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The Impact of an At-Risk Program in an Elementary School

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**THE IMPACT OF AN AT-RISK PROGRAM
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Christine Ann Crawford, B.A.

**An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Art
August, 1999**

Abstract

The purpose of this project is to examine the effects of an elementary At-Risk Program, Challengers, over a nine month period. The intent of this program was to increase student self-concept and academic achievement measured by grade point averages. Identification of students who participated in this study was done by a needs assessment survey completed by the teachers. The needs assessment survey includes identifying characteristics for students "at-risk." The control group consisted of students who were identified as "at-risk", but did not participate in the program. Data collection included scores on the Pier-Harris Self Concept Scale and teacher input on academic achievement scores. Research found a significant difference in self-esteem scores, but not grade point averages of students participating in the program.

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Master of Art
August, 1999**

Committee in Charge of Candidacy

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Dedication

To Mom, Dad, and Greg, for their constant guidance, love, and encouragement through every moment of school and life.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction.....	1
	Statement of Purpose.....	2
Chapter 2	Literature Review.....	4
	The “At-Risk” Child: Definition and Symptoms.....	4
	The Concern of Educators.....	8
	Components of a Successful “At-Risk” Program.....	14
	Challengers- Central Elementary “At-Risk” Program.....	25
	Summary of Literature.....	27
Chapter 3	Methodology.....	29
	Subjects.....	29
	Instrumentation.....	30
	Procedure.....	32
Chapter 4	Results.....	33
Chapter 5	Discussion.....	35
Appendix A	Challengers Needs Assessment Survey.....	38
Appendix B	Cover Letter for Experiment Group.....	39
Appendix C	Cover Letter for Control Group.....	40
Appendix D	Student Data Sheet.....	41
Appendix E	Piers-Harris Inventory.....	42
References.....		45

List of Tables

Table 4.1	Gender of students.....	37
Table 4.2	Grade of students.....	38
Table 4.4	Matched Sample Test.....	41
Table 4.5	Independent Sample T-Test.....	42

Chapter 1

Introduction

Virtually every child is capable of attaining an adequate level of basic skills. The recognition of this fact alone is an essential starting point for a discussion for students "at risk" of school failure. Instructional methods and materials now in use are failing large numbers of students. Even under optimal instructional conditions, some students will require more resources, more time, or both to achieve an acceptable level of achievement (Arlin, 1984).

This group of children, now being labeled "at-risk", were previously called dropouts, disadvantaged, marginal, impoverished, alienated, low achievers, disenfranchised, low income, or culturally deprived. Whatever the terminology, these students are disadvantaged because schools are not meeting their specific educational needs. The literature suggests that children may be "at risk" due to factors related to their socioeconomic status (poverty), family background (single-parent home), or community (drugs or youth gangs) (Becker, 1987). While a clear definition of "at-risk" or what constitutes an "at-risk" student seldom emerges, the term is generally used to denote students who are either "at risk" of failing to graduate from high school or "at risk" of developing emotional and/or behavioral problems, even if they do not already exist.

Children considered to be at-risk bring remarkable perplexities to the field of education. Since it is the job of teachers to deliver a quality education to all students, significant educational implications face educators in meeting the cognitive, academic and social needs of the "at-risk" child. Schools need to figure out what to do with high risk students who experience academic failure, fail to hand in homework, complete assignments, or participate actively or constructively in class, have high absent records, and often act out and become

discipline problems. These are the students who are potential drop-outs or substance abuser, the ones who have come to be labeled "at-risk."

Though the problem of low achievement among large numbers of students is hardly new, there has been improvement in some areas. For example, although the high school dropout rate has remained at 14 percent for whites over the period from 1970 to 1985, for blacks it has diminished from 31 percent to 19 percent (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1986). The National Assessment of Educational Progress shows improvements in the reading scores of blacks and Hispanics over the past decade (Carroll, 1987). However, international comparisons consistently find United States students to rank among the lowest in literacy and mathematical skills among industrialized nations, and minority students still perform substantially below their white classmates (Bureau of the Census, 1985).

It is certain that if the nation continues to do what it is doing now, it will continue to experience the same results, and it is equally certain that the results being obtained now are not enough. In essence, the schools also appear to be failing these children. Schools must develop programs to address the needs of these students. Without addressing this, the statistics are alarming, and the threat to America's economic and social well-being is enormous. With more than a million students dropping out of school each year, one-third of America's young people are entering adult society without a high school diploma (Comer, 1987). The long-range cost seem to far outweigh the cost of implementing successful programs in the school system.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of an "at-risk" program in an elementary school. An at-risk program is defined as a program which is designed to identify an at-risk population, and their needs, within the school environment and provide interventions to assist these children in reaching their highest potential, academically, personally and socially.

The focus of this research is to determine if the "at-risk" program will positively impact academic grades and self-concept of those students participating in the program.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The At-Risk Child: Definition and Symptoms

In almost every school, regardless of students' race and class, teachers can identify children who underachieve because of problems beyond school walls. According to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), there are more than 4,900 titles with the word disadvantaged (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Recently, educators have begun to use the term "at risk" to describe this certain category of students previously referred to as disadvantaged. The meaning of this term is never very precise, and varies considerably in practice; therefore, caution must be taken in terms of the overlap and ambiguity of the constructs that have been used to define these "at-risk" students. On the one hand, educators describe the term "at risk" as a new label for a phenomena that is as old as public school itself (Richardson, Casanova, Placier, & Guilfoyle, 1989). On the other hand, others argue that the term "at risk" student is the latest of a series of popular labels that focuses on individual characteristics and therefore stigmatizes the student (Ashton & Webb, 1986). This term is often criticized because it suggests that the student has the characteristic of being "at risk" instead of being in a place or circumstance that is considered to be "at risk". Therefore, when constructing a definition for "at-risk", several factors are considered.

One common definition of the term "at risk" students is a category of students who, on the basis of several risk factors, are unlikely to graduate from high school (Slavin, 1989). Among these risk factors would be low achievement, retention in a grade, behavior problems, poor attendance, low socioeconomic status, and attendance at schools with large numbers of poor students (Alderman, 1990). All of these factors are closely associated with

dropping out of school, and research has found by the time students are in the third grade, it can be fairly reliably predicted which students will ultimately drop out and which will complete their schooling (Howard & Anderson, 1978; Lloyd, 1978; Kelly, Veldman, & McGuire, 1964).

In practice, different factors have different predictive value depending on student age and other variables. For example, in looking at preschool students, the best predictors of dropout and other school problems are socioeconomic status indicators (Schreiber, 1968). Low-income children are at a higher risk for health related problems. Poor health and untreated physical conditions may slow a child's academic progress. Recurrent illness may interfere with attention and attendance, and vision and hearing problems make class participation difficult (Aday & Andersen, 1984). Then as students move through the grades, their actual performance in school becomes a much better predictor; grades, attendance and retentions of sixth graders, for example, are very highly predictive of dropout (Lloyd, 1974).

The probability that a student will complete high school is not the only rational criterion for designating students as being "at risk". Students who have failed one or more grades, been assigned to special education, or speak a language other than English may also be considered "at risk". Others have identified at risk students in terms of poverty, drug abuse, sexual activity, race, and ethnicity (Pellicano, 1987). "At risk" might also be defined as students who are unlikely to leave school, at whatever age, with an adequate level of basic skills. With the increasing use of competency-based graduation requirements, "at-risk" students might also be defined as those who are unlikely to pass criterion-referenced graduation tests.

Lein (1989, p. 47) describes at risk students as "those who lack the home and community resources to benefit from conventional schooling practices." Pallas (1989) formulated a definition for the term educationally disadvantaged to describe students who have been exposed to inappropriate education in the school, family, or community. Comer (1987) calls this group "high-risk children" and defines them as students who underachieve in school and, consequently, will underachieve as adults. Each definition would produce a somewhat different set of students held to be at risk, but there would be considerable overlap among them.

Recently, several educators have reframed the problem of "blaming the victim" to argue that school systems, school programs, organizational and institutional features of school, the structure of schools, or the school environment contribute to the conditions that influence student's academic failure (Boyd, 1991; Kagan, 1990; Meacham, 1990; Pellicano, 1987; Sinclair & Ghory, 1987). The school environment is the broader context or climate of the school that either facilitates or constrains classroom instruction and student learning (Shields, 1991). Sinclair and Ghory (1987) also maintain that it is the school environment that either encourages or discourages student learning through a series of interactions.

The term "at-risk" environment suggests that it is the school that should be considered "at risk". School environments that (a) alienate students and teachers, (b) provide low standards and a low quality of education, (c) have differential expectations for students, (d) have high noncompletions rates for students, (e) are unresponsive to students, (f) have truancy and disciplinary problems, or (g) do not adequately prepare students for the future are considered to be at risk. From this perspective, it could also be argued that many features

of schools and classrooms are alienating and ,consequently, driving students out of school rather than keeping them in (Kagan, 1990: Newman, 1989).

These students, identified as “at risk”, often exhibit similar characteristics and habitual traits. “At-risk” students generally exhibit at least some mild form or academic or behavioral problem. Cases that seem to be the exception are children identified as “at-risk” due to economic (i.e. poverty) or familial (e.g. divorce, substance abuse, siblings who have dropped out of school) factors. These problems may present themselves in other ways. In addition to behavior and academic problems, children identified as “at-risk” often have poor attendance, low self-concept, poor interaction with peers, poor listening skills, inadequate social skills, become involved with drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity at an early age (Howard & Anderson, 1988).

Children “at risk” also learn a host of distorted beliefs about themselves and others that cause them discomfort, such as not to feel, not to be angry, to be overly responsible, or to be irresponsible (Black, 1981; Friel & Friel, 1982; Robinson, 1989; Whitfield, 1987; Woititz, 1984). They hear double messages such as “I love you-go away”; “You can’t do anything right-I need you” (Musello, 1984; Woititz, 1984). These mixed messages are confusing to children at risk, and place them in a no-win situation. They are uncertain how to behave in social situations.

Children “at risk” have inadequate skills to manage the stress of living in a dysfunctional family. They are likely to be depressed and impulsive and to experience periods of anxiety and feelings of abandonment (Cantrell & Prinz, 1985). They exhibit low self-esteem, mood disorders, identity confusion, low tolerance for frustration, and a host of other emotional and behavior disorders (Bradshaw, 1988). Children “at risk” feel unprotected and at the mercy of

adults. They develop disruptive behaviors to compensate for feelings of pain and loss. Children "at risk" build walls for protection because they feel worthless and powerless to change their family (Gil, 1983). By the time children "at risk" reach school, they are frequently characterized as exhibiting a short attention span, being easily distracted, and having difficulty following directions. They often display low academic performance, poor communication and social skills that warrant early intervention (Cowan, 1973; Spivack & Swift, 1977; Victor & Halverson, 1976).

As the literature suggests, the term "at risk" child covers a spectrum of children. Students can be identified as "at risk" due to factors both outside of and within the school walls. All these factors can have a negative impact on children. If allowed to persist, these early problems are carried on into adolescence and adulthood and cause pronounced problems both for the individuals who are at risk and for society as a whole (Hovland, Maddux, & Smaby, 1996).

The Concern of Educators

A quality education is one of the surest ways this nation's children have to achieve success later in life (Robinson, 1992). Although schools are not in a position to prevent or alleviate the socioeconomic and cultural conditions that make such characteristics risky for persons in this society, school people see their function as that of an intervening treatment.

Educators are challenged with the responsibility of educating all children amidst a society in flux. The prevalence of racism, sexism, and classism has often plagued our society (Robinson, 1992). However, schools have been commissioned with the task of providing quality services to children to provide them with necessary tools to resist the derailments (e.g., drugs, unplanned

pregnancy) often encountered during adolescence (Robinson & Ward, 1991). That responsibility of education is also filled with other challenges, according to a thirty-six member commission of community leaders, doctors, and teachers sponsored by the American Medical Association and the National Association of State Boards of Education. Some of those concerns include (1990):

1. Suicide is attempted by 18 percent of girls and 10 percent of boys during their growing up years.
2. Teen pregnancy in the United States continues at the highest rate of developed countries; one in ten teenage girls will become pregnant.
3. Alcohol consumption involves one hundred thousand elementary school children who get drunk at least once a week.
4. Gonorrhea and syphilis among teenagers has tripled since 1965, with 2.5 million adolescents each year contracting a sexually transmitted disease.
5. Drugs affect more than 3.5 million twelve-to-seventeen year olds who have tried marijuana and one-third who are regular users; a half-million young people have tried cocaine - half of these regular users.
6. Arrests- in 1950 youths between fourteen and seventeen years of age had a rate of four per thousand. In 1985, the arrest rate was 118 per 1000.
7. The dropout rate in the United States currently stands at 30 percent.
8. The poverty rate for young people six to seventeen years old living in families with incomes below the poverty was 13 percent in 1969 and increased to 20 percent in 1985.

(cited in Shane, 1990, 13)

In view of these startling facts, it is apparent that educators must come to terms with the needs of children today, in order to better service the nation's

future. The United States economy no longer has large numbers of jobs for workers lacking basic skills. Increased levels of education are needed to compete in a technological world; therefore, school failure is indeed a liability and a primary concern for the education system (Carey, Reinat, & Fontes, 1990). Recent studies of cities experiencing very high growth rates find that even when entry-level jobs (such as fast-food jobs) are plentiful, there is a substantial core of workers who cannot qualify for them because of poor basic skills. Allowing large numbers of disadvantaged students to leave school with minimal skills ensures them a life of poverty and dependence, the consequences of which are disastrous to the social cohesiveness and well-being of our nation (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989; Morris, 1991). Yet the problem of low achievement is by no means restricted to poor or minority students. More than 10 percent of advantaged students lack the ability to read popular magazines, and only half have the reading skills considered necessary to read most newspaper stories or popular novels (NAEP, 1985).

The problem of students leaving school before graduation is a national crisis. Twenty-five percent of our nation's youth, between 14 to 16 years of age, drop out of high school before graduation (Brodinsky, 1989). With an average of 3,789 teenagers leaving the school systems daily, the economic implications are astronomical (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989; Morris, 1991). Dropouts cost United States taxpayers billions of dollars in lost local, state, and federal tax revenues. The unemployment rate of high school dropouts is four times higher than that of graduates. Consequently, dropouts earn approximately \$200,000 less, over a lifetime, than do graduates (Edmondson & White, 1998).

James S. Catterall (1985) estimates that each year's class of dropouts will cost over \$200 billion in both lost earnings and unrealized tax revenues during

their lifetimes. Additionally, billions will be spent for welfare, medical aid programs, and expenses in the criminal justice system. These are expenses that can and should be avoided. Keeping a teenager in school by providing him or her with a quality education that will prepare that youth for gainful employment after graduation is much more cost-effective than providing welfare payments and other forms of public assistance for a lifetime. One more reason to look at successful "at-risk" programs.

As many economists have pointed out, if the United States is to compete successfully in the world market, we must work smarter, not harder (Dryfoos, 1990). Real and lasting improvements in the standards of living of nations only come about through increases in the productivity of the workforce. The United States moved from a primarily agricultural economy through the industrial to the current technological economy. The job market is dictating each era's educational needs (Dryfoos, 1990). Today, those needs require a very high level of psychosocial and academic development for children to be successful both in school and later in adult life. History demonstrates that people able to participate in the primary job market have the best chance of living successfully in families, rearing their children adequately, acting as responsible citizens, finding satisfaction and meaning in life, and thereby experiencing as individuals a powerful sense of control and belonging within the society. Therefore, educators play an important role in adding to the reality of such a life.

Not all costs, however, are economic. Research has shown that 75% of prison inmates dropped out of school (Beck, 1991; Brodinsky, 1989; Capuzzi & Gross, 1989; Morris, 1991; Myll, 1988). In addition, the same research revealed that when dropouts have children, the cycles of their own lives are often

repeated. These cycles involve lives of deprivation, failure, and low self-esteem (Beck, 1991).

Educators cannot continue to blame the dropout problem on factors outside the school. When they do so, to a degree, they turn their backs on responsibility for the problem. The response to the problems of "at-risk" students cannot focus on exhorting parents to be better parents or students to be better students, or in blaming the low socio-economic status of the community for student problems in school (Freeman, Gregory & Lab, 1991). These responses are ineffectual. The educational process (i.e. curriculum, instruction, and intervention programs) is a major component of the solution.

When "at risk" children are identified they often become labeled. These students are described as nonachievers, marginal, impoverished, remedial, slow learners, low socioeconomic status, language impaired, and culturally deprived (Lehr & Harris, 1988). Ultimately, these and other labels have a profound impact on both teachers' and counselors' expectations of children's behaviors and professionals' behavior toward children (Fine, 1988; Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968). For instance, Lehr and Harris (1988) found that teachers who identify students as "at risk" often sit farther away from them, ask them to do less work, and reward them for inappropriate behavior. Such children were interrupted more often, were given less eye contact and other nonverbal communication of attention and responsiveness, and questioned primarily at the knowledge and comprehension levels. It appears as if the education system is working against these children and not with them.

It is illustrated that there is a strong relationship between students performance and teacher expectations (Joseph, 1994). Therefore, if teachers expect little success out of these students, this message is also reflective of

themselves. "At-risk" is much more than a label, it becomes a condition of daily life. The powerful impact of the learner's self-concept on academic achievement and social well-being has enormous implications for addressing the needs of the "at-risk" population. A major goal of the educational system is to help children become competent and successful as they proceed through school and enter their adult lives. Schools must find ways to help students enhance their resiliency and ability to respond to challenges and crises in positive, effective ways. Joseph (1994), reported that resilient children use proactive approaches to problem solving, construe experiences in positive and constructive ways, are good-natured, and easy to deal with, and have a sense of control over their lives. Schools have the responsibility to help develop the resiliency.

Whitfield (1987) suggested that perhaps 80% of all children come from dysfunctional families in which they do not receive the necessary love, guidance, and nurturing to form healthy relationships and feel good about themselves and about what they do. They are raised in environments where there is little control. It is suggested that children from these homes acquire codependency characteristics. Codependency is defined as a dysfunctional pattern of living and problem solving nurtured by a set of distorted rules in the family system. These children are "at risk" because these rules impair normal cognitive, affective, and behavioral development (Friel & Friel, 1982). Caplan (1964) suggested that children from dysfunctional families benefit from interventions at the early stages of development. With a significant number of children "at risk", Hohenshil and Hohenshil (1989) suggested that schools are appropriate for early intervention programs, which would benefit all children.

There are many reasons why students become discouraged about their educational experiences and drop-out. Finding alternatives to combat this problem can be complex. These alternatives involve the commitment of educators, the community, politicians, and parents. If the students who are "at-risk" of dropping out of school are not identified and helped, the ripple effect may be seen throughout society in prisons, the jobless rate, and in families that later suffer from poverty, alcoholism, violence, and neglect (White & Mullis, 1992).

The United States cannot afford to continue to allow school systems to turn out students lacking in the skills necessary to becoming productive citizens. The United States cannot afford to allow children to start out on a path that begins with poor achievement and leads to truancy, behavior problems, delinquency, early pregnancy, and dropout. The economic costs, not to mention the social costs, of allowing this progression to unfold for so many students are intolerable. The negative spiral that begins with poor achievement in early grades can be reversed. Schools can guarantee virtually all children adequate basic skills in the elementary school, and through that this could dramatically increase the school success of large numbers of students and consequently the quality of life of society (Pesseisen, 1988).

As Pesseisen (1988) indicated, "at risk" is just a label which suggests that populations of young people are being threatened by a systematic external danger in the larger community. The compelling problems are rooted outside the learner in the society itself. Curricular reorganization and teacher commitment to excellence for all students can evoke positive changes in achievement for the "at-risk" child.

Bearing all the above factors in mind, education and policy makers need to foster protective mechanisms that encourage resiliency and they should design programs that address the needs of this population of children. The economic and social costs of failing to assist and remediate "at-risk" students can be catastrophic (McLaughlin, 1992). Addressing this issue dramatically increases the school success of large numbers of students and consequently the quality of life of society.

Components of a Successful "At-Risk" Program

The number of students being labeled as "at-risk" is dramatically on the rise (Brown, 1986). Although the ideas of providing assistance to "at-risk" students at as early an age as possible seems to be just common sense, it is only in the past decade that early intervention programs have been developed and become widespread. More and more educators are realizing that the earlier the intervention, the greater the chance of producing meaningful change in a child. These efforts would be a response to help "at-risk" children become independent, responsible, and productive community members-which is the ultimate goal for every student.

Traditionally, the "at-risk" child has been taught through watered-down curriculum, sequenced basic-skills curriculum, special services, and tracked, or remedial classes. The research indicates these traditional methods to be less effective and often warrant negative consequences. Relatively little progress has been made in advancing the education of at-risk students in the previous twenty years. Studies show remediation, the main educational strategy for "at-risk" students, actually slowed down students' progress, placing them farther and farther behind the mainstream (Engman, 1992). Most of these strategies also contribute to reduced expectations and stigmatization of "at-risk" students

(Levin & Hopfenberg, 1991). Educators must prepare students for lessons rather than repair them after the fact. Schools must begin to work in a preventative, pro-active fashion, as well as continue the effective components of the traditional treatment mode. A wide range of students are categorized as "at-risk", therefore educators need to be aware that this diversity also requires diversity in programs and interventions.

Programs that have proven to be most successful share essentials that can be incorporated into any "at-risk" program. Most importantly, the educational success of the at-risk student is dependent upon four groups. The groups are educators, schools, parents, and the community. These groups must function in an integrative way to accomplish the goal of successfully educating the "at-risk" student population.

Role of Educators

Administrators, teachers, and other school personnel share the responsibility of providing effective and efficient instruction for all students. The teacher is the leader of the classroom and should lead by example. A major concern of the classroom teacher should be to help build a positive self-concept for all students. Each student should be treated with respect, and his or her worth as a person should be validated in the classroom on a regular basis (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). An individual's self-concept continually accumulates experiences that tell the individuals their degree of self-worth. The self-concept consists of everyday happenings, good and bad, that the learner experiences. Unfortunately, school and home experiences, both of which should contribute positively to the self-concept, often do just the opposite (Manning, 1993). Teachers know that children feel better about themselves when they do better in school, and vice-versa (Canfield, 1990).

The Canfield program uses a method to help strengthen students' self-esteem and to increase their chances for success in life. This program proposes that educators can improve children's self-esteem on a daily basis by encouraging them to have positive attitudes and self-perceptions. Canfield's program includes (1) teachers' accepting total responsibility for the learner's self-concept, (2) focusing on the positive, (3) teachers' monitoring their comments, (4) using student support groups in the classroom, (5) identifying strengths and resources, (6) clarifying the learner's vision so motivation can lead to goals, (7) setting goals and objectives, (8) taking appropriate action, and (9) responding appropriately to feedback (Canfield, 1990). In some cases, improving self-esteem might be the most significant essential.

Educators must accept students with all their problems in a nonjudgmental manner. For education to be effective, those charged with the task should be caring and supportive. They must identify those characteristics of students that cause them to be at risk and develop teaching strategies to meet their needs (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Effective teaching strategies with at-risk students can be effective for all students (Manning, 1993).

"At risk" students need administrators and teachers who are willing to take risks in providing new and innovative programs. They must be committed to the task of minimizing the negative effects of race, poverty, and other social, economic, and cultural variables and maximizing their efforts toward enhancing the quality of educational programs available for those students "at-risk". Essentially, educators are responsible for making the educational experience meaningful.

Effective programs should have high expectations for "at-risk" students, regardless of the "at-risk" condition. Programs for gifted and talented learners

place learners in intellectually stimulating situations and expect students to meet high proficiency levels; "at-risk" programs, however, often fail to demand excellence from learners due to low expectations. Research supports that instruction with at-risk children should focus on their strengths and should build upon their prior knowledge or experiences. Rather than allowing or even promoting mediocrity, "at-risk" programs should be challenging and rigorous and have high expectations. Students can achieve in such programs when educators provide developmentally appropriate objectives, methods, and materials (Manning, 1993).

The Accelerated Schools for Disadvantaged Students program educates academically "at-risk" learners by having high expectations, providing deadlines by which students are to be performing at grade level, offering stimulating instructional programs, having the educational staff that will be offering the program do the planning, and using all available parental and community resources (MacDowell, 1989). These efforts should close the achievement gap after a period of intervention so that students can return to regular instruction. This approach also addresses serious achievement deficits, the single most important reason students drop out of school. The accelerated curriculum seeks to bring all learners up to grade level rather than limiting interventions to "pull-out" programs (Hopfenberg, Lewin, Meister, & Rogers, 1991).

Staff development also comprises a key ingredient of successful programs (Bierlein & Vandegrift, 1993). Staff must continually upgrade their skills and keep abreast of the latest research and technology that will enhance their abilities to provide individualized instruction. Staff development may also help teachers understand the reasons for distrust and alienation between home and school. Everyone involved needs to understand how a power-sharing

organizational structure and a collaborative management style, with strong administrator leadership, reduces parent and student distrust and alienation.

The School System

Today's schools are ill-equipped and ill-designed to accommodate today's students (Bierlein & Vandegrift, 1993). Although almost every aspect of United States society has entered into the technological age, the United States school system remains in the industrial age. The programs, curriculum, and even buildings are essentially the same as they were 100 years ago. Probably the only thing that has changed is the learner. Today's children bring to the schools a completely different set of problems and concerns.

According to researchers, school size may have an effect on school dropping-out behaviors. Research on class size reveals that smaller classes result in higher student achievement (Bierlein & Vandegrift, 1993). Large schools with poor and minority enrollments tend to alienate students. These students have little contact with teachers or other adults and fail to become a part of the school community (Whelage & Rutter, 1986). Attention must be paid to reducing class sizes.

The school should provide a supportive environment for all students. This requires the school to embrace each student as an individual. Students should feel that they are part of the school community. The school should provide a positive environment for the students. The pupils should be involved in developing school spirit, and a strong activity program should be established for them.

A number of authors feel that students should also be involved in cooperative learning activities. Cooperative learning improves achievement for students and develops social skills that students can use in the school

environment and society (Slavin, 1983). Few opportunities are granted to children in terms of becoming active learners or problem solvers. This teaching strategy seems to compliment and reflect the real, adult world, to which children will soon become members. It is also reflective of the approach the school system should be taking itself.

Schools need to shift to a school-based, decision making approach, with heavy involvement of teachers and parents, which creates new roles for administrative leadership. Among the areas most appropriate for site-based participation in decisions are the choice of curriculum, instructional strategies, instructional materials and personnel, and the allocation of resources (Hopfenberg & Levin, 1991).

Awards and recognition for which all students have equal access should also be provided (Brandt, 1988). They should be based on a variety of accomplishments, thus allowing students who may not be the top achievers to experience success and receive recognition. This may also encourage cooperation rather than the current completion.

The school system needs to help develop resiliency in children. This is the ability to respond to challenges and crises in positive, effective ways. One way to do this is to build positive experiences for the child by using protective factors, rather than to focus on "fixing" identified problems (Christiansen, 1997). Protective factors are elements from the environment that can buffer children from stress and trauma and lead to resilience (Garbarino, 1992). Protective factors that help increase a child's resilience include (a) mentors, (b) special hobbies and interests, and (c) positive relationships with significant adults. These interventions can be fostered through the educators and community also.

Successful mentoring may result in positive outcomes such as increased school attendance, improved academic performance, and increased self-confidence for the student (White-Hood, 1993). The relationship with the adult may provide an opportunity for the student to explore personal interests with the support and guidance of a mentor. These special friendships can open doors to new worlds and create foundations for lifetime change (Rutter, 1979; Werner, 1989). These mentors serve as a positive role model for the child. In some cases, students may not have the family resources necessary to foster these relationships in various settings. Students need someone to connect with both inside and outside of school.

School counselors can serve as a valuable resource to assist "at-risk" children. They can help children in developing hobbies and interests and provide school wide opportunities for all students. Children who are involved in hobbies, creative endeavors, athletic pursuits and other extracurricular programs often receive positive recognition for such interests and activities (Katz, 1994). These children also tend to participate more in school and are less likely to drop out. Tracking potential school responsibilities that children can assume is one way of facilitating the participation of children in school (Bernard, 1993). Examples of these responsibilities, for which children can receive schoolwide recognition, include raising and lowering the flag, monitoring the school weather station, assisting in the office, library, or classroom; sorting mail; and working on special school projects (Christiansen, 1997). This approach emphasizes involvement, problem solving, responsibility, and accountability.

School counselors can also develop programs aimed at raising self-esteem, increasing achievement and cooperation, addressing social skills development,

and increasing positive classroom behavior (Edmondson & White, 1998). Counselors can implement these programs through various groups and classroom visits throughout the school year. Counselors can also provide courses in parenting skills. However, with this comes the challenge of getting the parents there who need to be there (Christiansen, 1997). The counselor can also work directly with the community and use them as a resource for various interventions, such as, tutoring programs.

The basic structure of the school is also a factor. Schools in which order, routine, predictability, and organization exist provide a protective factor for children (Garbarino, 1992). The organization and structure of a school can help children respond in an environment of safety and security. The combination of an established routine in the school setting and attention to the climate of the school community increases the participation of "at-risk" students (Long & Newman, 1980). Schools cannot make at-riskness disappear, but they can knock down some of the barriers that stand in the way of children being successful.

The Parents

Schools need to reengage parents and families in the educational process, especially for "at risk" learners. Partnership between parents and school personnel enhance the education of learners and provide parents with opportunities to play crucial roles in young adolescents' health and safety, in preparing them for school, and in creating a home environment that contributes to school achievement and overall development.

Parents have the responsibility of overseeing everything happening in their child's educational experience. Educators must stress constantly to them that it is not enough to send the child to school well rested, fed, clean, and neat, and

with proper school supplies. Parents need to show their children they want them to be successful and school success is also a value of the home. The parent needs to know that he or she has a responsibility to spend time with the child at the end of the school day to interact with them about their day.

Educators need to understand how to promote desirable home-school relationships so they can minimize the anxiety about school that undergirds parents' and students'. Parents should be encouraged to attend school-sponsored activities such as Parent's Night and PTO meetings. If the parents attend school sporting events, concerts, plays, and programs with the child, it often encourages the student to participate in such extracurricular activities. PAP, Program for Assessment and Support, also invites parents to training sessions throughout the school year on such topics as how to read to children (Henderson & Kreisman, 1991). Children become involved in academics as well as social activities if they know that their parents are interested and supportive of these efforts.

The Family Day Program in Gary, Indiana, strengthens ties between educators, families and students by having a special day that parents come to school with their children to watch films, hear speakers, sing together, and participate in other learning activities. Parents and children share their likes and dislikes, suggest ways to improve family interactions, discover each other's uniqueness, and learn to cope with each other (Manning, 1993).

Parents need to be united with the school system in a common vision. No one can do it alone. Often times, these two seem to be working against one another, rather than being allies. School and parents must support and depend on one another to make all children success in school and life.

The Community

Schools must also involve the community in their efforts to assist students. Schools cannot address all the needs by themselves, and the community must get involved in seeking solutions. The mission, concerns, and values of the school system must be shared with the community in order to gain their support and ideas. The community can serve as a resource as well as a support system. Working together toward the common goal of assisting students can establish and enhance a positive working relationship between school and community.

Every segment of the community, families, businesses, and government is going to have to cooperate to halt the upward trend in school dropouts. It is estimated that every \$1 invested today will save \$4.75 in future cost of welfare, remedial education programs, health care, and crime (Staff Report of the Select Committee, 1985). Businesses must devote time, money, and energy to developing programs that will entice the "at risk" population to stay in school and assist them in gaining some success in their learning careers. At risk students need more resources, services, and innovative programs that relate to the real world (Committee for Economic Development, 1987).

Members of the community can serve as volunteer tutors for programs. By using volunteer tutors, one program, On-a-Roll began to notice improvement in the students' attitude toward school, as well as improved skills (Engman, 1992). Tutoring programs are effective, depending on how they are delivered. For example, before and after school tutorials were not as well-received as during school programs. Teachers also preferred that they took place within the classroom setting rather than on a pull-out basis (Bierlein & Vandegrift, 1993).

Other interventions can be when business get involved in an adopt-a-school program. One such program was adopted in Washoe County schools near Reno, Nevada, where their graduation rate had dropped to 71

percent in 1988. Harrah's Reno, a local casino, successfully collaborated with the school to address this concern (Nebgen, 1992).

Harrah's general manager recruited a coalition of community leaders from business, the courts, local colleges, and various professions to fight the community's dropout problem. The group implemented programs designed to stem the tide of dropouts, each aimed at a different group of students or designed to alleviate a different problem that might lead a youngster to drop out of school (Nebgen, 1992).

One intervention is for school's to develop a work permit program. The program would give positive work experiences to students who are "at risk" of dropping out, without threatening their ability to graduate from high school. The work permit can be revoked if the student is not attending school and performing to their ability. This can also be a part of vocational programs set up by community members. Vocational programs often produce vocational outcomes (Bierlein & Vandegrift, 1993).

Mentors are another successful intervention that can involve the community. Mentor programs can pair adult volunteers from the community with the students. Their relationship can involve meeting once a week, attending workshops on self-esteem, decision making, and communication skills; participation in an awards event' and spend a day together at the mentor's workplace. Their involvement can also include unstructured activities, especially with younger students. Just giving students undivided attention from an adult can give students a positive feeling about themselves, and about school. Mentors can include university students, police officers, fire fighters, doctors, attorneys and business executives.

Businesses can also assist to fund various programs. For example, programs to train staff members to better assist children. Businesses can also help to provide home-based family counseling and parent education opportunities (Nebgen, 1992).

Youth programs and informal social networks set up by the community members can also serve as a mediating structure that protect young people from the risks of living within their community (Engman, 1992). Youth programs are opportunities to encourage and develop children's talents and discourage involvement with drugs and crimes.

Children are members of the community and will one day be expected to support their community. Therefore, members of society, must assist the schools to develop ideas to intervene with children to encourage success, which will essentially lead to success for the nation as a whole.

Challengers - Central Elementary's "At-Risk" Program

Challengers is an after-school program at Central Elementary School designed for students identified as "at risk" in grades one through five. The idea was started with the formation of a committee to identify ways to meet the needs of those students identified as "at-risk." Criteria for "at risk identification was developed in the 1993-1994 school year. Based on research and experience, teachers and staff brainstormed characteristics of students "at-risk." The criteria is on a rating scale to be completed by the classroom teachers. The rating scale includes the following factors: high absentee rate, lack of stability at home, numerous family relocations, low self-esteem, referrals to social worker for psychological assistance, abnormally withdrawn, no or few friends, poor social behavior or adjustment, apathy, descending grade trends, weak reading skills, a

history of failure or retention, students from divorce or death of a parent or sibling, and incomplete classwork.

The "at-risk" program started with an Adopt-A-Student program. Teachers recommended students, using the rating scale, to be paired up with teachers and staff members in the building who are adoptive parents to the students. The purpose being to provide the student with another positive adult role model who can spend twenty to thirty minutes per week with the child. The time can be spent reading together, writing letters, celebrating an occasion or just conversation.

In February of 1995, the "at-risk" program grew to include an after school program for the students being identified. The program is facilitated voluntarily by faculty and staff of Central Elementary. The program also included tutors from Francis Howell High School and DeSmet High School. The Parent Teacher Organization helped to support the program by supplying money for buses and supplies. During the 1995-1996 school year, the program continued to grow and was renamed *Challengers*.

Challengers program participation is an opportunity for students to obtain extra help and support. The goal of the program is to increase students' self-esteem, enhance school motivation, and provide academic support. The students participate in the program one day a week. The students participate in fun, enrichment, life skill and tutoring activities. These activities may include sports, art and crafts, computer activities, science club, model building, aerobics, cooking, drawing and painting scenery for school plays and basic skills games. In addition to the activities, every other week is used as a tutoring session. The students work on homework or participate in games and activities focusing on skill acceleration. The program includes opportunities to do things

for others, i.e, nursing homes. The program also provides character education development by participating in activities to learn respect, cooperation, independence, and organization skills. During the 1998-1999 school year, thirty-seven students participated in the program. Volunteers for the program currently include five faculty members from the school. Additional help is sometimes requested for various activities.

Summary of the Literature

“At risk” students can be identified in any school. Factors making a child “at risk” can be the result of both the school and the home environment. Each of these children bring about various behaviors, problems and issues; however the ultimate concern is in the the cost to society, economically and socially, by allowing a high drop-out rate to occur. Early intervention strategies must be implemented. Intervention requires the collaboration of educators, the school system, parents, and the community working together toward a unified goal.

Early intervention can include an “at risk” program to increase self-esteem and provide academic support. The likelihood of an “at-risk” program being effective can be increased when educators identify the needs of “at-risk” students, and include key components that have contributed to the success of other programs. Each of the components mentioned has the potential for increasing a program’s success, however it may be impossible to implement everything all at once. Therefore, educators must be selective and at least take small steps to implement the pieces they can, with the intention of adding to the program each year. Decisions for additional program components can grow out of program evaluations, which need to be done annually. It is imperative to the success of a program, to include evaluations. It was evident through the

research that program ideas continue to be implemented without program evaluation.

Statement of Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis #1:

There is no significant difference in self-esteem scores and grade point average when student participate in an at risk program.

Alternate Hypothesis #1:

At risk students participating in an at risk program will show a significant increase in self-esteem scores and grade point average from the first quarter to the fourth quarter.

Null Hypothesis #2:

There is no significant difference in self-esteem scores of at risk students who participate in an intervention program, than those who do not.

Alternate Hypothesis #2:

At risk students participating in at risk program program will show a significant difference in self-esteem scores as a result of the program compared to children who do not participate in the program.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Subjects

The sample for this study was selected from a population of students from a primarily middle class public school in St. Charles, MO. The students attend a year round cycle school in a rapidly growing county. The building houses children in grades kindergarten through fifth. The current enrollment of the school is 1,352. The students who qualified for this program were identified as being "at-risk" based on a needs assessment survey completed by the classroom teachers. The students participating in the study were in grades two through five. The experimental group consisted of 26 students; 12 male students and 14 female students with a mean age of 9.04 (S.D.=.82). The control group consisted of 29 students; 19 male students and 10 female students, with a mean age of 9.28 (S.D.=.96). Data analysis showed no significant differences in proportion of gender between the two groups ($x = .815$) ($p=0.05$). Gender and grade are shown in table 3.1 and 3.2. Chi squared tests indicate that gender and grade differences proportion was not significant ($p<0.05$).

Table 3.1: Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Experiment	12	14	26
Control	19	10	29
Total	31	24	55

Table 3.2: Grade Level

Grade Level:	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Experiment	3	14	7	2	26
Control	5	12	9	3	29
Total	8	26	16	5	55

Instrumentation

To measure program success, data collection will include the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, and a data sheet completed by the teacher containing subject area percentages for the school year (Appendix). The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale is an 80 item self-report instrument designed for children ages 8 to 18 years. The test takes about 15-20 minutes to administer, either in a group or individually (Piers, 1984).

The Piers-Harris was developed in the 1960s as a research instrument and as an aid to clinical and educational evaluation in applied settings. The Piers-Harris provides a total score and six "cluster scales": Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction. All cluster scales are scored in the direction of positive self-concept so that a high score on a particular cluster scale indicates a high level of assessed self-concept within that specific dimension. The maximum total score is an 80. Other maximum scores for each subscale are: Behavior (16), Intellectual and School Status (17), Physical Appearance and Attributes (13), Anxiety (14), Popularity (12), and Happiness and Satisfaction (10). For the total score, the normative sample consisted of 1,183 school children from a public school system in a small town in Pennsylvania. The children ranged in grade from 4 through 12. Norms for the

cluster scales were based on a sample of 485 public school children, including 279 elementary school, 55 junior high school, and 151 senior high school students. Interpretation of the Piers-Harris is based on individual item responses, the cluster scales, and the summary scores. The scale was designed primarily for research on the development of children's self attitudes and correlates of these attitudes. A number of studies have investigated the test-retest stability of the Piers-Harris with both normal and special samples. The reliability coefficients ranged from .42 (with an interval of 8 months) to .96 (with an interval of 3 to 4 weeks). The median test-retest reliability was .73. Piers (1973) also calculated internal consistency on a normative sample of 297 sixth and tenth graders. Using the KR-20 formula, the reliability estimates for the total score ranged from .88 to .93 for various subgroups. The reliability figures compare favorably with other measures used to assess personality traits in children and adolescents (Piers, 1984).

A study of construct validity of self-concept was conducted examining three aspects of self-concept for five self-concept instruments, including the Piers-Harris. It concluded that self-concept interpretations of the total score on the Piers-Harris are warranted based on convergent validity coefficients. Although high correlations between measures of other constructs and the Piers-Harris have been obtained, further research into its discriminant validity is required (Piers, 1984).

The Challengers Needs Assessment survey was developed to identify the population of "at-risk" students (Appendix). It involves a rating scale which includes research based characteristics of students identified as "at-risk." Those characteristics include high absentee rate, lack of stability at home, numerous family relocations, low self-esteem, referrals to social worker, abnormally

withdrawn, poor social adjustment, apathy, descending grade trend, weak reading skills, low test scores and academic difficulties, retention, students from a divorce/death of a parent or sibling, and incomplete classwork. The students are rated on each of these characteristics and each characteristic is weighted to obtain a total score for each student.

Procedure

Identification of students was done at the end of the 1997-1998 school year. This information was obtained by the classroom teacher completing the Needs Assessment Survey. Parental permission was then obtained for children of both the experimental and control groups (Appendix). The Piers-Harris pre-test was administered to the children in Challengers on October 12, 1998, approximately two weeks after Challengers began. The children were administered the Piers-Harris orally and responses recorded by the Challengers staff. The experimental group then participating in the Challengers program for nine months. The experimental group was then administered the Piers-Harris post-test on June 17, 1999. The control group was also administered the Piers-Harris at this time.

To determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the self-concept of the experimental and control group, the mean score of the Piers-Harris for the control group was compared to the mean score for the control group, using t-tests.

Data on grades was recorded by the classroom teacher quarterly and turned in to the administration staff to determine if there was a statistically significant increase in grade point averages over the nine month period.

Chapter 4

Results

To test the hypothesis that there was significant change in Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, Happiness and Satisfaction and Grade Point Average, of the experimental group from pre-treatment to post-treatment, matched sample t-test were conducted. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Results of data analysis revealed that the students reported a significant increase in the following subscales on the Piers-Harris: Behavior ($p=.021$), Happiness ($p=.031$), Popularity ($p=.000$), and Total Score ($p=.006$). However, there were no significant differences in Anxiety, Physical Appearance, and Intellectual Status. Also, no significant increase in grade point average. Therefore, Null Hypothesis #1 was partially rejected.

Table 4.1: Matched Sample Test

	Pre-treatment		Post-treatment		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Behavior	12.00	2.99	13.15	2.71	2.474*	.021
Anxiety	8.42	2.98	8.96	2.73	1.494	.148
Happiness	7.73	1.31	8.15	1.35	2.282*	.031
Physical Appearance	8.42	2.00	8.54	1.98	.515	.611
Popularity	7.42	2.23	8.19	1.96	4.811*	.000
Intellectual Status	11.23	3.99	11.58	3.62	.647	.523
Total Score	55.19	10.83	58.23	9.83	2.982*	.006
Grade Point Avg.	2.27	.8989	2.49	.6689	1.472	.153

* $p<0.05$

To test the hypothesis that there was a significant difference between control group and experimental group in Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, Happiness and

Satisfaction and Grade point Average, and independent sample t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in Table 4.5. Results of data analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups on total self esteem scores on the Piers-Harris ($p=.005$). In addition, significant differences were reported on the Behavior subscale ($p=.005$), the Happiness subscale ($p=.028$). However, no significant differences were noted in Anxiety, Physical Appearance, Popularity, and Intellectual Status. Also, no significant difference between experimental and control group in their grade point averages. It is noteworthy that although data analysis revealed statistical differences, meaningful differences will be noted in the discussion. Thus, the Null Hypothesis can only be partially rejected.

Table 4.2: Post-Treatment Independent Sample t-test

	Experimental Group		Control Group		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Behavior	13.15	2.71	10.66	3.57	2.899*	.005
Anxiety	8.96	2.73	7.93	2.69	1.409	.165
Happiness	8.15	1.35	7.28	1.51	2.265*	.028
Physical Appearance	8.54	1.98	8.03	2.54	.813	.420
Popularity	8.19	1.96	7.31	2.32	1.515	.136
Intellectual Status	11.58	3.62	10.48	3.46	1.145	.257
Total Score	58.23	9.83	50.00	10.81	2.942*	.005
Grade Point Average	2.27	.8989	2.31	.5536	-.181	.857

* $p<0.05$

Chapter 5

Discussion

A significant segment of the American population today appears to be labeled as “at-risk.” The problem of students leaving school before graduation is a national crisis. Dropouts cost the United States billions of unearned dollars, along with the social costs to society.

For the first time in history, people must obtain a formal education to stand a good chance of successfully accomplishing adult tasks. Improving the education of these children is one of the most important tasks our nation faces. Educators are challenged with that responsibility. To compete in the job market today, children must develop higher levels of social and academic development, which must begin at school.

Although the identification of “at-risk” students is hardly a new concept, only in the past decade has early intervention programs become developed and become more widespread. It appears to be more cost-effective to invest money in programs at an early age, than wait to see the long term results of no intervention. The role of the elementary education program appears to be a pro-active preventative approach. Many of the severely negative results of “at-risk” behaviors have not yet surfaced, and these programs could possibly benefit all children.

This study examined the effects of an early intervention program with “at-risk” students. Although the data analysis indicated significant increases from pre-treatment scores and post-treatment scores on the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale for the experimental group, Grade Point Averages increase was not significant. It is important to note that, although significant increases were reported on the following subscales: Behavior, Happiness, Popularity, and

Total Score for Piers-Harris, these differences do not appear to be meaningful differences. The increase in the score does not indicate a meaningful difference or change in the child. Lack of significant differences could be due to the fact that none of the mean scores on the Piers-Harris pre-treatment and post-treatment fell below the average range. Students appeared to score themselves in a more positive direction. The Piers-Harris is also a self-report instrument completed by the child. Because this is the child's perception, the scores are subject to conscious and unconscious distortions by children, usually in the direction of more socially desirable responses. Self-concept is also a complex concept, difficult to measure.

In comparing the experimental and control group, the students who participated in the "at-risk" program did show significant differences in self-esteem scores than those who did not at the termination of the program. Again although these scores were significantly different, they did not appear to be meaningfully different. The differences did not indicate substantial difference between the two groups.

Also, no significant increase was reported on grade point averages. Lack of significant increase could be due to lack of parental involvement, as well as, not enough focus on the academic component of the program. Students are receiving direct academic support only approximately three times a month.

Another limitation is there was no control group pre-treatment scores for the Piers-Harris. Therefore, their levels prior to treatment were not determined. This limited the comparison of the groups prior to the intervention to indicate any differences. Also, several of the students in the program received counseling intervention throughout the school year. These interventions could have also positively impacted Piers-Harris scores.

Recommendations for the program would include a more intensive approach to include possibly tutoring for the students during the school day. This could be implemented with the help of community members or parents in the building. The committee of teachers also need to assess the program's needs annually by formulating parent and child input of positive and negative experiences during program attendance. Parents and the community need to be a part of this program to make it more successful. The committee could also find ways to link the program with the middle school and involve them during the process to prepare these students for school years to come. Perhaps a final recommendation is to gain financial assistance through grants. More money could mean more children being reached by this program. Regardless of the changes made, a program such as Challengers needs to continue in the schools. Continued research will help fine tune such programs in an effort to provide more effective programs to "at-risk" students.

CHALLENGERS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Name _____ Teacher _____

1998-1999 Grade _____ 1998-1999 Cycle _____

Please rate the students

0-5

with 5 being extreme.

1. High absentee rate _____
2. Lack of stability at home (job, substance abuse, etc.) _____
3. Numerous family relocations _____
4. Low self-esteem _____
6. Referrals to social worker for psychological assistance _____
7. Abnormally withdrawn, no or few friends _____
8. Poor social adjustment/ inappropriate social behavior _____
9. Apathy, disengagement from school _____
10. Overall descending grade trend _____
11. Weak reading skills _____
12. Low test scores and academic deficiencies _____
13. A history of failure/retention in school _____
14. If in special ed, a lack of success _____
15. Students from divorce/death of a parent or sibling _____
16. Incomplete classwork _____

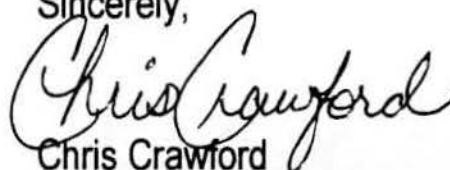
CENTRAL ELEMENTARY CHALLENGERS PROGRAM

October 1, 1999

Dear Parents,

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in Central's Changers Program this school year. We would like to evaluate the program over the course of the year. As part of our evaluation, we will be administering the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale. The Piers-Harris is a self-report instrument which takes about fifteen minutes to complete. It is designed primarily for measuring development of children's self -attitudes. In addition to this test, we will also receive data from your child's classroom teacher regarding grades and attendance. The data will be compiled to provide us with information for structuring our program, along with being used in a Master's Thesis Project at Lindenwood University. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,



Chris Crawford

Cycle B Counselor

My child _____ has permission to participate in this project. I understand that my child's name will not be used in the project, only the data from this school year.

Parent/Guardian's signature

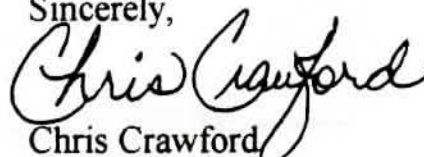
CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

June 1, 1999

Dear Parents,

Now that we are approaching the end of our school year, we need to take some time to evaluate Central's Challengers Program. In order to do this, we are looking for a "control group" of students who did not participate in this after-school program. The students selected as part of this control group, will complete a questionnaire at school which will take about fifteen minutes. The Piers-Harris is a self-report instrument designed primarily for measuring development of children's self-attitudes. The data will be compiled to provide us with information for structuring our program, along with being used in a Master's Thesis Project at Lindenwood University. Please understand that your child's name will not be used in this project, only the data. If you will allow your child to participate in this project, please sign the permission slip below and return it to school. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me. Thank you in advance for allowing your child to participate.

Sincerely,



Chris Crawford
Cycle B Counselor

My child _____ has permission to participate in this project. I understand that my child's name will not be used in this project, only the data from this school year.

Parent/Guardian's signature

**Please return to Chris Crawford

Central Elementary Challengers Program

Child's name _____ School year _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____

Please list the child's grades for each completed quarter. List the percentage earned for each subject area. Please do not place letter or number grades on this sheet of paper.

	1st qtr.	2nd qtr.	3rd qtr.	4th qtr.
Reading	_____	_____	_____	_____
Language	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spelling	_____	_____	_____	_____
Math	_____	_____	_____	_____

Number of absences:

1st qtr. _____ 2nd qtr. _____ 3rd qtr. _____ 4th qtr. _____

Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale Results(to be completed by counselor)

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale PROFILE FORM

Ellen V. Piers, Ph.D. and Dale B. Harris, Ph.D.

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Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Age: _____ Sex (circle one): Girl Boy Grade: _____

School: _____ Teacher's Name (optional): _____

Percentile	T	I Behavior	II Intellectual and School Status	III Physical Appearance and Attributes	IV Anxiety	V Popularity	VI Happiness and Satisfaction	Total Score	T	Percentile
85										85
								80		
								78-79		80
								77		
								76		75
99										99
98	70		17	13	14	12		75		98
								74		
								73		
								72		
		16						71		
93	65			12				70		93
			16		13		10	69		
								68		
84	60			11		11		67		84
		15	15		12			66		
								65		
								64		
								63		
69	55		14	10	11	10	9	61-62		69
		14						60		
			13		10		8	59		
								57-58		
								56		
50	50	13	12	8	9	9		54-55		50
								53		
								52		
		12	11		8	8	7	50-51		
								49		
31	45			7				47-48		31
		11	10		7	7		45-46		
								44		
		10	9	6				42-43		
								40-41		
16	40		8	5	6	6	6	39		16
		8						37-38		
								35-36		
								33-34		
								31-32		
								30		
7	35			4		4	5	28-29		7
		7	6					26-27		
								24-25		
		5	5	3				23		
								21-22		
2	30		4		3		4	20		2
								19		
								18		1
1		3	3	1	2					
								0-17		25
		2	2		1		1			
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			1				0			
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1. My classmates make fun of meyes no
2. I am a happy personyes no
3. It is hard for me to make friendsyes no
4. I am often sadyes no
5. I am smartyes no
6. I am shyyes no
7. I get nervous when the teacher calls on meyes no
8. My looks bother meyes no
9. When I grow up, I will be an important personyes no
10. I get worried when we have tests in schoolyes no
11. I am unpopularyes no
12. I am well behaved in schoolyes no
13. It is usually my fault when something goes wrongyes no
14. I cause trouble to my familyyes no
15. I am strongyes no
16. I have good ideasyes no
17. I am an important member of my familyyes no
18. I usually want my own wayyes no
19. I am good at making things with my handsyes no
20. I give up easilyyes no

21. I am good in my school workyes no
22. I do many bad thingsyes no
23. I can draw wellyes no
24. I am good in musicyes no
25. I behave badly at homeyes no
26. I am slow in finishing my school workyes no
27. I am an important member of my classyes no
28. I am nervousyes no
29. I have pretty eyesyes no
30. I can give a good report in front of the classyes no
31. In school I am a dreameryes no
32. I pick on my brother(s) and sister(s)yes no
33. My friends like my ideasyes no
34. I often get into troubleyes no
35. I am obedient at homeyes no
36. I am luckyyes no
37. I worry a lotyes no
38. My parents expect too much of meyes no
39. I like being the way I amyes no
40. I feel left out of thingsyes no

41. I have nice hairyes no
42. I often volunteer in schoolyes no
43. I wish I were differentyes no
44. I sleep well at nightyes no
45. I hate schoolyes no
46. I am among the last to be chosen for gamesyes no
47. I am sick a lotyes no
48. I am often mean to other peopleyes no
49. My classmates in school think I have good ideasyes no
50. I am unhappyyes no
51. I have many friendsyes no
52. I am cheerfulyes no
53. I am dumb about most thingsyes no
54. I am good-lookingyes no
55. I have lots of pepyes no
56. I get into a lot of fightsyes no
57. I am popular with boysyes no
58. People pick on meyes no
59. My family is disappointed in meyes no
60. I have a pleasant faceyes no

61. When I try to make something, everything seems to go wrongyes no
62. I am picked on at homeyes no
63. I am a leader in games and sportsyes no
64. I am clumsyyes no
65. In games and sports, I watch instead of playyes no
66. I forget what I learnyes no
67. I am easy to get along withyes no
68. I lose my temper easilyyes no
69. I am popular with girlsyes no
70. I am a good readeryes no
71. I would rather work alone than with a groupyes no
72. I like my brother (sister)yes no
73. I have a good figureyes no
74. I am often afraidyes no
75. I am always dropping or breaking thingsyes no
76. I can be trustedyes no
77. I am different from other peopleyes no
78. I think bad thoughtsyes no
79. I cry easilyyes no
80. I am a good personyes no

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