted:	1.9000	Total Points Unweighted:	57.0000
Class Rank as of 06/24/2015:	518 out of 536	Total Credits: Earned:	27.000
		Potential:	30.000
		Credits Towards Graduation:	27.000

Note: All courses taken at the middle school for high school requirement(s) will not calculate in the GPA.

Note: High School Earned Credits only are calculated.

TESTING INFORMATION

Test Name / Score Name	Score	Test Date
4th Grade Writing		03/01/2007
4th_Grade_Writ_Achievement_Level	III	
4th_Grade_Writ_Scale	12	
English I End of Course		01/01/2012
EnglishI_EOC_Percentile	148	
EnglishI_EOC_Pass/Fail	37	
EnglishI_EOC_Scale	148	
EnglishI_EOC_Achievement_Level	III	
EnglishI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard		
Algebra I End of Course		06/01/2012
AlgebraI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard		
AlgebraI_EOC_Achievement_Level	III	
AlgebraI_EOC_Scale	152	
AlgebraI_EOC_Percentile	56	
AlgebraI_EOC_Pass/Fail		
Sports & Entertainment Marketing I		01/16/2013
Sports_Entertain_Market_I_Raw_Score	48	
English II End of Course		06/01/2013
EnglishII_EOC_Scale	138	
EnglishII_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
EnglishII_EOC_Percentile	11	
Sports & Entertainment Marketing II		06/05/2013
Sports_Enter_Market_II_Scale	89	
FN42-Foods II-Enterprise		01/14/2014
Foods_II_Food_Advanced_Scale	88	
Biology End of Course		06/01/2014
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Biology_EOC_Percentile	13	
Biology_EOC_Scale	239	
Business Law		01/13/2015
Business_Law_Scale	89	
CPR		05/18/2015
CPR_Pass_Fail	P	

CURRICULUM RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

APPENDIX Z: HIRO TRANSCRIPT

Hiro

January 6, 2016
 Green Hope High
 School No: 920441

Green Hope High
 2500 Carpenter Upchurch Road
 Cary, NC 27519
 (919) 380-3700
 Official NC Transcript

01/06/2016

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name: [REDACTED] Student No: [REDACTED]
 Address: [REDACTED] Birthdate: [REDACTED]
 Gender: Male
 Graduation Date: 06/08/2015
 Course Of Study: Future Ready Core
 Endorsement(s): No
 CTE Concentrator: No
 Math Rigor: Yes

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Contact: Karen Summers School No: 920441
 (919) 380-3700 Grades: 9-12
 L.E.A.: Wake County Schools Accreditation: SA
 (919) 431-7400 College Board Code: 342709

CREDIT HISTORY

Grade	Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Earned Credits	Flags
Grade: 9	2011/12					
	00012K CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
	00012K2 CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
	10212E ENGLISH I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	20212AF ALGEBRA I: PART I	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	U
	20222FS ALGEBRA I: PART II	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
	30402G EARTH SCIENCE	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
	90112A HEALTHFUL LIVING I	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	U
	40242D WORLD HISTORY	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	U
Grade: 10	2012/13					
	30202Y BIOLOGY	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
	70652C CHILD DEVELOPMENT	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
	10222Y ENGLISH II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
	40522A CIVICS & ECONOMICS	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
	00012AA CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
	00012AA CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
	20302B GEOMETRY	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
	20302B GEOMETRY	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
Grade: 11	2013/14					
	42092X0 Amer History: Founding Prin, Civics & Ec / CIVICS & ECONOMICS	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
	00012X0 Indiv Curriculum / CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
	51152X0 Dance (Beginning) / MODERN DANCE I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
	64012X0 Sports Medicine I / SPORTS MEDICINE I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
	23002X0 Common Core Algebra II / ALGEBRA II	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
	00012X0 Indiv Curriculum / CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
	10232X0 English III / ENGLISH III	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
	34102X0 Physical Science / PHYSICAL SCIENCE	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
Grade: 11	2014/15					
	23002X0 Common Core Algebra II / CR	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	EU

1/6/2016

NC Transcript

33202X0	Algebra II Online	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	EU
96102X0	Biology / CR Biology Online	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
	Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance					
10232X0	English III	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
Grade: 12	2014/15					
34102X0	Physical Science / CR Physical Science Online	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	EU
96102X0	Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
24012X0	Discrete Mathematics	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
10242X0	English IV	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
43012X0	U.S. History / US HISTORY	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF GOVERNORS**MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS REMAINING**

FOREIGN LANGUAGE(2)

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Cumulative GPA Total Points are Calculated as of the end of 01/06/2016

Cumulative GPA Weighted:	1.8667	Total Points Weighted:	56.0000
Cumulative GPA Unweighted:	1.8667	Total Points Unweighted:	56.0000
Class Rank as of 06/24/2015:	528 out of 536	Total Credits: Earned: 27.000	Potential: 30.000
		Credits Towards Graduation:	27.000

Note: All courses taken at the middle school for high school requirement(s) will not calculate in the GPA.

Note: High School Earned Credits only are calculated.

TESTING INFORMATION

Test Name / Score Name	Score	Test Date
4th Grade Writing		03/01/2007
4th_Grade_Writ_Achievement_Level	II	
4th_Grade_Writ_Scale	10	
Algebra I End of Course		06/01/2012
AlgebraI_EOC_Scale	152	
AlgebraI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard		
AlgebraI_EOC_Percentile	56	
AlgebraI_EOC_Pass/Fail		
AlgebraI_EOC_Achievement_Level	III	
English I End of Course		06/01/2012
EnglishI_EOC_Pass/Fail	49	
EnglishI_EOC_Scale	151	
EnglishI_EOC_Percentile	151	
EnglishI_EOC_Achievement_Level	III	
EnglishI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard		
Parenting and Child Development		01/16/2013
Parenting_and_Child_Dev_Scale	71	
Biology End of Course		06/01/2013
Biology_EOC_Percentile	13	
Biology_EOC_Scale	239	
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
English II End of Course		06/01/2013
EnglishII_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
EnglishII_EOC_Scale	137	
EnglishII_EOC_Percentile	10	
Biology End of Course		01/01/2015
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Biology_EOC_Percentile	1	
Biology_EOC_Scale	229	
CPR		05/25/2015
CPR_Pass_Fail	P	

CURRICULUM RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

No Data For Student

AWARD/ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

No Data For Student

Signature of Principal or Designee Certifying This Transcript

APPENDIX AA: FATIMA TRANSCRIPT

"Fatma"

January 6, 2016	Student Name: [REDACTED]	Student No: [REDACTED]			
Green Hope High		School No: 920441			
Green Hope High 2500 Carpenter Upchurch Road Cary, NC 27519 (919) 380-3700 Official NC Transcript					
01/06/2016					
STUDENT INFORMATION					
Name: [REDACTED]	Student No: [REDACTED]				
Address: [REDACTED]	Birthdate: [REDACTED]				
	Gender: Female				
Contacts: [REDACTED]	Graduation Date: 08/11/2015				
	Course Of Study: Future Ready Core				
	Endorsement(s): No				
	CTE Concentrator: No				
	Math Rigor: No				
SCHOOL INFORMATION					
Contact: Karen Summers	School No: 920441				
(919) 380-3700	Grades: 9-12				
L.E.A.: Wake County Schools	Accreditation: SA				
(919) 431-7400	College Board Code: 342709				
CREDIT HISTORY					
Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Earned Credits	Flags
Grade: 9 2012/13					
30405A EARTH SCIENCE (HONORS)	A	5.000	4.000	1.00	U
10212X ENGLISH I	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	U
90112A HEALTHFUL LIVING I	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	U
10382PF ESL II: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
20372A LOCAL OPTION CC MATH IB	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
95502G STUDY SKILLS	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
40245Q WORLD HISTORY (HONORS)	A	5.000	4.000	1.00	U
20362A LOCAL OPTION CC MATH IA	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
Grade: 10 2013/14					
FA312X0 Apparel and Textile Prod I / APPAREL DEVELOPMENT I	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
33205X0 Biology Honors / BIOLOGY (HONORS)	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	U
22015X0 MATH II HONORS / LOCAL OPTION CC MATH II (HONORS)	A	5.000	4.000	1.00	U
11412X0 Spanish I / SPANISH I	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	U
43045X0 American History I Honors / AMERICAN HISTORY I: THE FOUNDING PRIN-HN	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	
34205X0 Chemistry Honors / CHEMISTRY (HONORS)	A	5.000	4.000	1.00	U
10225X0 English II Honors / ENGLISH II (HONORS)	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	U
11422X0 Spanish II / SPANISH II	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	U
Grade: 11 2014/15					
96022X0 Sat Preparation	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
30202X0 Spec Intrst Science / Forensic Science	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
23015X0 MATH III HONORS	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	U
42095X0 Amer His: Found Prin, Civics & Ec Hon / Civics & Economics Honors	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	U
10235X0 English III Honors	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	U
96102X0 Local Elective / SUCCESS 101 (Online)	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	

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43055X0	American History II Honors	B	4.000	3.000	1.00	
44067X0	AP Psychology	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
10245X0	English IV Honors	C	3.000	2.000	1.00	U
24035X0	Pre-Calculus Honors	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
Grade: 12 2014/15						
24012X0	Discrete Mathematics	P	0.000	0.000	1.00	EU
44032X0	Psychology	P	0.000	0.000	1.00	E

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MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS REMAINING

No Requirements Remaining

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Cumulative GPA Total Points are Calculated as of the end of 01/06/2016

Cumulative GPA Weighted:	3.5769	Total Points Weighted:	93.0000
Cumulative GPA Unweighted:	3.1154	Total Points Unweighted:	81.0000
Class Rank as of 06/24/2015:	396 out of 609	Total Credits: Earned: 26.000	Potential: 26.000
		Credits Towards Graduation:	26.000

Note: All courses taken at the middle school for high school requirement(s) will not calculate in the GPA.

Note: High School Earned Credits only are calculated.

TESTING INFORMATION

Test Name / Score Name	Score	Test Date
W-APT Grades 6-8		
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Reading_Proficie	09	11/13/2012
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Reading_Raw_Score	2	
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Listening_Raw_Score	5	
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Listening_Proficie	6	
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Speaking_Proficie	14	
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Speaking_Raw_Score	6	
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Adj_CPL_Proficie	08	
WAPT_Grades_6_8_Writing_Proficie	5.05	
Math I End of Course		
MathI_EOC_Achievement_Level	III	06/01/2013
MathI_EOC_Scale	261	
MathI_EOC_Percentile	88	
Biology End of Course		
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	IV	01/01/2014
Biology_EOC_Scale	257	
Biology_EOC_Percentile	74	
Apparel Development I		
Apparel_Development_I_Scale	83	01/13/2014
English II End of Course		
EnglishII_EOC_Achievement_Level	IV	06/01/2014
EnglishII_EOC_Scale	157	
EnglishII_EOC_Percentile	74	
CPR		
CPR_Pass_Fail	P	04/16/2015

CURRICULUM RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

No Data For Student

AWARD/ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR

ACTIVITIES

No Data For Student

Signature of Principal or Designee Certifying This Transcript

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX BB: ANTONIO TRANSCRIPT

ANTONIO

January 6, 2016		Student No: [REDACTED]			
Student Name: [REDACTED]		School No: 920441			
Green Hope High					
Green Hope High 2500 Carpenter Upchurch Road Cary, NC 27519 (919) 380-3700 Official NC Transcript					
01/06/2016					
STUDENT INFORMATION					
Name:	[REDACTED]	Student No:	[REDACTED]		
Address:	[REDACTED]	Birthdate:	[REDACTED]		
		Gender:	Male		
		Graduation Date:	06/08/2015		
		Course Of Study:	Future Ready Core		
		Endorsement(s):	No		
		CTE Concentrator:	No		
		Math Rigor:	No		
SCHOOL INFORMATION					
Contact: Karen Summers		School No: 920441			
(919) 380-3700		Grades: 9-12			
L.E.A.: Wake County Schools		Accreditation: SA			
(919) 431-7400		College Board Code: 342709			
CREDIT HISTORY					
Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Earned Credits	Flags
Grade: 9 2011/12					
00012K CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
10212E ENGLISH I	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
90112A HEALTHFUL LIVING I	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
20212AF ALGEBRA I: PART I	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
00012K2 CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
70452A FOODS I-FUNDAMENTALS	B	3.000	3.000	1.00	
20202B INTRODUCTORY MATHEMATICS	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
10212E ENGLISH I	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
Grade: 10 2012/13					
30402G EARTH SCIENCE	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
20362A LOCAL OPTION CC MATH IA	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
40242D WORLD HISTORY	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
70652C CHILD DEVELOPMENT	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
00012AA CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
00012AA CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
20372A LOCAL OPTION CC MATH IB	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
10222D ENGLISH II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
Grade: 11 2013/14					
33202X0 Biology / BIOLOGY	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
42092X0 Amer History: Founding Prin, Civics & Ec / CIVICS & ECONOMICS	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
00012X0 Indiv Curriculum / CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
10232X0 English III / ENGLISH III	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
33202X0 Biology / CR BIOLOGY (Online)	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	EU
00012X0 Indiv Curriculum / CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
10232X0 English III / ENGLISH III	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
21052X0 MATH IB / LOCAL OPTION CC MATH IB	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
Grade: 11 2014/15					
33202X0 Biology / CR Biology Online	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	EU
10232X0 English III / CR English III Online	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	EU
21032X0 Math I / CR Math I Online	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	EU

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FN422X0	Foods II - Enterprise	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
Grade: 12 2014/15						
96102X0	Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	
10242X0	English IV / English IV Online	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
22012X0	Math II / MATH II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
34102X0	Physical Science / PHYSICAL SCIENCE	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
43012X0	U.S. History / US HISTORY	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	U
96102X0	Local Elective / Success 101 Online	C	2.000	2.000	1.00	

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MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS REMAINING**

FOREIGN LANGUAGE(2) Fourth Math - UNC Math III/Algebra II/Integrated Math III

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Cumulative GPA Total Points are Calculated as of the end of 01/06/2016

Cumulative GPA Weighted:	1.1667	Total Points Weighted:	35.0000
Cumulative GPA Unweighted:	1.1667	Total Points Unweighted:	35.0000
Class Rank as of 06/24/2015:	535 out of 536	Total Credits:	Earned: 26.000 Potential: 30.000
		Credits Towards Graduation:	26.000

Note: All courses taken at the middle school for high school requirement(s) will not calculate in the GPA.

Note: High School Earned Credits only are calculated.

TESTING INFORMATION

Test Name / Score Name	Score	Test Date
English I End of Course		
EnglishI_EOC_Pass/Fail	3	01/01/2012
EnglishI_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
EnglishI_EOC_Percentile	133	
EnglishI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard	-	
EnglishI_EOC_Scale	133	
English I End of Course		
EnglishI_EOC_Pass/Fail	20	06/01/2012
EnglishI_EOC_Percentile	143	
EnglishI_EOC_Achievement_Level	II	
EnglishI_EOC_Scale	143	
EnglishI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard	-	
English I End of Course		
EnglishI_EOC_Pass/Fail	5	06/10/2012
EnglishI_EOC_Scale	135	
EnglishI_EOC_Percentile	135	
EnglishI_EOC_Met_Exit_Standard	-	
EnglishI_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
CPR		
CPR_Pass_Fail	P	12/14/2012
English II End of Course		
EnglishII_EOC_Scale	135	01/01/2013
EnglishII_EOC_Percentile	7	
EnglishII_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Math I End of Course		
MathI_EOC_Percentile	35	06/01/2013
MathI_EOC_Scale	245	
MathI_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Parenting and Child Development		
Parenting_and_Child_Dev_Scale	84	06/06/2013
Biology End of Course		
Biology_EOC_Percentile	2	01/01/2014
Biology_EOC_Scale	231	
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Biology End of Course		
Biology_EOC_Scale	230	01/01/2015
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Biology_EOC_Percentile	2	
Math I End of Course		
MathI_EOC_Percentile	19	01/01/2015
MathI_EOC_Scale	240	
MathI_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	

APPENDIX CC: BILLY TRANSCRIPT

"Billy"

January 6, 2016		Student No: [REDACTED]			
Student Name: [REDACTED]		School No: 920441			
Green Hope High					
Green Hope High 2500 Carpenter Upchurch Road Cary, NC 27519 (919) 380-3700 Official NC Transcript					
01/06/2016					
STUDENT INFORMATION					
Name:	[REDACTED]	Student No:	[REDACTED]		
Address:	[REDACTED]	Birthdate:	[REDACTED]		
Contacts:	[REDACTED]	Gender:	Male		
		Expected Graduation Date:	Undefined		
		Course Of Study:	Future Ready Core		
		Endorsement(s):	No		
		CTE Concentrator:	No		
		Math Rigor:	No		
SCHOOL INFORMATION					
Contact:	Karen Summers (919) 380-3700	School No:	920441		
L.E.A.:	Wake County Schools (919) 431-7400	Grades:	9-12		
		Accreditation:	SA		
		College Board Code:	342709		
CREDIT HISTORY					
Course	Mark	Weighted	Unweighted	Earned Credits	Flags
Grade: 9 2012/13					
20322A LOCAL OPTION CC MATH I	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
30205X0J SPECIAL TOPICS IN SCIENCE/ENGINEERING DE	D	2.000	1.000	1.00	U
40312A WORLD GEOGRAPHY	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
30405A EARTH SCIENCE (HONORS)	D	2.000	1.000	1.00	U
10215C ENGLISH I (HONORS)	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
20335A LOCAL OPTION CC MATH II (HONORS)	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	
952025B SEMINAR	P	0.000	0.000	1.00	E
Grade: 9 2013/14					
00012X0 Indiv Curriculum / CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
21032X0 Math I / LOCAL OPTION CC MATH I	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
34205X0 Chemistry Honors / CHEMISTRY (HONORS)	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
00012X0 Indiv Curriculum / CURRICULUM ASSISTANCE	A	4.000	4.000	1.00	
10215X0 English I Honors / ENGLISH I (HONORS)	D	2.000	1.000	1.00	U
22015X0 MATH II HONORS / LOCAL OPTION CC MATH II (HONORS)	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
30202X0 Spec Intrst Science / STEM Engineering Design II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
45012X0 World Geography / WORLD GEOGRAPHY	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
Grade: 10 2014/15					
33202X0 Biology	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
96102X0 Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
10222X0 English II	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
43042X0 American History I / American History I: Founding Principles	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	
33202X0 Biology / CR Biology Online	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	EU
96102X0 Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	

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10232X0	English III	D	1.000	1.000	1.00	U
22012X0	Math II / MATH II	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	U
Grade: 11 2015/16						
22012X0	Math II / CR Math II Online	F	0.000	0.000	0.00	E
30202X0	Spec Intrst Science / SCIENCE ELECTIVE	P	0.000	0.000	1.00	EU
43052X0	American History II / American History II					S
IM212X0	Cabinetmaking I / Cabinetmaking I					P
10242X0	English IV / English IV					S
20512X0	Foundations of Math II / Foundations of Math II (Elective)					P
96102X0KS	Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance					S
96102X0KF	Local Elective / Curriculum Assistance					P
22012X0	Math II / Math II					SU
34102X0	Physical Science / Physical Science					PU

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MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS REMAINING

Civics and Economics	English IV	FOREIGN LANGUAGE(2)
Fourth Math - UNC	Math II/Geometry/Integrated Math II	Math III/Algebra II/Integrated Math III
Physical Science	World History	

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Cumulative GPA Total Points are Calculated as of the end of 01/06/2016

Cumulative GPA Weighted:	1.0476	Total Points Weighted:	22.0000
Cumulative GPA Unweighted:	0.9048	Total Points Unweighted:	19.0000
Class Rank as of 09/24/2015:	570 out of 612	Total Credits:	Earned: 16.000 Potential: 21.000
		Credits Towards Graduation:	16.000

Note: All courses taken at the middle school for high school requirement(s) will not calculate in the GPA.

Note: High School Earned Credits only are calculated.

TESTING INFORMATION

Test Name / Score Name	Score	Test Date
Math I End of Course		
MathI_EOC_Percentile	10	01/01/2013
MathI_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
MathI_EOC_Scale	237	
CPR		
CPR_Pass_Fail	P	01/14/2013
Math I End of Course		
MathI_EOC_Scale	243	01/01/2014
MathI_EOC_Percentile	29	
MathI_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	
Biology End of Course		
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	01/01/2015
Biology_EOC_Scale	228	
Biology_EOC_Percentile	1	
English II End of Course		
EnglishII_EOC_Scale	149	01/01/2015
EnglishII_EOC_Achievement_Level	III	
EnglishII_EOC_Percentile	43	
Biology End of Course		
Biology_EOC_Achievement_Level	I	06/01/2015
Biology_EOC_Scale	241	
Biology_EOC_Percentile	18	

CURRICULUM RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

No Data For Student

AWARD/ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

No Data For Student

Signature of Principal or Designee Certifying This Transcript

APPENDIX DD: MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Introduction	This first module provided an intent and overview of the training. It also provided a ten question Pre-Test for counselors covering issues of NC high school graduation requirements. Correct answers are provided following each question. This module also provided a hyperlink to the NC Department of Public Instruction where a complete list of the NC graduation requirements is listed. Prior to this module a checklist was provided to help counselors identify the steps of and streamline the registration process This was presented in a WORD document that counselors could pull up online or print out to follow along with the examples provided in the modules.
Module 2	This module began actual instruction and followed the understanding of graduation requirements from Module 1. Examples were provided with guiding questions. These questions asked counselors to decide the classes in which they should enroll a student, whether the student should be in a standard or honors level class, and which data they would use to make this determination. Two excerpts from two different students were provided, and counselors were asked to make decisions about which courses the student should take. An audio clip was provided for each transcript to talk through the decision-making and transcript.
Module 3	This module discussed the transfer process. It provided information and situations that may be encountered during a registration for a transfer student. A student scenario is provided. This particular scenario provides challenges such as half credits and moving from a standard curriculum to a common core curriculum. This module reminds counselors how to use the chart to determine which credits this student has, as well as asking questions about what he/she needs to graduate. Counselors are asked to make determinations as to these questions. An audio clip discusses the thought process to work through this registration.
Module 4	This module provides a scenario of a student who transferred in to a 4x4 block from a traditional 7-period day. He also transfers in mid-term, thus may not have sufficient seat time. The counselor is asked how to proceed through this registration. An audio clip is provided to a suggested response to the scenario. Another scenario follows. This student enrolls from a hybrid schedule, moving into a 4x4 block schedule. Several questions to consider are provided. These include questions about how to enroll this student from the hybrid schedule, what to do if a course is not offered, and how to complete her registration and schedule. An audio clip provides suggestions of ways to help this student. This module offers some "out of the box" suggestions to help students transition into a new school and maintain on-time graduation.
Module 5	This module begins with an overview of the complications of enrolling HMS to a new school at non-traditional times, including coming from different states where courses often seem alike, but do not meet the course requirement. This module discusses the need to look up the course and compare objectives. This module provides audio to discuss a student's courses and how to determine if he meets graduation requirements in NC.
Module 6	This module builds on Module 5. This module shows a student who appears to have completed her credits. Her previous school names the classes in the same terms as in NC, but divides them differently. This module discusses the importance of checking credits as well as names to properly transfer a student.
Module 7	This module shows a student who appears to have more credits than needed for graduation. The sending school appears to award multiple credits for what is only worth a single credit in NC. Another example shows that a student has received less than one credit for a course. This is another example of credit conversion. Again, this a module to highlight the importance of researching what is sent from the sending school prior to making scheduling decisions.
Module 8	This module provides examples of a student who transfers into a public school from a private or home school setting. This is another module providing direction for transfer of credits toward graduation requirements. This module provides practice with the checklist in transferring this student.
Module 9	This module provides direction for counselors in moving a student from a 4x4 block schedule into traditional 7-period day.
Module 10	This module provides information about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and the Military Compact. Each of these political policies provides protection for special populations of students. Some of these offer counselors additional options in helping maintain on-time graduation for these students.
Module 11	This module is called "Thinking Outside of the Box." This module discusses Personalized Registration Process, as well as providing a menu of options to help a student retain and/or regain credits in order to graduate on time.
Module 12	This module is a Test Your Knowledge module. It begins with the same pretest that was given at the start of the training modules, but then moves to four opportunities to apply what has been learned.