An Analysis of the Impact of a Socio-Emotional Student Intervention on GPA, Attendance, and Office Discipline Referrals of High School Students

Justin A. Young

B.A. Biology, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2012

B.A., Secondary Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2012

M.S., Pittsburg State University, 2016

Submitted to the Graduate Department and Faculty of the School of Education of Baker University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

James Robins
_____
Jim Robins Ed.D
Major Advisor

Harold Frye
_____
Harold Frye Ed.D

James McMullen
_____
James McMullen Ed.D

Date Defended:
January 15, 2021

Abstract

Students in high school today undergo a higher level of stress than any students have in history. Students feel pressure to succeed and to engage in difficult, higher-level classes. This drive places an unfair expectation on students as they are vying for scholarship money and admission into their desired school. As this drive for achievement has increased, school districts have implemented interventions to address the student's socio-emotional needs. This quasi-experimental study investigated the efficacy of an intervention, and the relationship of Power Hour to high school students' overall GPA, attendance rate, and the number of office referrals. This study was conducted in School District A which is a medium-large school district in a suburban setting. Archival student-level data were obtained from the district which incorporated all students who were enrolled in high school for the school year 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. These school years represent two years before the implementation of Power Hour and two years after Power Hour was implemented. The findings of this study are varied based on the variable. The findings suggest that there is a positive relationship between the implementation of Power Hour and the overall GPA of students who have experienced it. The results further suggest that students who have experienced Power Hour have a negative relationship with regards to attendance. Lastly, the study identifies that there is not a significant difference between the rate of discipline referrals of students who experienced Power Hour and those who did not. The results of this study suggest that district leaders will need to conduct further research to determine the long-term effects of Power Hour.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and dear friends who have provided unwavering support. As I was finishing my Master's degree, I felt as if I would not feel complete without pushing myself to achieve more. I knew that it would not be an easy road but with the support system that I have at home, I knew that I would be able to make it. When I applied, I was anxious as I awaited the letter to determine which path I would take. My wife was with me when we opened the letter and the excitement in her eyes as we saw I was accepted, proved to me that I was making the right choice for our family.

To my beloved wife, Bekah, the support you have given me through this journey cannot be adequately put into words. The nights where I would leave for work and get home after you had gone to bed, the weekly classes which left you taking care of our two boys, and the time you allowed me to work. I could not have done this without you. You have always supported me in every challenge I take on and through you, I know that I can always achieve it. I look forward now to spending more time with you and our family. Thank you for being you, I love you.

To my two boys, Landon and Christian, I love you both and hope that I am setting an example for you that will carry on to your future success. Landon, I remember when I graduated with my Master's and the smile and pride on your face make me want to always make you proud. I can't wait to see how you react when I graduate again. I look forward to always being there for your success and hope to make you feel as good as you made me feel and drive and support you to always achieve your dreams. Christian, you were born halfway through this process, which made keeping up with classes a little more challenging. The smiles you gave, the way you and your brother climbed in my lap

during my meetings with Dr. Robins, will be memories I will carry with me forever. You boys helped to lighten the stresses of this process and gave me even more of a reason to accomplish this. I love you both.

To the rest of my family and dear friends, the support you have provided to not only me but my family has been invaluable. I cannot tell you what it means to have your support and kind words as I progressed through this process. You have been available to provide opinions, support my wife and kids when we needed it, and have been a presence that always is providing love and support.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my family, friends, cohort member, students, coworkers, and mentors all of whom have influenced the path I have taken and provided significant support on my journey to complete my doctoral degree. Through you all I have learned the value of being a lifelong learner.

To Dr. James Robins, I cannot express my gratitude enough. You encouraged me from the beginning to establish consistency, pick a topic, and develop a strategy. Our weekly meetings, even when we did not have a significant amount to talk about, were always beneficial and kept me driving in the right direction. I will always remember the meeting during Covid when my two sons would want to say hello and you graciously entertained them and were always caring enough to inquire about my family and how all were doing. To Dr. Li Chen-Bouck, thank you for your feedback on my chapter components. Without you, I would be lost in the statistics. Thank you for being so patient and ensuring that I understood the components of my study and explaining any misunderstandings more clearly. To Dr. Harold Frye, I have had the unique pleasure of your support and feedback on not only my dissertation but all of the directed field experiences. You have been a very supportive individual on my journey and I feel lucky to have had you on my committee as well.

Cohort 20, thank you for the experiences we shared on Wednesday nights. The variety of experiences that each of you possessed supported me in my learning. I had not been in education as long as most and the experience that you all shared, allowed me to grow and develop, not only as an educator but as a student as well.

Principal Ellspermann, thank you for taking the time you did to inform me as to where Power Hour came from and how it affected your students. I appreciate you responding to me through social media and connecting with me as it really provided me with invaluable information and insight into Power Hour that I would not have been able to access otherwise.

To Dr. Jessica Dain and Dr. Jim McMullen, thank you for your support and mentorship during my field experiences. Dr. Dain, you were an invaluable individual during my learning process. I appreciate you allowing me to discuss real work examples with you and providing and district vision on the issue, which most do not see past the building level. These conversations will stay with me as I continue in my career. Dr. McMullen, you provided me with access to various district personnel which supported my learning in many ways. As well, you were always willing to help with questions or feedback on my topic and I appreciate the time you gave. As well, I am very excited that you are serving on my committee.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

Across the country, students are subjected to an antiquated educational system. Since the 1950's the educational system has done little to change. Classrooms are organized in the same fashion (Chen, 2018). The students that attend are doing so seeking to achieve enough time to satisfactorily earn enough credits to graduate (Gabby, 2013). High school students attend seven classes a day for fifty minutes and the only break they are provided in the day is twenty-five minutes where they are expected to eat lunch, decompress, and socialize with their peers. Unfortunately, the students attend the same lunch each time and this may or may not coincide with their friends or anyone they have a relationship with. As well, when the students miss class due to athletics, illness, or field trips they have to find time to make up work before or after school, which may not be possible due to work schedules, practices, or familial obligations.

These absences has caused some educators to begin altering the school day. There has been a movement among some schools and school districts to input a fifty minute period in the day that allows students to autonomously utilize their time as they see fit. This time has become commonly known as Power Hour and for teachers, the time is broken into two twenty-five minute periods to ensure that teachers have their appropriate time for lunch.

Students today have a higher level of stress than has ever been seen before which has contributed to consistent feelings of failure and depression. There is an ever-present level of stress placed upon the student to succeed. Students are working harder than ever and stress is the common denominator. The pressure to succeed and have it all is pushing teenagers to a breaking point and this prolonged stress can have irreversible negative effects on their physical and mental health (Graham, 2019). This level of stress has caused school districts to develop pathways that

will help students to deal with their daily activities. The development of an advisory or homeroom facilitates the feeling of a community within the school. The homeroom teacher has the most interaction with the student and allows them to evaluate the student, communicate with the parents, and align strategies to meet the student's needs (Goldman, 2019). The use of advisory is one method schools have used however, there is a newly developed idea that has been used in schools in the country from small private schools to large districts.

The common model for the high school day is a very segmented day. The students are in a classroom for an acceptable amount of time and then, at the appropriate time, they are released to the lunchroom to have twenty-five minutes to eat and socialize. This has been the model for a very long time. Ellspermann, a principal at a low-performing high school in Florida changed the structure of her schedule to allow for greater school autonomy. This idea came from a smaller school in the area that was doing something similar. The idea was to allow the students to learn to govern their time and make more adult decisions (personal communication, 2019). The student body and teaching staff saw a marked improvement in the student's desire to achieve, a decrease in social unrest amongst the students, and a great level of buy-in as the students felt a better connection to the school, and an increase in the diversity of the relationships students form. When students graduated from this school, employers from the area approached Ellspermann and remarked that they sought to hire students from her school as they were more prepared to handle the rigor of a workday and manage their time better than their peers who came from other schools (personal communication, 2019).

Power Hour is an unstructured time in the day where students are given one hour to use as they see fit (personal communication, 2019). Prior to the implementation of Power Hour, the school Ellspermann was principal of had a poor graduation rate, and the implementation of this

strategy increased the rate from 56% to 98%. As well, she noted that students appeared less stressed, had more time to make-up work, meet with teachers, and spend time with classmates.

Student grades are more important than ever. As stated earlier, students experience higher than ever before seen levels of stress. That stress is directly related to the increased focus on Advanced Placement (AP) test scores and grades to outcompete with their peers for college admission. Students complain that their grades suffer because they are bored in school and overwhelmingly not interested which causes their level of motivation to suffer. Schools need to become much more deeply attached to the work beyond their walls (Doyne & Goncher, 2019). Electives were made available and student choice was encouraged (Collins, 2020). This fact is why students found elective courses much more interesting than core curriculum classes.

The factory model of education has demonstrated how antiquated the current model of education is. The factory model of education that posits the United States adopted Prussia's school system in order to create a compliant populace (Watters, 2015). As the development of the modern high school continued, high school began to evolve into something that the students could see more value in. Their main intention went from preparing students for college to preparing students for life and non-academic jobs (Collins, 2020). The overall motivation for this transition is to increase student engagement and grades. The more the student is engaged, the greater the likelihood of them succeeding and being prepared for their future. The student must develop a sense of belonging to their school as well as foster relationships, not only with students but also with teachers. Relationships with teachers are key, this helps the student to focus on the subject matter as they feel their emotional needs are being met in the classroom (Northern & Petrilli, 2015).

Student referrals are another contributor to student performance. The more a student is acting out in class, the more likely they are to miss instruction and therefore fall behind their peers in class. Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, and Vincent (2004) state office discipline referrals (ODR) are an interpretation of the school-wide behavioral climate. This demonstrates that ODR was associated with high degrees of disorder within the school. School leaders can utilize this information as a probable indicator of their school environment as well as utilizing the data to determine if there are any teachers who may have a higher than average referral practice. This allows the school leaders to further develop school professional development (PD) to support the staff in dealing with difficult kids.

Research has indicated that there is a correlation between the number of ODRs a student has and their level of success. Three or more suspensions in ninth grade predicted school failure in high school and was also correlated to a negative grade point average (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). As well as the student having a level of failure due to ODRs, there is another outlying consequence that is not typically taken into account. The students who are not being sent to the office and the teacher are losing class time due to the fact that every office referral written represents an amount of time take away from teaching and learning (Anderson, 2020). Teachers have reported that a reduction in disciplinary issues not only improves the school climate, it also frees up time to do things other than deal with discipline (Anderson, 2020). The ultimate goal of the school is to reduce or even change the time in the day when ODRs are occurring which can reduce the amount of lost class time.

The goal of any program that is implemented within a school is the betterment of the students that attend. The initial goal of the school was to teach students and create a path towards college as the educational system was based on stature. The students were attending

school intending to attain enough credits to graduate. The focus of education has changed as it seeks to prepare students for the future they see for themselves. Today's students are much more stressed than students in the past. They are tasked with achieving at the highest level, being as involved as possible, and maintaining an interest in everything. The challenges the schools face are to ensure the education that is provided is authentic, relevant, and rigorous. The school must be able to do this, take into account the socio-emotional well-being of the student, and mitigate any behaviors that come with adolescents. This is where the formation of Power Hour has been developed. Students are provided time to socialize with friends, build relationships with other peers as well as teachers, and take a brain break. The development of a relationship with a teacher helps the student learn how to interact with adults and become a more competent adult. This will, in turn, facilitate the students in having better grades and higher levels of attendance as they will have bonded with their school.

Background

The Power Hour model has filtered into several different school districts in Kansas. School District A put Power Hour in place, in 2017 where the student body of the various high schools was given a fifty-minute time period to have lunch and work with teachers. School District A is a medium-large district in suburban Kansas that currently has thirty-six elementary schools, ten middle schools, and five high schools. The district is comprised of 29,603 students with a population that is 48% female and 51% male with slight variations over time.

Table 1

Demographic Data

Program Year	Male	Female
2015	51.6%	48.4%
2016	51.5%	48.5%
2017	51.3%	48.7%
2018	51.3%	48.7%
2019	51.4%	48.6%

Figure 1

Demographic Data for the High School Population of School District A
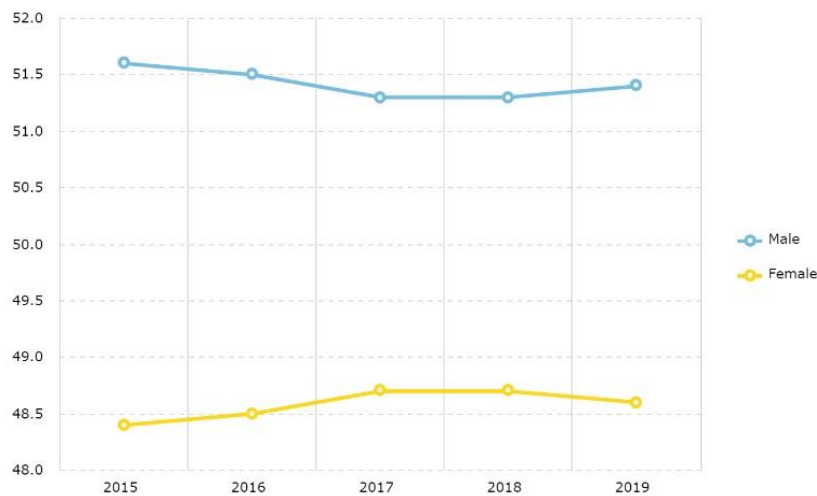
Note: Data retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/.

Figure 2

Ethnicity Demographic Data from School District A
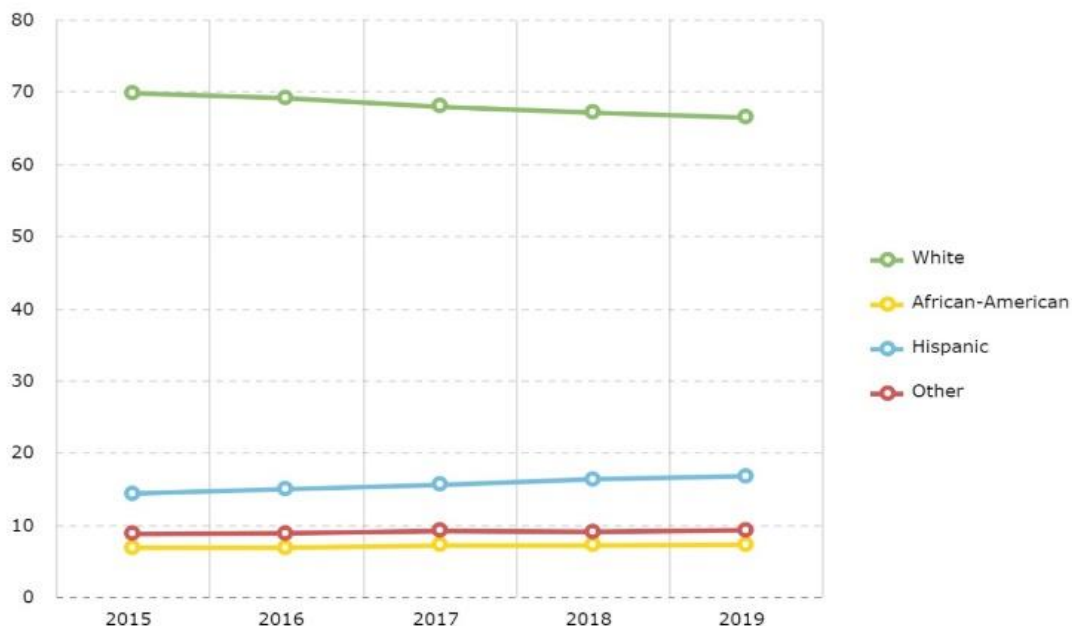
Note: Data retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

The attendance rate at District A is well above the state average. Across all age groups, the district has an average attendance over the year of 98.9% in 2018 and 99% in 2019. The state average is 94.5% for both years. The attendance data represents the population of the district from Kindergarten through 12th grade. The attendance focus for this study looks at the high school attendance per building. The graduation rate for School district A in 2018 was 94.1% and in 2019 it decreased to 93.6% which is still above the state average of 87.5%

School district A is comprised of five high schools. The first school was founded in 1883. Each school, while representing a single district has a variety of demographics which makes it unique from the others. High school A has a population of 2,142 students and is predominantly female at 55.6% to 44.4% and has been female-dominated for the past five years.

The school is predominantly white with a steady decrease in that population and an increase in the Hispanic population which is consistent with the demographics of the district.

Figure 3

Cultural Data for High School A in School District A

Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

High School A has lower attendance than the district as a whole but remains above the state average. In 2018, High School A had an attendance rate of 96.3% and in 2019 the school saw that percentage rise to 97.5%.

Figure 4

Attendance Data for High School A Related to State Averages
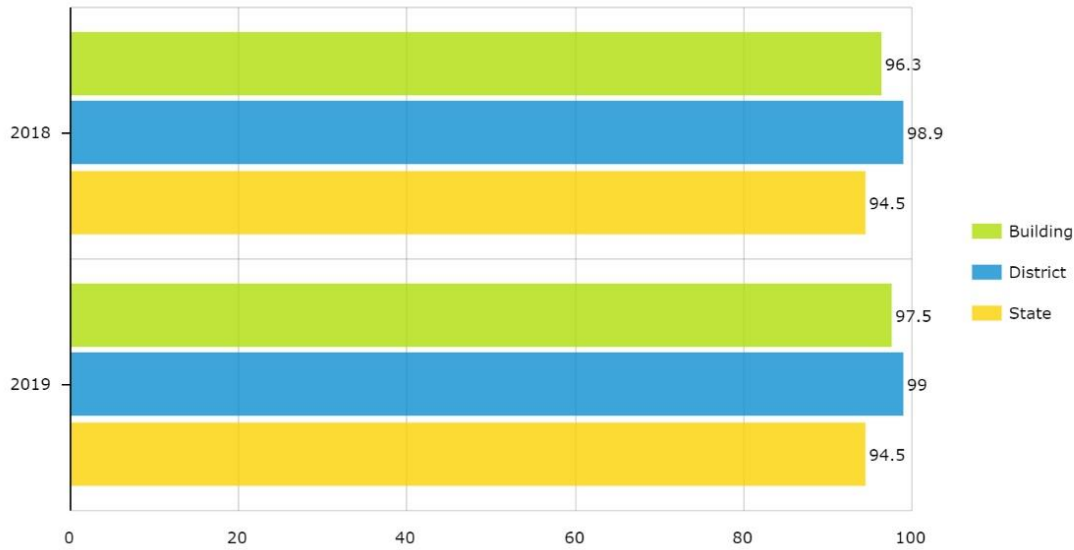
Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

High School B was founded in 1981 in the south of the suburban area. This school has a population of 2,040 students with a greater population of males than females at 53.3% to 46.62%. Over the past five years, the population ratio has been fluctuating near a 50:50 ratio but has maintained a higher male population. This school has less diversity than High school A with a white population at 73% which has decreased over the past five years from 77%.

Figure 5

Cultural Demographic Data from High School B in School District A

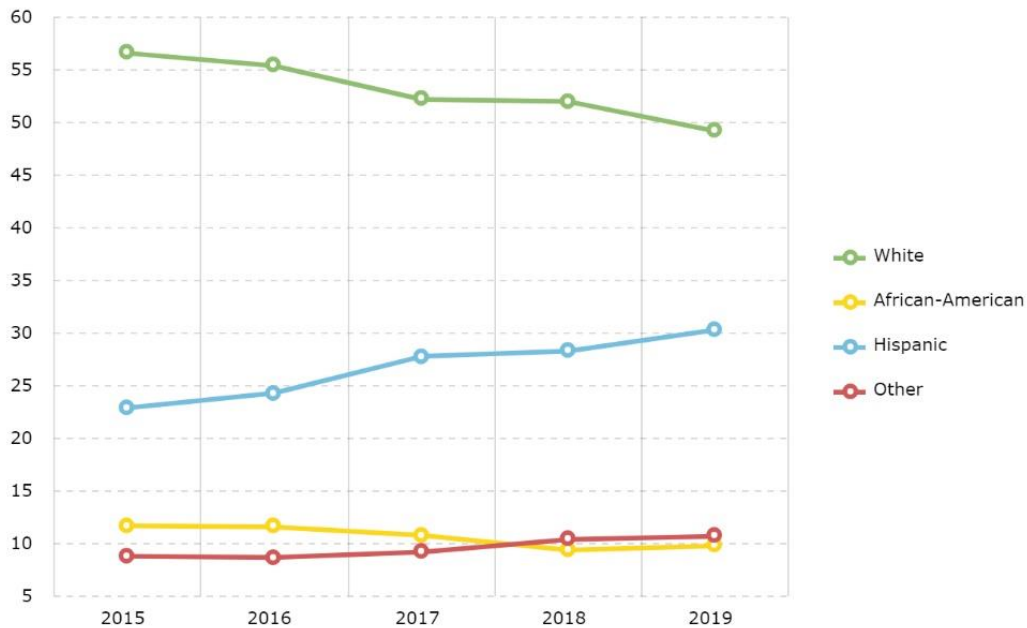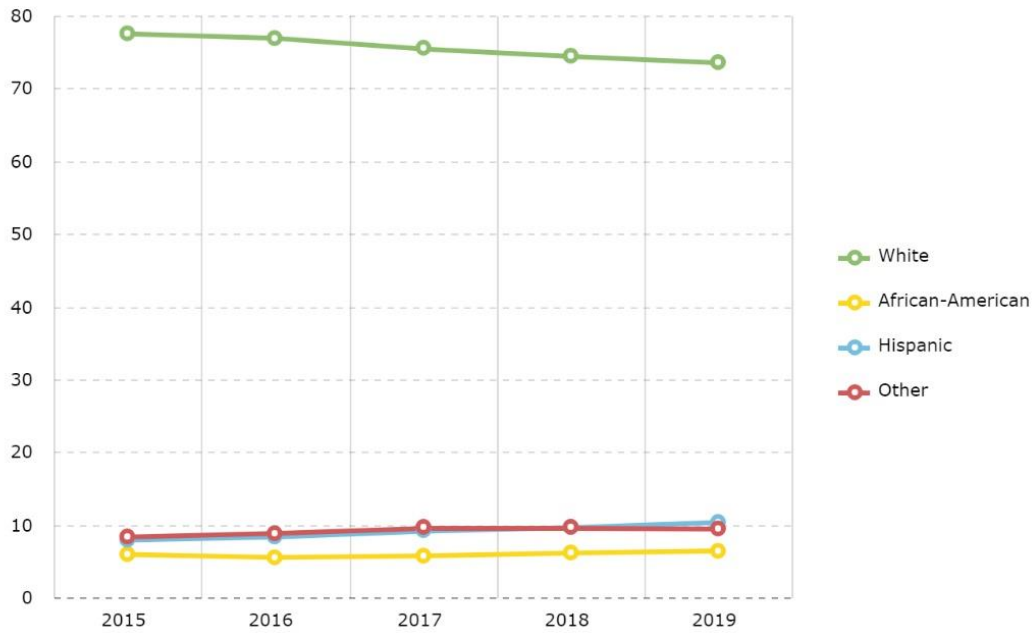*Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/*

The attendance rate at High School B in 2018 was 97.3% and in 2019 was consistent at 97.2%. This is less than the district average but still greater than the state average.

Figure 6

Attendance Data from High School B Related to State and District Averages
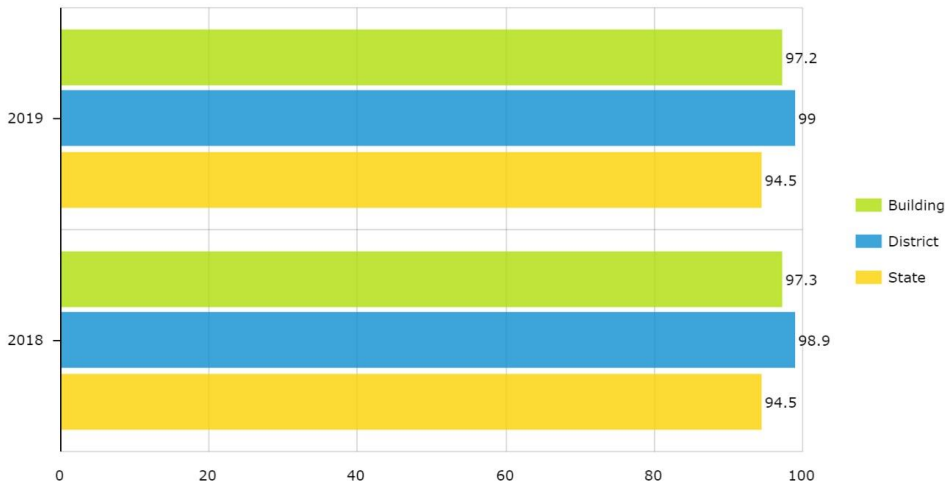
Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

High School C was founded in 1992 and has a student population of 1,904 students. The ratio of male to female has been very close to 50:50. In 2015, the ratio was 50% male and 50% female which vacillated among the next five years, and in 2019 there were 48.6% male and 51.4% female. Caucasians are the most represented ethnicity in the building and the other ethnic groups representing the same percentage of the population. The Caucasian population has been declining over the past five years which is consistent with the district demographics.

Figure 7

Cultural Data from High School C in School District A
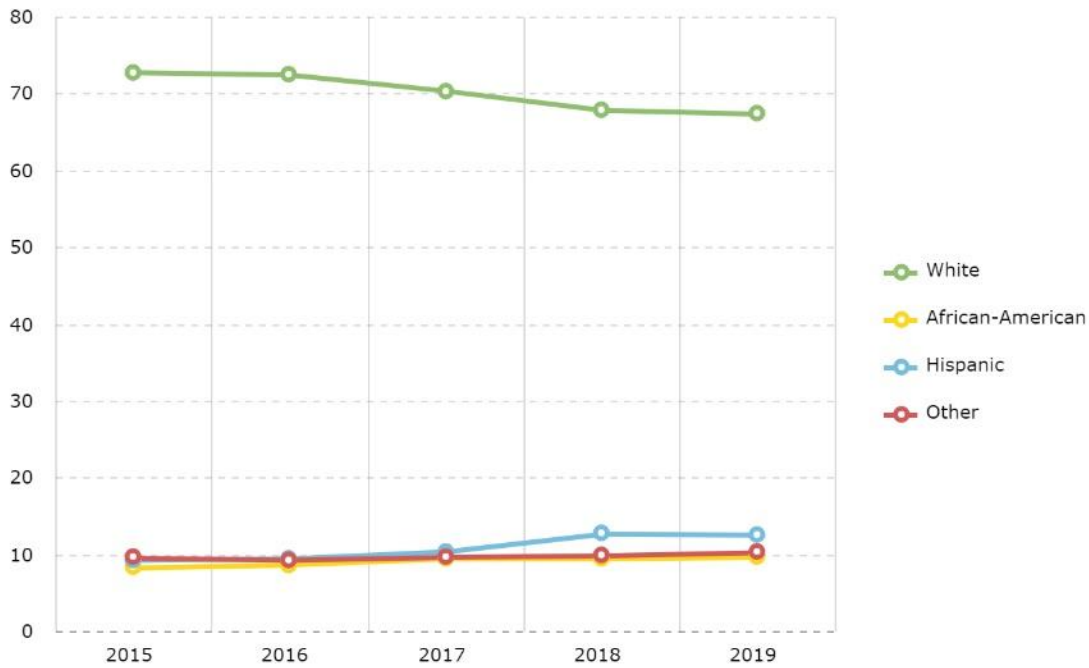
Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15,

2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

The attendance rate at High School C is above the state average but below the district average.

In 2018, the attendance rate was 96.2% and in 2019 it increased to 97.2%.

Figure 8

Attendance Data from High School C related to District and State Averages
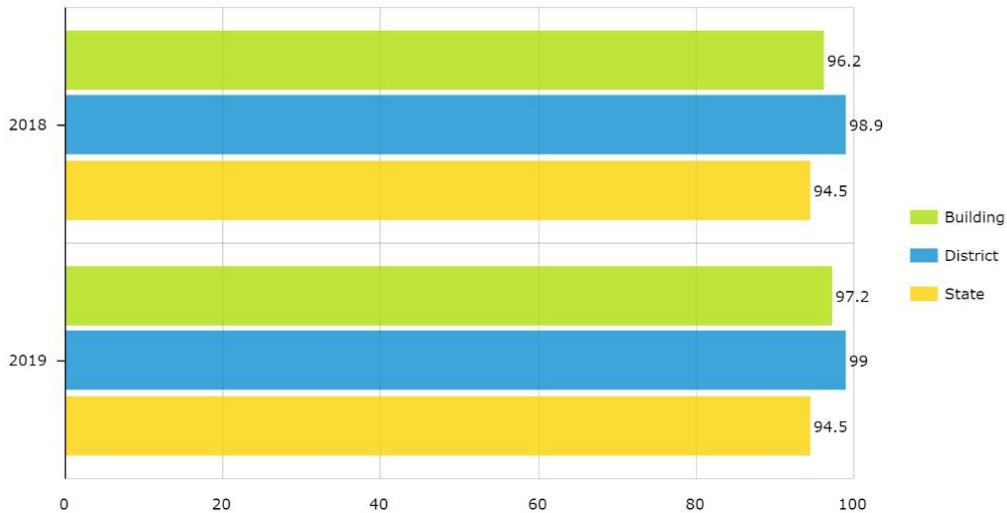
High School D was established in 2003. This school serves a student population that is in two different cities, one of the cities is divided between two districts. High School D has a student population of 1,938 students and has a ratio of 57.64% male to 42.36% female. Over that past five years, the ratio of male to female has changed slightly all while maintaining a male-dominated population. The diversity of the school has been very consistent with the majority of the student body being Caucasian and in contrast to the trend in the district, the Caucasian population has increased while other ethnicities have remained relatively consistent.

Figure 9

Cultural Data from High School D in School District A
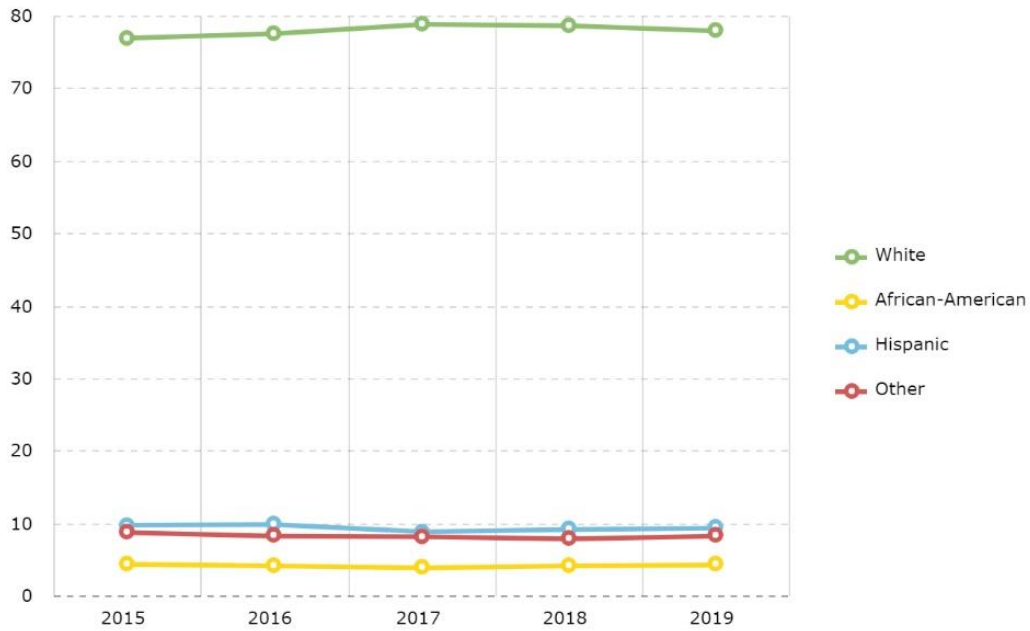
Figure 1 Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from

https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

High School D has the highest attendance rate in the district, which is most consistent with the

district average. In 2018, the graduation rate was 98.5% and in 2019 it decreased slightly to

98.4%.

Figure 10

Attendance Data for High School D related to State and District Averages
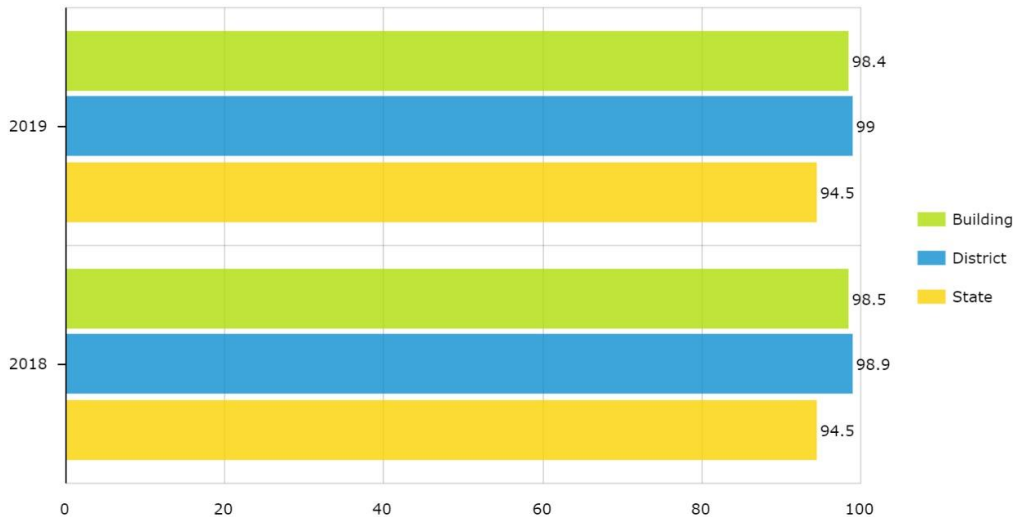
Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

High School E was opened in 2017 and has a student population of 1,329. In its short history, it has a higher male to female ratio and has stayed consistent. In 2019 there was a 54.4% male to 45.6% female population and there was an increase from 2018 in males and a decrease in females. This school has a higher Caucasian population than other ethnic groups with Hispanics being the next highest represented population.

Figure 11

Cultural Data from High School E in School District A

Note: Retrieved from Kansas Department of Education.. (2020, February 2). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/

For the purposes of this study, this high school will be omitted. There will not be enough archival data to represent an accurate picture of any effect of an intervention that would have taken place and affected the population. Any intervention that was put in place, will have been enacted within High School E from the beginning and therefore, it will not be an accurate indicator of success or failure.

The school day in School District A is comprised of seven classes with a lunch period in the middle of the day. Prior to the 2017-2018 school year, the lunch period was segmented into five different lunch periods. This meant that some students would leave their fourth-hour class and go straight to lunch while others would attend their fifth-hour class. The students at lunch would have twenty-five minutes to eat and then return to class. The fifth-hour class would then

be interrupted for students to eat and then return. This caused some classes to be disrupted and then have trouble getting the student back on track when they returned. In 2017, the school district adopted a lunch period called Power Hour. This replaced the segmented lunch period and sent the entire school district to lunch for fifty minutes. The students are provided with the autonomy of when they eat, who they interact with, and what work they choose to do. During this time, teachers of certain departments are assigned either the first twenty-five minutes or the second twenty-five minutes to eat, whichever they do not eat, they are to be available to help students. School district A provided expectations for the students to eat one-half of the fifty minutes and to see teachers, get help, meet with clubs, or do what they need to do to be successful the other half. Students are expected to see at least two teachers per week.

Statement of the Problem

The current structure of the educational day is one that has been used for a very long time (Chen, 2018). Today's students have much more to deal with in their day, due to the rigor and expectations of their school day (Walker, 2016). The antiquated model does not support students who are struggling in school, help them feel connected and want to be at school, and allow for students to decompress reducing the likelihood of outbursts during class (Collins, 2019). This has led to the creation of the Power Hour intervention. Power Hour, a school-wide "free" hour, allowing students to take ownership over their educational experience; schools using this tactic have observed higher student achievement and fewer discipline problems (Porter, 2016)

Power Hour is a new intervention with very limited research examining its efficacy. The most common piece of information that can be obtained are blogs that reflect personal opinions or the way in which Power Hour is being utilized within a district. Through the course of the research, it was discovered that Jayne Ellspermann was the first person credited with starting

Power Hour. An interview was conducted with her and she shared that she developed this intervention as a direct response to the low graduation rate of her school. She sought to improve the grades and morale of her school (personal communication, 2020).

The intervention of an autonomous period in the day that allows the students to interact as they see fit and govern their time has not been studied, especially the possible impacts of the Power Hour on students' GPA, attendance, and office deferrals. This intervention was adopted to increase the desire of the student to attend school, achieve, and ideally no longer cause disruptive behavior in class which would cause a loss of class time for themselves or their peers. Currently, due to a lack of research, the district has adopted Power Hour without empirical evidence to support its effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine changes in students' performance at the high school level prior to and after the Power Hour was implemented. First, the study will look at the overall GPA of high school students and examine if there is a change after Power Hour was implemented. Another purpose is to look at the change in attendance of the students in the four high schools pre-implementation and post-implementation of Power Hour. The final purpose of the study is to examine the change in the number of office referrals that students experience, pre-implementation, and post-implementation of the Power Hour.

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to be significant with ramifications for the change of the long-accepted model of the educational day at the high school level. Students experience high levels of stress which is translated into their performance in the classroom. The more pressure that is placed upon the student to succeed, the more likely grades are to drop due to the rigor of

the modern-day classroom and the constant barrage of information the students are experiencing (Graham, 2020). As student's grades fall, they have the potential to then begin suffering attendance issues as well as acting out more at school when they are present. The concept of restructuring the school day to allow for students who are highly involved in the school community, students who are absent, or students who are taking a very rigorous course load to have the capacity to seek extra help or just take the break they need will vastly improve the student's ability to succeed (personal communication, 2019). The utilization of Power Hour allows students the ability to refocus themselves for the remainder of the day, the time to socialize with others and take part in school activities. In short, the impact of this study is not only focused solely on the individual but brings about a systemic sweeping change that takes into account the whole student by considering not only academia but the socio-emotional components of the person.

　　　This intervention does not have a preponderance of studies that have been conducted in a medium-large suburban school district as of yet. The focus specifically looking at the improvement of grades, attendance, and decrease in referrals has not been studied. The districts that currently utilize this intervention, have not looked into the success of the intervention. Commonly, the districts that have adopted the intervention do so and they continue to manipulate it, use it as a reward, as opposed to looking at the success of it. Looking at district data will demonstrate to all who seek to adopt the intervention, the successfulness of Power Hour, and provide a sweeping change amongst education. The ramifications of Power Hour is a drastic shift in education towards a more autonomous structure that allows students more choice in their day as well as allowing the teacher the ability to socialize and build relationships with students and colleagues.

Ultimately, the results of this study will affect the way districts conduct PLC time and shape the conversation about students and what is best for kids. The utilization of this study will facilitate the determination of the overall effect of Power Hour on the student body. This will also allow for future decisions to be made based on the perceived need of the students to be allowed to have more student voice within their day.   Furthermore, the study will seek to add a basis of literature to facilitate future researchers who seek to investigate the efficacy of Power Hour.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined delimitation as self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study. This study was delimited in the following ways:

- The study was conducted in a medium-large suburban school district in Kansas.

- The study looked at students in grades 9 through 12.

- The data collected looked at the years 2015 through 2019 exclusively.

- Only four of the five high schools were examined as the fifth high school was new and began with Power Hour therefore, there was no data for students prior to Power Hour.

- Only grades, attendance rates, and office referral data were included in the current study.

Assumptions

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined assumptions as postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research (134). This study was conducted with the following assumptions:

- All schools implementing Power Hour are doing so with fidelity.

- All students participating in Power Hour are using it as expected.

- All teachers are providing support and utilizing Power Hour with fidelity.

- All archival data collected will be accurate

Research Questions

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated research questions and hypotheses are critical components of the dissertation.

RQ1. Is there a difference in the overall GPA between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

RQ2. Is there a difference in student attendance between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

RQ3. Is there a difference in student office referrals between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

Definition of Terms

Advanced Placement (AP). The AP program is a collaborative effort between secondary and postsecondary institutions that provides students opportunities to take freshman-level courses while still in high school (Educational Testing Services, 2008).

Advisory. Advisory is a regularly scheduled period of time, typically during the school day, when teachers meet with small groups of students for the purpose of advising them on academic, social, or future-planning issues (glossary, 2020).

Archival Data. Archive data consists of older data that remains important to the organization or must be retained for future reference or regulatory compliance reasons (Rouse, 2015).

Attendance Rate. Student Attendance Rate measures the percentage of students who are attending the classes, lectures, or seminars you provide within a given timeframe. By breaking this down by class type or age group you may expose particular problem areas, which need to be addressed in order to heighten (Futrli, 2020).

Brain Break. Brain breaks are mental breaks designed to help students stay focused and attentive. The brain breaks get students moving to carry blood and oxygen to the brain. The breaks energize or relax. The breaks provide processing time for students to solidify their learning (Watson Institute, 2020).

Carnegie Unit. A time-based standard, one unit is awarded for every 120 hours of class time. One hour of instruction five days a week for 24 weeks is one unit (Levine, 2015).

Graduation Rate. The percentage of students who graduate from secondary school. with a regular diploma in the standard number of years (NCLB, p. 14, 2008)

Homeroom. A classroom where pupils report especially at the beginning of each school day (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB was the product of a collaboration between civil rights and business groups, as well as both Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill and the Bush administration, which sought to advance American competitiveness and close the achievement gap between poor and minority students and their more advantaged peers (Klein, 2015).

Office Discipline Referral (ODR). Commonly available and frequently used school-wide measures of student behavior. ODR is an event in which a student engaged in behavior that violated a rule/social norm in the school, problem behavior was observed by a member of the school staff, and an even that resulted in a consequence delivered by administrative staff who produced a permanent (written) product defining the whole event. (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, p. 132, 2004).

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a proactive approach that schools use to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. The focus of PBIS is prevention, not punishment (Lee, 2020).

Power Hour. Power Hour, a school-wide "free" hour, allows students to take ownership of their educational experience; schools using this tactic have observed higher student achievement, fewer discipline problems, and healthier behaviors (Porter, 2016).

Professional Development (PD). Used in reference to a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness (edglossary, 2013).

Professional Learning Community (PLC). This term to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education—a grade-level teaching team, a school committee, a high school department, an entire school district, a state department of education, or a national professional organization (DuFour, 2014).

Physical Activity. Moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity" and children ages five through seventeen should engage in sixty minutes daily (Hertig, & Chu, 2017).

Seminar. Seminars often assign teachers to the course who are experienced in social and emotional skill-building and have a naturally supportive rapport with students. By teaching three to five seminar periods a day, teachers quickly hone their delivery to meet the goals of the program and are able to use their prep periods to become more familiar with curriculum strategies, content, and resources (McCutchen, 2020).

Stress. In a medical or biological context stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external (from the environment, psychological, or social situations) or internal (illness, or from a medical procedure). Stress can initiate the "fight or flight" response, a complex reaction of neurologic and endocrinologic systems (Shiel, Jr., 2018.)

Organization of the Study

This study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the background, problem, purpose, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and a list of terms with definitions used in the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. Chapter 3 is comprised of information about the research methods utilized for the study. Chapter 4 includes a presentation of the study results and hypotheses testing. Finally, in Chapter 5 the study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions are included.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

History of School

In the United States, public education is defined by <u>Education Bug</u> as a federally funded school, administered to some extent by the government, and charged with educating all citizens (Chen, 2018). Prior to the first free public school being opened, there was an initial education system that consisted of Latin schools that were developed to primarily teach Puritan values and were run out of the home. The individuals who were teaching at these schools encountered a lack of respect from others and as such, they were not compensated well. Teaching in a Latin Grammar School or a one-room schoolhouse was not a respected position in any community (Collins, 2020). In 1635, the first free public school was opened. This school was the first of its kind to be supported by taxpayer dollars from those in the community in which the school served. The public education system was driven forward by a legislator from Massachusetts named Horace Mann. Mann had a passion for educating the constituents as he believed education was the key to bridging social gaps, overcoming poverty, and creating more societal equity (Chen, 2018). Another pioneer of public education was Henry Barnard, a person who came from a family of means but shared a passion for education like Mann. Barnard was responsible for successfully forcing districts to uphold a minimum standard for building, teachers, and classroom resources. This was a drastic difference from the initial Latin schools and one-room schoolhouses, where no such expectations existed. The Boston Latin Grammar School provided secondary education and was very exclusive, only allowing boys who were preparing for college, especially law or the ministry to attend (Collins, 2020). The work by

Manna and Barnard provided an opportunity for all Americans despite their social class or race and fostered a level of expectation for current schools.

There is an understanding that as the modern school developed, the school system was developed in such a manner as to resemble a factory. There is a theory that the factory model of education in the United States adopted Prussia's school system in order to create a compliant populace (Watters, 2015). The New York Times in 2012 stated the American education model was copied from the 18th-century Prussian model designed to create docile subjects and factory workers. Watters argues, Prussia, in the 1700s when their education system was finalized, was not industrialized and therefore, training factory workers was not their main focus. The Prussian system, while being the most widely used as an example for the factory system, was superseded by another system that did more accurately represent a factory, the monitorial system. The monitorial system and other variations of it involved schools that were housed in large warehouses where students were placed in groups of 30 or more not by age but by reading proficiency (Watters, 2015). Furthermore, the monitorial system provided students with more levels of personalization with regards to their education and let them move at their own pace. Ultimately, Watters believes that the factory model of education is a myth that has been touted by many to justify upgrades to the system. The past model depicts passive and docile children being trained for a future in factories. However, historically, there have been various models that utilize different beliefs on how to provide students with the best opportunity to learn.

Development of Seminar/Advisory

Across the world, there has been a period of time created within the school day, which has a different use depending on the country it has been utilized in, called homeroom or advisory. Advisory has been defined by The Glossary of Education Reform as a regularly

scheduled period of time when teachers meet with small groups of students for the purpose of advising them on academic, social, or future-planning issues (2020). This period of time allowed students an opportunity to work with adults and develop relationships that they could not be formed in a typical classroom. Furthermore, the development of an advisory/seminar was intended to foster a stronger adult-student relationship and to allow the school to develop a greater sense of community. Throughout the utilization of this time, students have the capacity to be advised on socio-emotional issues, college preparatory activities, and work to formulate future career goals. However, not all instructors have felt fully trained and this has caused them to have an unstructured advisory period. The role of the advisory teacher has been to ensure the development and implementation of school rules, monitor students' progress, and ensure they are using their free time wisely (Treska & Treska, 2016). As the culture has developed, the school or district developed the capacity to turn advisory into a well-defined curriculum to fully support the student body.

Since the 1950s, advisory/seminar has been a key part of the school structure in high school. At this time, social importance was given to the ideological and political education of students relying on their experience (Treska & Treska, 2016). The teacher was responsible for the progress of their students, for the order of discipline in class, and the education of all of their students. In Japan, an advisory/seminar has been structured to create a community among students allowing them time to build peer relationships. The Japanese have a completely different structure than that in the United States. In Japan, teachers move from classroom to classroom leaving the students in the same classroom to formulate deeper meaningful relationships with each other (Goldman, 2019). In the United States, the structure of seminar/advisory has been for students to sit in a specific classroom for twenty to thirty minutes,

and then when the bell rings, to file out into the hall and move to the next lesson. This does not

contribute to the formation of a community nor does it allow students time to form deeper

relationships with one another (Goldman, 2019).

Carnegie Unit

Prior to 1906, there was a varied idea of how a student achieved in high school and what

credit would be awarded. In 1906, the Carnegie Foundation created the Carnegie unit which was

devised to standardize education for all students. A time-based standard, one Carnegie Unit is

awarded every 120 hours of class time. This translated to one hour of instruction for five days

over twenty-four weeks (Levine, 2015). This standardized admission into college by creating a

minimum of fourteen hours required to obtain college admission. This enabled schools across

the country to give the same amount of education over the course of the year for the same

amount of highs school credit (Gaddy, 2013). Based on the time, the Carnegie Unit became the

basis of school design which was related to that of the assembly line. Education of the students

was not based on the level of comprehension they had achieved but the amount of seat time and

teaching they had been exposed to. In this manner, once a student had completed the required

amount of time, they would be moved to the next level, as if in an assembly line. The Carnegie

Unit sought to standardize students' exposure to subject material by ensuring they received

consistent amounts of instructional time and was never intended to be a measure of what students

learned (Levine, 2015).

Student Stress

The American adolescent is exposed to higher levels of stress and anxiety than ever

before. In this day and age, the pressure to achieve, the pressure of social media, and the

pressure to fit in has created high levels of stress (Flannery, 2019). This epidemic is not specific

to high performing schools. A 2014 study by the American Psychological Association found that students are more stressed than adults. 30% of teens have reported feeling sad or depressed and 31% of teens felt overwhelmed (Walker, 2016). Students reported that the pressure to take enough Advanced Placement (AP) classes, to achieve at the highest level, and the pressures they receive through social media and pleasing parents caused students to feel so much stress that they reported missing meals, not getting enough sleep at night, and experiencing high levels of anxiety.

There are theories about the reason stress affects students more now than in the past. One theory is that students have not been provided with coping skills to help them deal with the pressures of society. Teenagers were raised in classrooms governed by No Child Left Behind, instead of making art and new friends, they learned to write full-on sentences in timed tests, for fun they attended pep rallies to get them up for state testing (Flannery, 2019). The focus on standardized testing has created a culture focused on test scores as a mark of success. This testing pressure causes students who strive to succeed to feel a diminished worth based on the results of their scores. Students start taking the SAT in the 8th grade, students who get a B for the first time in their educational career fear their future admission to college (Flannery, 2019). This focus has created an elevation in student stress. Students and their families can get too caught up in a culture of competitiveness, students experience a lack of sleep and focus 100% on school work just to achieve at the highest level (Walker, 2016). The use of social media is another generator of high levels of stress for students. Adolescents will post comments they would never say to a person in person. The image that is portrayed through the use of social media conveys a false sense of what the world is and how their life should be Between the years 2010 to 2015, the number of teens who felt useless and joyless surged 33% the number of 13- to

18-year-olds committed suicide increased to 31% (Flannery, 2019). These results garnered an investigation and as researchers sought to explain the increase in teen suicides, it was found that there was a direct correlation to the sudden ascendance of the smartphone (Flannery, 2019). Finally, it was discovered that teens who spend five or more hours online a day were seventy-one percent more likely than those who spent one hour a day to have at least one risk factor. The importance of students to form positive social connections is vital to healthy adolescents. Schools can provide a setting to support resilience, offering an opportunity for students to connect with teachers, coaches, and mentors who exhibit caring and concern. As well, the ability to foster meaningful relationships with peers can facilitate a deeper capacity for dealing with levels of stress as students can develop healthy outlets and real connections which reduce the level of social media usage. Social connections lead to resilience through social support and socio-emotional learning, but also biologically, as they counteract the stress hormone cortisol (Keating, 2017). These social connections stimulate a powerful part of our brain, the prefrontal cortex which affords us the ability to focus on the present opportunities they are exposed to.

Power Hour

The development of a break in the school day was designed to provide students the opportunity to be in charge of their educational experience (Porter, 2016). The term for this break is Power Hour. Power Hour is designed for the entire school to take a socio-emotional break from the rigor of the school day. This time allows students the time to eat lunch, spend time with friends, confer with teachers, complete missing assignments, and be involved with clubs or other school activities.

The pioneer of Power Hour was Jayne Ellspermann. Ellspermann was the principal of West Port High School, a rural school with a low SES population, for ten years which was the

worst-performing school in the district with a graduation rate of 56%. During her tenure, she elevated the graduation rate to 98% and developed a graduation culture which she credited to the use of Power Hour. Ellspermann named this time Power Hour to signify the empowerment of the students to learn to govern their time (personal conversation, 2020). Ellspermann has over 30 years of experience as an educator and is currently working in Florida as an educational consultant. Ellspermann published an article in *Principal Leadership* and noted, "Students are no longer just grouped by cliques and class schedules; they bond through common interests" (Porter, 2016).

Ellspermann developed the idea of Power Hour after observing what another school in the area was doing with their lunchtime. The school was utilizing time in the day to allow students to go home, work with teachers, or go out to lunch and this time was showing evidence of success. Upon further conversation, Ellspermann realized the school only had a student body of 125 students where her school had a population of 2,000. Prior to Power Hour, Ellspermann developed F chats. An F chat is when a student was failing one or more classes and the student would be referred to the office. The principal and the student would sign a paper signifying a commitment on the part of the student to bring the grade up and seek help. She noted that these were not overwhelmingly successful and were tedious for her and teachers to ensure students were honoring the agreement. Power Hour was implemented with the help of a like-minded staff that were genuinely interested in students succeeding (personal conversation, 2020). The staff developed times when they were available, students were made aware, and this created time in the day for students to form clubs which were not previously present at the school. The time that was created, was used by students who played sports and would miss classes, coaches would have players come in and break down film, and students have access to the majority of the

campus to eat and be with their friends. West Port had three lunches, where students would have twenty-five minutes to eat and then return to class. Ellspermann noted a significant amount of fights and other behaviors that were a distraction to the school day. After implementation, Ellspermann stated, I had one fight which resulted in a suspension of Power Hour, the student body desired to have it back that he agreed to police themselves with regards to student behavior and clubs took turns picking up the campus trash (personal conversation, 2020). Once Power Hour was put back in place, Ellspermann noted that students began to be more aware of their surroundings, were vigilant about getting help when needed, and had local employers approach her stating that the students who graduated from her school were the best employees as they knew how to handle the free time maturely.

The secondary focus of Power Hour has been to provide students with a Socio-Emotional Break. High school schedules tend to be highly rigorous and demanding, the expectations that they are to maintain high levels of focus for seven hours a day, become experts and expend the same effort in all classes, and maintain a level of decorum that is expected with no breaks, at the high school level, is a large ask for adolescents. Many scholars contend that we should not expect students to focus for extended periods without a break (Weslake, Christian, 2015). Breaks within the day will benefit the students academically and facilitate their emotional well-being, and reinforce the development of skills that will benefit them later in life. Fulfillment of the innate and fundamental needs for competence and autonomy enhances the levels of vitality (Trougakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal, 2014). The ability of students to develop autonomous choices facilitates a better sense of self and a more productive student in the classroom.

Brain Development and Research

Brain breaks can be easily incorporated into the daily schedule through the utilization of a

schedule adjustment. The schedule format that has been used by a majority of the high schools

in America does not allow for brain breaks with the use of a segmented lunch. The lunch

schedule allows students a short twenty-five minute time to eat, decompress, and socialize, there

is no time for work or to relax. Redesigning the school schedule can help address these issues

(Canady & Rettig, 1995). Canady and Rettig (1995) go on to state that, A well-crafted schedule

can result in the more effective use of time, improve instructional climate, solve problems related

to the delivery of instruction, and assist in establishing programs and instructional practices. By

creating a time when students develop the capacity to make their own decisions, based on their

unique needs, this schedule will address the fact that students learn in different ways and some

students need more time to learn. Power Hour will facilitate the students in seeking the help they

need. Ultimately, the daily schedule can have a great effect on a school's climate (Canady &

Rettig, 1995). This schedule builds a more positive climate where students feel more connected

to the school, can do better academically, and fewer referrals are typically seen.

Brain breaks being included in the school day can be utilized to facilitate more than just a

student's recovery. Research has found that regular breaks throughout the school day can be an

effective way to reduce disruptive behavior (Terada, 2018). Furthermore, by allowing students

the ability to move, engage in sports, and utilize their minds in a fashion other than academics

allows students to benefit from the great number of benefits related to increased physical

activity. Engaging in physical activity increases blood flow and oxygenation in the brain,

boosting neural connectivity, and stimulating nerve cell growth in the hippocampus (Terada,

2018). This fact illustrates that allowing this time to students physically changes the structure of

the brain which yields several benefits. Students show increased attention, memory, retention, and the ability to cope with stress. There are other types of brain breaks that are not physical which still yield benefits to students. Brain breaks can be categorized into three categories: those based on breathing or relaxation, vigorous activity, and those that focus on mental activity, plus any combination of all three (Weslake, Christian, 2015).

The utilization of physical activity to support the growing and changing adolescent brain has many benefits. Physical activity is defined by the World Health Organization as "moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity" and children ages five through seventeen should engage in sixty minutes daily (Hertig, & Chu, 2017). As children are aging, their brain is developing a large number of synapsis which facilitate the child's ability to focus, retain information, and deal with socio-emotional issues. During times of exercise, there is an increased rate of secretion of molecules by muscles and fat cells that affect the levels of growth factors in the brain. This influences the shape and function of the hippocampus by accelerating new neuron growth and increasing the size of that region of the brain (Yeager, 2018). Furthermore, over the past seventy years, there has been quite a breadth of research that demonstrates there is a morphological change within the brain structure of animals related to fitness and physical activity. Structural changes include, but are not limited to, synaptic size and density, complexity, and extent of dendritic arbors, size and number of glial processes, vascular density, and rate of neurogenesis (Thomas, Dennis, Bandettini, Johansen-Berg, 2012).

Animal studies have shown that running affects the brain by increasing cell proliferation, survival, and differentiation of neurons (Hertig & Chu, 2017). There has also been evidence that during aerobic exercise, in animals, there is an increase in trophic factors such as brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). These factors affect cell birth and brain development, as well as

enhance neural transmission and improve learning and memory (Binder & Scharfman, 2004).

Current evidence suggests while exercise may be good for the brain at all ages, the adolescent

brain may respond differently than those of other age groups. This is due to the fact that the

adolescent brain is undergoing extensive growth. The malleable adolescent brain is believed to

be especially susceptible to various modifiable lifestyle factors, such as physical activity and

aerobic exercise (Hertig & Chu, 2017).   During animal tests, there has been direct evidence of

the brain exhibiting a change within the motor areas, specifically the cerebellum and motor

cortex and specific regions of the hippocampus, which plays a major part in learning and

memory. In humans, imaging studies have complemented these results, while at other times,

there have been more global changes in brain structure (Thomas, Dennis, Bandettini, Johansen-

Berg, 2012).

The time of adolescence is measured by the time that physical puberty occurs and

terminates when one is able to make adult-like decisions. Adolescents spend much less time

being monitored by adults than they would as a child which aides in more freedom to begin

making decisions. This is the time period where individuals begin to engage in more risky

behavior such as illegal substances, sexual activity, and other peer-related decisions (Hartley &

Somerville, 2015). During this time, there is a natural occurrence within the brain as it matures,

where there is demonstrated alternation of the adolescent brain. Through structural magnetic

resonance imaging, there is a reduction in the volume of gray matter, a major component of the

central nervous system, lagged structural development of the prefrontal cortex, which is related

to improved impulse control, working memory, and complex reasoning (Hartley & Somerville,

2015). This is to say, the normal progress of a maturing brain with no regard for what level of

impact exercise plays. As the maturation process occurs, adolescents engage in risky behavior

and this is directly related to not understanding the negative consequences associated with those choices or a false sense of invulnerability. Several studies have refuted this fact suggestion that adolescents do understand the potential negative consequences but do not perceive that they are susceptible to the negative consequences. Scientific evidence is emerging and suggests the decision making of adolescents is unique and the uniqueness is attributed to normative maturational changes in brain functions (Hatley & Somerville, 2015). The connection of normative development to the adolescent brain is directly related to the choices that are made and can be directly affected by the presence of peers. The peers form some adolescent decisions and can be directly related to the temperament of the student.

The effects of exercise on mood and cognition has been the subject of many different studies on both humans and animals. In humans, both behavioral and functional imaging identifies neuroanatomical systems modulated by a long-term increase in exercise. The most common improvement is in the pre-frontal cortex which is related to attention and executive functions (Basso & Suzuki, 2017). During these tests, the most consistent effects that were reported are improvements in cognitive tasks that depend on the prefrontal cortex, enhancements in mood, and decrease in stress level. Studies have focused on varying intensities of exercise and identified that moderate-intensity will benefit executive function more and vigorous exercise is more beneficial to informational processing. During times of exercise, there is a correlation to the reduction of negative behavior and an increase in positive perceptions. There is evidence that the exercise that is the most beneficial to one's mood is something the participant enjoys. The utilization of exercise during the regular school day will create an environment where students have the opportunity to improve their moods, cognitive processing, and focus. A large collection of research in humans has shown that a single bout of exercise alters behavior at the level of

affective state and cognitive functioning in several key ways (Basso & Suzuki, 2017). This effect of exercise does not terminate shortly after the workout is over, the effects of positive feelings and decrease in stress is present for twenty-four hours. Exercise alleviates negative as well as enhances positive mood, with effects occurring immediately after and lasting up to one day post-exercise cessation (Basso & Suzuki, 2017). This contributes to a more successful population who have engaged in healthy habits, possess improved levels of cognition, and have the ability to focus for a longer period of time due to the morphological changes that occur within the brain.

Attendance

Absenteeism is defined by Balkis, Arslan, and Duru (2016) as a period of time when a student does not attend school. Research indicates that the success of a student can be correlated to the consistency with which they attend school. There are significant consequences for a student's high level of absenteeism which are detrimental to the student's success. Students who attended lectures scored 9.4% to 18% better on exams than students who missed (Chou & Kuo, 2012). Absenteeism among high school students leads to more negative effects, from low academic performance to potential social issues. Students who experience high levels of absenteeism are missing due to many different factors. The greatest factor which directly affects students' attendance is motivation, parental support, and relationships. The research identified factors that did not have a statistically significant impact as the previously identified three factors (Chou & Kuo, 2012).

Chour and Kuo (2016) found when a student is motivated they have a strong desire to learn and keep learning. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are what has been found through research to drive students to succeed. When students were incentivized to attend more regularly,

studies found that the level of intrinsic motivation declined and students had an increase in attendance due to the extrinsic reward. Teachers in elective courses experienced higher levels of attendance than core courses as students had a higher level of motivation to attend class (Chou & Kuo, 2016). Another factor that affects motivation is the complexity of the course. Research indicates the student perceives the course work to be too complex or too easy they will lose interest and therefore, not value attendance in class. Chou and Kuo (2016) stated, if there is too much work involved, for example, too much homework or tests, the student may find the material interesting but resent the course and not attend.

During the student's high school years, students are learning to foster deep relationships with their peers and to build positive relationships with adults. The effects of student social life can have a significant negative effect on attendance (Morgan, 2001). Students who have not fostered relationships and do not feel a connectedness to the school tend to have more attendance issues. The Sacramento Unified School District conducted an absenteeism study to determine the primary causes and frequency of absence related to each issue. It was discovered that a lack of relationships caused one in five students to be chronically absent. The district defined chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of school, regardless of the reason. Relationship issues for students shift as they progress through their school experience. Students who are in grades K-6 tend to build relationships with peers while students in grades 7-12 begin to build solid relationships with adults. Students who come to school do so to be with their friends. Students reported that they found the teacher's teaching method interesting and this increased attendance (Chou & Kuo, 2016). Furthermore, the more connected a student is to their school and peers, the more desire they have to be at school which yields better academic performance among high school students (Chou & Kuo, 2016).

Familial factors are a key contributor to student attendance. Parent and caregiver discretion was identified as a contributing factor for 31% of chronically absent students (Sacramento Schools, 2014). Chronic Absenteeism is closely related to the emphasis that the parents and other family members place at school. Students learn expectations from their role models and those that do not emphasize the importance of school will have students who do the same. Parents have a significant impact on students' attendance in school. School absenteeism has been associated with internalizing and externalizing behavior, family work and health, school environment, and parents' level of education (Balkis, Arslan, & Duru, 2016). Research indicates the following reasons for student absenteeism arise from family: socioeconomic level of a family, the need for the student to work to support the family, parenting skills, psychological problems, support or neglect, alcohol and drug abuse, and criminal behavior (Demir, Akman Karabeyoglu, 2016). The primary role of a parent is to ensure their student attends school regularly and is successful. Disinterested families are not concerned with the overall success of the student as well as regular attendance. Student attendance is one variable that has a significant impact on student achievement (Demir, Akman Karabeyoglu, 2016). Research has indicated that attendance is a direct determinant of the academic success a student will attain. Today's high school student is less controlled than their parents were in the past. Due to the lack of control and monitoring, parents ignore the excuses which are effectively supporting and justifying the absenteeism (Demir, Akman Karabeyoglu, 2016).

The attendance of a student is related to three specific variables. When a student finds a subject interesting or has a relationship with a teacher, this will increase the desire of a student to attend school. Boredom may exist in elementary or middle school, but it is endemic to high school students (Northern & Petrilli, 2017). Most high school students report that they are

intrinsically motivated to learn. Of the students surveyed, 83% to 95% report being motivated to apply themselves in school by thinking deeply, listening carefully, and completing assignments (Northern & Petrilli, 2017). The majority of students have reported that they engage in cognitive engagement which is related to asking themselves questions, reflecting on their work to fix errors, and reviewing their level of understanding as a common practice. Teachers are central to the sense of connectedness and engagement in the school of the student. Students also report highly valuing time connecting with peers (Northern & Petrillin, 2017). Research has indicated that the more connected students are to the school, the more likely they are to attend regularly. When a student establishes a positive relationship with teachers, this will increase commitment to the school and will help to reduce absenteeism (Demir & Akman Karabeyoglu, 2016). Students are deriving enjoyment from a less restrictive classroom which is more geared toward student achievement and relationship as opposed to the traditional classroom. Instead of classrooms feeling like training grounds or holding pens, they felt like design studios or research laboratories; lively productive places where teachers and students engaged together inconsequential work (Doyne & Gonchar, 2019).

Student absenteeism related to familial beliefs is an area that is difficult to address for schools due to the potential sensitivity of the issue. If there is not a value put on education, it is difficult to overcome this belief and to convince a student to try unless they have a high level of intrinsic motivation. This is related to the lack of involvement of the parents as they rarely attend parent-school meetings and do not create a highly disciplined environment for their students at home. Demir and Akman Karabeyoglu (2016) recommend increasing the level of school involvement at the student level. One effective way of reducing absenteeism is to encourage the student to participate in school activities. This will further deepen their

connectedness in school and create a desire, despite the environment at home, to be at school.

Research indicates that the school administration should begin to work with the families to

ensure the attendance of the student. This can be done by illuminating the fact that there is a

direct correlation to student attendance and success (Chou & Kuo, 2012). Schools should effect

a change within the family as, beyond the school day, success in school and good attendance has

been directly related to a reduction in risky behaviors such as suicidal ideation in the future. As

absenteeism increases, students are more inclined to experience psychological problems such as

depression or behavioral disorders. According to Demir and Akman Karabeyoglu (2016)

absenteeism for young people is considered a predictor of academic failure and leads to many

other risk factors. Parents of children should be informed about the importance of good

attendance for achieving success and for providing risk factors not only in school but also in the

future (Demir & Akman Karabeyoglu, 2016)

Office Discipline Referral

An Office Discipline Referral (ODR) is a district policy that is implemented within the

school to address several behavioral issues that affect the school day. ODR is an event in which

a student engaged in behavior that violated a rule or social norm, a problem behavior observed

by a member of the school staff, or an event that resulted in a consequence delivered by a

member of the school administration (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). Each

ODR is a representation of student response to various situations, a teacher or staff member

response to student behavior, or an administrator response to a teacher-student interaction.

ODR's are commonly available and frequently used school-wide measures of student behavior

that can serve as a measure of the school culture and the efficacy of the school site intervention

currently in place (Irvin, Robin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004).   Interventions that the ODR

data supports are school-wide behavioral climate, general misbehavior of the student at school, student perceptions, teacher perceptions, and classroom orderliness. Most specifically, ODR data is used to make decisions about student behavior. Schools keep records of the number of ODR and reasons for them in various ways. They are kept either in a database or in a hard copy record for the school to later assess and develop various interventions. The use of an ODR is one of the best sources to assess where problem behaviors occur on school property to help develop interventions, as well as to allow for the assessment of desirable outcomes. Office referrals have been used successfully in program evaluations as a dependent or outcome variable and have been shown to be a reliable measure within schools and children (Kaufman, Jaser, Baughan, Reynolds, Di Donato, Bernard, & Hernandez-Brereton, 2010). Student referrals have been linked to a myriad of negative outcomes including lost class time, exclusionary disciplinary consequences, and contact with the juvenile justice system (Martinez, McMahon, & Treger, 2015). Research supports that three or more suspensions in ninth grade predicted school failure in high school (Irvin, Robin, Sprague, Sugai, and Vincent, 2004). There is a direct correlation between grade point average and specific types of ODR behaviors. Research has shown that students that were suspended in lower grades tend to have a consistently high pattern of referrals as they progress through their educational career. An elementary school was surveyed and the probability that a student who was referred once would be referred again was 81% the first year, 80% the next year, and 77% the following year (Kaufman, Jaser, Baughan, Reynolds, Di Donato, Bernard, & Hernandez-Brereton, 2010). Research further supports that ODRs in school are a strong predictor of later school failure and antisocial behavior into adulthood.

Once it has been deemed appropriate to create an ODR for a behavior, beyond the obvious disruption to the class, there is an amount of class time that is lost. Researchers have

identified that regardless of the level of offense, discipline takes time: from the student being disciplined, the teacher writing the referral, the administrator that has to meet with the student, but the class the student is in is directly affected. Teachers have noted that writing referrals take them between four and ten minutes to write a referral (Anderson, 2012). The American Federation of Teachers polled their member teachers and it was reported that 17% said they lost four or more hours of teaching per week due to disruptive behavior; another 19% lost two or three hours (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). A professor at the University of Louisville found that referrals take twenty minutes out of the classroom and twenty minutes of adult time to write. A professor at Loyola University Chicago's School of Education suggested those numbers to elevate to forty-five minutes of lost class time (Anderson, 2012). This loss of class time can cause a great distraction within the school day. The student who has caused the infraction may believe the situation affected only themselves. Research has shown that this loss of class time affects their classmates as well as the teacher. When a teacher is constantly dealing with discipline, this causes extra levels of stress and this stress can then be conveyed to the students. This stress level does not allow for effective instruction. Anderson (2012) stated that a loss of five minutes of class time, related to middle school discipline data, translated to a loss of 11, 320 minutes, or 28.3 school days. When the time is moved to the aforementioned twenty minutes, it is a loss of 113.2 days, and at forty-five minutes a loss of 254.7 days.

Office discipline referral data has supported that throughout education, males are more often referred to the office than females. The over-representation of ODRs among boys has been widely documented. These gender differences are expected as ODRs are an indicator of externalizing behaviors, which are more common among boys (Martinez, McMahon, & Treger, 2015). A study of office referrals in an elementary school reported that 55% of males had a

referral of any kind and 40% had a referral for aggression, as compared to 34% of females with a

referral of any kind and 21% with a referral for aggression (Kaufman, et al., 2010). Other studies

represented similar data with male referrals outnumbering that of females. In a similar study of

11,000 middle school students, it was reported that males received significantly more referrals

than females. This study reported that males accounted for 75.4% of the total referrals for the

school year. The reasons for the referrals change as the student ages. Students are more likely to

be referred to the office for violent or aggressive reasons between the grades of Kindergarten and

sixth grade. As students age, the most common referrals are for absenteeism or noncompliance.

Gender differences in office referrals may differ over grades, as male referrals for aggressive

behaviors decrease and referrals for non-compliant behavior increase from elementary to high

school (Kaufman, et al., 2010). Researchers have identified that these referrals are founded in

the developmental process of the child. Elementary students are working on developing

friendships and team building. This correlates to the levels of aggression, which are related to

bullying, fighting, and verbal threats, as students are working through how to interact with their

peers. During the middle school years, students are working toward identity development and

autonomy which translates to a greater amount of ODRs related to disrespect such as the use of

profanity and disrespect towards teachers. During high school, the ODRs are related to

attendance, such as skipping class and leaving the building without permission, which is related

to their formation of independence (Kaufman, et al., 2010). This has led researchers to identify

that interventions cannot be the same for all grade-levels and should be custom designed for the

appropriate grade and development of the students. Teachers said they did not realize that some

student behaviors were related to academic frustration and due to the ODR, it created a feeling of

the student that the teacher does not care about them.

ODR incidence can be correlated to various factors. There is support for the student-teacher-ratio that occurs in the classrooms to be a factor. Teachers that have a higher student-teacher ratio tend to write more office referrals due to poor classroom management. Schools with larger student-teacher ratios may create impersonal school settings which inhibit the formation of relationships with peers and adults. Research indicates that high-risk students in low-aggression classrooms were more likely to be suspended than students in high-aggression classrooms. This finding signifies that "teacher thresholds" for tolerating misbehavior may vary by classroom context and these contexts can contribute to student disciplinary rates (Martinez, McMahon, & Treger, 2015). The use of ODR data to determine the efficacy of staff development and training is vital to the success of the school. Examination of the office referral data helps to identify those teachers who need further training on classroom management as well as to identify students who benefit from additional support. While data is utilized for developmental purposes and there is a negative effect of an ODR, the writing of the referral gives the student and teacher a break from the situation and allows them to refocus. This provides evidence for the need to enhance the skills of teachers to learn to prevent the behaviors before they are a problem. Teacher preparation must include a greater focus on developmental stages in children and adolescents so that instruction and behavioral expectations are closely aligned with these stages (Kaufman, et al., 2010).

Research supports the use of ODR data in informing programmatic decisions and in planning interventions such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Knowledge of the different patterns of office referrals may facilitate the development of interventions that are targeted to specific groups of students (Kaufman, et al., 2010). The benefits of using ODR data and a PBIS system are that they transform the school climate from one of punitive

punishment to more proactive educational methods. This allows the school to support those

students and teach them how to develop levels of autonomy with minimal struggles. As well, the

ODR data further supports the efficacy of the intervention in place. The use of teacher training

and implementation of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) can be implemented to change school

culture. PBS is a data-based system that, before the implementation of the program, collects

data, reviews it, and determines what programs should be kept, altered, or no longer used. The

reduction in disciplinary issues has not just improved the school climate but has also freed up

time to do things other than deal with discipline (Anderson, 2012). Effective use of PBS

presents clear expectations for positive social behavior, offer active instruction to define

appropriate behavior, deliver consistent acknowledgment of positive behavior, and include a

systematic intervention to prevent problem behaviors. These are logical extensions of behaviors

described by Skinner and adapted for practical use through applied behavior analysis and

management (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). PBS is a positive way for staff to

build relationships with students which increases a sense of belonging to the student and thereby

reduces the number of referrals. The development of any program should be backed by research

and done so with a specific goal in mind.

Grades

The United States school system operates primarily as a meritocracy where grades are

earned, students are tracked into achievement groups, and awards are provided to the student

who performs at a satisfactory level (Alber, 2017). The problem with this system is that it

negates those children who are not able to operate successfully in the system. Those students are

labeled as nonproficient, poor readers, failing students, or poor test-takers. This has caused the

focus of the parent on the grade as opposed to the learning of the child. Once school begins,

many parents assume grades are a good indicator of their children's knowledge (Coaching, 2017). Due to the overwhelming focus on grades, parents remark solely on the grade itself with comments such as, why did you get this grade? This tends to negatively affect the self-esteem and self-efficacy of the student. The focus of the classroom and school looks beyond the grade and to determine what circumstances may be present causing the student to fail.

In the United States alone more than 370,000 students flunk out of college every year for various reasons (Cherif, Movahedzadeh, Adams, & Dunning, 2013). Researchers have found the most common reasons for students' poor grades can be categorized into five categories: absences of preparation and effort, poor time management, external factors, motivation, and study habits. These factors should have been refined in high school and play a vital role in the success of a student in college. These issues reflect the rate at which students finish their post-secondary work. In 2009, 29.2% of students graduating with an associate's degree had heard it within three years and 55.5% of students seeking a bachelor's take up to six years to complete it (Cherif, Movahedzadeh, Adams, & Dunning, 2013). This failure, in high school or college, has created stress with the student who is failing as well as the instructors. The instructor tends to be a self-reflector that will internalize the circumstances of student failure. This reflection seeks to identify if there are shortcomings within their instructional strategy.

Many students who failed at school remember well-intentioned adults who tried to help but also remember drawing unwanted attention to challenges they viewed as shameful or embarrassing. These well-intentioned adults caused them to stop accepting help (Katz, 2016). A component of the failure of many students can be correlated to their overall feeling of belongingness to the school as well as family issues. Some students may lack peace of mind due to the way they are raised and worried about issues at home, other students may lack a social

connection and stay isolated from classmates and the institution. The child may conceptualize that a bad grade can divert a busy parent into dedicating more time and attention to issues the student is dealing with (Coaching, 2017). Researchers have developed a theory that children who feel uncomfortable communicating their need to spend more time with parents or other adults, use bad grades as a way of drawing attention to themselves. Students who develop and maintain good relationships with faculty and classmates develop a deeper level of motivation and have a higher level of success. If a student does not have the self-drive to succeed or to see the benefit from successfully finishing a given course, they will not try and invest in the class and thus no succeed (Cherif, Movahedzadeh, Adams, & Dunning, 2013). There is a correlation between self-motivation and lack of perseverance. Students with self-motivation apply their perseverance, mental capability, and energy to do everything in their power to succeed. As students lack a strong sense of motivation this will lend themselves to laziness. As laziness becomes more pervasive this quality results in students decreasing their level of effort in class and they will eventually just fail. Aside from the intrinsic motivation, parents, and teachers need to take the role of motivators in a student's life, this will help them to easily relate the significance of success to real-life facilitating a higher level of intrinsic motivation to provide students with higher levels of success.

The preparation of a student for the next phase of their life is vitally important. Researchers have found that high school is the most important time when a student gets a foundation for the advanced level of learning that takes place at the college level. There is a connection between poor study habits, poor time management, and an inability to identify and establish priorities. This is an indicator of future high potential academic failure among students (Cherif, Adams, 2013). This poor study habit causes students to struggle with course content

which exacerbates the failure rate due to a student experiencing the self-fulling prophecy of failure and thereby continuing to struggle. The teacher can combat this problem by building successful relationships with the student. Research supports the student-teacher relationship to be an important factor in student success. Teachers play a major role in sparking student interest in a subject and this can be a key factor as to why a student is not doing well in a particular subject (Coaching, 2017). Katz (2016) refers to the importance of fostering a growth mindset, in which students are praised for their efforts more than their achievements, allowing for and even encouraging mistakes. This growth mindset will help students to develop another quality, grit. Girt is a term that was coined by Angela Duckworth who conducted research among a variety of individuals, developing her grit scale. Grit is described as a predictor of the future success of a student based on their ability to tackle and stick with tasks, it is not related to natural ability but to drive (Duckworth, 2016). The more a teacher is involved with the interests of their students, the more relevant the teacher can make a class that will inspire the student's interests and success. Bloom and his research team found that the best mentors at the early stage are warm supportive teachers who made initial learning very pleasant (Duckworth, 2016). Research shows that people are enormously more satisfied when they do something that fits their personal interests (Duckworth, 2016).

The ability to manage time and get tasks done in an appropriate time frame is vital to the success of a student. When high school students graduate, they report that the ability to manage their time is one of the most difficult transitions they face in college. Students are not accustomed to managing their time because they have no idea how much time and effort college work demands (Cherif & Adams, 2013). When a student does not have the ability to manage their time, they begin to suffer procrastination. This results in falling behind and a feeling of

failure. The more a student gets behind statistics support that they do not know how to get caught up and this causes their level of work to be sub-standard, they perform poorly on examinations, and their level of stress increases. Poor study habits, time management, and study skills are among the impediments that stand in the way of learning for many students (Cherif & Adams, 2013). The high school years are the time where a student should develop the necessary time management required to be successful in their future life, regardless of continuation into academia or entering the workforce. A degree of autonomy during the early years is important. Longitudinal studies tracking learners confirm that overbearing parents and teachers erode intrinsic motivation (Duckworth, 2016). The development of autonomy allows students to investigate what they are interested in, develop a passion, and pursue it. In doing, so, those students understand the importance of time management and will have a higher level of grit and a growth mind to succeed.

Conclusion

The modern school system does not function as schools did in the past. The adopted system which, worked to provide an education that worked for all students, no longer functions for the modern student. There is a current migration away from a credit system that proves a student has successfully completed a level of education that prepares them for the real world is an antiquated thought. The modern student is under higher levels of stress that are focused towards a pressure to succeed, be it self-induced or imposed by familial expectations, take higher courses, and out-compete their peers on standardized tests that schools now are forced to consider the whole student (Flannery, 2019). The more the school emphasizes the whole student, the more a student will achieve (Morgan. 2001). The use of Power hour facilitates the allowance for students to decompress, build solid relationships with their peers and adults, and

get the extra help they need to succeed in a high-pressure world. Power hour has a demonstrated level of success in a variety of school environments. As education evolves, Power hour will continue to evolve with the ever-changing environment and be adopted by more districts to focus on the whole student and allow learning to be assessed in a more meaningful way.

Chapter 3

Methods

This study examined the change in student's performance related to GPA, attendance, and discipline prior to and after the Power Hour was implemented that was introduced by School District A among their high school students. The focus of the study was to examine what changes occurred in GPA of the students, the change in how often students attended school, and what change occurred with the number of office discipline referrals of the high school student population that had experienced Power Hour from those that had not experienced Power Hour.

The sample was students that attended School District A for two years before the implementation of Power Hour and those that attended two years post-implementation. Chapter 3 includes the research design and research hypothesis, an explanation of the selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Research Design

The research design of this study was quasi-experimental quantitative. According to Creswell (2014), "quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (p. 4). Archival data for the specific variables were collected from the district and analyzed. The independent variable is the participation status of the Power Hour. The dependent variables are the overall GPA, attendance, and the number of office referrals that are occurring during class time.

Selection of Participants

The population of the study is high school students of four of the five high schools in School District A. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated, "Purposive sampling involves selecting a sample based on the researcher's

experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled" (p.175). Purposive sampling method was selected since the researcher was an employee of the district with knowledge of the group sampled. Students' data for years 2015-2019 were selected as this represents a two-year period before the intervention was implemented and two years post-implementation. Four of the five high schools in the district were selected since the district implemented a new strategy, Power Hour in the four high schools. The fifth high school opened more recently and did have this program, therefore, there will be no archival data for that specific school. The number of students being included in the sample size approximately 8,000 high school students per school year in grades nine through twelve.

Measurement

GPA. Student's GPA was determined by accessing student transcripts which are recorded in the Synergy system that is used throughout the district. During the school year, teachers enter grades into this system. When a student completes a semester, teachers enter the final grade, the counselor receives the information, and the registrar ensures that all data has been entered for all students. The system records the final grades for the semester on the student's transcript. The GPA is measured on a traditional grade scale of A, B, C, D, and F, and each letter grade is assigned a numerical value (i.e., A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1, and F-0). The GPA was calculated by adding the numerical value for each letter grade earned and then divided by the number of courses the student was enrolled in. This system has been maintained throughout the course of this study.

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure" (p. 181). Validity for GPA is established by having conversations related to grading during the departmental Professional Learning Committee

meetings (PLC). During the PLCs, validity is addressed by planning for horizontal alignment and common assessments, discussing how assignments are graded, and establishing rubrics.

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "Reliability is the degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it is measuring" (p. 182). The district has outlined and provided guidelines for GPA calculations and School District A has utilized consistent procedures for calculating GPA. In addition, during the semester, teachers enter grades based on student's performance in class in Synergy, and when the semester is completed the teachers will enter final grades into Synergy. The building registrar checks to ensure all grades are entered and then documents them on the student's transcript. This system has been maintained across the district for the length of this study.

Attendance. The attendance was measured by accessing Synergy and analyzing the archival attendance records. Each teacher enters attendance records every hour for each student. This information is sent to the attendance office in the school where it is checked against students who have been excused for the day. If there is a potential error, the attendance office will verify it with the specific teacher. Once all attendance has been verified, it is recorded at the end of the day and is logged to the student's records. To measure attendance, archival data will be accessed through the Synergy system. Student data were obtained from 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Reliability for attendance was established through a procedure whereby each staff member and school utilizes the same system for recording attendance.

Office Referral. Office Referrals were measured by the number of times a student was sent to the office for any transgression that violated the student code of conduct. When a staff member has observed an unacceptable behavior and has deemed it necessary to send the student

to the office to speak with an administrator, the student is given an office referral. The administrator will then document the referral into the Synergy system which is attached to the student's record. The secretaries will enter additional documentation, such as transcribing the initial write up that was submitted by the staff member, while the administrator will document the referral and any conversations with parents and students. This allows for checks and balances to ensure that information is entered correctly which provides validity for the office referral data. The system has been maintained during the length of this study. Reliability for office referral data has been established by all administrators following the same process for consistency.

Participation Status of the Power Hour. The participation status of the Power Hour was decided by the year the first data were collected. More specifically, since Power Hour was adopted in the district's high schools during the 2017 school year, the students, whose data were collected during the 2015 and 2016 school years, were categorized as non-participation status since they did not have the experience with Power Hour; and the students, whose data were collected during the 2017 and 2018 school years, were categorized as participation status since they had experience with Power Hour. Validity for the participation status was established by utilizing the Synergy system and accessing the archival data. This allows for the specific data set to be accessed for each specific year. Reliability for the participation status was established by using the same system throughout the study. The data were maintained on the Synergy system and the district has ensured the consistency of this data as they are maintained at the district office and checked by the registrar and attendance office at each high school.

Data Collection Procedures

An email was sent to the district to obtain initial permission to conduct the study (see Appendix A). An Institutional Review Board (IRB) was submitted to Baker University to gain approval to conduct this study (see Appendix C). Once the IRB approval had been obtained, the school district was contacted again to get approval to use the archival data, and permission was granted on July 31, 2020 (Appendix B). As this is archival data and the participants are anonymous, there were no individual permissions obtained. The participants were labeled by student numbers and confidentiality was maintained.

The archival data were obtained from the Synergy system that School District A uses. Data for the study were obtained from the archival records from School District A and four of the five high schools in district A. Student data for overall GPA were obtained from four high schools within School District A. Student attendance and office referral data were obtained from the four high schools. The data for the students will be focused on the school years 2015 through 2019. The data were be obtained by contacting the learning services department of School District A. That department then generated a request for the specific archival data. This was sent to the technology department who collected the data and was organized into an excel spreadsheet.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

RQ1. Is there a difference in the overall GPA between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

*H1***.** There is a statistically significant difference in the overall GPA between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to address RQ1. The mean of the overall GPA of the high school students before the implementation of Power Hour was compared to the mean of the overall GPA of students after the implementation of Power Hour. An independent-samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it examines the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups, and both means of two groups are continuous variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size is reported.

RQ2. Is there a difference in student attendance between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power hour?

H2. There is a statistically significant difference in the attendance between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to address RQ2. The mean of attendance of students before the implementation of Power Hour was compared to the mean of attendance of students after implementation of Power Hour. An independent-samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it examines the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups, and both means of two groups are continuous variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size is reported.

RQ3. Is there a difference in student office referrals between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

*H3***.** There is a statistically significant difference in office referrals between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to address RQ3. The mean of the number of students' office referrals before the implementation of Power Hour was compared to the mean of the number of students' office referrals after the implementation of Power Hour. An independent-samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it examines the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups, and both means of two groups are continuous variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size is reported.

Limitations

In 2008, Lunenburg and Irby defined limitations as "Parts of a study are not under the control of the researcher. Limitations are factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings or on the generalizability of the results." (p. 133). The limitations of this study include:

1. The level of fidelity with which each high school is implementing the program. There is an expectation from the district implied, however, each school has a unique population that will have the potential for causing variability affecting the variables.

2. There is no peer-reviewed literature focusing on Power Hour and its effects on GPA, attendance, and office referrals. The current study provides a preliminary analysis of the potential impact of Power Hour.

3. All samples are collected from one school district, so the results of the study should not be generalized to other school districts with different settings.

Summary

This chapter examined the research design, selection of participants, measurement, and data collection procedures. Also, included in this chapter were data analysis, hypotheses testing, and the limitations of this study. In chapter four, the results of hypotheses testing are discussed.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the level of efficacy of an intervention implemented by School District A. The implementation, Power Hour, was initiated to assist high school students with an opportunity to be more successful by providing unstructured time. In this study, three areas, which can be attributed to a student's outcomes in high school, were evaluated. Archival data were retrieved from the school district and assessed for the following variables: Attendance, GPA, and office referrals.

Descriptive Statistics

The samples for this study were high school students enrolled in School District A from the school year 2015 through 2019. The students who attended high schools during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years represent the students who did not experience Power Hour, and the students who attended high schools during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years represent the students who did experience Power Hour. See Table 12 for detailed demographic and descriptive statistical information of the samples.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Participants for the Power Hour Study

Variables	Groups	*N*	*M*	*SD*
GPA	without Power Hour	11961	3.27	.89
	with Power Hour	11188	3.29	.88
Attendance	without Power Hour	16619	67.76	66.20
	with Power Hour	15416	73.08	71.72
Office referral	without Power Hour	2429	2.50	2.71
	with Power Hour	2466	2.65	2.77

Note: *N*=sample size for the group, *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation.

Hypothesis Testing

This section includes the results of three research questions for this study. The results describe

whether each hypothesis was supported or not supported by the data analysis.

RQ1. Is there a difference in the overall GPA between a group of high school students

with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of

Power Hour?

H1. Having the experience of Power Hour causes students to have a better GPA than

those who did not experience Power Hour.

Outliers were detected and 529 outliers were found, which was 1.7% of the total

samples. The outliers were excluded from the following analysis. The results of the

independent samples *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the two

means, $t(22594.85)= -2.70$, $p = .007$ $d = -0.04$ The sample mean for students GPA that did not experience Power Hour ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.83$, $n = 11702$) was significantly lower than the sample mean for students that did experience Power Hour ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.80$, $n = 10918$). The research hypothesis was supported. The results demonstrated that the students who had experienced Power Hour had a significantly higher GPA than those students who did not experience Power Hour. The effect size indicated a small effect.

RQ2. Is there a difference in student attendance between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

H2. Having the experience of Power Hour will increase the attendance of students over those who did not experience Power Hour.

Outliers were detected and 3239 outliers were found, which represents 10.1% of the total samples. The outliers were excluded from the following analysis. The results of the independent samples t test indicated a statistically significant difference between the two means, $t(28447.99)=-3.83$, $p< 0.001$, $d = -0.05$ The sample mean of attendance for students that did not experience Power Hour ($M = 51.89$, $SD = 35.03$, $n = 15094$) was significantly lower than sample mean of attendance for students that did experience Power Hour ($M = 53.47$, $SD = 35.51$, $n = 13702$). The research hypothesis was supported. The students who had experienced Power Hour was absent from more class periods than those students who did not experience Power Hour. The effect size indicated a small effect.

RQ3. Is there a difference in student office referrals between a group of high school students with the experience of Power Hour and a group of high school students without the experience of Power Hour?

H3. Students who experience Power Hour will have fewer office referrals than those students who did not experience Power Hour.

No outliers were identified for this variable. The results of the independent samples *t* test indicated no statistically significant difference between the two means, $t(4893)= -1.93$, $p= 0.054$. The sample mean for office referrals of students who did not experience Power Hour ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 2.71$, $n = 2429$) was not different from the sample mean for office referrals of students that did experience Power Hour($M = 2.65$, $SD = 2.77$, $n = 2466$). The research hypothesis was not supported. The number of office referrals, between students who had experienced Power Hour and those who did not experience Power Hour, did not change over the years that were studied.

Summary

Chapter 4 included an analysis of the data for each research question and hypothesis. The results suggested that students who had experienced Power Hour did have a higher GPA than those who did not experience Power Hour; however, the results suggested students who experienced Power Hour were found to be more absent than those who had not experienced Power Hour. In addition, the results suggested that there was no significant difference for office referrals between the students who had experienced Power Hour and those had not. Therefore, the findings indicate that Power Hour may have an impact on the overall GPA and attendance of high school students. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, findings related to the literature, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

The study was conducted to determine the effect that an unstructured time within the school day, Power Hour, would have on the overall GPA, attendance, and discipline referral of a group of high school students. Chapter 5 is comprised of many sections. The first section, the study summary, includes an overview of the problem, purpose statement and research questions, a review of methodology, and the major findings. The second section contains the findings related to the literature. The final section is the conclusion which includes the implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

This section includes an overview of the study on the efficacy of the intervention, Power Hour, and the effect that Power Hour has on student GPA, attendance, and office referrals. The overview of the problem, the purpose of this study, and the research questions are included in the summary. This section concludes with a review of the methodology and the major findings of the study.

Overview of the problem. The current structure of the educational day is one that has been used for a very long time (Chen, 2018). The students of today have much more to deal with, due to the rigor and expectations of their school day (Walker, 2016). This antiquated model does not support students who are struggling in school, does not help them feel connected or want to attend school, and does not allow for students to decompress reducing the likelihood of outbursts during class (Collins, 2019). Power Hour, a school-wide "free" hour, allows students to take ownership of their educational experience; schools using this tactic have observed higher student achievement and fewer discipline problems (Porter, 2016)

Power Hour is a new intervention with very limited research examining its efficacy. The most common pieces of information that can be obtained are blogs that reflect personal opinions or the way in which Power Hour is being utilized. This intervention was adopted to increase the desire of the student to attend school, to achieve, and ideally no longer cause disruptive behavior in class which would cause a loss of class time for themselves or their peers (Porter, 2016).

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of the efficacy of an intervention that was implemented in a medium-large school district. An additional purpose was to determine the effect this intervention had on the overall GPA, attendance, and office referrals of a selected group of high school students. The study included three research questions and three hypotheses to address the purpose of this study.

Review of the methodology. A quasi-experimental research method was used in this study. Archival data were used for all students enrolled in high school in School District A, grades nine through twelve. These students were enrolled in School District A high schools during the school year 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Three independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare the means of two independent groups to determine statistical significance. The students were grouped by those who had experienced Power Hour and those who had not. The groups were assessed for overall GPA, attendance, and office referral rates among the various years.

Major findings. The first major finding is related to the first research question regarding the change in GPA for those students who have not experienced Power Hour and those students who had. The results from this study indicate that high school students of School District A that participated in Power Hour had a significantly higher GPA than those students who had attended high school and not experienced Power Hour. The results of this study may indicate a

relationship between the experience of Power Hour and a higher GPA with a small effect size, representing a statistical difference between the two groups.

The second major finding is related to the second research question regarding the attendance of students who did experience Power Hour and those students who did not experience Power Hour. Attendance was measured by looking at period attendance and how many individual periods were missed. The results of the study indicate that high school students of School District A who had experienced Power Hour missed more class periods than those students who had not experienced Power Hour. The results of this study may indicate a relationship between the experience of Power Hour and absenteeism with a small effect size.

The third major finding is related to the third research question regarding the rate of office discipline referrals for high school students in School District A that experienced Power Hour and those students that had not. The results of the study indicated no significant difference between those who had experienced Power Hour and those students that had not experienced Power Hour. This research specifically looked at all student records without concern for the severity of the offense or the specific time of day the offense occurred.

Findings Related to the Literature

In this section, research related to this study is compared to previous research. This creates a level of complexity as Power Hour does not have a depth or breadth of research that has been conducted since it has been used. Research has been conducted in various forms that is directly related to the intention of Power Hour as it relates to GPA, attendance, and office referrals. There have been other works done in a different iteration of interventions like Power Hour, such as the work done by Kuhlman (2020) looking at a lunchtime intervention which can

be described as a supervised learning lab during lunch. However, the depth of peer-reviewed literature directly related to Power Hour has not been developed.

The first research question is related to the overall GPA of high school students enrolled in School district A. High school is the important time when the student acquires a foundation for the advanced level of learning to come later in their life. During this time, students form more meaningful relationships than they do in primary school. These relationships can be with peers or adults in the school. When students have friends and feel socially connected and supported at school, this predisposes them to feel positively toward academic work and other activities (Juvonen, Espinoza, & Kinfsend, 2012). Power Hour allows the opportunity for students to begin and continue to foster those opportunities. Providing students with an opportunity to associate with students of their choice, experience different school activities, and meet with teachers establishing a bond yields more academic success. School belonging was associated with more frequent classroom participation, homework completion, and exam preparation (Juvonen, Espinoza, & Kinfsend, 2012). In this study, it was found that the inclusion of Power Hour in the school day, yielded a more positive overall GPA for students in the high schools.

The second research question is related to the attendance rate of students enrolled in high school in School district A. Absenteeism is a variable that has a significant impact on student achievement (Demir & Karabeyouglu, 2016). The more that a student misses school, the more likely they are to fail and to struggle to foster meaningful relationships with peers. In this study, it was found that students who experienced Power Hour missed more classes than those students who did not. This is contradictory to the findings in research. Demir and Karabeyouglu (2016) stated absenteeism makes it difficult to create a solid foundation in terms of discipline and a

sense of responsibility. This lends itself to future problems such as maintaining jobs and struggling with discipline in their life. High school students with poor attendance were significantly more likely to have attendance referrals than the lower grade levels (Kaufman, dt al., 2010).

The third research question is related to the amount of office referrals students in School district A received before and after Power Hour. When making intervention decisions within the school building, the office referral data is a valuable tool to make informed decisions. Research indicates that office referral data is useful in informing programmatic decisions and in planning interventions (Kaufman, et al., 2010). The results of this study indicated that the rate of office referrals did not increase or decrease between the students who did not experience Power Hour and those who did experience Power Hour. The rate of student referrals has been related to the teacher-student ratio. Schools with a larger student-teacher ratio may create impersonal school settings that are at odds with the potential of fostering strong positive adult relationships (Martinez, Treger, & McMahon, 2015). This could be related to why there was no change in the overall referral rate. School district A is a medium-large district with a relatively high student-teacher ratio, which in the normal school day does not allow relationships to be fostered.

In this study, the GPA, attendance rate, and office referral rate were assessed for students who attended the high schools two years before Power Hour and two years after Power Hour. The study found that there was a significant difference in the overall GPA of the students from those who did experience Power Hour and those who did not. Attendance was assessed and measured based on period attendance. It was found that more students missed class periods in the day after Power Hour was introduced than those who did not have Power Hour. Finally, it

was found that the level of discipline referrals remained primarily unchanged between the two student groups.

Conclusions

This section contains conclusions drawn from this study on the effectiveness of the Power Hour model and the effect it has on student GPA, attendance, and office referrals. Implications for action and recommendations for future research are included. Finally, concluding remarks complete the study.

Implications for action. The findings of this study are varied and independent of each other. Students are experiencing levels of expectation and drive to achieve at the highest level. This has caused students to fall behind and has increased student stress levels over grades. The indicated relationship between a higher GPA and Power Hour creates an opportunity for schools to provide the most valued commodity of time for students. School districts should retain Power Hour as a model within their high schools, or adopt Power Hour. The segmented lunch schedules continue to put extra stress on the student and do not allow them time to refocus themselves for the next class. Typically, the segmented lunch period breaks up a class, making it harder for students to regain or maintain focus. Schools that do not use Power Hour should seek to develop Power Hour for their school. Schools who are using Power Hour, but do not feel Power Hour is beneficial, should send representatives to other schools to observe a successful implementation.

Students have a difficult time focusing for longer periods. Research supports that students who are allowed a brain break or physical exercise will return to class more focused and be able to retain more information (Weslake & Christian, 2015). Schools should allow students to have a portion of the Power Hour to engage in physical activity, if they choose, for example,

they could engage in open gym, the fitness center opened for students, or the ability to go outside and exercise.

Professional development will be needed to brief the staff on expectations of the Power Hour program. Staff needs to understand what expectations they should provide to the student body as well as what expectations staff expect for themselves. The professional development should be designed in such a manner as to allow the staff to have a voice in a manner to express concerns and ideas for improvement.

Parents of students need to be informed of the expectations of Power Hour. This study indicates that students have a greater number of absences with Power Hour and this may be related to parents attempting to allow their students more freedom. It appears that Power Hour has become a time in the day when parents may call their students out to leave school and have lunch or other errands that could be done outside of the school day. As well, parents may be seeking to schedule appointments for students during this time and this could be a contributing factor to increased absences. Parents need to be informed that their student has academic time, club time, or other activities which will allow their students to be more connected to the school.

Furthermore, the schools need to enter into the use of Power Hour with the mentality that the school is empowering the student to make positive choices. Schools need to be clear about expectations and this can be achieved at the beginning of each year. The student body needs to be informed and accountable as to what non-negotiables the administration has relative to maintaining Power Hour. Expectations must be expressed, and the staff must be willing, to remove Power Hour for a time if the trust is violated. The key to the success of Power Hour is the empowerment of the student body to be responsible for themselves and ensure that expectations are met.

Recommendations for future research. Below are recommendations for future research on the impact of Power Hour on student GPA, attendance, and office referrals.

1. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study to include multiple districts with varying demographics for a larger sample size.

2. It is recommended that future researchers replicate the current study to include looking at the difference of discipline referrals from the morning and afternoon.

3. It is recommended that future researchers conduct a longitudinal study focused on a specific group of students who will be tracked throughout their high school career, to show the effect of Power Hour as students mature and have more experience with the intervention.

4. It is recommended that future research is conducted to investigate the relationship between attendance and Power Hour

5. It is recommended that future researchers investigate the effects that Covid-19 has on the development of Power Hour in high schools in the future and what implications this has on Power Hour.

6. It is recommended that the current study be replicated utilizing the same parameters and variables in a qualitative format.

Concluding remarks. The fact that there is not a depth of research that has been conducted on Power Hour indicates that there needs to be more time devoted to a better understanding of the intervention. The school has a unique opportunity to build capacity in the students and teach them to manage their own time during the day. This will help to prepare them for the future that awaits and is a very powerful and vital role the schools must accept. There needs to be a deeper understanding of the development of an intervention, such as Power Hour.

The students face an ever-changing world and the levels of stress they are exposed to are consistently changing. Allowing them to have time in the day to associate with peers, relate to adults, and take a break from the academic work will help them to be successful academically and as they leave the school building and move into their future.

References

(n.d.). Edglossary. Retrieved January 22, 2020, from http://www.edglossary.org/advisory

(n.d.). Meriam Webster. Retrieved April 6, 2020, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homeroom

Adams, J. M. (2015). *Getting to the 'why' of discipline disparities*. Ed Source. Retrieved February 10, 2020, from https://edsource.org/2015/getting-to-the-why-of-discipline-disparities/83861

Alber, R. (2017). *What failing students what us to remember*. Edutopia. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from https://www.edutopia.org/article/what-failing-students-want-us-remember

Anderson, C. (2012). *As disciplinary incidents rise, teachers lose time teaching and the kids lose time learning*. South Coast Today. Retrieved February 10, 2010, from https://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/20120624/NEWS/206240341

Balkus, M., Arslan, G., & Duru, E. (2016). The school absenteeism among high school students: Contributing factors. *Educational sciences, theory, and practices*, *16*(6), 1819-1831. 10.12738/estp.2016.6.0125

Basso, J. C., & Suzuki, W. A. (n.d.). The effects of acute exercise on mood, cognition, neurophysiology, and neurochemical pathways: A review. *Center for Neural Science*, *2*(7), 127-152. 10.3233/BPL-160040

Bryan, J. (2014). *Fastbacks, flashbacks, and response to intervention*. Renaissance. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://www.renaissance.com/2016/08/04/fastbacks-flashbacks-and-response-to-intervention/

Buffmum, A., Mattos, M., & Weber, C. (2010). They why behind RTI. *Educational Leadership*, *68*(2), 10-16.

Canady, R. L., & Rettig, M. D. (1995). The power of innovative scheduling. *Educational Leadership*, *53*(3), 4-10.

Chen, G. (2018). *A relevant history of public education in the United States*. Public School Review. Retrieved January 9, 2020, from https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/a-relevant-history-of-public-education-in-the-united-states

Cherif, A., Movahedzadeh, F., Adams, G., & Dunning, J. (2013). Why do students fail? Students' perspective. 35-51. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274310752_Why_Do_Students_Fail_Students'_Perspective

Chou, P. T.-M., & Kuo, Y.-H. (2012). Journal of studies in education. *Examining factors relating to classroom attendance and performance*, *2*(2). 10.5296/jse.v2i2.1564

Coaching, N. (2017). *Where do bad grades come from*? Nobel Coaching. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from https://nobelcoaching.com/bad-grades/

Collins, B. D. (n.d.). *The rise of the high school*. Retrieved January 9, 2020, from https://www3.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/riseofhs.html

Demir, K., & Akman Karabeyoglu, Y. (n.d.). Eurasian journal of educational research. *Factors associated with absenteeism in high schools*, (62), 37-56. http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.62.4

Denwoth, L. (2020). Friendship is crucial to the adolescent brain. *Family*. TheAtlantic.html

Doyne, S., & Gonchar, M. (2019). Do you like school? *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/learning/do-you-think-school-is-boring.html

Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Scribner/Simon & Schuster.

DuFour, R. (2004). What is professional learning community? *Schools as learning communities*, *61*(8), 6-11. http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/What-Is-a-Professional-Learning-Community%C2%A2.aspx

factors influencing school attendance for chronically absent students in the Sacramento city unified school district. (2017). UC Davis center for Regional change. Retrieved January 9, 2020, from https://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/publication/chronic-absence-sacramento-city-unified-school-district

Flannery, M. E. (2018). *The epidemic of anxiety among today's students*. neaToday. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from http://neatoday.org/2018/03/28/the-epidemic-of-student-anxiety/

Freeman, R., Miller, D., & Newcomer, L. (2015). Integration of academic and behavioral MTSS at the district level using implementation science. *Learning disabilities: A contemporary journal*, *13*(1), 59-72. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1080597

Freshman seminar. (n.d.). School-connect. Retrieved April 6, 2020, from https://school-connect.net/sel-freshman-seminar

Gaddy, J. (2013). *What in the world is a Carnegie unit?* LetsHomeschoolHighSchoo.com. Retrieved January 9, 2020, from https://letshomeschoolhighschool.com/2013/01/16/homeschool-carnegie-unit/

Goldman, D. (2019). *Redefining homeroom in the american education system*. Politicoid. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from https://medium.com/politicoid/redefining-homeroom-in-the-american-education-system-8ddcc53f214b

Hansen, F. (n.d.). *Coping with stress at school*. Adrenal fatigue solution. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from http://adrenalfatiguesolution.com/coping-with-stress-at-school/

Hartley, C. A., & Someville, L. H. (2015). The neuroscience of adolescent decision-making. *Current opinion behavioral sciences*, *1*(5), 108-115. 10.1016/j.cobeha.2015.09.004

Havik, T., Bru, E., & Ertesvag, S. K. (2015). School factors associated with school refusal-and truancy-related reasons for school non-attendance. *Social Psychology of Education*, *18*, 221-240. 10.1007/s11218-015-9293-y

Heick, T. (2019). *Why did that student fail? A diagnostic approach to teaching*. Teachthought. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/diagnostic-teaching-why-students-struggle/

Herting, M. M., & Chu, X. (2017). Exercise, cognition, and the adolescent brain. *Birth Defects Res.*, *109*(20). 10.1002/bdr2.1178

Hess, J. (n.d.). Anxiety prevalence among high school students. *Counselor education master's thesis*, (170). http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/edc_theses/170

Hoover, J. J., Baca, L., Wexlar-Love, E., & Saenz, L. (2008). National implementation of intervention (RTI): Research summary. *National Implementation of RTI*, 1-14.

Irvin, L. K., Tobin, T. J., Sprague, J. R., Sugai, G., & Vincent, C. G. (2004). Validity of office discipline referral measures as indices of school-wide behavioral status and effects of school-wide behavioral interventions. *Journal of positive behavioral interventions*, *6*(3), 131-147.

Juvonen, J., Espinoza, G., & Knifsend, C. (n.d.). The role of peer relationships in student academic and extracurricular engagement. *Handbook of research on student engagement*. 10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_18

Katz, M. (2016). How teachers can help students who fail in class to succeed at life. *Greater Good Magazine*.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_teachers_can_help_students_who_fail_

in_class_to_succeed_at_life

Kaufman, J. S., Jaser, S. S., Vaughn, E. L., Reynolds, J. S., Di Donato, J., Bernard, S. N., &

Hernandez-Brereton, M. (2015). Patterns in office referral data by grade, race/ethnicity,

and gender. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, *12*(1), 44-54. NIH Public

Access. 10.1177/1098300708329710

Keating, D. P. (2017). *Dealing with stress at school in an age of anxiety*. Psychology today.

Retrieved January 16, 2020, from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/stressful-

lives/201708/dealing-stress-school-in-age-anxiety

Klein, A. (2015). *No child left behind overview*. Education week. Retrieved April 6, 2020, from

https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-

definition-summary.html

Kratochwill, T. R., Volpiansky, P., Clements, M., & Ball, C. (2007). Professional development

in implementing and sustaining multitier prevention models: Implications for response to

intervention. *School Psychology Review*, *36*(4), 618-631.

Kuhlman, J. (2020). *Teacher perceptions regarding academic support times within public high

school daily schedules in the suburban Midwest.* [Doctoral dissertation, Baker

University].

Lahelma, E. (2010). School is for meeting friends: secondary school as lived and remembered.

British Journal of Sociology of Education, *23*(3), 367-381.

10.1080/0142569022000015418

Lang, M., & Conaty, F. (2008). *An analysis of factors influencing the attendance of first year university students*. Research Gate. Retrieved January 22, 2020, from http://researchgate.net/publication/215868228

Lee, A. M.I. (n.d.). *PBIS: What you need to know*. Understood. Retrieved April 4, 2020, from https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/pbis-how-schools-support-positive-behavior

Levine, A. (2015). *The waning of the Carnegie unit (essay)*. Inside higher ed. Retrieved January 9, 2020, from https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/10/08/waning-carnegie-unit-essay

Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B.J. (2008). Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: *Tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences.* P. 133. Corwin Press, CA.

Martinez, A., McMahon, S. D., & Treger, S. (2015). Individual-and school-level predictions of student office disciplinary referral. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 1-12. Sage. 10.1177/1063426615588289

Mellard, D. F., Stern, A., & Woods, K. (2011). RTI School-based practices and evidence-based models. *Focus on exceptional children*, *43*(6), 1-15.

Minkel, J. (2017). Does it matter whether kids like school? https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/10/18/does-it-matter-whether-kids-like-school.html

Nichols, S. L. (2015). Teachers' and students' beliefs about student belonging in one middle school. *The Elementary School Journal*, *76*(2), 145-169. 10.1056/501485

Northern, A. M., & Petrilli, M. J. (2017). *What teens want from their schools*. Thomas B.

    Fordham Institute. Retrieved February 4, 2017, from

    https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/what-teens-want-their-schools

Porter, L. (2016). *Power hour: More than just recess*. The educator's room. Retrieved November

    12, 2019, from https://theeducatorsroom.com/power-hour-more-than-just-

    recess/#:~:text=Power%20Hour%2C%20a%20school%2Dwide,discipline%20problems

    %2C%20and%20healthier%20behaviors.

Professional development. (2013). Education reform. Retrieved April 6, 2020, from

    https://www.edglossary.org/professional-development/

Rouse, M. (n.d.). Tech target. Retrieved April 6, 2020, from

    https://searchdatabackup.techtarget.com/definition/data-archiving

Steinberg, L. (2014). *What's holding back American teenagers?* Slate. Retrieved January 9,

    2020, from https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/02/high-school-in-america-a-complete-

    disaster.html

Terada, Y. (2018). *Research-tested benefits of breaks*. Edutopia. Retrieved 11 7, 2019, from

    https://www.edutopia.org/article/research-tested-benefits-breaks

Thomas, A. G., Dennis, A., Bandettini, P. A., & Johansen-Berg, H. (2012). The effects of

    aerobic activity on brain structure. *Frontiers in psychology*, *3*(86).

    10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00086

Treska, L., & Treska, T. (2016). The role, responsibilities, and duties of the homeroom teacher in

    Albanian education system during the communist regime. *European journal of social

    sciences education and research*, *3*(4), 49-57. 10.26417/ejser.v8i1.p49-57

Trougakos, J. P., Hideg, I., Cheng, B. H., & Beal, D. J. (2013). Lunch breaks unpacked: The role of autonomy as a moderator of recovery during lunch. *Academy of Management Journal*, *57*(2), 405421. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.1072

Walker, H. M., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F. M. (2003). *Heading off disruptive behavior*. American Federation of Teachers. Retrieved February 10, 2020, from https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2003-2004/heading-disruptive-behavior

Walker, T. (2016). *Educators look to parents and communities to help reduce student stress*. neaToday. Retrieved January 16, 2020, from http://neatoday.org/2016/09/16/reducing-student-stress

Watters, A. (2015). *The invented history of 'the factory model of education'*. Hack education. Retrieved January 13, 2020, from http://hackeducation.com/2015/04/25/factory-model

Weslake, A., & Christian, B. J. (2015). Brain breaks: Help of hindrance. *Christian education*, *1*(1), 38-46. https://research.avondale.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=teachcollecti on

Why do students fail? -Faculty's perspective. (2018). Edsys. Retrieved February 9, 2020, from https://www.edsys.in/why-do-students-fail/

Yeager, A. (2018). *How exercise reprograms the brain*. The Scientist. Retrieved December 9, 2019, from https://www.the-scientist.com/features/this-is-your-brain-on-exercise-64934

Appendices

Appendix A: Initial Email for Approval

Good morning ▮▮▮▮▮▮

My name is Justin Young and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Baker University and working on my dissertation. My dissertation topic is over Power Hour and the effect is has on GPA, attendance, and office referrals. I have attached my research application for summer research. Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to being able to provide the district with the information I find through my study.
Sincerely,

Justin Young
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Appendix B:District Approval from Director
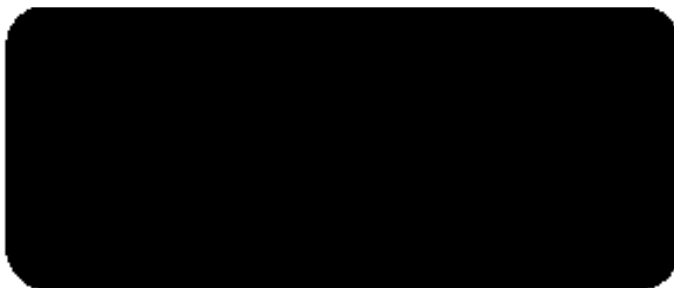
[REDACTED]

July 31, 2020

Dear Justin:

I am pleased to inform you that your request to do research in the [REDACTED] with high school data concerning the effectiveness of Power Hour has been **approved**. We do have a copy of your application and your professor support letter. As soon as Baker provides you with an approved IRB form, please forward it to the Assessment Office.

In any of your work, please do not make any reference to the [REDACTED] or any specific school. Please reference [REDACTED] as a "large suburban district in the mid-west" or a school as a "suburban school in the state of Kansas"— or some other reference name of your choice, but do not use the [REDACTED] name or any school names. Additionally, please do not use any student or staff identifying information.

Your study is of interest to the [REDACTED] and I look forward to reviewing your results when you have completed your work. Please forward a copy of your dissertation when it is complete.

Good luck with your research!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Appendix C: IRB Approval
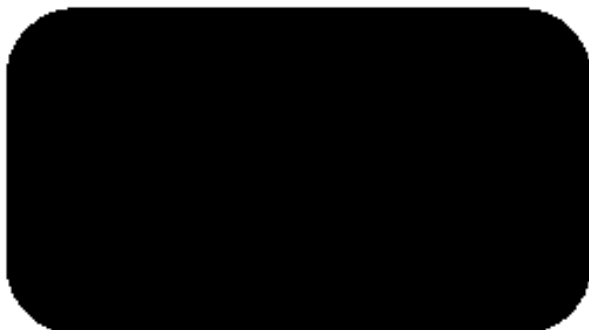
BAKER UNIVERSITY
Own Confidence
1858

August 26th, 2020

Dear Justin Young and James Robins,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Exempt Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,

Nathan Poell, MLS
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
     Sara Crump, PhD
     Nick Harris
     Christa Manton, PhD
     Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix D: Ellspermann Interview

Interviewer: Where did power 50 come from?

Ellspermann: Well it started as power hour and then cut it has gone through a lot of different iterations. I would say it's started now, I have to say it started with the fact that we had a lot of students failing classes. We had looked at our failure rate across all subjects throughout the school and we had a 38% failure rate and to be honest, most of them were in like algebra 1 biology so we had a lot of failures. We just have a lot of failures and but I had a very willing staff and they were saying we just can't get our kids to stay after school and that is true, you can't because we were a high poverty school with almost with no homes around us. Everybody was bussed in so your high poverty and your high school and everyone's bussed in there's no room for them to come in early. Some of my teachers had volunteered to come early and stay late, students were staying late they were already committed to doing something else unless they already camp students were failing to the point that they were not eligible and then at lunch teachers offered to help kids at lunch but we had 3 lunches in an A, B, and C lunch. Well if you're in my class and you want extra help and you have C lunch and I am the teacher I have A lunch well that doesn't do you any good either. I was talking with a group of principles, I have some colleagues of fellow principals, I was serving on a board of directors and I said did any of you have a solution for teachers who want to give help and kids who need extra help? One of the principals said yeah I do we have a 45-minute lunch on our kids eat lunch and teachers eat lunch and just go and get help. I thought wow, and I'm picturing my school, we were projected the following year to have 2000 students we had 1800 students out cafeteria sat 500 students so we had 3 lunches and cafeteria that could seat 500 students if you're doing the math you saw that where we're dealing with something impossible. We couldn't go to four lunches our kids didn't

have cars they didn't go anywhere no one left campus because nobody could leave campus and even those that did have cars we didn't want to leave anyway. I was picturing that, he goes yeah the teachers just open their doors everybody eats lunch and when I saw how many lunches you have to go to lunch then move to 1 lunch I said OK, how many students do you have and he said 112. He and I went in and says that's not gonna work for me because where are they going to eat and I was thinking about my facility in my time and so I started thinking about it. We had five minutes between each of the lunches which gave me 15 minutes we already had a 30-minute lunch we had the two passing periods plus the five minutes on either side because we had a class change. So we had 30 minutes plus 20 minutes and they gave us 50 minutes. I wanted a whole hour so when we go to that point, I did ask if the busses could come 5 minutes early and 5 minutes late, if I could extend it 10 minutes. The district said okay, my teachers said okay, so we went with a Power Hour until the district said we need to scale it back and that is when it became 50 minutes. The whole premise was based on academics. We wanted our kids to be successful, our graduation rate was in the high sixties and kids weren't graduating because they were not passing classes and so we looked at that and I brought the idea of the 1 lunch, kids can eat anywhere they want on campus, and they could go get help and you all could help your kids he could have clubs. We didn't have clubs who came to clubs nobody can come early nobody could come late and the kids who could be in clubs they were already in athletics they were in theater they were in band there just wasn't any time that's where it came from it came. From a place of some kids won't need more time to learn and how are we going to make that happen? That is where it came from and already started getting into some of the other pieces and parts but does that kind of answer that entry-level position I had willing teachers who wanted it to help kids we

just didn't have the time and you know we talked it out until we could figure out maybe we could do this.

Interviewer: Are you the 1st to be credited with the first Power Hour, aside from the other individual you mentioned which was a much smaller scale?

Ellspermann: Right, right, and they had for their 45-minute lunch and he said some kids go home, I didn't have anything else to go on so we were kind of making this up as we went along. I think that if you don't come at it from an academic perspective, really that the vision that kids are going be better, kids are going to do a better job, then I think that you end up with a different product. We started this, it's been 10 years now, easily it was about 10 years ago it was by the time I'd written my 1st article about it we'd probably been doing it for us several years. I had data that I could share with them, the 1st year that we did it our failure rate went from 38% down to 3%. I've probably worked with over its probably about 120 schools or school districts to put this all over the country. The successful schools, whether it's a rural school or West Chicago and they have cardinal hour there, if you want to be successful you have to come out with an academic vision and you can't overschedule it. When you overschedule it, you have kids that have to go someplace and you have teachers who are having to keep track of kids, then it will fail. One of the things about power hour is about empowering students. What we told our students when I 1st rolled it out was a low I'll back up a little bit, so we thought about it knocked this around for about a year I had teachers and said OK if we're going to do this you're not gonna have an hour for lunch, that's not what we're here for, we have got kids who need help. If we are going to do this I need to know you're game enough to tell me why are we going to need it because I'm not gonna put my neck on the chopping block for you, although I never did ask permission. I just did it because I have never had anyone ask me about my master schedule

before then so why should I go asking permission to mess with it. That year the teachers came up with a said that you know would be great if we could have clubs, you know I know someone said I love to I'd love to have a key club, I would love to have a chess club, I would love to have national honors society be able to have a meaning rather than just induction and well you're in but we never have time to meet, we developed student government which had been a bit haphazard with like 3 or 4 go-getter kids that had cars doing everything so we said you know the teacher said gosh we could have a student council. I had implemented an early college center on my campus, one of the things that we struggled with as we were working through accreditation as a college campus is the teachers have to have 2.5 out all hours for office hours every week. We didn't have 2.5 hours for office hours they were saying that they're planning was their office hours. To see them they would give students a pass so the people who taught early college said hey office hours problem solved on 2.5 hours for office hours if I have 30 minutes. The media specialist said I might be able to pump up my circulation as kids would have time to come into the media center. The coaches came to me and said you know it would be great if we could have our teams come in and break down film during the middle of the day. Some of the coaches said it would be great if I could have my team and I could drag them to classes so that they would stay eligible and so we started, they came up with this huge list I mean it was more than you could physically do with the staff that I had. Between the clubs and the activities, everybody who taught at AP class everyone said oh every day I'll have all of my kids here and then AP teacher started fighting because they all wanted all of their kids and we had 28AP classes so how do you do that? The teachers really, they were empowered and the only thing that I kept saying to them is we have to teach our students to manage their own time. I don't want where we have to ring a bell in the middle of power hour, but that's for teachers to know that your lunch has stopped and

now you are in club time or whatever time and I let the teachers if on Monday you have an environmental club then you may have your office hours the 2nd half because you know that that there are a lot of kids in there that are also members of the national honor society. I let the teachers pick when you have your lunch but you have to post a schedule of your power hour lunchtime, so the teachers came up with a schedule on Monday some took their lunches during the 1st half or the second half. The only thing I did was I took it back to them I gave everybody a post-it note only put one of them are going to have their lunch 1st or 2nd, I mean I know this is easy stuff, you can do I had 138 staff members no I'm not gonna go around the room and ask people and have conversations, you got a post-it note and put your preferred lunch, of course, everybody put 1st lunch, what was up with that? The next time I met with the staff and we were still doing was planning, I had that sheet with all the post notes and I went folks this is not going to fly. They came back up and they sorted it out and someone started counting, them and I went only it doesn't have to be exact but I can't have all teachers on one side over here that I have to have it has to be reasonable, not equal. They were ready and when I said work this out they were going count but it was what it was for me helping to empower the teachers all along to design it. You want your students to pass this class you want students to do well in your class because you don't want to see them again next year. The success or failure is in how the teachers embrace it. The empowerment of the children is vitally important, the teacher's number one has to embrace it, you have to come to look at it with it's for academics or why bother point of view. You're not, we're not giving, everybody an hour lunch that's not what this is and that they have to understand that the power is about empowering you to use your time well. We have migrant students who took naps because they picked in the morning because we were late starts for they would pick in the morning and then they would come to school you take a nap, go grab your

lunch and take a 45-minute nap and then you're going to be ready for the rest of the day and I'm OK with that so who cares his I get a call of I've got calls from all over the country people going I mean I had kids you want to take a nap and on like lead on let up at you know what if that's gonna make them better prepared for the 2nd half of the day, I mean it if they want to grab a piece of pizza and take a nap, who cares you have kids who are gonna over-schedule themselves which results in my watching kids just during the day run from one side of the campus to the other because they need to get to their club or they are turning in in this paper. One of the things that we recognized if we did this because again we had the luxury of really thinking this all the way through, to impact the year before we had all business took place during power hour so no teacher ever will have to write a pass for a child to go anywhere during the day.   Homecoming tickets were sold during power hour, football tickets sold at power hour, any kind of transition you out turn something in happens at power hour. If you've got an absentee note to turn in, turn it in during power hour, you come to school you get straight to class you do all of your business during power hour. The teachers saw that as a way to capture that time that's lost writing kids passes kids coming in late because so-and-so kept them so that they could finish their test. No teachers, really even though I pitched this to them, came to me and said things like our ESE students could have their extended time during power instead of me having to write them a pass. You start seeing that no more did I have to negotiate the conflict between 2 teachers because he's always keeping kids and they never send them in the bell rings. Teachers might request the same kids legitimate to teachers that want the same kids but one is saying but he didn't finish and I wanted him to finish and the other teacher saying I started instruction on time and he's missing his bell work. I would tell those teachers, I know you both have a great heart but the bells are there for a reason well now that teacher could say "Hey buddy don't worry come finish the work

power hour" now he's a class on time so many of those nitpicky things that drive me nuts when you're a teacher we addressed them. We could formalize our procedures as a school so that we can minimize those interruptions. We didn't schedule it, we didn't tell students that they had to be anywhere, we didn't say you had to go to remediation, we didn't say you had to do anything, we said that this time is yours use it wisely and if you don't we will chat, and then we did do that we would monitor our students and if we had students who were not performing well academically, we would have a student success chat with them. My teachers called it the F chat. They were saying and listen buddy come to power hour if not you're going to have to do with Mrs. Ellspermann and she is going to call you in for an F chat. I don't want you to have to go through that and so the teachers would have to go through it as well because F chats were labor-intensive and irritated my teachers. I wanted to make sure that I could assure students', parents, and the community that we did everything we could before students failed. We had 38% failure, that's a lot of kids to meet with and so we were eliminating those things so that we could help our kids. The biggest compliment that I had I think, was a compliment from the business community having employers come and say I love to hire your graduates because they are self-motivated they don't sit around and wait for somebody to tell me what to do. They help one another, they are the best employees I could ever have, they understand timeliness, and whenever I asked the students, where to do you know where did you learn how to be such a good employee they set up Mrs. Ellspermann made sure that we understood how to use time in power hour. We gave that hour to them, you got an hour to handle all of your business and it just worked. Another compliment was for kids that went off to college, that would come back and say power our help me get ready for college number one I know how to use office hours, I know how to have that relationship with a teacher where I can go for help, and you know it's cool or a collaborative and

number. Second, I know how to use my time because they said, you know they saw all their friends all around them just collapsing because they didn't know how to manage that time all that free time that you have in college. My students had already been given only one hour but every day they were given that hour and they learned how to use it across the span of a week.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts as it relates to imposing structure in a Power Hour? Have you experienced the utilization of Power Hour as a reward and those who are not succeeding, being punished by having it taken away?

Ellspermann: There are a couple of things about high school, high school is the most social time of a young person's life, and we wonder why they are on their cell phones all the time. We never give them time to be with their friends. It is important for them to hang out and be with their friends. The other thing is that if you want those kids who have D and F to be successful, you have to create in them that desire to want to improve. Now, I had a bunch of yahoos when I first came to high school. We were striving not to be an F school that was the goal just don't be an F because they will be on that state watch list. That's what I walked into my first day of school. As a principle, I had a teacher break a child's arm, well you know you have to make a point show who's boss, I also by the end of that week I had had 2 children skip school one shot and killed the other. These students did not come from an upper-middle-class home, there are 70% students of color, close to 68%, it would range up-and-down and an about a between 65 and 68% free reduced lunch, so these are not affluent good kids we had nearly 40% of all classes taken were failed, so that's what where we started within my first year. Not telling the children what to do, but telling them here are your opportunities, when I opened it up I went into grade-level meetings where everybody came into the auditorium. I would tell the students, get out your cell phones, call or text your mama, your aunt, your grandma, your daddy, your uncle, I don't

care who you do but tell them right now today, today you have straight A's. They were all looking at me like oh my God she's flipped her ever-loving mind. I said now call right now because today, the 1st day of school you have straight A's you have an A in every single subject and it's yours to lose. I share because every teacher here wants you to be successful, we are a standards-based school, they teach you to standards if you do everything that they tell you to will get an A you will get an A if you choose not to listen if you choose to do something else well that falls on you but these teachers are gonna do everything in their power to see that everybody in this room keeps those. You can imagine 600 kids calling and there's a buzz in the room and I am kind of walking up and down the aisles and one child hands me his phone and says my mom wants to talk to you, I knew who this mother was and she said Mrs. Ellspermann my son says he has straight A's, yes ma'am he does she started crying, and I said but now I'm gonna give him the phone back to him cause I'm gonna tell him how to keep those straight A's. He only has straight A's today we are going to see that get straight A's for the rest of his career. I told them that we're going to of that we're going to build time into the day that they can go back to any teacher and get additional support and help. They are now and also, some of this was a little bit of our enrollment so we also went we went from not being an F to not being a C to not being a B to being an A school to being one of the highest performing A schools. We became the highest performing high school in the district. We rose from dead last in the district to become the highest performing school in the district and all this was based on teachers who kind of flipped their thinking. These teachers said, "Hey maybe it's my job to see that every child is successful and not every child is successful the 1st time maybe it's my job to figure out what it's going to take for a kid to get straight A's and lay it out for them and make them work make them come back into my room and do the extra work." We implemented redo's and retakes, we had no

penalty for redo's and retakes. I had teachers who said if we're gonna do redos and retakes that is a lot more stuff for me to grade let's talk about which are grading now and they regrading a lot of classwork and homework. I said what if you don't have to grade that? What if you let the whatever grade the student gets on and there what is whatever grade they get on their test you could backfill all and that be a grade for their homework? Or, do not grade it they should do it but if they want to do a retake they have to turn in their homework and they have to get an 80 or better on their homework before they can take a retake so we started putting in place ideas to help all kids be academically successful. Once we got everybody into changing from were teaching the standards that are our content but we're teaching human beings to be successful. Everybody is supposed to leave our class with what everyone should have and not everyone comes with the same size pail some people's pail has a hole in it, some people's pail, you know they start and somebody shoots a hole in their pail because they break up with their girlfriend they get pregnant they get you to know all of those things so what can we do to put in place that we can make sure that regardless everybody walks out with what they need to be successful at the next level. Everyone walks out so that everyone is to be successful. My teachers went from really being very competitive about trying not to have any F's that were their competition. I can't say there is one teacher who can keep became a huge convert but he stood up in a faculty meeting and said 66.8 and I was looking around it he said F's in my class and I was thinking oh dear heavens Houston we have a problem. He went from there to have a no one fail ever he said there is no reason to fail my class. Come in when you need extra help, you come in if you have a question, come in bring a friend in, and just crazy stuff means the teachers started saying no and everyone's getting across the finish line and it on our graduation rate improved to 98%. The number of students taking advanced placement classes quadrupled the number of students taking

early college classes quadrupled because the students were being successful at academics. Students wanted the challenge so more teachers got the team to advanced classes because there were more advanced kids because they were doing better earlier and they were hanging in there until the end, it was a game-changer and it's still a game-changer. Kids during power hour will take a virtual class if they want to get ahead or they want to catch up. Here's the other thing, in our district students need 24 credits to graduate, we only had a 6 period day, as our graduation rate went up to 98% legit passing classes because kids were doing the work and so the kids were coming in and they were getting help and they would get help from each other. They would form study groups and they would, like in college, they would start study who said they would know you and see them huddled up together. We went from having 12 of us in the cafeteria for an hour and a 1/2 A-day more than that is we got there before the everybody came in and then we have stayed there through rows of the quick and steaming like this making sure that you know nobody was throwing pudding we went from that to 0 people in the cafeteria only the ladies who were serving lunch.

Interviewer: You implemented this in a rural/urban school. Do you have experience with this being successful in a suburban affluent area?

Ellspermann: Power Hour has been in the school since 2015 and the school still to this day. Here are the conditions for power to exist and I did have to take power away because you know you mess up it goes away this is our campuses and should be treated like your home. Mess with it then you're not going to have the access they had to meet those conditions and the campus had to be clean, if I see trash all over campus, I see garbage it's gotta go, can't be any discipline referrals during power hour so that means no monkey business in the bathroom. We found out that is an inappropriate activity like in what you will perceive as hidey-hole areas decrease

because they were students all over campus when we had lunch A, B, and C, there were more

incidents of issues. With Power Hour, there were students all over the building and so issues

decreased.   Issues decreased because someone will rat you out saying, if someone was smoking

something funny in the bathroom, some kids would be in the Hall that we go hey hey somebody

come somebody is in there doing something. Last, if we didn't see a decrease in failure then

obviously this wild experiment is not working so it will have to go away. Our purpose was to see

if we could decrease, well I went to eliminate failure, but I wanted to eliminate failure but I never

got that. The failure rate was 3% the 1st year and has been 3% every year since then, it just

because the same yahoos that it's the same yahoos no matter what you do they're not going to

need to do so you're something how kids that are not gonna make the right decision. We told the

kids that its's OK sometimes, you don't get it the 1st time, sometimes teachers didn't pass their

teacher exam the 1st time, some to retake the GRE to get into graduate school a couple of times

so you know we told them that failure is not the end, failure is a launching pad.

Interviewer: How long did you take it away?

Ellspermann: The 1st time I took it away for I took away for 2 days, that was the 1st year we

had it. We had it for probably a few months in October and I just said you know they're not

paying attention look at and hours walking around or Power Hour and picking up trash. Monday

I'm gonna say something and tell them I don't want to see any trash and Tuesday I saw I think it

was 22 pieces of trash. My staff got mad at me I picked up 22 pieces of trash now mind you

their 2000 children eating and I picked up 22 pieces of trash I told them that I had to pick up 22

pieces of trash today that's unacceptable how could anybody let me bend down and pick up trash

when you know it's your responsibility. Then on Wednesday, it was like they were it was with

something sillier things like 17 pieces of trash I was like this day I picked up 17 pieces of trash

and students watched me do it I cannot believe that that happens that's it have to know that I'm serious. My administrative team was like, yeah you're gonna pick that cross to die on, and I said it is the little things like I can't let them get away with this that that is OK we saw Mrs. Ellspermann pick up trash she must not serious so on Thursday I told them that there was no power hour, I said that I have given you a warning, I gave you the data, I told you that there was trash, there is someone in every single room and saw me bend down to pick up trash and I should never have to do that, I'm saying is over the intercom while my teachers are like oh my gosh don't take away power hour, don't take away Power Hour. I mean my teachers were like freaking out so I told them that effective immediately there is no power and within 30 minutes the chairman of my school advisory committee was in my office the superintendent was calling me to say what the heck is his power our thing that I'm getting calls about? That was when I realized I forgot to mention it to him to get permission but just slipped my mind so he came out, what the heck what are you doing here so I explained it to him and he thought that I had lost my mind. That was OK but by the time we got to lunch the students had made posters at said A, B, C lunch not for me bring the power back to the hour there like a holding these sit-downs in the cafeteria. I was like hey listen, you gotta show me that you can take care of this that you're going to do this and their kids were crying and saying I'm supposed to make up a test today you know they were because they were in and they had started to use it the president of the student body had this manifesto that he had written up in had signed by like a 1000 kids and marked it around the edges. The students said you gotta give us a second chance us of I gave you 2nd chance I told you I picked up 22 pieces of trash and then you let me pick up 17 the next day what's up with that I don't know we promise is going to be gonna be spotless and so it was. The student council laid out precisely what their plan was, I said you know I'll start with what is your

plan and the plan was that all these clubs of wheat started several of them were service clubs and they all they went around and they said that they had got athletic teams service clubs they all picked A-day and they policed the campus so during power so again empowering the students. We had recruiters come during that time we had and colleges come and do college visits we had them we had career we do our career fair during power hour we would have we would do FAFSA just I everything happened during power hour so if you punish kids were only the good, I don't see that that's not Power Hour that's not how or anything because you've got to empower the bad kids along with the good but you gotta hold everybody did the same level of accountability.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on starting Power Hour on the first day of school or is it beneficial to wait a few weeks after school starts?

Ellserpmann: We are we did start the 1st day but this was funny so our teachers come back 5 days ahead of the students of they have workdays and with the day before the students come back. We had like this one giant last faculty meeting before the kids come back in last-minute procedures, to address anything that we forgot anything that the teachers need and as the staff entered I have music playing, I was listening to them talk and I here to my teacher say, don't you want to be a fly on the wall when those 2000 kids run to the cafeteria at the same time and I went oh shoot, we didn't think about that, that's a lot of kids to be in lines in the cafeteria if they don't understand what's going to happen. I said to my staff as if it had been a plan I said, hey all it's come to my attention and I need your help. I need your help on how to get one last thing figured out. We haven't quite put a procedure in place for what we're going to do we're going to explain to kids what power hour is before lunch ever happens. We need to figure out how that's gonna work, what we're going to do and how do we control the flow because 9th-grade boys are

going to run to the cafeteria like they haven't eaten all summer. I had my staff help with the dilemma and what we need is a solution for a controlled flow of students to the cafeteria so we don't destroy it in one day by having kids not be able to eat. The problem is 2000 kids in line all at the same time so I had everybody at their tables come up with you know come up with some ideas. I walked around and I went dang I have always worked at the smartest teachers ever maybe because I hired them saying been talking to each other and they were saying things like we can do that, we can do that and when I pulled them all back together they came up with, the people who taught the seniors said how about we go ahead and say and hold seniors back when the power hour starts we will hold them back we're going to you know talk to them about responsibility, being those be a senior class and that they know sort we have this new thing called power hour going on you probably understand the importance more men a 9th grader about getting your work done during this time and then they and so I said that's a great idea. I'm thinking to myself That's you know that's a good 500 kids you know that's 500 kids not running in the cafeteria because they're gonna just call them back and then the the the junior class teacher said Hey you know what would one do the same thing, when you talk about the an upperclassman know he crossed the threshold you're no longer underclassman your up or so and they and the so the teachers were talking about bringing have a brainstorm kind of the things that they're going to do during power hour, what they would say to underclassmen to give them to use that time wisely, gosh that's great so I thought I have got half of them going but then other people raising their hands and when the teachers set in we never really had clubs so why don't we do club sign ups that 1st day and teachers who have clubs we can you know we could pull some kids together and we can have them yet we can have and have like a I'm have my booths something and its own then something I never thought I would do my basketball coach says we

can do it in the gym. That was when he could hit me he could have just pushed me over with a feather because my basketball coach would not let anybody go in the gym for anything. He was also my athletic director and basketball coach and he said we'll do sport sign up. We can get on their physical forms we can talk about these goals we can have this Winter and Spring. WE can have coaches in there talking to kids having some of their kids there and so I went on that very 1st day. I went down to the cafeteria trying to figure out how we don't have how my way to manage this because I was used to sitting in the cafeteria for an hour and a half barking at children about staying in your seat that and all those silly things that you do and they weren't coming. the bell rang and they're not coming, and then they started trickling in and they were talking and they were acting like human beings. They were acting orderly and calm, just talking and they got in line and they came in they sat down and ate, some kids took their stuff and went outside some kids had gotten food and already taken it back to the classroom, they were walking to classrooms and then the wave of the juniors and seniors they were calm and went to the outer Courtyard talking to their friends because this is the 1st day school. After a long summer, they need time to talk to their friends. I didn't have the parents calling me saying could you please change my child's classes so they can have lunch with their friends, now they can see their friends they can meet up, they're out there talking and then I went by the gym and it looks like the science fair was being held. Teachers made posters they had their poster and they had flyers, wrestlers were encouraging younger students to sign up, Again, it goes back to empowering and not controlling students, you put the structures in place.

Interviewer: Has Power Hour been taken away ever?

Ellspermann: The school board, after I left, took away Power Hour stating they believed it to be dangerous. Over that year, the school documented fights, discipline issues, and failure. The

principal, who was there when I was, went to the board and said, let me show you years of documentation of data of attendance academic performance discipline let me show you this one year when it was taken away, they gave her a power hour back. The school board then said but we don't like the name power hour so she said OK we're gonna call it alpha time and they said we like alpha time so she said good and walked out. The board had stated they did not like Power Hour and thought it had a negative connotation. How could it, it was called that for years and was doing great until the board stopped it. I think that the chaos comes from control because you got 14,15, 16, 17, 18-year-old kids who want to be with each other they want to be with your friends you have to be OK with that you have to be OK with them socializing. After all, that's critically important if they don't do it, then they're gonna do it when they can. They will figure out a way to do it and take away from instructional time. We did not have kids skipping school, kids skip school to hang a skip school to hang out with one another and some did you other things but let's not talk about that but they skip school because they want to be with their friends. They don't ever have time in school to be with their friends, but if you take that away, you go your fine you can hang out with your friends, and keep the academic piece mainly for 9th and 10th graders. We never had much of a problem with 11th and 12th grade but was 9th and 10th-grade kids not get the hang of it we would have a little F chat. There, the teacher would in that conference come with a paper that said this is what the problem is, this is what I have done, and then they left the bottom of it blank and then come to a meeting with me and the student. I would ask the student what are you going to do to fix this and I would write down their commitment and they would typically say, I could use power a little better than I have been using it. I would say what day are we going to go to Mr. Smith's class? You're gonna go every Tuesday? Then and then I would sign, they would sign it, the teacher would sign it. I would do

however many I needed to do. For me, it seems to provide a level of accountability to the students. The students, for some reason, thought that I was keeping track of that schedule because if I would walk out on the Courtyard and they would be hanging out with their friends, they say I'm going on Wednesday to power hour and I'll say, that's right thanks for reminding me. I didn't remember what day they said they were gonna go to their teacher, but they felt that commitment because they signed a paper, then I signed it, and then I would give it back to the teacher. The teacher would have that as a reminder that the child committed to coming on Tuesday or Wednesday, whatever day it was but we would do that right after the 1st 9 weeks of grading. The consequence for them not showing up is that the student fails the class.