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The Impact of the Addition of Community Based Truancy Intervention Panels on the Reduction of Student Absences

Lenora Jane Nyeste
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THE IMPACT OF THE ADDITION OF COMMUNITY BASED TRUANCY INTERVENTION PANELS ON THE REDUCTION OF STUDENT ABSENCES

by

Lenora Jane Nyeste

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
Of The University of Southern Mississippi
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2013
ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF THE ADDITION OF COMMUNITY BASED TRUANCY INTERVENTION PANELS ON THE REDUCTION OF STUDENT ABSENCES

by Lenora Jane Nyeste

May 2013

In 2008, a large southeastern school district was awarded an $8.5 million Safe School/Healthy Students (1999) federal grant. The grant, titled Success for All Students (SFAS) (2008) was a collaborative effort between the school district and county commissioners with the shared goal of increasing student achievement and healthy development by providing and sustaining family, school and community prevention and intervention programs. One of the services provided by the SFAS program was the addition of a truancy intervention panel (TIP) in the 35 district schools receiving services.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a TIP on the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent (dependent variable) along with analyzing the responses of panel members pertaining to the effectiveness of the TIP. This was a longitudinal study measuring the dependent variable reported by each of the 108 schools in the district. The percentage rates of TIP schools were compared to non-TIP schools and over time (2006–2011) in TIP schools. Analysis included the comparison of the dependent variable for all, Black, White, and economically disadvantaged student groups. TIP members provided survey responses, which identified strategies used by the TIP to reduce student absences as well as measuring the perceived impact of the TIP at reducing truancy. The survey responses then provided a final measure of program fidelity.
A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006–2011) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to measure the between subjects effect on the dependent variable revealing the addition of a TIP had no impact on the percentage rates compared to non-TIP schools at the elementary, middle, or high school levels. Further analysis of data included the ANOVA to measure the effect of time (2006–2011) on TIP v. non-TIP. Results indicated the addition of the TIP had no impact on the dependent variable over time. Further study included between-subjects multivariate Pillai’s Trace (MANOVA). Data analysis indicated that the addition of a TIP had no impact on the dependent variable compared to non-TIP schools or over years based on student ethnicity or socio-economic standing. Analysis did reveal highly significant differences between the dependent variables of White students compared to Black students with White students reporting significantly higher percentages of absences than Black students.

This study found an overall decline in the dependent variable for the district in both TIP and non-TIP schools although the addition of the TIP had no more impact on the dependent variable than strategies used to reduce student absences in non-TIP schools. Survey responses indicated TIP members believe the addition of a TIP to be an effective method in reducing student truancy.
The University Of Southern Mississippi

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by

Lenora Jane Nyeste

A Dissertation
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of The University of Southern Mississippi
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Student truancy contributes to a number of problems including student drop out rates, unemployment, welfare dependency, and incarcerations. The education system has taken on an integral role in influencing students to stay in school. Community-based truancy reduction programs have been implemented to lend support to education systems in an effort to provide services which may reduce the number of days students are absent from school. One example, The Success for All Students Program (SFAS) (Success for All Students Program, 2008) funded through an $8.5 million grant under the federal Safe School/Healthy Students Program (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999), included the addition of a community-based truancy intervention panel (TIP). The TIP is a strategy implemented through local schools to reduce student absences. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of impact the addition of a TIP had on reducing student absences.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the purpose of the study as well as the background, statement of the problem, research questions, definitions, delimitations, assumptions, justification, and summary. Chapter II presents the theoretical framework for this study as well as the review of literature. Chapter III illustrates the methodology for the study and includes the research design, participants, instrumentation, procedures, and limitations. Chapters IV and V describe the results of the research, discuss findings, assess implications, and provide suggestions for future studies.
Background

Truancy has been defined as the unexcused absence from classes or school (DeKalb & ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1999, p. 2). The effects of truancy are numerous and affect not only the student that chooses to be absent, but society suffers as well from an increase in crime to a lower tax base and a higher demand for public assistance. Students that are absent from school on a regular basis are more likely to be involved in delinquency, lowered educational attainment, and a lifetime of potential problems such as drug involvement and criminal activity (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001; Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Hawkins, 1995).

The effects of truancy are a concern not only for the future of the absentee student but also for schools and businesses across this nation. In his description of truancy, DeKalb and ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management (1999) stated, “Truancy has been labeled one of the top ten major problems in this country’s schools, negatively affecting the future of our youth. In fact, absentee rates have reached as high as 30% in some cities” (p. 2). When students are not in school, they are more likely to be involved in high-risk activities. Truancy is often associated with drug use, vandalism, teenage pregnancy, and juvenile crime.

A number of authors have identified risk factors that contribute to truancy as well as described the characteristics associated with students that choose to be absent. The stereotype of a truant is no longer associated with older, high school students. Today, the typical age of a truant has declined and is far more likely to include elementary level
children. When describing the accountability associated with truant students, Capps (2003) reported, “The younger age of truants indicates the problem has as much to do with parents as with children” (p.1).

Poverty is another factor that contributes to truancy. Student absences tend to be higher in public schools located in the inner city with high levels of students receiving free and or reduced lunch. Schools typically measure the number of students eligible to receive free and reduced lunch as an indicator of poverty. Typically, higher levels of poverty correlate with higher levels of truancy (Heaviside, Rowland, Williams, & Farris, 1998). Areas of urban poverty usually consist of low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization. Children living in these areas are typically at risk for developing antisocial behaviors and attitudes (O’Donnell, Michalak, & Ames, 1997).

Breaking the poverty cycle and providing opportunities that lead to success for all students are stated goals in education. There are a number of theories associated with the causes of juvenile delinquency and truancy. The social developmental model theory proposed by Catalano and Hawkins (1996) points to the causes of student truancy as directly related to risk factors surrounding a child. Studies pertaining to truancy describe the importance of identifying risk factors early in a child’s development in order to determine the most effective strategies to increase protective influences and develop pro-social behaviors (Catalano, Kosterman, Hawkins, Newcomb, & Abbott, 1996).

The education system takes an active role in the reduction of student truancy, as it is now accountable for the number of in-seat hours students are actually in class. In a report by McCray (2006), “Research indicates that there is a correlation between student absences and low levels of academic achievement as well as an increase in drop-out
A number of authors agree truancy is not a problem for schools to address alone. The reduction of truancy requires the combined effort of multiple agencies including juvenile courts, community members and the addition of resources for both parents and students. Research indicates a collaborative effort among schools, parents and the community is required for the identification of strategies to decreasing truancy, address risk factors and root causes of truancy, and prevent children and youth from progressing to more serious and violent behaviors (Baker et al., 2001; Bell et al., 1994). Schools in partnership with supporting community service agencies can address risk factors that impede a child’s ability to become academically successful while providing the necessary services for the at-risk child and family (Baker et al., 2001; Garry, 1996; Gullatt & Lemoine, 1997; McCray, 2006; Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett & Willson, 2007). Health and support services provided through community agencies are available at school or at another location by referral. These agencies work to support families with resources that include parenting skills, strategies to reduce social risk factors, and increase pro-social bonding opportunities (LSSD, 2008).

In 2008, a collaborative effort between a large southeastern school district (LSSD) and local community service agencies developed the Success for All Students Project (2008). The district explained the intention of the project in an announcement stating, “The Success for All Students Project addresses student behavioral, social and emotional supports, identified as community risk and protective factors” (LSSD, 2008, p. 2). The areas of the school district chosen to receive Success for All Students program services had very little infrastructure in place to promote pro-social behavior or assistance in reducing the anti-social behaviors of school aged children. The LSSD (2008) report
stated, “Students in this area of the district have high rates of discipline referrals which include placement into alternative learning centers and no means by which to successfully reintegrate alternative placed students back into mainstream school settings” (p. 7). The LSSD attendance data for 2007 indicated, “3,539 students had 15 or more absences or 10% of the 38,051 student population in the identified areas” (LSSD, 2008, p. 7). The Success for All Students program also identified the need to provide behavioral training to promote pro-social behaviors and reduce anti-social behaviors. “The trainings will be used to address student needs while concurrently providing support programs for parents on how to address behavioral, social, and emotional problems.” (LSSD, 2008, p. 11)

The Success for All Students Program initiated the implementation of a community-based, truancy intervention panel (TIP), used in a growing number of school systems as a strategy to reduce truancy and improve pro-social behavior. Students with as few as three unexcused absences are identified and monitored through a collaborative effort among the panel, parents and student to encourage increased attendance before involving juvenile court. A truancy intervention panel requires the cooperation of school counselors, school administrators, local police officers, a truancy court officer, and a social worker (LSSD, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the Success for All Students Program funded by the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (1999) under the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention program (1999) was studied to determine the impact of the truancy intervention panel on the reduction of student absences.
Statement of the Problem

Schools have become increasingly responsible for reducing the number of student absences as government policies and regulations mandate educational success for all students including those students that prefer to be absent. Georgia’s superintendent of schools reported, “Research has shown that missing just 30 hours of instruction negatively affects a student’s academic performance” (Raising School Attendance, 2002, p. 54). Federal guidelines place attendance provisions on school districts receiving federal funding that require students to meet attendance regulations. Schools have to face the reality that unless they change parent and student’s ideas about truancy, schools will undoubtedly fail to meet the government requirements imposed under Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Education systems must work to develop programs and initiatives in order to combat frequent student absences. The benefits come in the form of more in-seat hours for increased student achievement and less time out of school for students to become involved in criminal activities.

There are numerous reasons as to why students are truant from school. It is important to identify why students become truant along with developing strategies to reduce the percentage of student absences. One program implemented to reduce the percentage of student absences as well as identifying strategies to increase participation is the addition of a community-based truancy intervention panel (TIP). This study analyzes the impact of the panels provided through the Success for All Students (2008) program for their impact on the reduction of student absences.
The following questions were addressed in this study: (a) is there a relationship between the addition of a TIP and the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent; (b) is there consistent implementation of the TIP in all schools; (c) what are the perceptions of panel members on the effectiveness of a TIP as a strategy to reduce truancy?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this two-part quantitative study was to examine the impact of a TIP on the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent (dependent variable) along with analyzing the responses of panel members pertaining to the effectiveness of the TIP as a strategy used to reduce absences.

The first portion of this causal-comparative study compared archival attendance data between TIP and non-TIP schools as well as attendance data over time. A secondary purpose of the study was to determine if there was a relationship between a TIP and the dependent variable for minority students and economically disadvantaged students. Data was analyzed across a six year period from 2006–2011.

The survey descriptive research portion of this study focused on rating the opinions and responses of TIP members generated through a three-part survey pertaining to the impact of the truancy intervention panel. The first section of the survey addressed the climate and characteristics of the school. The second part of the survey asked panel members to describe the panel and identify strategies used to reduce student absences. The third section measured the responses of member opinions on the effectiveness of the panel at reducing student absences. The survey included questions used to determine the fidelity of the truancy intervention panel as implemented at each school in the study area.
The aim of this study was to extend the existing body of knowledge regarding the addition of a community-based TIP as a strategy to reduce student absences.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The opinions of panel members pertaining to their school climate, panels, strategies, and impact of the panel were measured by analyzing the responses provided through survey questions developed for this study. In addition, another measure of effectiveness analyzed school attendance data provided through the Georgia Department of Education (2012) which reported the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent (dependent variable) for TIP and non-TIP schools. Finally, analysis of data provided pre-TIP and post-TIP attendance percentages as well as attendance percentages for student ethnicity and socio economic groups as an additional gauge of effectiveness.

The first research question along with the three hypotheses for this study included:

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between the addition of a Truancy Intervention Panel and the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent when compared to non-TIP schools?

In order to answer this question, the following hypotheses were tested:

$H_{01}$: There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools.

$H_{02}$: There is no significant difference between the percentages of days absent before the addition of a TIP compared to after the addition of a TIP.

$H_{03}$: The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels.
The second and third research questions measured participant responses pertaining to the impact of a TIP on reducing student absences:

*Research Question 2.* Is there consistent implementation of Truancy Intervention Panels in all schools?

*Research Question 3.* Do panel members perceive Truancy Intervention Panels as an effective method toward reducing the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent?

**Methodological Framework**

This study focused on attendance data representing two areas of the district implementing the TIP and comparing it to all other non-TIP schools in the district. TIP schools included 35 schools consisting of 20 elementary, nine middle and six high schools. The percentages of students with 15 or more days absent was reported by the Georgia Department of Education (2012) for schools in the district over a six-year period in the categories of all, Black, White and economically disadvantaged students.

**Definitions**

*Accountability* - The expectation that schools and/or educators should be held responsible for improving student achievement and should be rewarded or sanctioned for their success or lack of success in doing so (Office of the Education Ombudsman, 2011).

*Alternative School* - A public school designed by a school district to serve students whose needs are not being met in the traditional public school environment (Office of the Education Ombudsman, 2011).

*Anti-Social Behaviors* – Exhibiting behaviors that are hostile to or disruptive of the established social order marked by or engaging in behavior that violates accepted
mores. Behavior that is antagonistic toward, or disrespectful, of others (American Heritage Dictionary, 2009).

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) - A series of annual performance goals set by the state for each school district and school as well as for the state as a whole. By participating in Title I, a voluntary federal program that provides more than $11 billion to participating states to help educate low-income children, states agree to commit themselves to the goal of the federal No Child Left Behind Act: that all students will be proficient in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics, as determined by state assessments, by 2014 (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a).

Economically Disadvantaged - Students who receive economic support through the federal Title I grant program. The basic principles of Title I state that schools with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting student’s educational goals. The number of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program determines the threshold for low-income students. For an entire school to qualify for Title 1 funds, at least 40% of students must enroll in the free and reduced lunch program (Malburg, 2011).

Excessive Absence - Any student absent for more than 12 days in any one semester will be considered as having excessive absences. These absences do not include those that result from participation in school-sponsored trips. At the high school level, excessive absences beyond stated limits, can result in removal from a course with a failing grade (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a).
Excused Absence - The following are considered excused absences: Illness, funeral, medical or dental appointment, and other absences for which permission has been granted in advance (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a).

Expulsion - Removal of a student from school, class, or sometimes district property for an indefinite period of time (Office of the Education Ombudsman, 2011).

Implementation Fidelity - The concept of implementation fidelity, sometimes called adherence or integrity, is a determination of how well a program is being implemented in comparison with the original program design (CSAP, 2001).

large southeastern school district (LSSD) - pseudonym created by this researcher to represent actual school district in which research was completed.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - A federal law that requires yearly student testing, consequences for schools or districts that do not meet standards, and requires all teachers and assistants to be highly qualified (Office of the Education Ombudsman, 2011).

Pro-Social Behaviors - Pro-social behaviors are those intended to help other people. Pro-social behaviors are characterized by a concern about the rights, feelings, and welfare of other people. Behaviors that are described as pro-social include feeling empathy and concern for others and behaving in ways to help or benefit other people (Cherry, 2012).

Student Ethnic Groups - For the purpose of this study, student ethnic groups will include the following student groups as defined by the Georgia Department of Education: All students, Black students, Hispanic students and White students (Georgia Department of Education, 2011c).
Suspension - A disciplinary action that removes a student from school for a definite period of time. Long-term suspensions last for more than 10 days; short term suspensions last fewer than 10 days (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a).

Title I - Title I is a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This act provides federal funds through the Georgia Department of Education to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools with high numbers or percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a).

Truancy Intervention Panel (TIP) – Group of school administrators, school social workers, truancy intervention specialist, truancy coordinators, school counselors, teachers, and community volunteers that address student attendance and academic concerns. Panels are designed to foster an environment in which families and students are empowered to create their own solutions (LSSD Attendance Protocol, 2011).

Truant - Any child subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than five days of unexcused absences (LSSD Attendance Protocol, 2011).

Unexcused Absence - A student is absent any time he or she is missing from school or from any assigned class or school activity. The following, even with parental consent, are considered unexcused absences: Truancies, working, missing the bus, oversleeping, shopping, car not starting, getting senior pictures taken, keeping personal appointments, visiting out-of-town (unless excused prior to absence), college visits (unless excused prior to absence), needed at home (unless excused prior to absence), and other avoidable absences (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a).
Delimitations

The researcher chose to limit the study to two areas of a large, southeastern metropolitan public school system identified by the pseudonym, large southeastern school district (LSSD, 2008). Another way the researcher chose to limit the study pertained to the collection of survey data. Distribution of surveys was restricted to schools whose principals granted this researcher permission to participate. A number of principals reported that their schools did not use the TIP or chose not to participate in the survey. The researcher chose to limit the survey respondents to school staff members actively involved in a TIP.

Assumptions

There were a few assumptions made by the researcher for this study. It was assumed that all schools from the district used the same process of identifying truant students as well as the method of parental notification of student absences. The state of Georgia directs each school district to develop a compulsory attendance committee to establish a set of requirements addressing student absences. The district represented in this study adopted the attendance guidelines of the LSSD compulsory attendance committee and published those requirements for all district schools to implement. Those strategies required teachers to contact parents of students that acquired three unexcused absences from school. When the student had five unexcused absences, schools were required to notify parents of student absences, either in writing or through a phone call. When a student reached seven unexcused absences, the school was required to recommend a social worker referral to investigate reasons for the student absences and to initiate the activation of a TIP meeting in TIP schools. When a student had 10 absences,
a referral was made to juvenile court. The school social worker was responsible for the collection and maintenance of the attendance data as well as the collection of quarterly grades and all demographic data of identified truant students (LSSD Attendance Protocol, 2011). It was assumed that all data would be entered honestly and correctly. It was also assumed that only participants involved in a TIP would respond to the survey and return it in a timely manner.

Justification

There are a number of approaches identified by researchers as possible strategies for combating truancy. Eastwold (1989) concluded that strategies to reduce truancy are “More than a school issue and that the most successful efforts directed toward a reduction in absenteeism are those that involve both school personnel and the community” (p. 28). The SFAS Program (2008) targets absenteeism by providing support to local schools with the addition of a TIP as well as providing opportunities for students to identify with pro-social behaviors through programs that enrich a pro-social environment. The intent of The SFAS Program (2008) is to “provide evidence-based practices to improve the academic success and healthy development of students while assuring sustainability of newly implemented individual, family, school and community prevention and intervention programs” (p. 10). The truancy panel is comprised of school leaders, the juvenile court system, and community members that work together to reduce truancy. Panels identify truant students, talk with parents and students to understand the reasons behind the absences, monitor grades and discipline and finally provide a support system that encourages the family to work cooperatively with the school and community to
ensure students get to school every day and stay there. The panel also serves as an intervention before the student receives a juvenile court referral.

A study by Brough, Bergmann and Holt (2006) on the importance of community and school collaboration stated:

All elements of the community’s social structure, including juvenile court services, police liaisons, parent networks, youth organizations, church groups, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and 4-H, must work with the school to identify and help those students who are at risk. Community governments must talk about how much they value the youth of their community and then budget for programs to support the schools.  (p. 21)

The professional significance of this study was to determine the impact of the addition of a TIP on reducing student absences as well as analyzing the perceptions of TIP members on the effectiveness of the program. It was important to determine the impact of a TIP as a strategy to reduce student absences in order to justify the implementation of a TIP in all district schools. It was also believed that this study would add to the body of knowledge pertaining to student truancy by analyzing demographic data to determine if there was a significant difference in reduction of absences by ethnicity or economically disadvantaged students. The benefits of utilizing a TIP as a truancy reduction strategy included building strong, positive interactions between parents, students, school personnel and the local community. An additional benefit is the support parents received as they take a more active role in the academic achievement of their child by ensuring their students increased attendance rate.
Summary

The 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983) delivered an in-depth analysis pertaining to the state of education for America’s youth. The report described an education system in desperate need of change if the United States had any hope of competing in the growing world market. Education reform, under the watchful eye of the United States federal government, put education reform programs in place in an attempt to increase student achievement and improve global competition. Education reform programs placed guidelines and restrictions on public schools that received federal funding. Schools would be required to educate all students to meet the academic standards placed by the state in order to meet AYP as well as the addition of a second indicator for AYP identifying the attendance rate for each school. Schools would meet the requirements of the second indicator if they had less than 15% of their students with 15 or more absences in one school year. In an attempt to meet the growing demands of education reform, particularly with the issue of student attendance, schools are required to identify students with high rates of absenteeism as well as identifying strategies designed to keep students in school. Recent strategies to reduce truancy include building a partnership between parents, schools, the community and the student. This study focused on the addition of a TIP as a strategy to increase student attendance as well as measuring the perceptions of TIP members on the effectiveness of the program.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The second chapter provides a detailed review of the literature after first describing the theoretical framework that supports this study. Research shows that in order to explain the origins and development of delinquent behavior, a comprehensive system involving several theoretical models is necessary in order to address the various reasons students develop delinquent behaviors. The social development model theory (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996) which is based on a number of behavioral theories provided the theoretical framework for this study. The social development model theory includes portions of the social control theory (Hirschi, 1969), differential association theory (Sutherland, 1934), and social learning theory (Bandura, 1969). The social development model was unique to juvenile delinquency in that it first identified the risk factors associated with the delinquent student and then determined the protective factors needed to change the anti-social behaviors of the child. This researcher’s study measures the effectiveness of a truancy intervention program on reducing truancy, a form of juvenile delinquency. The social development model provides the framework for the study of the truancy intervention panel. A detailed review of the social control theory, the differential association theory, the social learning theory, and finally the social development model theory is presented in this chapter.

The organization of the literature review will be as follows: (a) truancy and the American Education system, (b) types of strategies used to address truancy, (c) community based truancy intervention programs.
Theoretical Framework

Over the past several decades, there have been many behavioral and criminal theories associated with juvenile delinquency. The theories associated with juvenile delinquency include those specific to the area of truancy. For the purpose of this study, theories specific to truancy are identified under the category of juvenile delinquency.

Theories behind juvenile delinquency historically sought to explain delinquency as a way for poor citizens to achieve the same means as the wealthy through illegitimate methods. Merton (1938) developed the anomie theory which explained that society sets goals and achievements that are within reach for more wealthy, upper-class members of society but not readily available to people at lower social levels. Poor citizens sought to achieve the same goals and rewards but often found that impossible because of social barriers that were difficult to transcend. Delinquent behaviors provided an avenue for poor citizens without legitimate financial means to achieve the same goals through illegitimate methods. Delinquency provided alternatives for the lower class to enjoy the same rewards as those of the wealthy (Merton, 1938).

Merton (1968) expanded on the anomie theory with the introduction of the traditional strain theories. The idea behind the strain theories suggested that societal goals that were out of reach for the majority placed strains or stresses on the population that lead to criminal behavior. Strain theories were explained as a structural strain and not as an individual strain. Individuals would be less likely to engage in criminal behavior unless they were part of a deviant or anti-social subculture that would support the use of crime as a means to an end. As stated in a report by Froggio (2007), “The traditional strain theories were highly criticized due to research which failed to support
the theories” (p. 384). Societal strain theories were replaced with sociological theories as more researchers tried to explain criminal behavior, specifically juvenile crime (Featherstone & Deflem, 2003; Merton, 1968).

Research eventually began to show that juvenile delinquency could not be explained under a specific theory. According to Sullivan and Wilson (1995), “A contemporary view of the theories associated with juvenile delinquency, favors the concept of an integrated complex of causal factors within which individual, familial, and social structural factors may exert variable influence on a case by case basis” (p. 1). One reason delinquency was difficult to explain was that juvenile crime looked different in rural vs. urban and suburban settings, in high vs. low socio-economic areas, between races, gender and age groups and may or may not depend on the family structure of the juvenile. Integrated theories began to develop in an attempt to explain delinquent behavior in juveniles. One integrated theory, the social development model theory (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996), provided the framework for this study. The social development model includes elements of the social control theory (Hirschi, 1969), which are beneficial in the identification of factors that cause the development of anti-social behaviors. The social development model also includes elements of the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1973), which are essential in identifying the paths to pro-social and anti-social behavior. Finally, the social development model includes elements of the social learning theory (Bandura, 1969), which identifies factors that either encourage or discourage antisocial behavior (Catalano et al., 1996). The social development model is a behavioral theory that looks at the origins and development of
delinquent behavior in young children and adolescence. Following are explanations of the theories used in the development of the social development model theory.

*Social Control Theory*

Social control theory (Hirschi, 1969; Kempf, 1993; Krohn & Massey, 1980; Massey & Krohn, 1986) states that delinquent behavior is simply part of human nature and does not require certain conditions to be present in order for delinquent behaviors to emerge. The choice to develop delinquent behaviors depends on connections to conventional society norms. According to Teevan and Dryburgh (2000), “Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory is the best theory used to explain why adolescent boys are truant; those behaviors develop from boredom and lack of social control” (p. 87). Society determines which behaviors are acceptable or not and one’s ties to society determine the level of constraint placed on behaviors. For adolescents and children, delinquent behaviors emerge when the normative constraints of society are substantially attenuated (Sullivan & Wilson, 1995). The relationships adolescents form along with their connections to others are important factors when determining delinquent behaviors. For adolescents, the opportunity to develop relationships with others is an essential part of understanding both personal identities as well as determining how successful they will be both academically and socially. When opportunities to form and nurture connections at school are limited, the more opportunities there are for students to become disengaged and truant. Hirschi and other researchers hypothesized that without inhibition and strong positive connections with others, along with anti-social ideals especially connected with school, students will be more likely to engage in truancy and other types of anti-social
behaviors (Brezina, Piquero, & Mazerolle, 2001; Hirschi, 1969; Sigfusdottir, Farkas, & Silver, 2004). Traditionally, researchers referred to the social control theory and its four constructs (attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief) as the original theory used to measure students ability to form social bonds at school as a primary indicator or precursor of delinquency (Crosnoe, Ericson, & Dornbusch, 2002; Eith, 2005; Maddox & Prinz, 2003).

When children and adolescents have not formed secure social bonds there is no one left to influence that child from developing anti-social behaviors. Children are more likely to take risks and engage in deviant behaviors if they feel they have nothing to lose. Hirschi (1969) describes Attachment, the first major construct of the social bond theory as affection or close relationships with others. He suggests that students that have formed strong attachments at school are less likely to be absent or in violation of school policies. Therefore, when students lack a sense of attachment at school, they are less likely to embrace the norms and values of the school and choose anti-social behaviors as a result. Hirschi identified the second construct as Commitment. Commitment is the amount of time, energy, and personal resources a student invests in forming relationships with peers and participating in school activities. Students are less likely to abandon academics, extracurricular activities, peer groups, teacher relationships, and leadership opportunities if they have invested their resources and made a commitment to the relationships they have formed. Hirschi then described Involvement, the third major construct as the ability to keep busy and stay out of trouble. The more involved a student is in their structured, pro-social behaviors, such as athletics, clubs and organizations, the less likely they will be to engage in negative, anti-social behaviors such as drug use, vandalism, and truancy.
The final construct is *Belief*. *Belief* is society’s values and norms that determine right from wrong (Hirschi, 1969). When students believe in the value of education and understand the need for school rules as a method to guide good choices, students will be more likely to engage and form relationships. Students must believe that education is vitally important in their future success. The ability of children and adolescents to form relationships is the basis behind the social control theory and helps researchers partially explain truancy and delinquent behavior. The addition of the social learning theory (Bandura, 1969) adds another dimension when trying to understand the reasons students choose to become truant and in the identification of truancy reduction strategies.

*The Social Learning Theory*

The social learning theory (Akers, 1977; Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, & Radosevich, 1979; Bandura, 1973, 1977; Conger 1976, 1980; Lanza-Kaduce, Akers, Krohn, & Radosevich, 1984), states that people learn from each other using modeling, imitation and observations. By observing others, people are able to form ideas pertaining to new behaviors as well as the rewards and consequences associated with these new behaviors. Modeling behaviors contributes to pro-social behavior or anti-social behavior depending on the positive consequences experienced through the behavior. In the famous *Bobo Clown* (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961) experiment, Bandura et al. was able to show that learning occurs when individuals imitate and observe other’s behaviors. Bandura (1977) formulated that in order for effective modeling to occur, the following conditions were necessary: (a) Attention – The amount of attention a behavior gains from others varies depending on several factors including the unusualness of a behavior, how often the behavior is exhibited, how functional the behavior proves to be and it’s effectiveness.
The observers past rewards and consequences, perceptions of the person modeling the behavior and sensory capacities also affect attention. (b) Retention – How well does the observer remember what was being modeled. The act of remembering includes the mental images, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, and motor rehearsal associated with the learned behavior. (c) Reproduction – A person’s ability to analyze and recreate the image or physical behavior. (d) Motivation – There has to be a strong need to master the imitated behavior. Bandura postulated that one’s environment causes behaviors while at the same time, behaviors cause the environment or what he referred to as, “reciprocal determinism” (Bandura, 1977).

The Differential Association Theory

The differential association theory (Cressey 1953; Matsueda 1982, 1988; Matza 1969; Sutherland 1973; Sutherland & Cressey 1970) like social learning theory supports the idea that behaviors are learned and reinforced but asserts that delinquent behaviors are learned and supported through their environment. According to Sullivan and Wilson (1995), “The differential association theory suggests that there are no natural impulses that lead to delinquency, but rather delinquent behaviors must be learned and reinforced through the same process of conforming behaviors” (p. 1). This helps to explain how characteristic behaviors are learned and reinforced based on the social contexts and clues that individuals are consistently exposed. Delinquent behaviors are learned and developed through a faction of society that operates under a different set of behaviors from the norm. In the Teevan and Dryburgh (2000) study of Sociological Explanations of Delinquency, 56 high school boys were surveyed to determine why they had either participated or refrained from taking part in delinquent behaviors such as fighting,
vandalism, petty theft, truancy, and drug use. Teevan and Dryburgh (2000) explained the results of this study when they reported:

The study was designed to test multiple theories of delinquency including Sutherland’s (1934) differential association theory, which asserts that delinquent ideas, values, and techniques are both learned and supported in intimate peer groups the same way that conformist behavior is learned as well as Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory, which argues that all adolescents carry a potential for delinquency and thus emphasize factors such as keeping busy in the pursuit of conventional goals that prevent delinquency. (p. 79)

Results of the Teevan and Dryburgh (2000) study identified truancy as a delinquent behavior and described truancy as the “most common delinquent behavior with 45 of the 56 boys surveyed as having been truant at least once in the previous year as well as the most frequently committed; several of the responding boys reported over 200 truancies” (p. 82). Results also revealed that the differential association theory offered the best explanation for drinking, drug use, and to a lesser extent truancy as behaviors learned and supported through peer group interactions. Concluding statements from the Teevan and Dryburgh (2000) study revealed that no one theory can explain delinquent behavior but that delinquent behavior is best supported by overlapping theories.

The social development model theory provided the framework for this researcher’s study based on overlapping theories of juvenile delinquency as a behavior learned and reinforced by societal influences affecting the juvenile’s choices. Sullivan and Wilson (1995) lent support to the social development model when they reported:
Effective intervention to juvenile delinquency rests on comprehensive assessment that can measure the relative and interactive effects of contributory factors in these various domains and produce a plan of intervention that is tailored to the problem profile of the youth, family, and community. Treating all delinquents with the same set of intervention techniques and resources is doomed to partial success at best. (p. 1)

*The Social Development Model Theory*

The social development model (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996) is a human behavioral theory used by criminologists, psychologists and more recently educators to explain where and how children and adolescents develop delinquent behaviors. The social development model theory is used to predict, based on identified risk factors and protective factors, which children will develop pro-social or anti-social patterns of behavior as they mature. The benefit for educators in using the social development model is the ability to identify children most likely to develop anti-social behaviors and provide early interventions. The basis of the social development model posits that children and adolescents learn behaviors, both anti-social and pro-social, from the people they interact with including family members, community organizations, peers, schools, and religious organizations. Anti-social behaviors would include childhood behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, and violent crimes committed by young adults. When a child bonds with a social unit that models pro-social beliefs, the child is more likely to develop pro-social behaviors. The opposite is true for children exposed to social units that model anti-social beliefs, in that the child is more likely to develop anti-social behaviors (Catalano et al., 1996).
According to the social development model theory, the socialization of children and youth proceed through the following four socialization constructs: (a) opportunities for involvement in activities and interactions with others; (b) the degree of involvement and interaction; (c) the skills to participate in those interactions; and (d) the reinforcement forthcoming from performance in activities and interactions (Herrenkohl et al., 2001).

The socialization process is important in that the more social interactions a child encounters leads to more social interactions with which a child will participate. Participation increases the development of social skills, therefore allowing the child to feel a sense of positive reinforcement from participating and interacting in the social activities (Fleming, Catalano, Oxford, & Harachi, 2002). When a child experiences the socialization process in a consistent manner, social bonding and attachment occur while the child forms commitments to the socializing unit or person. That bond then influences future behaviors for that child. If the socializing unit models pro-social behaviors, the child is more likely to develop pro-social attitude and behavior. Anti-social bonds influence the development of anti-social behaviors. The socializing unit can therefore influence a child to conform to the norms of the group. The child will begin to behave in the same manner as those of the social unit (Catalano et al., 1996).

The socialization process occurs through stages of a child’s life. The first occurs while the child is at home or during pre-school. The second stage happens while attending elementary school. During these stages, the family unit is the most influential force on the socialization process for a child although school begins to influence during the latter stage. The third stage takes place during middle school while the fourth stage occurs at the high school level. As a child enters elementary school, the socialization
unit moves away from the families influence and closer to the influence of peers, school, and neighborhood that have the most dominate effect during middle and high school (Fleming et al., 2002).

The way in which a child is socialized leads to a child developing either pro-social behaviors or anti-social behaviors. In order for a child to develop pro-social behaviors and attitudes, a child must experience a socialization process that helps the child internalize society’s standards for normative behaviors, along with society’s rules and laws. A child who has been socialized in a pro-social unit will develop into a law-abiding citizen, who is not likely to participate in anti-social behavior (Catalano et al., 1996). A child socialized in an anti-social unit will develop anti-social behaviors and values. The child internalizes and normalizes anti-social behaviors. The anti-social child knows that the beliefs and norms of the anti-social unit are different from those of normal society but rationalizes the difference as being an alternative to society’s rules (Catalano et al., 1996).

Research into the social development model indicates that children who engage in delinquent behaviors are more likely to take part in more than one type of juvenile offenses. Students that are truant are more likely to commit acts of vandalism or drug/alcohol abuse as well as being at a higher risk for behavior problems at school (Choi, Harachi, Gilmore, & Catalano, 2005). Children who have behavior problems or are involved in delinquent activities will require strategies and interventions that identify and target the anti-social behaviors and attitudes modeled by a child’s social
unit instead of trying to address a single delinquent behavior. This information is beneficial to educators as they address not only truancy but also other school related delinquent behaviors.

A child’s environment may also affect the type of social behaviors modeled in a developing youth. Research shows that children raised in urban poverty are likely to experience exposure to low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization, which put children at risk of developing anti-social behaviors (O’Donnell et al., 1997). Children are also at risk for developing problem behaviors during periods of transition, which include changing the school environment from home school to public classrooms and includes the transition between school levels such as elementary to middle grades and middle grades to high school (Kosterman, Hawkins, Spoth, Haggerty, & Zhu, 1997). By first identifying reasons as to why children may develop anti-social attitudes and behaviors, the social development model makes it possible to address these issues and provide interventions in the production of pro-social skills and behaviors.

One must first identify the risk factors and protective factors before being able to predict childhood pro-social and anti-social behaviors. Risk and protective factors influence behaviors through biological, psychological, or social forces. Social risk factors are the influences that a child may experience within the family unit, among their peers, at school or in their community (Catalano et al., 1996). A child’s socioeconomic standing, age, ethnicity, and gender also influence exposure to different types of risk and protective factors (Choi et al., 2005). Risk factors contribute to a child adopting anti-social behaviors and attitudes. Protective factors are influences that support pro-social behaviors. Protective factors increase the likelihood that a child in a high-risk
environment can develop pro-social behaviors and attitudes while reducing the effect of their anti-social environmental influences (Catalano et al., 1996).

Research data collected over a 20 year period of time indicated that the social development model provided criminologists, psychologists and educators strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency by identifying anti-social behaviors in children and providing instead, pro-social activities and bonding opportunities. Questions pertaining to the applicability of the social development model for all children and youth regardless of gender, ethnicity and regional differences arose due to the majority of early data consisting of research of the social development model on White children. Further studies addressing this issue support the social development model and the applicability of the social development model strategies across ethnicities, gender, and location (Choi et al., 2005; Fleming et al., 2002).

For educators, the social development model is a beneficial tool in the identification of children that may develop anti-social behaviors as well as providing a method to reduce the number of incidences involving behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, and violent criminal offenses committed by children and young adults. Ayers et al., (1999) reported that for children that commit violent acts, there is a high risk for committing serious violent crimes in adulthood. Children that commit serious criminal offenses tend to begin those acts at around age 10, with the seriousness of the offenses escalating until the youth reaches approximately 17 years of age, where the number of delinquent behaviors peak. The risks of serious violent crimes committed in adulthood diminish if the child is older when they commit their first serious crime. Studies have shown that 45% of children that participated in violent crimes before the age
of eleven had committed violent criminal offenses by the time they reached mid 20’s. When children between the ages of 11 and 12 committed their first violent crimes, only 25% went on to commit a violent offense by mid 20’s. The percentages are even smaller when children between the ages of 13 and 17 committed the first violent act and then another, by the time they reached their mid 20’s (Herrenkohl et al., 2001). As schools and educators continue to search for strategies to reduce delinquent behaviors, including student truancy, the social development model allows educators to identify violent and anti-social tendencies in young children for treatment while concurrently introducing the child to social units that model and encourage pro-social development.

The social development model is an effective tool in aiding educators in early identification of risk factors and anti-social behaviors and attitudes, which may influence children and adolescents to develop delinquent behaviors, one of which may be truancy. The social development model hypothesizes that by providing children with social interactions involving pro-social behaviors and attitudes, children can develop protective factors that effectively isolate the child from the anti-social influences in the child’s environment.

Summary of Theoretical Framework

The social development model is a human behavioral theory used by criminologists, child psychologists, and educators to explain the origins and development of childhood and adolescent delinquent behaviors. The social development model takes into account the risk factors and protective influences of individual children and predicts whether that child will develop anti-social or pro-social behaviors and attitudes. The social development model assists researchers in identifying the behaviors and attitudes of
the child’s social unit including family, peers, or the community and determining whether the child will adopt the same behaviors with age. The theory suggests that programs that are able to identify the risk factors associated with young children and adolescents in high-risk areas and then introducing pro-social behaviors and attitudes through mentors and programs can change the socialization of the child away from anti-social behaviors.

This study measured the effectiveness of a truancy intervention panel at reducing the percentage of student absences. The truancy intervention panel, provided through the Success for All Students (2008) program identifies students with high rates of truancy. Assessments are made to determine the risk factors associated with the child followed by an attempt to integrate protective influences to develop pro-social behaviors and attitudes toward school attendance. The Success for All Students program was developed on the philosophy of the social development model theory.

Review of the Literature

The review of literature for this chapter focuses on programs and strategies currently implemented that address student truancy. The arrangement of this section provides the reader with a comprehensive review of literature involving the following areas of study:

1. The Effects of Truancy on the American Education System
   i. National education reform programs
   ii. Truancy as a barrier to education
   iii. Compulsory attendance laws
   iv. Causes and characteristics of student truancy
      a. Unsupported school environment
b. Chaotic family life

t. The effects of truancy on student ethnic groups and students of poverty

2. Types of Strategies Used to Decrease Student Absences

i. Court-based strategies

ii. School-based strategies

iii. Community-based strategies

3. Truancy Intervention Panels

i. Success for All Students Project, truancy intervention panel (Large Southeastern School District, 2008, p. 15)

The Effects of Truancy on the American Education System

The education of America’s youth has undergone numerous changes throughout the years. Multiple education reforms are in place to assure that America’s youth have the skills necessary to successfully develop into productive citizens of this country and more recently to include their successful participation in a global society. Oliva (2009) elaborated on the role of education in developing America’s youth when he stated:

Education is one of the institutions the human race has created to serve certain needs, and, like all human institutions, it responds or should respond to changes in the environment. The institution of education is activated by a curriculum that itself changes in response to forces affecting it. (p. 21)

The American education system has long taken the position that education includes more than just the development of knowledge and skills in language, math, and science. Several authors suggest the importance of education in shaping the morals and ethical
values of society. When describing the role of education on the development of community and society, John Dewey (1897) stated:

I believe that the community’s duty to education is, therefore, its paramount moral duty. By law and punishment, by social agitation and discussion, society can regulate and form itself in a more or less haphazard and chance way. However, through education, society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move. (p. 17)

Goodlad (1984) and his associates developed a theme for what they believed to be the four categories of academic goals all schools would need to implement in order to best educate America’s youth. They included the areas of academic, vocational, social and civic, and personal. He described the ten categories encompassed within these goals that included mastery of basic skills and fundamental processes, intellectual development, career education-vocational education, interpersonal understandings, citizenship participation, enculturation, moral and ethical character, emotional physical well-being, creativity and aesthetic expression, and self-realization. Several authors suggest that the education of America’s youth as well as the development of a civilized society rests in the hands of the education system and ultimately America’s schools (Oliva, 2009).

National Education Reform Programs

For the American education system, the United States government has had an increasing role in determining the educational needs of America’s youth. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (U. S. Department of Education, 1996a) was enacted as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s war on poverty.
This national education act was designed to focus federal funding on poor schools with low achieving students. From ESEA (1996a), Title I was established to improve education for disadvantaged children in poor areas. Title I continues to be the foundation behind ESEA (1996a). The academic achievement of millions of impoverished children have been affected by Title I grants, particularly in acquisition of basic academic skills. One of the many programs to come from ESEA (1996a) was the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (U. S. Department of Education, 1995) that was developed to bring public awareness of the role of schools in combating drugs and violence among our nation’s youth (U.S. Department of Education, 1996a).

In 1981, the National Commission on Excellence in Education was formed to “review and synthesize the data and scholarly literature on the quality of learning and teaching in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities, both public and private, with special concern for the educational experience of teen-age youth” (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p. 1). The National Commission on Excellence in Education issued their report, A Nation at Risk (U. S. Department of Education, 1983) indicating numerous concerns within the American education system. According to Smith (2006), research developed through A Nation at Risk (1983) found “The United States was unable to compete in the global marketplace because of its inadequacies in providing public education” (p. 3). A Nation at Risk (1983) made recommendations for the educational process in the areas of content, expectations, time, and teaching practices:

Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This
promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently
guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure
gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only
their own interests but also the progress of society itself. (U. S. Department of
Education, 1983, p. 1)

Based on the results of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), demands for national standards,
academic rigor, standardized testing, and an increase in graduation rates led to the
development of the educational reform acts that were developed in an attempt to meet the
demands of businesses faced with the challenges of a developing global market and
economy. By 1990, the United States federal government had put into place six national
education performance goals, known as the *America 2000 Education Strategy* (U.S.
Department of Education, 1991) to assure a quality, competitive education for all
students. Along with instructional goals and the implementation of effective curricula
was a goal directed at increasing the graduation rate by at least 90% (U.S. Department of
Education Strategy* (1991) by enacting the *Goals 2000 Educate America Act* (Congress of
the U.S., W. E., 1994) which included a goal that would seek to increase parental
participation and involvement in not only academic achievement but also in the
promotion of the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

Concurrent with *Goals 2000 Educate America Act* (U. S. Congress, 1994), the
federal government passed the *Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA)* of 1994 (U. S.
Department of Education, 1996a). The *IASA* (1996a) reauthorized the *ESEA* (1996a),
which together with *Goals 2000 Educate America Act* (U. S. Congress, 1994) focused
federal funding on the needs of all students, not just economically disadvantaged or those at risk of failure. Federal funding in the form of grants were made available to promote and support the achievement of these goals. The re-authorized *ESEA* (1996a) implemented standards-based instruction and assessments emphasizing higher student achievement but also gave states and localities flexibility in the design and operation of their own federally funded education programs.

Finally, in 2001, the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) which again re-authorized *ESEA* (1996a) was passed into law setting forth the educational standards and goals on a national level that passed the accountability standards for educating all children to meet the same academic achievement goals across all subject areas on to the local school. The focus of *NCLB* (2002) according to Rod Paige, then U.S. Secretary of Education, “is to see every child in America- whatever their ethnicity, income, or background-achieve high standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The *NCLB* (2002) act again addressed daily membership and attendance as part of the goals for education reform. Part of *NCLB* (2002) required states to be accountable for all students meeting the requirements of academic achievement. Programs were implemented at the state and local level designed to meet the academic needs of all children by the year 2014.

As the 2014 deadline approaches for all students to meet the academic achievement goals put in place with *NCLB* (2002), states are taking advantage of the flexibility offered through *ESEA* (1996a) in developing academic programs that have student achievement goals that are more attainable when trying to gain academic success for all students. The re-authorization of *ESEA* (1996a) and *NCLB* (2002) made

In November of 2011, the Superintendent of Schools for the state of Georgia submitted to the U. S. Department of Education, the State’s request for an *ESEA* (1996a) flexibility waiver. The state’s waiver requested:

- Flexibility from the established annual measurable objectives (AMO) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State’s proficient level of academic achievement on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013-2014 school year. The State requested the waiver to develop new ambitious but attainable goals in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support improvements efforts for the state and local education systems. (U. S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 5)

In February of 2012, Georgia’s *ESEA* flexibility waiver was approved with the conditions that the state must submit to the U. S. Department of Education for review and approval an amended request incorporating the final version of the *College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)* (U. S. Department of Education, 2012a) by May 2013. The *CCRPI* (2012a) addresses student content mastery goals for students in elementary, middle and high school. Along with curriculum mastery, a separate goal is included to measure student attendance rate that reviews the percentage of excused and unexcused student absences at each school (Barge, 2012). Over the last 50 years, there have been
numerous federal education reform policies implemented to improve the education of America’s youth. Along with addressing the concerns associated with student academic achievement, education reform policies have addressed student attendance and the problems associated with high rates of truancy.

*Truancy as a Barrier to Education*

A number of authors have shown that the progression of national education reform has made evident the fact that as programs are implemented, the goals of student achievement are not easily met. Many barriers impede access or attainment of education for students. The state of Georgia has identified one of those barriers as truancy or the act of staying away from school. “In order to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a school must meet state-set goals in test participation, academic achievement and a "second indicator" statistic (graduation rate for high schools and, usually, attendance rate for elementary and middle schools)” (Georgia Department of Education, 2011a). The attendance rate for middle and elementary schools is reported for AYP based on the percentage of students absent 15 or more days during the school year. Schools reporting student absences of 15 percent or higher, fall under the category of *does not meet* and fail the second indicator of AYP (Georgia Department of Education, 2011b).

In an address delivered at the *Presentation on Student Attendance and Student Achievement*, John Barge (2011), Georgia’s superintendent of schools, documented that in 2010, The Georgia Department of Education reported that 180,995 students or (9.7%) of students were absent 15 or more days. For students in the eighth grade, the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent were even higher. In 2009, 12,096 eighth graders were reported to have 15 or more days absent. In 2010, the number of
students increased to 13,913 or (12.3%) of students (Barge, 2011). Absences are recorded as either excused or unexcused. Barge (2011) reported, “Research shows that the negative affect of excused and unexcused absences is similar” (p. 6).

As schools find they are taking more responsibility for a student’s academic achievement, the provisions in Goals 2000 (1994) and NCLB (2002) have forced schools to take an active role in promoting student attendance. In many states, school attendance is identified as a compulsory provision in determining whether a school makes AYP (U.S. Department of Education, 2011a). According to LaMorte (1982), “Every state has some form of compulsory education law. These laws generally provide that children between certain ages must attend public, private, or home school, and failure to comply may be a criminal violation” (p. 19).

*Compulsory Attendance Laws*

The Georgia school compulsory attendance law, SB413, (§ 20-2-690.1) (Georgia General Assembly, 2005a) requires a student between his or her sixth and sixteenth birthdays to attend a public school, private school, or a home study program. Georgia state law SB413 addresses truancy and attendance by requiring communities and schools to work together to uphold the recommendations of the local student attendance protocol committee implemented in each school district. The Georgia compulsory attendance law included the following two goals: (a) insure coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies, and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school and (b) increase the percentage of students who take tests required under state law (LSSD, 2011).
The state of Georgia requires that all students between the ages of six and 16 attend school. Parents and guardians are responsible for enrolling students between the ages of six and 16, and then successfully monitoring and assuring that students attend school without excessive absences or tardies. After five unexcused absences from school, the school has the right to make a referral to the juvenile court system on the charges of truancy, which is a misdemeanor charge in the state of Georgia. Georgia has also established the Georgia’s driver’s license/school attendance law (SB226) “Joshua’s Law”, (Georgia General Assembly, 2005b). The law grants the state the ability to award students a driver’s permit and or driver’s license only after the school has verified that the student applicant has had no more than 10 unexcused absences over a one-year period, prior to applying for the permit or license. The state has a vested interest in keeping students in school.

When students are absent from school they miss important academic instruction. Missed instruction time negatively affects ill-prepared students expected to perform on state mandated assessments. Assessment scores determine the overall achievement of the school, thus limiting the school’s opportunity for additional or perhaps even continuing funding (Strickland, 1998).

Truancy is a barrier to education as well as a burden to society. National education reform policies have made schools accountable for student attendance. The first step in making sure schools meet attendance requirements is to identify truant students and the risk factors that impede that child from attending school. The following section identifies characteristics of the truant and factors that contribute to student truancy.
Causes and Characteristics of Student Truancy

The problem identified in this study looks at the effectiveness of a Truancy Intervention Panel at reducing student absences. The philosophy of the social development model (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996) when addressing juvenile delinquency, specifically truancy, is to take into account the risk factors as well as the protective influences that affect the socialization of a child. Therefore, identification of the truant child includes developing a firm understanding of the socialization unit affecting the behavior and attitudes of the child. The following section describes the characteristics and causes associated with student truancy.

McCray (2006) and Capps (2003) commented on the common indicators used to identify students more likely to be truant. According to McCray (2006), “When children do not feel a sense of belonging in school, they often seek support elsewhere, which can result in truancy” (p. 30). Capps (2003) reported, “Truants often perceive the world around them as unstable and confusing with many coming from dysfunctional, unstable, and insecure homes” (p. 34). Many authors agree children that are truant most likely have a number of risk factors affecting their lives.

Many authors have contributed to research identifying causes of truancy. Reid (2005) reporting on the causes that contribute to truancy and non-attendance stated:

Research (Kinder, Wakefield, & Wilkin, 1996; Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson, & Kirk, 2003; Zhang et al., 2007) indicates that findings can vary depending upon the methodology used to determine the cause of truancy and non-attendance. Data obtained from whether the methodology utilizes school-based surveys,
town center surveys, pupils’ self-referral instruments, parentally obtained information or teacher-assessed questionnaires often reveal some significant differences in outcomes on such matters as the extent of parentally condoned absenteeism. (p. 60)

In a report by Kinder et al., (1996) involving a study of 160 students, the causes of truancy, ranked in order were identified as: (a) the influence of friends and peers (b) relations with teachers, often those lacking in respect for pupils (c) the content and delivery of the curriculum (d) family aspects (parents’ attitudes, domestic problems) (e) bullying and (f) the classroom context, for example lack of control or pupil’s learning difficulties. (Kinder et al., 1996)

Another report by Kinder, Wakefield, and Wilkin (1995), asked educators to identify what they believed to be the most common factors contributing to truancy. The report found educators identified personal, family and community factors as having the most contributing influence on students. Personal factors included the level of self-esteem, social skills and confidence students had as well as how well students were able to interact with their peers and form relationships. Personal factors also included student’s academic ability, their involvement in special education, and their ability to focus their attention and self-monitor their behavior. Family factors included how often the parent gave permission to stay home from school, how much the family supported education, the presence of domestic violence in the home, inconsistent parenting skills and stresses involving lack of financial stability. Community factors were based on the socio-economic level of the family and included location, attitudes toward their community and lack of community pride. Factors within the school community included:
inadequate or inconsistent administration of attendance rules, the inability to monitor student attendance throughout the day, the inability of students to form any type of bond with adult mentors or peers and curriculum that had no relevance to the student’s academic needs (Kinder et al., 1995).

Based on a number of reports, many authors agree on the following factors as most likely to contribute to truancy: (a) family factors (e.g., lack of parental supervision, domestic violence, and substance abuse; (b) school factors (e.g., school climate issues, school size, attitudes, inflexibility in meeting the diverse cultural and learning needs of the students, and consequences of absenteeism such as out-of-school suspensions); (c) economic influences (e.g., single-parent homes, high mobility rates, and student employment); (d) student variables (e.g., substance abuse, lack of social competence, and mental and physical health problems) (Baker et al., 2001; Barth, 1984; Egger, Costello, & Angold, 2003; Guttmacher, Weitzman, Kapadia, & Weinberg, 2002; Hallfors et al., 2002; Rohrman, 1993)

Additional research revealed differing opinions pertaining to who is to blame for student truancy. Based on the review of survey questions provided to parents, students and school personnel, results indicated that each group of respondents tended to blame the causes of truancy on one of the other groups. Parents and students both blame the school environment as a major contributing factor for a student becoming truant. The education system found a lack of parental involvement to be a major contributing factor (Malcolm et al., 2003). Some of the major issues identified as contributing to student truancy, according to Zhang et al. (2007), include: (a) unsupported school environments, (b) economic influences, (c) chaotic family life, and (d) personal academic or social
deficits. Although the causes for truancy differ depending on the respondent, most authors agree there are a number of influences that contribute to truancy. The following section looks at the most common identified factors.

**Unsupported School Environments**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the addition of a truancy intervention panel on the reduction of student absences. As schools identify reasons why students may become truant, one reason often reported by students is an unsupportive school environment. The following section provides information pertaining to unsupportive school environments.

Many children that become truant started in primary grades and continued into high school. Reasons that children stay away from school, tend to focus on the student’s feelings that created either a sense of belonging or the feelings of being unaccepted. Truant students feel disconnected to school for a number of reasons. Children who have previously reported acts of bullying tend to stay away from school. Wimmer (2008) a school psychologist, reports on what she describes as “school refusal” behaviors. School refusal behaviors are factors that prevent both students and staff members from attending school on a consistent basis. Wimmer (2008) describes the following school factors as contributing to school refusal behavior: high-absentee rates for students and staff members; peer pressure to stay out of school; large groups of low-achieving older students; large class sizes; high levels of discipline problems; low staff morale; an authoritarian style of school management; negative staff member-student interaction; too much emphasis on competition or testing; school violence; and gang activity.
Wimmer (2008) provided ways in which to change the attitudes of both students and staff from avoidance to acceptance by recommending that schools provide a safe school environment. The development and implementation of anti-bullying and anti-violence programs is essential to a safe learning environment as well as increased supervision in areas where bullying or gang activity have been reported. Students are more likely to come to school when they feel welcome and when they feel the adults in the building will help them if they feel threatened or unsafe (Wimmer, 2008). The development of pro-social or anti-social behaviors and attitudes is directly related to the adult and peer bonds made by a student during the early years of childhood and adolescence. Truancy is a behavior supported by anti-social behaviors introduced early in educational grade levels. Truancy involves youth as young as second grade that because of a myriad of reasons choose not to come to school and without prompt intervention, can lead to habitual absence from school and eventual student dropout. As students continue to miss class instruction, they experience a drop in grades, which also contributes to students spending more time away from school. It is a cycle that if left without intervention will lead students to drop out of school altogether.

**Chaotic Family Life**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the addition of a truancy intervention panel on the reduction of student absences. One factor identified as having a negative effect on a child’s ability to get to school each day is a chaotic family life. For the majority of students, going to school every day is simply part of their routine. The parental and family structure available in most homes contributes to the idea that children go to school every day, get good grades, and graduate from high school so
they can either go to college or enter the workforce. Unfortunately, not all children find themselves surrounded by a familial structure that values education or understands the negative effects that poor academic achievement will have not only on the student but on society as well.

Students with a poor history of school performance often are the product of families that are disengaged from the education system. In one study that addressed school disengagement and student mental health issues, DeSocio et al., (2007) describes familial characteristics that often times kept students from school. “These families may have experienced previous negative encounters with school officials, contributing to their distrust of the school system and accentuating their reluctance to get involved with intervention strategies” (p. 9).

Truant students may have family issues at home that force them into caretaker roles involving younger siblings or invalid family members. In one-parent families, the parent often relies on an older sibling to care for a sick child or invalid family member when the family income is in jeopardy. A 2007 report by DeSocio et al. described family problems that may contribute to truancy:

For many students, truancy was symptomatic of personal and family problems. At times, poor school attendance was part of a family’s efforts to cope with social and economic demands, for example; some parents acknowledged that family needs took precedence over school attendance: The youth was needed at home to provide childcare, care for ill relatives, or contribute to the family income. (p. 5)

Another report on the causes of truancy indicates that a child’s home life often leads to truancy and other forms of juvenile delinquency. Garry (1996) states a common
cause of truancy is parental neglect. Parents of truant children often do not value education. Parents require older children to babysit younger siblings or work to provide additional income instead of attending school. Still other truant children report that they were not able to attend school because of problems at home, in the neighborhood or at school. Neighborhoods can be a source of problems to young children forced to walk past empty drug houses or unsafe areas on their way to school (Garry, 1996).

A chaotic family life contributes to truancy. Another factor involved in contributing to truancy is the student’s ethnicity and living in poverty. The following section reviews literature pertaining to the effects of ethnicity and poverty on increased rates of student truancy.

*The Effects of Truancy on Student Ethnic Groups and Low Economic Standing*

The research for this study looks at the effectiveness of a truancy intervention panel at reducing student absences. A secondary portion of this study will measure if the addition of a truancy intervention panel is an effective strategy in the reduction of absences in students from ethnic minorities or low socio economic groups. This section reviews the literature associated with research into truant minority students and truancy for students living in poverty conditions.

Studies show that the environment in which a child matures provides risk or protective factors that help to develop the social structure surrounding a child. Socio-economic standing seems to have an effect on whether or not a child will become truant or commit juvenile crime. Research by McNeal (1999) on the effects of parent involvement on cognitive (science achievement) and behavioral (truancy) outcomes in the first set of findings provided evidence that contend social capital (parent-child
discussions, Parent-Teacher Organization membership, student mentoring) was associated with higher student academic achievement and less deviant behavior. The results shifted when racial, household structure and socioeconomic variation were examined. The initial findings presumed to support social capital but persisted only for White students of middle to upper socio-economic standing with a stable two-parent household. McNeil (1999) provided the reader with an explanation of minority groups and their socialization into American culture. McNeal contended that the socialization process and social experience is much different for minorities from the dominant group. He looked to education when making his point, which included the under-representation of minorities in textbooks, a difference in treatment by both teachers, and peers, the placement of minorities in lower performance track classes, and that minorities generally learn less in a school year. McNeal continued by pointing out that minorities attend schools that typically have fewer resources than predominately-White schools. McNeal (1999) contended that these negative experiences led minority students to develop an attitude about the value of education and predicted the level of involvement in the education system. He noted that poor and minority parents are far less likely to be involved in school-based activities and far less willing to meet with teachers and school officials because of past negative experiences and intimidation. The results of McNeal’s study, which studied the effect of parent involvement on student achievement and behavior, showed that even at comparable levels of involvement, single parents, minority parents, and poverty level parents experienced less student outcome. The first major finding in McNeal’s (1999) research indicated that the effects of parental involvement are contingent upon at least moderate levels of resources, and for minority parents, poor
people, and single headed households, those tended to be lacking. The second major finding from this study was that parent-teacher contact does not significantly increase student achievement or reduce problematic behaviors. Possible explanations were that when teachers call home, parents become reactive because the majority of teachers call home due to behavioral issues rather than academic issues. McNeal concluded that the most important element of social capital in building a consistent relationship to adolescent outcomes (achievement and dropping out) was parent-child discussion, which should be fostered and developed (McNeal, 1999).

A study, presented by Henry (2007) reported truant behavior, demographic and family characteristics, school-related risk factors, and drug use. Her study utilized data collected in 2003 by the Monitoring the Future longitudinal study that tracked beliefs associated with drug use, attitudes and behaviors of United States high school students. The results of the Henry study indicated, “11% of eighth graders and 16% of tenth graders reported recent truancy. The most common predictors of student truancy were parental education, large amounts of unsupervised time, school disengagement, and drug use” (Henry, 2007. p. 29). The report indicated that a difference existed between the percentage of reported truancy among Black eighth grade students and significantly higher truancy among Black tenth grade students (Henry, 2007).

An example of a collaborative effort between organizations to reduce truancy among minority students and students of poverty comes from a study conducted by McCray (2006) which looked at attendance data for minority students and students of poverty in Florida. McCray revealed the highest rates of student absences occurred for students in grade 9 and 12; among students of ethnic minorities including American
Indian, Black and Hispanic youth; and students of poverty (reported as eligible for free and reduced lunch). The study conducted in a public urban high school in Florida identified chronically truant students and applied an intervention strategy to increase attendance. McCray reported *Project CAUSE* (Community Alliance for Urban Student Empowerment) as an example of a collaborative effort between a Florida university and a Florida high school to increase attendance rates of 20 students in grades 9 and 10 identified as chronic truants. Chronic truancy was defined as having 20 or more absences in a semester. A second requirement was for students to be older than typical age for that grade level. School administrators were asked to identify obstacles most likely to keep students from achieving academically. They immediately pointed to chronic absenteeism. The intervention strategies implemented by *project CAUSE* consisted of: (a) conducting weekly “rap sessions” with the project coordinator, (b) holding small-group tutorial sessions, (c) developing mentor/protégé, (d) facilitation roundtable discussions, and (e) offering relevant out-of-school experiences. The aims of the project were to: (a) Increase school attendance rates among high school students with chronic truancy, (b) Improve academic performance among high school students with histories of chronic absenteeism, (c) Increase a sense of school belonging among high school students with chronic absenteeism, and (d) Support a new group of students annually with continued funding (McCray, 2006).

Types of Strategies Used to Decrease Student Absences

Educators are finding ways to join with their communities to ensure that students exhibiting high rates of absenteeism are identified early and strategies are implemented to assure a child’s participation in their education, which includes coming to school every
day. There must be a comprehensive system in place when assuring student success. Blankenstein (2004) wrote, “Ensuring achievement for all students means having an overarching strategy that encompasses the majority of learners-and then having specific strategies aimed at those who need extra support” (p. 110). Educators were expected to recognize the issue of truancy as a barrier to academic achievement, examine potential causes, and put programs and services in place to foster school reform that will improve student attendance (Blankenstein, 2004).

There is much research (Kinder et al., 1996; Malcolm et al., 2003; McCray, 2006; Reid, 2005; Zhang et al., 2007) devoted to the causes of truancy as well as the resulting consequences to the student and society. A number of strategies have been employed as a means of deterring students from becoming truant. Several authors have concluded that programs designed to combat truancy fall into one of the following four categories: court based programs; school based programs, computer based technology that evaluate anti-truancy programs and finally community-based programs (Bell et al., 1994; Kube & Ratigan, 1992). In explaining the importance of community in combating truancy, McCray (2006) reported:

Truancy is a societal problem, not just an individual one. Truancy has the potential to limit the possibilities for the lives of many youth. Interventions work best when implemented on a broad scale. Families must ensure that their children are in school, schools must create a climate where students feel safe and have a sense of belonging where learning is taking place. Entire communities must take active roles in the lives of youth and not shun them or fear them. When we all take responsibility, we will all reap the benefits. (p. 33)
Court-Based Strategies

Court based truancy reduction programs include sanctions placed on parents of persistent truants, attendance requirements in order to receive or maintain a driver’s license and mandatory parenting classes to educate parents with strategies and skills to combat truancy and delinquent behaviors. Truancy is referred to as a status offence in juvenile court. Status offenses are illegal only because the person committing the offense is a juvenile. There are four categories of status offenses that include, running away, truancy, ungovernable, and underage drinking. “The proportion of arrests sent to juvenile court has increased gradually from 1980 to 2003 from 58% to 71%.” (Zhang et al., 2007, p. 244)

In a study by Zhang et al., (2007) youth initially referred to the juvenile justice system because of truancy were tracked using a longitudinal study to examine truancy offenders’ interactions with the South Carolina Juvenile Justice System (SCDJJ) at their first and second referrals. According to Zhang et al., when comparing truancy referrals to non-truancy referrals, youth with first referral to SCDJJ for truancy are more likely to be white, females and do not have a history of serious drug use. They are also less likely to be referred for more serious crimes as they reach adulthood and if incarcerated, face shorter sentences. Zhang et al., (2007) contends that the results of this study suggest that youth who are referred to juvenile court for truancy are very different than youth referred to court for more serious offenses.

In South Carolina, when a child ages 12-17 has accumulated seven or more absences and fails to comply with an intervention plan while continuing to miss school, the child is determined to be a chronic truant and may be referred to juvenile court.
Judges may order parents and the child to appear in court with the order that the child attend school. If the child continues to miss school, the parent can be fined or imprisoned for contempt as well as declaring the child delinquent if the absences are deemed out of the control of the parent. Truancy is a strong indicator of the levels of delinquent behavior in youth and later criminal conduct. The purpose of the Zhang et al. (2007) study was to track truancy first offenders and first offenders for other crimes to determine if there was a difference in later referrals. The results of the study indicated that for first time truancy offenders compared to first time other offenders: (a) European Americans were more likely to be referred for truancy where African Americans were more likely to be referred for other offenses; (b) girls were more likely to be referred for truancy and boys were more likely to be referred for other offenses; (c) juveniles from low socio-economic households were more likely to be referred for truancy where juveniles from households earning more than $15,000 were more likely to be referred for other offenses; and (d) juveniles who did not use drugs were more likely to be referred for truancy than those who use drugs. Results show that truancy offenders are referred to court earlier than other offenders are. Another finding of the study by Zhang et al. indicated that age, gender, ethnicity, special education status, drug use, and family criminal history are all risk factors that influenced a truant into a second referral (Zhang et al., 2007).

School-Based Strategies

As schools try to identify strategies that may reduce student truancy, they must first identify the characteristics of the truant and then find reasons as to why students may choose to stay away. School based programs are traditionally maintained either by
school counselors or social workers implementing programs designed to address issues identified as reasons students stay away from school such as feeling unsafe, bullied, peer pressure and low self-esteem.

A study reported by Wimmer (2008) indicates that an effective strategy to reduce student absences that are associated with anxiety and depression is in the development of coping strategies. Students are taught to problem solve using steps that help students identify when they are feeling stresses, recognize their feelings and thoughts, implement healthy thoughts and coping strategies and then reward themselves for identifying their stress points and using strategies to cope (Wimmer, 2008).

There are a number of strategies used by schools to assist in the reduction of student absences. One area of research identifies mental health issues, as reason students may become truant. A study by DeSocio et al. (2007) looked at the problem of student mental health issues along with lack of engagement to determine the effectiveness of a truancy intervention program directed at students at high risk for academic failure and dropping out of school. The intent of the study was to determine if providing a mentoring teacher to initiate a bonding relationship within the school as well as providing school-based mental health services might affect students with high rates of absences and disengagement. The intervention program focused on two separate interventions; the first enrolled students in a school-based health center for comprehensive health services while concurrently assigning those students a mentor teacher from the school. The study group was comprised of students with 15 or more unexcused days absent for the school year and in serious danger of failing six or more of their eight classes. Student ethnicities were reported as very diverse with approximately 58% Black/Non-Hispanic students,
25% Hispanic/Latino students, 13% White/Non-Hispanic students, 3% Asian Pacific Island students, and 1% Native American/Alaskan Native students. The report stated 65% of students lived in poverty and were eligible to received free and reduced lunches (DeSocio et al., 2007).

DeSocio et al. (2007) found that students with high rates of absenteeism and failing grades, often experienced reactions from their teachers and peers that were detrimental to a student coming to school. Students and teachers often repeated phrases such as, “Why are you still coming to class when you have no chance of passing” (DeSocio et al., 2007, p. 9). The study showed attendance increased when students received a mentor teacher that could help redirect the student’s feelings of hopelessness and the social pressures to drop out. The encouragement of the mentor teacher and the ability of the student to form a bond with a school member were beneficial in keeping students in school (DeSocio et al., 2007).

A study by White and Kelly (2010) presented through the role of school counselor, described the programs available to students that are truant and in danger of dropping out of school. The study identified the risk factors and the supporting factors that affect a student’s decision to drop out of school. The study identified strategies that schools, primarily counselors could utilize in an attempt to intervene and keep students in school. The interventions identified through the study focused on either reducing the risk factors associated with truancy or increasing the resiliency or protective factors. Strategies identified as increasing protective factors included providing social supports in early adolescence, assigning adult advocates to track at-risk students, teach social and personal skills to at-risk students, and provide support and education to parents.
Strategies to address risk factors included providing academic training and support to teachers for more academic instruction and less time spent on behavior management as well as providing after-school skills training and tutoring for at-risk students.

Interventions included early identification of at-risk students through attendance records and communication between the school and parents. The study called for remediation plans and follow-through after implementation (White & Kelly, 2010).

Community-Based Strategies

The problem identified through this study is to determine the effect of the addition of a truancy intervention panel on the reduction of student absences. Many authors (Baker et al., 2001; Capps, 2003; Fantuzzo, Grim, & Hazan, 2005; McCray, 2006; Michael, Dirrus, & Epstein, 2007; White & Kelly, 2010) agree that the problems associated with identifying reasons why students become truant and then putting strategies in place to reduce student absences are too many for schools to handle on their own. Research by Garry (1996) shows that combining the efforts of the school, parents, and the community provides a more comprehensive system in the effort to reduce truancy. “Many communities are designing and implementing truancy-reduction programs involving families, schools, law enforcement, businesses, judicial and social service agencies, and community and youth services organizations” (p. 2).

Community-based programs are designed to improve attendance by addressing the causes of truancy for the individual student as well as developing strategies to improve pro-social skills and reduce anti-social behaviors and attitudes. Programs include parenting classes, student mentoring, family counseling, and a case manager to monitor student behavior as an alternative to juvenile court (Zhang et al., 2007).
In 1996, the U. S. Department of Education published *A Manual to Combat Truancy* that outlined steps to reduce truancy. The manual described programs successfully implemented throughout the United States to reduce student truancy. The following are examples of successful programs identified through *A Manual to Combat Truancy* (U. S. Department of Education, 1996b).

In New Haven, Connecticut, *The Stay in School* program used peer pressure and mentors to encourage middle school students with a high rate of absences to attend school on a regular basis. Truant middle school students were required to attend truancy court where a panel of high school students questioned them about their absences and identified solutions. The truants were assigned mentors and entered into a contract that required the student to report to the panel in two months for updates on their progress.

Another program identified through *A Manual to Combat Truancy* (1996b) was the *Mentoring and Tutoring Help* (MATH) (Reglin, 1997) developed in Escambia, Florida. Students processed through the truancy court conference program were provided a mentor with similar interests along with tutoring in math and English. Another aspect of the program was the expectation that parents are actively participating in the program in order to ensure student buy-in.

An example of collaboration between schools and the local police was highlighted through a truancy recovery program implemented in Richmond, California through the *Comprehensive Homicide Initiative* (Fyfe, Goldkamp, & White, 1997). Analysis of data provided through the program revealed improvements in academic performance, school behaviors, and attendance (Fyfe et al., 1997). Another collaborative effort for the reduction of truancy was reported by Garry (1996) that pointed to truancy as a smaller
part of a much larger problem associated with the truant and the risk factors surrounding the child. The report identified seven community reduction programs that involved schools, law enforcement, families, businesses, judicial and social service agencies, as well as community and youth service organizations. The programs were recognized as providing innovative approaches in the reduction of truancy working through juvenile courts and the community, in identifying truant middle school aged children as well as programs targeting children as young as five years old. The identified programs from around the nation introduced effective programs that reduce truancy before truancy led to much more serious juvenile crime. The report continued by indicating the need to identify and reduce the negative risk factors surrounding the truant as well as providing positive influences in an attempt to change the motivation of the truant child (Garry, 1996).

Furlong, Paige, and Osher (2003) presented the results of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) (1999) initiative implemented in seven of the 77 districts that participated in the program through 2002. The report focused on the need for communities to examine the issues, successes, and struggles experienced by districts involved in the study before attempting to implement additional SS/HS (1999) programs. The initiative was beneficial in that programs provided students, schools, and the community opportunities to build pro-social bonds between children and caring adults while developing academic achievement and pro-social behaviors.

As a grant program, SS/HS (1999) provided guidelines to participating districts on the implementation of school-community collaboration. “Collaboration must include the local school, local public mental health authority, and law enforcement as well as family
members, students, and juvenile justice officials” (Furlong et al., 2003, pp. 449-450).

The development and implementation of evidence-based strategies to reduce risk-factors and increase pro-social skills are determined by the local school or community group based on specific, local needs. One area addressed in Furlong et al. included utilization of evidence-based strategies used to identify needs of the local community. Selection and utilization of standardized strategies is important to assure program fidelity. The report also addressed the need for data collection and interpretation to assist in the evaluation of local programs (Furlong et al., 2003).

**Truancy Intervention Panels**

The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of the addition of a truancy intervention panel on reducing student truancy. The truancy intervention panels studied here were developed through the Success for All Students (2008) grant in collaboration with a large metropolitan school district experiencing pockets of high student truancy. The Success for All Students program was funded through a federal Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative (1999) grant (LSSD, 2009).

The philosophy of the Success for All Students program was developed based on the social development model theory of providing pro-social units and protective factors in order to increase the opportunities for high-risk students to adopt pro-social attitudes and behaviors (Success for All Students, 2008). Results of the federal grant initiative as reported through the U. S. Department of Education (2012b) indicated:

- The Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (1999) has funded more than 365 urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas nationwide since 1999. This grant is the result of a unique collaboration among the U.S. Departments of
Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice and was created in response to rising concerns about youth violence, substance abuse, and school safety. Each grant site determines how funds can best be used within the community to link new and existing services. Partnership between schools and communities creates a coordinated, cooperative effort that recognizes the complexity of these issues and their root causes. Using programs and services that have a proven track record of success, as well as strategies for both prevention and intervention, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative helps reduce the risk factors that come between children of all ages and their ability to learn—and to stay safe and healthy. (para. 3)

The Success for All Students program was implemented within two areas of a large southeastern metropolitan school district which had very little infrastructure to support high-risk communities. Children and adolescents living in those areas were at risk for developing anti-social behaviors and attitudes modeled in their societal units. The intent of the Success for All Students program was to identify students that exhibited behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, and violence and provided them with opportunities to interact in pro-social activities, which may produce protective factors for the development of a socially acceptable adult. Truancy is addressed through the Success for All Students program by identifying the risk factors that prevent the child from attending school then providing strategies to encourage increased attendance through pro-social interactions before making a referral to juvenile court (Success for All Students Project, 2008).
The Success for All Students (2008) program was first implemented as a year-long pilot program as a school-based mental health support program for a pre-determined high-needs area of a large southeastern metropolitan school system. The program provided free intervention and mentoring services to families and individual students as a “Unique opportunity to create infrastructure that provides an integrated, comprehensive, community-wide plan to promote safe, respectful, and drug-free school environments while supporting pro-social skills and healthy childhood development” (p. 2). Following the successful pilot year, the district in partnership with the county community services board, juvenile court and the sheriff’s office were awarded an $8.5 million in grant funds through the federal Safe School/Healthy Students Program (1999). Through a district announcement, the goals of the SFAS grant were explained as:

Over a four-year period, the community-based program provides services for students at 35 schools including 20 elementary schools, nine middle and six high schools designed toward reducing discipline events, improving attendance and ultimately increasing student academic achievement. (LSSD, 2009)

Summary

The effects of truancy are visible throughout this country and around the world. Truancy is costly to businesses, schools, and communities. Businesses and communities face a higher number of juvenile crimes committed between the normal school hours from students that are truant from school. Police departments are burdened with not only increased crime, but also identifying truants and placing them at school, with parents or at a juvenile detention center. Education reform has placed the burden of accountability on to the local schools with the incentive to get students to school in the form of federal
monies. In order to meet the requirements of Annual Yearly Progress, schools need to meet the attendance requirement referred to as the second indicator. Schools, communities, and businesses understood the need to combine resources when dealing with the problems associated with truancy.

The literature in this chapter presents information pertaining to the effects of truancy on the American education system and policies that are in place in order to meet the demands of reducing truancy. This chapter also presented literature pertaining to the characteristics of the truant student as well as causes of truancy. Finally, strategies used by juvenile courts, schools and community services were identified and explained as a way to identify truant students as well as the risk factors and protective factors that develop the socialization network for the truant student and family. Community based truancy intervention panels are introduced as a strategy to reduce student absences.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the addition of a truancy intervention panel on student truancy. A second purpose of the study was to determine if the addition of a truancy intervention panel had a significant impact on student absences based on student ethnicity or socio-economic standing. Following is the methodology for this study.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter III was to outline the research design of this causal-comparative study. Research questions and the relating hypothesis were proposed along with the methodology through which they were tested. The participants, instrument, and procedure as well as the method of analysis are explained in this chapter.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Federal education reform laws place the burden of student attendance on to individual schools. A second indicator of a school’s ability to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures the annual attendance rate. Programs to identify students most likely to become truant as well as the implementation of effective strategies to keep students in school are necessary for schools to meet the criteria of AYP. Programs designed to promote the cooperation between parents, students, community members and schools are now included as a strategy used to increase student attendance. One program currently in use is the Truancy Intervention Panel provided through the Success for All Students Program (2008) in a large southeastern school district.

This two part quasi-experimental quantitative study analyzed the variables to determine if a relationship existed between the addition of a Truancy Intervention Panel (TIP) and the rate of attendance as reported through the Georgia Department of Education (2011c). The first part of the study investigates the following question:
Research Question 1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the additions of Truancy Intervention Panels and the percentages of students reported with 15 or more days absent when compared to non-TIP schools?

There are three hypotheses for the first research question. Information pertaining to the (dependent variable) percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for all 108 schools in this study was provided by the Georgia Department of Education’s annual report of school attendance data reported under the school report card category of second indicator. Analysis included a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) between subjects ANOVA to measure the means and standard deviation of the impact of the implementation of a TIP on the dependent variable. The dependent variable was measured as both a comparison of TIP and non-TIP schools as well as the impact of a TIP on the dependent variable over time. Research data included the analysis of the dependent variable based on student ethnicity as well as economically disadvantaged. The three hypotheses are as follows:

\( H_{01} \): There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between schools with a Truancy Intervention Panel and non-TIP schools.

\( H_{02} \): There is no significant difference between the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent before the addition of a TIP compared to after the addition of a TIP.

\( H_{03} \): The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels.
The second part of this study examined the perceptions of Truancy Intervention Panel members collected by survey. The survey was designed to measure the ratings of the opinions expressed by administrators, counselors, and social workers describing the impact of a TIP on reducing the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent. Survey questions were also included to determine fidelity of the implementation of the TIP program by examining the membership of the TIP at each school as well as the strategies used to reduce student absences. Part two of this study addressed the following questions:

Research Question 2. Is there consistent implementation of Truancy Intervention Panels in all schools?

Research Question 3. Do panel members perceive Truancy Intervention Panels as an effective method toward reducing the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent?

Research Design

This quantitative quasi-experimental research study (Gay & Airasian, 2000) consisted of two types of data collection. The reason for this method of study was to determine if a relationship existed between the reported percentages of students with 15 or more absences and the addition of a Truancy Intervention Panel. As well, survey data were used to measure the opinions of TIP members as to the effectiveness of the TIP at reducing student absences along with implementation fidelity. This methodology was appropriate in order to determine whether the addition of a TIP had an impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent.
The first part of the study examined attendance data reported as the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent as provided through the Georgia Department of Education (2011c) on the 108 elementary, middle and high schools in the district. The analysis of research question one consisted of the longitudinal study measuring the impact of the addition of a TIP on the dependent variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) compared to non-TIP schools. Analysis also included measuring the dependent variable to determine the impact of a TIP over a six-year period of program implementation. Further analysis was completed to determine if the addition of a TIP had impact on the dependent variable based on student ethnicity or socio-economic standing. The independent variable for the study was the implementation of the Truancy Intervention Panel.

The second and third research questions were analyzed by measuring the responses of TIP members provided through the survey descriptive research component. The survey included questions designed to measure the opinions of TIP members on (1) the climate and characteristics of their schools, (2) identification of members of the TIP and strategies used to reduce student absences and, (3) the impact of the TIP as a strategy to reduce student absences.

Participants

The study examined information collected in two types of data. The first set of data provided archival attendance date from the district's 108 schools at the elementary, middle and high school grade level that included the percentage of students at each school with 15 or more days absent. Data was reported for students in the categories of all students, Black, White, and economically disadvantaged. Schools receiving a TIP
provided through the Success for All Students (2008) program were identified through the LSSD website (LSSD, 2009).

The second group of participants included administrators, counselors, teachers, and school social workers that have participated in a TIP. The panel members represented the schools in the district receiving services through the Success for All Students Program and are currently implementing a TIP as a strategy to reduce student absences. The researcher delivered the surveys to the TIP schools that had agreed to participate in the study. Although the school names, principals, and counselors of TIP schools were identified on the LSSD website, permission to conduct research at the TIP schools was granted by the LSSD Office of Accountability. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the LSSD and the researcher’s name and description of study were forwarded to participating principals. The permission letter can be found in Appendix A. After being granted permission from the school district, IRB for the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) was applied for and permission granted to conduct research. A copy of the USM IRB approval letter is located in Appendix B.

Instrumentation

The instrument administered to participants was created by the researcher and titled, “The Impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel on Student Absences”. The 22-question survey consisted of three sections. Section 1 included six questions that measured responses pertaining to the characteristics and climate of the school. Section 2 included questions that identified members of the TIP along with strategies used to reduce student absences. Question 7 identified TIP member job titles and number of each on the panel. Questions 8 through 11 identified how often and under what conditions TIP
meetings were held. Question 12 presented the 14 strategies recommended by the LSSD attendance protocol (2011-2012) committee for the TIP to use in reducing student absences. Respondents were asked to mark the strategies used at their school to reduce absences. Section 3 consisted of eight questions that measured the opinions of the participants as to the effectiveness of the TIP at reducing student absences. The response variables were measured on a Likert bi-polar response scale. The variable agreement had the following five attributes: (1) = Strongly Disagree, (2) = Somewhat Disagree, (3) = Neutral, (4) = Somewhat Agree, and (5) = Strongly Agree.

The survey contained items used to determine program fidelity of the implementation of a TIP throughout the targeted schools. Questions 7-14 were designed to determine membership of each school’s TIP and the frequency in which a TIP meets to determine student eligibility. Questions 16-22, were included to determine the strategies used by the TIP to reduce absences. A copy of the instrument is located in Appendix C.

The survey instrument was tested for validity by examining the responses of three panel experts chosen for their work in education as well as their participation in and development of the Truancy Intervention Panels implemented through the Success for All Students program (2008). The validity questionnaire titled, “The Impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel Survey” is located in Appendix D. The panel of experts included the Truancy Court Coordinator, a Truancy Officer, and a TIP-school principal. Questions were eliminated from the instrument based on the responses of the expert panel. It was determined that because the questions on the instrument were examined individually rather than as a sub-score, Cronbach’s alpha was inappropriate. Reliability of individual items is undefined and simply reported in this study. Also since the target pool of
respondents was already limited, it was determined not to waste this limited pool by using some of them as a pilot study.

**Procedures**

Names and locations of schools were obtained from the LSSD website. The website also identified the school name, location, and principal for each school in the two areas of the county receiving services through the Success for All Students (2008) program. Although the school names and principal names are available on the district webpage, the application for approval to conduct research by the IRB through the LSSD was submitted. A permission to participate form was delivered to each of the principals in the SFAS (2008) area for the principal’s signature granting permission for research to be conducted at their school. With the submission of the principal’s permission to participate form, IRB final approval was granted by the LSSD Office of Accountability.

Survey instruments as well as a letter to the school counselor and a cover letter to the participants were hand delivered to each school participating in this research. The survey cover letter, located in Appendix E, stated that a returned and completed survey indicated that the participant granted consent for the survey data to be included in the study. The letter also stated that only adult persons directly involved with a TIP should complete the survey. The letter to counselors indicated that both the district and the principal granted permission to conduct research at their school. The letter stated that the survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Finally, the letter gave directions on the distribution and collection of the survey letter. Counselors were directed to deliver a survey to any principal, administrator, teacher, social worker, or other person that had participated in a TIP. Counselors were asked to collect the
completed surveys and keep them in a secure location until the researcher could return. The letter titled, “Letter to Counselors with Instructions for Survey Distribution and Collection” is located in Appendix F. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher coded the instrument in order to identify the school from which each response came. Individual participants were not identified.

This quantitative study also included the longitudinal measure of school attendance data for school years 2006-2011. The sample for this research involved 108 schools, including 12 high schools, 25 middle schools, and 67 elementary schools. Archival attendance data reporting the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent was collected from the Georgia Department of Education (2012) web site for the years 2006–2011. Reports for the study were collected by accessing the Report Card link. After identifying the chosen district profile, individual school data was collected by school year under the second indicator tab of the NCLB/AYP link. The 35 schools in the two areas of the district receiving services provided through the SFAS (2008) were identified through the SFAS (2008) website.

Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis of data was run separately for elementary, middle and high school levels. Descriptive statistics included means and standard deviation of the dependent variable (percentages of students reported with 15 or more days absent) over a six year period in TIP and non-TIP schools for all students, Black students, White students and economically disadvantaged students. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed
an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Analysis included the following three between-subjects effects: (a) the difference in absences in TIP and non-TIP schools, (b) the difference in absences across six years, and (c) an interaction between years and the addition of a TIP. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test the between subjects effect of the interaction of the dependent variable over time, student ethnicity, and the addition of a TIP.

Summary

Chapter III has presented the research design for this study. Quantitative analysis were conducted in two parts, to first determine if there was a causal comparative relationship between the addition of a Truancy Intervention Panel and the number of students with 15 or more days absent. Archival attendance data were provided through the Georgia Department of Education (2012). The dependant variable for the study was the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent. The independent variable was the addition of a TIP. Descriptive statistics included the means and standard deviation of the dependent variable for both TIP and non-TIP schools over a six-year period. Tests included a 2 (TIP v. Non-TIP) X 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) run to determine the between subjects effects for TIP and non-TIP schools. Further analysis of between subject effects on the dependent variable included multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA. The research methods in this study were designed to analyze the data and report information pertaining to the effectiveness of the addition of a TIP on the number of students reported with 15 or more days absent.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this two-part study was to examine the impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel on student absences as well as analyze the responses of TIP members to survey questions. This chapter reports the processes through which the study was conducted and the analysis through which the research questions and related hypotheses were examined. This chapter provides the descriptive statistics, statistical data, and the summary of results.

Descriptive Statistics

The survey instrument for this study was distributed to 33 of the 35 (94%) elementary, middle, and high schools in the district receiving services provided through the SFAS (2008) program. Each participating elementary school received three surveys, middle schools received five surveys, and high schools received 10 surveys. The number of surveys provided to schools was determined based on the number of support personnel at each level identified through the school websites. Only school personnel that participated in a TIP completed and returned surveys. Sixty surveys were sent to the 20 elementary schools in the SFAS (2008) areas, 10 schools completed and returned surveys (50%) with 16 participants (n = 16). Eight elementary schools (40%) reported that they did not use TIP because they did not have students at risk for truancy. Two elementary (10%) principals declined to participate. Forty-five surveys were sent to nine middle schools each receiving five surveys. All nine middle schools responded with completed and returned surveys (100%) with 32 participants (n = 32). Sixty surveys were
distributed to six high schools each receiving 10 surveys. Three high schools responded with completed and returned surveys (50%) with 16 participants \((n = 16)\). Two (33%) high schools did not respond. One (17%) returned one survey after the completion of the data analysis and was not counted. Of the 165 surveys delivered to the 33 schools, 64 surveys (39%) were completed, returned in a timely manner, and included in the analysis \((n = 64)\). Table 1 presents years of experience in education for members of a TIP.

Table 1

*TIP Members’ Years of Experience in Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (03%)</td>
<td>1 (06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>5 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>1 (07%)</td>
<td>11 (35%)</td>
<td>6 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>9 (64%)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>6 (19%)</td>
<td>1 (06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>1 (03%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows the largest proportion of the TIP members had 16 to 20 years of experience in education. TIP members at the elementary level reported the highest number of years of educational experience while the middle and high school levels reported experience between 11 and 15 years.

Descriptive information measuring the perceptions of TIP participants based on the climate and characteristics of their schools and communities were also recorded.
Responses based on a Likert, bi-polar response scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) follow in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Descriptive Data for Participant Responses Indicating Climate and Characteristics of TIP Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parents or guardians at the school make sure their child comes to school every day.</td>
<td>16 4.06 .680</td>
<td>31 3.94 .814</td>
<td>16 3.88 .960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parents or guardians at this school are actively involved in their child’s education.</td>
<td>16 3.94 .680</td>
<td>31 3.94 .736</td>
<td>16 3.63 .890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students at this school have numerous resources that build pro-social attitudes and beliefs.</td>
<td>16 4.00 .966</td>
<td>31 3.82 1.34</td>
<td>16 3.31 1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students at this school live in high-risk areas that contribute to anti-social behaviors.</td>
<td>16 3.00 1.10</td>
<td>31 2.65 1.30</td>
<td>16 3.25 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students at this school have parents or guardian supervision when they get home from school.</td>
<td>15 1.00 0.00</td>
<td>31 3.44 .890</td>
<td>16 3.06 .772</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Scale 1 (Strongly Disagree) – 5 (Strongly Agree). Middle missing one (.03%) response.
Table 2 represents the means and standard deviations of the responses from TIP participants pertaining to the climate and characteristics of their school and community. Responses indicated a perception among elementary participants that parent participation and community resources were more available and declined as indicated by the responses of participants from middle and high school. The availability of community resources available to students to build pro-social bonds differed in that elementary and middle responded more frequently that they somewhat agree (4) more than high schools respondents which were neutral (3) in their response. The greatest disparity in responses was in question six indicating that elementary students in the SFAS areas do not have supervision when they get home from school.

The second research question addressed in this study asked if there was consistent implementation of the TIP in all schools. Participant survey responses included descriptive information addressing program fidelity in the implementation of a TIP. Responses included the identification of participants, frequency of TIP meetings and TIP strategies used to reduce student absences. Participant responses pertaining to the second research question were presented in Table 3 through Table 8 and address program implementation fidelity. Table 3 identified the TIP participants by school level.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Data of Frequency and Percentage of TIP Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table identified counselors (100%) at the elementary and high school level and social workers (100%) at the middle and high school level as the most likely TIP participants. Principals were identified as participants (94%) at the elementary level but dropped to (25%) at the high school level. Each level identified the truancy officer as a participant. Only one (.03%) middle school and four (.25%) high school respondents reported having a community member on their panel.

Additional measures of program fidelity included the process of identifying truant students and the frequency of TIP meetings. Response choices ranged from weekly to never. Table 4 includes information pertaining to the frequency of TIP meetings used to analyze attendance data and identify truant students.
Table 4

*Descriptive Data for the Frequency of TIP Meetings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Bi-Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Bi-Monthly</th>
<th>Never Meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>10 (67%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
<td>1 (07%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (03%)</td>
<td>24 (83%)</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4 (31%)</td>
<td>1 (08%)</td>
<td>4 (31%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>1 (08%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Missing responses question 8. Elementary 1 (.03%) n = 16, Middle 3 (.09%) n = 32, High 3 (.19%) n = 16.

Table 4 indicated the largest proportion of elementary, middle, and high school levels held monthly meetings to identify truant students. High schools indicated meeting times that varied more than the other school levels. Additionally, participants identified the frequency of TIP meetings held with truant students and their parents as a strategy to reduce absences. Table 5 reports the responses to frequency of TIP and student meetings.

Table 5

*Descriptive Data for Frequency of TIP Meetings with Students and Parents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Bi-Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Bi-Monthly</th>
<th>Never Meet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>11 (73%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>21 (72%)</td>
<td>8 (28%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>6 (46%)</td>
<td>4 (31%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Missing responses for question 11 = Elementary 1 (.03%) of n = 16, Middle 3 (.09%) of n = 32, High 3 (.19%) of n = 16.

Table 5 shows that the largest proportion of schools at the elementary, middle and high school level met with truant students and parents primarily on a monthly or bi-monthly schedule. At all levels, responses indicated TIP meetings occurred.
A measure used to identify truant students was through the monitoring of both excused and unexcused absences. Survey responses indicated at what number of unexcused absences a student was referred to a TIP. Table 6 includes the responses.

Table 6

*Descriptive Data for Frequency of Unexcused Absences Required for a TIP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt; 5</th>
<th>6 - 10</th>
<th>11 - 15</th>
<th>&gt; 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>9 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>24 (77%)</td>
<td>2 (06%)</td>
<td>1 (03%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>1 (07%)</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Missing responses for question 11 = Elementary 1 (.03%) of n = 16, Middle 1 (.03%) of n = 32, High 1 (.03%) of n = 16.

Table 6 shows that for all school levels, six to ten unexcused absences were most likely needed to recommend a TIP meeting with truant students and parents. Responses were varied at each school level. Participants were also asked to identify the number of excused absences needed to bring a truant student to a TIP meeting. Table 7 includes excused absences needed for a TIP referral.

Table 7

*Descriptive Data for Number of Excused Absences Required for a TIP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt; 5</th>
<th>6 - 10</th>
<th>11 - 15</th>
<th>&gt; 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (33%)</td>
<td>5 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>2 (06%)</td>
<td>10 (32%)</td>
<td>9 (29%)</td>
<td>10 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1 (07%)</td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>5 (33%)</td>
<td>6 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Missing responses for question 11 = Elementary 1 (.03%) of n = 16, Middle 1 (.03%) of n = 32, High 2 (.13%) of n = 16.
Table 7 compared the varied responses from all school levels with most indicating absences ranging from six to more than 15. The largest proportion of participants indicated students would need to acquire 15 or more excused absences for recommendation to a TIP.

Two additional questions asked respondents to indicate if student grades or prior student discipline were considered by the TIP when determining which students would be recommended for a TIP meeting. When respondents were asked if a student’s grades were taken in to consideration when determining a recommendation for a TIP, the responses indicated all levels reported a neutral response with means and standard deviations of elementary (m = 2.93%, SD = 1.44%), middle (m = 3.12%, SD = 1.47%), and high school (m = 2.81%, SD = 1.47). Responses were very similar when asked if a student’s prior discipline had any impact on the TIP when determining TIP recommendations. At the elementary level (m = 3%, SD = 1.41), middle (m = 2.90%, SD = 1.53%), and high school (m = 2.75%, SD = 1.65%).

Another measure of program fidelity was the identification of the types of strategies used by TIP members as a method to reduce student absences. Participants indicated which strategies the TIP at their school used. Table 8 compared the responses of TIP members at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Table 8

*Descriptive Data for Types of Strategies Used in TIP Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Description</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Teacher communication to parent via email, phone, or conference when student has acquired three unexcused absences</td>
<td>15 (94%)</td>
<td>28 (88%)</td>
<td>13 (81%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. School communication to parent via phone, letter, email when student has acquired five unexcused absences</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
<td>32 (100%)</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Social Worker contacts parent via letter, phone call, home visit, and/or conference</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
<td>31 (97%)</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Student support groups, incentive programs, and/or conferences to address truancy and other anti-social behaviors</td>
<td>11 (69%)</td>
<td>26 (81%)</td>
<td>14 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Social Worker meets with teachers regarding student and/or participation in the RTI process</td>
<td>14 (88%)</td>
<td>16 (50%)</td>
<td>10 (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Social Worker referral to community resources including financial assistance, counseling services, and/or mentoring programs</td>
<td>15 (94%)</td>
<td>30 (94%)</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Letter to parent explaining suspension and/or denial of Student’s driving privileges (when applicable)</td>
<td>7 (44%)</td>
<td>24 (75%)</td>
<td>9 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Attendance agreement between Social Worker and Student acknowledging the Compulsory Attendance Law</td>
<td>8 (50%)</td>
<td>28 (88%)</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. A Truancy Intervention Panel meets with student and parent when deemed necessary</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
<td>32 (100%)</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Referral to juvenile court, magistrate court and/or Department of Family and Children Services</td>
<td>14 (88%)</td>
<td>31 (97%)</td>
<td>15 (94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Our school based Learning Support Resources Teams evaluate student related information to determine which attendance strategies are appropriate for that student</td>
<td>6 (34%)</td>
<td>17 (53%)</td>
<td>5 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Our school utilizes printed materials to communicate the content of the Compulsory Attendance Law and Teenage Driver’s law (when applicable)</td>
<td>11 (69%)</td>
<td>26 (81%)</td>
<td>14 (86%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. Our school conducts attendance campaigns to inform Students and parents of the Compulsory Attendance Law and Teenage Driver’s law (when applicable)</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (13%)</td>
<td>8 (25%)</td>
<td>7 (44%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n. Our school promotes communication between teachers, students, and parents regarding the student’s attendance and academics</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 (94%)</td>
<td>27 (84%)</td>
<td>13 (81%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Elementary n = 16, Middle n = 32, and High School n = 16.

Table 8 indicated the types of strategies used at each school level as a method to reduce student absences. There were seven strategies reported by at least 80% of the respondents’ at all three school levels used to reduce student absences. Two questions that specifically addressed the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and the State’s right to deny students the right to drive at the high school level were reported as strategies used by less than 60% of respondents.

Analysis of Hypotheses

This study took place in a large school district in the southeastern United States and included attendance data for all (n = 108) schools in the district. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a TIP on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent in TIP schools compared to non-TIP schools. As well, the purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a TIP on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent over time. Analysis of data included percentages of students with 15 or more days absent for student categories of all students, Black, White and economically disadvantaged students to determine the impact of a TIP on particular student groups.
compared to non-TIP schools. The implementation of the TIP occurred in 2008. Data includes two years prior to the implementation of the TIP. Descriptive test of means and standard deviation were run for all district schools (n = 108) over a six-year period 2006 – 2011 at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

The first research question was stated as follows: Is there a relationship between the addition of a TIP and the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent? The first hypothesis proposed that there is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. This hypothesis was tested using a 2 (TIP v. Non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) between subjects ANOVA on the impact of the addition of a TIP on the dependent variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The first research question was also addressed by a second null hypothesis that was stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP. This hypothesis was tested using a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable over years. Further multivariate tests provided analysis of the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP vs. non-TIP to measure the impact of the TIP on the dependent variable over time.

The first research question was again addressed by a third hypothesis that stated, the addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. This hypothesis was tested using a 2 (TIP v. Non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) between subjects ANOVA to test the dependent variable based on student
ethnicities and again for socio-economic standing. Additional multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA were used to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable over years as well as ethnicity and socio-economic standing. The three hypotheses used to address the first research question were tested separately at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The results of those tests are presented as follows by school level.

**Elementary**

Table 9 presented the means and standard deviations of the percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent for elementary level schools (n = 65) including TIP schools (n = 19), and non-TIP schools (n = 46) over a six year period 2006 - 2011.

Table 9

**Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of Absences for All Elementary Students in TIP and Non-TIP Schools, 2006 - 2011.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TIP (n=19)</th>
<th>Non-TIP (n=46)</th>
<th>Total (n=65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 indicates the comparison of the mean for the dependent variable (percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. The data indicated that the addition of a TIP had no impact on the dependent variable. Throughout the period of this study, elementary schools in the district reported a decline in the percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent in both TIP and non-TIP schools for the years 2006 – 2011.

A statistical treatment of the first two null hypotheses was conducted. The first null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. The second null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 63) = .146, p = .703$ which were not sufficient significant data to reject the first null hypothesis, indicating a TIP did not have impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for all students at the elementary level compared to non-TIP schools. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time with results indicating $F(5, 59) = 17.90, p \leq .001$ there were statistically significant data to reject the second null hypothesis. Results indicated a significant change in the dependent variable after the
addition of a TIP, supporting the descriptive observations that the dependent variable was in decline across time. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP vs. non-TIP with results indicating $F(5, 59) = 2.01, p = .091$ which was not statistically significant and failed to reject the second null hypothesis. The result showed that although the dependent variable declined across time, both TIP and non-TIP schools declined indicating the addition of a TIP did not have any more significant impact on the dependent variable after implementation than in non-TIP schools. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed that the dependent variable had statistically significant decline but the addition of a TIP had no more impact on the decrease of the percentage of all elementary students with 15 or more days absent in the years 2006 – 2011 than non-TIP schools.

Further analysis was completed to determine if the addition of a TIP had an impact on the dependent variable based on student ethnicity. Table 10 presented the means and standard deviations of the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent based on ethnicity for elementary level schools (n = 65) including TIP schools (n = 19), and non-TIP schools (n = 46) years 2006 - 2011.

Table 10

*Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of Absences for Student Ethnicities in Elementary TIP and Non-TIP Schools, 2006 - 2011.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total (n=63)</th>
<th>TIP (n=19)</th>
<th>Non-TIP (n=44)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 indicates the comparison by ethnicity of the means for the dependent variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows.

Attendance data for Black students indicated a decrease in the dependant variable prior to the addition of a TIP and continued to decline in percentages over the 2006-2011 school years. Attendance data for White students indicated an increase in the dependant variable prior to the addition of a TIP then reported a decline after the implementation of a TIP. Attendance data for White students declined over the 2006–2011 school years but reported higher percentages overall in comparison to Black students.

A statistical treatment of the first two null hypotheses was conducted. The first null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. The second null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>5.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 61) = 3.56, p = .064$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the first null hypothesis which stated there is no difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent in TIP and non-TIP schools. Further analysis included multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time as well as ethnicity. Results indicated the dependent variable across time effect, $F(5, 57) = 4.87, p = .001$ provided sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis. Results indicated a significant change in the dependent variable across time. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP that resulted in $F(5, 57) = .269, p = .928$ which indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis. Analysis confirmed that a reduction in the dependent variable across time was indicated in both TIP and non-TIP schools over time. The addition of a TIP did not impact the results more than what was observed in non-TIP schools. The third null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. Statistical analysis of the third null hypothesis was provided. A multivariate test for the dependent variable based on ethnicity revealed $F(1, 61) = 32.75, p \leq .001$ reporting statistically highly significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that the dependent variable is highly impacted by student ethnicity. Data indicated there were a higher
percentage of White elementary students reported with 15 or more days absent than Black students were. Further multivariate tests for the dependent variable of the interaction of ethnicity with the addition of TIP $F(1, 61) = 2.01, p = .162$ reported there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that there was a significant decline in the dependent variable of ethnicities for TIP and non-TIP school, but the decline in TIP schools was not significant compared to non-TIP schools. A multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with ethnicity $F(5, 57) = .908, p = .482$ indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results did not support one ethnicity having significant change in the dependent variable across time when compared to the other. A final multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with ethnicity with the addition of a TIP as $F(5, 57) = .878, p = .502$ indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed that based on student ethnicity, the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent was not impacted by the addition of a TIP compared to non-TIP schools. Student ethnicity highly impacted the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent with White students reporting higher percentages of students with 15 or more days absent. The data indicated that the percentages of students of both ethnicities with 15 or more days absent were impacted over time 2006 - 2011, but the addition of a TIP had no more impact than non-TIP.

Elementary attendance data were then analyzed to determine if a TIP had an impact on the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent based on their socio-economic standing. Demographic data, including means, standard
deviations, and sample size for elementary economically disadvantaged students were run to determine the impact of a TIP over a six year period with a between group effect. The results were reported in Table 11.

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of Absences for Economically Disadvantaged Students in Elementary TIP and Non-TIP Schools, 2006 - 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TIP</th>
<th>Non-TIP</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=18)</td>
<td>(n=44)</td>
<td>(n=62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 indicates the comparison of the mean for the dependent variable (percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. The data indicated that throughout the period of this study, elementary schools in the district reported a decline in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students with 15 or more days absent in both TIP and non-TIP schools for the years 2006 – 2011.

A statistical treatment of the third null hypotheses was conducted. The third hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: The addition of a TIP has no
significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 60) = .000$, $p = .999$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis, indicating a TIP did not have impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for economically disadvantaged students at the elementary level. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time with results indicating $F(5, 56) = 5.46$, $p \leq .001$ there were statistically significant data to reject the third null hypothesis supporting the descriptive observations that the dependent variable across time was in decline. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP and economically disadvantaged with results indicating $F(5, 56) = .363$, $p = .871$ which was not statistically significant and failed to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that for economically disadvantaged students, both TIP and non-TIP schools had a decline in the dependent variable. The addition of a TIP did not impact the dependent variable any more than in non-TIP schools. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed that the dependent variable was in decline in both TIP and non-TIP schools, but the addition of a TIP had no significant impact on the decrease of the dependent
variable of economically disadvantaged elementary students in the years 2006–2011 compared to non-TIP schools.

Statistical analysis of elementary school data indicate a decline in the dependent variable for all student categories but fail to support the addition of a TIP as having more impact on the decline than in non-TIP schools. The dependent variable was highly impacted by a student’s ethnicity specifically that the percentage of White students reported with 15 or more days absent is higher than reported percentages for Black students. The addition of a TIP had no more impact in the decline of the dependent variable for student ethnicity than in non-TIP schools.

Middle School

Statistical analysis of the data was continued by running descriptive test of the means at the middle school level. Tests of the three null hypothesis were run for all students, student ethnicity and economically disadvantages students to determine the impact of a TIP on the dependent variable. Table 12 represents the mean and standard deviations of the percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent for middle schools.

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of All Absences in Middle TIP and Non-TIP Schools, 2006 - 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TIP (n=7)</th>
<th>Non-TIP (n=15)</th>
<th>Total (n=22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 indicated the comparison of the mean for the dependent variable (percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. The data indicated that throughout the period of this study, middle schools in the district reported changes in the percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent in both TIP and non-TIP schools for the years 2006 – 2011 with an overall decline.

A statistical treatment of the first two null hypotheses was conducted. The first null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. The second null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of
difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 20) = .498, p = .488$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the first null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference in the dependent variables between TIP and non-TIP schools. The addition of a TIP did not have impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for all students at the middle level. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time. Results indicated $F(5, 16) = 2.72, p = .058$ there were not sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis, indicating a non-significant change in the dependent variable across time in both TIP and non-TIP schools. Observation of data indicated both categories had decline in the dependent variable followed by increase along with additional decline. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP vs. non-TIP with results indicating $F(5, 16) = .303, p = .904$ there were not statistically significant data to reject the second null hypothesis indicating that a TIP did not impact the dependent variable after implementation. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed a non-significant change in the dependent variable across the years similar in both TIP and non-TIP schools. The addition of a TIP had no impact on the changes of the percentage of all middle school students with 15 or more days absent in the years 2006 – 2011.

Completion of further analysis determined whether the addition of a TIP had impact on the dependent variable based on student ethnicity. Table 13 presented the means and standard deviations of the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent
based on ethnicity for middle level schools \((n = 22)\) including TIP schools \((n = 7)\), and non-TIP schools \((n = 15)\) years 2006 - 2011.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of Absences for Ethnicities in Middle TIP and Non-TIP Schools, 2006 - 2011.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TIP</th>
<th>Non-TIP</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=7)</td>
<td>(n=15)</td>
<td>(n=22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>7.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>6.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>8.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>7.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 indicates the comparison by ethnicity of the means for the dependent variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. Attendance data for Black students indicated a decrease in the dependant variable prior to the addition of a TIP and continued to decline in percentages over the 2006-2011 school years. Attendance data for White students indicated less decrease in the dependant variable in all categories over the years of this study. Attendance data for White students reported higher percentages overall in comparison to Black students.

A statistical treatment of the first two null hypotheses was conducted. The first null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant difference
in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. The second null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 20) = .799, p = .382$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the first null hypothesis which stated there is no difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent in TIP and non-TIP schools. Further analysis included multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time as well as ethnicity. Results indicated the dependent variable across time, $F(5, 16) = 1.83, p = .165$ did not provided sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis indicating no significant change in the dependent variable over time for either TIP or non-TIP schools. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP that resulted in $F(5, 16) = .443, p = .812$ which indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis. Analysis confirmed that a non-significant change in the dependent variable over time was indicated but the addition of a TIP had no significant impact compared to non-TIP schools. The third null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based
on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. Statistical analysis of the third null hypothesis was provided. A multivariate test for the dependent variable based on ethnicity revealed $F(1, 20) = 12.54, p = .002$ reporting statistically highly significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that the dependent variable is highly impacted by student ethnicity in both TIP and non-TIP schools. Data indicated there were a higher percentage of White middle school students reported with 15 or more days absent than Black students were. Further multivariate tests for the dependent variable of the interaction of ethnicity with the addition of TIP $F(1, 20) = .155, p = .698$ reported there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that although there was a non-significant decline in the dependent variable, the addition of a TIP did not have significant impact on the decline compared to non-TIP schools. A multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with ethnicity $F(5, 16) = 4.57, p = .009$ indicated there were sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that both Black and White students reported a change in the dependent variable over time. A final multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with ethnicity with the addition of a TIP as $F(5, 16) = 1.45, p = .259$ indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. The dependent variable for both Black and White students showed significant change in both TIP and non-TIP schools over time. The addition of a TIP did not have more impact on the dependent variable than what was observed in non-TIP schools. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent was not impacted by the addition of a TIP compared to non-
TIP schools. Student ethnicity highly impacted the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent with White students reporting higher percentages of students with 15 or more days absent. The data indicated that the percentages of students of both ethnicities with 15 or more days absent were impacted over time 2006 - 2011, but the addition of a TIP had no impact.

Middle level attendance data were then analyzed to determine if a TIP had an impact on the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent based on their socio-economic standing. Demographic data, including means, standard deviations, and sample size for middle level economically disadvantaged students were run to determine the impact of a TIP over a six year period with a between group effect. The results were reported in Table 14.

Table 14

*Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Absences in Middle TIP and Non-TIP Schools, 2006 - 2011.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TIP (n=7)</th>
<th>Non-TIP (n=15)</th>
<th>Total (n=22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>11.54 2.98</td>
<td>12.23 4.27</td>
<td>12.01 3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>9.44 2.28</td>
<td>10.69 3.42</td>
<td>10.29 3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9.11 3.20</td>
<td>10.06 3.60</td>
<td>9.76 3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8.26 2.56</td>
<td>9.86 2.76</td>
<td>9.35 2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7.64 1.47</td>
<td>8.13 3.14</td>
<td>7.98 2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6.99 .84</td>
<td>7.52 2.28</td>
<td>7.35 1.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 indicates the comparison of the mean for the dependent variable (percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. The data indicated that throughout the period of this study, middle schools in the district reported a decline in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students with 15 or more days absent in both TIP and non-TIP schools for the years 2006 – 2011.

A statistical treatment of the third null hypotheses was conducted. The third null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 20) = 1.82, p = .193$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis, indicating a TIP did not have impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for economically disadvantaged students at the middle level. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time with results indicating $F(5, 16) = 7.15, p \leq .001$ there were statistically significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results supported the descriptive observations that the dependent variable across time was in decline for both TIP and non-TIP schools. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP with results indicating $F(5, 16) = .134, p = .982$ which
was not statistically significant and failed to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that for economically disadvantaged students, the addition of a TIP did not impact the dependent variable after implementation more than in non-TIP schools. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed that the dependent variable was in decline but the addition of a TIP had no impact on the decrease of the percentage of economically disadvantaged middle level students with 15 or more days absent in the years 2006 – 2011.

Overall, the statistical analysis of middle school data indicate a decline in the dependent variable for all student categories but fail to support the addition of a TIP as having an impact on the decline. The dependent variable was highly impacted by a student’s ethnicity specifically that the percentage of White students reported with 15 or more days absent is higher than reported percentages for Black students. The dependent variable for economically disadvantaged middle school students as well showed a decline across time, but the addition of a TIP had no more impact than in non-TIP schools.

High School

Statistical analysis of the data was concluded by running descriptive test of the means at the high school level. Tests of the three null hypothesis were run for all students, student ethnicity and economically disadvantages students to determine the impact of a TIP on the dependent variable. Table 15 represents the mean and standard deviations of the percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent for high schools ($n = 15$) and included TIP schools ($n = 4$) and non-TIP schools ($n = 11$).
Table 15

Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of All Absences in TIP and Non-TIP High Schools, 2006 - 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TIP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-TIP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14.55</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>14.73</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>13.87</td>
<td>6.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>14.87</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>11.23</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>14.42</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>13.57</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>17.80</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>15.59</td>
<td>10.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 indicated the comparison of the mean for the dependent variable (percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. The data indicated that after the first year with TIP, those high schools reported a decrease in the dependent variable. Non-TIP high schools reported an increase in the last year of the study 2010-2011 that also increased the total.

A statistical treatment of the first two null hypotheses was conducted. The first null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. The second null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days
absent after the implementation of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using *SPSS for Windows* and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 13) = .632, p = .441$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the first null hypothesis. Results indicated the addition of a TIP did not have impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for all students at the high school level compared to non-TIP schools. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time. Results indicated $F(5, 9) = 1.39, p = .313$ there were not sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis, which supported the descriptive data that indicated no difference in the dependent variable between TIP and non-TIP schools across time. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP with results indicating $F(5, 9) = .495, p = .773$ there were not statistically significant data to reject the second null hypothesis indicating that a TIP did not impact the dependent variable after implementation. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed that the dependent variable showed non-significant decreased across time in TIP schools. The addition of a TIP had no more impact on the changes of the percentage of all high school students with 15 or more days absent in the years 2006 – 2011 than non-TIP schools.

Completion of further analysis determined whether the addition of a TIP had impact on the dependent variable based on student ethnicity. Table 16 presented the
means and standard deviations of the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent based on ethnicity for high schools ($n = 15$) including TIP schools ($n = 4$), and non-TIP schools ($n = 11$) years 2006 - 2011.

Table 16


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TIP (n=4)</th>
<th>Non-TIP (n=11)</th>
<th>Total (n=15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>15.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>12.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>10.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 indicates the comparison by ethnicity of the means for the dependent variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows.

Attendance data for Black and White students indicated an overall decrease in the dependant variable in TIP schools while non-TIP schools reported an increase in the dependent variable for both ethnicities over the 2006-2011 school years.

Attendance data for White students reported higher percentages overall in comparison to Black students.
A statistical treatment of the first two null hypotheses was conducted. The first null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools. The second null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: There is no significant reduction in a school’s reported percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 13) = .536, p = .477$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the first null hypothesis which stated there is no difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent in TIP and non-TIP schools. Further analysis included multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time as well as ethnicity. Results indicated the dependent variable across time, $F(5, 9) = .740, p = .612$ did not provided sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis indicating no significant change in the dependent variable across time for either TIP or non-TIP schools. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP that resulted in $F(5, 9) = .442, p = .809$ which indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the second null hypothesis. Analysis confirmed that a non-significant reduction in the dependent variable across time was indicated but the addition of a TIP had no more impact than in non-TIP schools. The third null hypothesis of the study,
treated statistically stated: The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. Statistical analysis of the third null hypothesis was provided. A multivariate test for the dependent variable based on ethnicity revealed $F(1, 13) = 2.67, p = .126$ reporting there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis indicating that the dependent variable is not impacted by student ethnicity. Further multivariate tests for the dependent variable of the interaction of ethnicity with the addition of TIP $F(1, 13) = .153, p = .702$ reported there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis indicating that the dependent variable was not impacted by the addition of a TIP based on student ethnicity. A multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with ethnicity $F(5, 9) = 2.32, p = .939$ indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. A final multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with ethnicity with the addition of a TIP as $F(5, 9) = .178, p = .964$ indicated there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis.

Conclusions based on the statistical analysis for high schools revealed there was no impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent by the addition of a TIP compared to non-TIP schools. The dependent variable based on student ethnicities had no significant change across time, in either TIP schools or non-TIP schools. White students reported higher percentages of the dependent variable than Black student did.

High school level attendance data were then analyzed to determine if a TIP had an impact on the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent based on their socio-economic standing. Demographic data, including means, standard deviations,
and sample size for high school economically disadvantaged students were run to
determine the impact of a TIP over a six year period with a between group effect.

The results were reported in Table 17.

Table 17

Means and Standard Deviation of the Percentage of Absences for Economically

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TIP (n=4)</th>
<th>Non-TIP (n=11)</th>
<th>Total (n=15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20.23</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>20.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18.48</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>18.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>20.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13.40</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>19.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14.53</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>18.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12.53</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>17.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 indicates the comparison of the mean for the dependent variable
(percentage of all students with 15 or more days absent) summarized as follows. The
data indicated that throughout the period of this study, high schools in the district
reported a decline in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students with 15 or
more days absent in both TIP and non-TIP schools for the years 2006 – 2011. Overall,
TIP schools indicated a larger decrease in the dependent variable than non-TIP schools.
A statistical treatment of the third null hypotheses was conducted. The third null hypothesis of the study, treated statistically stated: The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between-subjects ANOVA on the impact of a TIP on the dependant variable (percentage of students with 15 or more days absent) was run with a 95% significance coefficient (.05) using SPSS for Windows and computed an F statistic to test the significance of difference in means between subjects (TIP and non-TIP). Results revealed a main effect for TIP, $F(1, 12) = 1.78, p = .207$ indicating there were not sufficient significant data to reject the third null hypothesis, indicating a TIP did not have impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent for economically disadvantaged students at the high school level. Further analysis included a multivariate Pillai’s Trace MANOVA to test for the between-subjects effect of the dependent variable across time with results indicating $F(5, 8) = 4.18, p = .037$ there were statistically significant data to reject the third null hypothesis. Results supported the descriptive observations that the dependent variable across time was in decline for both TIP and non-TIP schools. Analysis further provided a multivariate test for the dependent variable of the interaction of year with TIP vs. non-TIP with results indicating $F(5, 8) = .848, p = .552$ which was not statistically significant and failed to reject the third null hypothesis. Results indicated that for economically disadvantaged students, a TIP did not have more impact on the dependent variable after implementation than in non-TIP schools.

Conclusions based on the statistical analysis revealed that the dependent variable was in decline but the addition of a TIP had no more impact on the decrease of the
percentage of economically disadvantaged high school students with 15 or more days absent in the years 2006 – 2011 than in non-TIP schools.

Overall, the statistical analysis of high school data indicates a statistically significant decline in the dependent variable for economically disadvantaged students across time, but for all other student categories, a non-significant decline. There was no evidence to support the addition of a TIP as having more impact on the dependent variable for any student categories compared to non-TIP schools.

The third research question was stated as follows: Do panel members perceive Truancy Intervention Panels as an effective method toward reducing the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent? It was addressed by analyzing the responses of TIP participants as provided through the survey instrument. The third section of the survey asked respondents to indicate their perceptions of the effectiveness of a TIP at reducing student absences using a Likert type scale. Responses follow in Table 18.

Table 18

*Frequency and Means of Participant Response Pertaining to Impact of TIP on Reducing Student Absences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A Truancy Intervention Panel is an effective strategy used to reduce the number of student absences at our school</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. A Truancy Intervention Panel identifies causes of why individual students have excessive absences.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A Truancy Intervention Panel improves student attendance by addressing student anti-social attitudes and behaviors.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Parents or guardians participation is essential to the impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel on reducing student absences.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Truancy Intervention Panel provides resources for parents and guardians of identified truant students.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Truancy Intervention Panel provides resources for identified truant students.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Truancy Intervention Panel effectively lowers the number of absences for students of all ethnicities.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Students that have been through a Truancy Intervention have fewer absences from school.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1 (Strongly Disagree) – 5 (Strongly Agree).
Table 18 reported the responses of TIP members based on their perceptions as to the impact of a TIP at reducing student absences. The responses of the TIP members at all levels indicated very positive responses for all questions in this category. Participants at all grade levels gave responses that indicated perceptions between 4 (Somewhat Agree) – 5 (Strongly Agree) as to the impact of a TIP at reducing student absences. Question 4 indicated that at the middle and high school level, the participants believed that parent participation was essential toward the impact a TIP would have toward reducing student absences. Question 5 responses strongly indicated that at the middle and high school levels, the TIP provided parents with resources and strategies needed to reduce truancy.

Summary

Three research questions were tested. The first research question asked if there is a relationship between the additions of truancy intervention panels and the percentages of students reported with 15 or more days absent when compared to non-TIP schools. This research question was tested through three hypotheses. The first null hypothesis stated there is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between schools with a Truancy Intervention Panel and non-TIP schools. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected thereby meaning there was no difference at any school level as well as in tests based on student ethnicity and socio-economic standing. The second null hypothesis stated there is no significant difference between the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent before the addition of a TIP compared to after the addition of a TIP. At the elementary level, the null hypothesis was initially rejected for tests that included all students, student ethnicities, and socio-economic standing. Results indicated statistically significant data to reject the second null indicating a significant
change in the dependent variable in TIP schools over time. After conducting further multivariate tests to determine the addition of a TIP on the dependent variable over time, when compared to non-TIP schools, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected thereby meaning there was no difference at any school level for all student categories. The addition of a TIP had no more significant impact on the dependent variable compared to the dependent variable at non-TIP schools. At the middle school level, results of between subjects ANOVA test indicated the null hypothesis failed to be rejected thereby meaning there was no difference in the dependent variable over time in TIP school. Further tests using multivariate between subjects MANOVA confirmed the addition of a TIP had no statistically significant impact on the dependent variable and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. At the high school level, the second null hypothesis was tested using a between subject ANOVA to test the dependent variable over time with results indicating the null hypothesis failed to be rejected thereby meaning there was no difference in the categories of all students and student ethnicities. The same test run on economically disadvantaged students resulted in a statistically significant change in the dependent variable over time and rejected the second null hypothesis. Further multivariate MANOVA to test for the addition of TIP on the dependent variable over time resulted in TIP having no significant impact on the dependent variable over time and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected thereby meaning there was no difference. The third null hypothesis stated the addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels. Attendance data was analyzed using a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between subjects ANOVA to determine if a relationship
existed between the dependent variable for Black and White students in both TIP and non-TIP schools. The initial ANOVA test to determine a significant difference between Black and White students indicated a statistically significant difference at the elementary level between the dependent variable based on ethnicity. White students were reported with significantly higher percentages of students with 15 or more days absent than Black students were. The analysis of the middle school dependent variable based on ethnicity resulted in a highly statistically significant F ratio with the resulting data indicating significantly higher truancy among White middle school students than Black students. Further multivariate MANOVA results of between subjects effects indicated the addition of a TIP at both the elementary and middle school levels had no more effect on the reduction of the dependent variable than in non-TIP schools. Results at both levels indicated non-significant change in the dependent variables and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected thereby meaning there was no difference for both elementary and middle school levels. Analysis of the dependent variable based on ethnicity resulted in no significant difference between Black and White students in TIP and non-TIP schools, or over time with the addition of a TIP in schools receiving support from a TIP. At the high school level after running a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) analysis of variance ANOVA followed by between subjects multivariate MANOVA, all results indicated the third null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Research question two asked if there was consistent implementation of the Truancy Intervention Panel at all schools. Participant responses indicate a lack of program implementation fidelity between school levels and within school levels among schools. Participant responses indicated TIP membership at schools was inconsistent. At
the elementary level, participants reported 94% of principals as TIP members while middle schools reported principals as TIP members 56% and high schools reported 25% of their principals as TIP members. Counselors and social workers were reported most likely to be TIP members along with the truancy officer but none were consistent by school or school level. There was also inconsistency in participant responses based on the frequency of TIP meetings used to identify truant students. At the elementary level, responses indicated that 67% met monthly, middle school TIP met monthly 83% of the time, and high schools reported meeting at all listed time choices depending on the school. The frequency in which a TIP met with truant students and parents was also inconsistent between school levels and within school levels. The majority of elementary and middle schools met with student and parents on a monthly basis, while high schools were inconsistent from each other and the other school levels. Participant responses also indicated inconsistency in when a student was referred to a TIP based on the number of excused and unexcused absences. Inconsistencies were also identified as participants were asked to identify strategies used to reduce truancy by the local TIP as well as if a TIP took into consideration a student’s grades and behaviors when determining a TIP.

The third research question for this study asked if panel members perceived Truancy Intervention Panels as an effective method toward reducing the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent. The means and standard deviations of responses measuring the perceptions of TIP participants were provided. The largest proportion of survey responses were reported as 4 (agree) – 5 (strongly agree). Responses would indicate that TIP participants believe the addition of a TIP to be an effective method used to reduce student absences.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter V discusses the results of the study. It provides the limitations discovered during the study, as well as discussing the implications for policy and practice. Finally, this chapter offers recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this two part quantitative study was to analyze the variables to determine a relationship between the addition of a truancy intervention panel (TIP) and the rate of attendance as reported through the Georgia Department of Education (2012). An additional study measured the opinions of the administrators, counselors, and social workers from the participating TIP schools on the effectiveness of the panel. The first research question was stated as follows: Is there a relationship between the addition of a TIP and the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent? Three null hypotheses were analyzed in order to examine the first research question. The three null hypotheses considered in this study were:

1. There is no significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between schools with a truancy intervention panel (TIP) and non-TIP schools.

2. There is no significant difference between the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent before the addition of a TIP compared to after the addition of a TIP.
3. The addition of a TIP has no significant impact on the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent compared to non-TIP schools based on student ethnicity or socio economic levels.

The first null hypothesis tested whether there was a significant difference in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP schools and non-TIP schools. The study design addressing the first null hypothesis included the separate statistical analysis of attendance data for all students at the elementary, middle and high school levels using a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between subjects ANOVA. Additionally, the statistical analysis of attendance data was run to determine results for Black, White, and economically disadvantaged students at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Further multivariate MANOVA were run to determine between subject effects. This study found no significant difference in the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent between TIP and non-TIP schools at any school level and failed to reject the first null hypothesis. Both TIP and non-TIP schools reported a decline in the dependent variable for the student categories of all, Black, White, and economically disadvantaged but the addition of the TIP did not influence the results more than in non-TIP schools.

This finding was not expected. Previous conducted research based on the addition of community-based truancy intervention programs reported on the reduction of student absences, the development of pro-social attitudes and beliefs along with the reduction of anti-social behaviors (Choi et al., 2005; Fantuzzo et al., 2005; Furlong et al., 2003; Hendricks, Sale, Evans, McKinley, & DeLozier-Carter, 2010; Trueman, 1996; Trujillo, 2006). Results from this researcher’s study indicate a decrease in the dependent
variable in TIP schools. The addition of a TIP may have contributed to the reduction in student absences. The unexpected results that came from this study were the decreases in the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent at the non-TIP schools. The strategies to decrease truancy in non-TIP schools were just as effective as the addition of a TIP. The first null hypothesis states there is no relationship between the addition of a TIP on the dependent variable compared to non-TIP schools. Results from this study indicated there is no difference in the dependent variable in TIP v. non-TIP schools and therefore failed to reject the first null hypothesis.

The second null hypothesis examined whether there was a relationship between the percentages of students reported with 15 or more days absent after the addition of a TIP compared to non-TIP schools over the years. Attendance data was analyzed using a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between subjects ANOVA to determine both pre and post TIP attendance rates in order to identify changes in percentages. At the elementary level, results indicated a statistically significant change in the dependent variable over time and rejected the second null hypothesis. Results of the multivariate MANOVA examined the between subject effects of the addition of a TIP on the dependent variable over time and failed to reject the second null hypothesis. For elementary schools, there was a significant decline in the dependent variable over time in both TIP and non-TIP schools. The addition of a TIP did not mitigate the change any more than what was reported in non-TIP schools. For elementary schools, results indicated that the addition of a TIP did not significantly reduce the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP and failed to reject the second null hypothesis.
At the middle school level, there was not a significant change over the years in either TIP or non-TIP schools. Results of the multivariate MANOVA examined the between subject effects of the addition of a TIP on the dependent variable over time and failed to reject the second null hypothesis. For middle school students, the addition of a TIP did not significantly reduce the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent after the implementation of a TIP.

For high schools in the district, there was not a significant decline in the dependent variable in any of the student categories except for economically disadvantaged (ED) students. Initial ANOVA results indicated that for ED students, there was a statistically significant reduction in the dependent variable for both TIP and non-TIP schools over time. Further multivariate MANOVA results indicated the addition of a TIP did not have a significant effect on the dependent variable over time and failed to reject the second null hypothesis.

Related research previously conducted contradicts the results of this study and presents evidence that suggests the addition of a truancy intervention panel should reduce the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent (Choi et al., 2005; Fantuzzo et al., 2005; Furlong et al., 2003; Hendricks et al., 2010; Trueman, 1996; Trujillo, 2006). Lack of research directly comparing the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent in both TIP and non-TIP schools may contribute to the initial idea pertaining to the impact of a TIP. Just looking at the decrease in percentage rate for TIP schools could lead one to conclude the addition of the TIP has impact on student truancy. Further analysis that compares the percentage rates for TIP schools with those of non-TIP schools is more revealing when looking for overall impact. Results of this study show the percentage
rates in TIP schools are in decline but those rates are declining for all schools in the district, with or without a TIP. The social development model (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996) provided the theoretical framework for this study, which suggests that programs intended to identify anti-social behaviors, and influences early for at-risk children can be successful when students are presented with programs and resources that develop pro-social behaviors and attitudes (Catalano et al., 2006). Truancy Intervention Panels, developed under the social development model such as those implemented through the Success for All Students Program claim to reduce truancy. Additionally, prior research in support of TIP includes U. S. Department of Education (1996b) *Manual to Combat Truancy* that describes a collaborative effort between schools and truancy court. Students work with mentors to identify factors that contribute to the student’s absences as well as identifying strategies to help students come to school and form pro-social bonds. A study by Garry (1996), provided evidence from seven collaborative efforts in support of community groups able to provide early intervention strategies for identified at-risk students. White and Kelly (2010) presented evidence in support of programs that identify anti-social behaviors and attitudes in truant students while then providing opportunities to develop pro-social attitudes and behaviors. Finally, Furlong et al., (2003) presented evidence gathered through community programs charged with identifying students at-risk for truancy and providing those students with programs and opportunities to develop pro-social attitudes and behaviors in an effort to reduce truancy. Furlong et al., (2003) stated that further studies should include the implementation and utilization of standardized strategies to assure program fidelity. The report also addressed the need for data collection and interpretation to assist in the evaluation of local programs (Furlong et al.,
Results from this study reveal the addition of a TIP had no statistical impact on student attendance rates when compared to strategies used in non-TIP schools.

The third null hypothesis examined the relationship between the addition of a TIP and the dependent variable compared to non-TIP schools based on a student’s ethnicity or socio-economic level. Attendance data was analyzed using a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006-2011) between subjects ANOVA to determine if a relationship existed between the dependent variable for Black and White students in both TIP and non-TIP schools. The initial ANOVA test to determine a significant difference between Black and White students indicated a statistically significant difference at the elementary level between the dependent variable based on ethnicity. White students were reported with significantly higher percentages of students with 15 or more days absent than Black students were.

The analysis of the middle school dependent variable based on ethnicity resulted in a highly statistically significant F score with the resulting data indicating significantly higher truancy among White middle school students compared to Black students. Further multivariate MANOVA results of between subjects effects indicated the addition of a TIP at both the elementary and middle school levels had no more effect on the reduction of the dependent variable than in non-TIP schools. Results at both levels indicated non-significant change in the dependent variables and the third null hypothesis failed to be rejected for both elementary and middle school levels. Analysis of the dependent variable based on ethnicity resulted in no significant difference between Black and White students in TIP and non-TIP schools, or over time with the addition of a TIP in schools receiving support from a TIP. At the high school level after running a 2 (TIP v. non-TIP)
x 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) analysis of variance ANOVA followed by a between subjects multivariate MANOVA, results indicated the third null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

This finding was not expected. Previous conducted research by multiple authors reported Black students with higher levels of truancy than White students (Choi et al., 2005; Henry, 2007; McCray, 2006; McNeal, 1999). In a 2007 report, Zhang et al. (2007) researched first offenders in the South Carolina juvenile justice system and reported that White students were much more likely to be incarcerated due to truancy than Black students were. In the Zhang et al. (2007) study, Black students were much more likely to have a second or third incarceration and most involved a violent criminal act.

Further analysis of the third null hypothesis involved measuring the dependent variable for economically disadvantaged students against the addition of a TIP. A 2 (TIP v. non-TIP) x 6 (Years: 2006 – 2011) analysis of variance ANOVA was run at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Results of the between subjects analysis of TIP v. non-TIP for the dependent variable in the student category of economically disadvantaged, there was not a statistically significant difference in the dependent variable between TIP and non-TIP schools. This result was the same at all school levels and results failed to reject the third null hypothesis. Further analysis using a multivariate MANOVA to test between subjects effects over time resulted in statistically significant results at all levels indicating a decrease in the dependent variable over time for economically disadvantaged students in both TIP and non-TIP schools. When the addition of a TIP was added to the MANOVA, results at all levels indicated no statistical significance between the dependent variable at TIP or non-TIP schools over time. The third null hypothesis failed to be rejected for all school levels. Again, statistical results
from this study would fail to support the addition of a TIP as being any more effective at reducing student absences than strategies used at non-TIP schools.

These results were unexpected. Previous conducted research suggested that the addition of a TIP in impoverished schools would increase pro-social behaviors from anti-social behaviors and provide reasons for students to connect with pro-social models at school and in the community (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Catalano et al, 1996). The social development model theory (1996), the basis for this study, firmly supports the benefits of a community based intervention program when addressing student truancy. Results from the Success for All Students Program (2008) also support the addition of a community-based TIP as a successful strategy in combating truancy for the economically disadvantaged students. Results from this study indicated the addition of a TIP, as a strategy to reduce truancy, had impact on the dependent variable for economically disadvantaged students over time. What is so unexpected was the addition of a TIP was no more effective at reducing truancy for economically disadvantaged students than were all other strategies used at the non-TIP schools.

The second part of this study analyzed the responses of TIP participants based on their perceptions as to the impact of a TIP on the reduction of student absences. Section one of the survey presented questions that would measure responses pertaining to the climate and characteristics of the school and community. Responses indicated parent participation and community resources were more available for students at the elementary level and were less available as students moved through middle and high school. Participants indicated resources to build pro-social attitudes and behaviors were more likely available for students and parents at the elementary level but declined as
students moved through middle and high school levels. Responses indicated elementary participants felt strongly that students did not have supervision after school.

The survey portion of this study also examined the responses of members based on their perceptions of the effectiveness of a TIP at reducing student absences as well as determining program fidelity. The following research questions were addressed: (a) Is there consistent implementation of Truancy Intervention Panels at all schools? (b) Do panel members perceive Truancy Intervention Panels as an effective strategy in reducing the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent?

Results indicate there is not consistency in the implementation of the TIP. The membership of the TIP varied among respondents at all grade levels as well as how often the TIP met together and with students. TIP membership consistently included the use of the school social worker and counselors but responses indicated a range of membership depending on the school and the school level. At the elementary level, the principal was highly likely to participate in a TIP while at the high school level they did not. Community members were identified as TIP members in five of the 64 responses. Participants were asked to identify strategies used by the TIP at each school to reduce truancy. Of the 14 strategies presented, six strategies were used at all school levels. Of the six strategies identified at each school level, only one of those strategies utilized the support of the TIP, the other five strategies involved communication with parents from teachers, the school, or the social worker.

These responses indicate the implementation of the TIP is specific for each school as well as school level. Individual schools determine how often the TIP met to identify and bring truant students and families to a TIP. Individual schools also determine
whether previous discipline or grades were used as a factor when determining which students meet with the TIP. Panel members also varied between schools and school levels. Responses indicated TIP membership could include the social worker and the counselor at one school while another school may have a panel consisting of up to ten members. The effectiveness of the TIP at reducing student truancy as well as providing pro-social mentoring and programs can only be as effective as the TIP membership.

The third section measured TIP member responses pertaining to the impact of the TIP on reducing student absences. At all school levels, the TIP members believed the TIP to be a highly effective strategy at reducing student absences. Responses to all questions in section three were scored between agree and strongly agree. These responses indicate that members of a TIP fully agree that the addition of a TIP is an effective strategy in reducing student truancy.

Limitations

The findings from this study were limited by the following: (a) the study was conducted within two specific areas of a single school district and generalizing findings to other districts should be approached with caution, and (b) all schools in the district were expected to implement the strategies to reduce student absences developed by the LSSD Compulsory Attendance Committee.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Results of this research have shown that over the six years of this study, the percentage of students reported to the Georgia Department of Education with 15 or more days absent have declined. The data have also shown that while these percentages are declining, schools that have implemented a truancy intervention panel have had the same
rate of change as non-TIP schools that are using strategies to reduce student absences of which appear to be as effective at much less cost. In 2008, the LSSD along with the county commissioners were granted an $8.5 million Success for All Students Grant. The grant provided truancy intervention panels to the 35 schools in the district that received serviced through the Success for All Students Program. In 2013, the program will no longer be funded by federal grant. The district will need to make a decision as to whether the addition of the truancy intervention panel, based on the model provided through the Success for All Students Program is an effective and cost worthy strategy to reduce student absences. This study indicated TIP schools have experienced a decrease in the percentage of students with 15 or more days absent over the six-years this research was conducted. A TIP is effective at reducing student absences. It is the opinion of this researcher that although a TIP is an effective strategy to reduce student absences, it is no more effective than strategies used in non-TIP schools. If the strategies used are similar in their effectiveness that becomes useful information to schools in need of strategies.

Based on survey responses, panel members perceived the TIP to be an effective strategy to reduce truancy. The responses also indicated that the strategies used by the TIP are the same strategies that were recommended by the LSSD Attendance Committee. Attendance rates for the non-TIP schools reported the same decreases as TIP schools that should indicate that the strategies used to reduce truancy are just as effective as the addition of a TIP without the additional cost of the TIP members hired through the Success for All Students Program grant.

Program fidelity, concerning the implementation of a TIP was an issue based on the responses of TIP members. The research supporting the addition of a TIP all provides
definite ideas pertaining to the membership of a successful TIP. Survey results indicated that membership ranged from a counselor and the truancy coordinator at some TIP schools to the school social worker, the administrators, the Sheriff, the Truancy Coordinator and community members at others.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research include the analysis of the types of strategies used in the non-TIP schools that appear to be just as effective as the addition of a TIP at reducing student absences. Results from this study indicate the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent are in decline over the years. Strategies used by the TIP are effective based on the perceptions of the TIP members.

Another possible research project should include the analysis of possible reasons for the significantly higher percentages of White students reported with 15 or more days absent when compared to Black students and Economically Disadvantaged students. What are the conditions that seem to cause such a disproportionate percentage of White students to become truant in elementary school and continue through high school?

Finally, it is an additional concern that in both TIP and non-TIP schools, the percentage of students reported with 15 or more days absent increases from elementary to middle and continues to increase into high school. Data from this study indicate that high schools in this district continue to have close to 18% of students with 15 or more days absent in one school year. Additional research should address the requirement of more effective strategies to address truancy at the high school level.
Summary

This study produced a number of insignificant findings. There was no significance discovered in the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent in schools that utilize a Truancy Intervention Panel as a strategy to reduce student absences when compared to non-TIP schools. These findings were consistent at the elementary, middle and high school levels. There was also no significance discovered in the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent before and after the addition of a TIP. The dependent variable was measured over a six-year period and indicated a significant decrease over the years at the elementary level but after further analysis it was determined the addition of the TIP had no impact on the change in the dependent variable. The middle and high school levels did not indicate significant change in the dependent variable. Final analysis of student ethnicity and socio-economic standing discovered no significance in the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent in TIP schools compared to non-TIP schools. There was also no significance discovered between Black, White, and Economically Disadvantaged students in the percentages of students with 15 or more days absent in TIP schools over time. This study did reveal a statistically significant difference in the dependent variable between Black and White students. White students had significantly higher percentages of students reported with 15 or more days absent. These findings are inconsistent with previous research correlating the addition of community based intervention programs with the reduction of student absences although previous research specifically measuring attendance data in TIP and non-TIP schools was not found (Choi et al., 2005; Henry, 2007; McCray, 2006; McNeal, 1999). Further research should include additional comparisons of attendance
data in TIP and non-TIP schools. Lastly, survey responses indicate that TIP members believe the TIP to be an effective strategy used to reduce student absences. There was inconsistency in the implementation of the TIP between schools and school levels, in the identification and determination of truant students, in the strategies used by the TIP by school, and in TIP membership. These results were not unexpected but do indicate that the addition of the TIP is individualized by the needs at each school. Effectiveness of the TIP program might be increased with fidelity, but more research is needed to fully ascertain feasibility.

It is hoped that these findings will have an impact. This research could influence district policymakers to examine the broad implementation of Truancy Intervention Panels as a method for reducing student absences. A TIP seems to have been an effective strategy in identifying at risk behaviors and providing support to families and students for specific student populations. This research could also influence TIP membership and methods used to identify and support at-risk students.
APPENDIX A

LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE COUNTY

August 17, 2012

Ms. Lenora Nyeste
6011 Fairlong Ct., NW
Acworth, GA 30101

Dear Ms. Nyeste:

Your research project titled, The Effect of the Addition of a Truancy Intervention Panel on the Reduction of Student Absences, has been approved. Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct the research is complete. Please work with the school administrators to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

Schools
Kennesaw Mt., North Cobb, Allatoona, Harrison, Hillgrove, & McEachern HS
Awtrey, Barber, Cooper, Durham, Lost Mt., Lovinggood, McClure, Pine Mt., & Tapp MS
Acworth, Baker, Big Shanty, Bullard, Cheatham Hill, Compton, Frey, Kennesaw, Lewis,
McCall Primary, Picketts Mill, Powder Springs, Still, & Varner ES

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Academic Division prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the Cobb County School District or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at 770-426-3407.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Judith A. Jones
Chief Academic Officer

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Scott Sweeney, Chair
Lynda Eagle · Timothy Shultz · Kathleen Angriecio · David Banks · Alison Barrett

SUPERINTENDENT
Michael Hinojosa, Ed.D.
APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 34065-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Event Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 12080804
PROJECT TITLE: The Effect of the Addition of a Community-Based Truancy Intervention Panel on the Reduction of Student Absences
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
RESEARCHER/S: Lena Nyeste
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: 08/21/2012 to 08/20/2013

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
APPENDIX C

TIP MEMBER SURVEY

The Impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel on Student Absences

Section 1

*Please answer the following question related to your personal experience.*

1. Total years in education? Please circle your answer.
   1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years > 20 years

*Answer the following questions based on your perceptions using the provided Likert-scale.*

2. Parents/Guardians at this school make sure their child comes to school every day.
   
   Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Parents/Guardians at this school are actively involved in their child’s education.
   
   Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Students at this school have numerous community resources that build pro-social attitudes and beliefs.
   
   Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Students at this school live in high-risk areas that contribute to anti-social behaviors.
   
   Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Students at this school have parent/guardian supervision when they get home from school.
   
   Strongly Disagree  Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5
TIP MEMBER SURVEY

Section 2

*Your school has been identified as a school that utilizes a Truancy Intervention Panel provided through the Success for All Students Program as a strategy to reduce student absences. Please answer the following questions based on the characteristics of your Truancy Intervention Panel.*

7. Please indicate the number of each member of the Truancy Intervention Panel at your school.
   Principal       _______  Juvenile Court Officer       _______
   Administrators  _______  Law Enforcement Officer       _______
   Counselors      _______  Community Members        _______
   Social Workers  _______  Psychologists                     _______
   Parent Liaison  _______

Other, please specify
________________________________________________________________________

8. Please indicate how often the Truancy Intervention Panel meets to review student absences prior to meeting with students.
   ____ Weekly ____ Bi-Weekly ____ Monthly ____ Bi-Monthly ____ Never Meet

9. Please indicate at what approximate number of *unexcused absences* is a student referred to the Truancy Intervention Panel?
   ____ <5 ____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ >15

10. Please indicate at what approximate number of *excused absences* is a student referred to the Truancy Intervention Panel?
    ____ <5 ____ 6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ >15

11. How often does the Truancy Intervention Panel have scheduled meetings with students and parents/guardians?
    ____ Weekly ____ Bi-Weekly ____ Monthly ____ Bi-Monthly ____ Never Meet

12. Please place an x on the line next to any of the following strategies used at your school to reduce student absences.

   a. *Teacher* communication to parent via email, phone, parent conference or postcard when student has acquired *three* unexcused absences;

   b. *School* communication to parent via phone, letter, and email when student has acquired *five* unexcused absences;

   c. Social Worker contacts parent via letter, phone call, home visit, and/or conference;

   d. Student support groups, incentive programs, and/or conferences to address truancy and other anti-social behaviors;
TIP MEMBER SURVEY

e. Social Worker meets with teachers regarding student and/or participation in the RTI process; ________
f. Social Worker referral to community resources including financial assistance, counseling services, and/or mentoring programs; ________
g. Letter to parent explaining suspension and/or denial of Student’s driving privileges (when applicable); ________
h. Attendance agreement between Social Worker and Student acknowledging the Compulsory Attendance Law; ________
i. A Truancy Intervention Panel meets with student and parent when deemed necessary; ________
j. Referral to juvenile court, magistrate court and/or Department of Family and Children Services; ________
k. Our school based Learning Support Resource Teams evaluate student related information to determine which attendance strategies are appropriate for that student; ________
l. Our school utilizes printed materials to communicate the content of the Compulsory Attendance Law to students and parents; ________
m. Our school conducts attendance campaigns to inform Students and parents of the Compulsory Attendance Law and Teenage Driver’s law (when applicable); ________
n. Our school promotes communication between teachers, students, and parents regarding the student’s attendance and academics; ________

Answer the following questions based on your perceptions using the provided Likert-scale.

13. The Truancy Intervention Panel takes into consideration a student’s grades when deciding if a student will be invited to a panel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>
14. The Truancy Intervention Panel takes into consideration a student’s prior discipline when deciding if a student will be invited to a panel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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</table>

Section 3

Please answer the following questions based on your perceptions as to the impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel at reducing the number of student absences at your school.

15. A Truancy Intervention Panel is an effective strategy used to reduce the number of student absences at our school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

16. A Truancy Intervention Panel identifies causes of why individual students have excessive absences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

17. A Truancy Intervention Panel improves student attendance by addressing student anti-social attitudes and behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

18. Parental/Guardian participation is essential to the impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel on reducing student absences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

19. The Truancy Intervention Panel provides resources for parent/guardians of identified truant students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
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</table>

20. The Truancy Intervention Panel provides resources for identified truant students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Neutral</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
21. The Truancy Intervention Panel effectively lowers the number of absences for students of all ethnicities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

22. Students that have been through a Truancy Intervention have fewer absences from school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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APPENDIX D

VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel Survey

Thank you for volunteering your time to assist me in the development of this survey. Your input is very important with respect to the survey itself and the development of my dissertation overall. Your willingness and consideration to participate in this study is greatly appreciated.

Please rate the included survey based on the following information:

1. Does the survey contain language that can be understood by administrators, counselors, and social workers who have participated in a Truancy Intervention Panel (TIP)?
   ______________________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________

2. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to obtaining information regarding the characteristics of a (TIP) and (TIP) panel members opinions toward the effectiveness of a (TIP) at reducing student absences?
   ______________________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________

3. Do you find any of the questions offensive or obtrusive? _______________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________

4. Are there any questions that you would exclude from the survey? ________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________

5. Are there any other statements that you would include that are not a part of the survey? ______________________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________

6. Please make any other comments or suggestions about the survey below: __________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________
APPENDIX E

SURVEY COVER LETTER

September 4, 2012

Dear Participant,

Thank you for volunteering to take part in my research project pertaining to Truancy Intervention Panels and the impact of the panel at reducing student absences. My name is Lenora Nyeste and I am working toward my PhD at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and confidential. Neither you nor your school will be identified through your answers. A returned and completed survey will indicate that you grant consent for the survey data to be included in this study. Your answers will provide general perceptions of the Truancy Intervention Panel as a strategy to reduce student absences.

If you are not directly involved with the Truancy Intervention Panel, please forward this survey document to the most appropriate person able to provide insight into the program in place at your school.

The survey consists of three sections. The first section seeks information pertaining to the climate and characteristics of your school. The second section asks you to describe the Truancy Intervention Panel and identify strategies used at your school to address student absences. The final section focuses on questions pertaining to your perceptions of the impact of the Truancy Intervention Panel at the reduction of student absences at your school.

When you have finished the survey, please return it to your school counselor and I will come by to pick it up.

Again, thank you for your time and input. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at my cell or email.

Sincerely,

Lenora Nyeste
APPENDIX F
COUNSELOR COVER LETTER

Letter to Counselors with Instructions for Survey Distribution and Collection

Lenora Nyeste

September 4, 2012

Dear School Counselor,

Your Principal along with the Office of Accountability for Cobb County Schools have granted me permission to conduct research at your school. I am a PhD student involved in a cohort developed through the University of Southern Mississippi and Cobb County School District. I am searching for input pertaining to the impact of a Truancy Intervention Panel (TIP) on student absences. I will be conducting research through the university, using school attendance data as well as the opinions of (TIP) members on the effectiveness of the panel at reducing student absences.

Your school receives services provided through the Success for All Students Program including the implementation of a (TIP) to aid schools in identifying students at-risk for truancy as well as offering strategies to students and parents for reducing student absences. Participation in this survey requires that you have knowledge of the (TIP) in place at your school and have participated in the panel. Your input as a (TIP) member will be beneficial to me in my research and I appreciate your time and opinions.

I have included in this packet enough surveys for any adult employee at your school that has participated in a (TIP) including your principal, administrators, social worker and counselors. Persons that have not participated in a truancy intervention panel should not complete the survey. Time to complete the survey should take no longer than 10 minutes. Participation in this survey is completely confidential and voluntary. Respondents may choose to withdraw from participating in this study at any time without penalty. They may also choose not to answer particular questions.

Please distribute this survey to the appropriate Truancy Intervention Panel members at your school. Have participants complete and return the surveys to you. Keep the completed surveys in a secure location in the envelope provided. I will return next week to collect the completed surveys. I will be available to answer any questions you may have pertaining to the survey or this research.

I sincerely appreciate your help in gathering the survey data for my research.

Respectfully,

Lenora Nyeste
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