PROJECT SWAG (STUDENTS WHO ACCEPT GREATNESS): A PROPOSAL FOR AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

by

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BS, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2006

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences

Graduate School of Public Health in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Health

University of Pittsburgh

2011

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Graduate School of Public Health

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July 21, 2011

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Background: High school dropouts are a public health concern, due to the short-term and long-term effects they can have on themselves, communities, and taxpayers. Many repercussions result from dropping out of high school, such as inadequate education, higher crime rates, and higher tax dollars spent on high school dropouts. Not having a high school diploma can lead to poorer quality of life, limited access to employment, lower income levels, and inadequate or no health care insurance. **Objective:** The goal of this thesis is to propose an after-school program that can be implemented by the New Castle Area School District to intervene with high school dropouts with an early intervention. The design is targeted for students in grades four through six. This proposal incorporates three health program planning frameworks: the Social-Ecological Model, the Mobilize, Assess, Plan, Implement, and Track (MAP-IT) framework, and the Community Tool Box framework. It also includes constructs from Social Cognitive Theory and input from administrators, teachers, and staff at George Washington Intermediate. **Methods:** An extensive review of the literature and interviews were conducted. In total, eight administrators, teachers, and staff at George Washington Intermediate School in New Castle Area School District provided feedback for developing the after-school program. **Results:** Findings from literature showed most after-school programs have an academic, academic and behavioral counseling or art focus with some recreational activities. A limited number of

programs included academics, behavioral counseling, arts, and recreation. The results from the interviews showed students would benefit from an after-school program that encompassed academic support, behavioral counseling, arts, cultural enrichments and recreational activities. **Conclusions:** These findings helped provide recommendations for developing the after-school program. Recommendations are to provide an after-school program for high poverty areas and for students who are in grades fourth through sixth.

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PREFACE

Picture an artist who has been given a blank canvas; imagine the anticipation he or she holds for creating a masterpiece focusing on every detailed stroke of the paintbrush perfectly drumming on the tightly woven fabric, the artist breathlessly awaits the final product. Community health can parallel the canvas and artist scenario where the community represents the canvas and the artist represents the assessors; health statistics help paint the picture of a community's health. Some may illustrate the influential causes and rates of disease, morbidity, and mortality; others center attention on significant life periods or occurrences. The data assist the evaluators in describing a population's need.

The alarming high school dropout rates and repercussions high school dropouts face will be presented in this thesis and will paint the picture of America's potential problem areas for some areas of the health status. My plan is to take the existing canvas painting of some of America's high school dropouts and turn it into a masterpiece by introducing a preventative early-intervention strategy by proposing an after-school program to address high school dropout at an early age. The reasons for naming the after-school program **Project SWAG** are twofold: one, it offers a partial definition of what I would like to see the program to represent, which is defined by "swag – the way in which you carry yourself. Swag is made up of your overall confidence, style, and demeanor" (Urban Dictionary 2011); and two, it allows me to create

acronyms for the second goal of the program, “Students Who Accept Greatness,” which is a chance for the students to believe in their potential for success. My vision for the students is to develop an exceptional swag in their academic performance, behavior, attitude, and character.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Heavenly Father for the wonderful husband, son, family, and friends He's given me. To my amazing husband, Vasa, words cannot describe how much I love and adore you. You have offered me so much love and support, through my education and, though it was not easy, we finally made it through. Tavion, Mommy is so sorry she had to spend so much time away from you, but you've been such a good boy helping Mommy with housework and helping me de-stress with cuddle time, walks, and prayers. Mommy is so proud of the beautiful, loving, smart, and polite little boy you are becoming. Mom, thank you for all the long talks, listening ears, and great insight you've provided to me throughout my life, especially during my education. Thank you for your prime example of what it takes to strive for the best and to not let anyone bring you down. To the rest of my family members, thank you for your love, support, encouragement, and laughter. Gina Rose, Natalie Blais, and Ms. Tammy Thomas, how would I have survived without you three during my years at the University of Pittsburgh? You three were a God-send and I am truly blessed to have you in my life. To my work friends, Laura, Patty and Joanne, your love and support is a blessing; it's wonderful to be surrounded by beautiful people as yourselves every day. Lisa Miller, thank you for offering your time to review my thesis. Dr. Songer, thank you for not giving up on me; you've taught me so much. To the New Castle Area School District administrators, teachers, and staff who offered insight for developing this after school program, thank you for your time and

feedback. Last, but not least, to my phenomenal committee members, I hope one day I can be such an amazing support to my students as all four of you were to me. Dr. Terry, you amaze me more each day, and I am so thankful I was able to have you as my committee chair. I am extremely grateful and honored to have worked with you during my thesis. Thank you for your amazing insight and direction throughout my project. Dr. Martinson, thank you for your thoughtfulness during my thesis drafts. Dr. Voorhees, I am honored as well to have your thorough commentary, guidance, and expertise for my thesis. Ms. Tammy Thomas, thank you for the constant feeling of support; you never made me feel like I was taking up your time. You always provided me with such an amazing environment that provided me a sense of comfort, relief, and joy. Thank you for your considerate time in providing me with helpful feedback to make my project better. And to the amazing children and youth of our future, believe in yourselves; although life will bring you many obstacles, God has an incredible plan for you to do something great. Do not let *anyone* tell you that you cannot accomplish something, for only you, God, and your hidden talents and potential determines how amazing you can be.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Dropping out of high school and not having a diploma can have long-term negative socio-economic consequences. These consequences do not affect only the individual; high school dropouts can be quite costly to families, communities, and society as a whole. Authors warn not to focus solely on risk factors for predicting which students will leave high school (Gleason & Dynarski 2002).

This thesis examines the risk factors and early warning signs for high school dropout. It reviews how dropping out of high school can negatively impact individuals, communities, and society. It reviews federal policies and current programs that address the high school dropout crisis. It offers insight from administrators, teachers, and staff from George Washington Intermediate School in New Castle Area School District for ways to address high school dropouts.

Three health planning frameworks: Social-Ecological Model framework, Mobilize, Assess, Plan, Implement, and Track (MAP-IT) framework, and the Community Tool Box framework, in addition to constructs from Social Cognitive Theory and input from interviews were used to further develop an after-school program, with the efforts to decrease students from dropping out of high school.

The goal of this thesis is to propose an after-school program that can be implemented by the New Castle Area School District. By developing a proposal for an after-school program, the

Principal Investigator (PI) can help the New Castle Area School District implement an intervention to increase the percentage of students that graduates from high school. The goal of the proposal is to address high school dropouts from an early intervention perspective; the program targets students in grades four through six. The methodological approach of the study and themes that emerged from the interviews has been provided.

In order to identify the programs needs and activities to include in the after-school program, interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, and staff of George Washington Intermediate School. The interviews were aimed toward the following questions: what were the early warning signs of high school dropout; what administrators, teachers, and staffs could do to address high school dropout; what programs were being offered currently; what academic initiatives were needed for transition to high school; the benefits and limitations of an after-school program; administrators', teachers', and staffs' visions on an after-school program; and ways to get parents, caregivers, and community members involved.

The themes that emerged from the interviews were administrators', teachers', and staffs' awareness of risk factors for high school dropout; current programs or recommendations for addressing high school dropouts; characteristics of an after-school program; and limitations for students in education and for an after-school program. Recommendations are to offer an after-school program for grades fourth through sixth to address high school dropouts earlier in the intervention stage and to set high poverty areas as a priority.

1.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

New Castle Area School District is located in Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. The total population in 2006 estimates 24,732 people. The estimated median household income in from the US Census Bureau was $25,598 in 1999. As an entire district, 65.58 percent of the New Castle Area School students are receiving free and reduced lunches, while the percentages of free and reduced lunches for other districts are: Union Area School District 39.05 percent, Shenango Area School District 25.03 percent, Neshannock Township School District 15.66 percent (NSLP, 2010). George Washington Intermediate School has 70.52 percent of their students receiving free and reduced lunches (National School Lunch Program [NSLP], 2010).

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), (2011) there is a new approach for calculating graduation rates in the school year of 2009-10. This requirement has been established by the Department of Education, in order to properly calculate graduation rates. The goal of the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate is to accurately calculate the number of students who complete high school within 4 years, starting with ninth grade. The calculation involves transfer students who are added or removed from the cohort.

The Public Local Education Agency dropouts and dropout rate for 2009-10 for New Castle is 1.4 percent; that is, 14 students drop out for every 1,000 students (PDE, Dropout Data and Statistics, 2011). The high school graduation rate is reported to be 73.43 percent; the preliminary 2009-10 4-year cohort graduation rate for New Castle Area School District was 73.72 percent; graduation rates for other districts surrounding New Castle Area School District are 87.97 percent for Mohawk Area School District, 91.80 for Union Area School District, and

93.07 percent for Neshannock Township School District (PDE-4-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2011).

The attendance rate for New Castle Area School District is 90.70 percent, Union Area School District (94.5 percent), Mohawk Area School District (95.10 percent), and Neshannock Township School District (94.50 percent), New Castle Falls short (PDE 2011).

2.0 BACKGROUND

This chapter discusses the characteristics of dropouts, highlights the educational decline the United States faces in academic performance and dropout rates, and provides an explanation of 'dropout factories.' It also offers insight regarding factors that influence high school dropout, examines what the literature says about high school dropouts, and offers reasons for why students chose to leave high school. It also highlights the negative outcomes high school dropouts face and the impact that dropping out of high school can have on communities and society.

2.1 UNITED STATES DROPOUT CRISIS

Currently, the United States faces a crisis in its educational system namely, the high number of high school dropouts. Dropouts by definition are those "16-to-24 years-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not completed a high school program regardless of when they left school," according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2006). When compared to other industrialized nations, such as the United Kingdom, Asia, India, and Canada, the United States is 18th out of 36 on educational ranking (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2010). The OECD countries are recognized as the "world's most advanced economies" (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp, & Tahan, 2011, p 52). The

United States also falls below other developed nations in mathematics and science (Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010). Within the United States, the median state Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) from high school was 77 percent in 2008-09 (Stillwell, Sable, & Plotts, 2011).

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2009), the United States loses more than 7,000 students per day to high school dropout, which equates to more than one million students a year. Dropout is in fact so prevalent that Balfanz and Legters (2004) define high schools whose graduating classes are less than 40% of freshman students who began high school as "dropout factories."

Members of minority populations, such as African Americans (reporting a dropout rate of 58 percent) and Hispanics (reporting a dropout rate of 50 percent) are more likely than their white counterparts (22 percent) to drop out. Overall, males have higher rates of dropping out than females, across all races and ethnicities (Editorial Projects in Education [EPE], 2007). The dropout rates for males and females in the U.S. were reported by 45 states and the District of Columbia. The dropout rates were 2.7 percent out of 198,699 females and 3.6 percent out of 267,999 males (Stillwell, Sable, & Plotts, 2011). These numbers represent the 2008-09 public high school total dropouts for grades 9-12, and the high school dropout rate for grade 9-12, by gender and state or jurisdiction within the 45 states and the District of Columbia (Stillwell, Sable, & Plotts, 2011).

High school dropouts have been a concern for many decades. As a result of the high dropout rates in America, Healthy People 2020 set specific objectives for adolescent academic success (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS] 2011). These objectives can

help address high school dropout. The following objectives reflect the need for an after-school program that encompasses various levels, such as individual, familial, and community levels:

AH-2 Increase the proportion of adolescents who participate in extracurricular and out-of-school activities. The target for this goal is 90.8%.

AH-3.2 Increase the proportion of parents who attend events and activities in which their adolescents participate (USDHHS 2011). There is no reported target for this goal.

AH-5 Increase educational achievement of adolescents and young adults. There is no reported target for this goal.

AH-5.1 Increase the proportion of students who graduate with a regular diploma four years after starting 9th grade. The target for this objective is 82.4%.

AH-5.5 Increase the proportion of adolescents who consider their school work to be meaningful and important. The target for this objective is 29.3% (DHHS 2011).

2.2 EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF DROPOUT

The warning signs of dropout can begin as early as the sixth grade and include low attendance and failing grades (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Vitaro, Brendgen, & Tremblay, 1999). Other predictors of dropout are disengagement in the classroom, behavior problems, and poor academic performance. If students exhibit signs of poor behavior and failing grades in math or English by sixth grade, they have only a 10 percent likelihood of graduating from high school in four years, and 20 percent of graduating in five years (Balfanz & Herzog, 2005).

Research points out some warning signs related to impending dropouts, as follows: excessive absenteeism (Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Neild &

Balfanz, 2006), disruptive behavior in the classroom (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007), and poor academic performance (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Neild & Balfanz, 2006; Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007). However, a criticism of the literature on dropout is that the research falls short of identifying underlying physical, mental, behavioral and socioeconomic factors. Longitudinal studies neglect to thoroughly examine periods of high school from the beginning stage of early development, such as starting at the pre-kindergarten level and following students through high school, and were limited to examining only family characteristics, such as supportive home environments that value education rather than structural traits, like single parent homes (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000).

2.3 RISK FACTORS FOR DROPOUT

Diverse reasons exist for students' dropping out; most frequently cited are, falling behind due to missing too much school (Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Neild & Balfanz, 2006), poor academic achievement (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Neild & Balfanz, 2006; Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007), feeling isolated in school and peer conflict (Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbot, Hill, Catalano, & Hawkins, 2000; Lee & Breen, 2007), poor relationships with teachers (Jordan, Lara, & McPartland, 1996), limited support from the family (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997; Gleason & Dynarski, 2002; Rumberger, 1995), and education policies (Eckstein & Wolpin, 1999). Students who were disciplined for their behavior, such as being given suspension or probation, had a higher risk for dropping out of high school than those students who were not suspended or on probation (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007).

Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, and Carlson (2000) explored determinants of why students chose to leave high school and identified six factors. These factors include lack of ability to perform well in academics; lack of ability to adapt and engage socially, especially with peers; low parental involvement; low household income status; lower intelligence quotient (IQ), and presence of any negative behavioral issues. The literature also identifies other factors associated with dropping out of high school, such as: home environment and physical factors, emotional, developmental, and learning disabilities, mental health factors, and social environment and economic factors. Clearly, multiple physical, mental, and socioeconomic factors influence dropout rates. Table 1 lists several factors that may affect high school retention.

On the other hand, some environmental factors related to high school retention were smaller classroom size (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Rumberger & Lim, 2008), such as 15 students per teacher (Rumberger & Lim, 2008), and strong school practices and policies, such as requiring students to stay in school past 16 years of age (Rumberger & Lim, 2008).

Table 1. General factors that affect high school retention

Risk Factors	Reference
Home environment and Physical factors	
The student's pregnancy hinders sustainability	(Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Harding, 2003; Neild & Balfanz, 2006)
A student whose family member experiences a prolonged or serious physical illnesses plays a role in retention	(Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001)
The student's home environment affects success in school (Negative parental upbringing; Disconnected with early engagement with children and child-rearing and developmental styles)	(Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Pagani, Vitaro, Tremblay, McDuff, Japel, & Larose, 2008)
The student's usage of drugs and/or alcohol interferes with high school completion	(Garnier, Stein, & Jacobs, 1997)
Race and ethnicity poses barriers to high school retention	(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009; Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006; Weatherspoon, 2006)
Males have higher rates of dropout than females	(Neild & Balfanz, 2006; Stillwell, Sable, & Plotts, 2011)
Emotional, developmental, and learning disabilities; and mental health factors	
A student's lack of motivation poses a risk to dropping out	(Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006)
Students who struggle with learning disabilities have an increase risk for dropout	(Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992)
Poor academic performance negatively affects high school completion	(Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000); Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007)
Students who have mental disorders face barriers for high school retention	(Parker & Asher, 1987)
Students who engage in criminal activity/conduct disorder, and/or violence interferes with staying in school	(Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Rumberger & Lim, 2008)
Social environment and economic factors	
A student who is isolated from their peers affects his or her retention	(Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbot, et al., 2000; Lee & Breen, 2007)
Students who are absent from or limit their participating in after school activities create barriers to retention	(Baldwin, Moffett, & Lane, 1992)
School environment (large classroom sizes, school policies and practices, such as not requiring students to attend school past 16 years of age)	(Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Rumberger & Lim, 2008)
Community environment (Higher socio economic status [SES] can offer more resources to students)	(Harding, 2003; Rumberger & Lim, 2008)
Single parent households can create barriers to retention	(Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger, 2001)
Negative peer influence hinders sustainability for a student	(Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1987)
Suspension creates barriers to high school retention	(Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007)
Excessive absenteeism may lead to dropping out of high school	(Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Neild & Balfanz, 2006)

2.3.1 Home environment and physical risk factors

To explore how home environment can play a role in success or failure in school, some investigators have started examining the relationship between students and their parents (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Pagani, Vitaro, Tremblay, McDuff, Japel, & Larose, 2008). Students who stayed in school had higher parental involvement than those students who did not. The research points out when parents develop a connection with their children at an early stage, such as showing an interest in their children's academics and providing an environment conducive to learning, dropout rates are lower (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000).

One study found that early developmental history may determine a student's likelihood of dropping out. This longitudinal study was conducted by Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, and Carlson (2000), who followed children six months to 19 years old in order to assess the probability of dropping out of high school. The study investigated factors that predicted dropout rates, such as early childhood care, overall sensitivity of the mother, infant-mother attachment relationships, support for problem-solving, home environment at an early age, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement at school. Of these seven factors, early home environment and quality of early childhood care had the most influence on whether a student stayed in or dropped out of high school. These findings support those of other studies in that dropping out of high school does not develop overnight; rather, it is a process that starts in early childhood and continues throughout the student's lifetime, until the student physically and "[…] formally withdraws from school" (Rumberger & Lim, 2008, p. 542). The research of Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver (2007) show that, students start to withdraw from school as early as kindergarten. From fourth

through seventh grade, disengagement from school seems to intensify, which most likely results in later dropout by 10th grade (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver 2007).

In addition to the home environment, some other barriers to high school completion are as follows: a family member's prolonged or serious physical illness or death (Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001), pregnancy (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006; Harding, 2003; Neild & Balfanz, 2006), engaging in risky behaviors (e.g., drug and alcohol use) (Garnier, Stein, & Jacobs, 1997), and race and ethnicity (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009; Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006; Weatherspoon, 2006).

Students who were responsible for a member of the family, those who became parents or became pregnant, or had to work in order to support their family, were more likely to drop out of high school (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006), and having an older sibling drop out increased the likelihood of leaving school (Barro & Kolstad, 1987). The more incidences of changing schools due to a family move, the more difficult it became for a student to stay in school (Gleason & Dynarski, 2002). A student's chance for dropping out of high school doubled when he or she worked more than 22 hours a week (Barro & Kolstad, 1987).

African Americans, when compared to Whites, have higher dropout rates and lower high school completion rates (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000). Even though Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to have higher rates of dropouts than Asians and Whites, the culture and background of the individual's family, school, and community play a key role in whether or not a student completes high school (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Moreover, race and ethnicity have been linked to diverse learning styles. African Americans tend to thrive better when offered active learning opportunities, such as expressive creativity or social interaction (Weatherspoon, 2006). The traditional teaching approaches used in teaching and education can

pose a barrier to their learning. When the educational system fails to connect with culture and teachers tend to focus on stereotypes that African Americans are less motivated to be successful in school, teachers tend to "reinforce their stereotypical biases by projecting low expectations for achievement" (Weatherspoon, 2006, p.10), thus creating an opportunity for African American students to perform poorly in academics.

Perreira, Harris, and Lee (2006) explained how Blacks, especially second (the children of immigrants, both citizen and non-citizens of the United States) and third generation (the grandchildren of immigrants, both citizen and non-citizens of the United States) are more likely to drop out when in a more diverse ethnic community different from their own background. These students typically have a harder time connecting with their school because of cultural barriers. Social factors related to urban African American adolescents can affect school performance (Somers, Owens, & Piliawsky, 2008). One reason African American students dropped out of high school was due to the limited amount of social support from their surrounding school environment (Baldwin, Moffett, & Lane, 1992). Again, support from teachers, peers, and administrators may help determine whether a student will complete high school.

2.3.2 Emotional, developmental, and learning disabilities and mental health, and risk factors

Dynamics of emotional, developmental, and learning disabilities, and mental health tend to be forgotten in explanations for dropout. These factors may be important underlying causes for why students fail to complete school. Some investigations pointed out the limited interventions

designed for students with disabilities; researchers have found that these students are at high risk for not completing high school (Davis, Winsler, & Middleton, 2006; Dunn, Chambers, & Rabren, 2004; Dynarski & Gleason, 2002). Dunn, Chambers, and Rabren (2004) explain, "The lack of attention to students with disabilities is unfortunate, because recent data have estimated that the dropout rate for students with mild disabilities, who constitute the majority of students with disabilities, is likely to be at least two times greater than that of their peers without disabilities" (p. 314).

Dunn, Chambers, and Rabren (2004) identified four predictive factors related to dropout. These factors were as follows: (1) Disability status: Learning Disability (LD) or Mental Retardation; (2) Perception of general preparation received during school for life after high school; (3) Identification of a helpful person in school; and (4) Identification of a helpful class while in school (regardless of subject). The implications of the data showed that students with milder disabilities had higher dropout rates than those students with more severe disabilities. The research, however, did not give recommendations to focus on high school dropout prevention methods for students who suffer from learning disabilities.

In general, sixth grade students who are consistently having behavioral problems have a higher chance of dropping out (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Children who are not accepted by their peers are at higher risk for violent behavior, misconduct, illicit activity, and depression (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Parker & Asher, 1987; Rumberger & Lim, 2008). These problems can lead to more serious problems, such as criminal activities and conduct disorders. African Americans are more likely to be victims of serious crimes, and those exposed to such crime are at a higher risk for mental disorders (Lofstrom, 2007; Snell & Thomas 1998;

Weatherspoon, 2006). Positive peer influence can increase a student's likelihood to perform better in school, which can, in turn, decrease the number of disruptive emotional and behavioral issues later in life (Parker & Asher, 1987).

2.3.3 School environment risk factors

Overall, the school environment is a critical component for high school dropouts. Researchers believe that schools themselves can make a great impact in a student's decision to complete high school. Experts are looking at school-related factors that play a key role in students staying in school. Students whose teachers are more supportive and try to connect with their students have a better chance of success (Sharma, Petosa, & Heaney, 1999; Shepard & Smith, 1990; Dunlap, Dunlap, Koegel, & Koegel, 1991).

2.4 NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF DROPOUT

The following will briefly discuss the negative implications of dropping out for individuals themselves and the financial burden to communities and society. When indicators of high school dropout are identified, such as achievement problems and failing grades, it may be too late to intervene for the student (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000). Another strong predictor of high school dropout is when a student is held back from advancing to another grade (Rumberger, 1995). Understanding factors related to dropout can play a key role in addressing the high school dropout crisis by developing early interventions.

2.4.1 INDIVIDUAL

Students who do not complete high school tend to face many challenges in life. Many high school dropouts are at a greater risk for job instability, because most jobs require a high school diploma (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). Those who do not possess a high school diploma tend to have less income; studies show potential earning rates are significantly lower than those who graduate high school (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Additionally, persons who completed high school or the General Educational Development (GED) certificate had average potential earnings over $31,400 annually, which show high school graduates made $12,955 more annually than high school dropouts in (Laird, Cataldi, KewalRamani, & Chapman, 2008). One report indicated high school dropouts made 40 percent or less income than persons with a high school diploma or higher degree, and when compared to all workers, they were 50 percent more likely to be unemployed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

In addition to problems non-high school graduates may face with lack of qualifications and job instability, unemployment rates are higher among dropouts than those who graduated (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). Socioeconomic disadvantaged individuals are at risk for other negative outcomes; for instance, they are predisposed to health problems, tend to live in poverty, and have a greater chance of being dependent on public assistance (Rumberger, 1987). High poverty levels are associated with dropout rates and can further complicate the vicious cycle of high school drop outs (Bradley, & Corwyn, 2002). Poverty stricken children tend to have higher academic failure and are at higher risk for dropping out of high school at an early level (Bradley, & Corwyn, 2002).

2.4.2 Community/Societal

High school dropouts place an economic burden on communities and society by being more dependent on public welfare; it is estimated that high school dropouts are twice as likely to receive public assistance when compared to high school graduates (Rumberger, 2001). If this problem is not addressed, taxpayers will have to make up some of the public assistance costs (Upchurch, 1993; Weiss, 2009). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009), reports: "If the students who dropped out of the class of 2007 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional $329 billion in income over their lifetimes" (p. 1). Furthermore, our nation loses $90 billion in tax revenues, medical spending, and social services provided to a single cohort of high school dropouts over a lifetime (Levin, Belfield, Muennig, & Rouse, 2007).

Those who drop out are at greater risk for engaging in criminal activity and violent crimes. The rate of dropout was high for more than one-third of prison inmates, when they experienced difficulty in academic and/or behavioral performance, as well as a disinterest in school (Harlow, 2003). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, a large proportion of inmates in federal and state prisons are high school dropouts: "approximately 30 percent of federal inmates, 40 percent of state prison inmates, and 50 percent of persons on death row are high school dropouts" (as cited in Laird, DeBell, & Chapman, 2006 p 1). On the other hand, state prisoners who held a high school diploma were less likely to be repeat offenders than those state prisoners that dropped out of high school or had a GED (Harlow, 2003). In fact, studies from the Alliance for Excellent Education website indicate that just a "one percent increase in high school graduation" could perhaps prevent the United States from spending $1.4 billion in incarceration costs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

2.5 OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

Several program planning frameworks and one theory are used in this proposal. The program planning frameworks include Social-Ecological Model (SEM); the Mobilize, Assess, Plan, Implement, Track (MAP-IT) framework; and the Community Toolbox. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) constructs are also used to inform this proposal. SEM, MAP-IT, and CTB were developed to generate theory-driven practices for creating healthier communities. These frameworks provide the opportunity to work in partnership with key stakeholders in the community, consider inter-relationships of factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels, ([NCIPC], [DVP], 2007) and their effect on a program (TCTB, 2011); and help to establish program evaluation and sustainability.

The SEM was used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a framework to promote violence prevention (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control [NCIPC], Division of Violence Prevention [DVP] 2007). SEM has four levels: (1) Individual; (2) Relationship; (3) Community; and (4) Societal. Factors at each level may play into specific health issues or problems. The first level (*Individual*) includes biological and personal factors which contribute to high school dropout. The second level, *Relationship*, involves social interactions between families and friends, which in turn may influence behavior. *Community* is the third level and considers the environment, like surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and other social settings. The final level is *Societal*, which considers normative social influence, culture, policies, and/or social inequalities (NCIPC, DVP, 2007).

Mobilize, Assess, Plan, Implement, Track (MAP – IT) is a framework developed to achieve the objectives of Healthy People 2020, as referenced in *Implementing Healthy People*

2020 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS] 2011). Each component of MAP-IT plays a critical role in creating or initiating change for health prevention programs or interventions. *Mobilize* involves identifying community members who are willing to partner in the efforts for improving or developing health interventions within a defined population. The goals are to develop a vision and mission of the organization, define clear objectives, and assign roles for the community partners. *Assess* sets priorities and evaluates needs and resource available in the community. *Plan* involves creating a logic model, defining program goals, outlining parameters for meeting and reaching goals, and taking into consideration the best point to intervene. *Implement* maps out the steps needed to in order for the intervention to be put into practice. Lastly, *Track* encourages those initiating interventions to evaluate the work that has been completed and assess whether or not the goals and plan of the intervention have been met (DHHS 2011).

The CTB is a resource designed by the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. It offers evidence-based information globally to develop health or improve communities. In order to initiate change in or improvement of communities, the CTB framework guides individuals and organizations through 12 steps (The Community Tool Box [TCTB] 2011). The 12 steps are as follows: (*1) Analyzing Information About the Problem Goals, and Factors Affecting Them; (2) Establishing Your Group's Vision and Mission; (3) Defining Organizational Structure and Operating Mechanisms; (4) Developing a Framework or Model of Change; (5)Developing and Using Strategic and Action Plans; (6) Arranging for Community Mobilizers; (7) Developing Leadership; (8) Implementing Effective Interventions; (9) Assuring Technical Assistance; (10) Documenting Progress and Using Feedback; (11) Making Outcomes Matter;* and *(12) Sustaining the Work.*

Social Cognitive Theory was first known as Social Learning Theory, a behavior theory based on the belief that one's behavior is determined by how another person models his or her behavior, from psychologist Albert Bandura (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008). Bandura then renamed Social Learning Theory as Social Cognitive Theory when concepts from cognitive psychology were integrated to accommodate the growing understanding of human information processing capacities and biases that influence learning from experience, observation, and symbolic communication (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008,).

SCT is based on nine key concepts or constructs, and provides explanations for human behavior. Those nine concepts are grouped into five categories: (1) psychological determinants of behavior; (2) observational learning; (3) environmental determinants of behavior; (4) self-regulation; and (5) moral disengagement. SCT highlights reciprocal determinism, which is how people and environments are connected. It is explained that "environmental factors influence individuals and groups, but individuals and groups can also influence their environments and regulate their own behavior" (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008, p. 171).

Determinants within *psychological determinants of behavior* are outcome expectations, one's outlook on how probable positive or negative the outcome will be due to the type of behavior performed; self-efficacy, one's belief in his or her "ability to perform behavior that brings desired outcomes" (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008, p 171), and collective efficacy, a belief of the group's ability to execute a behavior that offers preferred results. *Observational learning* is performing a new behavior that is learned from another source (e.g., a media source, peer, parent, and society) through "peer modeling" (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008, p. 171). Determinants that fall into *environmental determinants of behavior* are incentive motivation, both the proper and improper way to influence behavior using positive and negative rewards; and

facilitation, offering tools (e.g., environment change and financial assistance) to assist and provide easier transitions for new behavior changes. *Self-regulation* is setting internal and external controls to modify behavioral (e.g., goal-setting, self-rewards, and social supports); and *moral disengagement* is when one is made aware of the behaviors that can pose harm to individuals "that make infliction of suffering acceptable by disengaging self-regulatory moral standards" (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008, p. 171).

Behavior focused theories are critical when planning and evaluating interventions that are intended to change health behavior (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008). Constructs from Social Cognitive Theory will act as a guide, in addition to SEM, MAP-IT, and CTB, when designing an after-school program; the theory can provide a focus for activities geared toward addressing behaviors that may lead to dropping out of high school. This particular theory will help the Principal Investigator communicate how mediators of change are related to behavior. The particular frameworks were chosen over other planning models because they are focused on individuals' and communities' self-determination to make change; the frameworks tap into community resources and participation. Behavioral theory constructs are important when addressing behavior-related factors, as they help guide activities that may influence behavioral change, based on theory (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis 2008).

2.6 FEDERAL POLICIES TO ADDRESS HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a law established by the United States government that provides funding to Title I programs, requires districts to report academic achievement, identifies schools that are not performing well, and requires schools to report on actions the districts are going to take in order to improve performance (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). Two bills were established by the 112th Congress: Every Student Counts Act [ESCA] and Graduation Promise Act [GPA] and three bills by the 111th Congress: Every Student Counts Act [111th], Graduation Promise Act [GPA] [111th], and Success in Middle School Act [111th]), all of which were focused on improving educational performance and graduation rates (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). Each bill sets requirements for school districts to provide accurate calculations of graduation rates and actions plans when graduation rates are less than 90 percent. Some encourage states and allot monies to develop early-warning data systems and for schools that are not performing well in academics (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

The United States government is modifying the NCLB by adding regulations and introducing bills to improve graduation rates and academic performance, such as the "Every Student Counts Act." Other bills before Congress are "Graduation Promise Act" and "Success in the Middle Act" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). Students with disabilities and those who live in high poverty areas are high priorities. Table 2 explains the federal policies in further detail.

Table 2. Federal Policies Established by Congress

Bill	Date of Introduction	Requirement	Citation and Link to Summary Report
112th Congress			
Every Student Counts Act (ESCA) (112th) Senate Bill S.767 House Bill H. 1419	April 7, 2011	• Requirements are the same from the Every Student Counts Act 111th; adding disadvantaged populations (see below).	(Alliance for Excellent Education 2011)
Graduation Promise Act (GPA) (112th) House Bill H.R. 778	February 17, 2011	• Same as Graduation Promise Act (GPA) (111th)	(Alliance for Excellent Education 2011) http://www.all4ed.org/files/GPAone-pager.pdf
111th Congress			
Every Student Counts Act (111th) Senate Bill S.618 House Bill H. 1569	March 17, 2009	• Requires schools, districts, and states to report accurate calculations of graduation rates. • When graduation rates are less than 90%, schools are required to make increases in their overall graduation rates and subgroup graduation rates attainable.	(Alliance for Excellent Education 2011) http://www.all4ed.org/files/ESCA_summary111.pdf
Graduation Promise Act (GPA) (111th) H.R. 4181	December 2, 2009	• Allows $2.5 billion dollars toward specific needs for low-performing high schools • Title I allots $2.4 billion dollars to High School Improvement and Dropout Reduction Fund. • Title II allots $60 million dollars in grants for effective models to be developed, employed, and reproduced for students at risk for dropping out of high school.	(Alliance for Excellent Education 2011) http://all4ed.org/files/GPAone-pager.pdf
Success in Middle Act (111th) Senate Bill S. 1362 House Bill H.R. 3006	June 25, 2009	• Focus on middle school grades • Allots $1 billion dollars a year in grants for states to develop early-warning data systems	(Alliance for Excellent Education 2011) http://all4ed.org/files/SuccessintheMiddleOverview_Oct302009.pdf

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches and justification for using the Social-Ecological Model (SEM); Mobilize, Assess, Plan, Implement, Track (MAP-IT) framework; and the Community Toolbox (CTB); in addition to constructs from Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). These frameworks and constructs from SCT serve as a foundation for developing an after-school program for George Washington Intermediate School in New Castle Area School District. This study was approved by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB) on Tuesday, June 7, 2011 (see Appendix A for a copy of IRB Approval Letter for Protocol PRO11050484**)**.

3.1.1 Literature Review

The overall methodological approaches were a systematic review of the literature and qualitative in-depth interviews using open-ended questions. An extensive search of the literature was conducted via Pittcat+, PubMed, Medline, Google, Google Scholar, and Google Government. In addition to publications from national and local government organizations, the National Governors Association, Promising Practices Network on children, families and communities, IES National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, American

Psychological Association, the Center for Public Education, and the Alliance for Excellent Education were accessed between March 9, 2011, and July 15, 2011.

The terms used were "high school dropouts," "percentage of high school dropouts," "high school dropout facts," "high school dropout rates," "high school dropout rates 2010," "high school dropout rates United States," "high school dropout international rates," "dropout rates in America," "national high school dropout statistics," "solutions to high school dropouts," "reasons for high school dropouts," "how to prevent high school dropouts," "high school dropout" or "high school graduation," "in Pennsylvania and after school program," "after-school program grants," "after-school program grants" and "Pennsylvania," "consequences of dropping out of high school," "school dropout" or "high school graduation," "home environment" and "high school completion," "after school programs," "warning signs of "high school dropout," "public health" and "high school dropout," "interventions: dropout prevention," policies supporting high school completion," "preventing high school dropout," "after-school arts programs," "social-ecological model," "community tool box," "effective dropout preventions," "social cognitive theory and high school dropout," "self-efficacy" and "high school completion."

One inclusion criterion was articles published after 2000. However, some articles published prior to 2000 were included so as not to exclude longitudinal studies that followed students from ninth through twelfth grade. Some of the issues examined in the literature were factors that influenced students to stay in high school and characteristics of a high school dropout; the review was limited to only journal articles, as well as information from government and educational websites.

3.2 METHOD OF PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

The Superintendent of the New Castle Area School District (NCASD) was contacted via email on Wednesday, May 11, 2011, in order to discuss the study and program intent. The email regarding the study intent was faxed by the NCASD administration office to George Washington Intermediate's principals on Wednesday, May 18, 2011; on that same day, the Principal Investigator (PI) was contacted via email by the Assistant Principal to further discuss the study. On Friday, May 20, 2011, both the Principal and Assistant Principal provided verbal agreement to assist with the study and permit the PI to conduct in-depth interviews. The Assistant Principal provided a handwritten agreement on Wednesday, June 1, 2011. On Tuesday, June 7, 2011, 53 copies of the informed consent script were handed to the Administrative Assistant at George Washington Intermediate (GWI) to distribute to all administrators, teachers, and staff (see Appendix B).

Participants who were administrators, teachers, or staff members of GWI School were eligible. The participants had to contact the PI in order to participate in the interviews. Other administrators, teachers, or staff members from NCASD or other districts were excluded from the study. The administrators, teachers, and staff members of GWI who chose to participate in the interview contacted the PI via email from June 7 through July 7, 2011, which allowed the PI to schedule a date and time for an interview with participants. Interviews could be completed either in person or by telephone. The interviews started with a consent script. This ensured that the participants understood the nature of the study and gave them the chance to make a well-informed decision about participating in the research study.

3.2 INTERVIEWS

Information was collected through interviews with school administrators, teachers, and staff, conducted by the Principal Investigator. The same open-ended questions were asked of all participants in order to collect comparable data. Interviews were used instead of self-report surveys because of the ability to probe and follow up on questions. With a combination of the in-depth interviews and a critical review of the literature, the researcher explored the following questions:

1. Why should public health professionals be concerned with high school dropouts?
2. What are the socioeconomic implications of dropping out of high school?
3. What are the early warning signs for dropping out of high school?
4. Why are students dropping out of high school?
5. What programs exist that decrease high school dropout rates?
6. What programs have been successful in increasing high school graduation rates?
7. Are early intervention programs more successful than later intervention programs?
8. What program planning models have been used or would be ideal for the development of an after-school program?

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and were transcribed verbatim by the Principal Investigator (PI) into a Microsoft Word 2007 document during June and July 2011. Each participant was assigned a unique number when transcribing the digital voice files, and responses from the interview were categorized by themes. The questions followed: informative (probing the participant to answer the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How questions (Wikipedia 2011); expert opinion (probing the participant to share his or her recommendations or knowledge on an idea or situation); and cognitive and developmental (probing the participant to describe, create, and/or initiate ideas concerning visions of an after-school program, answering hypothetical questions, and ways to increase parental involvement). The transcriptions from the interviews were summarized, and themes that emerged from interviews were placed into a Thematic Matrices template using a table from Microsoft Word 2007. The themes helped the Principal Investigator identify areas and issues that the program should address for after-school program at George Washington Intermediate School. The input from the participants was used to develop the after-school program activities.

4.0 RESULTS

This section presents results of the literature search on after-school programs that address high school dropout at both the prevention and intervention stages.

4.1 AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

After-school programs allow students to participate in extracurricular activities, engage in additional academic assistance through tutoring, take part in special classes that may not be offered during the typical school day, interact with peers, communities, and staff, and learn from each other through peer/mentor modeling or from unexpected opportunities, such as teachable moments when a student and or staff member identifies a time to discuss a current situation.

With regard to target age group, most intervention programs developed for high school dropouts were aimed at students ages 10 to 18 (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004; National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability [NCWD] for Youth, 2011; The Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002). The after-school programs and out-of-school time programs were reviewed for 17 locations. Of the 17 reviewed, the setting for six programs was urban location only (USDJ, 2011), five included suburban and rural (NCWD for Youth, 2011; USDJ, 2011), and locations were not reported for six (First Things First, 2010; ICI, Minnesota's

UCEDD, 2010; Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004; USDJ 2011). The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (2011) provides a list of 102 after-school opportunities available to students; of the 102 programs, 35 had limited success, 33 had moderate success, and 34 were strongly effective in prevention, intervention, or recovery/re-entry program to address the high school dropout crisis.

Numerous programs are available that address poor behavior through counseling, engaging with the community, mentoring, and academic support. There are after-school programs with an arts approach, e.g, After School Arts Program (ASAP), which incorporates painting, dance, photography, and creative writing (ASAP 2011). However, in investigating through the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (2011) and the What Works Clearinghouse databases, no programs were included in the database that encompasses all components: academics, behavior, mentoring, tutoring, community involvement, and an arts focus.

The Center for Teen Empowerment (CTE) conducted a research project requested by the Barr Foundation to further investigate the views of Boston youth who participate in one of the 40 after-school programs (Barr Foundation, Inc., 2011). The Barr Foundation is a private organization located in Boston that focuses on offering sound education, protecting the environment, exposing students to art and culture, and addressing poverty at the global level to create a more sustainable future for children (Barr Foundation, Inc., 2011). Interviews, focus groups, and surveys were used to collect data, and 500 children, youth, and program staff participated in the research. The motivation behind the research was to improve after-school programs (The Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002).

The CTE found that Boston's after-school programs provided youth with the opportunity to grow and learn, offered them supportive relationships, gave them time to unwind from the school day and have their voices heard, and exposed them to life's lessons and new skills. Negatives of some of Boston's after-school programs were excessive rules; youth felt they could not opt out of an activity or give insight on program development; limited space available; out-of-date equipment; and food and snacks were not provided (The Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002).

Most of the participants in Boston's after-school programs are between 14 and 16 years of age (The Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002). A limited number of programs exist exclusively for fourth through sixth grades. There are after-school programs that address academic achievement, such as Be a Star, which aims to address poor academic performance for ages five to 12, and develop healthier attitudes among African Americans about abstaining from drugs and alcohol (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse [USDE, IES, NCEERA, WWC], 2011).

Additionally, four programs were selected to investigate effectiveness: Check and Connect, First Things First, Project COFFEE (Co-operative Federation for Educational Experiences), and Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. These programs were selected because they addressed factors that are related to high school dropout such as poor academic performance, disruptive behavior, and attendance. All of the programs offer counseling, which is an important component of an after-school program because it can help address some of the underlying issues related to why students drop out.

Check and Connect, addresses absenteeism, provides academic support, offers counseling and mentoring, and encourages students to engage in the community. Six longitudinal studies of this program demonstrated a significant effect on improving absenteeism, behavior, academics, and linguistics (Institute on Community Integration [ICI], Minnesota's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities [UCEDD] 2010).

Another early intervention program is called First Things First, based in Arizona, which provides counseling, mentoring, and engagement with the family for children ages five and up; there were no literature reported on program effectiveness (First Things First, 2010).

The third program reviewed was Project COFFEE, an intervention designed for out-of-school and in-school youth, in addition to troubled youth (between 16 and 19 years old) that offers academic, social, behavioral, occupational, and cognitive counseling. The program also provides additional support for students with disabilities. The student-to-teacher ratio is eight to ten students per teacher (NCWD for Youth, 2011). Results showed moderate statistical significance with Project COFFEE, according to the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (2011). However, the IES National Center for Education Statistics indicates the study designs were not adequate for meeting the criteria for evidence-based research, even though four longitudinal studies, since the 1990s, and four studies since 1989, showed a positive impact on decreasing dropout rates in addition to another study conducted by Bay State Skills Corporation (USDE, IES, NCEERA, WWC, 2011).

A fourth program reviewed was the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. This program addresses high school dropouts either at the prevention or intervention stage. The program is offered to low income students and is centered

on seven key tenets: learning; students are valuable to schools; students can make a difference in their and others' education; every student, parent and teacher has the right to, and is encouraged to create and maintain a strong sense of school excellence; a school's excellence can facilitate maturity of individuals and communities; and everyone (students, teacher, and parents) is expected to support each other with learning and teaching, with an emphasis on parental involvement (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004).

There is strong evidence, according to the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (2011), for this program's effectiveness. The study design was longitudinal and quasi-experimental (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004). However, it does not meet the standards for evidence-based research according to the IES National Center for Education Statistics (USDE, IES, NCEERA, WWC, 2011).

Even though the research for some of these after-school programs failed to show statistical significance, they can have many advantageous outcomes, such as improving behavior and academics; however, building evidence-based programs is still encouraged (USDJ, 2011). Table 3 shows a summary of selected dropout prevention intervention programs.

Table 3. Summary of Selected Dropout Prevention/Intervention Programs

Program/Type	Focus	Substantiation of Success	Reference
Check and Connect (Will conduct on-site training) **Intervention**	Kindergarten through collegiate level, attendance, behavior, academic support, counseling and mentoring, and engagement with the community	**Statistical Significance in affecting drop out rates:** Longitudinal study; six studies conducted and all showed strong statistical significance in improving absenteeism, behavior, and academics, and linguistics. **Note: The IES National Center for Education Statistics finds evidence for improvement.*	(ICI, Minnesota's UCEDD, 2010)
First Things First (Based in Arizona) **Prevention**	Early intervention ages 5 and younger, counseling and mentorship, family engagement	No study conducted on First Things First; however, research suggests interventions to be more effective for dropouts should begin before school.	(First Things First, 2010)
Project COFFEE (Co-Operative Federation for Educational Experiences) **Intervention**	Out-of-school and in-school youth, troubled youth between 16 and 19; offers support for students with disabilities*, academic, social, behavioral, occupational, and cognitive counseling, 8-10 students:1 teacher ratio	Longitudinal studies (4) since the 1990s and (4) since 1989; showed a positive impact on dropout prevention Bay State Skills Corporation also investigated and determined the effectiveness of the program **Note: Studies do not meet the standards for evidence based research by the IES National Center for Education Statistics*	(National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability [NCWD] for Youth, 2011)
IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program (Acts as a model for dropout prevention) **Prevention and Intervention**	Offered to students who are at lower poverty levels; focused on seven key tenets (learning, students are valuable to schools, students can make a difference in their education and others); self-esteem building; academics – tutoring	**Statistical Significance in affecting drop out rates:** Longitudinal, quasi-experimental design, identified statistical significance in dropout rate **Note: Studies do not meet the standards for evidence based research by the IES National Center for Education Statistics*	(Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004).

*Project COFFEE defines disabilities as learning, mental health, behavioral, and or chemical health problems, as well as visually and hearing impaired.

4.2 INTERVIEWS

This section provides information from interviews with administrators, teachers, and staff at George Washington Intermediate School. The themes that emerged from the interviews were awareness of risk factors for high school dropouts, current programs, recommendations for addressing high school dropout, characteristics of an after-school program, and the limitations standardized tests can have on students and perceived barriers to an after-school program.

4.2.1 Results from the interviews

In total, eight administrators, teachers, and staff contacted the Principal Investigator for one-on-one, open-ended interviews. Interviews were conducted between June 7 and July 7, 2011**.** The interviews asked participants to provide recommendations for and insights on the development of an after-school program (see Appendix C for the Interview Script). All interviews were conducted by the PI. Confidentiality was maintained by excluding names or any other identifying information; however, some participants identified themselves as teachers, either as past or current educators. All participants received a five dollar gift card to a local business in appreciation for participating in the study. The majority six of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in George Washington Intermediate's conference room. Interviews lasted between 35 minutes and 55 minutes. Two telephone interviews were conducted for participants not able to meet in person, and responses were collected via audiotape.

4.2.2 Early warning signs of high school dropout

The interviews started with questions about being able to recognize the early warning signs of a high school dropout. Most participants identified the early warning signs reflected in the literature, such as behavioral problems, poor grades, and absenteeism. Respondents reported being able to recognize potential dropouts by the following warning signs: low reading levels, struggling in other academic areas, lack of parent involvement, little or no value placed on education in the home, excessive absenteeism, disruptive behavior, students' lack of interest in school, and/or frustration with schoolwork. One participant identified early warning signs and further explained how a lack of parental involvement could also play a role in academic failure:

> I believe that I can see, honestly, in the early intermediate here, I can see just signs of basic giving up, in academics after they, you know get some F's on tests, parent involvement is not there. Immediately you can notice a student that has no parent involvement at home and basically if the parents aren't showing them respect enough to help them out they're basically just giving up. They know they're failing and then why go to school? They're dropping out, so I can, I mean, I'm not going to say, oh, this person is definitely going to drop out of high school, but I, you could know that each pod that I have, I could list five or six students that I would feel that are not probably going to graduate high school just because there is nothing there, that they're just giving up (Participant 1).

In addition to limited parental involvement, participants felt that students who struggled in reading were at highest risk for dropping out of high school. One said, "I would say reading – their levels – I think the students that have low reading levels are at most risk. They get frustrated with their school work" (Participant 3).

One person noted that the value a family or caretaker puts on education and reading could affect the amount of academic support a student receives in the home,

> One of the notes would be attendance – sometimes you have to look at the home life to see if their education, what their education background is and how they value it. I think the first thing to look at is attendance and then the second thing is to look at, you know, reading. Reading tells you a lot about a student, and if they're struggling in that area and don't feel like they're getting the support in a school and they're developing negative attitudes about coming to school, then that's a pretty good sign of the dropout rate (Participant 4).

If a student is performing poorly in reading and lacks education support at home, he is more likely to become frustrated and may develop a negative outlook on school, which may be a strong warning sign a student may perhaps drop out.

4.2.3 Current Programs Offered by New Castle Area School District at the Secondary Level

Three participants commented on an Alternative Education Program that New Castle Area School District has for potential high school dropouts, called the Academy. The Academy was established in order to provide students with a second chance for completing high school and receives its funds through the federal government. Some students are required to attend the Academy and others have the option to attend. The students who are required to attend the Academy are those who missed an extreme amount of school or those who have behavior problems, such as being disrespectful or excessive fighting. The school principal identifies the students who are required to attend the Academy. The second category, students who choose to attend the Academy on a voluntary basis, are students who are pregnant or have been in trouble with for skipping classes.

Once students are enrolled in the Academy, they are required to attend 45 days from the time they are registered for the program. If the students maintain "good forty-five" days in the

Academy, which is classified by optimal attendance: behavior and grades, as well as a "cooperative spirit," then the educational team submits a proposal to the Academy Principal for review. The approval of the review by the Principal of the Academy determines whether the student will be allowed to return to day school.

Four secondary education and two special education teachers teach in the Academy. The educational staff follows the core set of courses taught by New Castle Area School District's secondary day school program and the curriculum is administered at a secondary level. The students in the Academy are provided with guidance, counseling, and disciplinary actions, such as Out of School Suspension (OSS) and In School Suspension (ISS), the action that is imposed depends on the infraction. Most of the students in the Academy are from low social economic status background and range from 12 to 19 years of age. The male to female ratio and the distribution of African American to Caucasian are proportional. Six of the 60 students who attend the Academy are pregnant, nine are learning disabled, mentally handicapped, and/or emotionally disturbed, and ten students are provided with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which utilizes a tailored educational plan that fits the student's educational needs, while the remaining 35 students were admitted into the program due to disruptive behavior.

A typical week for a student in the Academy is academic studies Monday through Thursday and counseling, career academics, and physical education on Fridays. Counseling sessions are held once week in groups of four to six students, conducted by a licensed counselor. Each session on Friday is conducted as a rotation, and each gathering is held for 45 minutes. The therapy sessions address and redirect poor behavioral issues (e.g, fighting).

The Academy has seen some progress for the 2010-2011 academic school year; some of the students maintained the "good forty-five" days and have been able to return to day school. A follow-up question asked participant 7 to comment on the perceived views of Academy students and how Academy students felt about the program: "Although the school work is not that demanding, most students want to go back to day school and do not like the fact that they have to attend the Academy." Participant 7 continued to explain how friendships within the Academy were important to students. However, returning to day school seemed to be the motivating factor for the Academy students because the students were eager to reunite with their primary high school friends.

Despite the benefits of the program, Participants 7 and 8 believed that the challenges will continue to affect the alternative education program because of the limited number of staff. The students are not fully benefiting from the program because they are not receiving adequate attention from the staff members due to over-enrollment. There are students who are in great need of attending the Academy but cannot be granted access due to the "no more than fifty students cap" accepted into the program (Participant 7). One interviewee stated:

> Limited amount of students who can be accepted into the program – the Academy can hold no more than fifty students at a time, which has already exceeded the maximum capacity for the school year. The struggle is to maintain students in the Senior High School Academy. There is limited staff and the program is currently being eliminated for the next school year (Participant 8).

Another issue was that older students are the most difficult to retain because they are more likely to drop out of the program once they reach the legal age to withdraw (Participant 7).

One problem identified during the interviews was that more students could benefit from intervention programs, such as the New Castle Area School District's Alternative Education

Program called the Academy; however, the program will no longer be offered after-school due to state budget cuts as reported from a participant. Participants wanted to see an early intervention for the students at the Intermediate School to address high school dropout because they felt the secondary level was too late. Although they felt the Academy had its successes, some concerns remained about the ability of students of legal age to sign themselves out of school. Once the students who attended the Senior High School Academy were of age to sign themselves out, the number of students who chose to withdraw from school increased.

4.2.4 Elementary Level Programs in the New Castle Area School addressing High School Dropout

The participants were asked to comment on the school policies and programs that the school uses to address students' disruptive behavior, poor grades, and absenteeism.

The programs available that address behavior in the New Castle Area School District's Intermediate Level, grades fourth through sixth, are set within the classroom walls, and students who are being disruptive in the classroom will be punished through In School Suspension (ISS) and Out of School Suspension (OSS). When asked "What would cause a student to get an in school or out of school suspension," Participant 2 responded:

> Any inappropriate behavior deemed inappropriate by a teacher – whether it's disobedience or not doing their school work, not listening in class or of course fighting with other students arguing with other students, it really depends on – really it's up to the teacher, it's the teacher's call – after so many warnings of not responding to the teachers.

Teachers are able to refer students to detention for behaviors that occur in the classroom and issue an ISS, and "if the offense is severe enough then the principal will write them up for out of school suspension for up to ten days" (Participant 5). While each administrator and

educator may have her own set of classroom requirements and criteria for determining when to refer students for disruptive behavior, other educators offer more positive reinforcements for behavior. One teacher explained how he uses a money system incentive, in the classroom to encourage appropriate behavior:

> Each individual teacher has their own set of classroom requirements that they have for each of the students. I think most of the teachers have both positive incentives, to both act appropriately. Whether it's some type of reward – I have a money system that I do where the students can earn money, which then I let them to utilize to - maybe pay for a seat they would sit in or, sometimes I'll hold a luncheon that they can pay to participate in the luncheon (Participant 3).

There was much emphasis on sending a student to in-school suspension for a "time out" rather than "removing the student from the entire day, or not having an opportunity to get back on track," (Participant 3) and during the in-school suspension, the student would be able to complete an assignment and take time to think about his or her poor choice of action. Once the assignment was complete, the student would be allowed to return to the classroom.

Participants commented on the need for parents to be in open communication with the teachers and vice versa. The administrators, teachers, and staff witness positive results in the student's behavior whenever parental involvement is present, one stating in particular,

> That's one thing the school tries to stress, is to keep in communication with the parents because that is where you get a lot of support. If you can communicate with the parents and they feel they're on board, and you're getting them involved in letting them know how the student is behaving in school, that could be a great benefit as far as how the student performs. So we're really stressing the communication with the home, link it – try to link school and home together and communicate with the parents, and then I think after that it's pretty typical as far as the discipline goes (Participant 3).

Another program to help with behavior and acceptance of other children is an anti-bullying program. Study participants at George Washington Intermediate School (an anti-

bullying school) saw improvement with students' behavior in the first years the program was available to the students; however, over the years the program seemed to lose its effectiveness:

> Behavior-wise, the programs we have are an anti-bullying program here in our school. I've seen the first couple years we've had it; it was really effective you know. We had posters set up and ever since then, it has been dropping off a little bit. It hasn't been consistent, but [we are] an anti-bullying school and the program, we are trying to address behavior with that (Participant 1).

There is no disciplinary action taken for poor grades; rather, a student is referred to additional academic support if needed. If a student is performing poorly below the expected level, then administrators and/or teachers can look into other reasons for the delay in academic development; however, administrators and/or teachers, do not typically hold students back from moving to the next grade level. One person explains:

> We really don't necessarily hold back a grade when you get into upper elementary school because you have to think, is it really worth it – most educators believe if you're going to hold a child back it's usually in the pre-K, Kindergarten, or first grade. The focus is usually at where they're really behind, in reading, it's normally a focus there, but now it's kind of – you kind of just pass them on; unless you've investigated other areas – but you kind of just pass them on. I mean ultimately the parents in our state have the ultimate right to decide and teachers can recommend it, they can sign a waiver saying they don't want that to happen (Participant 4).

Most participants offered feedback regarding programs that encourage students to perform better academically. The school has what it calls "AR promotions," which offer incentives to encourage reading in students. George Washington offers "healthy competitions" (Participant 5). One person elaborated on how the school encourages students to perform better with incentive: "we do a lot of academic involve[ment] [with] competitions and academic things here at our school that's really trying to get the students to get better grades, challenges, and different things, but as a punishment, there is no punishment for poor grades" (Participant 3).

Typically George Washington Intermediate strives to make sure the students are not falling through the cracks, by investigating reasons behind poor academic performance. A meeting with the parents is usually scheduled. One person describes the process as the following:

> If a student or if a child is struggling in the academics, at the primary center, especially when it comes to later on, like grades fourth through sixth, you know, it's meeting with parents and seeing what reason that is, you know, were they not identified as a learning support in that area? Or are they just being lazy? Or do they not care? Or it's having a bad day? (Participant 4).

The New Castle Area School District offers tutoring during the school day for students who are in need of additional support. Retired teachers come in during the school day to tutor the children who need extra help. The tutoring is provided to students on a one-on-one basis and runs throughout the school year, "except the first month and the last month of the school year" (Participant 1). According to one participant, the program is offered primarily to students struggling in areas tested by the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) (standardized tests required by the state to assess academic performance) and starts a month prior to the PSSAs, which is in March; one person explained, "Well, I know we have a tutoring program that helps students who need help with the PSSA. That's in school, and that starts – I wanna say a month prior to the PSSA that begins" (Participant 2). When asked if the teachers were responsible for identifying a student for needing academic tutoring, the respondent claimed, "Yes, it's based on their scores on these 4Sight tests they take, and we just identify them based on their reading or math score" (Participant 2). Another person noted how the school offers tutoring when a student is doing poorly in a subject. "We have tutoring here that we offer here in the school, students that are identified that are at risk can be placed in a math or tutoring program

in addition to their regular school day" (Participant 7). The Principal Investigator was told that the tutoring program was not for learning support students. Even though tutoring is not for special needs students, the school does look out for students who may be identified as learning support:

> Obviously students that we believe that are not performing to the level that they should be can be tested by the school and possibly placed into some type of learning support system, in addition to the tutoring. Now tutoring is not learning support, that's [for] students that are kind of falling in between, what would be identified as special education and learning support that students maybe aren't meeting that requirement, but they're at risk so they get placed into that [tutoring] program (Participant 3).

New Castle Area School District, as well as other school districts, has an attendance policy. Students are allowed to miss only so many before parents or caregivers are expected to pay a fine; one person explained, "after so many illegal absences, the state is notified and they can go to court for that, which I've had in the past" (Participant 7). If a student misses so many days or has a tardy, he or she has to attend a Saturday detention. Many participants thought a Saturday detention was not an effective way to discipline students due to the fact that most students would likely not attend the detention because they were missing school in the first place.

Information about truancy was provided by another participant who stated, "We also have a truant officer that goes to houses and monitors them. They also have to provide a doctor's excuse if they miss so many days" (Participant 4). One person wanted to see something more effective be put in place for addressing attendance issues, stating:

> Attendance, they do have an attendance policy, and then if you are tardy, missing or you're missing so much, you have a Saturday detention, which to me, they're not going to come to school on a Saturday detention. I think one of the things we really gotta work on is attendance; something has to be done on attendance. Behavior they're not doing too badly at, but attendance, I think there has to be really refocused and there has to be some reconnect. I guess that goes back to the dropping out, I mean, if they're letting them get

away with it now, not going to school, you know, there's not a punishment, then you know, something has to be done (Participant 1).

When asked interventions, participants provided recommendations on ways to decrease or prevent high school dropout. One participant felt that schools could address high school dropout by offering more programs that provided students with more guidance on careers or vocations:

> I think there has to be more programs put in place for the kids that don't have an idea of what direction they want to go in for when they get out of school and maybe side extracurricular like sports, they need something else, some of these kids might need that, just like I said, more programs, more guidance, as to what they can do when they get out (Participant 2).

Some respondents felt that there need to be more programs that offer guidance and support to build more confidence. Students need to be surrounded with a more positive school environment, and after-school or extra-curricular activities should be established. One participant articulated how critical it is for school professionals to be more in tune with underlying factors of dropout and emphasized how professionals should work together to further investigate home life factors that may be getting in the way of a student's ability to be successful in school. A lot of participants agreed they needed to find a way to encourage more parents to become more involved with his or her child.

When asked at what grade one said:

> Oh, I think it should be addressed whenever you find it, I don't know if there is, one says all, one answer to say it should be in pre-K, it should be in elementary school or it should be in a secondary school, I think if you would notice something, you know to help, then I think the preventative measures that you can do because studies have shown, and I can't name any specific right now, but they talk about the child's attitude towards school and pre-k through 3, most of them are the ones with the positive attitudes, and when they hit

> their adolescence, which is roughly, what grades five through eight, that tends to be where the attitude shifts of how to make school cool for that teenager (Participant 4).

Participants were asked ways they help students or what academic initiatives would be needed to support students in transition to junior high. George Washington offers opportunities for students to get acclimated with the transition to high school, such as offering pod systems, where student see more than seven to eight teachers (each teacher has a specialized subject); giving students their own lockers; using planners; and meeting with junior high teachers to talk about the curriculum; one explains, "we try to close any gaps that we might have, as far as curriculum; what the students need or what they're missing so they would be prepared for the junior high" (Participant 3).

Respondents discussed other aspects of the transition to high school:

> Well, I would say from teaching sixth grade because they'll be going to junior high next year – usually it's… a lot of it is organizational skills, following directions, and learning how to be more independent in their learning because elementary kids, especially this year, I can see with fourth grade a lot of it you have to do for them so we're just – in sixth grade we try to get them to be more independent. We get them to – like taking notes automatically without a teacher telling you and being organized, being prepared, getting to class on time, and just things like that, that is going to help them gradually become more independent (Participant 2).

One person elaborated on the need to show a student how to use a planner:

> Oh, I think, you know, we need to focus on how to organize, how to keep a planner – I think we hand our children planners and don't necessarily teach them how to use them and how to effectively use them – study skills and how to learn to manage eight different subjects and eight different teachers giving you all something different and how to effectively manage their time so that time management, how to organize appropriately, how to use a planner appropriately, and how to study appropriately, would be, you know, what I think we need, is to focus just a little away from the typical subject areas, the core content, but without those the rest of it won't fall in place (Participant 4).

4.2.5 How to Get Parents or Caregivers Involved

Participants were asked about involving parents or caregivers with the after-school program. A consistent theme was that parents should be invited to participate in the after-school program and maybe even teach lessons.

> That's good because we've talked about that before – maybe a good way to do that is to – Requiring, that initially, that parents must come to the after-school program, maybe spend it – an identified a number of sessions with the student or maybe they have to for the first month they have to come once a week and spend the couple hours with their son or daughter at the program and then – I think if you do that you get a chance to meet the parents, they get to see you, they get to see how the after school program is run, then I think you'll have a better opportunity just to have their support throughout the whole program once they see how it works – some type of requirement that they're maybe they have to spend some time at the after school program (Participant 3).

4.3 BENEFITS OF AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Many participants identified numerous advantages of an after-school program, and felt students would greatly benefit from being involved in after-school programs. After-school programs were thought to be necessary for students, as they can assist in keeping kids involved by providing them with additional support they need personally or academically, building confidence with extracurricular activities, providing them with more guidance, helping students associate school with a positive environment, allowing for more one-on-one experiences, giving opportunities for students to engage in exercise programs and offering more socialization opportunities. One person further elaborated:

> Yes, I think that there's a lot – a ton of positives that come with the after school program, and I think that almost any student, behavioral problem or any other type of student would greatly benefit from being involved in an after-school program. Even more so, maybe with New Castle, you have many students who fall in the lower economic situation, in which maybe they

don't have the opportunities that someone in a different district might have to get involved in other types of activities and be associated with kids maybe outside – a little bit outside a school setting in which they're involved in interests – there are activities that interest them – you know a place like New Castle and more time that these students get to spend at the school or being around people that can educate them as far as their physical needs, their nutrition needs…any type of school work they can help them with and activities they can get involved in, these students would benefit greatly from that I'm sure – absolutely (Participant 3).

A few respondents could identify students who would benefit from an after-school program:

I know that there are kids here that I could pick out, maybe that would need some extra tutoring in math or in reading or even in science, so I think after school programs are always beneficial and I think it's good for the kids' socialization, cause some of them like that smaller atmosphere where there is not that many kids – they can get more one-on-one attention – for some children…they need that – it's hard for them to have a voice in a big classroom so it would help them a lot – tremendously (Participant 2).

> If you do it the right way and have them – rewarding systems and doing something to go after school and get them motivated to go after school – I think they would definitely benefit them because it's something students need more and if it's a smaller atmosphere with more one-on-one situations – I think it would definitely benefit some of the students that are in this room (Participant 8).

4.4 THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

This section discusses details about an after-school program. Characteristics of an after-school program, activities; respondents' visions of an after-school program; recommendations on referring children and students' eligibility for the program; insight on providing an end-of-the-school-year production to encourage parental, caregiver, and community involvement; community partners they would like to see involved in the after-school program; resources available to use for the after-school program; and the an after-school program limitations.

4.4.1 Characteristics of the After-School Program

Although the participants felt the after-school program should be limited to one hour to one hour and fifteen minutes because of children's limited attention span, it was noted that if programs had to run longer than the recommended timeframe, activities should be focused outside the normal classroom setting. One person commented on the need to have the program for two hours in order to accomplish goals of the program: "A couple hours, I think two – anything more would be too much – anything less I don't know if you would get everything in that you would need" (Participant 2). The participants were asked to identify a timeframe on how long students should spend for academic tutoring and one respondent answered:

> I think that depends on the individual student, obviously that's the thing about education, it's an art, so to set up a specific program designed to meet everyone's need is really not how it works. Every district is going to be different, so what works here in New Castle is not necessarily the best program for somewhere else, so to have a specific time period I'm not sure – we've talked here before about that we believe that the after school program, if it was an hour or two hours, would greatly benefit these students. To have that additional school work where they can have some tutoring, give them an opportunity to work on their assignments with some help (Participant 3).

4.4.2 Activities for the After-School Program

The administrators, teachers, and staff shared insights about planning activities for the after-school program. Activities should provide the students with opportunities to further develop skills in certain areas such as academics, community service, cultural enrichment and personal interests as well as build character, empowerment, manage time more efficiently, handle peer pressure, and other such issues. Activities that participants shared are as follows:

1. Providing learning in a smaller area;
2. Offering more opportunities for smaller group settings;
3. Engaging in fun activities;
4. Connecting learning opportunities with real-life examples;
5. Developing socialization skills;
6. Offering special clubs;
7. Providing academic support;
8. Assisting children with hands-on activities;
9. Exposing children to the arts;
10. Establishing a no-threat zone;
11. Offering reward systems;
12. Providing centers for learning;
13. Connecting with real people within and outside the community;
14. Engaging in physical activities;
15. Learning about nutrition and taking care of one's body;
16. Working out any school-related or personal problems in counseling;
17. Offering a reading/book club; and
18. Engaging in team-building activities.

Connecting learning with real-life situations was a recurring theme in the interviews. One person explained how it really benefits a student if the after-school program can "create a link between school" (math class) with a club, such as the auto club:

> I think once – for a lot of these guys once you've created that type of link so that they have an understanding of why I need to get this first from school – why do I need to become a better mathematician? Why do I need to learn the facts? Why do I need to learn to measure in centimeters? Well, every part I'm dealing with in this car is dealing with the metric system – you know I think that's maybe something that we need to do a better job in is creating that link so that a student can have a reason for wanting to pass the math test because they know that I'm going to have to utilize that for the auto club and then my – if I was creating it – let's say that we were talking about the auto club – you know maybe you have a requirement that says that you have to complete so many homework assignments – you have to have performed at a certain level in your math class and once you've met that requirement now you can participate in the after-school auto club – and that seems to work really well – even with the choir in-school activities – you know, students that are passionate about that and a lot of them are… will complete assignments, will be motivated to complete something in order to participate in the class – I think if you link the clubs to the school work and show them how the two are related (Participant 3).

Other participants warned about making things too restrictive for students. One stated:

> You have to be careful, you know, about not keeping positive incentives or activities away from students. I really think students respond well to incentives, you just have to do it the right way. These students already have it tough, and to see other kids getting to participate into activities and they aren't allowed to join in because they didn't complete an activity – you can only take that so far before you ask yourself, Is it really worth it? Am I hurting this child more than I am helping them by excluding them from an activity because they couldn't perform well on a test? Ah, no – I don't think incentives should be arranged in that sense. I think we should allow all of our students to be a part of an activity, but have other ways to motivate them to complete an assignment. Like – you know, you could have them be in a special club that interests them but use an incentive to encourage them to complete a homework assignment. Say if they complete so many homework assignments, they get to earn as a class to attend a special field trip within the subject of that club. So the student is still allowed to be in the club they just have to earn or pay for their field trip with their homework assignments. You have to establish some type of connection. Try to get the students to realize things don't just come to them for free. They have to earn it (Participant 6).

Some participants emphasized the need for after-school program activities to be "hands-on" and practical because most children thrive on real-life experience and active learning. Students who have fun and engage in authentic learning activities may have a better chance increase their potential to expand their knowledge. A recommendation for the after-school program was to limit the number of students who could participate, due to the idea that some students benefit more from smaller groups rather than larger groups, and students would have more personalized time with the program staff. One person explained, **"**An after-school program, I believe, you would get the students, you'd have to limit the number of students, but you would pick the students that you would feel would benefit from it" (Participant 1). The person continues by providing a vision for the program, expressing the following ideas:

> Say you have twenty, thirty students, you get three or four teachers and you break them down into groups and you do activities and you just do fun activities. For instance, math – you know, go outside if you're doing math and do stuff with them that you don't have a chance to do with them during a normal day here and get them involved. Reading, do a theme on a reading and talk to them – teach them in a smaller group and atmosphere and

> I think it would definitely benefit. I mean, once again you would need help with the budgeting and things like that, but I think if you could help twenty, thirty students a year on an after school program, they're really benefiting, you're really helping them out (Participant 1).

A few questions were asked about offering the after-school program as a 'referral program' for students who performed poorly with their academic performance, behaviors, or attendance. If an administrator, teacher, staff member, parent or caregiver could see the after-school program addressing students' needs, then they feel the referral program would be beneficial. Meaning, the program could be used to refer students to services they need for additional academic support, counseling, and/or to address poor behavior. However, some recommend the 'referral program' should encourage students to participate rather be used as punishment for students who struggled with their behavior or academics. The referral process should be clearly defined:

> If there's an organized process for referring kids and you know, how to follow the procedures and standards, I think it's highly likely that it could work. I don't see that being a problem. The main thing is to have a process, to have a referral process for at least the teachers and staff members to know what they need to do to get a child in there (Participant 7).

One person explained that the school would be in support of a 'referral program' for poor academic performance and disruptive behavior, but it would depend on the goals and objectives of the after-school program's intent:

> I think George Washington would be more than willing to implement a type of referral program. You know, I think that depends on what type of after-school program you want – if you want it to strictly be with students with behavior problems, then I don't think it would be a problem at all, if that's what you're designing. I think George Washington and everyone here in the staff would be more than willing to help identify the students that would need that program if that's the direction you would hope to go in (Participant 3).

A few participants commented on how all students should be allowed to participate in the after-school program, not just students who had problems with disruptive behavior, poor academic performance, or excessive absenteeism. The interviewee who did not agree with the referral program felt it was attaching a negative connotation or "stigma" to the after-school program. One person explained unless the 'referral program' was mandatory and the administrators, teachers, and staff members had to refer students to the after-school program based on disruptive behavior, poor grades, or absenteeism, they would not recommend a 'referral program':

> Again then we're attaching a negative area type, with the after-school program, when many kids don't want to do it. So I often think we do these things for the wrong reasons. If a child is not coming to school, for example, do you want them to come to an after-school program? I think that's not going to happen, and I don't think we should use that as a punishment for children not coming to school. Like, I never believe children who don't attend school, or this child is late so many times, so let's suspend the child – doesn't make sense to me to do something like that (Participant 4).

The person stressed the importance of finding out why a child was consistently late and trying to work on fixing the problem, instead of punishing the child for the action. Participant 4 elaborated:

> You know, if I was the parent and my child was late to school so many times and I knew the next time they would suspend them, the next time I would just leave the child home. So then it comes, do you want the child in school half a day or would you not want the child in school at all? So, you know, it's a double-edged sword, so I don't believe – I think we do these after-school programs for the wrong reasons and I don't think it should be a punishment. I think that's the reason many of them aren't successful.

Another participant was concerned that the 'referral program' would exclude other students who may need additional academic tutoring: "The hard part is, if you're only allowing

kids that are having problems, and maybe not the other kids – you wanna have kids to feel they need some extra help too," (Participant 2). Continuing,

> They want it or their parents might want it for them because if you're only allowing kids who we know are problem children, whether it be homework or absenteeism, they're not going to want to be there anyway. If it's an absenteeism problem – if they're absent from school, they're certainly not going to the after school program. So for that to work, once again there's got to be something that's going to – an incentive for them to be there (Participant 2).

Participants were asked their opinion about whether an after-school, end-of-the-school-year production would encourage parents, caregivers, and community members to attend the after-school program. One person said:

> No, not necessarily because it's like an open house, I think the end-of-the-year awards ceremony gets the parents to come, choir concert gets the parents to come, but just to come in a look at a portfolio of work, parents don't necessarily come, because at some point they're going to see it when they go home. I don't necessarily think a show case of work is going to get the parents to come (Participant 4).

When asked about some sort of theatrical production or talent show, the same person said:

> Yes, I think any type of musical, production, any sporting event, any awards ceremony where their child is going to get an award, for sure they would come. I think if I said we're going to have a reading night, I would get about one-eighth of the parents would come to that. So then it's, how do you partner with those teachers, the art teachers, the music teacher, the coaches and kind of involve and pull that all into one? And while parents are there throw that in? (Participant 4).

Participant 1 thought a conference with parents to help explain what is going on with their child would be a way to get them involved. Other comments about increasing parental involvement were as follows: allow them to teach lessons (Participant 2) or have the parents help with tutoring (Participants 2, 3, and 6), ask them to act as the chaperone for field trips (Participant 5), and allowing them to assist with the program in other ways (Participants 3, 7 and 8).

4.4.3 Community Member Partnerships

When participants were asked about organizations that should be involved the following responses were provided: the YMCA, WalMart, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) (the nearest metropolitan hospital), Jameson Hospital (a local hospital), the Hoyt (a local arts organization), the public library, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, local arts organizations, and anti-bullying organizations. One person commented:

> I think it's important to – you know, children who express themselves through the arts. And there are a lot of resources available that people don't realize are available and they just don't ask. And I always say it doesn't hurt to ask. For example, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, whether it's that organization or the Historical Cultural Trust, even the Pirates organization does a lot with outreach programs and the Steelers organizations and even the Penguins, so go and ask these people. I think people get the stigma that they're too big of an organization that they can't help out and they have a lot of programs available and they're just too scared to ask. So I would grab anyone willing to go on-board who would achieve the goals of the program. So I guess you would have to find the organization that would help you achieve those goals and how could they help you the most, and sometimes the ones you think are not going to help you or may not be the right organization turn out to be the best one. So I wouldn't close my possibilities to anything (Participant 4).

4.4.4 In-School Resources Available for an After-School Program

The following is a list of resources that respondents said are available at George Washington Intermediate for the after-school program: smart boards, supplemental material, books, a full library, a science lab, movable carts with laptops, laptops in every room, open outdoor fields, computer lab, gymnasium, and other technology-like equipment.

4.4.5 The After-School Program Limitations

Participants felt that the high demand of academic rigor expected by the Pennsylvania Department of Education was a barrier to students learning. Numerous participants expressed their frustration about how the academic world focuses too heavily on academic testing for the PSSA due to the state and federal legislation standards. One felt the approach taken to achieve for academic standards was like "a chore, with the drill and kill method," (Participant 4) meaning most students and teachers are not able to or are limited for time to expand on other supplemental materials that may be critical for learning. Teachers are expected to teach the material that will be covered on the standardized tests: "with the state, [students] take state testing now – they put a lot of pressure on you, sometimes you feel like a college professor – you're really pushed to teach out of the book, to do this, to do that – to get that standard across" (Participant 1). Today, most districts feel the pressure to have students perform well to have higher test scores, which seems to be emphasized as the number one indicator of school improvement (Participant 8). The pressure many have felt to perform well on standardized tests may be doing more harm than good; the focus on teaching to test for the standardized testing may narrow students' chances to learn and apply other important critical components of education to their lives. One respondent stressed the need for education to be focused on helping students get ready for their future:

> [There needs to be] more of a focus on, you know, what can you do to help these people and the students to prepare for life and to focus on new twenty-first century learning skills that kind of gives them the skills to go into the work force? I also think it's important, thus children hear firsthand from people who drop out of school and where they are and people who stayed in school, success stories, that firsthand knowledge and our authentic experiences is more important than what we can get at school (Participant 4).

When asked about perceived barriers to an after-school program, respondents covered six areas: limited direction with the program planning; negative attitudes from director, teachers, and/or staff; not connecting on the students' abilities and levels; lack of funding and transportation; and little to no parental involvement.

The after-school program would not be beneficial to students if it were run like a regular classroom setting. If the program was not run effectively, and students were "just sitting there and working on worksheets," (Participant 4) the program would not be worth it.

> I don't think it's going to be benefiting, because if they're basically already here for five six hours in the classroom, they don't want to just stay just another hour after school if it's not – if it's exactly the same – I think it would have to be a change in the way it's approached and what's going on (Participant 7).

Another barrier to the success of an after-school program would be a lack of motivation from the director, teachers, staff, students and parents:

> For the most part, I think they would, I mean they're going to be reviewing what they've learned in school but if they were to not benefit from it, they would have to be – I would put that blame on the teachers – they're not motivating enough to teach – maybe because it's after school or they weren't getting paid or whatever it might be – I think the parents would be an issue – the parents aren't getting their kids to school to the after school program or they are not picking them up or they're just saying forget about this, you know, – you should be learning enough in school – lack of motivation I would say whether it's parents or teachers or the kids (Participant 5).

One person explained how a lack of student interest, or a lack of interest in the students being served from the after-school programming staff would be a limitation to an after-school program:

> If the person in charge doesn't necessarily care, doesn't want them to want them to succeed and also students' attitudes towards it. The students' attitudes are easier to change than the person running the program so the hardest thing would be to match the right, whether it's teacher or community member, the right person to run the program and to have enough skills and knowledge of things that go on in schools if it's not somebody that works in the school district – have enough knowledge and information about

education and works closely with the school district so that they know what's going on and how to help students (Participant 4).

Another concern was students' limited capacity to learn and understand concepts:

> Every student develops at an individual pace and depending on the grade levels, you can go into in-depth manner. It's like trying to tell a toddler if you clean up your toys we can go get some ice cream tomorrow. The toddler just hears the word ice cream and wants it immediately, it's hard for them to wait for the next day, and that's the same with these students, you know, at the intermediate level (Participant 7).

If a program provides students with more information than they can handle, or it does not show a relationship with their current learning, it will only confuse the student rather than develop his or her learning. Students need to see how things are going to help them now, instead of the long-terms benefits:

> So I think you could give students all this information, but if it doesn't apply to them currently it's not going to work. You can't work ten years down the road for them and talk about how it's going to affect them when they're in college because they don't care and they mentally can't envision that down the road, but currently this is going to benefit them now, and this is one thing we try to do – or I try to do with some of the past students is we're doing this for this reason and this is how it's going to affect you now. If they can see that real world connection and how's it's directly affecting them, they're more likely to succeed with that. What I really think is the key that you need to make sure you have the right person running the after-school program (Participant 4).

4.4.6 Lack of Funding

All participants commented on the lack of funding for after-school programs. They felt that due to the state budget cuts, the school district would not be able to afford a program:

> I do just because, obviously there's going to be a cost involved and when you have a cost involved and we're in a situation now where I would say the majority of the school districts throughout the state are in a situation where we're either cutting programs, laying off teachers, pay freezes, might be difficult to accomplish, to convince someone that, hey, we want to spend some other money (Participant 3).

> Now I don't think it's impossible, I think you just have to show that the benefits outweigh the costs and maybe something else has to be eliminated to support the after school program – but there's definitely going to be a cost involved. You're going to have to be creative as far as how you're going to go about that whether it's find the food might have to bring stuff – I think cost is always an issue (Participant 3).

4.4.7 Transportation

A lot of interviewees perceived transportation to be a big issue with the after-school program, especially for elementary students:

> Yes, when you look at after-school programs, elementary and secondary, then I think elementary have more limitations and more hurdles to overcome to hold a program: children cannot drive at that age, you know, elementary age, you have to make sure they have transportation home, the children that you want to attend, you want them to be a part of those after-school programs their parents don't have the resources to come and get them, they're not necessarily the affluent children. But I mean, I think that's one of the major concerns, the transportation aspect (Participant 4).

Feeding children and schedule were also concerns:

> The next is you know, you have to feed children after school, and then the whole scheduling thing in general. I think secondary is a lot easier because you don't – they're a little bit older, they start driving or their friends drive so that they can car pool to things and do after-school activities, but I don't think there are as many limitations with the secondary level as there is with the primary level; I think it's hard to hold an after-school program at the primary level, I think for a school district, some of the organizations that hold after-school programs are different because someone has to take them there to begin with and with schools, you would just normally stay and then some how you would have to find your own transportation home, so I know we did after-school tutoring, it was hard because we had to arrange, provided a snack and transportation and then to find instruction time spent on working on the skills they need to develop was very small so then you have to look in the long run, was it even worth it? (Participant 4).

4.4.8 Lack of Parental Involvement

George Washington Intermediate School continues to struggle on a day-to-day basis to get parents to become involved.

> Well, that's the age-old question of how we get parents to attend after-school events. I don't know if I have a solution to that. I've been working on that – parental involvement like just parent meetings, PTO meetings and there really is no one solution of getting them there. It's kind of like finding out what works – trial and error, like you have to offer classes with the most parents with a prize. It's not the 1950s anymore where mom and dad is at home and mom is staying at home while dad works and there's two children. A lot of single parent homes, both parents are working, Aunts picking up little Johnny. I don't know and I hate to say days that a lot of parent involvement is gone, but I think they are, I just think that's the way the world is and I think we have to learn how to work within those limits because I don't think we're going to have the room mothers and the PTO involvement and the parents involved as much as we would like with how the world is today (Participant 4).

Another person commented on the numerous attempts the school takes to try to involve parents:

> We've tried this in our school –I mean, it just basically, in our school program here – in the city here – we've tried to get the parents involved in the different activities, and it's tough, it's tough, we have – at the beginning of the year, we have time first two weeks of the school year, a parents teacher night and I'm teaching on the average between sixty some students and I usually only get twenty to thirty, twenty to twenty-five parents throughout – representative –so it's tough. Now, to say what that has to be to get them there, now that's tough for me because we've tried a variety of things in this building during the school year and it's tough to get them here, it's tough (Participant 1).

5.0 PROPOSED INTERVENTION

The rationale for developing an after-school program for the New Castle Area School District's George Washington Intermediate School, grades four through six, is concern about the current dropout rates. The literature indicated that an after-school program could address dropout. The literature search and feedback from interviews helped the Principle Investigator design an after-school program to address high school dropouts. Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, and Carlson (2000) recommend that professionals develop programs and interventions in the early developmental stage in order to "influence subsequent development and achievement trajectories" (p. 542). Furthermore, the multiple factors influencing high school retention and preventing dropout should be considered when developing high school completion goals and objectives. When after-school programs are carefully planned and community needs are considered, programs can be effective (USDE, IES, NCEERA, WWC 2011).

Activities suggested for the after-school program were found in other dropout prevention or intervention programs, (First Things First, 2010; ICI, Minnesota's UCESS, 2010; Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004; & NCWD for Youth, 2011) and recommendations from interviews.

5.1 DESIGN OF THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Project SWAG (Students Who Accept Greatness) will provide youth with a sense of belonging through education, self-esteem building, and a foundation for hope for the future. The first step in the MAP-IT framework, according to HP 2020, is to develop a vision and mission statement (USDHHS 2011): **Vision:** To create a safe environment conducive to youths' learning and discovery of their potential for greatness. **Mission Statement:** To provide the students of George Washington Intermediate with a safe place to learn, advance, explore, and engage with positive peer and adult role models. The goal of the program is to decrease high school dropout by improving academic (ICI, Minnesota's UCESS, 2010; Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004; & NCWD for Youth, 2011) and behavioral performance (ICI, Minnesota's UCESS, 2010 & NCWD for Youth, 2011), increasing self-awareness of academic potential (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004), building management skills, interacting with positive peer modeling (ICI, Minnesota's UCESS, 2010 & Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004), increasing extra-curricular activities, increasing cultural awareness (CTE, 2002), and increasing active learning opportunities. Components of Check and Connect, First Things First, Project COFFEE, and IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program were incorporated in the Project SWAG after-school program.

All students at George Washington Intermediate will be eligible to participate in the after-school program; however, those who exhibit signs of disruptive behavior, low reading levels, and/or have trouble in other academic areas can be referred to the program by counselors, teachers, principals, and/or parents or caregivers. Teachers and counselors in the program will

work individually with students, as well as collaborate with other intervention staff in order to decrease in students' disruptive behaviors and improve academic performance.

The maximum number of students the program can accommodate is contingent on funding. The program will be hosted at George Washington Intermediate School. The after-school program's hours of operation will be from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on traditional school days; on days with early dismissal, the program will run from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday (see Appendix D for an Example of Weekly Activities) and will be offered throughout the school year (see Appendix E for A 40-Week Itinerary for the After-School Program).

The logic model developed for this particular intervention is built on Social Cognitive Theory constructs, which indicate that self-efficacy and one's potential to change habits are related to behavior (Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003). Theoretical constructs from this model are self-efficacy, self-regulation, facilitation, observational learning, and outcome expectations (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2008). The logic model is also a process in MAP-IT and CTB for the Plan step and will address the four levels of the Social-Ecological Model.

Social Cognitive Theory has been applied to problems and persons similar to those for the population identified, such as one study that aimed to develop problem-solving skills among sixth-grade children (Sharma, Petosa, & Heaney, 1999). The researchers theorized that building an intervention around the constructs of SCT, or some would lead to a structured classroom that would promote the use of problem-solving skills. Results showed students (sixth graders) who were involved in "a short-term intervention based on the theoretical constructs of SCT was more

efficacious than a knowledge-based approach in developing PSS" (Sharma, Petosa, & Heaney, 1999, p. 474).

In the program proposed in this paper, individual counseling, small group counseling (group sorts), and tutoring are directed toward fostering self-efficacy and will be focused on interacting with peers, teachers, and counselors to help students develop healthier attitudes about their potential to perform well in school, behaviorally and academically. Also, because students will engage in small group therapy sessions to talk about feelings and attitudes about various topics as well as complex issues they are facing, they will be able to provide each other with encouragement and support. The sessions will provide students the opportunity to develop and practice communication strategies and increase comfort level among peers to discuss difficult topics, in addition to problem solving. Students will engage in role-playing to improve life-coping skills and will learn about the tools needed to manage their self-regulation in the classroom. Self-regulation will also be discussed during individual and group counseling (group sorts) by the counselors, teachers, and/or staff members and appropriate and inappropriate behavior will be reviewed as well. Observational learning will be addressed through therapy sessions as students will learn from peer modeling and past experiences peers have with disruptive behavior and poor academic performance. Students will also list, examine and evaluate positive and negative peer pressures that exist in their daily lives and identify ways these pressures can impact behavior.

Counseling will also address outcome expectations in the classroom, the focus will be on addressing feelings and ideas each individual student has about receiving positive and negative attention in the classroom and learning to change students' expectations on promoting negative behaviors. Students will engage in coaching activities, like goal setting in respect to address

self-regulation. When students learn how to self-regulate or gain better control of their behavior, more time can be spent toward increasing academic performance. There are many benefits to self-monitoring, such as decreasing disruptive behavior, creating awareness about controlling behavior, accepting responsibility and developing personal independence (Frith & Armstrong 1986). Eventually, students become more confident in dealing with everyday life situations and may not require as much instruction from teachers/counselors (Dunlap, Dunlap, Koegel, & Koegel, 1991).

Peers, teachers, and counselors will demonstrate facilitation through group therapy sessions and tutoring with teachers and peers. The facilitation will be modeled after the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, an intervention developed to utilize in-depth academic tutoring in combination with peers at the same grade level as well as other grade levels (Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Intercultural Development Research Association, 2004). In the proposed program, peer tutoring will occur once a week for twenty weeks, and tutoring with teachers will occur three to four times per week for forty weeks. Table 4 presents the program's logic model and highlights the theoretical constructs of the Social Cognitive Theory that will be implemented in the after-school program.

Table 4. Logic Model for an After-School Program

ASSUMPTIONS	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
Self-efficacy Students who feel better about their academic potential will be more successful in school. **Self-regulation** Students who engage in coaching activities like problem solving and goal setting will gain better control of their behavior. **Facilitation** Mentors working with students can serve as a catalyst for change and increase the transfer of learning. **Observational learning** Students who interact with peers who have overcome barriers to disruptive behavior and poor academic performance will lead to decreased disruptive behavior and increased academic performance. **Outcome expectations** Changing the expectations students have about the amusement or attention associated with disruptive behavior	**Students** **Peers** **Teachers** **Parents/Caregivers** **School Counselors** **Volunteers** **Administrators** **School Board** **Intervention Site** **Funding**	**1. Individual counseling** ▪Emotional coaching ▪Building management skills **2. Small group counseling** ▪Students will engage in active role playing ▪Self-awareness activities that identify positive and negative peer pressure situations ▪ Desired behavior define in classroom ▪Peer modeling **3. Tutoring** (Peer/Teacher) ▪Students will interact with peers and teachers for academic tutoring **4. Activities** Students participate in extracurricular activities (see Activities section in Proposed Intervention section)	**Individual counseling sessions held 1x/wk for 40 wks.** **Group counseling sessions held 2x/wk for 40wks.** **Tutoring with peers 1x/wk for 20 wks.** **Tutoring with teachers 3-4x/wk for 40 wks.** **Activities will occur 4x/wk for 40 wks.**	**Decrease disruptive behavior** **Improve academic performance** **Increase self-esteem** **Increase extracurricular activities**	**Decrease school dropouts**

5.1.1 After-School Program Structure

The program will be administered collaboratively by New Castle Area School District and the Program Director. The Program Director, in conjunction with the after-school program staff, will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. The Program Director will train and supervise staff, as well as completing any financial and administrative tasks of the program, including grant writing. Meetings will be conducted at the end of each week to discuss any problems, recommendations, concerns, and/or upcoming events and trainings.

A licensed counselor or social worker will be in charge of conducting individual and group counseling sessions, in addition to making referrals for reports of abuse (at home or another place) or other issues that might surface during the group therapy sessions. The licensed professional will also provide in-service trainings to George Washington Intermediate's administrators, teachers, and staff members, as well as SWAG program staff at the beginning of the school year, and any other time deemed appropriate. The teachers and instructors will be assigned to specific groups at the start of the program and will act as facilitators for the Group Sorts and Ice Breaker time (see Activities section). Teachers and instructors will be assigned to run certain activities for the after-school program. Volunteers will assist with group activities and help with other tasks needed from teachers and instructors. Parents and caregivers, high school students, and community members will help distribute the after-school program snacks, and play a role in chaperoning local and distant field trips.

Students who do not exhibit positive behavior or those who may benefit from individual counseling will attend individual therapy sessions once a week for forty weeks. All students who participate in the after-school program will be involved in group therapy sessions called Group

Sorts two times per week for forty weeks with the school counselor. The group therapy (group sorts) sessions will work on team building, interpersonal skills, self-esteem activities, and youth empowerment. The group therapy sessions will discuss solutions youth can use for problems they are facing (e.g., a student is face with an alcoholic home environment, so group therapy sessions could help the student identify positive alternatives to abstain from alcohol and ways to cope with living in the alcoholic environment).

The reason group therapy sessions are called 'group sorts' to provide a non-stigmatized name for the group therapy sessions, thinking most children would feel better attending a group session to sort out problems, rather than attend a group session to 'receive therapy,' which may have a negative connotation.

5.1.2 After-School Program Curriculum

The curriculum will encompass a variety of activities. These include academic support, art, clubs, computer lab, dance, music, discovery centers, end-of-the-school year production, group sorts, individual counseling, library, physical activity, reading/book club, science, small groups, and special events (offered intermittently throughout the school year). The students will sign up for activities of their choice at the beginning of the school year and will be allowed to change activities throughout the year. If a student chooses not to be involved in a group activity on a particular day, he/she will have the option to participate in an individual activity or free time. All students will start group sorts and will continue to the next activity planned for the day. Academic support or homework time will be another activity all students will be strongly encouraged to attend, and if homework has been completed or is not assigned for the night, that student will be able to participate in free time.

5.1.3 Activities within the After-School Program

Academic Support or Homework Time

Academic support will be offered through individual and small group tutoring. Students will have the opportunity to work with peers, teachers, and volunteers in the after-school program. Tutoring should last 45 minutes to an hour.

Art

Art will include painting, drawing, drafting, and designing t-shirts. At the beginning of the school year, one project will be van design; depending on geographical location, students will be assigned to a van for transportation from the after-school program to their neighborhood or home. They will have the opportunity to represent their area of town with a team name for their van and will be provided with paint colors to splash onto the van. Students and staff will be given the chance to provide other ideas for additional art activities.

Clubs

The club activities were developed from the vision of participants 2, 3 and 8. Students will have the opportunity to make a list of interests and those mentioned most frequently will be the basis for special clubs. For example, if many students state a common interest in cars, an auto club will be developed. The after-school staff will contact local auto shops to see if they would be willing to schedule a special field trip with the auto club, in order to learn more about cars.

Computer Lab

Students will be able to use the computer lab to play games that enhance learning, to create poems, stories, musical programs, lyrics for songs, and any other linguistic or creative pieces. The computer lab will be available for students who want to produce pieces for the end-of-the-school-year production (see end-of-the-school-year production in the Activities section). The computer lab will be monitored by a staff member to insure proper usage of the computer lab technology. Firewalls and other protective devices will be are installed to for the safety of the student using the Internet.

Dance

Culturally appropriate dance will be offered including a blend of hip hop, krumping[1] and other styles of dance. Students will have the opportunity to express themselves through group or individual dances and will present the dance pieces at the end-of-the-school-year for parents, caregivers, and community members.

[1]A form of dance that "represents the ability to transcend racial tension and violence," providing "calming influences" and offers "in the absence of funding for after-school and performing arts programs, getting krumped is a positive alternative to more dangerous activities" (Jones 2005, http://www.dancespirit.com/articles/1452).

Discovery centers

The idea for discovery centers came from participants 1, 2, 5, and 8 and will give students the opportunity to explore reading, science, math, and other academic areas. This will involve students connecting with real people. Students will have the opportunity to connect learning with real-life events and people, one interviewee stated:

> I would like to have real examples, like you know, real authors come in, or with technology today, skyping with publishers or national authors about why they love to

> write and why they love to read or even like high profile athletes or movie stars or something to kind of get them involved of showing, you know, how reading goes outside, as far as take it to the next step with readers are leaders theories like community members, people outside the community that have succeeded in life and how reading has specifically affected their lives and how it's helped them get to where they are so they have the real world examples (Participant 4).

End-of-the-school-year production

Students will have the opportunity to organize an end-of-the-school-year talent show to present to family members, parents, caregivers, and community members. This production will highlight the positive work students have done over the course of the school year. Art projects, songs, poems, musical pieces, and dance will be shared. There will be a display table for creative materials produced by the students.

Group Sorts

Group sorts will allow time for students to work through day-to-day problems, concerns, and questions they have about life. This activity is the group counseling sessions; however, the name was changed to Group Sorts to help students feel more comfortable participating in the activity. The students will also work on learning how to develop their socialization and organizational skills. This will be a part of their daily schedule; although most days allot only 15 minutes for Group Sorts, other days throughout the week allow more time for discussion. Depending on the conversations and needs of the students, activities can be rescheduled accordingly.

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling will be conducted by the licensed counselor or licensed social worker, who will assess problem areas for students needing improvement. A student may seek help on her

own or be referred to the counselor or social worker by a mentor, teacher, staff member, administrators, and/or parents or caregivers.

Library

Library time will be allotted for students who want to check out books for the Reading/Book Club, or for exploring areas of interest, reference and research, as well as becoming familiar with the library system.

Physical Activity

Physical activity will be offered every day of the after-school program for those interested students. There will be options for structured and non-structured physical activity. The programs will use the school's sports equipment, with the approval of the school and physical education teacher. Other non-equipment physical activities will be available (see Dance in the Activities Section).

Reading/Book Club

A Book Club will be offered in an environment "like a café, with cocoa and cookies." Students will be assigned a certain book to read and then will discuss the book in a small, "casual," and non-classroom setting. The Book Club will meet in a specific room in George Washington Intermediate School, "some type of reading lounge, and it would take them out of the normal desk and chairs type of setting and [set the tone for] a no threat zone" (Participant 4). The "lounge" will have "couches or chairs" for students to read and share.

Science

Science activities will include hand-on activities that involve active learning, such as taking children to the pond and exploring through real-life examples. Other events could be having students create recipes and prepare the dishes from those recipes, taking a field trip to the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh, and putting together a science fair.

Small Groups

Small groups will allow students to work on projects within the activities options. Each activity will allow students to participate in a larger or smaller group atmosphere. For example, if students are preparing for the end-of-the-school-year production, they can work together in small groups to create the costumes, scenery, music and lyrics for the talent show. Another example would be if students had free time opportunity and they wanted to explore another topic area, the small group time would allow students to further explore that area.

Special events

Special events will include field trips to local and distant venues and will typically occur during half-days of school to allow more time for travel. Most trips will be centered on cultural enrichment (e.g., visiting a local or distant museum, attending a musical performance). These will allow students, especially those lower in income status, to be exposed to experiences that they might otherwise not have.

5.1.4 Health Planning Framework

The proposed after-school program will address multiple levels of the SEM, (individual, relationship, community, and societal levels) and will include interactions with peers, teachers, counselors, and family members. Activities aimed at the relationship, community, and societal levels will allow for developing skills, enhancing knowledge, and reshaping attitudes toward disruptive behaviors and poor academic performance. Table 5 further expands on influences, strategies, and prevention activities to be addressed in the after-school program at the four levels of the Social-Ecological Model.

Table 5. Social-Ecological Model: Influence, Strategy, and Prevention Activities

Level	Influence	Strategy	Prevention Activities
Individual	Factors that increase risk such as self-efficacy	Promote healthy attitudes and behaviors	Individual counseling with licensed counselor or social worker
Relationship	Relationships between peers, teachers, staff, and family that are negative can influence risk for high school dropouts.	Promote positive behaviors by modeling and positive mentorship	Everyday learning experience; Group Sorts (group counseling), and students will hear first-hand from high school dropouts, people who have had difficulty with school, and individuals who have been successful why school is important. Students will be provided with group scenarios and will work together to develop healthier attitudes about academic potential.
Community	Relationships between individuals and schools can increase risk of high school dropouts	Encourage a positive learning environment for students	End-of-the-school-year activity to encourage relational development among parents, caregivers, and community members
Societal	Factors that influence high school dropouts at the social level, school policies	Encourage a 'no-threat zone' environment	Establishing an after-school program

5.1.5 Funding and Budgeting

The Center for Teen Empowerment (2002) report recommends that after-school programs involve an array of young people from diverse backgrounds, culture, grade levels, racial, and gender pools. Therefore, the proposed program will be offered at no cost to the school or the children; the funding will come from federal, state, private, and local parties. Funding sources have been identified: entitlement programs, formula or block grants, discretionary or project grants, contracts, demonstration grants, and direct payments (Federal Funding Basics, 2011).

There are four major types of federal monies designated exclusively for after-school programs: the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC), and federal food and nutrition programs (Federal Funding Basics, 2011). Tables 6 and 7 show the proposed budgets for the salaries and fringe benefits. The two tables provide two options for the budget proposal: Table 5 includes the counselor option and Table 6 includes the social worker option.

The hours needed per week estimated, determined, and calculated by the Principal Investigator were based on a 40 week program. The three columns allowed for minimum, median, and maximum salaries to be provided. Funding will determine the budget levels for running the program. The individuals included in the budget are as follows: the After-School Program Director, the Counselor or Social Worker, Teachers and Instructors (All other), and the Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria. The total cost for staff salaries and benefits ranges between $57,998.40 and $127,169.60 total for the fiscal year.

Table 6. Proposed Budget and Potential Funding Resource (Counselor Option)

National Estimates for Occupation (Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2010)	**10%**	**50% (Median)**	**Hourly or annual mean wage**	**Hours needed per week**	**Potential Funding Resource**	**Citation for Funding and Link to National Estimates for Occupation Website**
After-School Program Director (Education Administrators, All Other)	**$20.17/hr** ($41,953.60 Annually)	**$36.39/hr** ($75,691.20 Annually)	**$42.70/hr** ($88,816 Annually)	40hrs 52wks x 40hrs/wk = 2080 hrs	CCDF; TANF; 21CCLC	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119039.htm
Counselor (Educational, Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors)	**$15.21/hr** ($9,734.40 40wks [640hrs] or $12,168 40wks [800hrs])	**$25.67/hr** ($16, 428.80 40wks [640hrs] or $20,536 40wks [800hrs])	**$26.03/hr** ($16, 659.20 40wks [640hrs] or $20,824wks [800hrs])	16 – 20hrs 640hrs – 800hrs	CCDF; TANF; 21CCLC	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211012.htm
Teacher (Teachers and Instructors, All Other)	**$17,740 annual wage*** (roughly $8.53hr) $5,459.20 40wk (640hrs) Or $6,800 40wks (800)hrs	**$29,820 annual wage*** (roughly $14.34hr) $9177.60 40wk (640hrs) Or 11,472 40wks (800hrs)	**$33,530 annual wage*** (roughly $16.12hr) 10,316.80 40wks (640hrs) Or 12,896 40wks (800hrs)	16 – 20 hrs 640hrs – 800hrs	CCDF; TANF; 21CCLC	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes253999.htm#(2)
Cafeteria (Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria)	**$7.92/hr** $2,534.40 40wks	**$10.93/hr** $3,497.60 40wks	**$10.93/hr** $3,497.60 40wks	8hrs 40wks x 8hr/wk = **320 hrs**	Federal Food and Nutrition Programs	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes352012.htm
Volunteers	Non-paid	Non-paid	Non-paid			
Total Staff Salaries (per year or per 40wks)	**1. $60,644.80 2. $64,419.20**	**3. $104,795.20 4. $111,196.80**	**5. $119,289.60 6. $126,033.60**			

1 The sum of the 10% column including only 640hr employees and full time After-School Program Director; **2** The sum of the 10% column including only 800hr employees and full time After-School Program Director; **3** The sum of the 50% column including only 640hr employees and full time After-School Program Director; **4** The sum of the 50% column including only 800hr employees and full time After-School Program Director **5** The sum of the hourly or annual mean wage column including only 640hr employees; **6** The sum of the hourly or annual mean wage column including only 800hr employees and full time After-School Program Director (* *may not be year-round or full time*)

Table 7. Proposed Budget and Potential Funding Resource (Social Worker Option)

National Estimates for Occupation (Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2010)	**10%**	**50% (Median)**	**Hourly or annual mean wage**	**Hours needed per week**	**Potential Funding Resource**	**Citation for Funding and Link to National Estimates for Occupation Website**
After-School Program Director (Education Administrators, All Other)	**$20.17/hr** ($41,953.60 Annually)	**$36.39/hr** ($75,691.20 Annually)	**$42.70/hr** ($88,816 Annually)	40hrs 52wks x 40hrs/wk = 2080 hrs	CCDF; TANF; 21CCLC	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119039.htm
Social Worker (Child, Family and School Licensed Social Worker: Elementary and Secondary Schools)	**$12.58/hr** ($8,051.20 40wks [640hrs] or $10, 064 40wks [800hrs])	**$19.33/hr** ($12,371.20 40wks [640hrs] or $15,736 40wks [800hrs])	**$27.45/hr** ($17,568 40wks [640hrs] or $21, 960 40wks [800hrs])	16 – 20hrs 640hrs – 800hrs	CCDF; TANF; 21CCLC	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211021.htm
Teacher (Teachers and Instructors, All Other)	**$17,740 annual wage*** (roughly $8.53hr) $5,459.20 40wk (640hrs) Or $6,800 40wks (800)hrs	**$29,820 annual wage*** (roughly $14.34hr) $9177.60 40wk (640hrs) Or 11,472 40wks (800hrs)	**$33,530 annual wage*** (roughly $16.12hr) 10,316.80 40wks (640hrs) Or 12,896 40wks (800hrs)	16 – 20 hrs 640hrs – 800hrs	CCDF; TANF; 21CCLC	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes253999.htm#(2)
Cafeteria (Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria)	**$7.92/hr** $2,534.40 40wks	**$10.93/hr** $3,497.60 40wks	**$10.93/hr** $3,497.60 40wks	8hrs 40wks x 8hr/wk = **320 hrs**	Federal Food and Nutrition Programs	(Federal Funding Basics, 2011) www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes352012.htm
Volunteers	Non-paid	Non-paid	Non-paid			
Total Staff Salaries (per year or per 40wks)	**1. $57,998.40 2. $61,352.00**	**3. $100,737.60 4. $106,396.80**	**5. $120,198.40 6. $127,169.60**			

1 The sum of the 10% column including only 640hr employees and full time After-School Program Director; **2** The sum of the 10% column including only 800hr employees and full time After-School Program Director; **3** The sum of the 50% column including only 640hr employees and full time After-School Program Director; **4** The sum of the 50% column including only 800hr employees and full time After-School Program Director **5** The sum of the hourly or annual mean wage column including only 640hr employees; **6** The sum of the hourly or annual mean wage column including only 800hr employees and full time After-School Program Director (* *may not be year-round or full time*)

5.1.6 Evaluation and Tracking

As recommended by the MAP-IT and the Community Tool Box frameworks, in order to measure whether or not the intervention is effective, an evaluation process will be established. Evaluations can highlight areas within the program that need improvement and provide information about whether goals of the program have been met.

There are two pre-tests and two post-tests for all teachers in George Washington Intermediate School and all students who participate in the Project SWAG After-School Program. The pre-test for the teachers will determine if they believe an after-school program will benefit their students academically, behaviorally, emotionally, and socially. The post-test for the teachers will evaluate whether or not the teachers saw an improvement in behavior, attendance, and attitude; an increase in students' interests in reading; students reporting about their positive experiences with the after-school program; and a decrease in the number of times teachers had to send students to detention, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension. The pre-test for the teachers will be administered at the beginning of the school year and the post-test at the end of the school year.

The pre-test for students will explore whether they think the after-school program might shape their thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes. The pre-test will also determine their expectations for and needs from the after-school program. The post-test will assess how the students believe the after-school has helped them with their academics, confidence, and learning. It will also look into whether or not the students felt their needs and expectations of the program were meet, and will ask questions about how valued they felt from the teachers, staff, and other students in the program. The pre-test for the students, will be administered at the beginning of the school year,

within the first week of the after-school program. The post-test for the students will be distributed at the end of the last week of the after-school program (see Appendix F for Project SWAG Evaluation [Pre-and Post-Tests]).

6.0 CONCLUSION

This chapter will discuss the limitations, recommendations, and conclusions of the study and will provide further insight of the importance of creating an after-school program for students to address high school dropouts at an early stage.

High school dropouts may face many negative socio-economic factors. High school dropouts earn less income than those individuals with a high school diploma and may have a higher potential for unemployment. Taxpayers are faced with paying higher tax dollars to cover the costs in tax revenues, medical spending, and social services.

This thesis reviewed the risk factors and early warning signs for high school dropout. It examined the negative impact high school dropouts could have on the individuals and the social-economy. Federal policies and current programs that address high school dropout were reviewed and used to develop a proposal for an after-school program.

Recommendations from administrators, teachers, and staff from George Washington Intermediate School in New Castle Area School District, three health planning frameworks: Social-Ecological Model framework, Mobilize, Assess, Plan, Implement, and Track (MAP-IT) framework, the Community Tool Box framework; and constructs from Social Cognitive Theory were also incorporated for the development of the after-school program.

This thesis will be used as a proposal the New Castle Area School District to implement an after-school program. By presenting a proposal for an after-school program, the Principal Investigator can provide guidance for the New Castle Area School District to implement an intervention to increase the percentage of students that graduates from high school. The proposal goal is to address high school dropouts from an early intervention stage and will be targeted for fourth through sixth grade students. The methodological approaches of the study and themes that emerged from the interviews have been provided.

The after-school program needs and activities were assessed through interviews with administrators, teachers, and staff of George Washington Intermediate School. The themes that emerged from the interviews were administrators', teachers', and staffs' awareness of risk factors for high school dropout; current programs or recommendations for addressing high school dropouts; characteristics of an after-school program; and limitations for students in education and for an after-school program. Recommendations are to offer an after-school program for grades fourth through sixth to address high school dropouts earlier in the intervention stage and to set high poverty areas as a priority.

Overall, the findings from this study were consistent with those reported in the literature which stated poor academic performance, disruptive behavior, excessive absenteeism, limited parental or caregiver support, and low reading levels were factors that contributed to dropping out of high school. With tutoring being offered only during the school year for the PSSA testing, the Academy being currently eliminated there is a need for addressing high school dropouts at another level. The proposal for the development of this after-school program will help New Castle Area School District address high school dropouts at an earlier stage. After-school

programs from the literature that showed statistical significance and inputs from the interviews were used to develop the after-school program.

6.1.1 LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the study are the sample size and the fact that the sample was not representative of administrators, teachers, and staff in the New Castle Area School District. The activities and ideas suggested by the interviewees may not to be generalizable for developing after-school programs for other areas. A needs assessment should be administered for the population serving, and input from should be taken from a larger population sample. Another limitation was that the study was based solely on the perspectives of administrators, teachers, and staff at the intermediate level. This excluded potential valuable feedback and recommendations from other administrators, teachers, and staff within George Washington Intermediate School as well as the input from parents, caregivers, community members, and students. Gaining insight from other perspectives would add to the development of a more comprehensive after-school program.

6.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Early interventions for students in the fourth through sixth grades are imperative for addressing the high school dropout crisis. Prevention efforts should be located in high poverty areas and for students with disruptive behaviors (Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbot, et al., 2000). Interventions geared toward supporting academics, behavior, and attendance can assist with increasing graduation rates (Balfanz, Herzog, & MacIver, 2007). Early intervention is thought to be a positive step toward prevention of school dropout (Conley & Hinchman, 2004; Dynarski &

Gleason, 2002; Sharma, Petosa, & Heaney, 1999). Factors such as behavioral problems and low school achievement are early indications of future dropout, and by identifying these factors one can initiate early intervention programs.

Smyth (1999) found that schools tend to have lower dropout rates when schools improve academic success among students. In fact, those students who were provided with a positive academic environment, such as support from their peers, teachers, and academics performed better in school. Results from Smyth's study showed that students who had better attendance records did better in school and were more likely to complete high school. Students who engaged in positive interpersonal relationships and who believed they were cared about by community members of the school, both adults and peers, were more likely to perform better in "academic achievement" and "educational attainment;" in fact, this is thought to be a key determinant in school success (Basch, 2010, p. 9). Education systems could respond to this by developing culturally sensitive curricula and practices, as well as exposing students to other cross-cultural curricula. These economic costs to society for high school dropouts should not be overlooked; preventative measures should be developed in order to save money on tax revenues (Weiss, 2009).

6.1.3 CONCLUSIONS

Factors related to high school dropout have been reported in the literature and from interview results: a decline in behavior, poor academic performance, poor reading levels, and excessive absenteeism. Many students at risk for dropping out of high school have underlying issues that may result in the warning signs cited above. Research shows a positive way to address high school dropout is through after-school prevention or intervention programs. Those programs that

include a focus on: academics, behavior, counseling, engaging with the community, mentorship, and an art focus are more likely to be successful in reducing dropout. After-school programs can be extremely beneficial to students as cited in the literature and results of the interviews with George Washington Intermediate School administrators, teachers, and staff.

Some explanations for why there are gaps in the research with respect to high school retention may be linked to the way studies are reporting their results; meaning, some studies may show a marginal improvement or may fail to use effective evidence-based research standards (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse [USDE, IES, NCEERA, WWC], 2011). Some results may not be reported accurately due to the pressure most schools have from educational policies requiring high academic standards (Shepard & Smith, 1990).

Holzer, (2010), testified before the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress in the effort to encourage more government funding to be put toward enhancing education and employment opportunities, as well as offering prevention efforts to address high school dropout. He further elaborates on the importance of federal funds being used for prevention, rather than intervention strategies, emphasizing, "And, while these efforts would cost some federal funds over time, the social and costs of *not* investing in our most vulnerable young people will be far greater over time. Sensible and cost-effective investments based on evidence of success, and with incentives for performance, should be made even in difficult fiscal environments" (Holzer, 2010, p. 4). The literature, Healthy People 2020, and federal policies point to the need for an early intervention program to address dropouts. Students who engage in positive development programs, such as after school programs tend to have higher graduation rates than those students who do not participate (U.S. Department of Justice [DJ] 2011).

This study adds to the literature by offering insight from school officials, such as administrators, teachers, and staff members for the development of an after-school program to address high school dropouts' at an early stage of intervention. Students who possess a high school diploma will have the opportunity to progress in the workforce and/or have the minimum requirements needed for applying to a community college, university, or technical school. Graduating from high school sets a person up for the future and creates both a better chance for success and a brighter future.

APPENDIX A

INTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER

University of Pittsburgh
Institutional Review Board

3500 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 383-1480
(412) 383-1508 (fax)
http://www.irb.pitt.edu

Memorandum

To: Teresa Ferrainolo

From: Sue Beers PhD, Vice Chair

Date: 6/7/2011

IRB#: PRO11050484

Subject: Project SWAG (Students Who Accept Greatness): A Proposal for an After School Program

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The above-referenced project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board. Based on the information provided, this project meets all the necessary criteria for an exemption, and is hereby designated as "exempt" under section

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)

Please note the following information:

- If any modifications are made to this project, use the " **Send Comments to IRB Staff**" process from the project workspace to request a review to ensure it continues to meet the exempt category.
- Upon completion of your project, be sure to finalize the project by submitting a "**Study Completed**" report from the project workspace.

Please be advised that your research study may be audited periodically by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT

B.1 PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT

Working title: "Project SWAG (Students Who Accept Greatness): A Proposal for an After-School Program"

My name is Teresa Ferrainolo, a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh seeking a Master in Public Health degree through the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences. I am affiliated with New Castle Area School District through Adagio Health, Inc. Power Up Program.

As a part of my graduate fulfillment, I am required to write a master's thesis and would like to develop an after-school program in order to address the high school dropout crisis in America. The goal of the program is to increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school. This goal will be addressed through an early intervention program targeting students in fourth through sixth grade. The program would address the risk factors that lead to high school dropout.

One piece of my research involves conducting in-depth interviews with school administrators, teachers, and staff members to gain insight for planning an after-school program. I am asking for your permission to participate in an interview. Your participation in this interview is strictly **voluntary**; thus allowing you to decide not to participate in the study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or New Castle Area School District.

Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to your participation in the study will be discarded. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence (unless information pertains to harming yourself or others), and will have no bearing on your professional standing or services you receive from the school district. Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. I will not record your name or any other identifying information for the purpose of this study.

If you are willing to participate, the interview will take about 90 minutes and upon completion you will receive a $5 gift card to Dunkin Donuts. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. Your feedback is fundamental for providing recommendations and insight for the development and need for an after-school program. The information obtained in the study may be published in the University of Pittsburgh's Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) or presented at academic conferences; however, your identity will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. This project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Martha Ann Terry. I can be reached by e-mail at t.a.ferrainolo@gmail.com. Please contact me if you would like to participate or if you have any questions or concerns. The interviews will be conducted over the telephone or face-to-face at George Washington Intermediate's conference room.

Researcher:
Teresa Ann Ferrainolo, BS
MPH Candidate at the University of Pittsburgh
Graduate School of Public Health
Department of Behavioral and
Community Health Sciences

Project Director:
Dr. Martha Ann Terry, Assistant Professor
University of Pittsburgh Director MPH Program
Graduate School of Public Health
Department of Behavioral and
Community Health Sciences

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

C.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions Assessing Awareness

What do you think the early warning signs are for a student at risk for dropping out of high school?

How can the school administrators, teachers, and/or staff address high school dropout?

At what level do you think an intervention should be addressed for high school dropout? (e.g., pre-school, intermediate, high school)

How does the school discipline students for behavior, poor grades, and absenteeism?

How much out of school time would students need to gain additional help with homework or extra tutoring?

What programs are available for students who are at risk for their behavior, attendance, and/or academic performance?

What happens to the students who perform poorly in attendance, behavior and academics?

What academic initiatives are needed to support students in transition to junior high?

Benefits/Limits of the program

How do you see an after-school program benefiting your students?

What are reasons you do not feel your students would benefit from an after-school program?

Are there any limitations you see for an after-school program?

Questions for planning the after school-program

Briefly describe your vision of an after-school program for your students.

What activities would you like to see in the after-school curriculum?

How many hours do you feel would be appropriate for an after-school program?

How would you initiate parental or caregiver involvement with an after-school program?

If parent/caregiver classes were offered, what are your thoughts on how to get them to attend?

Would an end-of-the-school-year activity get parents/caregivers/community members to attend?

What resources are available in your school to utilize for an after-school program?

What are some examples of team-building activities you would like to see your students involved in?

If the after-school program was contingent on a referral program, such as a student who had three strikes with behavior, absenteeism, and/or academics, how likely would George Washington be willing to implement the referral program?

If the referral program was established, what mandatory programs would you like for students to be involved in?

Elaborate on how other students who were not involved in the referral program could participate in the after school program?

What community partners would you like to see involved in the after-school program?

Are there any last statements you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

D.1 EXAMPLE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
3:30pm – 3:45pm (15 minutes) Arrival/Check-in/Snack 3:45pm – 4:00pm Report to Teams: Group Sorts: Debriefing from the school day Ice Breaker (Check in) 4:00pm – 4:30pm Activity of choice 4:30pm – 5:00pm Breakout for academic support (Peer/Teacher), homework time, or free time 5:00pm – 5:15pm (15 minutes) Load students on buses/vans to go home	3:30pm – 3:45pm (15 minutes) Arrival/Snack 3:45pm – 4:00pm Report to Teams: Group Sorts: Debriefing from the school day Ice Breaker (Check in) 4:00pm – 4:30pm Breakout for academic support (Peer/Teacher), homework time, or free time 4:30pm – 5:00pm Activity of choice 5:00pm – 5:15pm (15 minutes) Load students on buses/vans to go home	3:30pm – 3:45pm (15 minutes) Arrival/Snack 3:45pm – 4:00pm Report to Teams: Group Sorts: Debriefing from the school day Ice Breaker (Check in) 4:00pm – 4:30pm Activity of choice 4:30pm – 5:00pm Breakout for academic support (Peer/Teacher), homework time, or free time 5:00pm – 5:15pm (15 minutes) Load students on buses/vans to go home	3:30pm – 3:45pm (15 minutes) Arrival/Snack 3:45pm – 4:00pm Report to Teams: Group Sorts: Debriefing from the school day Ice Breaker (Check in) 4:00pm – 4:30pm Extension of Group Sorts 4:30pm – 5:00pm Activity of choice (Academic support will be offered to those students wishing to participate) 5:00pm – 5:15pm (15 minutes) Load students on buses/vans to go home

APPENDIX E

A 40-WEEK ITINERARY FOR THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

E.1 A 40-WEEK ITINERARY FOR THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Week 1 *Orientation for staff (1st 9 weeks)*	**Week 11** *Orientation for staff (2nd 9 weeks) Native American Heritage Month*	**Week 21** *Orientation for staff (3rd 9 weeks)*	**Week 31** *Orientation for staff (4th 9 weeks) National Poetry Month*
Week 2	**Week 12**	**Week 22**	**Week 32**
Week 3	**Week 13**	**Week 23** *National Black History Month*	**Week 33**
Week 4	**Week 14**	**Week 24**	**Week 34**
Week 5	**Week 15** *Read a New Book Month*	**Week 25**	**Week 35**
Week 6 *National Hispanic Heritage Month*	**Week 16**	**Week 26** *The Holt Local Fieldtrip*	**Week 36** *Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and National Physical Fitness and Sport Month*
Week 7	**Week 17**	**Week 27** *National Nutrition Month*	**Week 37**
Week 8	**Week 18** *Winter Festivities*	**Week 28**	**Week 38**
Week 9	**Week 19**	**Week 29**	**Week 39** *End-of-the-school-year production*
Week 10 *Fall Festivities*	**Week 20**	**Week 30**	**Week 40** *Wrap Up Summer Fun Field Trip to Kennywood or Sandcastle*

APPENDIX F

PROJECT SWAG EVALUATION (PRE-AND POST-TESTS)

F.1 PRE-TEST FOR TEACHERS

N/A = Not Applicable

1. I believe Project SWAG will help students' decrease disruptive behavior in my classroom/school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

2. I believe students will report positive experiences to me during class/school with the after-school program, Project SWAG.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

3. I believe Project SWAG will help improve students' interest in reading.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

4. I believe I will notice an improvement with students' academic performance.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

5. I believe Project SWAG will influence students to strive to attend school daily.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

6. I believe Project SWAG will help students become more aware of their academic potential.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

7. I believe Project SWAG will decrease the amount of times I send my student(s) to detention, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

F.2 PRE-TEST FOR STUDENTS

N/A = Not Applicable

1. I believe Project SWAG will help me with:

a) School work

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

b) Relating to my peers

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

c) Having more confidence with my ability to do better in school

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

d) Increasing my interest in reading

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

e) Increasing my interest in clubs/extracurricular activities

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

f) Increasing my interests in learning

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

g) Offering me opportunities to explore my interests

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

h) Offering more hand-on experience

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

i) Making learning more fun

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

j) Interacting with my friends

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

k) Sorting out everyday problems

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

l) Showing me how to solve problems

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

m) Showing me positive ways to deal with negative situations in life and school

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

n) Helping me discovery my creative side

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

o) Giving me a safe place to learn

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

p) Giving me a safe place to have fun

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

2. What do you want from an-after school program? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ To have fun
- ☐ To connect with friends
- ☐ To learn about new clubs
- ☐ To get help with homework
- ☐ To eat an after-school snack
- ☐ To be able to show my family what I have done in school
- ☐ To be able to put on a talent show for my family
- ☐ To talk about things that bother me in private (i.e., things that make me sad, scared, and upset)
- ☐ To be able to share with other kids things that bother me with life or school
- ☐ To join extracurricular activities (i.e., book clubs, dance, and physical activities)
- ☐ Other (Please write other comments) _____

3. I feel like I will be a part of a team in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

4. I feel like the after-school program will be a "no-threat zone"

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

5. I feel the after-school program staff will include me in program activities

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

6. I feel I will have a choice in which after-school program activities that I would like to participate in

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

7. I feel I will be valued in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

8. I believe I will enjoy the time I spend in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

9. I feel the students will accept me in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

10. Please provide any additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

F.3 POST-TEST FOR TEACHERS

N/A = Not Applicable

1. I have noticed an improvement in decreasing disruptive behavior in my classroom/school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

2. Students have reported positive experiences to me during class/school with the after-school program, Project SWAG.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

3. I have noticed an increase in students' interest in reading.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

4. I have noticed an improvement with students' academic performance.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

5. I believe Project SWAG has influenced students to strive to attend school daily.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

6. I believe Project SWAG has helped students become more aware of their academic potential.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

7. I believe Project SWAG has decreased the amount of times I have sent my student(s) to detention, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

8. Please provide any additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

F.4 POST-TEST FOR STUDENTS

N/A = Not Applicable

1. I believe Project SWAG has helped me with:

a) School work

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

b) Relating to my peers

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

c) Having more confidence with my ability to do better in school

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

d) Increasing my interest in reading

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

e) Increasing my interest in clubs/extracurricular activities

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

f) Increasing my interest in learning

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

g) Offering me opportunities to explore my interests

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

h) Offering more hand-on experience

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

i) Making learning more fun

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

j) Interacting with my friends

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

k) Sorting out everyday problems

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

l) Showing me how to solve problems

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

m) Showing me positive ways to deal with negative situations in life and school

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

n) Helping me discover my creative side

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

o) Giving me a safe place to learn

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

p) Giving me a safe place to have fun

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

2. Were there parts of the after-school program that were not offered to you? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Did not have fun
- ☐ Did not connect with friends
- ☐ Did not learn about new clubs
- ☐ Did not get help with homework
- ☐ Did not get an after-school snack
- ☐ Was not able to show my family what I have done in school
- ☐ Was not able to put on a talent show for my family
- ☐ Did not talk about things that bothered me in private (i.e., things that make me sad, scared, and upset)
- ☐ Did not share with other kids things about things that bother us with life or school
- ☐ Did not join extracurricular activities (i.e., book clubs, dance, and physical activities)
- ☐ Other (Please write other comments) _____

If you check one or more of the above, please explain the reason you did not participate or why the part was not offered to you in the lines below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. I felt like I was a part of a team in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

4. I felt the after-school program was a "no-threat zone"

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

5. I felt the staff included me in the after-school program activities

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

6. I felt I had a say which after-school activities I wanted to participate in

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

7. I felt I was valued in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

8. I enjoyed my time spent in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

9. I felt the students accepted me in the after-school program

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

10. I will participate in the after-school program next year

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

11. Please provide any additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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