

Are Academic Advisory Periods Having an Effect
in a Large Urban Southwest High School

by

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ABSTRACT

Inner city high schools today are struggling to create and maintain connections between students' values and schools requirements. Schools attempt to develop ways to help students become a vital part of the school community and provide them with resources to be successful both socially and academically. This study examined how an urban high school in the southwest implemented an academic advisory program to build and maintain the student/school relationship along with hoping to provide the resources to help increase student achievement in core academic programs. Research has identified the importance relationships have on academic achievement and the strong bonds that need to be developed with students and those there to support them. Previous attempts to provide students with the academic support through traditional tutoring in after-school programs have not proven to be successful in providing support students need. These after school tutoring programs have multiple challenges including being voluntary and students having other commitments they are involved with. Incorporating academic advisory programs during the school day is an attempt to overcome these challenges that are experienced with other programs. Using math and English course letter grade distribution comparisons were made to determine if changes in academic achievement occurred after implementation of academic advisory, whether participation in the program for more than one year made a difference on student academic achievement, and finally if academic advisory had any different effect on students that are high, middle, or low achieving. This study could not identify and specific correlation between the academic advisory program and academic achievement. When looking at letter grade distribution data from before implementation and after implementation similar growths

and declines are seen with no identifiable trends during the program implementation.

Consideration needs to be taken for the limitations identified and the school may want to conduct further review by addressing the limitations.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my entire family that has been there with me through my ups and downs while working through my educational career.

My wife Melissa who has always been there for me and put up with me being away from home and allowing me to take the time I needed to finish my education. You have always been there to help me along the way and to provide the much needed support as I worked through this journey. To my daughter Kennedy, you were still a future hope of both your loving parents when this journey began. Kennedy when you arrived it was incredible to have you join your mother and I on this journey. You were so young during this journey you didn't even know how hard it was for me to be away so many days and nights. I didn't do this for me; I did this for both of you. As a way to help secure your futures as a loving father and husband.

I also dedicate this to my parents James and Carlotta for encouraging me and always instilling in me the importance of an education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An ever-growing problem in urban schools today is creating the connection between our students' values and our schools requirements. Educators want the students to feel as they are part of the school community and provide them with the support and guidance they need to be successful socially and academically. "Students who do not feel an attachment to school personnel tend to have poorer attendance and drop out more than students who perceive that they are part of a supportive, caring school environment." (Galassi, Gullledge, & Cox, 1997, p.302)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2009), during the 2008-2009 school year an average of 3.4% of student's left high school without obtaining a diploma. During this time higher dropout rates were seen in minorities compared to whites. African American students had a dropout rate of 4.8% and Hispanics had a dropout rate of 5.8%, while students of northern European descent had a dropout rate of 2.4%. "In 2009, the dropout rate of students living in low-income families was about five times greater than the rate of their peers from high-income families (7.4 percent vs. 1.4 percent)" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009, p.6). Although slight fluctuations over the past four decades have occurred, on average the high school dropout rate has continued to decline over the past four decades from 6.1% in 1972 to 3.4% in 2009. This continual decline on average has also been seen among the minority and low-income students.

Many students in Sun Valley High School, from an urban southwest school district are struggling to achieve academic success. This urban southwest high school

district had a dropout rate of 3.6% in the 2010-11 academic school year, which is up from 2.5% in 2008-09 and 2.2% in 2009-10. The district four-year graduation rate for the class of 2011 was 75.8%, which is down from the previous academic year's graduation rate of 78.5%. As determined by the Arizona Department of Education, the district received a letter grade of "C". Grades are determined through an equal calculation of academic growth plus academic outcomes (% of students passing AIMS). The National Center for Educational Statistics calculated the national four-year graduation rate was 75.5% in 2009 and Arizona specifically had a 72.5% four-year graduation rate.

Traditional Tutoring

Tutoring can take on many shapes and forms in education. The most common forms of tutoring that are used in education are before school, after-school, and peer-to-peer tutoring. These three tutoring models have been used extensively and each has its own variations.

Before and after-school tutoring is commonly seen as voluntary tutoring being offered to students in the teachers classroom before and after-school. These settings can be group or one-on-one tutoring depending on the attendance each day. Attendance can be sporadic and often times attended mostly by high achieving students, not the students that are at risk of passing the classes.

In the past, the Sun Valley High School (a pseudo name), has developed a variety of tutoring programs. Attempts to provide academic interventions for the students have traditionally been based on voluntary models in which students attend tutoring/academic intervention time before and after school. Although these tutoring programs were well-intentioned the school has not seen a decrease in dropout rates,

higher graduation numbers, or better grades for the students as a whole.

Teachers encourage students to attend these tutoring sessions, but many students are so engaged in other extracurricular activities that they choose not to attend. “Extracurricular activities are freely chosen and provide greater opportunity for establishing relationships with peers and coaches or teachers than do most classroom activities” (Bergin & Bergin, 2009, p. 157). Many of the students make the choice not to attend tutoring and leave campus when the school day is over; therefore limiting the bond they build with the school.

Attachment

Attachment is simply the connection or bond an individual has with another person. Attachment in this discussion refers to the attachment students have between either the student and parent or the student and teacher. Within schools teachers are working to develop these attachments with the students, in the hope that attachments will help the students have a sense of security and feeling they have someone they can turn to when they need help. A student doesn't develop an attachment with only one person; students can develop attachments with multiple teachers as well as with the attachments they will establish at home with family and friends. Developing attachments at school also allows them to feel like they are part of something bigger and allows them to socialize along with develop behaviors and values that are appropriate for school. Students who have developed attachment to school have the feeling that people like them and care about their success (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

“Evidence suggests that secure teacher–student relationships predict greater knowledge, higher test scores, greater academic motivation, and fewer retentions

or special education referrals than insecure teacher–student relationships. In contrast, children who have conflicted relationships with teachers tend to like school less, experience less self-direction, and show lower levels of cooperation in classroom activities.” (Bergin & Bergin, 2009 pg. 154)

This relationship is directly related to the students’ motivation to succeed in challenging and demanding academic situations. Students that struggle to create parent-student and teacher-student relationships early on in their education will continue to have struggles throughout until those relationships are formed. These relationships have been determined to be integral parts of education at all levels of education. The need to develop intervention programs that can help build student relationships with adults has been identified (Learner & Kruger, 1997).

Academic Advisory

One approach that attempts to connect students with the school community is called an Academic Advisory. An Academic advisory is a form of structured intervention designed to increase student attachment with focus on academic performance.

The intention of academic advisories is to provide the student with structure and the relationship with school personnel they need to feel linked to the school values. This linkage allows direct guidance while the student has time to mature as a learner (Galassi et al., 1997). Academic advisories are typically delivered during the school day, similar to classes often designated previously as the homeroom.

Academic advisory is more than a traditional homeroom class; academic advisories are designed to provide guidance and support that exceeds the expectations of a traditional homeroom. Academic advisories are a time when students can focus on

course work for classes in which they are struggling in or time to work on current class work they need to complete. Academic advisories also provide time for the teacher to meet with the students individually while others are working, to discuss how they are performing in their other classes and address any issues they may be having. Academic advisories provide opportunities for the teacher to assume a similar role as a counselor. Some students need this time to help them identify how they can address issues they are having in specific classes although other students just need to feel that someone is watching over their progress and cares about them and their academic progress. This time is used to meet with all students, not just struggling students to discuss needs.

Even the highest performing students need the same support as the lowest performing students. Students at all levels benefit from the time and support gained through the academic advisory programs, and the relationships established with the teacher that has built the connections with their students on an individual and classroom level. Just because a student is high performing doesn't mean they don't need the time to talk through issues or challenges they may be experiencing (Galassi et al., 1997). If additional time to talk outside of the advisory period is needed then the teacher and student have the ability to schedule additional time as needed. Students also have the ability to arrange to leave their advisory classroom and travel to a classroom where they can obtain additional help from their academic teacher. This flexibility allows students to receive the tutoring they need to be successful if they are struggling in a class or if they feel they need to the extra help to continue to be successful.

Academic advisory is unique because selected groups are not targeted and the whole group is addressed throughout the intervention process. The advisor and students

generally meet multiple times in a week and possibly multiple times in a day and usually are done as both one-on-one meetings and whole group settings (Galassi et al., 1997; Van Ryzin, 2010). The advisor becomes a permanent part of the students' school experience and the relationship can last for several years.

“In this era of accountability, enhancing teacher–student relationships is not merely an add-on, but rather is fundamental to raising achievement.

Understanding the role of attachment in the classroom will help educators be more effective, particularly with challenging students. “(Bergin & Bergin, 2009 pg.141)

Challenges Regarding Academic Progress

Several possibilities exist for lack of academic progress. First the students are leading busy lives and have not placed a priority on academics. In urban schools many students have to work after school hours to help out with the living expenses at home. Second, many students do not have the maturity to understand how an academic advisory will assist them as students to become more productive adults. Some students are not willing to stay after school hours to attend tutoring/academic intervention when needed. Very few of these students have role models that emulate the importance of good grades (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). The sense of urgency felt by school personnel and significant individuals in the student's life is often not shared by the learner. As a result, many students do not see the need for academic intervention, especially during their free time after school (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

Sun Valley High School Academic Advisories

Attempts to reach all academically underperforming students with before and after school intervention have been successful with small numbers of students, but overall they have not had the hoped-for impact on the academic skills of the urban high school students. In order to help capture all students with academic intervention the Sun Valley High School has begun the implementation of academic advisory periods scheduled during the school day as part of every student's academic schedule. In an attempt to increase the success of the students and help decrease the "D" and "F" rates on the campuses an academic advisory period is a common class period scheduled for all students in the school and will be designed to allow students time to meet with the teacher they have for advisory as well as attend tutoring in their other courses of study.

The academic advisory program was designed for every student to be involved on campus. When a student receives their academic schedule at the beginning of the school year they are assigned to an academic advisor, these academic advisors are not the guidance counselors. These are teachers from the campus that will lead a class section of the advisory program. The teachers do not have the option to participate or not, all teachers are assigned a class section of 20-25 students on average. Academic advisory is a class section scheduled in the middle of the school day to maximize student participation by limiting the chances of absenteeism.

All students on campus are divided by academic grade level; this creates rooms with homogeneous populations of students in the same academic grade level. Dividing the campus population into homogeneous populations allows the curriculum within the academic advisory to be target for each specific grade level. Students in a freshman

advisory classroom will be learning about organization and note taking skills to help them transition into high school. In the sophomore classroom students are focused on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS), the year is broken down into segments to help prepare for the exam with reading and writing in the fall semester and Math primarily in the spring semester.

A junior level classroom is beginning to focus on college and what the requirements are to apply for college. As the year continues they will begin to apply for scholarships and begin to work on college applications. The senior students are beginning to look toward graduation and work on their senior capstone projects and continue applying for scholarships and financial aid. Curriculum at each level is not taught at the length of a regular class. Curriculum content is presented in 10-15 minute lessons that do not interfere with the remaining time in the advisory period. The remaining time is allotted for tutoring.

The advisory period provides time for tutoring during the middle of the school day to reach as many students as possible. Tutoring during the school day does not have the same issues as tutoring before and after school does. Students are not distracted by opportunities to be somewhere else and they are not trying to attend extracurricular activities or go to work. The students learn how this time can be beneficial to them and their success. This time during the school day provides for an uninterrupted focus on academics, and even if a student doesn't need tutoring they are expected to be working on classwork while they stay in their advisory room. Students have the opportunity to arrange to leave their advisory classroom assignment and visit other academic teachers where they may need assistance or time to finish a project.

Teachers may feel students are struggling and can require students to come to their room for assistance during this time or an advisory teacher may request for a student to attend a specific class for assistance based on the students' academic scores which are monitored by the advisory teacher. If students can not follow the directions and expectations for this time they can be assigned to a remediation time during advisory where they meet with other staff members to discuss their behavior and work through activities that help them understand the expectations of the academic advisory periods.

The advisory program at Sun Valley High School is helping the school reach every students' needs and help create the student-teacher relationship that has been proven to increase academic success. This program provides a teacher that every student knows they can go to when they have questions or issues. These academic advisory groups do not change every year, the students will stay with an advisory teacher from the beginning till graduation helping to foster that connection with the student and teacher.

In this urban high school district and Sun Valley High School in particular, the design of the program has been left up to the individual schools, with the overall intention being that they are providing academic intervention during the school day and not relying on the students to attend before or after school tutoring/ academic intervention. On each campus within this urban high school district, some form of intervention is taking place to help the students succeed. On some campuses a combination of an advisory and tutoring period exists while other campuses have developed a split program where advisory meets at one time during the day and the tutoring takes place at a different time in the day. By scheduling the tutoring during the school day the administration hopes to better capture the struggling students and address the issues they are having during this

time. Phillippo identified; “teacher support can boost students’ academic engagement and achievement, promote help-seeking behavior, buffer the negative effects of living in high-crime communities, and prevent dropout.” (Phillippo, 2010, p. 2259)

Although the literature is very positive about the use of Academic Advisories, very little data based support is found in the literature. The following research will look to identify the effect of advisory periods that allow for student academic intervention during the school day on the performance of students in an urban school district. The research will be conducted by examining the performance of students at one high school, Sun Valley High School, within the district that has been conducting advisory periods for four years.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Calls for changes to school format and structure are abundant. Suggestions range from reform of classroom procedures to changes to the core academic content taught to changing the roles and relationships within a school setting. Although the former two suggestions are important to discuss, the issue of changing roles and relationships is an interesting one in that research has shown that student engagement and academic achievement hinge on the development of strong bonds to parents, teachers and school communities, little consensus exists on how to achieve these types of relationships (Scales, Benson, Roehlkepartain, Sesma, & van Dulmen, 2006; Van Ryzin, 2011).

What can generally be agreed upon is that the positive connections students develop with their schools, teachers, and parents can directly influence their academic success. These relationships are shown to help build a foundation in the students' academic development and future success (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Attachment influences school success through two paths: indirectly through attachment to parents; and directly through attachment to teachers and schools (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). The focus of this literature review addresses student attachment to teachers and schools.

School/teacher attachment strongly influences student success in school, that is, increased standardized test scores, higher grades and lower levels of delinquency and discipline issues (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Student connectedness to school and their teachers can create a feeling that school is not only a place of learning but also as an important source of security and support

(Van Ryzin, 2010). Supportive teacher-student relationships are particularly beneficial to those students exposed to family and community based risk factors (Dubow, Tisak, Causey, Hryshko, Reid, 1991; Smokowski, Reynolds, & Bezruckos, 1999).

Student/Teacher & School Attachment

Strong relationships between students and teachers are critical to school success. The student-teacher relationship is vital to student success at the high school level and strong bonds between students and teachers are often credited with enhanced student motivation and engagement, pro-social behavior, and academic achievement (Van Ryzin, 2010). From a social perspective, positive teacher-student relationships are also associated with increased levels of self-esteem and decreased levels of frustration and anger (Van Ryzin, 2010). These behaviors often impact a child's ability to learn, focus and interact with others.

The transition from elementary and middle school levels to the high school level is often associated with a decrease in teacher support (Van Ryzin, 2010). Although strong bonds between students and teachers are known for enhancing academic achievement and overall mental well-being, development of attachment is often more challenging for teachers and students at the secondary school level as students spend less time with a single teacher than they did in early grades (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Many adults, nevertheless, can recall stories regarding the effect their high school teachers had on them, for example, influencing hobbies, determining career choices and providing the support needed to graduate.

The theoretical framework used for this paper is attachment and school bonding (also known as connectedness). Because the research questions focus on the significance

of the bond between students and school/teachers, understanding the basic concepts of attachment is necessary. Attachment is a deep and enduring bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby 1969). Attachment should not be confused with dependency as secure attachment encourages children to explore and find their place in their world. Attachment theory suggests that a child's early experiences with a caregiver (i.e. a parent) influence that child's beliefs and expectations about the willingness and approachability of others and that over time, these experiences shape how individuals will perceive themselves and others (Van Ryzin, 2010).

Attachment relationships are often defined by specific behaviors in children such as showing preference for or retreating from an attachment figure (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Secure attachment occurs when children have experiences with significant others that are warm, open and responsive to their needs (Bowlby, 1969 & 1982). In contrast, insecure attachment occurs when someone significant to the child rejects, neglects or is inconsistent in their affection or responsiveness (Van Ryzin, 2010).

Although most children will direct attachment to more than one figure, they are also highly selective about whom those figures are. Most children will attach to family but may also attach to non-family such as teachers (Ainsworth 1979). Attachment can influence behavior in several different types of relationships over the course of a person's life (Sampson, Carlson, Van Ryzin & Sroufe, 2009; Simpson, Collins, Tran & Haydon, 2007; Van Ryzin Carlson & Sroufe, 2009)

With regard to schools, attachment has at least two functions that are pertinent to classrooms and school performance. First, attachment provides feelings of security and

also allows children to balance the need for security with the motivation to explore their environment. Indeed, self-reliance and independence are the result of feeling secure (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). Secondly, secure attachment forms the base for socialization and social competence in children. Children with poorly defined attachments are more likely than secure children to exhibit behavior problems, aggression, dishonesty, disorganization and antisocial behavior (Hodges, Finnegan, & Perry, 1999)

For children exposed to risks at home and have insecure parental attachment, attachment can be transferred to or developed with non-family. Teachers or mentors, may be especially important for learners exposed to risks at home and have insecure family attachments. Zegers, Scheungel, van IJzendoorn, & Janssens (2006) found that adolescents having a secure therapeutic relationship with an adult perceived that adult as a base that provided security and support. Ainsworth (1989) also discussed the ability of non-parent adult figures to play the role of a surrogate parent and play an important part of a child's life by providing security, support and other benefits of a secure attachment relationship.

Student Support

Students across the academic spectrum, from low performing to high performing, need adequate support and connectedness to school in order to achieve academic success. Literature strongly suggests that teacher and school support can boost students' academic engagement and achievement (Davis, 2003), promote help-seeking behavior (Farmer, 2008), buffer the negative effects of living in high risk communities (Bowen & Bowen, 1999), and prevent school dropout (Croninger & Lee, 2001).

But successful interventions and support programs do more than increase class attendance or test scores. They also strive to understand the larger issues surrounding academic, social and personal problems that affect students and work to address those specific issues. This “personalization” of education is essential part of the learning process (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). In fact, McPartland (1994) argues that effective intervention and support programs promote school completion and academic achievement by focusing on the development of students’ relationships, teachers, and peers work to create a school environment which is academically supportive as well as a place that can help students with their personal and social problems.

Although well researched that secure attachment to adult figures is vital to the academic success of students, is often harder to achieve at the high school level as adolescents have a more difficult time using adult relationships to help with academic achievement because of the larger school environment high schools operate in (Learner & Kruger, 1997). With shortened face time with teachers and typically a larger student body on campus, students may feel lost in the shuffle. If the literature is correct in assuming that students need personalization, the institutions must implement interventions that foster the development of the teacher-student relationship. Learner and Kruger (1997) suggest the implementation of programs where teachers “adopt” students for the majority of their high school career in order to establish that attachment based relationship and increase student motivation and achievement.

Tutoring Time of Day

A variety of programs have been designed to encourage academic achievement by including greater positive time with students, for example, various types of tutoring.

Raising the educational achievement level of students is a major responsibility of teachers. Whether this work is done outside or inside the classroom, whether the focus is social or academically driven, teachers transmit more than facts and information. They develop relationships with their students (Lee & Smith, 1996). However, teachers must be given opportunities to connect with students.

Many schools use before and after-school tutoring programs to provide students an opportunity for small group or one-on-one learning time with their teacher to learning material at a deep level and to get assistance with homework and other projects outside the normal class time (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2001). In addition to teachers, schools often employ the use of non-teachers, such as classified staff, current students who have mastered certain subjects, pre-service teachers from local college and university programs, and community volunteers to assist students in their learning. Tutors may be asked to target a specific academic content area or help the students prepare for academic assessments (Saddler & Staulters, 2008; Zimmer, Hamilton, & Christina, 2010).

To examine the effectiveness of this type of tutoring/mentoring programs, a study examined the Pennsylvania Educational Assistance Program (EAP) in which the Pittsburgh Public School (PPS) district provided after-school tutoring to its' students during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. Funding was used to hire tutors that could be used outside of the school day and staff consisted of a combination of teachers, retired teachers and college students. The program was initially designed to have the tutors target students who had performed low on state and PPS district assessments, but the district made a decision to open the program to students of any learning level

(Zimmer et al., 2010).

During the 2004-2005 school year, the PPS district began the EAP program with 1,665 students participating of an eligible 22,991 students within the entire K-12 district. The following the 2005-2006 school year, the number of participants grew 19.4% to 5,939 student participants of an eligible 30,662 students. Participation of students of high school age was seen as significantly lower than the younger grades. Students in grades 9th, 10th, and 12th saw participation rates lower than 10%, with a slight increase of participation of students in 11th grade to near 15% participation. The increase in 11th grade participation is believed to be caused by students' beliefs that they need additional assistance to prepare for required state assessments during their 11th grade year. Despite the opportunities for tutoring, the students only experienced small gains on math and reading scores of achievement tests and were not deemed as significant growth (Zimmer et al., 2010).

EAP and other studies show that after-school programs are simply not effective because they are competing with outside factors for students' time and attention (Zimmer et al., 2010; Bergin & Bergin 2009). After school jobs, family obligations, and extracurricular school activities chip away at the likelihood students will engage in after school tutoring or mentoring programs. Before and after-school tutoring is often view as voluntary tutoring being offered to students in the teachers classroom. Depending on the attendance, these settings can be group or one-on-one tutoring. Attendance is often sporadic and generally attended mainly by high achieving students, not the students that are at risk of passing the classes (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Despite teacher encouragement, research has shown many students are so engaged in other extracurricular activities that they chose not to attend the offered tutoring sessions. Many students choose extracurricular activities over attending after-school tutoring sessions in the classroom because they have a deeper bond and connection to their sports, teams and coaches than their classroom teacher. These extracurricular activities have been shown to provide greater opportunity for establishing relationships with peers and coaches (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Participation in structured extracurricular activities generally results in positive effects in academic and social-emotional functioning but the same type of bonding for the classroom and academic connection is still being lost (Marsh, 1992; Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, & Valentine, 1999). As part of a larger framework, many schools have begun to implement small group advisory programs to better foster mentoring and relationship building between teachers and students (Van Ryzin, 2010). These small group advisory programs have group sizes of 10-18 students and the teacher meets both one-on-one with the students and in the whole group environment a minimum of once a week if not daily.

In an effort to understand the impact these types of small group advisory programs and subsequent teacher-student relationships would have on students and their academic achievement, Van Ryzin's (2010) study examined whether students from two high schools would consider their relationship with their advisory teachers as significant and if that relationship would foster positive school-based outcomes. The study included 209 students (80% of the total population) at two high schools that employed the use of advisory programs. At these schools, the advisory teacher worked directly with the students during the advisory period on a daily basis to define learning goals and

outcomes, to act as a resource for students who encountered academic or personal difficulties, and to encourage student efforts for success (Van Ryzin, 2010).

At the conclusion of the study, Van Ryzin (2010) concluded that while teachers did not rank at the highest level of relationship significance (first were peers, second were parents), the teacher-student mentoring relationship still contributed to positive school related outcomes such as student engagement and academic achievement and adjustment.

Positive Classroom Environments

Promoting positive development and school reform strategies do not need to be two separate models of change. In an 18-month case study on four California schools, researcher concluded that the biggest problem in schools was the quality of relationships between students and teachers, parents and teachers, and parents and students (Poplin & Weeres, 1992). They concluded that the real challenge of raising student academic achievement and performance heavily relied on improving and continually developing human relationships within the school and developing a strong school community (Scales et al., 2006).

Although the research suggests that school connectedness and teacher/student relationships are important to student achievement, the process in which this is accomplished is not clear. Research indicates that students with higher levels of school connection and school engagement tend to have better academic achievement and psychological adjustment (Van Ryzin, 2011). However, the next level that needs to be discussed is the maintenance and continuation of school connection and positive teacher/student relationships. Van Ryzin (2011) notes that although the importance of

positive school relationships has been established, it is less clear how these relationships can be fostered or hindered by student's perceptions of schools.

In an effort to investigate the impact school environments have on students, Van Ryzin's (2011) research evaluates student perceptions of school, engagement in learning, hope and academic achievement. In his study, Van Ryzin (2011) extended existing self-determination theory research by confirming that students' perception of their school environments were linked to their engagement in learning, which in turn was linked to change in hope and academic achievement. The finding of Van Ryzin's (2011) study suggest that students' perceptions of their autonomy, peer support, and performance may be useful leverage points for school intervention and reforms. Such reforms could include project-based learning, peer tutoring or cooperative learning environments such as advisory programs.

Van Ryzin's (2011) study suggests that the school environment as perceived by students can be a driving force of protective factors that can promote positive adolescent development and promote school achievement and engagement. From the results of his research, Van Ryzin (2011) calls for school reforms aimed at altering the nature of school environments to better support students' needs such as autonomy and belongingness and that the development of these may grow a positive feedback loop that, over time, promotes engagement and hope.

In a 1998-2001 study, Scales, Benson, Roehlkepartain, Sesma, and van Dulmen (2006) followed a sample of 370 students in the 7th through 9th grade for three years and into the student 10th through 12th grades to investigate the relation of development assets (e.g. positive relationships, opportunities, skills, values, and self-perception) to academic

achievement overtime. Assets are defined by the authors as important relationships, skills, opportunities and values that help guide adolescents away from risk behaviors, foster resilience and promote thriving (Scales et al., 2006). The study used student grade point averages (GPA) as a chief key in analyzing the correlation between academic achievement and development assets. Consistent with previous research this study indicated that students with more development assets reported greater GPAs and thus greater academic achievement than those students whose development assets levels decreased (Scales et al., 2006). The results of this study offer evidence that a broad focus on building and maintaining positive relationships in adolescents lives may contribute to promoting academic achievement. Infusing positive relationship development in classroom practices and in curriculum and instruction may provide the link needed to further increase development assets and achievement for students (Starkman, Scales, & Roberts, 1999; Taccogna, 2003; Scales et al., 2006).

Academic Advisories

The literature has shown the value of a positive classroom climate; more intense experiences to create attachments have led to the development of Advisory Programs. Advisory programs are activities or situations in which a teacher meets recurrently with a group of students to provide opportunities for mentorship, individualization, support, and guidance to assist students as they progress through adolescence (Juvonen, Kaganoff, Augustine, & Constant, 2004). Advisory programs have developed from research with early adolescents (10 – 14 year olds) which has shown that an enduring and meaningful relationship with only one caring adult in a school setting will improve academic achievement and reduce dropout rates (Jackson & Davis, 2000; National Association of

Secondary School Principals, 2006). Advisory programs are felt to help to facilitate the idea “every student needs to have a relationship with at least one adult in the school which is characterized by warmth, concern, openness and understanding” (George & Alexander, 1993).

Academic advisory programs are one approach to develop and build this support system within the advisory classroom. Advisory teachers are working to create these connections with the students. These teachers are in place to help provide guidance and support to these students (Galassi et al., 1997). The academic advisories provide students with the help they need to be successful both academically and socially within the school. Advisors work with the students to discuss struggles and concerns they are having in addition to providing resources to develop a positive climate at school (Galassi et al., 1997). Literature has shown that students who do not feel attached to school often will have poorer attendance and are more likely to drop out compared to students that feel connected to the school (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). “Advisory programs provide mutual benefits for students and teachers, an adult guide and advocate for students during an important developmental period, and guidance on a daily basis and that they broaden, supplement, and expand the scope of the formal school guidance program” (Galassi et al., 1997).

Conclusion

The literature has discussed the importance of relationships on academic achievement and the strong bonds that need to be developed with students between parents, teachers, and schools. The attachment students have with their parents is not directly seen on academic success as it is seen through the attachment to teachers and

schools. Creating these attachments with students in secondary education is important as students often feel a decrease in support in high school because of the reduced amount of time spent with individual teachers. Students from all academic performance levels need to feel they have the support in order to achieve academic success.

Teachers must also take on some of the responsibility in raising the educational achievement level of their students. Traditionally many schools developed after school tutoring programs to help provide students with academic support. These programs have positive intentions but are not always well attended by students that truly need the support the teachers are providing. Attendance to these programs is often times voluntary and students make the decisions to attend other activities either school related or non-school related instead of after school tutoring. Academic advisory is a program that is incorporated into the students' academic schedule and removes the voluntary aspect seen in many school tutoring programs. Academic advisory helps to develop a positive classroom climate and the attachment students' need that has been shown to provide positive academic success among students.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether academic advisory programs are having an impact on student achievement in an inner city Arizona high school. This will be determined by identifying any academic differences between students who participated in an academic advisory program and those prior to implementation of academic advisory. The effect of time students spent in an academic advisory on the achievement level in core academic areas will also be examined.

Sun Valley High School was not seeing success in after school tutoring programs and felt the incorporation of a program during the students' school schedule would result

in better outcomes. This study will help determine if spending the time during the school day in an academic advisory is beneficial to student academic achievement. This school has dedicated significant amounts of time in developing this program and this study will help determine if the outcomes from the classroom justify the inclusion of academic advisories.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Program Evaluation Design

This chapter details the methodology proposed for the program evaluation of one school that has implemented academic advisories in the Sun Valley School District. The questions that were addressed are:

1. What differences in academic achievement will be found between students who participated and those who did not participate in academic advisories?
2. What is the effect of time spent in an academic advisory on the achievement level in core areas of participating students?
3. Are the effects of advisory different for high, medium, and low achieving students as defined by the Explorer exam?

The first question for this study followed a quantitative archival approach utilizing achievement data collected by a school district containing multiple schools that have implemented the academic advisory program.

The second question analyzed the long term effect on achievement gathered through the quantitative analysis from archival data relative to the number of years spent participating in the academic advisory program participation.

The third question focused on a small representation of the student population to identify if advisory positively affected students at all academic levels. The Explorer exam was used to identify students that performed in the top third, middle third, and bottom third of the exam. Once these students were identified their academic performance in math and English classes was reviewed for change over time.

Participants and Setting

The program evaluation was conducted of one school site within a large urban school district located in the southwestern United States. The school received a school grade from the state of Arizona of a “C” and was rated as demonstrating an average level of performance according to state guidelines. The student population is 76.9% Hispanic, 8.6% Anglo, 7.6% African American, 3.7% Native American, and 1.8% Asian. The percentage of free and reduced lunch indicated that 86.31% of the families live in poverty.

Table 1: Demographics of Sun Valley High School						
	Demographics prior to implementation of Academic Advisory Periods during academic years 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09.			Demographics during implementation of Academic Advisory Periods during academic years 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12.		
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Hispanic Population	73.6%	75.7%	76.5%	76.4%	76.5%	76.9%
Anglo Population	9.3%	7.8%	8.1%	7.8%	7.6%	8.6%
African American Population	10.0%	9.8%	9.4%	9.8%	8.2%	7.6%
Native American Population	5.7%	5.2%	4.1%	4.3%	4.4%	3.7%
Asian Population	1.3%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%
Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage	68.14%	69.72%	79.90%	84.98%	86.31%	86.31%
Note: In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years the school district did begin the use of a designation of other for demographics not represented above.						

Data was analyzed from a total of 6 cohorts of students prior to the implementation of an academic advisory program and 4 cohorts of students that received the academic advisory program support. Based on how the original data was collected, no distinction has been made to account for those students that have transferred in or out of the school during the program evaluation period or have chosen to have poor attendance to school. These factors are considered a limitation of this study and will be a possible influence that can be considered for future research. This study evaluated the cohorts of students as a whole group and not individuals. This analysis was completed using archival data of grade distribution across grade levels in each core academic area, i.e., English and math.

		Table 2: Cohort structure before and after Academic Advisory						
		Years prior to Academic Advisory			Years after Academic Advisory			
		2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Students identified by cohort graduation year	Cohort 2007	12						
	Cohort 2008	11	12					
	Cohort 2009	10	11	12				
	Cohort 2010	9	10	11	12			
	Cohort 2011		9	10	11	12		
	Cohort 2012			9	10	11	12	
	Cohort 2013				9	10	11	12

The number of years that each student has participated in academic advisory varies with academic year in school. No students prior to 2008-2009 school year participated in the academic advisory program. Students that are members of Cohort 2010 received one year of academic advisory, students in Cohort 2011 received two years, Cohort 2012 received three years and Cohort 2014 received four years of academic advisory (Table 2). Only data for students who took a math or English class was evaluated in this study.

Procedures

Beginning in the spring of 2014 a collection of archival data was available. This data was reviewed allowing for a comparison of academic achievement in English and math for students prior to academic advisory and during academic advisory. A comparison was made on the overall academic performance of students in each level of math and English classes to determine if the academic advisory program is having an effect on the grades in these academic areas. The data then was used to determine if students that have been involved in the academic advisory program since its inception, i.e., four years, which occurred four years prior to this study saw greater success overall due to participation within the program than students who only experienced three, two or one year participation.

Data Analytic Plan

A descriptive quantitative data analysis determined any variances in demographics between the current student population at the urban high school being evaluated and the demographics of the student population in the years prior to the

implementation of the academic advisory program. This analysis was done to establish similarities and differences in the student population prior to and during academic advisories. In addition to demographics, class distribution data was reviewed to identify any significant variance in the number of classes offered in English and math prior to and during the academic advisories to check for any possible outside factors effecting results.

Archival grade data for each grade level in math and English classes for the three years prior to the academic advisory program was used to establish a control comparison group of students that did not receive the structured intervention through academic advisory program. The percentage of students that received a grade of “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, and “F” in math and English separately at each grade level was used. For example, in an English 1 in the fall of 2006 8.5% of students enrolled received an “A”, 27.5% received a “B”, 26.9% received a “C”, 16.6% received a “D”, and 19.6% received an “F”. This disaggregation by achievement level allowed for a comparison to be performed using with the data collected on grade distributions in the academic areas of math and English at each grade level after the academic advisory program began. These results allowed for a determination of the effect of mandatory tutoring during the school day on the math and English performance of secondary students.

The data collected on academic performance in math and English classes at each academic level also allowed for a comparison to be made between the control groups and the groups of students that have participated in academic advisories for either one, two, three, or four years. The results helped determine the effect of academic advisory over one, two, three or four years on the grades achieved in English and math courses.

The information gathered through the quantitative analysis was used to draw a conclusion on the success of academic advisory program participation over multiple years and if identifiable trends in the relationship between academic advisory and student academic outcomes emerged.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Academic advisory created a link that allows students to be connected to the school while growing as a learner (Galassi et al., 1997). To investigate the effectiveness of academic advisory at the secondary level, data was examined for a period of seven years. The data included three years prior to the implementation of the academic advisory program and the four years after the implementation. Two core content areas were studied: general education English and math courses. These two core content areas represent courses that every student must receive a passing grade in to achieve a high school diploma.

Data analysis of the academic achievement of students did not reveal increases of academic achievement from before academic advisory compared to those after the implementation of academic advisory. A visible decrease in the failure rate in English 6 and Algebra 2 during the four years academic advisory was implemented (see Table A6 and A10) but this decrease in the failure rate did not continue into the next level courses during the following fall semester (see Table A7 and A11). The failure rates in English 7 increased in the fall of 2009 and 2010, two of the four years academic advisory was implemented (see Table A7), Geometry 1 failure rates also increased for the four years academic advisory was implemented, 2009-2012, as compared to the two years prior to implementation, 2007-2008 (see Table A7). In contrast to the works cited by Bergin & Bergin (2009); Van Ryzin (2011); Davis (2003), academic advisory was not found to affect achievement.

The students at Sun Valley High School have varying backgrounds that could have made a difference in the outcome of academic achievement changes resulting from the implementation of academic advisory. During the 2011-2012 school year over 17.9% of the students that were enrolled during the school year transferred to another school some time during the year. This represents a transient student population within the school. This much student movement hinders the opportunities to develop the attachment to school needed to build success within the program. Van Ryzin (2011) feels to help establish school reform students need autonomy and belongingness, though such development occurs over time. Many of these students in this study may not have stayed in the school long enough to develop a sense of community or buy in to form a connection to the school or teachers. The typical dropout or transfer rate for the school went from 25.2% to 22.2% over the time the study was conducted.

Analysis of the grades in English and Math throughout the years examined by this study did not prove definitive. Gains and losses were visible in all courses within English and math throughout all years; refer to Tables A1-A14. This finding has allowed for a conclusion that the current academic advisory program may not have been effective in raising academic achievement in these two core content areas, that is, grades remained similar over time as compared to before and after implementation. Increases and decreases in academic achievement fluctuated throughout all years and courses examined within this study. No clearly defined academic growth or decline could be determined. This result did not seem to align with the research by Jackson & Davis (2000) or the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006) that promoted that notion

that academic advisories would be instrumental in providing students the emotional and academic support that would result in improved academic achievement.

Another aspect of this study was to determine if increased participation over time made an impact on academic achievement. The question was posed, if a student participated in academic advisory for one year, two years, three years, or four years, were identifiable differences in academic achievement present? When attempting to determine if the length of participation was a factor in academic success, similar results were seen when compared to the aggregated data, that is academic scores increased and decreased in both English and math courses but trends in one direction of either growth or decline could not be identified. Examination of Table A14 when looking at spring semester 2009- spring semester 2012 provides evidence for this conclusion. Cohort 2010 had an average failure rate of 4.8% in the spring of 2009 in Algebra 4. This failure rate continued to increase over the next two years and peaked at 13.3% in the spring of 2011 then decreased with cohort 2013 in the spring of 2012 to 10.9%. Similar increases and decreases are seen across all of the math and English courses spanning the cohorts 2010-2013 as seen in the shaded regions of Tables A1-A14.

This research question aligns very closely with a study reported by Scales, Benson, Roehlkepartain, Sesma, and van Dulmen (2006) in which 370 students in grades 7th through 9th were followed for three years to determine if identified assets (e.g. positive relationships, opportunities, attachment, skills, values, and self-perception) related to academic achievement over time. Scales et al. (2006) reported that the students with more assets had higher grade point averages (GPA) over the three year period. These positive results were not seen in the study of academic advisory.

The Scales et al. (2006) study looked at three cohorts of students for three consecutive years, which is different from this study which examined four cohorts for one, two, three, or four years. In both studies students had the opportunities to develop attachment to the school and positive relationships. The student populations were very different between these two studies. In the study by Scales et al. (2006), the student population was over 85% Caucasian and the students primarily came from families of high social economic status that highly valued education. This population is drastically different that students at Sun Valley High School were students are 77% Hispanic and come from families of low social economic status.

The final aspect of the research was to look at a select group of students based on their achievement on the Explore exam administered during the fall semester of their freshman year of high school. The Explore exam is a test produced by ACT that is commonly given to 8th or 9th graders to help prepare for the ACT, plan their high school courses, and give possible career direction. This group of students was subdivided based on their performance on this exam into three categories, high, medium, and low. Galassi et al. (1997) determined students at all levels can benefit from time to address challenges they may be experiencing. A student that is recognized as a high performing student scored in the top third of the Explore exam, medium students scored in the middle third, while low performing scored in the bottom third of the exam. The Explore exam was only used to identify the select group of students to be studied over their time at Sun Valley High School. The first year the Explore exam was given to a cohort of students was the fall of 2011. The math and English scores were then reviewed for these fifteen students for all math and English classes completed from the fall of 2011 through the

spring of 2013 as seen in Table A15. These scores again showed no identifiable growth or decline across all students reviewed. Changes were seen in individual students, but the overall trend showed no academic growth or decline.

Based upon the available research, the academic advisory at Sun Valley High School has had no effect on the academic achievement of the students. The grade variations students received prior to the implementation of academic advisory continues even after academic advisory within the school. One aspect of academic advisory that cannot be easily measured is the level of attachment the students now feel they have with the school. Attachment to school provides students with a feeling that a school is not only a place of learning, but provides security and support for the students (Van Ryzin, 2010). The attachment is not only from participation in the classroom, but involvement in extracurricular activities. Information is not available for the years prior to 2010-11, but in the time since implementation, participation in extracurricular programs have been at high levels, refer to Table 3. Bergin & Bergin (2009) stated the participation in extracurricular activities is better at establishing relationships than classroom activities. On average over 60% of the students at Sun Valley High School participated in an extracurricular activity. This connection to the school helps keep the students engaged and involved in, instead of being out in the community where other problems can arise. Academic advisory might not have had an academic change on the students, but may have provided connections to the school that would otherwise not of occurred.

Table 3	Extracurricular Participation						
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Sun Valley H.S.	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	63%	61%	69%

Educational Implications

Academic advisory programs require a large commitment on behalf of the school to implement. These programs require buy in from all parties involved, including the district, school, administration, teachers, students, and parents. Implementation is not a simple task to undertake. A program of this magnitude requires modifications to the academic day and bell schedule. Committing to complete this process, a school personnel must feel they are doing what is best for the students academically and socially. Careful oversight needs to be taken for a program of this magnitude as it has potential positive and negative implications on a school. If outcomes are seen like those obtained through this study then careful review needs to be considered for future planning. The potential impact this program has on the framework of a campus is great in terms of time and expense and needs to be addressed from a well-considered scientific base. If the program is not correctly handled then it can easily turn into a period of time on a campus that is being wasted. Instructional time is so important; educators cannot afford to be at a loss during the school day. Given the results of this preliminary study, the question must be raised about the value of continued implementation.

The program in this study did not produce the desired outcome of higher levels of achievement. This finding should be identified by the district and administration as an area of concern as this program has included time, money and resources to implement. Time needs to be spent on determining where the problems are within the advisory program to make sure corrections can be made so possible desired outcomes can be achieved. If the program cannot be corrected than a discussion should take place on

whether to continue with academic advisory or identify another program to make an attempt at academically capturing the students.

Future Research

Possible future research on academic advisory could examine the academic achievement at the classroom instructor level and not a whole campus level. This study examined the effect of academic advisory on the math and English scores of students without taking into consideration the academic advisor they worked directly with during this time. Davis (2003) felt the teacher support could boost students' academic engagement and achievement. Beneficial research may be conducted by being able to examine the effect of academic advisory as delivered by individual teachers. This investigation could be achieved by looking at math and English scores achieved by students over the four years of academic advisory implementation within individual classrooms based on their assigned teacher during academic advisory time. This type of study would also include the effectiveness of the implementation of academic advisory of the specific teacher compared to other teachers that also had students participating in the study. The difficulty with this level of study would be the necessity for individual student grade data analysis which is difficult to obtain because of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Due to FERPA, school districts are limited on the information they can release to an outside researcher.

Conducting a survey of the students and how their feelings are of their attachment towards the school may also be beneficial. Has a program such as academic advisory helped the students become more involved, or even feel they have someone they can turn to if they need to ask questions or have concerns? Although the study did not find an

effect on the level of academic achievement as a result of advisories perhaps other factors, not sensitive to the measures used in this study were at play. As discussed previously, school attachment helps provide support that many of the students need (Juvonen, Kaganoff, Augustine, & Constant (2004); George & Alexander (1993); Galassi et al. (1997)) and correlations with other significant factors may be drawn between attachment and school discipline data, to determine if a decrease in discipline rates has occurred within the school.

Future research is possible on academic advisory and may be necessary to develop a true determination of the program and outcomes relative to student and teacher behavior.

Limitations

During a study, limitations must be addressed to determine how the outcome of the study may have been influenced by outside factors beyond a researcher's control. While conducting the study on academic advisory limitations did arise that could not be accounted for during the study period. These limitations included school attendance, participation in the free and reduced lunch program, staff participation in the academic advisory program, and leadership changes within the school.

Sun Valley High School has seen a decline in the attendance rate based on the 100th day of school during the past three years. As seen in Table 4 the attendance rate has dropped nearly 4% over the last three years on the 100th day. Student attendance is a strong focus in education but is a limitation because it is out of the control of the school. Students are expected to and encouraged to attend school each day. Sun Valley High School has made every effort to encourage attendance to school each day. Galassi,

Gulledge, & Cox (1997) feel the level of student attachment is related to attendance and increases in attachment may reduce the likelihood of dropout.

Table 4	100th Day Attendance Rate						
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Sun Valley H.S.	97.1%	97.5%	98.1%	97.7%	93.0%	93.7%	93.9%

Along with the declining attendance rates, Sun Valley High School has seen the effects of the economy on their students. During the 2006-07 school year 60% of the students that attended Sun Valley High School were eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. During the last seven years the student eligible for free or reduced lunch has increased significantly to 89% of students in the 2012-13 school year (see Table 5). This increase in participation in the lunch program correlates to the struggles financially the families are having at home. These struggles are not only placed on the parents to provide for the family, but many students are expected to contribute to the financial stability of the family. This family expectation reduces the time outside of school students have available to focus on their academics. The support from teachers can encourage academic engagement and help reduce the effects of living in struggling communities (Phillippo, 2010; Dubow, Tisak, Causey, Hryshko, Reid, 1991; Smokowski, Reynolds, & Bezruckos, 1999).

Table 5	Free and Reduced Lunch Participation						
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Sun Valley H.S.	68%	70%	80%	85%	86%	86%	89%

Sun Valley High School has worked to effectively implement academic advisory as an intervention program. They have developed the program for all students to participate in and ask the staff to follow guidelines for its successful implementation. The feeling of the staff, however, suggests that controlling exactly what is occurring in every classroom by every teacher is impossible. Fidelity to the process involved in academic advisories was not within the scope of this study. Some teachers may be stronger at implementing academic advisory with their students while some are weaker. Academic advisory was designed to help all students the same, but a limitation that cannot be controlled is the effectiveness of the implementation of each teacher in his\her classroom. All students are being exposed to academic advisory, but the level of successful exposure may vary depending on the teacher. Skill levels of teachers is a variable that was not controlled for this study, as the school achievement was examined as a whole and did not follow select teachers' classrooms.

In addition to the previously discussed limitations, Sun Valley High School did experience a leadership change during the years analyzed in this study. A new principal was selected for this school for the 2009-10 school year when academic advisory was initially implemented. Along with the change in principal leadership, various additional administrative changes have been made during the time frame of the study. It is not possible to identify if the leadership changes within the school have changed the outcome seen within academic advisory.

Limitations are addressed in this study to make all interested individuals aware of the possible outside factors that have had an effect on the school and its students during

the years examined in this study. The study was conducted using academic data directly from classroom grade distributions of students within math and English courses.

Conclusion

Even though academic advisories have provided opportunities for attachment to school and a tutoring time during the school day in this study they have not resulted in growth in academic achievement at Sun Valley High School. This study reviewed multiple scenarios to see if academic advisory provided any form of academic support and each proved to have a similar outcome that showed students as an aggregated group largely maintained the same level academically during academic advisory as before. Several factors were identified that could have had an effect on the outcome of this study and should be considered when drawing a conclusion.

Additional research could be conducted to address possible limitations or narrow the field of research further. This study determined students that attended Sun Valley High School who come from a primarily a Hispanic background and low social economic households did not see academic growth. The program at Sun Valley High School should be reviewed to determine if continued implementation should take place or modification to the program should occur in an attempt to increase academic achievement.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

Three research questions were addressed to determine the effect of academic advisories on an urban high school in the southwest United States.

4. What differences in academic achievement will be found between students who participated and those who did not participate in academic advisories?
5. What is the effect of time spent in an academic advisory on the achievement level in core areas of participating students?
6. Are the effects of advisory different for high, medium, and low achieving students as defined by the Explorer exam?

These questions were addressed by examining math and English class letter grade distribution. The data was examined depending on each specific question. Question one required the review of letter grade distribution data from three years prior to implementation compared to four years post. For the next question data was looked at by following each cohort through their high school career in math and English courses to identify if those that had a greater number of years in academic advisory had an academic benefit over those that participated for fewer years. The final question required 15 students to be identified based on their score on the Explore exam, this exam score was only used to determine if they were high, middle, or low achieving students. Once the students were identified their grades in math and English courses were reviewed to look for any correlation between academic advisory and academic achievement.

Overall a correlation between academic advisory and academic achievement was not identifiable within the scope of this study. Some small gains were seen in one math and one English class but those gains did not continue into the next academic course in the sequence. Participation in academic advisory did not increase or decrease academic achievement; it was seen that continuous ups and downs occurred within the grade distribution before and during academic advisory. The same was seen when looking at the two remaining questions also. None of the questions provided insight into possible significance with the inclusion of academic advisories within an urban high school.

Conclusion

The intent behind implementation academic advisory in an urban school is positive, but in the case of this study the academic results were not seen. Academic advisory showed no positive or negative correlation over time on academic achievement. Increases and decreases were seen within individual courses, but those changes could not establish trends throughout the study.

This study identified multiple limitations, for example school attendance by students, participation in the free and reduced lunch program, staff participation, and leadership changes within the school. These limitations need to be considered and future studies may find ways to identify and address these possible limitations. It is recommended that the school continue to exam the impact academic advisories are having on their students and make a determination if continuation of this program is beneficial. The school may determine the level of attachment the students are feeling towards the school is beneficial enough to maintain the current program.

This study investigated school wide achievement and did not look at individual student data. Future studies may want to examine individual students to help reduce the number of limitations such as dropout and transfer rates that may be affecting the outcome, additionally being able to examine teacher fidelity. This study lays the foundation for additional research to examine the utility of this program in a specific manor. In no way does this study determine advisories are not providing support for our students. The results of this study provide an initial examination based on school wide data into academic advisory programs raising many more questions than answers.

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTED ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

		English 1 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	8.5%	46.9%	11.0%	12.0%	7.9%	9.9%	6.8%
	B	27.5%	24.1%	19.2%	21.7%	17.0%	16.9%	17.4%
	C	26.9%	12.7%	28.8%	19.4%	25.6%	19.0%	30.8%
	D	16.6%	7.0%	15.1%	17.6%	25.1%	23.8%	23.5%
	F	19.6%	9.1%	24.9%	28.6%	24.4%	30.4%	21.3%

		English 2 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	17.3%	23.9%	10.4%	5.5%	7.9%	10.3%	4.0%
	B	21.2%	26.5%	21.4%	21.3%	16.7%	22.6%	15.2%
	C	17.0%	22.5%	24.7%	28.8%	24.3%	23.4%	31.8%
	D	14.3%	9.9%	22.0%	15.8%	21.0%	22.1%	27.8%
	F	29.1%	17.2%	21.4%	28.6%	30.2%	21.3%	21.2%

		English 3 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	6.1%	15.0%	10.8%	5.2%	6.6%	5.9%	9.2%
	B	16.6%	21.2%	33.8%	22.4%	20.7%	15.3%	14.5%
	C	28.8%	27.7%	27.7%	33.5%	23.6%	20.9%	17.8%
	D	24.7%	16.3%	16.9%	20.7%	20.7%	19.8%	25.4%
	F	23.7%	19.9%	10.8%	18.1%	28.3%	37.8%	32.6%

		English 4 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	12.1%	14.3%	21.1%	12.3%	5.8%	8.5%	11.2%
	B	20.5%	20.1%	26.8%	22.7%	16.1%	17.1%	20.7%
	C	25.4%	16.5%	26.8%	24.9%	21.9%	23.9%	20.1%
	D	18.6%	23.4%	13.4%	15.8%	18.9%	18.8%	23.2%
	F	23.5%	25.6%	11.7%	24.3%	37.2%	30.7%	24.9%

		English 5 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	8.0%	4.3%	8.1%	9.6%	15.4%	8.8%	22.0%
	B	22.1%	14.2%	17.4%	26.3%	30.4%	17.3%	21.1%
	C	26.1%	23.2%	31.8%	25.3%	21.2%	27.0%	22.9%
	D	21.6%	28.0%	22.1%	19.6%	20.8%	24.5%	19.1%
	F	22.1%	28.9%	20.2%	18.5%	12.3%	22.1%	15.0%

		English 6 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	9.2%	4.5%	13.1%	15.2%	7.0%	14.3%	19.4%
	B	17.9%	17.6%	24.0%	34.6%	34.6%	19.1%	24.3%
	C	25.6%	28.4%	33.6%	23.0%	21.0%	30.4%	26.9%
	D	23.6%	23.3%	14.0%	14.8%	23.0%	21.2%	16.2%
	F	23.6%	26.1%	15.3%	12.5%	14.4%	14.6%	13.3%

		English 7 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	7.6%	20.0%	22.8%	16.3%	5.3%	5.9%	16.0%
	B	32.7%	28.3%	31.0%	26.4%	16.5%	21.1%	38.8%
	C	37.4%	29.4%	21.8%	31.0%	32.0%	35.2%	23.7%
	D	18.1%	15.6%	14.7%	17.1%	26.7%	31.3%	18.6%
	F	4.1%	6.7%	8.6%	9.3%	19.5%	5.9%	2.6%

		English 8 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	16.8%	9.5%	10.7%	14.6%	1.9%	7.1%	14.0%
	B	26.6%	26.6%	31.6%	24.3%	17.9%	25.7%	40.4%
	C	38.2%	41.4%	35.8%	27.9%	31.9%	42.9%	32.5%
	D	15.6%	21.3%	13.9%	30.0%	42.0%	20.9%	12.3%
	F	2.9%	1.2%	8.0%	3.2%	6.2%	3.0%	0.7%

		Algebra 1 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	13.4%	7.5%	12.4%	12.2%	11.2%	4.3%	0.3%
	B	25.4%	23.7%	17.7%	31.6%	19.0%	13.5%	6.3%
	C	20.4%	28.9%	23.0%	21.3%	21.0%	21.0%	19.6%
	D	21.1%	17.1%	17.0%	18.4%	20.2%	35.9%	35.4%
	F	19.0%	22.8%	30.0%	15.9%	28.5%	25.3%	38.3%

		Algebra 2 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	7.9%	9.1%	12.1%	8.9%	4.2%	5.1%	1.7%
	B	24.5%	12.6%	13.1%	15.4%	11.7%	12.2%	9.3%
	C	22.5%	23.5%	14.5%	24.3%	29.1%	26.4%	28.5%
	D	15.9%	19.1%	19.5%	26.8%	30.4%	29.7%	34.4%
	F	29.1%	35.7%	40.8%	24.6%	24.6%	25.7%	26.2%

		Geometry 1 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	5.3%	12.6%	6.8%	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%	3.7%
	B	20.0%	19.7%	26.0%	13.5%	12.6%	11.4%	14.1%
	C	18.7%	26.8%	28.2%	26.5%	21.5%	23.7%	19.6%
	D	22.0%	23.6%	23.2%	28.8%	26.5%	25.3%	30.0%
	F	34.0%	17.3%	15.3%	26.5%	35.4%	34.3%	32.2%

		Geometry 2 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	9.8%	12.5%	7.1%	4.7%	2.2%	4.7%	12.5%
	B	15.0%	19.6%	28.4%	14.2%	8.8%	22.9%	17.7%
	C	28.6%	26.8%	31.0%	24.7%	30.0%	26.9%	26.0%
	D	20.3%	16.1%	22.6%	30.5%	30.8%	23.3%	20.8%
	F	26.3%	25.0%	11.0%	25.8%	28.2%	21.7%	22.9%

Table A13		Algebra 3 Grade Distribution						
		Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Letter Grade	A	1.3%	9.3%	15.5%	2.5%	9.5%	4.4%	9.0%
	B	5.3%	27.9%	20.4%	6.7%	17.0%	10.2%	29.9%
	C	21.3%	27.9%	35.9%	29.4%	27.9%	22.9%	20.9%
	D	34.7%	25.6%	19.4%	32.8%	27.9%	42.0%	20.9%
	F	36.0%	9.3%	8.7%	28.6%	17.7%	20.0%	19.4%

Table A14		Algebra 4 Grade Distribution						
		Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
Letter Grade	A	3.6%	17.5%	31.7%	8.5%	8.8%	3.8%	5.7%
	B	16.1%	36.3%	26.9%	19.8%	22.1%	13.7%	12.3%
	C	32.1%	16.3%	25.0%	41.5%	36.3%	27.9%	22.7%
	D	28.6%	16.3%	11.5%	20.8%	19.5%	42.6%	34.6%
	F	19.6%	13.8%	4.8%	9.4%	13.3%	10.9%	24.6%

Table A15**Grades in Math and English for Students identified by Explore Exam**

Student #	Explore Exam Perform	2011-2012				2012-2013				2013-2014			
		English Sem 1	English Sem 2	Math Sem 1	Math Sem 2	English Sem 1	English Sem 2	Math Sem 1	Math Sem 2	English Sem 1	English Sem 2	Math Sem 1	Math Sem 2
1	High	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	C	A		B	
2	High	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	A	A		A	
3	High	C	C	C	C	C	D	C	B	A		B	
4	High	B	C	C	C	B	B	A	C	B		B	
5	High	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A		A	
6	Middle	C	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	F		F	
7	Middle	D	C	D	D	C	C	F	D	A		C	
8	Middle	D	D	D	D	D	D	C	D	C		C	
9	Middle	B	A	C	B	C	B	C	D	B		D	
10	Middle	B	C	F	D	F	F	F	F	Transfer		Transfer	
11	Low	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F		F	
12	Low	D	C	C	F	C	B	C	C	C		C	
13	Low	F	F	D	D	D	F	F	F	F		F	
14	Low	D	C	D	C	D	D	D	D	No Class		No Class	
15	Low	D	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	C		F	

APPENDIX B

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY IRB EXEMPTION



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Kathleen McCoy
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
480/965-6198
Kathleen.McCoy@asu.edu

Dear Kathleen McCoy:

On 2/19/2014 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Are Academic Advisory Periods Having an Effect in an Arizona Inner City High School District
Investigator:	Kathleen McCoy
IRB ID:	STUDY00000630
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• PUHSD Consent.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • GARD IRB 021614.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 2/19/2014.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc:

Michael Gard