IMPACT OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING ON MALE STUDENTS IN AN ALTERNATIVE

SCHOOL SETTING

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Abstract

Social and emotional learning is a framework designed to provide students with additional social and emotional support that teaches students skills to better manage themselves, their emotions, and their behavior. This qualitative research study explored the influence of social and emotional learning on male students assigned to an urban alternative school setting. Six male students with differing academic abilities, grade levels, achievement histories, and behavioral issues participated in the research study. Data collection included the responses of students collected from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts that provided triangulation to increase validity. Four themes emerged from the study: social and emotional learning in the school increases positive relationships, promotes parental involvement, encourages student–centered classrooms, and builds character in students. Effective implementation of social and emotional learning requires professional development for administrators, faculty, and staff and administrative support through visibility, celebration, and reinforcement.

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Dedication

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Chapter One: Introduction

The United States of America is the most powerful country in the world. The country has the world's leading economy and spends the most money on education when compared to other developing countries (Stephens, Warren, & Harner, 2015). According to a 2017 report by the National Center for Education Statistics, "the United States spent more than $11,319 per elementary student in 2017 and more than $12,995 per high school student. Although the country spends the most money on education, it still lags behind other developed countries in performances on international and federal assessments and educating minority students (Stephens et al., 2015).

Education is the key that allows individuals in the United States to improve their lives. High school graduates make significantly more money over the course of their lifetime versus those individuals who drop out of school (www.bls.gov/opub, 2019). In order for all students to maximize their potential and grow as individuals, they need opportunities, structure, and resources to best prepare them for the future. The first time that students receive a formal education is when they turn six years old and enter kindergarten (Stephens et al., 2015). School systems and districts across the country offer the same basic programs and services to all students to help them achieve in the classroom.

The goal of education is to provide all students with an education, prepare them to become productive citizens of the country, and participate in the workforce. When students enter

school for the first time, they are filled with excitement, curiosity, and commitment. By the time these same students enter 3rd grade; the wonders of school are replaced with anxiousness, restlessness, and dejection. Unfortunately, this causes the students to miss school, misbehave, and fall behind academically in school. This phenomenon continues as students move through elementary, middle, and high school. Research has shown that by the secondary school level, the academic gap widens by 3.5 grade levels among students with behavior problems beginning in elementary school. Conversely, by the time that these students reach high school, they are labeled as at-risk students or potential dropouts. (Adamson and Lewis, 2017)

Education reform defines at-risk students as students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school (Education Reform, 2013). According to research from the Department of Education, students who struggle or are at- risk are three times as likely to become dropouts.

According to Algozzine et al., (2011) reading instruction has been cited as a concern because of the association between problem behavior and reading development. Darney, Reinke, Herman, Stormont, & Ialongo, (2013) stipulated that social-emotional and behavioral factors are associated with poor academic and learning outcomes. According to Hinman (2009), because the high school drop-out rate (currently at over one million and including a diverse array of students) has long-term effects on society that range from employment deficits to health issues, there is a call to high schools to be creative and think outside the box in helping students. It is imperative to not only help students remain in school, but also to equip them with the skills necessary to become successful and productive members of society.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2011) data revealed that students who drop out of school would make $200,000 less over their lifetime compared to students who

graduate from high school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). This number is even more staggering when compared to college graduates who will make almost a million dollars more in salary compared to a dropout student. Lewis & Burd-Sharps (2010) predicated that students who drop out of school and are not involved in the workforce will cost the federal government over $97.3 billion in collected taxes and government support over their lifetime. This information supports research that concludes there is an economic benefit for schools to implement SEL as early as elementary school.

Research by Clark & Breman (2009), Kress & Elias, (2006), Ross, Powell, Elias, (2002), and Tolan and Dodge (2005) found that mental health concerns and other issues facing at-risk students from dropping out of school are in need of additional services to address their social and emotional needs, consequently contributing to their academic failure. The American education system continues to be plagued with the inability to resolve the many issues that define at-risk students and their continued failures in school (Slaten, Irby, Tate & Rivera (2015).

Statement of the Problem

Students who are at-risk fall into a high needs category and require support and services in comparison to their peers to ensure that their social and emotional needs are met in and out of school. The National Census Bureau (2015) reported that the dropout rate in the country has consistently declined since the 1980s. Although the dropout rate in the country is decreasing, 538,000 students dropped out of school in 2017. According to the United States Department of Education, 84% of students graduated from high schools during the 2017-2018 school year (www.ed.gov, 2017). However, as promising as the graduation rate is in the country, there are concerning signs from this report. Data from this report indicate that students who graduate from

high school still have trouble competing in the workforce, graduating from college, and staying gainfully employed.

Data collected from the Department of Education, National Census Bureau, and NAEP assessments indicate that there is a need for schools and school districts to implement SEL to combat issues that put those at-risk and high needs students at even greater risk of dropping out of high school and becoming part of the national statistic. Studies and research indicate that when SEL is implemented with fidelity, growth is shown in student achievement, in staff collaboration, and in the instructional practices of teachers.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of SEL on the academic achievement of at-risk male students in an urban alternative school setting. The study sought to answer if the implementation of SEL at an urban alternative school can change students' perceptions on their ability to improve their academic achievement in the classroom, which can increase their attainment of credits. The number of credits accrued and classes completed provides students an opportunity to earn their high school diplomas. Numerous research and studies examined child brain development, and in order to meet the needs of every learner, schools across the country have begun to explore the effect of SEL. Snipes & Tran (2017) found that the largest gap in growth mindsets occurred between low and high achieving students. In addition, low achieving students, as well as ELL students, may experience fewer rewarding academic experiences and may become discouraged and adopt a fixed mindset

Research Question

SEL is a framework designed to provide students with additional social and emotional support that allows them to better manage themselves, their emotions, and behavior. Research

reveals that when students are exposed to social and emotional competencies early in school, it helps students build positive relationships in the classroom and provides students with strategies to deal with conflict and issues. In return, students are able to focus better in class and exhibit a higher level of self- esteem, which can lead to an increase in academic achievement in the classroom. The majority of research on this topic has occurred at traditional schools with limited research on non-traditional schools. Six male students participated in the research to understand not only how SEL affected the academic achievement, but in addition, how they struggle in school academically, behaviorally, and socially, and which subsequently labeled them as at-risk. There were 12 questions asked of each male participant in the semi-structured interview. The finding from this qualitative study addresses the gap in literature and identifies the impact of SEL on male students in an alternative school.

One research question guided this qualitative: What is the impact of Social and Emotional Learning on the male students in an alternative school setting?

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework guiding this study is Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. In 1977, Bandura combined the social-emotional theory with the cognitive learning theory and theorized that learning is based upon modeling, observation, and imitation of others. Bandura claimed that behaviors are both a response to the conditions to which a person is subjected and the individuals inner feelings, values and beliefs. Bandura disagreed with the traditional theories on how people are able to learn through direct experience and consequences of outcomes. He stated that people learn by observing other people's behavior, are able to establish patterns of negative and positive behavior. By using Bandura's social cognitive theory as a framework for academic achievement, students can regulate their self-beliefs (personal

factors), improve their attitudes, establish their preferred learning styles (behaviors), and learn to interact positively with their peers (environmental factors).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is the growth mindset as described by Carol Dweck. It was selected because at-risk students typically have a fixed mindset due to the conditions and issues that have plagued them both academically and behaviorally in school. By implementing SEL, at-risk students will develop a growth mindset that improves their academic and behavior skills, which subsequently improves their academic achievement in the classroom.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study is that through learning the effect of SEL, educators can increase the academic, behavior, and social competencies of at-risk students in an alternative school setting. Studies by Durlark et al., (2011) revealed that students who participated in SEL programs showed an 11% gain in achievement. In addition, Mahoney et al., (2018) found that students who were part of the SEL program appeared to show remarkable outcomes in social skills, academics, and behavior. Therefore, there is a need for research to determine if SEL can improve the academic ability, behavior outcomes, and perception of at-risk students' ability to increase their academic achievement.

Researcher Positionality Statement

Experiences as an urban high school teacher, administrator, and alternative school principal led to an interest in the problem. Additionally, experience in working as a principal of a freshman academy deepened the interest. The need to help students, especially at-risk students succeed in both school and life has developed as a core value. Research has shown that when at-risk students have more than one role model, they perform better in school with fewer behavior

problems and a positive outlook on their future. A peer de-briefer was utilized throughout the study. The peer de-briefer checked for bias, assumptions and analyzed the classroom observation notes. This process allowed for validity of themes and categories, which emerged from the research.

Limitations

The research study involved a limited population from which the data were obtained. The limitations of the study were that the data collection centered on six male students enrolled in an alternative school. The primary methods for data collection were interviews, observations, and collection of artifacts. In addition, the students were selected due to their academic and behavior struggle in school, which affected their overall academic achievement in school.

Delimitations

The target population for this study was one urban alternative school in Middle Tennessee. A larger number of students would have yielded additional information regarding the growth mindset of at-risk students in an alternative school. The research questions and the questions asked in the semi-structured interviews were also noted as delimitations.

Assumptions

It was assumed that all research participants would answer the questions truthfully. The students have a history of academic and behavior struggle in school, and it is important that their information is accurate for the research. The findings of the study will assist other alternative, non-traditional, and traditional high schools help at-risk students succeed in school. In addition, students are remanded to an alternative school for violating their school district's discipline policy. It is important to note, that not all of the students who enter the alternative school are

academically at-risk students. These students do not meet the criteria of an at-risk student; they simply made bad decisions, which resulted in their expulsion.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms should be understood regarding their relationships with social and emotional learning, at-risk students, and academic achievement.

Academic Achievement: Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals (Oxford Bibliographies, 2019).

Alternative schools: An alternative school is an educational setting designed to accommodate educational, behavioral, and/or medical needs of children and adolescents that cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment (Encyclopedia of Child Health, 2019).

At-risk students: At-risk students are students who are not experiencing success in school and are potential dropouts. They are usually low academic achievers who exhibit low self-esteem. Disproportionate numbers of them are males and minorities (Donnelly, 1987).

Social and emotional learning: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) refers to a wide range of skills, attitudes, and behaviors that can affect a student's success in school and life (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first chapter details the background of the study, the problem statement, and the significance of the research. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are described, and the essential research question is listed. Limitations,

delimitations, and assumptions of the study are indicated, and a definition of terms is incorporated. The second chapter consists of a comprehensive literature review related to the topic. The literature review examines the following topics: 1) social-emotional learning, 2) why students need SEL, 3) the historical perspective of social and emotional learning, 4) the implementation of social and emotional learning, 5) perspectives on social and emotional learning, and 6) alternative education. The third chapter describes the methodology that detailed the research. Chapter Four contains the findings and data analysis for the study. Chapter Five includes the summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the collection of the data. The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze the effect of social and emotional learning on the academic achievement of at-risk students in an alternative school setting. By implementing SEL in all facets of the learning environment, research indicates that at-risk students can develop a growth mindset, demonstrate positive behavior, and utilize social skills that will increase their desire to continue in high school and persist toward graduation.

Summary

The study focuses on the impact of implementing social and emotional learning in an alternative school setting and examines this impact on the academic achievement of at-risk male students. Social and emotional learning has five competencies centered on the social and well-being of a student, which include self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Students who lack understanding of these competencies and who are remanded to an alternative school are already at-risk due to inappropriate or negative behaviors, poor academics, and social issues, all of which affect their ability to be successful in the classroom. These issues lead to achievement gaps, lack of credits attained for graduation, and appropriate social skills, which eventually fosters the likelihood of

dropping out of high school. By addressing students' self-perception of the ways in which they learn, how they handle failure and success, and their ability to regulate their emotions, students may develop a growth mindset, which will improve their academic outcomes, ability to persevere, and increase student achievement in the classroom.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The foundation or concept of SEL is for students to understand themselves, to control their behavior, to work collaboratively with others, and to develop a sense of empathy for self and others. Ultimately, the main goal of SEL is to develop the whole child through emotional and behavior competencies, which allow them to develop into mature, confident respectful adults. This literature review summarizes the outcomes of a variety of studies from a collection of researchers over the last 10 years.

Overview of Study

The review of literature for this study is organized into five sections that examine the following topics: 1) the historical perspective of SEL, 2) the theoretical and conceptual framework, 3) the implementation of SEL, 4) perspectives on SEL, and 5) alternative school setting. The purpose of this case study was to analyze the effect of SEL on the academic achievement of at risk- students in an alternative school setting. By implementing SEL in all facets of the learning environment, at- risk students will develop a growth mindset, positive behavior, and social skills that will increase their desire to continue in high school and persist toward graduation.

Social Emotional Learning Defined

Numerous studies have attempted to define *social and emotional learning*. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) first defined the term *social and emotional learning* (SEL) in the 1990s (Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006) as "the process of acquiring the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life" (Goleman, p.75). The basis for developing the concept arose from the desire to help young people understand their emotions, feelings, and how they fit into the world. CASEL based their definition and concepts on the book by Daniel Goleman titled *Emotional Intelligence (EI).* According to Marsh et al. (2018), SEL is characterized by a spectrum of ideas, and although these ideas similarly include behaviors, beliefs and traits that lead to success, specific definitions will vary depending on the person researching or studying it. As Jones & Bufford (2012) explained, SEL includes a focus on increasing students' competencies in the social and emotional realms via a variety of strategies, both teacher- and student-led, all aimed at creating a learning environment where students use SEL to improve their skills in areas like analysis, communication, and collaborating with others.

Methods of Literature Review

For this literature review, study journal articles were collected from Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) (online database), Google Scholar, Carson Newman online library, as well as literature sources relevant to the research topic. All research literature utilized was written within the timeline of 2009 - 2019. In addition to the journal articles, three dissertations and six books utilized. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional (CASEL) framework was used to complete the Literature review. Specific search words included: Social and Emotional Learning, Alternative School, Extrinsic, Intrinsic, Social Learning Theory, Social

Cognitive Theory, Growth- Mindset, authors Albert Bandura and Carol Dweck, Academic

Achievement, and At- Risk Student . This combination of search terms yielded 102 results.

Why Students Need SEL

The 21st Century has seen major changes in the dynamics of the family structure,

innovation in technology, and global competition in business. Society has always depended upon

schools to educate students, but also help solve the major issues occurring in the country. Needs

based upon these changes have led schools to seek out programs and curriculum that help

teachers and staff support students and their abilities to face these challenges.

The emotional state of students determines their learning capabilities and their ability to

learn in class. Poor academic outcomes and emotional and behavioral problems are all

intertwined, and one is a result of the other. Research by Luiselli, Putman, Handler, and

Freinberg (2005) and Saeki, Jimerson, Earhart, Hart, Renshaw, Singh, & Stewart (2011)

demonstrated the multi-faceted links among emotional, social, behavioral, and poor academics in

school. The authors noted that one domain affects the other domain either positively or

negatively in school. DePaoli et al, (2017), Weissberg et al, (2015), and Bridgeland et al, (2013)

conducted extensive research and found that schools must educate students in SEL as well as

academics to prepare them for survival in today's complex and diverse world. Jones and

Bouffard (2012) asserted that children who have strong social and emotional skills are directly

linked to better academic performance in school, and that strong skillsets in this area help

students establish a better sense of mental well-being, reflecting in positive relationships with

adults and peers. Yeager (2017) explained that adolescence is a time where children go through a

period of learning, exploration, and opportunity. Adolescence is a time when behavior and health

problems emerge in students. Without the proper mental health counseling, social services and

support, students may take these issues with them as they become adults. As adults, these emotional and behavioral issues and concerns may lead to substance abuse, incarceration, and high levels of unemployment.

Origins of SEL

Education reforms, new ideas, and initiatives are nothing new in the field of education. SEL is the newest curriculum which promotes the idea of an emotionally well-rounded student, which allows a student a greater chance to achieve academically in school. Indeed, the idea of a well-balanced student has always been part of education. During the 1960s, the conceptual idea of a socially and emotionally well-balanced student emerged in the country. The Comer Model, also called the Comer Process or the School Development Program (SDP), is named for Dr. James Comer of the Yale School of Medicine, a child psychiatrist who wanted to improve the educational outcomes and achievement of minority students (Lunenburg, 2011). Comer's theory centered on the psychosocial development of students. The Cromer Model contends that a child's experience at home and at school had a profound effect on psychosocial development. He believed that if a school could concentrate on a child's psychosocial development, then it could increase the child's chance of academic success (Effrem, & Robbins, 2019). Building supportive bonds among children, parents, and school staff helps students achieve academically, which, subsequently creates a culture of positive learners.

Lundberg (2011) explained how the School Development Program transforms schools' learning environment by building positive interpersonal relationships, promoting teacher efficacy and fostering students' prosocial behaviors. When school factors, classroom factors, external and internal factors, as well as students' attitude and behavior, are controlled, then ultimately student achievement increases (Yale University Child Study Center, 2011).

With the war on drugs and other social issues that plagued the 1980s, the New Haven School District developed a task force in order to combat the social issues of the time. Their task force found that the problem that their students encountered stemmed from inadequate problem solving, lack of communicating skills, inadequate after-school options, and inadequate guidance from encouraging mentors. Based on the findings of the task force, a recommendation of a K-12 social curriculum program was developed with an emphasis on self-monitoring, problem solving and respect for self and others (Effrem, & Robbins, 2019). In addition, the W.T. Grant Foundation funded a consortium on developing a school-based promotion of social competence. Out of this consortium came a framework for incorporating SEL in schools. In this framework were emotional skills that students needed for emotional competence defined as identifying and labeling feelings, expressing feelings, assessing the intensity of feelings, managing feelings, delaying gratification, controlling impulses, and reducing stress .

A Nation at Risk, published in 1983, alarmed education leaders and institutions in the country by emphasizing the slippage of the American school system and warning of dire consequences for their country if the American school systems did not improve their ability to compete with the rest of the world (Jones, 2015). William Spady theorized outcome-based education which has different meaning and names in the field of education. It is best described as standards-based education. Outcome-Based Education Theory defines the way educational institutions develop the outcomes and goals that students should master before they are able to progress to the next set of goals (Killen, 2012). The basic premise of this theory is that all students can learn but not at the same time, success breeds success in students, and school conditions are responsible for the success of student learning. This theory became popular during the 1990s because schools started analyzing the outcomes of student achievement.

The mid-1990s saw a rise in the interest of SEL in the country, due in part to work of Goleman on Emotional Intelligence (Efferm & Robbins, 2019). Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as a human skill, which includes how an individual manages feelings and how well one empathizes and gets along with other people (Goleman, 1995). Individuals are born with general emotional intelligence, which determines their potential for learning. His theory was based on the concept of innate abilities to manage emotions and empathize with others results in better processing skills, as well as the ability to retain information. Those who lack the ability to manage their emotions have more difficulties processing and retaining information. In addition, emotional intelligence determines the ability to learn practical skills based on five competencies, which were identified as self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships.

The role of schools and school systems have changed due to federal legislation like Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top. The federal government initiated these changes to increase academic and work standards, decrease the achievement gap among students, and increase state education reform. Due to these education reforms to increase student achievement, principals have gone from the role of school managers to instructional leaders, and teachers' instructional practices have changed from teacher-centered to student-centered. Teachers are now facilitators and coaches in the classroom (United States Department of Education, 2019). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act became law. The purpose of the law was to increase funding to help minorities and poor students. ESEA was part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. Over the years, other Presidents have reauthorized the law supporting education. In 1994, President Bill Clinton reauthorized the law supporting Goals 2000, which was based on standards-based education reform that originated from the Outcome

Based Education Theory (Efferm & Robbins, 2019). The federal government now requires states to use statewide standards and tests. In addition, CASEL was established the same year.

The Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2011 amended Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. This act provided training for teachers and principals to address the social and emotional development of students. In addition, it included funding for training in classroom instruction and school - wide initiatives focusing on aiding students in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will enhance their social and emotional development (www.GovTrack.us, 2019).

CASEL

The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning as a framework for schools originated in 1994 (CASEL, 2019). The participants included teachers, school leaders, and business leaders who developed a curriculum guide that educators and schools could use to assist students in managing their feeling and emotions. At the time, schools were using a variety of mandated programs to help students cope with their feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about themselves, others and their emotions. The mission of CASEL was to implement evidence-based SEL in preschool through high school (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). SEL is defined as a concept where students use five core competencies to improve their overall academic, behavior, and social development at school. By using the competencies, students are able to better control their emotions, feeling, and attitudes, which allows them a better understanding of themselves and others. The organization later changed its name to Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, and in collaboration with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), published the work, *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators* (CASEL, 2019). Today, CASEL is recognized as the world leaders in

SEL, and its research on Positive School Environment, Social and Emotional Skills Training, and Students Outcomes has allowed schools across the country to focus on educating the whole child (Marchesi & Cook, 2012).

SEL Competencies

While CASEL identified five competencies, Weissberg et al, (2015) identified a set of five core clusters of social and emotional competencies, which align with those of CASEL and include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Healthy attainment of these competencies help students improve academic performance, demonstrate positive social behaviors, and develop positive social relationships during the school years while reducing behavioral and psychological problems. Altogether, this skillset contributes greatly to a young person's ability to succeed in college, work, family, and society (Elias, 2014; Jones & Kahn, 2017).

Self-awareness is the first component necessary for a child to properly recognize emotions and accurately perceive individual strengths, needs and values. As adults, this develops into self-efficacy. Social awareness is necessary to understand empathy, as well as have respect for differences in others. Self-management is the ability to control one's self and manage stress while learning self-discipline. This skill consequently helps a child develop self-motivation and goal setting skills. Relationship skills include all those skills necessary to properly communicate with others, build appropriate and healthy relationships, accurately measure social cues and negotiation, ask for help, resolve conflict, and work with a team. The skills to evaluate, problem solve, and reflect make up responsible decision-making contributing to proper social and ethical responsibility (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Meta-Analyses/Research

Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg (2018) studied the positive and negative outcomes for students participating in social and emotional programs. The research explored four programs that focus on the outcomes of SEL and whether they yield successful outcomes. Due to concerns on the effectiveness and impact of social and emotional programs throughout the country, these researchers conducted four large-scale meta-analyses on student outcomes related to the implementation of SEL. Meta-analysis was defined as a way to gather all available statistical data and previous research data to establish one assessment in order. Therefore, these four studies represent the most updated research on the short and long-term impact on students.

The first study explored the outcome for more than 270,000 students from K-12 (Durlark et al., 2011). This study found that students who were part of the SEL program appeared to show remarkable outcomes in social, academic, and behavior areas (Mahoney et al., 2018). Their study also revealed that students who participated in the SEL program showed an 11% gain in achievement. Durlark et al. (2011) reported that the SEL programs that had the most success had four major components: including activities in a particular order, engaging ways to learn, concentrating on one to two skills, and focusing on certain skills. Teacher and staff run programs yielded more positive results. The need for global study on the long- term effects of participation in SEL programs was recommended (Mahoney et al., 2018).

The three additional studies by Sklad et al., (2012), Wiglesworth et al. (2016), and Taylor et al. (2017) all concluded the same result as the Durlark et al. (2011) study. Six domains—SEL skills, attitudes, positive social behaviors, conduct problems, emotional distress, academic performance—were highlighted by the four studies. The meta-analysis showed remarkable outcomes in SEL and student academic performance in the long-term and short-term

studies. In addition, the three studies included international studies and follow up questions to the students.

Finally, Mahoney et al. (2018) provided directions for future research, practice, and policy. The meta-analysis used statistical methods to examine the effectiveness of SEL, specific skills, the nature of instruction, and the type of students participating on the studies. Schools should determine the type of program that is most effective, identify SEL skills and attitudes that have the most impact for students, and determine what components of each program produce the best results. Research showed that when SEL is incorporated into the overall aspect of the school, there is a decrease in behavior incidents, an improvement in the academic performance of students, a demonstration of positive social behavior, and a higher level of self–efficacy from students.

Theoretical Framework

This study's foundation was based on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Bandura (1971) combined the social-emotional theory with the cognitive learning theory and theorized that learning is based upon modeling, observation, and imitation of others. Traditional theories of learning held the belief that behavior was a result of direct experiences, responses, and consequences. People learn by observing other people's behavior and based on the outcome are able to establish patterns of negative and positive behavior. Man's ability to think, process information, and develop patterns enable him to recall certain information when needed for insight and foresight behavior.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which is composed of observation, modeling, and imitation, has been examined to not only understand how students learn but to improve the

academic achievement of students. Bandura combined social-emotional theory with the cognitive learning theory and formed the Social Learning Theory. As Bandura continued his study, he revised his theory and terminology and changed the name to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1999). Nabavi (2012) examined this theory specifically as a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. Compared to Social Learning Theory, Social Cognitive Theory centers on cognitive concepts and development of children and adults. In addition, Bandura (1986) defined the term self-efficacy, as the ability of people to change their circumstance and situation based on their beliefs that they are in control of their own destiny.

At-risk students' academic achievement is examined in congruence with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Compared to their peers, at-risk students have a history of low academic achievement, higher numbers of behavior incidents, increased suspension rates, and a greater chance of dropping out of school. In addition, they tend to have low self-esteem, low self- efficacy, and lack the cognitive ability to make rational decisions. By using Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory as a framework for academic achievement, students can regulate their self-beliefs (personal factors), improve their attitudes and establish their preferred learning styles (behaviors), and learn to interact positively with their peers (environmental factors).

Students who have a high level of self–efficacy will stay with a task longer than those students who display a low level of self- efficacy. Students with a high level of self- efficacy understand that their ability is due to hard work, determination, and perseverance, rather than luck (Bandura, 1986).

Students attend school five days a week and, on average, spend over 1000 hours in school learning. School is not only a place for learning, but also a place where students interact

with one another, learn social skills, and develop healthy relationships. Children grow to model the behavior of their parents, siblings, teachers, and other students. These behaviors help shape the identity of the child and have an enormous impact on their ability to learn in and out of school. Research showed that behaviors of parents, teachers, and others during childhood are significant in the overall development of a healthy, well-rounded student. Over the years, researchers, educators, and psychologists have formed different opinions and theories on the different types of learning that have the most impact on student development and achievement in school.

Self-Efficacy

Constantine, Fernald, Robinson, and Courtney (2019) provided educators with six best practices for supporting the development of student self-efficacy, which include task engagement, social communicative engagement, self-regulated learning, multi-sensory activities, supportive feedback, and student-centered learning. Four key factors influence students' self-efficacy. These factors are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional and physiological cues.

Mastery experience involves the process of allowing students the opportunity to learn the information or content in a new way. At-risk students benefit from this concept because they have traditionally struggled in school, and having an option to learn would boost their confidence in the classroom. Conversely, if the learner is unable to complete the task, then the learner will have a negative mastery experience.

Vicarious experience occurs when the learner is able to watch a peer complete a task. If the learner is able to perform the task after modeling the same technique, then self–efficacy and

confidence grows in the learner. Unfortunately, if the learner is not able to master the task, then self-efficacy is diminished, and learners sometimes develop a sense of hopelessness. Vicarious experiences have been observed as school-aged students learn English and math. When students experience success early in school, this experience gives them confidence to continue learning even when they encounter difficulties later in school.

Social persuasion occurs when the learner is influenced by the statements of the person who they hold in high regard. The biggest influencer of student achievement and outcomes in the classroom is the classroom teacher. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers and administrators provide a climate that is conducive to learning, helps develop positive healthy relationships, and practices peer modeling.

Emotional and physiological cues are defined as one's beliefs about abilities, which cause the individual to become stressed or anxious regarding the situation. Due to a history of failure, at- risk students can boost their perception and their abilities if schools and teachers identify the causes and symptoms of their anxiety. In addition, teachers should develop alternative assessments and assignments that provide all students with the opportunity to show mastery in the classroom.

Teachers are the heart of what happens in the classroom; how they teach and what they teach are important to educating students. However, one of the biggest factors frequently overlooked is teacher efficacy. To complete a meta-analysis with a focus on the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement, Eells (2011) examined 26 studies regarding efficacy of teachers. When John Hattie converted and examined this number, the information reflected that teacher efficacy was the number one indicator on whether students achieved in the classroom.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is growth mindset. It was selected because at-risk students typically have a fixed mindset due to the conditions and issues that have plagued them, both academically and, behaviorally in school. By implementing SEL, at-risk students will develop a growth mindset that improves their academic and behavior skills, which in turn improves their academic achievement in the classroom.

Seligman, Maier, & Geer, (1968) termed the word *learned helplessness* and, their concepts and ideas were the foundations used by Carol Dweck and colleagues as the basis for growth mindset (Reienzo, Rolfe, & Wilkson 2015). Dweck coined the term *growth mindset* with colleagues who researched the reason why some students succeeded while others failed (Reienzo et al 2015). They determined that the students, who continued to work hard, believed in their ability, and did not look at failure as being permanent, had a growth mindset. Conversely, those students who gave up believed that they could never be successful. These students had a fixed mindset, which sent a negative message about who they were and damaged their self-esteem, causing them to avoid trying in the future.

Growth Mindset

Growth mindset can be defined as one's ability to change their learning habits through hard work, increased study habits, and a greater focus to detail. Conversely, a fixed mindset can be defined as a belief that intelligence is set and predetermined and cannot be increased through academic opportunities and effort. Farrington, Levenstein, and Keyes (2014) stated that students who have a growth mindset would continue to work hard in class to achieve academically, while students who have a fixed mindset will turn to performance avoidance.

Farrington et al, (2014) described performance avoidance as a situation where students refuse to complete assignments or work due to disappointment. In this situation, students would rather fail than risk the chance of looking incompetent. Unfortunately, at-risk students develop this phenomenon over time due to poor academic skills in either reading or math. Students who enter high school with academic deficits are more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who are on grade level. Research continues to show that students who enter high school, fail more than two classes, and miss more than 15 days of school are potential dropouts.

A research study examined student and teacher attitudes and beliefs regarding growth mindset, performance avoidance, and academic behaviors (Nevada Clark County School District, 2015). Snipes and Tran (2017) stated that The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) supported the facilitation of the study, and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) was contracted by Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West at WestEd to complete the corresponding report. The study used data and information from student and teacher reports on academic mindsets and behaviors. Clark County School District is characterized by the Department of Education as an urban educational district whose primary aim is to serve over 300,000 students who come from a variety of backgrounds, such as minority students, low-income students, and those who are still learning English.

Clark County School District administered the survey to teachers and students each year, and in the spring of 2015 decided to add a set of items, which measured growth mindset, performance avoidance, and academic behaviors. The significance of this decision was that the annual teacher survey used a set of questions regarding teachers' beliefs regarding the malleability of the abilities of their students in class (Snipes & Tran, 2017). It explained that

success is focused on the set of competencies and practices describing SEL and that while researchers and leading educators all define SEL in a variety of ways, they all agree on the importance of establishing a broad range of students' skills and competencies. Researchers also agree that SEL skills should be taught beyond just academic achievement. The Clark County School District survey examined the academic mindsets and behaviors of students and teachers in grades 4 through 12 and addressed the following four research questions:

1. What levels of growth mindset, performance avoidance, and academic behaviors did students report?

2. How did students' reported levels of growth mindset, performance avoidance, and academic behaviors vary by grade level, prior academic achievement, sociodemographic characteristics, and school characteristics?

3. What levels of growth mindset, student performance avoidance, and student academic behaviors did teachers report?

4. How did teachers' reported levels of growth mindset, student performance avoidance, and student academic behaviors vary by school characteristics (Snipes & Tran, 2017, p. 4-5).

An *academic mindsets logic model* was used for the hypothesis of the study. Researchers proposed that behaviors such as attendance, attention span, studying and classwork are driven by a student's academic mindset (Farrington et al, 2012). The academic mindsets logic model used seven different variables. If there are no changes in academic behaviors, then it is difficult for students to be able to change their academic mindsets or change academic outcomes (Snipes & Tran, 2017).

Short-term interventions targeting academic mindsets have the potential for long-term success based on the beliefs, academic behaviors, and academic outcomes (Snipes & Tran, 2017).When students change their beliefs, there is an increase in the success of the students. When students experience success in the classroom their beliefs, and attitudes about learning and school increase, and their mindset changes over time. The perspectives of teachers, peers and others can have either a positive or a negative benefit on student achievement.

Gaps in the research data highlighted large disparities in growth mindset in two groups: low versus high achievers and native English speakers versus non-English speakers. English language learners may experience a less rewarding academic experience, became discouraged over time, and adopted a fixed mindset. They concluded that ELL students had the greatest potential for increased academic achievement; however, additional research was needed to determine appropriate intervention and strategies, which would yield the highest result. Research was conducted in the Chicago public school system, and it was discovered that No Excuse and Charter School students displayed a higher level of growth mindset compared to students in a typical comprehensive high school.

Implementation of Social and Emotional Learning

Because issues and concerns in schools typically reflect the current issues and concerns of society, society continues to look to schools to address those concerns. With advancements in technology and companies competing in a global market, students need to have more than just basic skills to compete in the workforce, as well as the skills necessary to function as a valued member of society (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). In comparison to spending time at home with their parents, students spend more time attending school than they do on any other activity.

Schools are a logical choice to address the social and emotional needs of students (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

Program to Strategies

Jones & Bouffard, (2012) addressed the reasons why schools should integrate SEL, not only in the classroom, but also into every facet of the school. Social and emotional skills need to be developed over time and not simply discussed during a certain part of the day. Many states have SEL programs in their schools to educate the whole child. Research shows that SEL programs planned and effectively implemented show good growth in academics and behavior. Often, SEL programs are not combined with classroom instruction, lack sufficient training or professional development, and lack dedication of time promoting SEL. SEL programs must be continuous and constant so students are able to learn how to respond in social situations. SEL and academics must be taught collaboratively since these skills evolve and work together. SEL programs and literacy programs are being developed to help integrate the two ideas in ways that are more meaningful. SEL practices should become a seamless part of routine classroom practices throughout the day instead of a fragmented approach during the day. Future research should analyze how schools should incorporate SEL lessons in elementary, middle schools and high school.

Teachers' Voice

Martinez attempted to identify the conditions that support the teacher's development and implementation of SEL skills. By conducting research in a high - performing charter school in a disadvantaged community in California. The premise of the study was to show that teachers can effectively combine both cognitive and SEL in the classroom to develop a well-rounded student.

Research conducted by Durlark et al. (2011), Grant et al., (2017), and Jones et al., (2017) showed that there is an improvement in the academic and behavioral outcomes of students when SEL is implemented in school. In addition, their research concluded that there is a decrease in behavioral issues and problems. Due to the increase of bullying and violence in schools today, educators need to focus on more than just the academics in schools (Elias & Zins, 2013). Although there is a significant amount of information and research to support the claim, researchers have not agreed upon the best way of integrating SEL into every aspect of the school. Loveless and Griffith (2014) stated that in spite of the evidence surrounding SEL, teachers are faced with the demands of accountability from state-mandated testing. Unfortunately, this causes teachers to have less time available to increase students' cognitive development in the classroom. Teachers are faced with the demands of accountability and state testing, and many are ill-equipped to incorporate SEL properly in their curriculum and lessons. They lack support and training from the school district (Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Savoy, 2012).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identified three strategies, which can improve and develop students' social and emotional skills in the classroom (2013). Through years of research and studies, CASEL identified these strategies as teachers' direct instruction, integration with academic content, and a combining of SEL with teaching practices. What teachers think or feel will depend on if mandates, curriculum, or policies are implemented successful or unsuccessfully. If teachers believe that SEL is important, then they will find a way to incorporate SEL and academics successfully.

Martinez (2016) conducted an action research in a charter school. Ninety percent of the students were Hispanic students who lived in an impoverished community. The following facts were revealed from the study:

1. The experience of teachers teaching SEL resulted in a positive influence on teachers' pedagogical thinking about SEL.

2. Implementing SEL into the curriculum takes time and training for both teachers and principals. SEL training should be included in the Praxis in developing pedagogy, and training, coaching and support should be ongoing to ensure teachers' effectiveness in incorporating SEL in the curriculum.

3. Schools need to have continual support and establish a structure to ensure the sustainability of SEL in schools.

Additional research from students, teachers, and administration would provide information, which can increase schools' understanding of implementing SEL. In addition, teachers need on-going professional development and support to incorporate SEL curriculum effectively into instructional practices in the classroom.

Engaging Students

Schools have always focused on providing rich content and rigorous instruction, and stressed the importance of learning to students as early as preschool and early childhood education. For the last several years, however, the focus of middle and high schools has been on testing to improve the educational outcomes of students. Research continues to show these practices are insignificant and do not lead to increased student achievement (Allensworth et.al 2018). Schools could improve the social emotional and academic development of all students. Due to changes in technology and the world, schools are now attempting to prepare students for jobs that did not exist five and 10 years ago. Students are now required to have specialized skill to compete in the workforce, which include problem solving, critical thinking, and analytical

skills. More than ever, it is imperative that schools help develop these skills in students as well as teach social and emotional skills.

The only way for schools to improve the social emotional and academic development was to increase student engagement. Regardless of the curriculum, lesson, or standards, if students are not actively engaged and participating in the lesson, then there is not a chance for learning or equitable outcomes .Student engagement is the basis for all learning, and is composed of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components.

There are inadequate findings describing how teachers should incorporate SEL competencies. Reported that social emotional development is seen as a critical foundation in helping students develop social skills as early as pre-K. As students matriculate from one grade to the next, the demand of high stakes testing becomes the focus of schools. Teachers spend the majority of time in class covering academics and content, and social and emotional skills are left to after school programs or as partial intervention throughout the day. Less affluent students are at a disadvantage compared to affluent students whose parents have the resources and means to provide opportunities to increase their social and emotional development through summer internships, study-abroad experiences, or other youth development opportunities. The high school classroom is an ideal setting for students to practice and develop effective habits and to develop positive mindsets and interpersonal skills, which will last throughout their lifetime. The emotional and competences skills which students should develop and cultivate in school, are the skills, which employers are looking for as they hire employees.

Perspectives on Social and Emotional Learning

Slaten, Irby, Tate and Rivera (2015) conducted a study examining the approach of using SEL to reach African-American students in a Type II alternative school setting. For their study, they utilized consensual qualitative research, which involved interviewing 15 staff members from the school, including teachers, mental health professionals, and community educators. The National Center for Education (2014) revealed that there are over 12,000 alternative schools in the country serving over 600,000 students. Issues such as poverty, peer victimization, family turmoil, and mental health characterize a large number of at-risk students. Alternative schools and high - poverty schools traditionally have fewer resources available and usually have the biggest concentration of students that have severe emotional and behavior problems.

Teacher and Principal Perspectives

Due to the increase in accountability, school districts across the country face enormous pressure to show gains and growth in student achievement (Hamilton et al., 2019). This pressure has led to an emphasis on testing and limited the curriculum and instruction in the classroom, all which is validated by research (Hamilton, Stecher &Yuan, 2012). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) evidences of the these changes by determining how state and local funds are distributed based on its definition of success and the expansions of the accountability system used in the system (Grant et al., 2017). The report explained that success is focused on the set of competencies and practices describing SEL. The data for the report were collected from surveys from teachers and principals across the United States. The report centered on principals' opinions about SEL, students' social and emotional development, and their perceptions and support that they would need to implement the strategies correctly in school (Hamilton, Doss & Steiner, 2017). In order to gather and analyze the information, the report addressed the following three questions:

1. What are educators' opinions of SEL, and what SEL-related programs, practices, and assessments are they implementing?

2. In what ways do teachers and principals' responses differ?

3. To what extent are these responses related to school characteristics? (Hamilton, Doss & Steiner, 2017, p. 3)

Student Perspective

DePaoli, Atwell, Bridgeland and Shriver (2018), in connection with the Civic and Hart Associates, conducted a survey for the CASEL Corporation utilized a national online survey, which collected data from 1,300 young adults and students from across the country. According to the Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Youth Commission, the purpose of the report was to help school systems across the country provide equitable access to all students and provide them with the skills and knowledge for life in the 21st Century (Aspen Institute, 2018).

Previous student surveys (The Silent Epidemic, 2006;Youth Truth, 2008, The Yale Center for Emotional Development, 2015; and Annual Gallup Student Poll, 2017), as well as previous teacher surveys (Bridgeland, Bruce & Hariharan, 2013 and DePaoli, Atwell & Bridgeland, 2017) were used in developing the most current comprehensive survey and interview used by DePaoli et al (2018). The questions in this survey addressed current issues and concerns regarding students' feelings, as well as how schools can improve students' emotional development. The survey is composed of the following four research questions:

1. How do youth and young adults view the learning environments of high schools?

2. How does the social and emotional environment of high school affect students and student outcomes?

3. How do young people view the potential effects of focusing on social and emotional skills development?

4. To what extent are high schools helping young people develop social and emotional skills? (DePaoli et al, 2018, p. 10).

The significance of the report is that it validated prior research and concluded that when SEL is effectively implemented, there is a decrease of behaviors in schools, an increase in academics, and most importantly, an increase in the emotional well-being of students (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). DePaoli et al (2018) discussed the importance of federal and state policies enacted to ensure the integration of SEL in schools throughout the country. The student surveys provided critical information and evidence, which resulted in the following key findings from the report: 1) integrate social, emotional, and academic learning and development, 2) create and articulate a clear vision of student success and for SEL, 3) ensure young people are part of the decision making process, 4) diversify youth leadership and leadership opportunities, 5) strengthen SEL training among teachers and administrators, 6) support state SEL competency benchmarks, and 7) advance a robust research agenda .

Oberle, Domitrovich, Myers, and Weissberg, (2016) explained that SEL is of greater impact when implemented effectively into the learning environment rather than indirectly by fragmenting it as a separate component. However, even in schools where there is a high-quality SEL program, SEL is not embedded into all classrooms. DePaoli, et.al (2017) support the finding to strengthen training among teachers and administrators. Eighty percent of high-implementing principals reported that their teachers are prepared and trained in SEL and SEL

policies, while fifteen percent of low-implementing principals reported that their teachers were prepared to teach SEL.

Cost Benefit

Klapp, Belfield, Bowden, Levin, Shand and Zander (2017), conducted research by using a *benefit-cost analysis* of implementing long-term SEL interventions in compulsory school. A benefit-cost analysis framework is a tool that outlines in a monetary value the comparison between the costs and benefits of an intervention. Previous research by Durlak & Weissberg (2015), Hickman et al. (2013), and Levin, (2012) has shown that when students develop social and emotional competencies, they benefit in the end by enrolling in higher education, earning higher wages, having better mental health, and lowering incarceration and drug use. Sweden spent $3.9 billion dollars in 2008 on the direct and indirect usage of drugs in the country (Statistics Sweden, 2009). The Swedish government decided to utilize a benefit-cost analysis of drug usage and the impact of long-term interventions of SEL. According to Klapp et al (2017), the purpose of the study was to examine the benefits of Swedish social and emotional interventions in the country by comparing two schools, one which utilized social and emotional training intervention (SET) compared to a second set of students in the NO-SET group. Previous research by Durlak et al. (2011) had already shown that there was a positive short-term effect for SEL on the targeted and universal interventions. The findings from the study also supported previous findings done by Cohen & Piquero (2009), which theorized that early intervention focusing on SEL and development was a major factor in reducing drug use among students and reduced the monetary cost encumbered by society.

Public Health to Education

Studies over the last 10 years has shown the positive benefits of SEL. The studies identified the short and long-term benefits of schools who have effectively implemented SEL in the classroom include students that participate in SEL show an advantage in college readiness, job performance, and mental health conditions in adults. By instilling SEL competencies in students, they are able to compete effectively and efficiently and develop 21st-century skills, which will allow them to collaborate, communicate, think critically, and interact positively with their peers.

Greenberg, Domitrovich, Weissberg, and Durlark, (2017) theorized that SEL could improve the general population's wellbeing. The ultimate goal of education is to improve the wellbeing of the general population, and this is accomplished by not solving the ills of society but by improving the quality of life. There are three primary reasons why SEL can support public health to education and they are: 1) Schools are ideal sites, since students spend a large quality of their time at school; 2) School-based SEL programs can increase students' competence, which increases academic achievement and reduces behavioral and emotional problems; and, 3) Evidence-based SEL intervention were implemented in all aspects of the school. Implementing SEL as a public health approach to education involves schools using a three-tier approach, including universal, selective, and indicated interventions. The Public Health Approach is used by public health researchers and practitioners to document the problem, track who is involved, and analyze the result. The universal intervention approach would target all children and improve the structure of the school by improving the overall culture of the school, instructional strategies, and philosophies of teachers, and teaching explicit skills to students. The benefit of *selective inventions* is that it targets selective groups of students who have been identified as needing additional services and support, particularly students living in poverty, disadvantaged

neighborhoods, trauma-informed, and depression as students who would fit into this category. The third level indicated inventions are more intensive than the first two interventions. Children and families at this level show early signs of difficulty and more than likely are receiving treatment and services. This level is the most intensive and expensive, however; due to the problems which exist it would be more cost-effective over time.

Alternative School

Research indicated that students who are not reading on grade level by the 3rd grade are in danger of becoming at-risk students. These students generally exhibit low self-esteem and low academic performance. Disproportionate numbers of at-risk students are males and minorities. Due to the lack of success in the classroom, at-risk students tend to have more behavior issues and problems. Unfortunately, these behavior issues and problems manifest themselves in behavior, resulting in expulsion and their remandment to an alternative school.

According to the United Sates Department of Education, alternative schools are schools that operate under a different structure and system, which allows students who have not been successful a chance to excel and succeed in a non-traditional environment. There are three types of alternative schools frequently serving students who are at- risk. Type I alternative schools are magnet schools, which tend to serve students throughout the school district (Keaton, 2014). Type II alternative schools serve students who traditionally experience low attendance and academic issues. Type III alternative schools are designed to meet the needs of students who have experienced academic and behavioral problems, and expelled from their regular high school. Petrosino and Claire (2014) defined this type of alternative school as an educational setting designed for students who would generally be considered at-risk for dropping out or expulsion.

Wilkerson, Afacan, Perzigian, Courtright and Lange (2018) detailed that minority student are overrepresented in the alternative school setting. Additionally, minority students tend to struggle in alternative schools and eventually drop out of school. Research shows that students who drop out of school make less money, have higher unemployment rates, and experience greater usage of drugs than high school and college graduates.

Neglected and Delinquent Youth

According to the National Technical Assistance Center, (2014) there are over 300,000 children in the country who are considered neglected, delinquent, or at-risk. Neglected and delinquent students need additional counseling and support compared to non-delinquent youth to be successful in school. When neglected and delinquent students are not provided with additional supports and services, they have a higher rate of dropping out of school, drug usage, and incarceration

Osher et al (2016), detailed four issues, including safety, support, SEL, and engaging and challenging instruction, which were deemed as important factors in the learning process for neglected and delinquent youth. The learning process must be one in which neglected and delinquent youth feel a connection to teacher, peers, and the overall climate of the learning environment. Students who feel safe, supported, and connected to school; they attend school regularly, have fewer behavior issues, and have a better relationship with faculty and staff. Jennings and Greensburg (2009) concluded that teachers who are socially and emotionally competent develop supportive relationships with students, create activities that build on the strengths of students, and help students develop the basic social and emotional skills necessary to participate in classrooms.

Osher et al (2016) highlighted the importance of establishing SEL with neglected and delinquent youth as a way to improve achievement, reduce behavior and improve social skills. Durlak et al. (2011), and Taylor et al (2017) have shown through their research that SEL implementation has had a positive impact among all schoolchildren, regardless of students' race, socioeconomic background, or school location.

The graduation rate in the United States has steadily increased since the 2000s. However, at-risk students still lag behind their peers who are not at-risk when it comes to graduating from high school. Federal legislation and school districts have enacted numerous policies over the years attempting to meet the academic, emotional, and social needs of at-risk students. Longitudinal studies have showed the economic and societal impact of students not graduating from high school (DePaoli, Balfour, Atwell, Bridgeland, 2017).

California developed the Model Continuation High Schools (MCHS) program, which addresses the issue surrounding at-risk students. The California Department of Education (2015) identified the Model Continuation as a model, which could be used to assist in helping students return to school. Due to the success of the program, Sumbera (2015) conducted a three-phrase, two-method qualitative study. Sumbera's qualitative study observed 10 schools in the state that had success in helping vulnerable students return to school by providing social and psychological counseling.

Previous research, which focused on ways to re-engage at-risk students through polices, practices, and programs, identified three basic motivational components. When presented, these components allow for at-risk students' engagement in the classroom (Deci & Ryan, 2000, Eccles & Roeser, 2010, Skinner, Kindermann & Furrer, 2009). These components included 1) competence or the desire to experience mastery 2) relatedness, or the desire to interact, be

connected, and experience caring from and for others, and 3) autonomy or the desire to make one's own decisions in one's life (Sumbera, 2015).

The first finding revealed strategies perceived to be effective with at-risk students based on four emotional, two behavioral and two cognitive components. The second finding revealed that at-risk students were engaged emotionally by establishing a supportive adult-student relationship, as well as on and off counseling support, a safe and secure environment, and celebrating small achievements. MCHS established clear and high expectations and sought to engage students in activities, events, and educational learning opportunities on the campuses. Lastly, it was revealed that by providing a structured yet flexible learning environment, students are able to practice real life experiences in the classroom. The significance of the findings of this study was that when at-risk students are not successful in school, they become dropouts, which has a tremendous effect on society. The study provided schools a formula to help re-engage at-risk students in the educational process, which in turns helps them emotional, academically, and behaviorally.

Gaps in the Literature

SEL is a new concept that was developed during the 1990s. Over the years, there have been numerous research and studies, which highlighted the importance, benefits, and successes of SEL. The majority of research on SEL was at the elementary, middle, and high school setting. However, there has been a limited amount of research dedicated to the impact SEL has on the academic success of at-risk students in an alternative school setting. This study attempted to fill a gap in the literature on how the implementation of SEL at an alternative school setting influences the academic achievement and behavior outcomes of at-risk students. In addition, it provides

information, resources to traditional, and alternative schools that are uncertain about adopting a SEL curriculum.

Summary

This review of literature focused on five concepts around SEL and how the implementation affects the mindset of at-risk students in an urban alternative high school setting. Students remanded to an alternative school setting have violated school and district policies on behavior. The majority of students who attend alternative schools have a history of attendance, academic and behavior issues, which has caused them to struggle in and out of school. Unfortunately, these students continue to struggle when they return to their zoned school or become dropouts. Research showed that students who drop out of school have a higher percentage of drug use, incarceration, and mental health concerns. Students who stay in school and continue to struggle academically and behaviorally run the risk of not acquiring 21st-Century skills, which employers state the workers of tomorrow need to compete in the job market. By implementing social and emotional curriculum, at-risk students will change their perspective about themselves, academic abilities, and outcomes for the future.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to analyze the impact of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) on the academic achievement of at-risk male students in an alternative school setting. This case study examines the benefits of SEL and how information collected through the study can 1) strengthen students' extrinsic and intrinsic beliefs about their learning, 2) increase students' ability to improve behavior and academic achievement in the classroom, and 3) improve their social interaction with peers and adults. Studies by Durlack et al., (2011), Weisberg et al., (2015), and Taylor et al., (2017) have described the positive short-term and long-term impacts of SEL on students' academic and behavior outcomes. Their primary research focused on students who attend school in traditional elementary, middle, and high school settings. Unfortunately, few studies are dedicated to those students who would benefit the most from SEL. This specific research was designed to examine the impact of social and emotional learning on at-risk students in an urban alternative high school setting.

Durlak et al., (2015) discussed how learning is a social and emotional process. Schools could meet the academic needs of students by allowing students to manage themselves, understand the perspectives of others, relate to others effectively, and make sound choices regarding personal and social decisions. In addition, schools can meet the behavior needs of

students by allowing students to reflect on and learn from mistakes, understand relationships, and ultimately make responsible decisions.

Research Question

The study was guided by the following research question: What is the impact of social and emotional learning on male in an alternative school setting ?

Description of the Specific Research Approach

This qualitative case study examined the impact of SEL in an alternative school setting. Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Walker (2014) described the major characteristic of a case study as the ability to study individuals, groups, and organizations and to search for similarities and differences. Case studies are unique because the data, which is collected in real time and multiple methods of data collection, like testing, interviewing, observation, review of documents, and artifacts, are used to understand the focus of the study (Ary et al 2014). The three sources of data used for this study consisted of interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Interviews are commonly used in qualitative studies to gather information in participants' own words regarding their opinions, beliefs, and feelings about a situation. The authors explained that interviews are beneficial because information is easily collected, provides insight on the participants' perspectives, and allows for follow-up interviews in the future. Seidman (2006) explained that when conducting an interview, the body language of the people interviewed is just as important as the information that they convey verbally. One of the best ways to capture information from an interview is by using audio and video recording. This process allows the interviewer the opportunity to capture the natural responses, both physical and oral, and insight from the interviewee in real time.

Observations are another valuable tool used in qualitative research to gather information and collect data. Observations can be formal and informal depending on the situation. Observation allows the researcher to concentrate on the narrative of words, description of the setting, and behaviors of the participants in the study. Additionally, observations are useful in that they allow the researcher the opportunity to determine what is actually said which could be matched to what the person cannot explain in words.

Artifacts are the next common form of data, which are used to conduct qualitative research. Listed examples of artifacts that are used in qualitative studies and included such examples as textbooks, novels, meeting minutes, transcripts, surveys, and report cards. A daily journal of students' feelings and levels of understanding in the classroom are also useful artifacts.

The first stage of data collection began when the students entered the alternative school for their initial interview. Students who are remanded to one of the district's two alternative schools must complete an intake meeting prior to enrollment with a parent or legal guardian. The six students for this study were given an initial survey over their beliefs, concerns, and perceptions about their learning. Additionally, the students were interviewed about their learning styles, favorite teachers, and barriers, which they believe impede their learning. Another valuable source of data collection came from observing the students in their individual classes as they completed assignments, observing their collaboration with peers, and observing their ability to regulate their own behavior in class. Observation of students led into the second stage of data collection by providing data on the students' learning styles, how students process information, and how they acquire knowledge in the classroom. The third stage of data collection consisted of artifacts, which included the participants' transcripts, progress reports, students' work, exams,

and quizzes. A set of questions was generated to facilitate the interview. Questions were developed based on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the literature review, and data gathered from the initial screening interviews and classroom observations. (see Appendix A)

Description of the Study Participants and Setting

This qualitative case study was conducted in an urban school district, which serves over 85,000 students in 159 schools. There are 12 zoned high schools, three magnet schools, three alternative option schools, one virtual school, and two alternative schools for behavior related issues. According to the 2017- 2018 state report card, the graduation rate for the district was 80.3%, and the dropout rate was 3.2%. Students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and Black, Hispanic, Native Americans, and economically disadvantaged students had the highest dropout rates in the district. Consequently, the group of students with the highest dropout rates in the district echo dropout rates across the state and nation. Students who are considered the most vulnerable in the district, state, and country may benefit the most from SEL. Research has shown that the benefits of SEL extend years after students have graduated from high school.

This case study focused on six male students in one of the district's two alternative schools. The study was explained to the parents as they came in for an intake with their child, and parental consent was granted for the studentst to participate in the study. (see Appendix B) The students also provided informed consent. (see Appendix C). The two alternative schools in the district can accommodate 150 students, according to district and state policy. The demographics of the students attending the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) include 98% Black, 1% white, and 1% Hispanic students. The study was conducted over the course of a nine-week period with the principal data emerging from student interviews. The students' attainment of credits, their number of behavior incidents, the amount of days missed from school, and the

length of their expulsion were used to identify the participants. The students' prior academic and behavior history was reviewed when they entered the alternative school for their initial intake meeting. All students who are remanded to the school meet with the guidance counselor, social worker, and intake coordinator for their intake. The student participants for this study met with this team prior to their enrollment.

At 10 days, all students met with the school social worker to complete a survey to assess their previous experiences and current placement. The student survey is given at the 10-day mark so the student has time to settle into the environment and has an opportunity to form relationships. This also allows the social worker time to meet the student so when the survey is administered, the student might feel more comfortable giving honest answers. Questions include topics of safety, trust, previous school experiences, additional supports, current feelings, and career interests. Parents were given a survey at the intake meeting regarding additional services, available for the student and family. The questions for the parent survey included:

1. When did your child first begin experiencing academic and behavior problems in school?

2. Has your child been exposed to any traumatic events in their life, which changed their beliefs about school?

3. Is your child currently receiving mental health counseling? What additional counseling services do you feel would benefit your child's academic and behavioral performance in school?

4. Are you available for family counseling, and if so, how many hours do you feel are necessary to meet the concerns that you have regarding you and your child?

5. Are there additional supports in the community that you are already able to utilize in the present time?

Research regarding SEL describes the importance of school systems integrating SEL into every facet of the school. Students were scheduled with individual counseling sessions to target specific needs that the students identified as areas of concerns. The social worker and counselor shared collected data with teachers to assist in lesson planning.

Collection Procedures

Data were collected by having predetermined questions for the students to answer during the initial intake process. The interview was audio recorded, and a note - taking process was used to effectively collect the data and information when the students were interviewed about their past academic struggles in the classroom. After interviewing the students, the transcripts were reviewed and transcribed. The second phase of the data collection occurred as the researcher observed at-risk students in their classrooms. Note - taking and teacher anecdotal notes captured at-risk students' classroom performance, interaction with peers and teachers, and social norms. The third data collected came from the students' artifacts, which included quizzes, tests, progress reports, formative and summative assessments, discipline referrals, and attendance records. Finally, students were interviewed.

All information acquired during the data collection process was stored safely. Each interview audio tape was labeled and placed in a locked drawer for safekeeping. Additionally, all paper documents were secured in this same location, and digital documents were maintained and stored on a personal password-protected computer.

After the data collection was complete, the first step was to simply review the data and complete open coding by compiling a list of answers for each document or collection device. For the tape-recorded responses, audio answers were transcribed and then open coded. For the notes

taken, the data were typed into a spreadsheet and the data was disaggregated into codes. After compiling the open coded data, axial coding was conducted to identify categories and patterns among the data. This was done by examining the raw data and grouping it according to similar results. For example, students who indicated negative perceptions of school in their answers may have used different words but were still grouped together. Next, categories were merged to identify patters and themes that were used to answer the research questions.

Throughout the different stages of the data collection process, trustworthiness techniques were utilized to validate the collected data. A peer debriefer assisted in the study as reviewer of the data to check for bias, as well as to ensure that what was reported actually happen. Students' interviews, observations, and document collection, which included students' personal artifacts, ensured that multiple points of views or triangulation occurred throughout the study. Member checks were applied as the students were individually interviewed about their experiences during the intake process, as well as the interviews that followed. Following the intake interview, the next interview was conducted four weeks later. The actions for data collection were documented to provide a timeline and audit trails to support the collection process. All reviewers of data kept a reflective log, which was combined in the end with the researcher's personal reflective notes.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was approved by a school district supervisor in the district. After permission was granted, an application was submitted to the Carson-Newman University IRB for permission to conduct research. Parental and student-informed consent was acquired during the initial intake when parents and students came to the school. Before any interviews, observations, or artifacts were conducted or collected, the participants signed consent forms. The six participants were informed that they would not receive incentives for participating

in the research, and that while their data would be utilized to assist other at-risk students succeed in school, anonymity would be maintained. They were told that the data are important to the district because SEL is part of the district initiative to reduce suspensions and expulsions and help students achieve academically in the classroom.

The six students and their parents were informed that the interviews and observations would be audio recorded and that the transcripts, classroom observation notes, and recorded interviews would be housed in a secure location for seven years. Each student participant was given a number which corresponded to the file(s) under which their information would be documented. Teachers received training on incorporating principles of SEL into the classroom and student interactions. The faculty received professional development training on *Trauma Informed Practices* as the school began its implementation of a trauma-informed school structure model.

Data Analysis Procedures

The benefit of a case study is that the information collected through the study can examine students' extrinsic and intrinsic beliefs about their learning. Instruments created specifically for purposes of the research included interview survey documents, audio transcripts, student journals, observation guides, and questionnaires. The interview guide included the questions that were used in this study and informed by the review of the literature and the theoretical framework. In order to examine the effect of SEL had on the academic achievement of at - risk students, the reasons for student struggles in school were analyzed. The data analysis process began with the information collected from the students' initial interview. The interview process allowed the students, parents, and interview team the opportunity to ask candid questions regarding the students' ability, strengths, and weaknesses in school. The coding process was used

to identify information and categories, which resulted from the students' beliefs and thoughts. The information collected was recorded, transcribed, and broken down into codes, which were categorized and formed patterns and themes. The six male participants' interview information, classroom observations, and artifacts provided patterns, themes, and connections. The theoretical framework used in this case study was *Social Learning Theory* by Albert Bandura. The purpose was to analyze how students in an alternative school setting could change their perception of their learning through the five core competencies of SEL. By using Bandura's *social cognitive theory* as a framework for academic achievement, students may regulate their self-beliefs (personal factors), improve their attitudes, establish their preferred learning styles (behaviors), and learn to interact positively with their peers (environmental factors).

Summary

The goal of the study was to analyze the impact SEL on at- risk students in an urban alternative high school. At-risk students are the group characterized by the highest dropout rate, highest incarceration rate, and highest unemployment rate in the country. A qualitative research study was chosen to examine best practices and strategies, which could be used to improve the overall achievement and behavior of at–risk students. The methodology was used to identify the participants in the study, data collection, coding, and findings in the study.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an urban alternative school setting. This chapter presents a description of the participants, analysis of data, and summary of the coding process. Participants' semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and transcripts were utilized as data to answer the research question. Data collection occurred in an urban alternative high school located in Middle Tennessee. Data were coded using open, axial, and selective coding. The codes were identified, sorted, merged, and collapsed until common themes were produced through the selective coding process. Six male students of different academic abilities, grade levels, and behavioral issues participated in this case study. Finally, a summary of the overall findings is included at the end of the chapter. The ensuing chapter includes conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Descriptive Characteristics of Participants and Settings

This study occurred in an alternative school located in an urban school district in Middle Tennessee. The participants of the study consisted of six male students: five students were African American and one student was Hispanic. The participants were selected based on their prior behavior in school, their parents' willingness to participate in the study, and their desire to

attend college after graduating from high school. The grade level classification of the students included two freshmen, two sophomores, one junior, and one senior. To protect the identity and confidentiality of the students, numbers were assigned to the students that correlated with the information they provided for the study.

Student 1 is a16-year-old Black male student classified as a sophomore. Student 1 currently lives with his mother at the time of this study and is not on track to graduate. Based on the number of credits attained, Student 1 would need to access the district's credit recovery program to gain the necessary credits needed for graduation. The student was sent to the alternative school for robbery and theft under $1,000 while at school. The student's future aspirations are to attend college and play football or to work on cars.

Student 2 is a14-year-old Black male freshman who admits to being very social in school. The student currently lives at home with his mother. Student 2 revealed that this is his first year of high school and admits that he has not done well in school. According to his transcript and the number of credits attained from the first semester, Student 2 is not on track to graduate high school. The student should have obtained eight half credits from the first semester; however, he only earned four half credits. The student was sent to the alternative school for sexual harassment of a student in his home-zoned school. The student's future aspirations are to graduate from high school, go to college, and to play football.

Student 3 is a 16-year-old Black male student classified as a junior. The student currently lives at home with his mother. Student 3 admitted that he wants to go to college; however, due to his recent behavior issues in school, he has fallen behind in acquiring credits that he needs to graduate. The student currently has 15.5 credits earned out of 19 credits

attempted in high school. The student was sent to the alternative school for group fighting on school property. The student's future aspiration is to finish high school and go to college.

Student 4 is a 15-year-old Black male student classified as a sophomore. The student lives with his mother at home. The transcript for Student 4 revealed that he is currently missing two and a half credits, which he states is because he had to miss a month of school due to a recent incident in the neighborhood. The student was sent to the alternative school for violating the school and district policy for off-campus behavior. The student's future aspiration is to attend college.

Student 5 is an 18-year-old Hispanic male student classified as a senior. The student lives at home with his parents. Student 5 discussed the urgency to return to his school of zone because this was his senior year and last year in high school. This is the student's second time attending the alternative school, and his transcript reveals that he is on track to graduate if he passes his classes for the second semester. The student was sent to the alternative school for extreme disruption of the school environment. The student's future aspiration is to attend college or a technical school. He would like to work at a car dealership as a service technician and eventually, own his own auto service business.

Student 6 is a 15-year-old Black male student classified as a freshman. The student currently lives with his mother and siblings. While Student 6 was at his zoned school, he only passed and attained one credit for the first semester. Based on the number of credits attained, the student will have to access the district's credit recovery program to recover lost credits. The student was sent to the alternative school for extreme disruption of the school environment. The student's future aspirations are to finish high school, go to college, and to the NFL.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

For this study, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset were used as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks to guide the research study and develop themes. Social Learning Theory centers on observation, imitation, and modeling. Learning is an observed behavior where students are taught a skill through the learning process. In order for learning to occur in the classroom, students must be able to observe, practice, and retain the information. Since learning is an emotional process, at-risk male students develop a fixed mindset, and when the work becomes difficult, they are reluctant to continue because of past failures. By developing a growth mindset and increasing a student level of self- efficacy, schools can improve their academic achievement, behavior, and attendance. Students who are more involved and engaged in the classroom can change their perception of themselves and gradually change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. This phenomenon allows at-risk students to become confident in completing assignments and work in class.

Data Sources

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to answer the research question: What is the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting? The interview began with the researcher thanking the students for participating in the study, a review of the consent form, and the plans for using the results. This case study was conducted over a nine -week timeframe that answered the following research question: What is the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting?

Semi-structured interviews. The student interviews consisted of 12 open-ended questions that were based upon the research question. The questions allowed the students an

opportunity to provide feedback regarding their experiences, thoughts, and perceptions of school. The interviews were audio-recorded and averaged 30 minutes per interview, with the shortest interview lasting 20 minutes and the longest interview lasting 40 minutes. After each question, participants were given ample time to reflect upon their answers as the researcher read their answers back to them for clarity. The line of questions for the participants were asked in the same order and format to avoid biases and allow the participants to be open and candid about their personal experiences. The semi-structured interviews produced three major themes, which helped to answer the research question.

Classroom Observations. During the study, several classroom observations were conducted on each student in their English and math classes. Data collection consisted of the students' level of engagement, level of understanding of the material, social interaction with teacher and peers, and their behavior in class. The information collected on the participants was scribed by hand, analyzed through the coding process to attempt to ascertain themes among the data, which could support the research question. The results of the classroom observation data were shared among the teachers to help them better support the students. The results of the classroom observations produced one major theme, which supported the research question.

Artifacts. The participants' transcripts, progress reports, students' work, exams, and quizzes were utilized as artifacts for the study. The artifacts provided detailed information on the number of credits attained in school, participants' progress in school, and their strengths and weaknesses in classes. In addition, the researcher accessed the district's data system to review the participants' past and present attendance and behavior history. The information and data from the participants' transcripts, progress reports, and previous assignments were analyzed and

placed into categories. The collection of artifacts help support the themes from the other data sources that answered the research question.

Coding process. After the initial interview of the students, the researcher examined the information provided for accuracy. The audio recordings of the participants' responses were analyzed several times in an attempt to pre-code information or identify key terms and phrases used by the students. Some common words and phrases that most students used in their interviews were identified and noted. The TEMI application was utilized to transcribe the participants' audio interview into written text. The transcripts were printed, cut and sorted by categories, organized, and coded by the participants' responses. The researcher attempted to ascertain commonalities and similarities in the participants' responses.

The open coding process began when the researcher read the transcripts and notes from the interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts and determined themes that answered the research question. After several readings, highlighted keywords, phrases, and extracted repetitive statements, a list of initial codes was produced. The codes were derived from the raw data by reading line from line and identifying words and phrases that best represented what the participants stated. The open codes were then collapsed by grouping common themes and words. During this process, the researcher reviewed his notes several times to ensure that everything that the recordings and transcriptions from interviews and observations accurately reflected participants' statements.

The axial coding process occurred as the participants' words and phrases were identified and labeled. The words and phrases were placed on sticky notes, which allowed the researcher to capture and categorize them easily. The axial coding process consisted of examining, removing, and adding codes to ascertain if there were patterns in the data. The process was repeatedly done

until codes were condensed by combining similar phrases and words. The remaining open codes were then merged, which produced several axial codes. Participants' transcripts were subsequently review to determine if there were any additional patterns in the data. In addition, the researcher used a Word document and a table to organize the open codes. The axial coding process was repeated as open codes were condensed to the appropriate axial coding. The axial codes were combined, resulting in a descriptive phrase that accurately represented the selective code.

The selective coding process consisted of taking the axial codes and combining the codes to produce emergent themes. The information and data collected from the semi -structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts were reviewed several times. Throughout the different stages of the data collection review, trustworthiness techniques were utilized to validate the collected data. Peer debriefers were used to assist in the study as reviewers of the data to check for bias, and to authenticate the process. Students' interviews, observations, and document collection, which included students' personal artifacts, ensured that triangulation occurred throughout the study. Member checks were applied as the students were individually interviewed about their experiences during the intake process, as well as the interviews that followed. Following the intake interview, the next interview was conducted four weeks later. The actions for data collection were documented to provide a timeline and audit trails to support the collection process.

Research Question. This study was conducted to answer the following research question: What is the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting?

Emerging Themes. The study findings section highlights the results from the coding process. The data and information collected from the participants' semi structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts produced four themes, which answered the research question. Positive relationships, parental influences, student centered classroom, and character building were the themes that emerged from the data. Each theme is discussed in the following section with, examples from the participants' semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts.

Positive Relationships

Teacher to Student. One of the attributes of social and emotional learning is the ability to establish effective relationships with peers and teachers. Great teachers are essential to the success of students in the classroom. These teachers can make the learning process memorable where students feel comfortable and connected to the classroom experience. Teachers who can develop meaningful relationships with students can encourage students to reach their full academic potential. The participants interviewed were asked to discuss a teacher who was special to them in school or with whom they had positive experiences. From their answers and statements, words like helpful, caring, genuine, and high expectations were used by the students. Student 1 responded to the question by saying that his favorite teacher did not talk down to him. Student 2 responded by saying that his favorite teacher was someone who "understands who you are and why you act the way you act." He continued by saying "they know your struggles and know what you are going through and you are comfortable with this person and talking to them." Student 4 stated that his favorite teacher worked at the alternative school and that this teacher wants students to do well and succeed. Student 3 stated his favorite teacher does not sugar coat anything and that he knows a lot about history. The student then stated that he liked history,

which could be attributed to the relationship with the teacher. This student said, "I am learning things that I did not learn before and he keeps it real with you." Finally, Student 5 stated that his freshman teacher cared about helping him with his grades in school.

Classroom observations involved watching how the students interacted with their teachers. Observations indicated that the students had a positive rapport with their teachers. Five of six students spoke to their teachers directly as they entered the classroom. Their demeanor was friendly and polite. Although Student 1 was quiet, he was courteous and respectful toward his teachers in class. Student 4 was kind and attempted to please his math teacher by trying to answer the questions that were asked in class. Student 6 was talkative and disruptive in his classes; however, when he was redirected, he was not argumentative or rude toward his teachers.

Peer to Peer. Data collected from the interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts revealed that student interaction with friends garnered the most information. Studies show that students who have positive relationships at school perform better academically, display less behavioral problems, and socially interact more with peers and teachers compared to those students who have negative experiences at school. Students that have positive relationships with friends seem to have a higher level of self-esteem and perform better academically in the classroom. Participants were asked to tell about a time or experience that they really enjoyed at school. Student 2 explained that as an athlete he wanted to play football, and that kept him focused. He made the comparison of having a job and working to receive a paycheck. He wanted to go to school and do well so he could play football. Student 2 also stated that "sometimes I like school, but other times it just doesn't matter." He said that when he liked school, he did so because he thought it would lead to success. Student 4 said, "I enjoyed going to gym class first period because that is the only time I really had fun or enjoyed it." Student 5 explained that he is

still excited to go to school although he is now attending an alternative school. He stated that he is ready to graduate, and he looks forward to interacting with all the diverse friends that he has made at school. He said, "I enjoy all people of different nationalities." Student 3 reported that he liked going to math class because the teacher used strategies that required students to move in groups to different stations, in addition to whole group instruction. Student 3 indicated that this made class go by quicker. He stated that he learned in this manner and it did not have the confining feeling of being in class.

When the students were observed in their classrooms, peer-to-peer interactions were good among the students. Five of the six participants were pleasant with the other students in class while only one student stayed to himself. Student 3, who was observed as being friendly, seemed to have constructive relationships with the other students in the class, and always had a positive attitude. Student 2's social interactions in class were high. He got along well with his teachers and all of his peers seemed to like him. Student 5's level of social interactions were high and his teachers indicated he is one of the leaders in class and has a great attitude. One advantage of the alternative school setting is that the environment is often less expansive in size than the regular high school, providing for a more intimate climate. Teaching the SEL competencies in this atmosphere allows students a smaller, more comfortable social setting in which to learn and practice these skills with confidence.

Parental Influences. The first question in the study asked the participants to describe a hero and to identify a hero in his life. Five of six students listed their mother as their sole hero, with one student listing both his mother and father as his heroes. The second part of the question asked students to explain why they named a particular person as a hero. Student 1 responded by stating "she helps me with a lot of stuff and to stay out of trouble." Student 2 reported that "my

mom has been there since day one since my dad passed away after I was born and she has always had my back no matter what." The participants used the words powerful, encouraging, and strongest to describe their mothers. The information provided by the participants was used to construct the first theme that emerged for the study, parental influences. After analyzing the participants' responses, the category of strong family influences was identified in the study. Strong parental influences are a key aspect of a well-developed child. Children who enter school with their emotional needs met will be able to make strong connections with others. Parents are the first teachers that children have in their lives and parental influences can determine success in school. Student 5 stated, "My parents have had the most influence in my life." "They want me to do good in life and succeed. I will be the first to graduate." Family influence has a strong effect on the success and failures of students in school. Schools that provide families with positive experiences, subsequently, have students with better work ethics.

Student Centered Classroom. The sole purpose of the existence of schools is educating students. How teachers implement curriculum and lesson plan designs are vital to the success of students in the classroom. Highly effective teachers understand that student learning occurs in the classroom when students are highly engaged, content is relevant and meaningful, and they recognize that students have different styles of learning. Students learn in different ways and how they process information in the classroom depends on the ability of the teacher to develop effective relationships. When the participants were asked to portray their ideal classroom, each participant described it as a place where teachers used hands-on activities, teacher rapport, and the ability of the teacher to go in-depth. Student 1 discussed how he would "make the work easier" if he could create his ideal school. He explained that he did not like his "personal learning time" class, and adding that he would skip his 4th block class because he did not like the teacher.

He stated that the teacher acted as if she did not like him. He proceeded to discuss his two favorite teachers, Teacher A who taught math, and Teacher B who taught science. He described how Teacher A would break the information down in depth and Teacher B conducted experiments, did not move too fast through content, and made sure that he understood the work. Student 3 stated, "teachers would have to be involved and make the class more fun than what it is supposed to be by doing something different from the other teachers." Student 4 described how when students walked into the classroom, they would have a bell ringer or an activity that pertained to what they were doing in class. He described a style of group learning that he preferred – strategies that had students rotating in stations within a certain amount of time instead of receiving worksheets to be completed individually in class and then being assigned that same type of homework. In addition, he stated he would change the time of the classes because they have two-hour classes, which he feels are too long for the students. Student 5 stated his ideal classroom "would consist of a teacher who really helped the students learn the material, who would go into depth with the material, and who would challenge the students in the class."

Character Building. To address the social and emotional needs of the students, the staff participated in professional development during the summer that addressed trauma- informed practices and social and emotional learning. The school implemented morning meetings in the classroom with the students as one way to address social and emotional needs. During this time, teachers developed positive relationships with students, and addressed their academic concerns and behavior goals. Students who attend alternative schools consistently look for opportunities to reduce their expulsion. In response to this, the school also implemented positive behavior intervention support (PBIS), rewarding their positive behaviors. The school uses the system to impact academics and behavior in the classroom. Subsequently, to help students become aware

of their emotions, feelings, and behaviors toward others, the school implemented "Live School".

Live School is a program where the students can track their behavior and are rewarded points

that can be transferred into rewards at the school (PBIS). This program helps make students

cognizant of their behavior, attendance and, most importantly, their academic performance in the

classroom, and it provided the principal valuable information when asking teachers for

recommendations when attempting to modify students' expulsions. The success of the program

has reduced the number of discipline referrals by 10% and increased attendance at the school by

6%.

According to the principal, the success of the program was the ability of the teachers to

build positive relationships, which subsequently allows the students to regulate their emotions,

make better decisions, and increase their level of engagement in the classroom. Data obtained

through classroom observations showed that while some of the participants had to be prompted

multiple times or were overly talkative with their peers, the students' overall engagement was

positive. Social interactions of the participants were positive with both teachers and peers.

Teachers also reported the students had better attitudes toward work and a willingness to not

only complete the work, but complete it successfully with a good grade from the teacher. The

school professional counselor and social worker meet regularly with the students and provides

emotional and academic support by visiting classrooms daily, making attendance referrals, and

most importantly, future educational plans.

The five core competencies of social and emotional learning are self-awareness, self-

management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Through the

interviews and classroom observations, it was evident that the teachers of these students

implement these competencies throughout their daily engagements and lessons with the students.

Classroom observations indicate their incorporation of these competencies in their daily lessons, and activities, which give the students opportunities to practice these through group interactions, verbal responses, discussions, corrective behaviors and work performance, as demonstrated through the collection of artifacts. This data illustrated that by providing these students with a nurturing and caring environment, the students felt a better sense of connection to the school and their purpose in engaging in what the school had to offer. Traditionally, students who attend alternative schools do not have an emotional connection to the school.

Study Findings

Data collection from the semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts resulted in four themes emerging from the data analysis process: positive relationships, parental involvement, student–centered classrooms, and character building. The four themes answered the research question regarding the impact of SEL on male students in an alternative school setting. Positive relationships are critical to student development. This was evident by their responses to the interview questions and their interactions among their peers and teachers in the classroom. Parental influences affect how students act, behave, and conduct themselves in life. When the students were asked about their heroes, most students regarded their parents as their heroes in their life. The influences of a parent are critical to the overall development and growth of a student. When asked to participate in the study, all the parents agreed because they wanted help improve the development of their child. A student-centered classroom was identified as the third theme of the study and was significant because students described it as the optimal classroom for them to learn. Character building was the final theme to emerge. Character building is essential to all students but especially students who struggle academically and behaviorally in school. The school implemented morning meetings, PBIS, and Live School, which resulted in a reduction in

behavior incidents, and an increase in attendance. The information and data collected are
reflected in Figure 4.1 which displays the data sorted by levels of coding process that were
collected from the semi- structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts, which
support the themes that emerged through this study.

Figure 4.1 Data Sorted in Levels of Coding for the Research Question: What is the impact of
Social and Emotional Learning on Male Students in an Alternative School Setting?

Raw Data	Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding

You, the Principal. Because as the principal, you are able to mentor students. (SI).

I think my mom is a hero. She is always there for me and one of the strongest person I know. (SI).

Somebody that wants me to do good in life and succeed. My parents are my heroes. I live with both. The have had the most influence in my life. (SI)

Family Support
Parental Support
School Support
Supportive
Advocates
Mentors
Caring
Inspiring

Parental Influences

Social and Emotional Learning impacts male students in an alternative school setting by developing effective character, positive relationships, student- centered classroom and strong parental influences.

Student 4-impulse control is mostly self- managed and he is easily motivated. He is easily redirected when behavior, language, or actions are deemed inappropriate. (CO).

I mostly get upset with myself when I make a bad decision. Like when I got in trouble and got expelled. (SI).

Student is quiet with no behavior issue in class. (Artifacts).

Self – Reflection
Work Habits
Responsibility
Independence
Interpersonal Skills
Self- Control
Accountability

Character Building

Student 3 get along with his peers and is polite and kind. (CO).

I am someone who like to joke around and play some. I will be here for you if you have problems. (SI).

Discipline incidents have decreased by ten percent. (Artifacts)

Polite
Respectful
Friendly
Encouraging
Thoughtful
Open Minded

Positive Relationships

I liked going to math class- we would move around, do things as a whole group and it made class go by really quick- I learned that way, and it did not really feel like you were in a class. (SI) Where I can get my work done, were the teachers' helps us. When they go more in- depth than they are required to do. I like to be able to finish my work and then have time to do something else. (SI). Student 5 is actively engaged in class by participating and answering questions in class (CO).	Student Interest Hands- On- Activities Individual Attention Positive Creative Classroom Differentiated Instruction Classroom Engagement Flexible Classroom Instruction Student Choice Collaboration	Student Centered Classroom

Summary

The results of this study answered the research question, which guided the study. The one-on-one interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts produced valuable information regarding the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting. Understanding how at-risk students perceive school, learn in the classroom, and interact with peers and teachers is essential in helping students develop 21st Century skills, which are needed to compete in society and the workforce.

The students provided important information regarding their perception, thoughts, and experiences in school while the observations, staff input, and artifacts demonstrated the impact of the SEL practices implemented by the school. In addition, the students' level of engagement, understanding, and social interaction noted during the classroom observations. This information is important in because it provides teachers another resource to help those students who are struggling in class.

The information collected from the study can be used in other alternative and traditional schools looking for additional support in helping struggling students achieve academically and behaviorally in the classroom. The conclusion, findings, and limitations are addressed in Chapter 5, with recommendations for further research on the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting.

Chapter Five: Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting. The study sought to explore the impact of social and emotional learning at an urban alternative school on these students and to determine if SEL could change male students' perceptions, improve their academic achievement, and develop appropriate behavior in the classroom. By increasing their learning opportunities in the classroom and embedding SEL practices, students are more likely to pass their classes and accrue credits, which provides them an opportunity to earn their high school diploma. According to students' prior performances in school, they are typically behind their peers academically, behaviorally, and socially. These deficiencies cause students to develop a sense of hopelessness, which can lead them to display inappropriate behavior. These deficiencies also contribute to poor attendance, and these students are more likely to become dropouts.

This final chapter contains conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research on the impact of SEL. This study attempts to fill a gap in literature regarding how the implementation of SEL at an alternative school setting influences the academic achievement and behavior outcomes of at-risk students. In addition, it provides information, resources to traditional, and alternative schools who are uncertain about adopting SEL practices, curriculum,

and implementation. This chapter answers the following research question: What is the impact of social and emotional learning on male students in an alternative school setting? The research question was answered by collecting information and data from six male students of different grade levels, academic abilities, and behavioral issues. Data collection consisted of the participants' responses from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts, resulting in four themes that emerged from the selective coding process: positive relationships, parental involvement, student–centered classrooms, and character building.

Conclusion

Findings from this study indicate a positive impact of SEL upon male students in an alternative school setting. The findings are similar with previous studies conducted regarding SEL. Durlark et al., (2011) reported that students who participated in SEL programs showed an 11% gain in achievement compared to non-participating students. Sklad et al., (2012); Taylor et al., (2017); Wiglesworth et al.,(2016) Mahoney et al., (2018) conducted follow-up research studies and validated earlier studies by Elias (2006), and Durlark et al.(2011), which found that students who were part of the SEL program appeared to show remarkable outcomes in social skills, academics, and behavior. This study targeted a particular population of at-risk males students in a special school setting, but like previous studies, sought to determine the impact of SEL: could the implementation of SEL affect the academic ability, behavior outcomes, and perception of at-risk students' ability to increase their academic achievement?

The theoretical and conceptual framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Dweck's Growth Mindset were prevalent in the study. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory was used as a framework to examine academic achievement. Students were able to regulate their self-beliefs, improve their attitudes, establish their preferred learning styles, and learn to interact

positively with their peers and school staff. Data collection and analysis supported this theory, as students who were observed in their classroom displayed appropriate behavior, positive interactions, and identified student-centered classrooms as their optimal classroom for learning. Dweck's Growth Mindset Theory concluded that students who continued to work hard, believed in their ability, and did not consider failure to be permanent, had a growth mindset. Equally, those students who gave up believed that they could never be successful. These students had a fixed mindset, which sent a negative message about who they were and damaged their self-esteem, causing them to avoid trying in the future.   Farrington, Levenstein, and Keyes' (2014) research supported the theory that students who have a growth mindset would continue to work hard in class to achieve academically, while students who have a fixed mindset will turn to performance avoidance. SEL components include necessary skills and beliefs that encourage a growth mindset and give students skill they need to persevere and cope in their environments, which would otherwise leave them unsuccessful in school and minimize chances for future success.

Positive Relationships. Relationship skills is a key attribute of SEL. When students socialize positively in school, they can develop appropriate relationships and make friends. Students who can make friends and maintain positive relationships are more likely to perform better in school, display fewer behavior problems, and have a stronger support system CASEL, (2012). From the collection of data and information, the participants were observed displaying positive relationships with teachers and peers. Positive classroom interaction leads to better academic achievement. Students also gain a better sense of confidence when they can discern positive results of work and positive engagement. Demonstrated achievement in school translates to other areas of their lives, as they learn to help fellow students, provide encouragement, and

work collaboratively in groups. Increased confidence assists students even when they were redirected in classes, as they learn not to be combative or disrespectful. Jennings and Greensburg (2009) concluded that teachers who are socially and emotionally competent develop supportive relationships with students, then create activities that build on the strengths of students and help students develop the basic social and emotional skills necessary to participate in classrooms. Since male students who traditionally attend alternative schools struggle with academic and behavioral issues, the implementation of SEL improved their overall perspectives, beliefs, and behaviors.

Parental Influences. Parents are the first teachers that children have in their lives and parental influence can help determine student success. The academic and social development of children occurs early in their lives as they are taught how to walk, speak, and to express their wants and needs. As children grow, they are influenced by the behavior of their parents, siblings, and others. These behaviors help shape the identity of the child and have an enormous impact on their ability to learn in and out of school. This development continues as children enter school, and are expected to learn academic, behavior, and social skills. While parental influence was not specifically identified in the literature review, it is, by far, the most important factor in the academic, behavior, and social development of a child. Continual parental influence and involvement is essential as students mature and develop appropriate skills to be successful in school. When students are not successful in acquiring those skills, then schools should be able to reach out to parents for help and support. Jones and Bouffard (2012) asserted that children who have strong social and emotional skills are directly linked to better academic performance in school, and that strong skillsets in this area help students establish a better sense of mental well-being, reflecting in positive relationships with adults and peers. These students typically perform

better academically, have minimal behavior issues, and maintain appropriate friendships. Without continual parental influences and support, none of this would be possible. Research showed that behaviors of parents, teachers, and others during childhood are significant in the overall development of a healthy, well-rounded student. Parental influence was evident in this particular study, when five of six students described their parents as their heroes. The students stated that their parents were always there for them, caring, supportive and wanted the best for them. When the parents were informed of the purpose of this study, a description of SEL, and the benefit of their child participating, parents were receptive. After hearing the purpose and the benefits of the study, the parents agreed because they wanted their child to continue to develop as a student, make better decisions, and acquire skills that would prepare them for the future.

Student Centered Classroom. The success and failure of a student depends on the ability of the teachers to present engaging lessons, positive relationships, and a safe environment. When students feel safe and supported, they tend to complete their work, actively participate in class, and work well with others. Effective teachers understand that by establishing routines, procedures, and high expectations, that they are providing students with a foundation for learning. When participants in the study were asked about their ideal classroom, they described it as a place where they worked collaboratively, used hands-on activities, and applauded the ability of the teacher to provide differentiated instruction. Students learn in different ways, and it is important for teachers to get students actively participating in the learning process. This conclusion is supported by the research of CASEL, (2012), and Friedlaender et al., (2014), who explained that SEL, when taught through embedded instructions and student-centered classroom, instructions, helps students participate in the learning process and develop better communication and analytical and collaborative skills.

The research conducted by Constantine et al. (2019), who conducted research on the importance of self-efficacy in the classroom, supports these findings. Six best practices were identified for supporting the development of students' self-efficacy, and among those, student-centered classroom emerged as one of the best practices.

Character Building. Students who enter school lacking the necessary social and behavioral skills are more likely to fall behind their peers in school. These students have a hard time adjusting, making friends, and being successful in the classroom. Schools that have implemented SEL have seen an increase in academic achievement and a decrease in behavior incidents. The five core competencies of social and emotional learning are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The alternative school in this study implemented morning meetings, PBIS, and Live School. In addition, the staff participated in trauma - informed practices. According to the principal and data collection, the attendance of the students had increased by 10% and behavior incidents decreased 6%. These finding are aligned with Mahoney et al. (2018), who reported on the short and long-term outcomes of SEL. The short-term outcomes were identified as positive attitudes toward self and others, while the long-term outcomes were positive behavior, academic success, and improved mental health. The conclusions are supported by prior research and studies, which concluded that when SEL is effectively implemented in schools, there is a decrease in behaviors, an increase in academics, and most importantly, an increase in the emotional well-being of students (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, (2011).

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for schools that are struggling to meet the academic and behavioral needs of at-risk male students. The implications for the research offer a

deeper understanding of the impact of SEL within an alternative school setting. Previous research and studies on SEL have been on elementary, middle, and traditional high schools. There is limited research devoted to students who attend non-traditional, alternative, and behavior school settings. Traditionally, students who attend non-traditional schools need additional support and services to help them academically, behaviorally, and socially as compared to their peers in a traditional school setting. This study adds to valuable information that already exists regarding SEL. The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts assist schools in helping all students achieve in the classroom. Findings from the study suggest that for schools to maximize the impact of SEL, they must offer professional development around trauma - informed practices, SEL, and MTSS. A total commitment from administration and faculty are necessary to make these practices successful.

Professional Development. One of the reasons indicated for the success of the implementation of SEL was the continual training that the faculty and staff received through professional development. Trauma - informed practices, implicated bias braining, PBIS, and Tact 2, were all part of the professional development training received during the school year**.** The faculty and staff participated in a book study and held morning meetings. Morning meetings consisted of the faculty and staff meeting with the students for 30 minutes each morning to discuss concerns, issues, and problems that the students deemed important to them. In the afternoons, the faulty would meet and discuss students who were struggling academically and behaviorally, not in regular attendance, and the topic and agenda for the following morning meeting time. The procedures and protocols implemented are supported by the research of Oberle, Domitrovich, Myers, and Weisberg, (2016) that found that SEL is of greater impact

when implemented effectively into the learning environment rather than indirectly by fragmenting it as a separate component. However, research indicates that even in schools where there is a high-quality SEL program, it is not necessarily embedded into all classrooms. DePaoli, et al (2017) support the findings to strengthen training among teachers and administrators. Eighty percent of implementing principals reported that their teachers were prepared and trained in SEL practices, while 15% of low-implementing principals reported that their teachers were prepared to effectively embed SEL in their classroom instruction. When SEL is incorporated into the overall aspect of the school, there is a decrease in behavior incidents, an improvement in the academic performance of students, a demonstration of positive social behavior, and a higher level of self–efficacy from students.

Administrative Support. Schools that have been successful with SEL have strong support and commitment from Administration. For SEL to become a common practice at school, and not another item to check off a list, principals need to ensure that SEL is incorporated in all aspects of the school environment. Administrators can accomplish this goal by ensuring that when they visit classes, teachers have developed lessons that use the attributes of SEL. Principals need to attend all weekly PLCs and content team meetings, which will allow them a chance to discuss with teachers those students who are struggling academically and behaviorally in their classes. If principals cannot attend the meetings, they should appoint an assistant principal or instructional coach to attend the meetings. Principals need to offer professional development that support teachers who are struggling with fully implementing SEL in their classrooms.

Principals need to be highly visible in the hallways and they should adopt a behavior modification plan. When developing the plan, they should hold class meetings; and solicit ideas and advice from the students. This will ensure a buy-in from the students since they have now

been included in the decision-making process and understand the reason and purpose of the behavior plan. Principals need to send out monthly newsletters highlighting the accomplishments and successes of SEL in their schools. Finally, principals should celebrate the success of SEL by recognizing students who have improved their behavior, academics, and attendance in school.

Recommendations

The sample for this research study involved a limited population of students from which the information was obtained and collected. Data collection focused on six male students enrolled in one alternative school in an urban school district. Further research with a larger number of male students participating in the study will yield additional information regarding the impact of SEL. Since data indicate that male, students are suspended the most and shown to struggle academically and behaviorally, it would benefit the district to conduct the study in the other alternative school. Data collection from both alternative schools would yield information that would benefit the alternative schools, as well as the traditional and nontraditional schools in the district. The duration of the study was nine weeks, and if conducted over a longer period of time, the study could have provided additional information. Additionally, a larger sample of teachers, administrators, parents, and other school staff would provide more information regarding the influence of SEL on male students. It is recommended that future studies be conducted with females, exceptional education, and emotionally disturbed students who attend alternative schools. In addition, schools that struggle to close the achievement and behavior gap can conduct the study for additional information on academic and behavior strategies, professional development, and support systems. Future research should be conducted in rural, low-income school districts where dropout percentages are higher among at-risk student groups.

Summary

The implementation of SEL in schools has shown to increase the academic achievement and success of students. Research has indicated that when students are introduced to SEL competencies as early as elementary school, they tend to have higher academic success and fewer behavior problems when compared to students who are not immersed in SEL. The findings and conclusions of this study support previous research and studies, which outlines the short term and long-term benefit of schools implementing SEL. At-risk male students, who traditionally struggle in school, need additional academic and behavior support to graduate, compete in the 21st Century, and stay gainfully employed. Research continues to show the cost benefit of schools implementing SEL and the economic influence on cities where schools implement. Students who can regulate their emotions, feelings, and behaviors can live a more healthy and productive life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Student Interview Questions

1. Who are your heroes? Why?

2. Tell me about a teacher who is special to you and that you would describe as your favorite teacher.

3. How did this teacher help you to do your best?

4. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a teacher or student. How did you handle the conflict?

5. What are your two greatest strengths as a student? As a friend?

6. What makes you angry at school?

7. Tell me about the best day that you have ever had at school.

8. Think about a time when a teacher criticized your work. How did that make you feel?

9. Tell me about a time that someone hurt your feelings at school. How did you handle that?

10. How do you know if another person is angry or sad?

11. What are your future goals?

12. If you had a magic wand and could create an ideal classroom and school for you as a student, what would they look like?

APPENDIX B

PARENT/GUARDIAN Informed Consent
For Permission to Include Your Child/Minor (under 18 years old) in Research Study

Principal Investigator: Henry Johnson
Study Title: Social and Emotional Learning in a Non- Traditional School Setting.

Name of student participant: _____ Age: _____

The following information below is provided to inform you about the research project, your child's role within the project, your child's rights as a participant in the research, and your rights as his/her guardian. Please read all of the information carefully and ask any questions you have. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, and your questions will be answered. **Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary**. You are also free to withdraw your child from this study at any time. A copy of this informed consent form will be provided to you for your records before you participate in the study.

1. **Purpose of the study & role of the participant:**

   The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of Social and Emotional Learning on Male Students in Urban Alternative Setting. If your child participates in this study, his role will be that of an interviewee.

2. **Procedures to be followed and approximate duration of the study:**

   If you agree for your child to participate in this study, he will be asked questions regarding his social and academic experiences in high school.

3. **Compensation:**

   Your child will not be compensated for participating in this study.

4. **Benefits:**

   While your child might not experience any direct benefits, here are some good things that might potentially come from conducting the study: an understanding of obstacles he has overcome, an awareness of opportunities the school(s) have to offer, a chance to advocate for himself and others in communicating his needs, and further assessment by the district of its offerings to students and parents with regard to academics and social emotional supports.

5. **Appropriate alternative procedures and/or steps for withdrawing from the study:**

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not you want your child to participate in the study. Nothing will change if you choose for him not to participate. Nobody will be mad and it won't affect anything about his grades or anything about the school day. If you think, you want him to participate at first and then decide against it later, you are welcome to withdraw your child at any time with absolutely no repercussions.

6. **Description of the discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study:**

Though there is minimal risk involved in participating in this study, there is a chance that your child might feel slight discomfort if any sensitive topics or memories come to the surface while participating. If your child does experience discomfort during his/her participation, then he/she is free to skip any questions/topics or stop completely at any time.

7. **Confidentiality, Privacy, & Anonymity:**

Everything discussed or collected for the study will be kept completely confidential, meaning it will be totally private. I will take all precautions to minimize the possibility that anyone could link responses to your child. His name and school will never be attached to any reporting of the information after all data have been analyzed. I will ask to audio record the interview; this is strictly so I can go back to take notes and remember specific parts of the discussion. Everything collected for the study will be stored electronically for seven years. Your child's name and information will be retained as 'anonymous'.

8. **Contact Information.** If you should have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me via email at henry.johnson@mnps.org or my Faculty Advisor, Brenda Dean via email, Brenda Dean@cn.edu. For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, to discuss problems, concerns, and questions, or to offer input, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board or the Office of Research at Carson Newman University.

STATEMENT BY PERSON AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

By signing below, I acknowledge that **I have read this informed consent form; I understand the conditions of the research and my rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant. I freely and voluntarily allow my child to participate.**

_____   _____

Date   Signature of Parent/Guardian

Consent obtained by:

_____

Date

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator

_____

Printed Name and Title

APPENDIX C

STUDENT Informed Consent

For Child/Minor (under 18 years old) Participation in Research Study

Principal Investigator: Henry Johnson
Study Title: Social and Emotional Learning in a Non- Traditional School Setting

Name of student participant: _____ Age: _____

The following information below is provided to inform you about the research project, your role within the project, and your rights as a participant in the research. Please read all of the information carefully and ask any questions you have. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, and your questions will be answered. **Your participation in this research is completely voluntary**. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time. A copy of this informed assent form will be provided to you for your records before you participate in the study.

1. **Purpose of the study & role of the participant:**
   2. The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of Social and Emotional Learning on Male Students in Urban Alternative Setting.
   3. If you agree to participate in this study, your role will be as an interviewee.

4. **Procedures to be followed and approximate duration of the study:**
   If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer questions regarding your social and academic experiences in high school.

5. **Compensation:**
   You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

6. **Benefits:**
   While you might not experience any direct benefits for yourself, here are some good things that might potentially come from conducting the study: a better understanding of obstacles you have overcome, an awareness of opportunities the school(s) have to offer, a chance to advocate for yourself and others in communicating your needs, and further assessment by the district of its offerings to students and parents with regard to academics and social emotional supports.

7. **Appropriate alternative procedures and/or steps for withdrawing from the study:**
   It is completely up to you to decide if you want to participate in the study. Nothing will change if you choose not to participate. Nobody will be mad and it will not affect anything about your grades or

anything about your school day. If you think you want to participate at first and then decide you do not want to later, you are welcome to withdraw at any time with absolutely no repercussions.

8. **Description of the discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study:**

There is minimal risk involved in participating in this study. There is a chance you might feel slight discomfort if any sensitive topics or memories come to the surface while participating. If that happens, then you are free to skip any questions/topics and you are free to stop completely at any time.

9. **Confidentiality, Privacy, & Anonymity:**

Everything discussed or collected for the study will be kept completely confidential, meaning it will be totally private. I will take all precautions to minimize the possibility that anyone could link responses to you. Your name and school will never be attached to any reporting of the information after all data have been analyzed. I will ask to audio record the interview; this is strictly so I can go back to take notes and remember specific parts of the discussion. Everything collected for the study will be stored electronically for seven years. Your name and information will be retained as 'anonymous'.

9. **Contact Information.** If you should have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me via email at henry.johnson@mnps.org or my Faculty Advisor, Brenda Dean via email, Brenda Dean@cn.edu. For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, to discuss problems, concerns, and questions, or to offer input, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board or the Office of Research at Carson Newman University.

<u>STATEMENT BY PERSON AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY</u>

By signing below, I acknowledge that **I have read this informed assent form; I understand the conditions of the research and my rights as a participant; and my parent/guardian has given consent for me to participate because I am under 18 years of age. I freely and voluntarily choose to participate.**

_____   _____

Date   Signature of Student Participant

Assent obtained by:

_____

Date

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator

_____

Printed Name and Title