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Administrators' and Teachers' Perceptions of In-School Suspension

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The University of Southern Mississippi

ADMINISTRATORS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

OF IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

by

Amelia Shondra Jackson

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

December 2010

ABSTRACT

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OF IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

by Amelia Shondra Jackson

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Providing a safe and orderly school environment for students to learn is of paramount importance to school administrators, teachers, students, and the general public; however, the learning process should not be compromised while trying to maintain such an environment. There are many alternative approaches that can be utilized that would rectify the problem we as educators face in providing a safe and orderly environment. At-risk students are usually the ones who have the most serious infractions. These students exhibit a cyclical pattern of recalcitrant behavior. It is imperative that these at-risk students be identified as early as possible, and intervention programs developed and implemented, to save them from becoming chronic discipline problems. By doing this, we can foster a safer environment in our school as well as our community.

Research has shown that there are successful ISS programs. Those programs must be properly implemented. Simply suspending a student is not the answer. It will take more than a suspension to correct the behavior and to prevent it from happening again. A successfully implemented program would not only be beneficial to school personnel but also to the community as well as its

stakeholders. The researcher found that there was a discrepancy between administrators' perceptions of their ISS program versus teachers' perceptions of their ISS program. Teachers overall were dissatisfied with their ISS program. Further research should be done to pinpoint exactly why there is such a discrepancy. The purpose of this study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program in a school district. Data were collected through the use of a survey instrument completed by administrators and teachers during the spring of 2010. The results obtained from this study are to inform professionals of the alternatives to out-of-school suspensions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to Bagin and Gallagher (2001), the greatest discipline problems are: recalcitrant behavior, student disrespect for authority, student apathy toward learning, absenteeism, and class cutting. School administrators have utilized a myriad of methods for controlling student behavior, such as written assignments, detention, in-school and out-of-school suspension, Saturday School, and expulsion. These methods were used to discipline students in hopes of modifying behavior. Yell, Drasgow, and Rozalski (2001) states in order for students to learn their roles and responsibilities in school and society, discipline must be maintained.

In asserting control, principals have traditionally used out-of-school suspension (OSS) programs to isolate students who exhibited unruly behavior. Since OSS removes students from the school environment, it may be viewed as a negative form of disciplining students. A more positive alternative to OSS are in-school suspension (ISS) programs which have gained acceptance because they do not remove students from school (Sullivan, 1989). In -school suspension is “a program to which a student is assigned because of disruptive behavior for a specific amount of time” (Sheets & Gay, 1996, p. 87). Many states have defined disruptive behavior as follows:

Behavior that interferes with the student’s own learning and/or the educational process of others, and requires attention and assistance beyond that which traditional programs can provide or results in frequent

conflicts of a disruptive nature while the student is under the jurisdiction of the school, either in or out of the classroom. (Sheets, 1996, p. 90)

Is there such a thing as safety without suspensions? According to Skiba and Sprague (2008), disruptive recalcitrant behavior always tops the list of teachers' and parents' concerns about education. "In an effort to address this concern, many U.S. schools began adopting zero-tolerance policies in the 1990s, which led to substantial increases in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions" (Wald & Losen, 2003, p. 10). Administrators are now faced with the tough decision of keeping their school safe and making sure that students do not miss out on the educational process. According to Sanders (2001), a poorly designed ISS program will tend to have the same academic and social effect on a student as OSS would. Morris and Howard (2003) contends that though there are different ISS models, the type that is touted as most effective holds the students accountable for school assignments and involves rehabilitation and/or behavior assessments.

Statement of the Problem

According to Gagnon and Leone (2001), the rise in fatal shootings across the U.S. by youngsters has raised concern amongst stakeholders, educators, parents, etc. about the safety of schools. A school should be an environment that is conducive to learning, and shapes and molds the child's intellect. The learning process should not be hindered because of fear. Furthermore, they suggested that even with all the violence that has been thrust upon us, these

unique occurrences have formulated much of the discussion about how to stop violence and make safer schools.

Suspension (i.e., a disciplinary sanction that requires the student to be excluded from the school building for a specified period of time) is one of the most common disciplinary consequences used in schools for student problem behaviors (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004). Ironically, the research on suspension indicates that despite its frequent use, it is not effective in reducing the problems it is intended to address. Even though evidence suggests that suspensions lead to juvenile delinquency, the rates of its use have gone unchanged (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004). Many of the children who are suspended are at-risk children. According to Gagnon and Leone (2001), the present punishment that is used for these children, i.e. zero –tolerance school policies focuses on a limited number of reactive and punitive response to problem behavior, including office discipline referrals, in-and out-of-school suspensions and expulsion. Although these approaches may be viewed as providing direct relief to teachers and administrators, they fail to address the necessary elements within the school to effectively prevent any serious misconduct (Gagnon & Leone, 2001).

According to Mendez and Knoff (2003), because of the growth of public concern regarding school safety in recent years, out-of-school suspension has been used with increasing frequency to respond to serious levels of student misbehavior and maintain a positive educational climate. However, because it involves the exclusion of students from the learning process, suspension

frequently is perceived as one of the more extreme responses available to administrators. Suspension is given as punishment for an already committed inappropriate act or behavior; it rarely has a logical, functional, or instructive connection to the offense or infraction; and it usually occurs in the absence of additional interventions that focus on teaching or reinforcing students' more pro-social or appropriate responses to difficult situations. Regardless of the rationale underlying it, repeated suspension has been linked to a variety of negative outcomes for students, including academic failure, negative school attitudes, grade retention, and school drop-out (Mendez & Knoff, 2003). Studies have found suspension to be moderately associated with higher dropout rates (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Skiba & Sprague 2008). It is sometimes used to rid schools of problem kids. On the other hand, ridding the school of these children is not a quick fix. According to the Skiba and Sprague (2008), these schools still have low test scores and higher rates of suspension. The challenge for administrators is to put into place a more effective method of suspension that is safe and productive.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program in a school district. Data were collected through the use of a survey instrument completed by administrators and teachers during the spring of 2010. The results obtained from this study are to inform professionals of their perceptions of their ISS program.

Research Questions

The following research questions and hypothesis guided the study:

1. What are the purposes of ISS programs?
2. What are the characteristics of ISS programs?
3. What are administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS programs?
4. What are administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their school environment?
5. What are administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of their ISS program?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis guided the study:

Hypothesis: There will be a significant difference between administrators and teachers on perceptions of ISS and perceptions of school environment.

Definition of Terms

Terminology relevant to the study is defined as follows:

Administrator - primary person in charge contracted to oversee a particular school unit such as the principal or assistant principal.

Alternative School - a setting that provides instruction in an environment completely separate from that of the regular classroom student.

At-Risk - a person coming from a disadvantaged background therefore not having access to equal opportunities.

Characteristics of an ISS Program - an effective ISS program is clear, consistent, selective, constructive, and involves the parents. Paraprofessionals are employed to work with students serving as a tutor as well as a supervisor.

Detention - a regimented environment where students are diligently attentive to the rules. Communication is limited, and students are required to follow a format of instruction. This is usually done at hour intervals, such as in the morning before school, at lunch, or after school.

Discipline referral - the process of sending a student to an administrator for the purpose of discipline, which includes all forms of discipline. One of these forms is that of in-school-suspension.

Dropout - a student that leaves school prior to graduation or completion of high school (Dupper, 2003).

Expulsion - a discipline consequence that removes a student from the traditional educational setting for a significant period.

IEP - is an individualized educational program used for special education students.

In-School Suspension - offers a disciplinary alternative to out-of-school suspension that varies from program to program. Students are to report to school during normal school hours; however, instead of attending regular class, they attend alternative class.

Manifestation Determination - This process happens when a school district

proposes a disciplinary action that could result in a change of placement (e.g., long-term suspension, expulsion). It is a review of the relationship between a student's disability and misconduct (Yell et al., 2001).

Out-of-School Suspension – the temporary removal of a student from the school environment.

Purposes of an ISS Program - to be used as an alternative to Out-of-School Suspension. The student is isolated from the rest of the student body, usually on the school grounds, and is still able to keep up with the educational process so that no instructional days are lost.

Retract Officer - certified school personnel assigned to supervise ISS students in an isolated environment.

Saturday School - a disciplinary alternative to suspension, due to misconduct, that mandates the student must attend school on Saturdays.

Suspension - a discipline consequence that temporarily removes a student from the public school setting.

Zero-tolerance - a school discipline policy that results in the expulsion of a student from the traditional school setting for certain specified offenses.

Delimitations

This study was limited to administrators and teachers in one school district in a selected region during the spring 2010 semester. Data were gathered through questionnaires. The study is limited by accuracy and completeness of the data collected.

Assumptions

Participants who completed the survey instrument were honest and answered with sincerity. They carefully read directions and each question before answering.

Justification

According to Gagnon and Leone (2001), many of the children who are suspended are at-risk children. The present punishment that is used for these children, i.e. zero-tolerance school policies focuses on a limited number of reactive and punitive responses to problem behavior, including office discipline referrals, in-and out-of-school suspension and expulsion.

These approaches provide immediate short- term relief to teachers and administrators; however, they fail to address the school processes that are necessary to help prevent the student from further misconduct.

Morrison, Skiba, and Sprague (2001) found in their study that milder forms of student problem behavior at school are sometimes precursors to more serious and violent offenses and are considered a “warning sign” for future behavior that could threaten school safety. Some students who are sent to the principal’s office for minor disruptions in middle school and do not receive additional support services, will likely return to the office during junior high school with major discipline problems. Morrison et al. also noted a common assertion is that the best prediction of future behavior is past behavior; therefore, those students who have exhibited previous antisocial behavior at school would be expected to be those most likely to exhibit this behavior in the future.

Consequently, students who exhibit chronic patterns of school discipline involvement are highly likely to experience future school adjustment problems. Thus, attention is needed on these disciplinary infractions (Morrison et al., 2001). It is imperative that these at-risk students be identified as early as possible and intervention programs developed and implemented to save them from becoming chronic discipline problems. By doing this, we can foster a safer environment in our school as well as our community.

Considering Gagnon and Leone (2001), as well as Morrison et al.'s (2001) claims, the general purposes of this study were to collect the perceptions of administrators and teachers in a school district about their experiences with their in-school suspension (ISS) program, and to use this data to determine what improvements can be made to make their ISS program better because a student's educational process should not be compromised. They can be punished for an infraction and still learn in the process through the implementation of an effective viable alternative program.

As a result, Eggleton (2001) contends that some forms of ISS programs have been successful. If all the steps and components of a successful program that he discusses in his study are implemented, it would make for an effective program that would be beneficial to not only the school personnel but also the parents and the community. Therefore, it is important that administrators and teachers continuously open their minds to new and different techniques used to discipline students. At-risk students need as many intervention strategies as possible. Just suspending a child should not be the only alternative. After this

study is concluded, the results can be used to determine which, if any, of these programs studied can be enhanced or improved. Furthermore, this study can serve as a foundation for additional alternative program studies in other school districts. It is of paramount importance that alternative program studies, such as this one, continue being conducted so K-12 schools can forge a partnership with at-risk students, parents, and the community through educating our youth by any means necessary. This would entail the success of creative in-school and out-of-school suspension.

Summary

Discipline is the necessary ingredient in order for any school to be successful. However, in order to achieve this end, it will take involvement from the whole community if change is to be exacted. To achieve this, the administrative staff will have to research pre-existing intervention programs and combine them to make it fit their need. The ultimate goal should always be the success of the children. Research has shown that use of effective ISS program models combined with effective teaching and implementation of prevention programs significantly reduces discipline problems. More positive and effective school environments can serve to prevent the development of severe behavioral problems.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Balancing a safe school, while maintaining a productive learning environment, is an increasing concern for educators everywhere. For students to act respectfully and responsibly is the primary goal of teachers and administrators (Landau & Gathercoal, 2000).

Researchers from John Hopkins University stated that the following characteristics were associated with discipline problems: vague rules and regulations, equitability of the treatment of the students, discrepancies in enforcement, students took no ownership in the rules, disagreement among the teachers and administrators as to what the rules were and what the proper response should be for the student's conduct (Gottfredson, 1989). Teacher-administration cooperation was poor and the teachers usually had weak attitudes.

Changing these characteristics could decrease these disruptive behaviors. The first step is to make sure that the rules and consequences of breaking them are clearly delineated and communicated to the staff, students, and parents through newsletters, bulletins, assemblies, and handbooks. School personnel should also restate the school rules whenever students return from an extended vacation (Meyers & Pawlas, 1989).

This chapter provides a summary of the literature related to the subject of viable alternatives to out-of-school suspensions. The review of literature will discuss the following topics: historical overview, Supreme Court cases, Support Models, Effective Alternative Programs, Dropout Prevention, Juvenile Justice, Zero Tolerance, and Out-of- School Suspensions.

Historical Overview

Discipline can be viewed as training which seeks to correct, mold, or perfect the mind or moral being. It is obedience to authority or rules: punishment to correct deviant behavior. Discipline is the lifeline of a successful school. The Missouri Department of Education identified several major discipline problems at a series of regional meetings with parents, students, and educators which were as follows: recalcitrant behavior, student disrespect for authority, student apathy toward learning, absenteeism, and class cutting (Bagin & Gallagher, 2001).

These events occurred in our past history and are still occurring today. Discipline problems have not changed; however, the methods used to address them have evolved. The wooden cane was the mode of control throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the 1850s the leather strap and the hickory switch emerged. By the 1890s, the paddle was introduced. It was usually kept in sight behind the teacher's desk. The threat of these devices alone was usually enough to keep the students in line (Public Broadcast System, 2001). In order to exact the desired behavior from their child, parents had condoned these punishments.

Discipline began to change in the twentieth century. According to Bagley (1923), a trade was made between the old time penalties of pain and fears for a more modern school penalty such solitary treatment, an early form of time-out. Garinger (1936) stated that the old methods of flogging, standing on your toes for long periods of time, and wearing of dunce caps were replaced by Saturday school, home visits and academic penalties.

A focus on student rights began to increase. The train of thought began to change from punitive to preventive. Olivia (1956) explained, "Discipline should be viewed as reformation and preventative and not punitive. It is a goal by itself and not merely a means to an end" (p. 40). The 1954 landmark decision of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* not only upheld the constitutional rights of students but also abrogated the "separate but equal" doctrine regarding desegregation (McCarthy & McCabe, 1992). This pivotal case had an immense impact on the future of how public schools could regulate business and discipline issues. The term "alternative," also arose from this case in conjunction with discipline matters. Previously, schools used whatever measures they felt were necessary; today, alternatives are used to aid in students' rights. Ovard (1966) pointed out that there was a quest for a more positive and humanistic approach that focused on preventing recalcitrant student behavior. Hartwig and Ruesch (1994) indicated that pressure from parents and the public forced school administrators to seek and develop alternatives to traditional out-of-school suspension policies.

Discipline had been the most frequently mentioned problem in the Gallup Polls since their inception in 1969. Addressing the concerns of the public that the schools were too soft on discipline, educators thus developed strategies that would meet discipline objectives (Hartwig & Ruesch, 1994). Administrators often chose out-of-school suspensions over other forms of punishment because removing a student from the school setting in an out-of-school suspension was a faster tactic and less bothersome than detention (which required supervision by

school personnel) or counseling (which required supervision by specially trained personnel; Lines, 1972).

Theoretical Framework

Since the early 1800s, educators have been dealing with issues of school discipline and classroom management. Even the educators of Colonial America faced problems of truancy, fighting, and dropping out which are the same problems that we face today (School Discipline and Management, 2004). Historically, According to School Discipline and Management (2004), the first modern thinker to make a significant contribution to the theory of moral development was Jean Jacques Rousseau (1762). He developed the idea of humans going through five stages and he lists social responsibility as the last stage. He believed that the child's thinking did indeed change from stage to stage which would become important for later theorists.

According to School Behavior and Management (2004), many important theorists such as, Durkheim, Dewey, Freud, and Piaget paved the way to a better understanding of moral and behavioral development in our society. Durkheim (1925), who believed to act morally, was to better the society in which you live. Moral Development is a kind of socialization. Dewey (1932) had three levels of moral development: biological, economic, and other non-moral needs and desires that motivate the individual. Dewey explained that the individual goes through a set of processes through which he or she becomes more national, social, and moral. Freud (1925) argues that differences alone between the male and female anatomy may have a deep impact on the outcomes in moral

development for boys and girls. He purports that females' sense of justice is less developed than that of males and females are influenced more by feelings of affection and hostility. Piaget (1932) studied the basic reasoning processes children use in making moral judgments. He stated that children have a pre-moral stage where they have little understanding of the rules then they move on through two successive moral stages which encompass changes in their understanding of moral rules (School Discipline and Behavior Management, 2004).

Lawrence Kohlberg's work extends Piaget's theory and research. He focused on the underlying concepts of reasoning involved in moral judgment and how they change in the individual over time. He presents a more refined analysis of morality than Piaget. His stages are broken down as follows: First, there is the Pre-Conventional Level that has two stages. In stage one (Heteronymous Morality) you avoid breaking the rules. In stage two (Individualism) you look out for your own interests and follow the rules. Next, there is the Conventional Level which has two stages. You must live up to what is expected and keep mutual relationships. You must also follow your conscience and be a person of your word. Lastly, is the Post-Conventional Level which has two stages. You must be cognizant of others opinions and values and follow a code of ethics (School Discipline and Behavior Management, 2004).

We cannot forget the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act that established high standards and accountability for learning of all children. President George W. Bush signed this into law on January 8, 2002, and has changed education as

we know it. This act strives for fairness and excellence in education. According to Jorgensen and Hoffman (2003), schools must now ensure that ALL students learn the essential skills and knowledge defined by the state. All means all, including suspended students. NCLB regulations also provide options, such as transfer to another school and tutoring for parents of children in under-performing or unsafe schools. The U.S. Department of Education will fund and support programs that are scientifically based and work (Jorgenson & Hoffman, 2003). The authors used a direct quote from the U.S. Department of Education's 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, 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 as quoted by Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003, p. 2)

We as educators must not lose sight of the fact that we are saving a generation. These students are our future; thus, we must ensure that they have the tools necessary for success. All programs and avenues must be searched out. There is a direct correlation between a literate society and low crime rates vs. an illiterate society and high crime rates (Mazzotti & Higgins, 2006).

This review defines alternative ISS programs, current issues and challenges facing in-school and out-of-school suspension, and the different types of alternative ISS programs. This review provides an in-depth overview of the components of an effective ISS program and other alternatives to out-of-school suspension.

Support Models

According to Gagnon and Leone (2001), researchers and practitioners have identified and assessed the efficacy of more positive and proactive approaches to violence prevention. These interventions can be placed in three categories: school-wide or universal interventions, student-centered approaches, and school security measures.

These approaches address the core of the problem which is effective universal support or school-wide behavioral support that relies on development and implementation of a systematic approach to training, monitoring, and reinforcement of appropriate behavior. These measures seek to create a culture within the school in which respect for the individual, predictability, and the perception of fair play shape the behavior of teachers, students, and administrators (Gagnon & Leone, 2001).

The focus of these programs is significant given that youth violence has been linked to lack of social and problem solving skills. Experts agree that skills' training is an effective alternative to suspension and sends an appropriate message to students that they are wanted in school. In addition to teaching skills for negotiating nonviolent outcomes to conflict, youth are instructed in interpreting

social cues and taking the perspective of others. Project ACHIEVE, which is a universal intervention for elementary and middle schools that provides training to school personnel in six areas, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) also emphasize the importance of effective instruction as part of universal intervention (Gagnon & Leone, 2001). The authors go on to say that targeted interventions may provide special programs, classes, or schools for those who have engaged in specific acts of misconduct or those most at-risk for engaging in antisocial and disruptive behavior. Interventions aimed at individual students or groups of students can also teach specific skills such as conflict resolution strategies or social skills.

Gagnon and Leone (2001) discussed a specific program called Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT) program. It is a cognitive-behavioral intervention designed to be sensitive to the cultural needs of adolescent African American students who are at-risk for violence. It has helped to reduce physical aggression and adjudication for participating students. The focus is on modeling appropriate behavior and instruction in problem-solving strategies and includes role-playing and videotaped vignettes that portray African Americans modeling specific skills. PACT is designed to provide participants with skills to resist violence and negotiate conflicts, such as giving and receiving positive and negative feedback, resisting peer pressure, and problem-solving. Students are taught methods for expressing difficult feelings (anger, frustration, disappointment, and others) and appropriate means of resolving conflicts.

A third component of PACT, anger management, deals with recognition of anger, self-control, and consideration of consequences to actions, and is designed to help students understand the consequences of serious misconduct (Gagnon & Leone, 2001).

Another program that Gagnon and Leone (2001) mention is the First Step to Success Program. It is a student centered approach designed for students in kindergarten who exhibit aggressive or defiant behavior. The program has shown significant positive effects for aggression, academic engagement time, adaptive, and maladaptive behavior that have been maintained over time. The program uses skills training and a reward system to teach and reinforce positive student behavior. The PACT and First Step to Success programs provide a snapshot of effective interventions for small groups of students.

Gagnon and Leone (2001) offered the following recommendations for effective violence prevention in schools:

1. Clear rules and consequences: clearly stated rules and consequences for students, teachers, and administrators, are important components of effective universal interventions. The positive effects on student behavior when teachers establish, teach, and reinforce rules have been all documented.
2. Principal Support: Administrative support is critical for successful prevention programs. Evidence suggests that support should be visible, predictable, and continuous.

3. Ongoing Support to Staff: Continuing access to qualified consultants can assist educators in their attempts to implement procedures with a high level of confidence.
4. Parent and community involvement across settings: Positive results are obtained through extending school-based prevention programs to a number of domains of student life. Parents and other community members whenever possible or appropriate are important in supporting prevention programs.
5. Needs assessment and functional behavioral assessment: The needs and available resources of the school must be evaluated.

Furthermore, an assessment of the needs and values within the community, school, teachers, and student contexts can be used to develop procedures and interventions for behaviors that are socially and culturally inappropriate.
6. Staff acceptance: Staff willingness to support and implement a program is critical to its success. Students show significantly more improvement with teachers who implement a prevention program consistently.
7. Staff training: Critical components of a prevention plan can be appropriately implemented and maintained through comprehensive staff development.
8. Conflict resolution and social skills training frequently use direct instruction, teacher and peer modeling, role-playing, and rehearsal to

teach students. Programs focusing on these aspects have consistently resulted in reduced inappropriate behavior, increased student attendance, and short-term gains in problem solving, particularly for younger and disadvantaged children.

9. Program Monitoring and Effective Implementation: Consistent and high quality program implementation is essential. The quality of program implementation may be more important than whether a program was implemented. Quality prevention programs are increasingly using student outcome data (office discipline referrals, suspension rates, student achievement and special education referral and placement) to monitor program effectiveness. (Gagnon and Leone, 2001, p. 102)

According to Johnson (2001), conflicts among students in U.S. schools result in destructive outcomes with alarming frequency. Providing students with a quality education is becoming more difficult as societal influences disrupt the curriculum. Even in schools where weapons are rare, students often try to resolve conflicts by using destructive strategies, such as verbal threats, withdrawal by not telling the teacher, and restating demands. Most students seem to be unaware of steps that would allow them to manage conflicts constructively. Johnson (2001) believes that a students' academic experience should include training on managing interpersonal conflicts constructively. The authors suggest peer mediation program.

This strategy is based on *meditation*, a structured process in which a neutral and impartial third party (known as the mediator) assists two or more

people to negotiate an integrative resolution to their conflict, and *negotiation*, a process by which people who have both shared and opposing interests and who want to reach an agreement try to work out a settlement. The two approaches to negotiation are distributive (concession-convergence) and integrative (mutual gains). The distributive approach is aimed at maximizing one's own gains at the expense of the other whereas the integrative approach is aimed at maximizing both parties' gains. It is used in cooperative contexts that involve ongoing relationships, such as families and schools, using an integrative approach results in the most constructive outcomes (Johnson, 2001).

Johnson (2001) stated that advocates for peer mediation programs have claimed that such programs reduce rates of suspensions and detention referrals to the principal, and absenteeism, while increasing students' self-confidence, academic time on task, and academic achievement. Blomberg, Blomberg, Waldo, Pesta, and Bellows (2006), discussed the National Collaboration Project that intends to help states successfully implement the juvenile justice education requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Funded by Congress, the project recently was awarded to Florida State University's College of Criminology and Criminal Justice. It focuses on developing and maintaining effective working partnerships among its staff, those responsible for juvenile justice education, the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

The project's initial task was to conduct a survey and assessment of each state's juvenile justice education system. The results will be used to begin

developing individual state plans for implementing NCLB requirements. To facilitate this, the project will host a national conference where training, technical assistance, and evaluation will be provided to help states with the successful implementation of NCLB requirements (Blomberg et al., 2006).

Delinquent youths benefit from quality educational services and academic achievement while incarcerated because they are more likely to return to public school upon release, which leads to their reduced likelihood of re-arrest. With successful nationwide implementation of NCLB, every juvenile justice student, regardless of state of residence can receive quality education services.

Furthermore, the resulting academic achievement is expected to increase students' chances of successful community reintegration, thereby reducing the likelihood of their continuation in criminal careers. This project has five goals as noted by Bloomberg et al. (2006), which are as follows:

1. Identify each state's juvenile justice education system's administrative structure including the personnel responsible for administration and evaluation as well as those responsible for implementing the requirements of NCLB for neglected and juvenile offenders.
2. Determine current education evaluation capacities and identify common problems for all states, problems shared by certain groups of states and problems unique to specific states.
3. Develop a network of agencies, and administrators and evaluators responsible for juvenile justice education across the nation.

4. Provide information on NCLB requirements and evaluation methods to states to improve their ability to meet those requirements and effectively evaluate their juvenile justice education systems.
5. Measure and report the project's first year progress on the capabilities and remaining obstacles of states in meeting NCLB requirements and effectively evaluating their juvenile justice education systems.

Bloomberg et al. (2006), went on to state that juvenile offenders constitute a major portion of the U.S. crime problem, both in terms of current crime and the potential for future adult crime. Consequently, promising methods of crime reduction such as quality education services that increase the academic achievement and likelihood of successful community reintegration of incarcerated youths should be vigorously pursued. Students experiencing academic achievement while incarcerated remain in school following release and are much less likely to return to delinquent behavior patterns as compared with those youth who do not experience academic achievement and do not return to or remain in school.

The next article focused on aggression replacement training as part of a school-wide positive behavior support initiative. Ellen McGinnis (2003) pointed out why suspensions do not work. Suspension and exclusionary practices are increasingly not viewed as favorable options, as research suggests that these practices are targeted toward minority students and those with disabilities on a disproportionate basis. The positive relationship between school attendance and academic success has been well documented, encouraging the examination of

the relationship of school suspension to academic achievement. Thus, we see a cycle emerge, the more a student is excluded from school, the more likely he is to fall behind academically. And because it is more acceptable to act bad than it is to act stupid, a student is more likely to act disruptively and aggressively to avoid work that is not understood. It makes sense that students who are not in school will fail to learn what they need to learn. For minority students and those with disabilities, it is also likely that the achievement gap will continue (McGinnis, 2003).

McGinnis (2003) also discussed that the center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports has established a model to build the capacity of schools to address the needs of all students. Instead of being a curricula or program, PBS is a framework for addressing the full continuum of student needs, from those with mild issues to those students with intense and stable problematic behavior. This model includes a set of processes or strategies to foster social learning and to prevent problem behaviors. In addition, PBS provides a useful framework for coordinating school interventions and programs in a meaningful and unifying way. The PBS continuum of supports is characterized by three levels. The first, Primary Prevention, is directed toward meeting the needs of the majority of the school population (80%). Students in this group do not have serious behavior problems as they typically possess the internal controls and social behaviors to react in acceptable ways. However, given certain circumstances (e.g., lack of classroom management, negative school climate, lack of supervision), this group may act out. The need at this level is for

universal interventions or school-wide systems that target all students and staff. The goal is to minimize the predictable problems, so that more time and effort can be directed toward more severe behaviors. Primary prevention helps schools establish a positive school climate that provides a base for higher level interventions to succeed (McGinnis, 2003).

Secondary Prevention provides a system of behavioral supports for students with at-risk behaviors. This group has not responded sufficiently to primary prevention efforts and may comprise 15% of our student population. At this level, it is necessary to assess the needs of students and to select more intense interventions. Students in this group may move into a higher level on the continuum of the environment remains unresponsive and fails to meet their needs (McGinnis, 2003).

Finally, Tertiary Prevention, or an individualized system, is necessary for students (5%) whose patterns of behavior are more intense and chronic. Interventions at this level must be prescriptive in nature. That is, they must be designed to teach and reinforce behaviors that replace the undesirable or aggressive patterns. PBS provides a specific set of team-based collaborative strategies needed for each of the prevention levels. McGinnis (2003) then went on to discuss Aggression Replacement Training (ART). It is a complex intervention designed to address the complex nature of youth aggression. Schools may select to implement this strategy for students who regularly face disciplinary action due to aggression. Aggressive youth may be assigned to an ART class as a regular part of their school day (i.e., in lieu of an elective or wheel

class). For a student who has committed a violent act and who has been suspended, parental participation in an evening ART class for parents could be required. This class teaches parents the ART skills so they can reinforce and model the skills their child is learning. When parents attend classes, the length of the student's suspension is reduced. Skill-stream is a behavioral approach to teaching pro-social skills. Its processes focus on four direct instruction principles of learning-modeling, role-playing, feedback, and transfer. These same learning procedures have been used to teach a variety of behaviors, from academic competencies to sports, daily living skills, and vocational skills. They are applied in skill-streaming to teach individual, desirable social behaviors. More specifically, in ART, students learn what to do instead of aggression (McGinnis, 2003).

Anger control training is the second component of ART. This part of ART directly teaches students to respond to provocation, not with anger, but rather with a series of other responses. According to McGinnis (2003), students learn to respond to:

1. External events or internal interpretation that elicits the anger response (triggers).
2. Physiological sensations of anger (cues).
3. Strategies to reduce the arousal of anger (reducers).
4. Self-Statements to reinterpret and defuse internal triggers (reminders).
5. Using an appropriate skill-streaming skill instead of aggression.
6. Self-evaluation of use of the anger control sequence.

Moral Reasoning Training the third ART intervention is based on Kohlberg's stages of moral development. Presented with a series of moral dilemmas, students are exposed to the thinking of others in the group who possess differing levels of moral reasoning. Through this process, students progress their level of moral reasoning to that of the higher level peers (McGinnis, 2003).

According to Skiba and Peterson (2003), in every school and classroom there is a social curriculum that acts as a guide for student behavior throughout the school day. Though rarely as explicit as the written materials that constitute the academic curriculum, it is no less important in determining whether a student succeeds. For students who exhibit behavior problems, however, learning the social curriculum is by no means an automatic process. These students come into the classroom with perceptions and beliefs that have grown out of their experience that may leave them less capable of recognizing and responding to the typical social curriculum of schools. Well documented links between antisocial behavior and academic underachievement suggest that, as the difficulty of academic material increases, students with behavior problems will turn to off-task and disruptive behavior in order to escape from academic demands (Skiba & Peterson, 2003).

The authors found that there are effective alternatives to disciplinary removal that have been found to be effective in improving school discipline and reducing school disruption and violence. If discipline can be defined as teaching students the behaviors that they need in order to succeed socially in school,

disciplinary removal has proven to be an ineffective tool for reaching that goal. Rather an alternate perspective, stressing instruction and prevention, appears to hold greater promise for teaching students appropriate pro-social behavior. The challenge in putting that perspective into practice is to find effective methods of implementing research-based practices in school discipline and school violence prevention (Skiba & Peterson, 2003). Skiba and Peterson (2003) concluded that the most effective strategies were programs that:

1. Build the school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation;
2. Establish and consistently enforce school rules, particularly when positively framed, and communicate norms through school-wide campaigns;
3. Teach social competency skills (e.g., self-control, social problem solving, communication skills), especially over a long period of time.

Howard and Solberg (2006) discussed the Identity Pathways Program that involves the schools' counselors. It is imperative that the school's counselors become actively engaged in promoting school success for all students. For youth from low-income and diverse backgrounds, future career opportunities are predicated on achieving educational success. Therefore, school counselors become agents for social justice when creating, implementing, and supporting school-based interventions designed to promote school success, especially culturally relevant interventions that target youth from low-income and diverse backgrounds (Howard & Solberg, 2006). This is a curriculum that counselors can use to challenge all students to improve academically. The goal of the program

is to help youth build “success identities” and the skills needed to make effective school to work to life transitions. Its constructs include the importance of “learning how to learn” (i.e., building self-confidence), effectively managing stress and time, building effective relationships with peers and authority figures (i.e., teachers and employers), and establishing and completing one’s academic and occupational goals, ASIP is informed by relevant research in academic and vocational self-efficacy, motivation, and social support, as well as best practices in vocational education and group theory. This body of research and the theories integrated in the Ecological Developmental Cognitive Framework described above constitute the theoretical foundation of the program (Howard & Solberg, 2006). School counselors can improve the impact of interventions by validating the challenges to success that youth face by creating educational experiences at school that communicate trust, support, safety, hope, power, control, peace, wholeness, competence, and justice.

Lewis, Sugai, and Colvin (1998) explore the effects of a proactive school-wide discipline approach on the frequency of problem behavior exhibited by elementary students. They looked at the impact of a social skill interaction program combined with direct intervention on problem behavior. The authors suggest that parents and communities contribute to the development of problem behavior by failing to provide necessary prerequisite social skills and support and by modeling inappropriate social interactions; thus, schools must respond proactively and consistently. Children model behavior.

According to Luiselli, Putnam, and Sunderland (2005), many students who exhibit recalcitrant behavior create an unsafe learning environment, undermine instruction, and pose a threat to the school population. They see that the concern about student discipline has produced many intervention and prevention-focused programs designed to improve character and moral development, promote exemplary social, reduce antisocial behaviors, and strengthen academic competencies (Leff, Costigan, Manz, Nabors, & Power, 2001). Leff et al. (2001) also pointed out that research has identified several evidence-based strategies that have proven effective in school intervention, such as: a) social skills training; b) system-wide behavioral intervention; and c) academic curricula modifications. Most importantly, Luiselli et al. (2005), claims that establishing positive social relationships among students and school personnel has been shown to mediate risk factors and facilitate the impact of preventative interventions on youth pro-social development (Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller, & Skinner, 1991; Dryfoos, 1990; Kellam, Mayer, Rebok, & Hawkins, 1998; O'Donnell, Hawkins, Catalano, Abbott, & Day, 1995). Dishion et al. (1991), Dryfoos (1990), and Kellam et al. (1998), went on to discuss a systems-based behavioral intervention in schools which incorporates contemporary principles of positive behavior support (PBS). This is defined as “the application of positive behavioral intervention and systems to achieve socially important behavior change” (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 192). These models include the design of individual student behavior support plans but have as a main goal the implementation of prevention practices that target the whole school population.

George Sugai and Robert Horner (2006) discuss the implementation of a practice known as the school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS). According to these authors, it emphasizes an integration of measurable outcomes; data-based decision making, evidence-based practices, and overt support systems for implementers. They further suggest that over the past decade more attention has been aimed toward approaches that increase the availability, adoption, and sustained use of validated practices and applying what we know about the science of human behavior to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of school systems and organizations. Thus, they propose the school-wide positive behavior support as a promising approach to establishing school environments that address problem behavior in a positive manner.

The SWPBS has been touted as a blend of valued outcomes, behavioral and biomedical science, empirically validated procedures and systems change to improve quality of life and reduce or prevent problem behaviors (Carr, Dunlap, Horner, Koegel, Turnbull, & Sailor, 2002). Carr et al. (2002), contend that the model should be conceptually sound and validated. One should look at these basic questions: (a) Is the practice productive? (b) Is the practice applicable? (c) Is the practice long-lasting? The systematic implementation of the SWPBS approach is guided by four elements: first, the school establishes measurable and achievable goals and outcomes that are sanctioned by parents and educators; second, as much as possible the school identifies the best practices that are relevant and educational; third, information and data are used to document the status of practices and to see if there is a need for change; finally,

the school must establish system supports (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Sugai and Horner (2006), state that an establishment of a leadership team to lead and coordinate the SWPBS effort is what drives it. A team-based approach is necessary for being visible, keeping things in place, controlling growth, and reducing outcomes. This is all made possible because the team is composed of individuals who have policy and decision making responsibilities across a range of behavior related content areas. The authors do point out that although this model is conceptually sound; the SWPBS effort requires additional validation and refinement.

It is of paramount importance to have a research-based support model. The challenge for education leaders has always been to implement more effective, less exclusionary methods for maintaining safe, productive school climates (Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

Effective Alternative Programs

Sanders (2001) discuss a concept known as the Student Advisory Center (SAC) which provides an alternative to out-of-school suspension and traditional in-school suspension programs. He states the focus of the program is providing students with support while helping them learn how to make positive changes in their behavior. This program is also designed to promote academic success and to build self-esteem. The students are given clear standards and expectations for behavior. The program revolves around positive reinforcement. The focus is on helping students understand their decision-making process and for them to acknowledge that they are responsible for their actions. Staff members within

the program set up behavioral plans and objectives with the students. Sanders claims as they work to meet the goals, students will learn to focus on the areas where they are experiencing the problems. The program tries to ensure that the students feel confident upon returning to the classroom. The logic is that with confidence comes participation in the learning process. According to Sanders (2001), the program works as follows:

1. The principal determines when a student should be assigned to SAC.
2. The principal contracts with the student and parents about the program and completes a behavior/study skills curriculum checklist which shows the SAC teacher the areas the student needs to focus on while in the program (students must also complete their regular classroom teacher's assignments during their time in SAC).
3. The program is limited to a max of 10 students at any one time in order to ensure that each student receives the attention he or she requires.
4. The room is furnished with study carrels to deter student interaction. The room also contains textbooks for each grade level and subject level and school supplies. There are also reference materials available.
5. Students are escorted to SAC by the principal and then receive their rules.
6. A certified teacher staffs the room. This teacher monitors all the work. A counselor also visits with the students. The counselors and the SAC teacher meet regularly to monitor each child's progress.

7. In order to be released from the recommendation from their SAC teacher through the process of accumulating progress points. Before returning to the regular classroom. Each student must meet with their SAC teacher and complete an evaluation form and an exit conference.

According to Sanders (2001),

the goal of the Student Advisory Center is to help every student become a successful, contributing, productive, and connected citizen of the school and community. The purpose of the center is not to punish, but rather to create solutions, that foster and support the student. (p. 52)

Morris and Howard (2003) contend there are three basic categories that ISS programs fall into which are as follows: academic, therapeutic, and punitive. The most common form is the punitive model which is based on the premise that students misbehave because they want to cause trouble in the classroom and punishment will eliminate misbehavior. According to Morris and Howard (2003), the characteristics of the punitive model are as follows:

1. Student referrals are for a set period of time of two to ten days.
2. Rules are extremely restrictive in ISS.
3. Students spend their entire time completing assignments and doing punishment work such as, picking up garbage or cleaning up the cafeteria.

The academic model is a little different. It assumes that discipline problems arise when students have learning difficulties that cause them

frustration and that their behavior will improve with instruction in basic skills. The characteristics of this model are as follows:

1. The academic skills of the ISS student are measured and learning difficulties are diagnosed and assessed for progress toward identified academic goals.
2. Individual instruction in basic skills is provided.
3. The ISS teacher is trained in diagnosing learning difficulties and instructing basic skills development (Morris & Howard, 2003).

A third popular ISS program, according to Morris & Howard (2003), is the therapeutic model. It can be used by teachers to begin talking with students about why they are in ISS. It was designed to help students develop problem-solving skills. A basic tenet of this program is that student misbehavior results from a particular problem that a student is experiencing. Students are expected to accept responsibility for their actions. Unique characteristics of this model are as follows:

1. Improvement of student's self-esteem, communication skills, problem-solving skills, and understanding of the school environment.
2. Counseling techniques such as reality therapy, peer counseling, and outside referrals.
3. Staff development for teachers, parent training, and home and school survival training for the students.
4. Identification and monitoring of students' behavior control components during and after learning the program (Morris & Howard, 2003).

Morris and Howard (2003) also suggest that a mixture of the program may be what is best. You have to see what meets the need. ISS alone is not effective. Thus, a combination of academic and therapeutic is needed.

Dickinson and Miller (2006) take a look disciplining students with disabilities. According to Dickinson and Miller, a prudent administrator will adhere to all policies and guidelines regarding the disciplinary changes that fall under the new laws dealing with disciplining students with disabilities currently, during short-term suspension, schools are not required to provide educational services, but once a child has reached ten cumulative suspension days in a year, the school must provide services for any subsequent days (Hartwig & Ruesch, 1994). Schools may however, repeatedly suspend a child for periods often days or less, even if the cumulative days are more than ten in a school year as long as educational services are provided after the tenth cumulative day (Dickinson & Miller, 2006).

Dickinson and Miller (2006) also state that if a school removes a special education student from current placement for more than ten days unless it involves weapons, drugs or "serious bodily injury") the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) team must do a manifestation determination, which is an inquiry into whether a student's misbehavior is caused by, or related to, the student's disability. If the IEP team determines the misbehavior is related to the disability, then the child may not be suspended for more than ten days or expelled without permission from the child's parents (Yell, 1998).

Dickinson and Miller (2006) noted that in-school and out-of-school suspension programs may not always be in the best interest of students with disabilities, even if the programs are run effectively. There is the issue of removing the students from the classroom when they already tend to struggle in school. Time in the classroom is of paramount importance when disabled students are already faced with graduation tests, standardized end-of-the-course- tests, and academic hurdles. A study was done by the United States General Accounting Office which involved special education administrators and principals from three states. The survey revealed that some school districts provided tutoring and even counseling to suspended students. Some districts only provided “academic packets” which normally included assignments that the disciplined student missed while being out of class. As for the instructors, their qualifications ranged from certified to uncertified (Shaul, 2003). After a special education student completes ISS, a school district is not legally required to provide reintegration services.

Although some features uplift the ISS program, no ISS program, or any other form of discipline, will ever be longitudinally effective until educators help students get to the basics of their behavior problems (Dickinson & Miller, 2006).

According to Dickinson and Miller (2006), there are a few key elements of a successful ISS program:

1. It is important that the staff be well trained and competent.
2. The program should have all the components necessary to ensure the student’s academic progress.

3. Support for reintroduction to the regular education classroom should be in place for special education children. Just as a school-wide behavior management plan is vital to a well-run safe and healthy educational environment, coordinating school-wide understanding of the process and goals of an effective ISS program is also of paramount importance. All school personnel, classified, certified, and administrative, should appreciate how ISS works and what outcomes are expected.

Dropout Prevention

Barton (2005) presented a report in which he discussed rising dropout rates of high school, the superior efforts that have been set forth to retain students, the limited and diminishing opportunities for dropouts to regain a solid footing in education and training, and the increasingly desperate prospects for dropouts in today's economy. About one third of students are leaving high school without a diploma. The high school completion rate has not been accurately reported over the years. A number of independent researchers have made recent estimates that put the national rate as follows: 66.1%, 68.7%, 69.6%, and 71.0%. The high school rate has been falling. Since peaking at 71% in 1969, it has fallen to 69% in 2000. There is a combination of three factors that are associated with 58% of the variation in completion rates among states. Those three factors are: socioeconomic characteristics, number of parents living in the home, and a history of changing schools frequently (Barton, 2005).

According to Barton (2005), there are several ways to increase retention while providing a resource for school systems to follow.

1. *Alternative Schools* - the purpose of these schools is defined by each state, and therefore is not uniform. These schools do however, share a common thread. The students who are referred to alternative schools and programs are at-risk of educational failure, truancy, disruptive behavior, suspension, pregnancy, or similar factors associated with early withdrawal from school. Alternative schools exist within the public education system, either as separate schools or as programs within schools. The 11,000 schools included in this national survey helped to establish alternative schools as a massive public school effort to keep at-risk students in the education system.
2. *The Talent Development (TD) High School* - This is a model reform program developed by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR). The TD high school is based on research on student motivation and teacher commitment. This model did increase attendance and change teacher's perceptions dramatically.
3. *Communities in Schools (CIS)* - This program is run from a national office and five regional offices. Evaluations have shown that this type of program can improve student retention. It is dedicated to helping children succeed in school and prepare for life. Partnerships are formed between the schools and community agencies. The intention is

to bring them together to deliver services to students. These services might include: (a) management of individual student cases; (b) individual and group counseling; (c) volunteers and mentors; (d) classes teaching life skills; (e) classes providing remedial education; (f) tutoring; and (g) after-school or in-school programs on conflict resolution, community service, substance abuse prevention, pregnancy prevention, and teen parenting.

4. *Maryland's Tomorrow* - This is a large- scale dropout prevention program involving approximately 75 high schools. Its goal is to raise student achievement. The focus is on at-risk youth who are in danger of dropping out. The program includes counseling with a high level of student support, intensive academic instruction during both the summer and the school year, career guidance exploration over five years, a variety of summer activities, and adult mentors.
5. *The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP)* - This program was funded by the Ford Foundation with the intention of keeping students in school. The program was quite successful. It ran from 1989 until 1999 when the grant ended. The knowledge and experience gained from the program are still available.

Barton (2005) asserts that all of these programs were helpful in helping us to better ascertain how to retain students in school. However, there is still much more work that is necessary to help us to better understand the nuances and niches of our retention problems. Based on the national survey, there are very

few guidance, counseling personnel, and related staff to work one on one with students at risk of dropping out and their families.

Barton (2005) also pointed out that because of a decrease in funding, opportunities for dropouts to resume education and training is declining. Opportunities for instruction in second-chance programs are not growing either. Scientific evaluation has shown however, that some programs in operation are effective and a base of knowledge exists for rebuilding. Those programs are as follows:

1. The Job Corps which has been in operation since 1964.
2. Youth Build USA which provides education and training in the context of building affordable housing. This program has trained over 40,000 youth.
3. The Center for Employment Training (CET), begun in 1967, has 33 centers in 12 states. The CET provides job training and education.
4. The Youth Corps (Service and Conservation Corps) trace back to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s.
5. The community college is a flexible institution with a lot of involvement in GED and remedial instruction for dropouts. These colleges have the capability to make a much larger contribution.

Barton states that the earning power of high school dropouts has been declining over the past three decades. The nation faces increasing dropout rates, declining assisted second-chance opportunities for education and training, and an economic stance which is slowly deteriorating. According to Bost and

Riccomini (2006), high incidences of dropout among students with disabilities have placed educators at all levels under extreme pressure to identify reasons for dropout and to design effective interventions to reduce dropout rates. In response, schools are actively pursuing the implementation of variety prevention efforts, emphasis on reading and literacy, before- and after-school remediation programs, summer programs, increasing parental involvement, initiating mentoring and tutoring programs, alternative schools, professional development for teachers and staff, and funding allocations based on school performance. Although these programs seem beneficial, the scale of implementation remains inadequate to significantly affect dropout rates.

Bost and Riccomini (2006) propose potential reasons for the limited impact of these dropout prevention programs. They contend that there is an overwhelming amount of literature on dropout prevention that does not consist on original research but just theoretical pieces, descriptions of curricula, instructional strategies, etc. Many schools have developed dropout prevention programs based on these theoretical pieces without establishing clear program outcomes, measurement strategies, or evaluation design to determine the effectiveness of their efforts. Another possible reason for the limited impact of dropout prevention programs may be the effective teaching practices are not incorporated into the design of the academic components of these programs.

Bost and Riccomini (2006) also discussed students with disabilities are at a higher risk of dropping out. Legislators, educators, and researchers recognize the seriousness of the school dropout dilemma that permeates our society and

have planned, financed, and implemented an extensive set of policies, accountability mandates, strategies, and focused monitoring procedures-all intended to increase the likelihood that students with disabilities will not only stay in school but graduate with a diploma. Yet the dropout rate for students with disabilities has shown little progress over the decades. The students must be presented with effective instruction and school engagement.

Kennelly and Monrad (2007) offered approaches to dropout prevention in a report performed by the National High School Center. There are proven, research-based steps school systems can readily take to identify likely high school dropouts. The first step is to track and analyze basic data on which students are showing early warning signs of dropping out. There are key indicators that researchers have identified as indicative of who is most likely to drop out:

1. Those who have poor grades in core subjects.
2. Those who have low attendance.
3. Those who are not being promoted to the next grade.
4. Those who exhibit behavioral problems or disengagement.

Kennelly and Monrad (2007) suggest being most effective in preventing dropout, school systems should focus dropout prevention efforts in the beginning of the middle school. According to Kennelly and Monrad, research has shown that students with behavior problems are most likely to fail during middle school years and eventually dropout. This would be a window of opportunity for school systems to catch these students who are exhibiting poor academic performance

and behavior in the middle grades. By the time these students reach high school the likelihood of them dropping out has increased tremendously (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). Kennelly and Monrad, stated those school communities interested in building an early warning system should address the following steps:

1. Establish a data system that tracks individual student attendance, grades, promotion status, and engagement indicators, such as behavioral marks, as early as the fourth grade.
2. Determine criteria for who is considered off-track for graduation and establish a continuum of appropriate intervention.
3. Track ninth grade students who miss 10 days or more of school in the first 30 days.
4. Monitor first quarter freshmen grades, paying particular attention to failures in core academic subjects.
5. Monitor fall semester freshmen grades, paying particular attention to failures in core academic subjects.
6. Monitor end-of-the-year grades. The end-of-the-year grades will provide further information about failure rates and reveal grade point averages, providing detailed information about who is likely to struggle in later years and is considered by some researchers to be the best indicator for predicting non graduates.

7. Track students who have failed too many core subjects to be promoted to tenth grade. Research shows that those who are not promoted are the ones who are most likely to drop out.

Kennelly and Monrad (2007) state that there is not a proven plan of strategies or intervention tailor made for dropout prevention; however, there are a few proven dropout prevention program key components:

1. Attendance and behavior monitors
2. Tutoring and counseling
3. Establishment of small learning communities for greater personalization
4. Engaging catch-up courses
5. Ninth Grade Academies
6. Homerooms
7. Benchmarking
8. Progress Monitoring
9. Tiered Interventions
10. A focus on equal access to rigorous coursework and high expectations
11. Career/college awareness
12. Community engagement
13. Eighth to ninth grade transition programs.

According to Kennelly and Monrad (2007), when students drop out of high school, it takes a toll on the quality of their individual lives as well as the

community in which they live. Understanding the forces that impact the dropout rate and the magnitude of the dropout rate is an important preliminary step to developing dropout prevention strategies.

Juvenile Justice

According to Ziendenberg and Schiraldi (2001), suspended students find themselves void of any form of education. Twenty-six states currently have no requirement to provide suspended or expelled students with alternative education. Youth suspended from school are more likely to drop out of school and engage in deviant behavior. There are also disturbing racial disparities in student suspension rates by race, specifically with respect to black male students.

Mazzotti and Higgins (2006) describe the importance of facilitating relationships between schools and the Juvenile Justice System. The Juvenile Justice System (JJS) was established in 1889 as a way to separate the adult criminal justice system from the juvenile system. The primary goal was to facilitate the rehabilitation of youth (Loeber & Farrington, 2001). The philosophy at the time was that youth should be protected from the same punishments and criminal courts placed on adult offenders. The courts considered the social factors that may have influenced the delinquency, as well as the age and immaturity, before initiating treatment based on the child's needs.

Mazzotti and Higgins (2006) found that the current philosophy of the JJS does not focus on the rehabilitation of children and youth nor are they being properly educated or protected. It is critical that schools begin to take

responsibility for creating programs to help children and youth at risk for involvement in the system as well as those already involved in the JJS (Loeber & Farrington, 2001). Common law in the United States maintains that children under the age of 7 have no criminal capacity. For children older than 7 years and younger than 14 years, the courts may define their criminal capacity and the means by which they will be prosecuted. Children over the age of 14 are assumed by the courts to have the same criminal intentions as adults and may be prosecuted as adults. These legal definitions of a juvenile offender have caused the number of children and youth in the JJS to grow at an alarming rate. It is important to know and understand the statistics concerning JJS in order to design an appropriate program (Mazzotti & Higgins, 2006).

The Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC) 2002 Update reported a lack of educational resources in neighborhoods with diverse ethnic populations, which results in an inability to prevent dropouts (Hsia, Bridges, & McHale, 2004). A large number of youth entering JJS come from low-income areas, have diverse ethnic backgrounds, and have minimal access to academic support and services which puts them at risk for delinquency (Garfield & Nelson, 2004). A major concern of low-income areas is the reintegration of students back into the mainstream of school after incarceration. Because schools are a place where a child coming from a detention facility should feel safe and successful, it is crucial that schools develop and foster relationships with the JJS to avoid recidivism.

These relationships must involve proactive prevention, early intervention, and ongoing intervention. The research has indicated that Zero Tolerance in

schools and communities results in more youth being incarcerated (Burrell & Warboys, 2000).

According to Mazzotti and Higgins (2006), education must be offered to all children and youth with disabilities both at school and in juvenile detention facilities. School success may not stop delinquency; however, without it, children will have less of a chance. Our youth must be prepared for life after incarceration. The authors suggested the following teaching strategies to help bridge the gap between JJS and the schools:

1. Teachers and the juvenile justice system (JJS) communicate when a child is transferred to a detention facility.
2. Support and train school staff.
3. Identify parent advocates to work with parents as they move between the school and the courts.
4. Set up on-campus alternative programs. These may be pullout classes or afterschool classes that provide students with intensive academic support.
5. Provide counseling services for students considered at-risk and for those who are already dealing with the JJS.
6. Assign advocates (e.g., parent volunteers or older students) to answer questions and provide supports the student may need.
7. Partner with organized afterschool programs (e.g., YMCA, 4-H council, Boys and Girls Clubs of America).
8. Create during- and after-school tutoring programs (e.g., reading programs, homework clubs, tutoring clubs).

Mazzotti and Higgins (2006) claim that the manner in which school staff and educators structure the learning and social atmosphere can shape the rehabilitation of the student. By providing a welcoming support system, a stable and secure environment, school personnel and educators provide vital elements for the life successes of students as they transition from the juvenile system to school.

Yerwood and Abudum-Muhaymin (2007) look at juvenile structured day programs for suspended and expelled youth (JSDP). These programs are designed to offer education to expelled and suspended youth and are sanctioned by the courts. These programs are part of a community corrections and juvenile rehabilitative effort. It offers academic and life skills to the student as well as some programs to their families (e.g., anger management, counseling, referrals to other community programs, plans for transitioning back into the traditional school). The authors found that the JSDP made a difference because approximately one in four JSDP attendees made improvements in school attendance and had no further contact with the juvenile court system.

Christle, Nelson, and Jolivette (2005) conducted a study which examined the characteristics related to juvenile delinquency. They are suggesting that school-level Characteristics such as a supportive staff/leadership, school wide behavior management, and effective academic instruction can help reduce the risks for youth delinquency. Although the educational system can act as a cure for individual, family, peer, and community risks, researchers have identified a number of factors in school that may contribute to youth delinquency. In fact,

academic failure, exclusionary discipline practices, and dropout have been identified as key elements in a “school to prison pipeline” especially for minority students and those with disabilities (Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Costenbader and Markson’s (1998) research suggest exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension, interfere with the educational progress and propagate a failure cycle, thereby decreasing the opportunities to gain academic skills and appropriate social behaviors. Research also points out that despite its frequent use; suspension does not reduce the problem behavior that it is intended to address. Risk factors outside school also may advance the progression toward delinquency. For example, youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds generally come to school with weak pre-academic skills. These students start school at a disadvantage and are more likely to experience academic failure. Peer and community risk factors, such as association with delinquent peers, neighborhood violence, and limited opportunities for youth recreation or employment, also may contribute to this “pipeline” (Adams, 1990). Although academic failure, suspension, and dropout are related to student demographic characteristics and to specific behaviors, they may be more strongly affected by the characteristics of schools (Christle et al., 2005).

Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Burkey, McKeon, and Lenheart (2008) claims most people in America’s prisons will eventually be paroled yet, two-thirds do not have the literacy skills needed to function in society. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) contends that it is counterproductive to have people released from prison

who are lacking in the most fundamental skills for employment and citizenship (ETS, 1996). Inmates who participate in correctional education average up to a 20% reduction in recidivism from that of the general prison population (Steurer, 1996).

According to Vacca et al. (2008), Schools cannot address the needs of youths involved in the juvenile justice system without considering their educational needs. Several studies have shown crime and education are inextricably linked together and that factors like level of achievement in school, student grade retention, school attendance, and graduation rates are related to criminal activity.

Commonalities of the ISS Program

Many effective viable alternative programs were presented in the previous literature. They all share a common thread. The student can be punished for an infraction and still learn in the process through the implementation of an effective viable alternative program. The program, according to Gagnon and Leone (2001), must address the core of the problem that is effective universal or school-wide behavioral support that relies on the development and implementation of a systematic approach to training, monitoring, and reinforcement of appropriate behavior. In doing this, it hopes that the program will create a culture within the school that shapes the behavior of students, as well as teachers and administrators. Interventions aimed at individual students or groups of students can also teach specific skills such as conflict resolution strategies or social skills. This is all meant to reinforce positive student behavior. Not only is ownership of

the program needed from the entire school but it is also needed from the parents and community as well. As noted by Gagnon and Leone (2001), positive results are obtained through extending school-based prevention programs to a number of domains of student life.

Skiba and Peterson (2003) found that there are effective in improving school discipline and reducing school disruption and violence. Stressing instruction and prevention appears to hold greater promise for teaching students appropriate pro-social behavior. The challenge in putting that perspective into practice is to find effective methods of implementing research-based practices in school discipline and school violence prevention. According to Leff, Costigan, Manz, Nabors, and Power (2001), there are several evidence-based strategies that have proven effective in school intervention. Such as: social skills training, system-wide behavioral intervention, and academic curricula modifications. ISS programs should be designed to help the student. It should be a combination of therapeutic and academic. As stated by Dickinson and Miller (2006), the key elements of a successful ISS program include:

1. A well-trained and competent staff
2. The necessary components to ensure a student's academic progress
3. Support for reintroduction into the classroom. An effective program holds students accountable for school assignments and involves the student in some aspect of rehabilitation or functional behavior assessment, thereby creating a check and balance. An ideal ISS program encourages poorly performing students to work harder, as

well as to learn problem solving and conflict resolution skills. It is a program which is clear, consistent, selective, constructive, and involves the parents.

A Preface to Out-of-School Suspensions

Many schools have replaced corporal punishment with a zero tolerance approach to discipline which requires that the misbehaving students are suspended, expelled, or turned over to the police. According to Knoff, Mendez, and Perron (2002), the primary goal of suspension is to decrease or eliminate the likelihood that a student re-commits an offense that is so serious that another referral to the principal's office or another suspension is necessary; however, this is not the case. Given that many children are suspended multiple times during the year, it does not appear that OSS is effective in this aim.

Researchers have found that many out-of-school suspensions were unnecessary, made no educational sense, and disservice the interests of the children involved. In many cases, it equates to a significant loss of schooling and caused many youngsters to drop-out of school permanently (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). Not only are these practices ineffective but also they reinforce the behaviors that led to the student's removal from school. For example, this happens when students who dislike school, teachers, or peers are sent home, and in the absence of parental guidance and supervision, they spend their time watching television, playing video games, roaming the streets, etc. instead of gaining academic, vocational, and interpersonal skills (School Discipline &

Behavior Management, 2004). OSS is not the best choice solution. That is why administrators are leaning more towards ISS as an alternative.

Zero Tolerance

According to Rose and Gallup (2004), school discipline has consistently been a concern parents and the general public for the last 35 years. Lawmakers and school boards have answered the call for safer schools by enacting tough penalties for serious behavioral offenses. For example, in 1994, to heighten safety and ensure an environment conducive to learning, Congress passed the Gun Free Schools Act which required states that received federal funds to mandate expulsion from school any student who brought a gun to school for at least one year (Stader,2004). This legislation served as a cornerstone for contemporary zero-tolerance policies, which denoted that severe instances of student violence and/or misbehavior would result in severe consequences (e.g., suspension or expulsion) for the student.

According to Stader (2004), the most often discipline problems cited by public school principals are student tardiness, absenteeism, and fighting between students. Weapons, drug sales on campus and physical assaults on teachers are relatively minor problems. GFSA allows local school administrators to modify any disciplinary action for a firearm violation on a case-by-case basis. The primary goal of this provision is to allow school district administrators and/or boards of education to take the circumstances of the infraction into account and, if necessary, ensure that the legal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are honored.

The courts are generally supportive of reasonable zero-tolerance policies designed to improve school safety. For example, in a high profile case six students were involved in a violent fight in the stands at a football game in Decatur, Illinois (*Fuller v. Decatur 2001*). The district expelled the offending students for two years. They were cited for physical violence and endangerment policies. After national publicity and political pressure, the board modified the two year suspensions to two semesters and an alternative school placement (Stader, 2004). Sometimes the policy is not always rational. For example, in *Seal v. Morgan (2000)*, Dustin Seal brought action against the Knox County (Tennessee) Board of Education for expelling him for high school after a friend's knife was found in the glove compartment of his car. Seal denied any knowledge of the knife's presence in the car while it was on the school property and argued that the school board's action was irrational.

Although it recognized that not expelling a dangerous student carries significant consequences for all concerned, the court held that consistency is not a substitute for rationality and that the application of a zero-tolerance policy in this particular case was indeed irrational. "A school board may not absolve itself of its legal and moral obligation to determine whether students intentionally committed the acts for which they were expelled by hiding behind a zero-tolerance policy that makes the student's knowledge a nonissue" (Stader, 2004, p. 63).

Zero tolerance policies have not gone without comment and criticism from many inside and outside the education field. Much has been written about

potential problems resulting from these zero-tolerance policies and to what some view as the extreme interpretations and/or inequities of these policies. For example, in the State of Florida, principals must request that the parents of a suspended student inform the principal, “if firearms or other instruments for which the primary purpose is to use as a weapon are available to the student” (Johnson, 2001, p. 5). Requiring administrators to get information from parents that they may be unwilling or unable to give may seem excessive. Another example occurs when zero-tolerance causes the expulsion of disproportionate numbers of minority student from school, leading observers to question whether the policies are fair and equitable (Johnson, 2001).

Casella (2003) offered a different look at zero-tolerance. He stated that zero-tolerance strengthens a link between schools and prisons a century ago with the development of truant officers. He purports that this is a poor system of discipline. Casella delineated alternatives to the zero tolerance policy such as:

Violence Prevention Initiatives:

1. Make available and publicize mentoring and tutoring programs for all students.
2. Have ongoing peer mediation, student support teams, and other forms of effective resolution programs..
3. Encourage the study of character and social well-being in academic coursework.
4. Give more time for counselors to counsel and to get to know students.

5. Reduce or eliminate exclusionary practices in schools that segregate students and ferment violent circumstances.

School Discipline Initiatives:

1. Institute a program of school service to replace out-of-school suspension, based on a model of restorative justice.
2. Have in-school suspension that is accompanied by academic work, tutoring, or community or school service.
3. Schedule times during the week for school staff to meet with parents of students who continuously violate school policies.
4. Have students develop a problem-solving plan that requires them to specify what is needed to solve their problem.
5. Have a program of student check-ins, in which the student is required to meet with an adult or older student to discuss weekly progress to discuss weekly progress regarding the problem-solving plan.

In sum, zero-tolerance policies in many states are used by administrators to discourage school violence. Research has shown that there are some strengths and weaknesses in these policies. According to Juvonen (2001), one possible explanation for the linkages between suspension, dropping out, and delinquency is that increased unstructured time is available to the suspended student increasing the likelihood of contact with deviant peers.

Out-of-School Suspensions

Out- of- school suspensions are the most widely- used form of punitive school discipline in public schools in the United States. Research has shown

that students who are repeatedly suspended are more likely to suffer academically and to drop out of school. The Children's Defense Fund (1975) found that the vast majority of school suspensions were contingent upon such minor offenses as truancy, tardiness, pregnancy, smoking, and minor dress code violations. It all hinged upon which district, school and class the student was in. Dupper (1994) asserted that social workers are of paramount importance in filling the gap of developing and implementing alternatives to suspensions. They are best able to confront the negative impact of punitive disciplinary policies such as suspension and to lead the way in developing alternatives.

When the principal is left with no other choice but to suspend the student, the question remains-does out-of-school or in school suspension do any good? Of course the answer for misbehavior is no. Suspension and expulsion seem to be ineffective means of dealing with misbehavior because they do not appear to be a deterrent for future misconduct (Bock, Tapscott, & Savner, 1998). According to Bock et al. (1998), suspending students also increased the likelihood that the suspended student would eventually dropout of school.

Skiba and Peterson (1999) suggest developing a more effective way to make suspension "unenjoyable" for suspended students since they see it as vacation time. Feucht (1998) came up with a successful suspension plan. He is an assistant principal in Westlake, Louisiana. When students are sent home from his school, the students are given one of many books from which to read. When the student returns from being suspended, they are required to give an oral report to the assistant principal and take a test that measures

comprehension of the material read. Students must average 80% proficiency or they are sent to an in-school suspension site to read the book again. In addition, they can be given appropriate content in all their respective disciplines that must be completed. For ease, one may have packets made up with a checklist included (Feucht, 1998).

There are many school factors that influence school suspensions. These included: (a) vague rules and a lack of teaching expected behaviors (b) unwillingness of staff to recognize their roles in the causes of student behavior, (c) teacher expectations and judgments, (d) inappropriate staff responses and discipline strategies in classrooms, and (e) staff resistance to change regarding discipline strategies (Christle et al., 2004). Skiba et al. (2003), found consistent evidence of significant minority overrepresentation in office referrals, suspension, and expulsion.

Brooks, Schiraldi, and Ziedenberg (1999) states in order to maintain a positive educational environment, administrators will frequently use out-of-school suspension to respond to serious levels of student misbehavior. However, because it involves exclusion of students from the educational process, suspension is often viewed as one of the more extreme responses available to administrators within the continuum of various disciplinary options (Brooks et al. 1999).

Summary

Research shows that there is a need for a viable alternative to out-of-school suspensions. Historically, discipline and school safety are recognizable

problems in school (Rose & Gallup, 2004). In response to these problems many schools use some form of prevention, intervention, and crisis management plan. The common modes of discipline that schools use are: out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, detention, Saturday School, detention, and Alternative School. The United States Supreme Court has changed the structure of how administrators discipline students for inappropriate behavior. The courts have opened the door to use ISS as an alternative. Schools have modified their discipline policies to follow precedents set by court decisions. Just as a school-wide behavior management plan is vital to a well-run, safe and healthy educational environment, coordinating school-wide understanding of the process and goals of an effective ISS program is also of paramount importance. All school personnel, classified, certified, and administrative, should appreciate how ISS works and what outcomes are expected. Schools cannot address the needs of youths involved in the juvenile justice system without considering their educational needs.

The implementation of the zero-tolerance policy in schools has caused much controversy. It has its strengths and weaknesses. Officials are charged with the responsibility of managing schools and maintain a safe and orderly environment. The public reportedly places school discipline as their primary concern in National Gallup Polls on education. And children favor discipline when it is administered fairly. Administrators use common practices such as suspension, expulsion, voluntary withdrawals, temporary dismissal or detention

as exclusionary discipline methods for putting students out of school (Children's Defense Fund, 1975).

The current study highlights more effective approaches to out-of-school suspensions. This study was limited to administrators and teachers in one school district in a selected region during the fall 2009 semester. Data were gathered through surveys. The data were used to determine if the satisfaction with the perceptions of the teachers and the principals with their ISS program can be improved to help make any improvements in the program so that it will be more effective. The results of this study will help administrators and educators with what can be done with their ISS program to make it more effective. It will contribute to the wealth of literature dealing with ISS programs and suspensions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the data, the participants, instrumentation and procedures of the study. During the spring semester of 2010, administrators and teachers were asked to complete a survey (Appendix A) which quantified data measuring their perceptions of their ISS program. The questionnaire also asked them to rate the effectiveness of their ISS program and to tell the purposes of their program. The data collected from these professionals were used to

determine if a difference exists between the perception of administrators and teachers of their ISS program.

The purpose of this study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program in a school district and determine if a difference exists between the perceptions of administrators and teachers. There is an ongoing effort to not only keep our schools safe but also to keep our students in attendance which means that out-of-school suspension may not be "the best" choice. According to Barton (2005), students who are frequently suspended have a higher propensity of dropping out due to their removal from the school environment. Thus, it is imperative that alternative forms of discipline are implemented so that the educational process is not disrupted and the student is still serviced. The student will be productive and the school will benefit. This section includes the following information: (a) Research Design, (b) Participants, (c) Instrumentation, (d) Procedures, (e) Data Analysis, and (f) Summary.

Research Design

The following independent variables were used for this study: the administrators and teachers who participated in the spring 2010 survey. The dependent variables used in this study were scores from each of the five variables measured by the survey instrument: purposes of ISS programs, characteristics of ISS programs, administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS programs, administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their school environment, and administrators' and teachers' perceptions of strengths and

weaknesses of their ISS program, which were derived from the research questions.

Participants

The subjects in this study were administrators and teachers from high schools in one school district in the south during spring of 2010. Data were collected from participants using a paper questionnaire instrument which was delivered using the mailbag system to all the high schools and middle schools in a selected school system which is located in the Southwest corner of a southern state. It has 63,000 students and covers more than 1,644 miles. Each survey was individually addressed to a specific recipient in the school. Each recipient was asked to fill out the survey and return it in a self-addressed envelope. They were asked to mail it back through the mailbag system. The surveys were then collected and scored.

Instrumentation

The questions on the survey instrument (Appendix A) were developed by the researcher. The completed instrument consisted of 40 items, two of which collected demographic type items, thirty-seven were a 5- point Likert- type scale and one was a check item measuring teachers' and administrators' perceptions of their ISS programs. One item asked them to check which items best represents their ISS program. Research question one, which looks at the purposes of ISS programs, is addressed in question 40. Research question two, which looks at the characteristics of ISS programs, is addressed in questions 32-39. Research question three, which looks at administrators' and teachers'

perceptions of their ISS program, is addressed in questions 22-31. Research question four, which looks at administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their school environment, is addressed in questions 3-21. Research question five, which looks at administrators' and teachers' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of their ISS programs, is addressed in question 28 and 35-39.

A pilot study was conducted using 40 participants that consisted of former and current teachers, administrators, counselors, resource officers, and retract officers in Central Office and a high school within the county. Permission was obtained from the Superintendent to conduct the pilot survey (Appendix D). The purpose of the pilot survey was to determine whether the directions, questions, and answer choices were understandable to the pilot survey participants.

The pilot survey participants were asked to read the directions and questions, to answer the choices very carefully, and to write down any concerns they had regarding the wording, spelling, clarity or any other issues which inhibited their understanding of the questionnaire.

The data collected from the pilot survey were entered into an SPSS data file to calculate the reliability of the survey instrument. The reliability test calculated the instrument's internal consistency for each of the variables measured. The reliability statistics for Cronbach's alpha was .831 for the characteristics of ISS Programs (questions 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39), .895 for the perceptions of ISS Programs (questions 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31), .925 for perceptions of school environment (questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21), and .860 for strengths

and weaknesses of ISS Programs (questions 28,35, 36, 37, 38, and 39). Since all of the internal reliability statistics were greater than .70, the instrument was considered to produce reliable scores.

Procedures

For this study the researcher used data obtained from the participants. Permission was obtained from the Superintendent of a public school system to use the survey instrument. Permission was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to use this data and permission was obtained (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

Means, frequency, and standard deviation were used to test the following research questions:

1. What are the purposes of ISS programs?
2. What are the characteristics of ISS programs?
3. What are administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS programs?
4. What are administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their school's environment?
5. What are administrators' and teachers' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of their ISS programs?

An Independent Samples T-test was used to test the following hypothesis: There will be a significant difference between administrators and teachers on perceptions of ISS and perceptions of school environment.

Limitations

There were limitations to this study. All school districts in the area were not surveyed. Only one was chosen, and of that one district all schools did not return their questionnaires. Only administrators, teachers, librarians, counselors, retract officers, nurses, social workers, resource officers, and teacher's aides were selected from each school; thus, the sample is from a limited population.

Summary

The perceptions of administrators' and teachers' ISS programs were discussed. An Independent Samples T-test was used as a primary method of obtaining data for this study as well as means, standard deviation, and frequency. For this study the researcher used data obtained from the participants. The following independent variables were used for this study: the administrators and teachers who participated in the spring 2010 survey. The dependent variables used in this study were scores from each of the five variables measured by the survey instrument: purposes of ISS programs, characteristics of ISS programs, administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their school environment, and administrators' and teachers' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of their ISS program which were derived from the research questions. The questions on the survey were developed by the researcher. The completed instrument consisted of 40 items, two of which collected demographic type items, thirty-seven were a 5- point Likert-type scale and one was a check item measuring teachers' and administrators' perceptions of their ISS programs.

By exploring factors related to In-School Suspensions in this region, the researcher seeks to develop information that can be used to inform future research efforts and potentially inform local school districts. The population will benefit from the utilization of information gathered in future ISS program implementation, potentially increasing the effectiveness of these programs, and ultimately improving ISS program outcomes.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program in a school district and determine if a difference exists between the perceptions of administrators and teachers. This was done through an examination of the purposes and characteristics of an ISS program as well as the administrators' and the teachers' perceptions of their ISS program, their environment, and the strengths and weaknesses of their ISS program.

The following people from a school district in the South were surveyed during the spring semester of 2010: administrators, counselors, retract officers, teachers, social workers, and librarians. These people were selected because all come into close contact with those students who are most likely to serve ISS. After the data were collected, they were entered into an SPSS data file for analysis purposes.

Of the 400 questionnaires that were sent out for completion, only 150 (37.5%) were returned. These were used for analysis purposes.

Sample Characteristics

The participants in this study ranged from administrators to librarians. The majority of the respondents were administrators. Teachers were the next group with retract officers last. The rest of the percentages were made up of counselors, social workers, and librarians. The majority of the respondents had 6

to 10 years of experience. The next group had over 10 years experience (Table 1).

Table 1

Roles in the School and Years Experience

	n	Percentage
Role in School		
Administrator	44.7%	67
Teacher	38.0%	57
Retract Officer	10.0%	15
Counselor	5.0%	8
Resource Officer	.7%	1
Nurse	.7%	1
Teacher's Aide	.7%	1
Years Experience		
6 to 10 years	30.7%	46
Over 10 years	28.0%	42
3 to 5 years	22.7%	34
Less than one year	10.0%	15
One to Two years	8.7%	13

A large percentage of the respondents felt as though ISS serves as a consequence for unacceptable behavior as well as an alternative to out-of-school suspension. The next largest group believes that ISS encourages appropriate

behavior and serves as a time out of the regular classroom for the student. The remaining questions were answered as follows: ISS reduces the student's feelings of alienation. Some of the *other* comments were as follows: To let students have a party and celebrate their misbehavior, to use as character education enhancement, and serves as a non-study hall where no class work is done (Table 2).

Table 2

Purposes That Represent a Particular ISS Program

	n	Percent of cases
Serves as a consequence	120	84.5%
Alternative to OSS	118	83.1%
Encourages Appropriate Behavior	69	48.6%
Time out of regular Classroom	51	35.9%
Reduces feelings of Alienation	13	9.2%
Other	8	5.6%

Item Descriptives

To better understand the analysis of the constructs, they have been regrouped in order to obtain a clearer picture of the responses. They could range from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*) or 1 (*Not Effective*) to 3 (*Very Effective*) or 4 (*Does not Apply*). The majority of the means of the items were between 2.12 and 2.99 that was Somewhat Effective or Disagree. The

remaining means ranged from 3.07 to 3.44 that was very effective or agree. One of the items was a 1.92 which was a strongly disagree. The standard deviations measured normal variability for the items, ranging from .61 to 1.49. The items measuring the highest means were questions 3, 5, 12, 13, and 36. These items asked questions that pertained to the school. The items with the highest deviations were questions 25, 26, 27, and 33. These items dealt with the school's ISS program. Tables for each of the items measuring the constructs are presented below (Tables 3-6).

Table 3

About the School (Items 3-13)

Question	Std. Dev.	Mean
3 (supportive/inviting place-students)	3.44	.61
4 (high standards)	.71	3.37
5 (promotes academic success)	3.40	.70
6 (fails to involve most parents)	.93	1.92
7 (clearly communicates consequences)	3.29	.84
8 (handles discipline problems fairly)	3.26	.80
9 (supportive/inviting place-staff)	3.27	.70
10 (provides adequate counseling)	2.99	.86
11 (provides adequate health services)	3.23	.74
12 (safe place for students)	3.41	.61
13 (safe place for staff)	.64	3.43

Note. Scale: 4 (Strongly Agree)....1 (Strongly Disagree)

Items 6-13 had a means ranging from 1.92 to 3.44 when asked about the school. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that their school was a safe, supportive, and inviting place for students to learn. They strongly disagreed when asked if the school failed to involve the parents in school events or activities.

Table 4

About the School (Items 14-21)

Question	Means	Std. Dev.
14 (well understood procedures)	3.21	.68
15 (collaborates well with community)	2.93	.68
16 (collaborates well with law enforcement)	3.37	.61
17 (sufficient resources to create safe environment)	3.20	.70
18 (considers sanctions for student violations on a case-by-case basis)	.82	3.19
19 (enforces zero-tolerance policies)	2.81	.94
20 (provides effective support services for students referred to ISS)	.82	2.93
21 (provides adequate professional development opportunities for staff)	2.71	.89

Note. Scale: 4 (Strongly Agree)...1(Strongly Disagree)

Items 13-21 asked more questions about the school. The mean ranged from 3.37 to 2.71. The majority of the respondents agreed that the school has well-understood procedures to deal with crises, collaborates well with law

enforcement officers, has sufficient resources to create a safe environment, and considers sanctions for student violations of rules and policies on a case-by-case basis with a wide range of options. The respondents disagreed on the school collaborating with the community, enforcing zero-tolerance policies, providing effective support services for students referred to ISS, and providing adequate professional development opportunities for staff on how to deal with the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth.

Table 5

The School's ISS Program (Items 22-34)

Question	Std. Dev.	Mean
22 (modifies inappropriate behavior)	2.06	.68
23 (reduces the student's feelings of alienation from school)	.69	2.10
24 (provides an alternate to at-home out-of-school suspension)	.72	2.40
25 (reduces dropout rate)	.77	1.97
26 (reduces truancy)	.72	1.89
27 (reduces chronic tardiness)	.73	1.79
28 (serves as a consequence for unacceptable behavior)	.72	2.23
29 (helps the student improve his/her attitude toward school)	.74	1.99
30 (prevents future misbehavior)	.73	1.97
31 (adequate student teacher ratio)	.74	2.33

Table 5 (continued).

Question	Std. Dev.	Mean
32 (requires the referring teachers to ISS with current assignments)	.68	2.46
33 (keeps files for each student tracking the behavior)	.84	2.13
34 (has a certified ISS Coordinator to enforce the requirement)	.72	2.40

Note. Scale: 3 (Very Effective).....1(Not Effective)

Items 22-34 observed the school's ISS program. The means ranged from 1.79 to 2.46. The respondents overall felt that their program was somewhat effective. Many respondents however, felt that the program did not reduce tardiness, truancy, drop- out rate, nor did it prevent future misbehavior or improve the student's attitude towards school. This table was based on a 3-point Likert scale.

Table 6

The School's ISS Program (Items 35-39)

Question	Std. Dev.	Mean
35 (well-thought of by teachers)	.85	2.85
36 (is well-thought of by Administrators)	.73	3.07
37 (is effective in improving classroom behavior)	.86	2.64
38 (is effective in acting as a deterrent to misbehavior)	.84	2.75

Table 6 (continued).

Question	Std. Dev.	Mean
39 (is effective assigning students to ISS for punitive acts)	.78	2.95

Note. Scale: 4 (Strongly Agree).....1 (Strongly Disagree)

Items 35-39 dealt with the school's ISS program. The means ranged from 3.07 to 2.64. The ISS program is well thought of by administrators; however, it is not well thought of by teachers. The respondents disagreed to the following: effective in acting as a deterrent to misbehavior, effective in assigning students to ISS for punitive acts, and effective in improving classroom behavior when the students return from being in ISS.

Next, the data was analyzed to ascertain the reliability of the instrument for this group of participants. A reliability coefficient was calculated for the following constructs using Cronbach Alpha: Purposes of ISS programs, Characteristics of ISS programs, Administrators' and Teachers' perceptions of their ISS programs, Administrators' and Teachers' perceptions of their school's environment, and Administrators' and Teachers' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of their ISS programs. The instrument yielded reliable with Cronbach alpha's ranging from .852 (characteristics), .893 (strengths and weaknesses of ISS program), .903 (perceptions of the school's environment), to .933 (perceptions of ISS program).

Next, an analysis of the constructs was performed in order to check the researcher's hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between

administrators and teachers on perceptions of ISS and perceptions of school environment (Table 7).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Constructs

Construct	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Charac.	2.79	.64	1.13	4.00
Perceptions Of ISS	2.31	.73	1.00	4.00
Environment	1.42	.49	3.19	4.00
Strength/Weaknesses Of ISS	2.82	.69	1.00	4.00

Note. Scale: 4(Strongly Agree)....1(Strongly Disagree)

Based on the findings from this analysis that ranged in means from 2.31 to 3.19, most of the respondents agreed on the environment of their schools. The perceptions of ISS varied with a mean of 2.31 and a std. deviation of .73 that is what the researcher hypothesized.

Statistical

An Independent Samples T-test was used to determine if there were significantly statistical differences between the perceptions of administrators and teachers ISS program and their environment. During the analysis, significant statistical differences were found between not only the perceptions of administrators and teachers ISS program and their environment but also between the characteristics of the ISS program and the strengths and

weaknesses of their ISS program. The following information was gathered from the T-test (refer to means in Table):

1. Characteristics $t(122) = 5.55, p < .001$
2. ISS $t(122) = 6.09, p < .001$
3. Environment $t(122) = 4.09, p < .001$
4. Strength $t(122) = 5.68, p < .001$

The information gathered showed that administrator perceptions were higher than that of teachers. A one-way ANOVA was also performed to test the differences between administrators, teachers, and retract officers using the constructs as the dependent variables (Table 8).

Table 8

Descriptives for a One Way ANOVA

Constructs	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Characteristics			
Administrators	67	3.06	.55
Teachers	57	2.46	.66
Retract Officers	15	2.98	.13
ISS			
Administrators	67	2.63	.72
Teachers	57	1.89	.61
Retract Officers	15	2.50	.49

Table 8 (continued).

Constructs	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Environment			
Administrators	67	3.32	.38
Teachers	57	2.99	.51
Retract Officers	15	3.35	.54
Strength			
Administrators	67	3.10	.54
Teachers	57	2.45	.73
Retract Officers	15	3.09	.56

Based on the ANOVA, administrators see their ISS program in a more positive light than the teachers and retract officers. The retract officers see the ISS program as more positive than do the teachers.

Teachers' perceptions of their ISS program is viewed the most negative of all the constructs.

The hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between administrators and teachers on perceptions of ISS and perceptions of school environment was supported in this study.

Ancillary Findings

Although it was not part of the original research design, an ANOVA was performed in order to test differences between and within groups using the constructs. A significant difference was found with all constructs.

There was a significant difference between administrators, teachers, and Retracted officers' perceptions of their ISS program, their environment, strengths and weaknesses of their program, and characteristics of their program.

A few teachers and administrators took the time to write out a response in the other section listed under questionnaire number 40 which asked which purpose(s) listed represents your particular ISS program. The general consensus was that if ISS was more structured and better organized, then it could possibly be more beneficial for the students placed there. For example, incorporate the following:

1. Have a certified ISS Coordinator
2. Hold teachers accountable for getting the work to the students so that they do not get behind in their lessons
3. Emphasize character education
4. Involve the counselors and social workers for student support

This goes back to what Eggleton (2001) stated that if all the steps and components of a successful program are implemented, it would make for an effective program that would be beneficial to not only the school but also the parents and the community.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This perceptions study was performed on administrators and teachers in an Alabama school district. Data were collected during the spring of 2010 regarding their perceptions in the following areas: Characteristics of ISS programs, Purposes of ISS program, School's Environment, Strengths and Weaknesses of their ISS program, and Administrators' and Teachers' perceptions of their ISS program. During the spring of 2010 data were collected using a questionnaire to determine administrators, teachers, and counselors, retract officers, resource officers, librarians, and teacher's aides' perceptions of their ISS program. The data was then analyzed and the largest groups' data (administrators, teachers, and retract officers) utilized. Data from the questionnaires of this group were compared, and the following results were yielded.

Conclusions and Discussion

The analyses of the data were presented in the previous chapter. A summary of the results is presented here. This study attempted to test the one hypothesis and answer five questions to see if there was a significant difference between administrators and teachers on perceptions of ISS and perceptions of school environment. The research hypothesis was tested successfully.

The research hypothesis examined whether a significant difference existed between administrators and teachers on their perceptions of their ISS

program and their perceptions of their school environment. When tested using an Independent Samples T-test, significant statistical differences were found between not only the perceptions of administrators and teachers ISS program and their environment but also between the characteristics of the ISS program and the strengths and weaknesses of their ISS program. A one-way ANOVA was also performed to test the differences between administrators, teachers, and retract officers using the constructs as the dependent variables. Based on the findings from this test, administrators thought more highly of their ISS programs than did teachers and retract officers. Retract officers' perceptions were higher than teachers, yet lower than administrators. In summary the researcher's hypothesis was supported by this study.

Gottfredson (1989) pointed out that teacher-administration cooperation was poor and the teachers usually had weak attitudes when dealing with disruptive behavior of the students. According to the researcher's findings in this study, teachers had viewed their ISS program in a less favorable light than did administrators or retract officers. Many of the programs that were studied were very detailed and thorough; in contrast, the administrators who participated in the researcher's study did not intimate that their ISS program was detailed or thorough. The programs that were in place at their schools were lacking in some areas or were practically none existent. The authors in this study all suggested that in order for an ISS program to be truly effective certain components must be present such as, effective universal support or school-wide behavioral support that relies on development and implementation of a systematic approach to

training, monitoring, and reinforcement of appropriate behavior. Gagnon & Leone (2001) contend the focus of these programs is significant given that youth violence has been linked to lack of social and problem solving skills. The results of this perceptions study showed many of the participants felt that their ISS program did not deter deviant behavior. According to the researchers in Gagnon and Leone's study, if the proper components are in place for the ISS program, these problems would be avoided. McGinnis (2003) pointed out why suspensions do not work. She stated that suspensions are exclusionary practices that hinder a student's educational success.

There is a positive relationship between school attendance and academic success. Consequently, while the student is in ISS, it becomes of paramount importance that they receive all the services necessary to ensure their academic success. ISS is not complete isolation. The student is still in a school environment with support. Skiba and Sprague (2008) stated the challenge for education leaders has always been to implement more effective, less exclusionary methods for maintaining safe, productive school climates. If the educational leaders' ISS program is properly implemented using a researched-based support model, then the students will not only be provided with support but also they will learn how to make positive changes in their behavior.

The researcher found that there is a discrepancy between administrators' perceptions of their ISS program and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program. This literature in this study was supported by the research. The researchers stated that administrators thought more highly of their ISS programs than did

their staff. Many administrators used various components of an effective ISS program; however, too many of those components were used in isolation. In order to have an effective ISS program, a combination of effective ISS program components must be utilized.

Limitations

This study involved only one school district, so the results of the study may not generalize to the broader administrative and/or teacher population or populations in other school districts. Another limitation was that only a small number of the questionnaires were returned. A larger volume should be sent out in order to yield a higher return. More than one school district should also be involved in the study in order to get a broader scope of responses. Of the questionnaires returned, only a small portion was retract officers. Another limitation was that many of the elementary school and middle school administrators stated that they did not utilize ISS or that they used an alternate form such as time out in the administrator's office or an amended day schedule for the student. The results were limited to the time period studied during the spring of 2010.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

Based upon the results of this study, the researcher has developed a few recommendations. Since many teachers feel that the ISS programs are not working, administrators could use suggestions made by Eggleton (2001), Gagnon and Leone (2001), Johnson (2001) and many others throughout the study on how to implement an effective ISS program. If all of the components of

a successful program are implemented, the school would be safer; there would be less disciplinary problems, and less habitual ISS students. Students benefit from quality educational and academic achievement while housed in ISS. When they return to the classroom setting, they are not behind and are less likely to commit another infraction. Skiba and Peterson (2003) concluded that the most effective programs were ones that initiate and sustain innovation, establish and enforce school rules, and teach social competency skills. There has to be a connection or a bridge for the students. They must experience success and gain the skills necessary to make effective school to life transitions. This is where counselors become an important ingredient for this recipe for success. They can help bridge the gap by becoming actively engaged in promoting school success through creating, implementing, and supporting school-based interventions that specifically target these at-risk children. Educational leaders should utilize proven research-based support models mentioned in this study to help improve their ISS program. The program should promote academic success and build self-esteem as well. According to Morris and Howard (2003) the academic skills of the ISS student should be measured and learning difficulties diagnosed and assessed for progress toward identifiable academic goals. Improvements can and should be made to the survey instrument. New items could be added to the instrument to better measure perceptions and some items could be reworded to increase reliability of the instrument. Individual instruction in basic skills should be provided, and the ISS teacher should be trained in diagnosing learning difficulties and instructing basic skills development. Other tenets of an effective

program include but are not limited to helping the student with self-esteem, communication skills, problem solving skills, and understanding their school's environment, counseling techniques, staff development for teachers, parent training, as well as identification and monitoring of students' behavior. The educational leader must see what meets the need. ISS alone is not effective.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program in a school district. The next step in this study should be to follow up with administrators and teachers to see if any new strategies were implemented in order to improve their ISS programs. This current study focused on administrators' and teachers' perceptions of their ISS program. Future research could also include the extent of involvement of the school counselors with at-risk students to help identify, recondition, and save them from becoming chronic discipline problems. A closer look at social and problem solving skills should be noted. Students who end up in ISS or OSS lack these skills. Training students in these areas could be another alternative. As noted in the study, a combination of models may be best. The educational leader must see what meets the need for his or her ISS program. Because surveys, such as the one used in this study, are not comprehensive enough, in-depth investigation using case study methodology should be conducted. If only one school district is involved, distribute a large quantity of questionnaires so that a higher return will be yielded. Retract officers as well as Resource officers should be targeted. Since student perceptions of ISS were not investigated,

studies that involve students who have participated in ISS programs should be conducted. Because this study was limited to one school district in Alabama, additional studies should be conducted in other school districts in other states to determine the effectiveness of ISS programs. A qualitative follow-up study should also be conducted to help determine why there is a disparity between administrators' and teachers' perceptions.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL SUSPENSION QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey asks your opinions about this school only, not about the district overall. It deals with school suspensions (in-school/out-of school), as well as safety issues within your school.

1. What is your role(s) at this school? (Mark all that apply).
 - A). Administrator (principal and assistant principal)
 - B). Teacher
 - C). Prevention staff, nurse, or health aide
 - D). Counselor, psychologist
 - E). Police, resource officer
 - F). Other certified staff (e.g. librarian, retract officer)
 - G). Other classified staff (e.g. janitor, secretarial or clerical, food service)
 - H). Teacher's aide, teacher's assistant, or instructional aide

2. How many years have you worked in any position, at this school?
 - A). Less than one year
 - B). 1 to 2 years
 - C). 3 to 5 years
 - D). 6 to 10 years
 - E). Over 10 years

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about this school.

This school....

		Strongly			Strongly	
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	
3.	Is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.	4	3	2	1	
4.	Sets high standards for academic performance for all students.	4	3	2	1	
5.	Promotes academic success for all students.	4	3	2	1	
6.	Fails to involve most Parents in school events or activities.	4	3	2	1	
7.	Clearly communicates to students the consequences of breaking school rules.	4	3	2	1	
8.	Handles discipline problems fairly.	4	3	2	1	
9.	Is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work.	4	3	2	1	

10.	Provides adequate				
11.	counseling for students.	4	3	2	1
12.	Provides adequate health				
	services for students.	4	3	2	1
13.	Is a safe place for students.	4	3	2	1
14.	Is a safe place for staff.	4	3	2	1

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about this school.

This school....

		Strongly		Strongly	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
15.	Has well-understood procedures to deal with crises.	4	3	2	1
16.	Collaborates well with community organizations to help address substance use or other problems among youth.	4	3	2	1
17.	Collaborates well with law enforcement officers.	4	3	2	1
18.	Has sufficient resources to create a safe environment.	4	3	2	1
19.	Considers sanctions for student violations of rules and policies on a case-by-case basis with a wide range of options,	4	3	2	1
20.	Enforces zero-tolerance policies	4	3	2	1
21.	Provides effective support services for students referred to ISS.	4	3	2	1
22.	Provides adequate professional development opportunities for staff on how to deal with the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth.	4	3	2	1

Please rate the effectiveness of your ISS program in accomplishing each of the following items (Circle one number for each statement).

This school's ISS program...

		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Does not Apply
23.	Modifies Inappr. behavior	1	2	3	4
24.	Reduces the student's				

25.	feelings of alienation from school Provides an alternate to at-home (out-of-school) suspension	1	2	3	4
26.	Reduces dropout rate	1	2	3	4
27.	Reduces truancy	1	2	3	4
28.	Reduces chronic tardiness	1	2	3	4
29.	Serves as a consequence for unacceptable behavior	1	2	3	4
30.	Helps the student Improve his/her attitude toward school	1	2	3	4
31.	Prevents future misbehavior	1	2	3	4
32.	Has an adequate student teacher ratio.	1	2	3	4
33.	Requires the referring teachers to send students to ISS with current assignments each day.	1	2	3	4
34.	Keeps files for each student tracking the behavior modification progress and following up with teachers to ensure that behavior is improving	1	2	3	4
35.	Has a certified ISS Coordinator to enforce the requirement that current assignments are current each day	1	2	3	4

Please rate the effectiveness of your ISS program in accomplishing each of the following items (Circle one number for each statement).

This school's ISS Program....

This school....

		Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
36.	Is well-thought of by teachers in our school.	4	3	2	1

37.	Is well-thought of by Administrators in our school.	4	3	2	1
38.	Is effective in improving classroom behavior when the students return from being in ISS.	4	3	2	1
39.	Is effective in acting as a deterrent to misbehavior.	4	3	2	1
40.	Is effective in assigning students to ISS for punitive acts.	4	3	2	1

41. Which purpose(s) listed below best represents your particular ISS program? (Check all that apply).

- _____ To reduce the student's feeling of alienation from school.
- _____ To provide an alternative to out-of-school suspension.
- _____ To provide time out of the regular classroom for the student
- _____ To serve as a consequence for unacceptable behavior
- _____ To encourage appropriate behavior
- _____ Other (please specify) _____

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL FORM



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
 Tel: 601.266.6820
 Fax: 601.266.5509
 www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee 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 Effect 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: **29113002**

PROJECT TITLE: **Administrators' and Teachers' Perceptions to In-School Suspension**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **12/01/09 to 05/21/10**

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Amelia Proby**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & Research**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **12/03/09 to 12/02/10**

Lawrence A. Hosman
 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

12-1-09
 Date

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Amelia Proby
7719 Bellefield Dr. E
Theodore, AL 36582
Purple_asp@yahoo.com

October 22, 2009

Dear Dr. Nichols:

As a student in the doctoral program at The University of Southern Mississippi, I am engaged in a research project for my dissertation. It involves conducting a survey of Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of In-School Suspensions and Out-of-School Suspensions. I will need your permission to use my survey in your school system. The survey will not involve students or academics. It will ask principals, teachers, and retract officers about their perceptions of their school's ISS program and about the services it provides to accommodate the needs of their students and the school. It will only take a few minutes to fill out.

I will address the survey specifically to each personnel member in an envelope and send it through the mail bag with a self-addressed return envelope. They will send it back to me through our mail bag system. Their responses will be anonymous. The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board will approve my project once I get approval from you. Your cooperation in this matter is needed and will enhance this study. Please accept my earnest appreciation for your assistance.


If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at 251-508-3489.

Sincerely,

Amelia Proby

APPENDIX D

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

	Mobile County Public School System	BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS Ken Migguston, President - District 1 William S. Meredith, V. President - District 2 Judy P. Stout, Ph. D. - District 3 Reginald A. Greenhaw, Ph.D. - District 4 Rev. Leson C. Maize - District 5 SUPERINTENDENT Roy D. Nichols, Jr., Ed.D.
P.O. Box 180069 • Mobile, Alabama 36618 • (251) 221-4000		

October 27, 2009

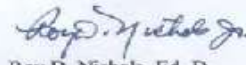
University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

To Whom It May Concern:

Ms. Amelia Proby has permission to conduct a research project in the Mobile County Public School System for her dissertation. The project will involve a survey of principals, teachers, and retract personnel and their perceptions of in-school and out-of-school suspensions in the district. Ms. Proby has agreed to maintain the confidentiality of all principals, teachers, and retract personnel participating in the research. Upon completion, she will share all research results with the Mobile County Public School System.

If further information is needed, please contact me at (251) 221-4394.

Sincerely,



Roy D. Nichols, Ed. D.
Superintendent

RDN/cp

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