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An Analysis of the Impact of Emotional Literacy Instruction on At-Risk Students

A Dissertation by

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Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2015

Committee in charge:

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April 2015

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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Impact of Emotional Literacy Instruction on At-Risk Students

by Shannon Hampton Garcia

This study examined the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction for at-risk adolescents ages 13 to 18 at the high school level. Of particular interest is the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk youth Grades 9-12 in secondary high schools' 8-week-long social-emotional literacy class through Project AWARE, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates; the data were analyzed using archival data and teacher interview. Project AWARE, the social-emotional literacy intervention examined in this study, educates and provides mentorship for at-risk students, while also providing a group educational component on relationships between students to help increase connection, decrease depression, and relational aggression for students. Project AWARE offers a working partnership between adults and students, and involves mentoring other students in the group. Two groups were considered in this study: 37 students in Project AWARE and 10 adults involved with or who had intimate knowledge of Project AWARE. All faculty described experiences with the program, and these experiences were analyzed using the NVIVO program for qualitative research. Student experiences were also noted in the archival data and analyzed for quantitative research. Three broad themes were identified: (a) factors that impact at-risk youth in an effort to understand how adverse childhood experiences serve to obstruct successful student outcomes and how the resilience and a culture of developmental assets can contribute to desirable outcomes for at risk students; (b) primary, secondary, and tertiary

level support programs for at-risk youth that include character education, parent education, teacher training, and behavioral/counseling interventions in public schools as alternatives to traditional discipline and how these programs support or strengthen emotional literacy in students; and (c) social-emotional literacy training's impact on student discipline, connection, and resilience. The findings suggest that programs that provide mentoring and include group educational components can have a positive impact on student awareness and attitude.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Literacy, At-Risk Students, Intervention, Positive Behavior Supports, Behavioral Intervention

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

All children have a human right to dream and to have a quality public education in a safe and supportive environment, which provides a foundation for access to higher education, meaningful employment, and full participation in society (Model Code Working Group, 2009). Ricardo is the son of an immigrant family from Mexico who moved to North San Diego County 6 years ago in pursuit of that very dream. Ricardo is a Spanish-speaking English language learner who has struggled with many issues since arriving in the United States including a learning disability, drug addiction, domestic violence, his parents' divorce, his father's abandonment, a resulting low socioeconomic status, and homelessness. A student like Ricardo is deemed "at risk" if he or she comes from a diverse background, a low socioeconomic background, has been involved in crime, suffers from drug or alcohol addiction, is at risk of dropping out, or has any combination of these risk factors (Barron-McKeagney, Wood, & D'Souza, 2001). By this definition, Ricardo is an at-risk student, but in order to understand the context of his experience and the impact it can have on his behavior and outcomes, it is useful to examine the background of the traditional school response to students like Ricardo.

Background

In the United States today, generations of at-risk students like Ricardo are not able to negotiate the personal difficulties they face, act out in school, and as a result are being shaped by reactive school policies that are more punitive than educational. At many schools, scores of at-risk students like Ricardo are sent to the office due to a disciplinary issue, and they are often suspended and expelled, resulting in the reinforcement of the school-to-prison pipeline, which refers to school punitive discipline policies that push

students out of the classroom and into the criminal justice system at alarming rates. This push out/school-to-prison pipeline crisis is fueled by many factors, including zero tolerance and other punitive discipline policies (Elias, 2013).

Each year, over 3 million students across the country are suspended and over 100,000 are expelled (Model Code Working Group, 2009). These punitive practices do not improve student behavior but rather increase the likelihood that students will fall behind academically and drop out, contributing to an unhealthy atmosphere affecting the entire school community. Students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, and other marginalized communities are impacted the most by these barriers to education, resulting in millions of children and young people being pushed out of school and into poverty, unemployment, and often, prison (Model Code Working Group, 2009).

The research behind the school-to-prison pipeline has linked school systems directly to the U.S. criminal justice system, which now houses more prisoners than any other country in the world. In fact, if a youth is incarcerated before the age of 18, the chance of starting a lifetime of imprisonment increases exponentially. Of the 2.5 million people in prison in America, 70% of these inmates are high school dropouts (Western & Pettit, 2010). Locally, in all grades, schools have 18,960 students in the process of dropping out of San Diego's high schools, and these, by definition, are at-risk students (J. C. Wilson, 2011).

Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy (2014) is the ability to deal with one's emotions and recognize their causes as well as the ability to understand and appropriately express emotions (The

Million Signature Emotional Literacy Campaign, 2014). Students without well-developed emotional literacy skills miss the hidden curriculum in schools, which refers to the expectations educators have of students who are not explicitly taught and are drawn from middle-class value systems; they can range from expectations such as raising one's hand before speaking to learning to read by being read to before bedtime (Learn NC, 2014). All students are exposed to but do not always internalize the hidden curriculum, which consists of specific social norms that, once mastered, allow the student to become effective and productive citizens (Cubukcu, 2012). Schools that seek to specifically teach emotional literacy by helping children deal with their emotions and become better listeners not only keep students in school, but see student achievement levels rise ("This is the North East," 2014).

However, most current educational policies and practices do not address emotional literacy, and hundreds of school districts across the country instead employ discipline policies that push students out of the classroom and into the criminal justice system at steadily increasing rates. Many at-risk students begin their journey to the juvenile justice system through a series of behavioral issues due to a lack of emotional literacy, which compounds other learning and behavioral problems, ultimately leading to exclusion from school. The Southern Poverty Law Center advocates for changes to end the school-to-prison pipeline and has filed lawsuits or civil rights complaints against districts with punitive discipline practices that fail to recognize the lack of emotional literacy in some students (Elias, 2013). By replacing punishment with a system such as emotional literacy training to give kids access to this hidden curriculum so that they can learn how to recognize their reaction to stress and to control it, students can build

resilience to help combat Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE; Stevers, 2012). More research is needed regarding strategies that will help to prevent troubled youth from dropping out and being at risk for a life of low earnings, poverty, adverse adult outcomes, and criminal justice contact; research does show if a youth is incarcerated before the age of 18, his or her chance of starting a lifetime of imprisonment increases exponentially (Stevenson, 2012).

Discipline in America

In 1972, there were 300,000 people in jails and prisons; today there are 2.5 million people in jail (Pelaez, 2013). Right now, the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and this mass incarceration has, according to Bryan Stevenson, fundamentally changed this world. Further, research shows that incarceration “habits” often begin at an early, formative age (Stevenson, 2012). Youth with arrest records have lower earnings, longer periods of unemployment, and a greater risk of family conflict than those without (Lopatto, 2011). Students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, and other marginalized communities are impacted the most by “no tolerance” disciplinary barriers to education, resulting in millions of children and young people being pushed out of school and into poverty, unemployment, and prison (Model Code Working Group, 2009).

Discipline disproportionately affects minorities and those with special needs.

Minority students face tougher disciplinary consequences than their counterparts, a new trove of federal data show, affirming long-held beliefs about disparities in the application of disciplinary procedures. Black students are more than three-and-a-half times as likely as White students to be suspended or expelled, according to the U.S. Department of

Education's Office for Civil Rights' survey, known as the "Civil Rights Data Collection" (Resmovitz, 2012, para. 1, 4). Additionally, data released from the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Office revealed the disparity in student discipline outcomes nationwide. The report showed that African American students made up 18% of those enrolled in schools that were studied for the national survey but accounted for 35% of suspensions.

Further, students with disabilities were more than twice as likely to receive out-of-school suspensions as their peers (Resmovitz, 2012). The students miss school, and often are shifted to continuation/alternative schools, entering a cycle of substandard educational environments where they often end up honing their skills in criminality (Shah, 2012). Research shows that when students are removed from the classroom as a disciplinary measure, the odds increase dramatically that they will repeat a grade, drop out, or become involved in the juvenile justice system. These negative consequences disproportionately affect children of color as well as students with special needs (School Discipline Consensus Project, 2014).

Negative outcomes as a result of school discipline. Students subjected to suspension and expulsion often find themselves in a spiral of failure leading to dropping out. These punitive practices do not improve student behavior but rather increase the likelihood that students will fall behind academically and drop out (Model Code Working Group, 2009). Nationally, the highest dropout rate occurs in the ninth grade, often following a series of suspensions (J. C. Wilson, 2011). Hispanic high school dropouts are much less likely to attain a General Educational Development credential—just one in 10 Hispanic high school dropouts has a GED, compared with two in 10 Black dropouts and

three in 10 White dropouts, and nearly one in three Hispanic teens is unemployed, compared with one in five for White teens (Cepeda, 2011), impacting the safety and economic foundation of the entire community.

Disciplinary Disparities in Local Schools

According to Magee (2012), Hispanic and African American students are expelled and suspended at rates disproportionate to their population in many San Diego County schools. A review of student discipline outcomes shows a striking disparity in local schools. Among San Diego County's 42 school districts, Hispanics represented 44% of students and accounted for 57% of expulsions during the 2009-2010 school year. Black students accounted for 6% of enrollment and made up 12% of expulsions (Magee, 2012). Clearly, based on these data, students from minority groups are at greater risk for expulsion and subsequent, related social, emotional, and criminal problems.

Dropouts Lead to Crime and Societal Costs in California

The Dropout Research Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has estimated the lifetime criminal justice, incarceration, and victim costs for the state of one grade level of dropouts at \$24.2 billion. The researchers also projected that one year's crop of dropouts will go on to commit 113,954 violent crimes (J. C. Wilson, 2011). In San Diego, in all grades, there are currently 18,960 students in the process of dropping out of San Diego's high schools. Add the previous 4-year cohorts and there are 37,920 dropouts in San Diego who are between the ages of 14 and 22, which directly impacts incarceration rates (J. C. Wilson, 2011). The California Dropout Research Project estimates that San Diego can save \$267 million per class cohort by reducing the high school dropout rate in half—and by reducing this dropout rate by half for one cohort of

San Diego schools, the city is projected to experience 435 less homicides and aggravated assaults over these students' lifetimes (J. C. Wilson, 2011).

According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), effective and promising alternatives to current disciplinary practices include violence prevention, early intervention strategies, social skills training, and positive behavioral supports (NASP Resources, 2001). Schools implementing effective strategies have reported reductions in office discipline referrals by 20-60%. This results in improved access to engaged academic time and improved academic performance for all students.

Although there is a substantial amount of research that illustrates how Response to Intervention (RTI) can be used to target academic deficits in students, there is a lack of research that specifically focuses on emotional literacy within the intervention model for behavior, especially with adolescents. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities (Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). Despite the effectiveness of these interventions for academic progress, students are not explicitly taught emotional literacy skills, which continue to represent the "hidden curriculum" for students in schools.

The Hidden Curriculum

Students who have experienced some ACE, such as trauma, abuse, or neglect in their homes, sometimes act out in school and are punitively disciplined, often as a result of not knowing the hidden curriculum of emotional literacy in schools (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003). The hidden curriculum refers to the expectations

educators have of students which are not explicitly taught and are generally drawn from middle-class value systems (Learn NC, 2014). Students with disabilities in particular are often “left in the dark” when it comes to an understanding of the hidden curriculum and culture within the school, and school success frequently depends upon mastering this hidden curriculum (Janowski, 2009). The hidden curriculum includes instruction to increase emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, and building healthy and prosocial lifestyles.

Emotional Intelligence

Part of the curriculum that is hidden from students are the strategies necessary for employing emotional intelligence skills in the school environment. Emotional intelligence is one’s ability to recognize and understand emotions, and using this awareness to manage oneself and one’s relationships with others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003). Teaching students self-awareness skills is a wise investment; 83% of people high in self-awareness are top performers while just 2% of bottom performers are high in self-awareness (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Because emotions are contagious and travel rapidly between people, emotions are an open-loop system and require training (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008). With the right training for teachers to be able to teach emotional intelligence to students, Tuggle Scott (2009) asserted that students can learn emotional literacy skills through Piaget’s theory of learning, which provides the basis for understanding how adolescents learn; young children can and do think in different ways than adults. Learning skills by focusing on developmental progress through this theory can support character education and growth.

Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, understand, and appropriately express one's emotions. Just as verbal literacy is the basic building block for reading and writing, emotional literacy is the basis for perceiving and communicating emotions that influence our thoughts and actions, inspire our needs, affect our bodies, and impact our relationships ("What is Emotional Literacy," 2014). According to Tuggle Scott (2009), because at-risk students can often be controlled by their emotions and are often not yet skilled enough at spotting them and using them to their benefit, emotional awareness and understanding can be taught via small group instructional interventions, which allow at-risk students to acquire prosocial strategies for successful lifestyles.

Being able to understand and appropriately express emotion are keys to success in the modern world and emotional literacy is a preventive tool, which properly understood, can help solve many social ills—violence, illness, drug abuse, dysfunctional relationships, and global societal conflicts ("What is Emotional Literacy," 2014). When students have not had the opportunity to learn emotional literacy skills in the home as a result of the family not having these skills and do not adhere to the norms expected in schools, they tend to be singled out for discipline, which directly impacts their future (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011).

Building a Prosocial Lifestyle: Blocks of Healthy Development

The Search Institute has identified building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets or Blocks of Healthy Development—that can be taught in schools in order to help young children build prosocial lifestyles that ultimately result in adults who are healthy, caring, and responsible citizens (Search Institute, 2014). Data

collected from Search Institute surveys of more than 4 million children and youth from all backgrounds and situations have consistently demonstrated that the more developmental assets young people acquire, the more prosocial their lifestyles are and the better their chances of succeeding in school and becoming happy, healthy, and contributing members of their communities and society (Search Institute, 2014). Social and emotional literacy in school interventions seek to develop at-risk youths' developmental assets in order to promote and ensure successful outcomes for students; these include external assets, such as support, empowerment, boundaries, and expectations, and internal assets, including a commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity (Search Institute, 2014).

Social-Emotional Literacy Instruction

Social-emotional literacy programs' purpose is to create a place with a climate where young people can learn to communicate and contribute to the overall well-being of their own lives and the lives of those in the community in which they live by educating at-risk youths and preparing them to take responsibility for their thoughts and actions (Washington, 2014). By becoming emotionally literate, learning social skills, and employing rigorous self-examination, at-risk students can become productive members of society (Washington, 2014).

Statement of the Research Problem

When reviewing the new Common Core standards, the latest academic standards being adopted by a majority of states in America, social-emotional learning is not included (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). Although the Common Core raises the instructional rigor and expectations of American students, it falls short in that it

fails to provide for a focus on character and social-emotional education, which are necessary skills for all students if they wish to become college and career ready (Fink & Geller, 2013). Character development underpins education as a whole, supporting students by cultivating an ethical perspective, coupled with the skills needed to take action on that perspective. This education, so overlooked by the new standards, is needed in order to support successful citizens in a global 21st century society (Fink & Geller, 2013).

Social-emotional learning puts students on positive life trajectories that have been shown to reduce bullying, at-risk behaviors, and academic failure rates; it also works to prevent a wide range of issues by developing children's capacity in social-emotional learning (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, & Lewis, 2000). As indicated by the Learn NC study (2014), students who have experienced trauma, abuse, or neglect in their homes often act out in school, and due to the lack of social-emotional learning and support programs, they are instead punitively disciplined, given little or no support to help them overcome adversity, and continue to suffer from a disadvantage in not knowing the hidden curriculum. School success often depends on mastering this hidden curriculum of emotional literacy skills, yet at-risk students often are not given the opportunity at home or at school to master them (Learn NC, 2014).

Currently there is a lack of reliable, valid research that focuses on emotional literacy behavioral interventions for students at the secondary level (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force [APA], 2008; Lipsey, 2009; Stevens, 2012; Tuggle-Scott, 2009). Because students at the secondary level are on the verge of making long-term life choices—including pursuing a career, expanding their

education, or making unproductive choices—it is imperative to focus on at-risk secondary student character education in order to give them the tools for positive citizenry outcomes and to connect them socially. Researchers have concluded that due to a lack of connection and the traditional disciplinary model involving punitive disciplinary practices, at-risk students often drop out; however, providing support and connection builds resiliency and success in at-risk students (Fabelo et al., 2011).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk youth Grades 9-12 in secondary high schools' 8-week-long emotional literacy class through Project AWARE, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates.

Research Questions

The following are this study's principal research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in referral, suspension, and expulsion for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?
2. Is there a significant difference in attendance for at-risk students following the social-emotional literacy program experience?
3. What are teacher, counselor, and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of social-emotional literacy instruction on improving problem behavior within the classroom?

Significance of the Problem

Today in the United States, the inclusion of social-emotional learning programs and their impact is not a part of this nation's instructional programming on a wide scale (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). Although the new Common Core State Standards address a variety of gaps in the nation's previous state instructional standards, one additional gap remains: character and social-emotional education, key components for students who wish to become college and career ready (Fink & Geller, 2013). An ethical perspective, supported by character development and social-emotional literacy—necessary components of any curriculum looking to build model 21st century citizens—continues to be overlooked and set aside in favor of a focus on academic curriculum in schools; thus, there is currently very little known about the systematic impact of social-emotional literacy training for students at the middle and high school level as a key to combating at-risk behaviors (Battistich et al., 2000; Fink & Geller, 2013).

The topic of this study therefore is to provide insight into how social-emotional literacy training can impact at-risk high school students, based on the input of faculty members who work with the program as a means of correction for maladaptive behavior. North County San Diego schools employ a variety of interventions and supports for at-risk students; however, few of these programs have been evaluated for efficacy and student outcomes nor have they investigated the perspectives of counselors, teachers, and administrators about these programs.

Instruction in social-emotional literacy could be a contributor to the correction of adverse student outcomes and maladaptive behaviors in one of San Diego's largest school districts; this study would therefore fill a gap in the knowledge base in terms of how

social-emotional literacy can impact at-risk youth. This work adds to the body of knowledge of behavioral support in providing foundational information that will allow school systems to establish effective behavioral interventions at the secondary level.

Definitions

At risk. A student is deemed “at risk” if he or she comes from a diverse background, is from a low socioeconomic background, has been involved in crime, suffers from drug or alcohol addiction, is at risk of dropping out, or has any combination of these risk factors (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2001).

Criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are dynamic risk factors that are directly linked to criminal behavior; what follows is a list of risk factors that Bonta and Andrews (2006-2007) identified that contribute to criminal behavior.

Connectedness. Connectedness is a sense of being a part of something larger than oneself, a sense of belonging, or a sense of accompaniment as well as having the ability to grow through cooperative behavior (Hallowell, 1993).

Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to a person’s ability to recognize and understand emotions, and to use this awareness to manage him or herself and his or her relationships with others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003).

Emotional literacy. Emotional literacy refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and appropriately express emotions (“What is Emotional Literacy,” 2014).

Hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum refers to the expectations society has of students who are not explicitly taught; it is generally drawn from middle-class value systems and can range from expectations such as raising one’s hand before speaking to learning to read by being read to before bedtime (Learn NC, 2014).

Relational aggression. Relational aggression is defined as emotional aggression; themes within these relational aggression behaviors can include sexual harassment, rumors, or lies being spread about a person, or being made fun of because of the way he or she looks or talks (D. Wilson, 2004).

Resiliency. Resiliency is the ability to rapidly recover from misfortune and/or disruptive change without being overwhelmed or responding in dysfunctional, destructive ways (Al Siebert Resiliency Center, 2014).

School-to-prison pipeline. “The School-to-Prison Pipeline refers to school policies and practices, including punitive school discipline policies, that push students out of the classroom and into the criminal justice system and is reflective of the prioritization of incarceration over education” (Elias, 2013, p. 2).

Delimitation

Only students ages 13-19 who were identified as being at risk were included in the study.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters, a reference section, and appendices. Chapter II presents a review of what is known about the impact and outcomes of the exclusionary discipline policies in schools, the impact these policies have upon students including the school-to-prison pipeline, risk factors and developmental assets that often contribute to at-risk student behavior(s), and education-based programs and supports that seek to address that at-risk student crisis in schools. Chapter III explains the methodology as well as the research design of this study and includes details and research on population, sample selection, instrumentation, and data

collection and analysis. Chapter IV demonstrates the results and provides an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected in the study, and Chapter V contains a discussion of conclusions reached as a result of the analysis and findings as well as any further recommendations for research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Today in America, the systematic integration of social-emotional learning programs is not a part of this nation's schools; with No Child Left Behind and the Common Core State Standards, no room has been left to include social-emotional learning in the classroom or its impact on a large scale (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). The purpose of this literature review was to establish a base in order to synthesize and analyze the research underpinning this study, which is concerned with how educators can effectively reach and teach students in their care through social-emotional learning. Children who are exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) often struggle with learning roadblocks, and this country's current educational approach to at-risk students, combined with the lack of social-emotional learning programs, has a far-reaching impact, not just on the student experiencing ACE, but on the student's school, district, state, and nation (Fabelo et al., 2011).

Theoretical Lens

The theory that informed this research was schema theory, which served as the lens through which this research was interpreted. Schema theory (J. Anderson, 1977) holds that people develop mental models regarding life based upon prior experience and knowledge, which then influences the acquisition of new knowledge ("Learning Theory- Schema Theory," 2014). A schema is an individual's collection of prior knowledge that provides a context for meaningful interpretation of new information (R. Anderson, 1984). The most important component of schema theory and how it relates to the research of education is the role of prior knowledge in taking in new knowledge. When people learn, they either recreate new schemas or link together schemas already learned in new ways

(Wiseman, 2008). What follows is a theory chart that shows how schema theory relates to how people or humans code qualitative data (see Table 1).

Table 1

Theory Chart

Theory	Theoretical tenant	Application of theory to data analysis
Schema theory	How knowledge of action is based on schematas	Staff interview—impact of social-emotional learning on attendance
Schema theory	Knowledge of action is based on schematas	Staff interview—impact of social-emotional learning on discipline
Schema theory	Knowledge of actions is based on schematas	Staff interview—impact of social-emotional learning on connectivity, resilience, and relational aggression

By interviewing staff about the impact of social-emotional learning on attendance, discipline, connectivity, resilience, and relational aggression, this study sought to determine how, if at all, at-risk students change their mental model based upon the acquisition of new knowledge through social-emotional learning.

By interviewing staff and examining archival data, this study explored the following themes: (a) factors that impact at-risk youth in an effort to understand how ACEs serve to obstruct successful student outcomes and how the resilience and a culture of developmental assets can contribute to desirable outcomes for at-risk students; and (b) primary, secondary, and tertiary level support programs for at-risk youth including character education, parent education, teacher training, and behavioral/counseling interventions in public schools as alternatives to traditional discipline and how these programs support or strengthen emotional literacy in students.

A review of the research and professional literature begins with a look at the traditional approach to school interactions with at-risk students through discipline.

Disciplinary Impact and Outcomes

Suspension/Expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are common tools used by educators to address student misbehavior in schools. In 1974, 1.7 million (or 3.7% of all students) in U.S. schools were subject to suspension at least once. This number rose to more than 3.3 million (or 6.8% of all students) in 2006 when 102,077 students were expelled according to the latest civil rights data (Petras, Masyn, Buckley, Ialongo, & Kellam, 2011).

Since the 1970s, school suspensions have risen steadily (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Suspension and expulsion are now a commonly accepted response to a variety of student behaviors, 95% of which are labeled disruptive behavior—which includes everything from dress code violations to displays of affection—while only 5% were for drugs, violence, or weapons (Fabelo et al., 2011). Violence in schools continues to be a small proportion of disruptions in school, yet due to suspensions, expulsions, and juvenile justice referrals, violence and school disruptions have remained level since the mid-80s (DeVoe et al., 2004; Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, 1998; Losen, 2011; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Meanwhile, the actual crime rate—students perpetrating crimes against other students—has decreased 67%, although strict disciplinary policies have not been shown to be behind either of these reductions (Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003; Skiba et al., 2007). What has been shown, however, is that the impact of zero tolerance has disproportionately impacted minority and disabled youth, far exceeding their representative number within the general student population.

Minority/Disabled Youth

A significant body of research has shown that students of color and those with disabilities are the most negatively impacted by disciplinary policies, with an overwhelming proportion of suspended and expelled students nationwide often low-income, disabled, and/or minority youth (Losen & Skiba, 2010; Warwick & Christensen, 2013). Since 1968, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has tracked disciplinary statistics on exclusionary discipline practices (Hawley & Ready, 2003) and in the report, it was evident that African American, Latino, and special needs students were overrepresented in disciplinary statistics and spend the most time out of school due to zero tolerance practices (Losen & Skiba, 2010). In fact, since data collection began in the early 1970s, suspension rates for non-White students K-12 have more than doubled (Losen, 2011).

African American Students

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006), more than 28% of Black male middle school students were subject to suspension (compared with 10% of White males), while 18% of Black females in middle school were suspended in 2006 (compared with 4% of White females). Since the 1970s, the Black/White suspension difference has more than tripled, and now more than one out of every seven Black students enrolled is suspended at least once (Losen, 2011). Federal data support the argument that minority students face tougher disciplinary consequences than their White peers. Black students are more than three-and-a-half times as likely as White students to be suspended or expelled, which does not represent their percentage of the population; they comprise 18%

of those enrolled in schools, yet make up approximately 35% of suspensions (U.S. Education Department's OCR, 2012).

African American males are also subject to discipline more often than other races (C. C. Lee, 1996; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003). The 2010 report, *Suspended Education: Urban Middle Schools in Crisis*, showed that in 15 of the nation's 18 largest districts, 30% or more of all enrolled Black male students were suspended at least once, while within those districts, hundreds of schools had over 50% suspension rates for Black males (Losen & Skiba, 2010).

African American males do not necessarily engage in higher rates of disruptive or violent behavior discipline (APA, 2008). A great majority of school infractions that result in exclusionary outcomes for these students are for subjective reasons (such as dress code and defiance) that do not result in similar outcomes for their White counterparts (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992a; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Latino Students Research on Latino student discipline has also shown disparities in school disciplinary outcomes and that these students are more likely to be subjected to exclusionary discipline. Further, research has shown that Latino students are often subjected to more severe punishment than their White peers and are overrepresented in school disciplinary data in areas such as detention, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Skiba et al., 2009).

Disabled Students Students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 are consistently found to be overrepresented in disciplinary data, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders (Leone, Mayer, Malmgren, & Meisel, 2000; Wagner,

Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005). In the states of Virginia, Tennessee, Delaware, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, and Washington, 19% of examined districts reported disproportionate differences in exclusionary discipline between students with disabilities and those without (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). Additionally, racial disparities exist within this student group. In 2008, one report showed that several states suspended more than one in five Black disabled students, while three states (Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Nevada) had a suspension rate of more than a third for disabled Black students (Losen, 2011).

Disciplinary practices for these student groups often involve police (school resource officers) who are a part of the disciplinary system, which has introduced strategies that criminalize and profile marginalized youth, particularly in high-poverty schools and areas (Johnson, Boyden, & Pitz, 2001; Verdugo, 2002). These partnerships often work to set children on a path toward juvenile hall and prison (Stevens, 2012), resulting in what some advocates call “the school-to-prison pipeline.”

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

Exclusionary school policies have been shown to contribute to an increase in juvenile justice system contact for behaviors that were once handled exclusively in the educational environment (Children’s Defense Fund, 2007). This practice of partnering with the juvenile justice system and employing police in the school setting with education funds has not produced enough evidence to prove they create safer schools (APA, 2008; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). In fact, proponents of zero tolerance reform have reported that police presence may be contributing to the increased profiling

and identification of students as at risk of violent or disruptive behavior without any real evidence (APA, 2008).

Impact of Juvenile Justice System Involvement

More than one in seven students has now been in contact with the juvenile justice system at least once between seventh and 12th grade, and almost 50% of those with 11 or more disciplinary infractions were involved in the juvenile justice system (compared with 2% of those with no disciplinary infractions). Even when controlling for school and student characteristics (such as poverty and race), if a student was subjected to exclusionary disciplinary practices, he or she was almost three times as likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system the following year, and each additional encounter further increased the likelihood of juvenile justice involvement (Fabelo et al., 2011).

One suspension, in fact, triples the likelihood of a juvenile justice contact within that year and doubles the likelihood of repeating the grade (Stevens, 2012). When students are suspended, this also increases their chances of juvenile justice contact. Research studies show that when a student is suspended or expelled, his or her chances of coming into contact with the juvenile justice system in the following year increase substantially. As noted, this impact is greatest for minority youth with more than 70% of students arrested in school or sent to law enforcement being Black or Hispanic (Resmovitz, 2012, para. 1, 4).

At the state level, the statistics by student group are significantly disparate. In one study in Texas, one in five (20%) African American students, one in six (17%) Hispanic students, almost half (48%) of those with an emotional disturbance, and one in 10 (11%)

White students were involved with the juvenile justice system during the study period (Levin, 2009; Reyes, 2006). The impact of this school-to-prison pipeline, or juvenile justice contact, on youth is significant; when children are taken to court for minor offenses, they start a criminal record, and this often cumulates into greater consequences over time (Children's Defense Fund, 2007).

As a result of the exclusionary discipline policies and the school-to-prison pipeline, millions of children and young people are now a part of the juvenile justice system, which for most impacts their long-term life outcomes and does not correct behavior (Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Model Code Working Group, 2009). Further, these policies have been shown to be less effective than promising alternatives targeting behavior and mental health, and ultimately waste taxpayer dollars on ineffective tools (Rosenzweig & England, 2004). For many incarcerated adults, prison habits begin at an early age, which lends support to the argument that the school-to-prison pipeline solidifies a way of life for at-risk children. The FBI now has files on one in three American adults, with over 12,000 new names added to its master criminal database every day—mainly as the result of arrests connected to zero tolerance policies at schools (Fields & Emshwiller, 2014).

School Discipline Is Associated With School Dropout Scott and Barrett (2004) found that for every disciplinary referral written for a student, the student spends 20 minutes on average outside the classroom, possibly impacting his or her academic success due to the high correlation between time engaged in instruction and student achievement (Brophy, 1988; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Students who are disciplined lose approximately 580 hours of instructional time in any given school due to office

visits, discipline procedures, and suspensions, yet these referrals are earned by only 3% to 7% of the student population, usually a small population of the most at-risk students who need the most help (Sugai & Horner, 1994; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997). In addition, research has shown that punitive practices do not improve student behavior, but they do increase the likelihood that students will fall behind academically and drop out (Model Code Working Group, 2009).

Impact of School Dropout

In the United States today, some 40 million Americans lack a high school diploma (Fritz, 2012), and nationally the highest dropout rate occurs in the ninth grade, often following a series of suspensions (J. C. Wilson, 2011). The academic failure that follows suspensions is often difficult to recover from, and relationships with teachers also suffer following disciplinary action; this too contributes to student disconnection and dropout (Allensworth & Easton, 2005; Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; Barber & Olson, 1997; Sweeten, 2006; Tobin & Sugai, 1999).

The High Cost of Dropouts Dropouts cost the taxpayers \$209,100 per capita over a lifetime and cost the country \$300 billion per year (Levin, Belfield, Muennig, & Rouse, 2007; Princiotta & Renya, 2009; Rouse, 2005). Dropouts are also costly to America's competitive rankings. America ranked 21st in high school graduation rates (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison, 2009), which damages the future of the U.S. national economy, as 90% of the growth in the American job market will soon require education beyond high school (Monrad, 2007).

The cost to the individual is also large; dropouts earn two thirds that a high school graduate will earn over his lifetime, and one third of that earned by a college graduate

(Levin, 2009; Rumberger, 2011). Due to their economic status, dropouts are more likely to utilize additional community resources like welfare, be a single parent, contribute less to society in taxes, be unemployed, and uninsured, have less economic opportunities, and cost the state more in police, court, and parole programs (Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

Dropouts in California Locally, the impact of dropouts in California is large. The California Dropout Research Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, estimated that in California, one class cohort of dropouts costs the state \$24.2 billion. Further, the researchers predicted that these dropouts will go on to commit 113,954 violent crimes (J. C. Wilson, 2011). These dropouts often are undereducated and thus underemployed, and this decreases the state's ability to attract employers who need high-quality staff (Bowen, 2009; Levin, 2009).

Dropouts in San Diego In San Diego, 18,960 students are in the process of dropping out of San Diego's high schools, and this directly impacts incarceration rates. The California Dropout Research Project projects that if the dropout rate was reduced by 50%, San Diego could save \$267 million per cohort, which then impacts the crime rate—specifically, 435 less homicides committed and aggravated assaults over these students' lifetimes (J. C. Wilson, 2011).

Dropout Demographics Twice as many Black students and four times as many Hispanic/Latino students drop out than White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2007), and students with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out as their peers without disabilities (Agran, Alper, & Wehmeyer, 2002; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Repetto, Pankaskie, DePalma-Hankins, Schwartz, & Perry, 1997).

Researchers have concluded that students often drop out due to a lack of school connection and the practices of suspension and expulsion, which most schools simply find easier to do than employing counseling or restorative justice practices that would require resources that they often do not have. Yet the causes of student misbehavior often go completely unaddressed—and can be caused by underlying factors that the current culture of discipline fails to acknowledge.

Risk Factors That Impact At-Risk Youth

For most students, the school-to-prison pipeline begins with inadequate resources in public schools that fail to address the underlying factors that can negatively impact student behavior. Overcrowded classrooms, insufficient staff training, and a lack of funding can lead to a severe lack of student support for those who need it the most, leading to disengagement, dropout, and potential juvenile justice entanglement (ACLU, 2008). Although many point to the low-income status of students as being the main culprit for disciplinary outcomes, the disproportionate discipline of minority and disabled students cannot be completely explained by economic disadvantage alone (Skiba et al., 2002; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Often, there are criminogenic risk factors and ACEs beyond poverty that put students at risk of falling into the school-to-prison pipeline.

Criminogenic Risk Factors

Research has shown that criminal behavior can be predicted; it is likely when the rewards and costs for crime outweigh the rewards and costs for prosocial behavior (Bonta & Andrews, 2006-2007). Rewards and costs can be external and come from, for example, family, or can be internal and come from, for example, feelings of pride, relaxation, shame, or excitement (Bonta & Andrews, 2006-2007). Risk factors for criminal behavior—which lead young people to break rules at school and subsequent entanglements with the law—are antisocial personality pattern (marked by impulsivity and aggressiveness), procriminal attitudes (marked by a negative perception of the law), and social supports for crime (marked by criminal association). Students who do not feel connections to caring adults at home or in school often seek connection through other groups, such as gangs, or engage in other risk-taking behaviors such as drug and alcohol use (T. Lee & Breen, 2007).

Other risk factors include substance abuse, dysfunctional family/marital relationships, the lack of prosocial recreational activities, and a lack of support in school. The Office of National Drug Control Policy reported a 39% increase in drug use among young Hispanic teen boys between 2008 and 2009 (Cepeda, 2011), and if left untreated, drug and alcohol abuse tends to become progressively worse. More than two thirds of those surveyed prior to an arrest reported substance abuse problems, and 59% reported abusing alcohol or drugs many times per week or daily (Sedlak & McPherson, 2010).

Additionally, those with poor family relationships and inappropriate parental monitoring are more at risk. Research has shown that children most likely to be suspended or expelled are those most in need of adult supervision and professional help.

In one study, 15% of children who have never been abused but had witnessed domestic violence were suspended from school in the previous year. This was attributed to heightened aggression and delinquency from living in a violent home environment. For students with major home-life stresses, academic suspension in turn provides yet another life stress that, when compounded with what is already occurring in their lives, may predispose them to even higher risks of behavioral problems (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003). Most, if not all, of these risk factors can be attributed to ACEs, which have been shown to have long-term impacts upon life outcomes.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

The Centers for Disease Control's groundbreaking ACE study exposed the impact of complex trauma in childhood and the resulting impact on health and life outcomes years later (Stevens, 2012). As a result of this study, medical authorities are now aware of the link between childhood abuse and adult mental and physical health outcomes (Felitti, 1991, 1993; Gould et al., 1994; McCauley, Kern, Kolodner, & Schroeder, 1997; Springs & Friedrich, 1992). Through this research, medical investigators are now convinced that childhood adverse experiences can accurately predict mortality in the United States (McGinnis & Foege, 1993; "Mortality Patterns: United States," 1996). At this time, childhood experiences are recognized as the basic causes of morbidity and mortality in adult life, and teenage behavior is recognized as either a response to a nurturing environment (positive) or the result of complex trauma (negative; Stevens, 2012).

Impact of ACE. The ACE study identified 10 risk factors for poor life outcomes, including emotional, sexual, and physical abuse; emotional and physical neglect; a parent

addicted to alcohol or other drugs; seeing a mother being abused; a family member in prison; a family member diagnosed with a mental illness; or a parent who has disappeared through abandoning the family or divorce (Rivara et al., 1997; Stevens, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). This study issued an ACE score, which gives the participant one point for each trauma. Results showed that half of those who responded had at least one ACE. People with high ACE scores die, on average, 20 years earlier than those with low ACE scores (Stevens, 2012), and patients who have four or more ACEs have a four to 12 times increased risk for alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide. People with an ACE score of 6 have a 4,600% increase in the risk of becoming an IV drug user, and those with an ACE score of 10 are likely to be homeless, in prison, or dead by suicide (Stevens, 2009). The study also found a strong relationship between a higher number of ACEs and adult disease, including cancer, liver and lung disease, and skeletal fractures. The seven categories of ACE were strongly interrelated and persons with multiple categories of childhood exposure were likely to have multiple health risk factors later in life (Felitti et al., 1998).

ACE and multiple risk factors. This research runs parallel to the research on students with multiple risk factors who have been shown to be several times more likely to drop out than students who only display one or two risk factors (or ACEs) mentioned in the ACE study (Rumberger, 2001). When students experience trauma in the home, student behavior reflects that; yet, due to a lack of training, educators often see this behavior as an intellectual deficit or mistake it for a learning disability (Cassidy & Bates, 2005). Chronic stress is often the culprit as it has been shown to damage students' brains, which makes it physiologically impossible to learn. In fact, toxic overdoses of stress

hormones have been shown to physically injure the brain (Stevens, 2012). Other studies corroborate these findings and have shown the effect of child neglect and abuse profoundly impacting child behavior, grade repetitions, and disciplinary outcomes (Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode, 1996). Other factors not cited in the study—including living with a single parent or being a part of a group that does not value education—have also been identified as negative factors that influence school failure and exclusion (England, 2005).

School and justice system response to ACE. When at-risk youth are experiencing unmet needs, schools that are underfunded, undertrained, and underequipped cannot handle the tsunami of issues that complex trauma brings to the classroom, so the juvenile justice system steps in as the treatment system, and as a result, more children are in jail than ever before (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Rumberger, 2011). However, like schools, the juvenile justice system is also poorly equipped to address the acute needs of many of these young people.

Young people who find themselves in juvenile hall are often the product of tragic circumstances: 70% saw someone severely injured or killed, 72% said they had something very bad or terrible happen to them, 30% reported being physically or sexually abused, more than 60% admitted to suffering from anger management issues, and 30% of them have attempted to commit suicide (Sedlak & McPherson, 2010). Many of these children have suffered from ACE. The good news is that resiliency can be cultivated and ACE can be overcome.

Overcoming ACE. Resilience factors, such as caring connections, helping a friend, experiencing success, and having hope, have been shown to buffer young people

against the negative impacts of ACE (Cassidy & Bates, 2005). Further, students who are trained to believe in effort, willingness, and persistence overcome self-doubts and persevere when confronted with life's challenges (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). By adopting programs and teaching resiliency within the curricular program, schools can help students develop problem-solving and empathy skills, a sense of purpose, and independence (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001).

Resilience and perseverance are often cited in research as factors leading at-risk students toward staying the course in school (Knesting, 2008). A study of learning disabled students in Chicago examined the concept of resilience and found that many developmental assets, including accessing support from concerned adults, cultivating self-determination, and enlisting parental involvement and structure were strong indicators of completing school (McIntyre, 2013; Murray & Naranjo, 2008). In fact, developmental asset development has been found in other research to support student persistence, including the ability to set clear goals and cultivate meaningful connections (Knesting & Waldron, 2006).

Effective interventions that include cultivating developmental assets can not only improve at-risk student outcomes but can also ensure that teachers and the remaining classmates enjoy a safer environment that is conducive to learning. By supporting students through in-school counseling, mentoring, and social services, schools can reduce dropout rates and stem the flow of student contact with the juvenile justice system while simultaneously reducing the number of students who cycle in and out of in-school expulsions and removals (Fabelo et al., 2011). What follows is a review of support programs to help at-risk students build resilience and develop assets that support success.

Developmental Assets and At-Risk Youth

Many experts now believe that schools and the juvenile justice system are crippled by a lack of options for at-risk students in need. Often, administrators and judges are forced to choose between unpalatable options for students due to a lack of research-based alternatives. Administrators are forced to choose between suspension and expulsion, while judges are forced to choose between probation and incarceration for adolescents with moderately serious offending histories who do not pose an immediate or significant threat to public safety (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011).

However, school officials and educators can provide more effective tools and supports to prevent the vicious disciplinary cycle as well as the steady stream of students being sent into the juvenile justice system. Suh and Suh (2007) concluded that early help for students is the most effective, and multiple interventions may be necessary to keep students with multiple risk factors in school. Treatment as a necessary component of any strategy that expects to address at-risk student behavior (Christensen, 2011), should be cognitive and behavioral in nature, employed by professionals who understand the context (Gornick, 2002), and be based upon individual needs (Inciardi & Saum, 1997; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1999).

State legislatures in Indiana, Texas, and Virginia have adopted legislation to modify harsh disciplinary procedures and expand supports available to schools (APA, 2008) in an effort to address criminogenic needs, at-risk student factors, and developmental assets. Successful programs that address specific risk factors known to influence delinquent behavior and target criminogenic risk factors have been shown in studies to reduce recidivism over 20%, while programs that promote fear of punishment

usually increase recidivism as well as those programs devoted to simply improving physical fitness (C. Dowden & Andrews, 1999).

Wilderness programs and boot camps have also shown little success in improving outcomes for delinquent youth, as have residential treatment centers for youth with serious emotional disturbances (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011). However, programs that intervene early and increase human capital through the promotion of developmental assets are promising. There are 40 developmental assets identified by the Search Institute (2014), and these can be divided into external and internal developmental characteristics. Results for programs for very young children are particularly notable; evaluations of early childhood education programs that promote developmental assets show large benefits decades later in reduced delinquency and crime (Carneiro & Heckman, 2003).

Lens for Success: Promoting Developmental Assets

Research suggests that there are three dimensions of engagement that foster student success: behavioral engagement, supported by behavioral cooperation, supportive relationships, and behavioral support; academic-cognitive engagement, supported by motivation to do well, collaborating with parents, and encouraging self-monitoring behaviors; and social engagement, supported by metacognition, persistence, creative thinking, positive self-concept, and self-reflection (Dunleavy, 2008).

These dimensions of engagement are summarized by the Search Institute's (2014) work on developmental assets. The developmental asset framework was developed by examining 1,400 peer-reviewed studies on factors that are necessary for healthy child development and that have been shown to have a strong association to youth education

and good health (Scales & Leffert, 2004; Scales, Sesma, & Bolstrom, 2004; also see Benson, 2006; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006).

The Search Institute (2014) identified several building blocks of healthy development—also known as developmental assets—that can be taught in schools in order to help young children build prosocial lifestyles, which ultimately lead to healthy, caring, and responsible lifestyles.

External Assets: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, and Constructive Time

Support can come from family, positive family communication, other adult relationships, a caring neighborhood and school, or through parental involvement in schooling. Empowerment comes in the shape of believing that the community values youth; the child feels safe at home and at school; there are clear rules/consequences; there are adults and peers who model positive, responsible behavior; and parents have high expectations. Additionally, students feel supported when time is productively spent through involvement in sports, clubs, and community or religious organizations. Lastly, when students are taught boundaries (acceptable versus unacceptable social and academic behaviors) and are held to high expectations, students in turn tend to be engaged in their learning, challenged, and feel connected (Steinberg & Allen, 2002). This in turn promotes motivation, better school attendance, and higher academic achievement.

Internal Assets: Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity

Internal assets are met when the young person is committed to learning; that is, he or she is motivated to do well in school, is actively engaged in learning, and is doing at

least 1 hour of homework every school day, cares about her or his school, and reads for pleasure 3 or more hours per week. The child's positive values contribute to their internal assets if they place a high value on helping other people (social competencies), promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty, acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs, tells the truth even when it is not easy, and accepts and takes personal responsibility. A young person with internal assets also knows how to build a positive identity by planning ahead and making choices; demonstrating empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills; has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds; can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations; has control over things that happen to them; reports having a high self-esteem; believes that their life has a purpose; and is optimistic about her or his personal future (Search Institute, 2014).

Developmental Assets and School Success

Data collected from Search Institute (2014) surveys of more than 4 million children and youth from all backgrounds and situations have consistently demonstrated that the more developmental assets young people acquire, the more prosocial their lifestyles are, and the better their chances of succeeding in school and becoming happy, healthy, and contributing members of their communities and society. In a study of at-risk high school students, Singh, Chang, and Ditka (2008) concluded that school connectedness and whether or not students were intellectually and socially engaged was significantly related to academic engagement. Teachers need to rely on all types of engagement (Lock, 2010) to empower their students, and by focusing on the positive

aspects of young people, the developmental assets model empowers those it seeks to help (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000).

In addition, students with higher assets have demonstrated higher GPAs, even after controlling for gender, poverty, race, or ethnicity (Leffert, Scales, Vraa, Libbey, & Benson, 2001; Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003). Although there is significant evidence that poverty is an important predictor of academic failure (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997), developmental assets can support helping low-income students succeed in school. One study revealed that students whose mothers were only high school educated versus mothers with some college (a common indicator of family income) had similar academic outcomes, provided their assets were similar (Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003). A variety of programs that incorporate the cultivation of at least some of the developmental assets is necessary to ensure student success.

Education-Based Programs and Supports

Research has shown that due to the comprehensive approach the developmental asset framework uses, it not only impacts student achievement but promotes a healthier community (Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003). Successful programs that effectively reduce school disruptions include high levels of developmental assets, including student support, student services, and community supports (Osher, Sandler, & Nelson, 2001). Schools implementing effective programs and protocols that incorporate developmental assets—including external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries, expectations, and constructive time) and internal assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity)—see their office referrals drop, on average, from 20% to 60% (NASP Resources, 2001). By abandoning punitive approaches and

embracing research-supported developmental asset cultivation to improve school community and connections, schools can reconnect alienated youth so as to reduce discipline problems and curtail school violence (APA, 2008; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002). By introducing social-emotional literacy instruction into schools, the internal developmental assets—positive values, social competencies, and positive identity—as well as the external developmental assets—support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive time—can be developed in students who need it the most: the at-risk student, who needs to be supported both outside and inside of school through powerful connections to healthy adults (Search Institute, 2014).

Connection to school has been shown to be a decisive aspect of violence prevention. Conversely, alienation from school has been shown to be key in the development of delinquent youth behavior (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004). By developing a continuum of research-supported alternatives for students at risk for discipline, schools can stem the flow of students into the school-to-prison pipeline and restore safe school environments (APA, 2008). Programs that develop connections such as restorative justice, parent education, group therapy, or community service are proven strategies that provide access back to the classroom for at-risk students (APA, 2008; NASP Resources, 2001) and are proven success stories when compared with programs that are punitive in nature (McNeil, Copolla, Radigan, & Vasquez Helig, 2008). What follows is a description of an array of supports for students.

There is strong evidence in the literature demonstrating that preventing or treating delinquency and school failure are more cost effective than paying for these neglected social problems at a later time through welfare, social services, and incarceration costs

for dropouts and alienated youth (Bear, Webster-Stratton, Furlong, & Rhee, 2000; Kingery, Biafora, & Zimmerman, 1996). According to NASP Resources (2001) and The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2011), by coordinating violence prevention (through a variety of services), early intervention strategies, social skills training, and positive behavior supports, schools can implement comprehensive programs such as effective bullying prevention, restorative justice programs, and threat assessment programs to reform their punitive disciplinary programs (Cornell & Sheras, 2006; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Elliott, Hatot, Sirovatka, & Potter, 2001; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Olweus & Limber, 1999; Tolan, Guerra, & Kendall, 1995; Walker et al., 1996).

Mentoring programs and cognitive skills training through primary strategies (for all students), secondary strategies (for those at risk), and tertiary strategies (for those students already engaged in disruptive/violent behaviors) are also known to be effective. What's needed in schools is, however, a comprehensive approach including most, if not all of these elements to provide a kind of "village" of support for at-risk students. What follows are evidence-based supports to help schools change their punitive cultures for vulnerable students who most need the help.

Primary-Level Support Programs

Schoolwide positive behavior support and bullying prevention. According to the director of UCLA's Center for Civil Rights Remedies, Dan Losen (2012), schools that teach positive behavior tend to have higher achievement and lower suspension rates (Resmovitz, 2012). Programs such as Positive Behavior Supports or Bullying Prevention, when taught schoolwide, can assist schools in cultivating a schoolwide baseline understanding of behavioral expectations and can reduce reliance on school

suspension and expulsion, thus increasing students' opportunity to learn, which taps into external developmental assets of empowerment, boundaries, and expectations (APA, 2008). Studies of schoolwide systems for Positive Behavioral Supports (Rosenberg & Jackman, 2003) and Safe and Responsive Schools (Skiba, Ritter, Simmons, Peterson, & Miller, 2006) have shown reductions in referrals and exclusionary discipline and have shown noteworthy improvements in school climate and connection (APA, 2008). One of the keys in building a positive climate is a staff that embraces two basic concepts: toxic stress prevents kids from learning and moving from a punitive approach to a supportive, educational approach (Stevens, 2012). As more and more studies show an increase in positive outcomes for at-risk youth and the resulting overall improvement in school climate, an increasing number of districts around the nation are adopting Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW PBIS) that help support emotional literacy in all students; these have been shown to reduce disciplinary actions by over 50% (Fabelo et al., 2011).

Attendance intervention. Adolescents who leave school are much more likely to participate in risky behaviors with potential legal consequences (Barro & Kolstad, 1987; Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Since students who are in school are less likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system, interventions tailored specifically to keep students in school also decrease behavioral issues that funnel students into the school-to-prison pipeline. Interventions include case managing students with attendance problems to track their progress, providing parent education to families on how to support student success in school, and offering wraparound social services to

students who have life obstacles in the way of school attendance; these represent the external developmental assets of support (Berger, 2011).

Family programs. Additional programs that support external asset development include those that support families exclusively; family factors have been shown to be strong predictors of student academic outcomes, and for at-risk students, family contexts and goals must be considered a part of any intervention (Trainor, 2005). Akos and Galassi (2004) drew a direct correlation between families' environment and student behavior. Those with discipline problems experienced more conflict, less organization, and less consistency in the home than students without behavioral problems. Further, research has shown a clear connection between parent involvement and student success, and any programs that facilitate parent input and involvement can impact student success (R. Wilson, 2010). Schools need parental support to prevent their students from dropping out due to the external and internal causes for dropout. No one factor is responsible, but schools and parents who work as partners with counselors, staff, and families have been shown to positively impact graduation rates (McIntyre, 2013). Several family programs have been proven to yield effective results.

Strengthening Families Framework. Districts that employ the research-based Strengthening Families Framework engage families and community stakeholders in building five main protective factors that reduce child abuse and neglect and are strongly aligned with the Search Institute's developmental assets (Center for the Study of Social Policy's Strengthening Families, 2014). The five pillars include fostering parental resilience, social connections, education in parenting and child development, wraparound services in times of need, and emotional literacy education for the family and child.

Currently, 42 states have integrated the framework into their social service delivery systems, and interest in the framework is climbing. In the 2011-2012 year, more than 70,000 people received professional development training in the framework, which teaches stakeholders what families need to thrive and offers free tools to support implementation in child abuse and neglect prevention, home visit, parent education, child welfare, and public awareness programs.

Multisystemic therapy (MST) and functional family therapy (FFT). These therapies are additional external asset development treatment models for families with delinquent youth. MST involves multiple family contacts per week in the home and community, while FFT employs office counseling for cognitive change. Studies of families who engage in MST have seen arrest rates approximately 25% to 70% lower than those receiving other treatments, or none at all, and have shown their youth spending 50% less days confined in juvenile hall after therapy (Swenson, Penman, Henggeler, & Rowland, 2011). Meanwhile, an FFT study of chronic offenders showed FFT juveniles with a 33% decline in recidivism than youth in other treatments (Functional Family Therapy, 2014).

Florida Redirection Program. The Florida Redirection Program provides family counseling as an alternative to jail for young offenders. Compared to jailed youth, those young people participating in the program were shown to be almost 15% less likely to be arrested for a new violent felony, 14% less likely to be convicted of a new felony, and 35% less likely to go to prison once adults (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2010). This program was found to have saved Floridians \$41.6 million from 2004-2008 by steering mild offenders away from expensive

incarcerations (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2010).

Despite evidence-based models like these that work and support healthy developmental assets; however, very few of them are in existence in the United States for youth who have begun to tangle with the criminal justice system. In fact, less than 5% of juvenile offenders are treated with evidence-based programs per year (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011). Governments need to begin taking stock of programs that work to offer better alternatives for at-risk youth families and for the student themselves, as outlined in the following programs.

Secondary Level Support Programs for At-risk Youth

Preventative measures may not be adequate for at-risk students; hence, secondary level interventions are needed to work with small groups of students who need more support to attain success both socially and academically (Crone & Homer, 2003; Walker et al., 1996). At-risk students' behavioral interventions have been researched in the past; however, successful intervention programs addressing social skills, a key internal asset described by the Search Institute, have not been implemented effectively in schools with longevity (Mazzotta-Perretti, 2009). Emotional literacy and social skills intervention programs attempt to assist at-risk students by teaching them empathy skills, the importance of meaningful relationships, how to cultivate those relationships, and how to manage school in ways that promote their success (Moore, 2007). What follows are those secondary level support programs discovered in the research that have demonstrated promising results in changing outcomes for at-risk students.

Behavior support programs. *The ARC model.* Research conducted on the attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC) program, an emotional literacy framework that identifies 10 building blocks to engage flexible approaches to traumatized youth and their families, showed a decrease in posttraumatic stress and behavioral difficulties in failed adoption placements (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2011). The ARC model was developed at the Justice Resource Institute and guides educators in the trauma-sensitive classroom in Lincoln High in Walla Walla, Washington, to ask questions and act as trauma investigators before assigning consequences. Counselors also give students tools so they can recognize their reaction to stress and control it, and staff members discuss helping students at staff meetings as opposed to disciplining them. Since implementing this approach, which employs developmental asset awareness and training for all staff, suspensions dropped 85% (Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2009; Stevens, 2012; Trauma Center, 2015).

Positive Action (PA). The program Positive Action (PA) is a national program that improves academics, behavior, and character in at-risk students K-12 who are in need of emotional literacy development. The mission is to transform individuals, schools, and stakeholders by teaching and reinforcing positive actions, a key component of internal assets whereby youth learn to place value on helping others (Search Institute, 2014). PA is a teacher-driven character education program designed to promote student character and positive behavior. Research into the program has shown that several indicators improve following program implementation, including (but not limited to) attendance, behavior, discipline, crime, and drug use (Flay & Allred, 2003).

Behavior Education Program (BEP). BEP intervention has been shown to increase academic success while decreasing disciplinary referrals and problematic behavior in elementary students (Bowers, 2002; Hawken & Horner, 2003; Hawken, MacLeod, & Rawlings, 2004; March & Horner, 2002). Students in BEP cycle through a system of interactions with adults who work to teach the hidden curriculum that students may not have received at home (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2004). Students check in with adults throughout the day and work toward meeting daily behavioral goals through a series of interactions that provide constant positive feedback, which ultimately provides the students with a reminder of school expectations and works to increase school connection—the positive value component of internal assets (Crone et al., 2004; Filter et al., 2007).

Why Try intervention. Why Try is often used as an alternative to suspension and is designed to teach positive social-emotional literacy and behaviors, the hidden curriculum, and address the long-term academic achievement of at-risk students (Mazzotta-Perretti, 2009). In a recent study, students enrolled in Why Try included those who were academically failing and had poor attendance, yet were seen as potentially benefiting from the social and emotional skills the program teaches. Following the program, participants showed a 77% reduction in disruptive behavior, had less attendance problems, and became more accountable for their own behavior. They also improved in motivational indicators and some improved in their grades (Highland, McNally, & Peart, 1999; Moore, 2007).

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.). G.R.E.A.T. is a program taught by police in an effort to reduce gang activity and violence and to improve

student outlook on law enforcement. The program pairs law enforcement officers with at-risk middle schoolers. After 1 year, the program showed a 39% reduction in middle school students' joining gangs and a 24% reduction in those joining gangs 4 years postprogram as opposed to those who did not attend the program; internal assets are cultivated through this program by teaching students to accept and take personal responsibility (Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, & Osgood, 2012).

Project Success. Project Success is a behavioral treatment for at-risk youth returning from alternative school, and one study sought to determine the change in school connection, behavior, and academic outcomes following the program. Researchers did find a positive increase in attitude toward school and in improvement in academic achievement, a key component of the development of internal assets and emotional literacy development (Search Institute, 2014). Though attendance and discipline continued to be problem areas for the students, the dropout rate decreased significantly (Berger, 2011). This study signifies just how truly powerful school connection is to at-risk youth and the impact emotional literacy can have upon students.

Mentoring programs. At-risk students often report that school staff do not understand their problems or listen to them, and some students who dropped out report that had the school reached out, they may not have dropped out. This survey of high school dropout students also found that dropouts were unable to name one adult they felt was supportive of them in school (High School Survey of Student Engagement, 2006; Knesting, 2008). The mentoring experience for students can address this problem, and the relationship cultivated between the mentor and mentee allows adolescents to become

engaged with a calming force, enabling adolescents to develop emotional literacy, social abilities, and improved self-awareness (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Adult support has not only been identified in the developmental assets framework for student success but has also been identified by researchers as an important construct for at-risk youth as *social capital*, which aligns support and resources that can promote at-risk student engagement and academic success (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Intensive mentoring programs for at-risk students have, in many cases cited in the research, reported positive results in reducing recidivism and increasing academic/employment outcomes (The Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2011). What follows is a description of successful mentoring programs that actively reach out to at-risk students, develop their emotional literacy skills, and boost their internal assets, which serve to prevent dropout.

Strong Teens. Strong Teens is a program designed for African American adolescent males and is conducted by professional counselors in a small group format with a focus on African American culture. The program teaches positive historical role models and facilitates conversations around race (White & Rayle, 2007). No research was available as to the efficacy of the program, yet even brief interventions can have a positive effect on students. A. R. Dowden (2009) developed a brief psychoeducational intervention designed to empower adolescent self-advocacy, a key internal asset, and improve academic outcomes similar to this program, and four out of six students in the study were found to pass all their classes while five out of six decreased their discipline and attendance problems (A. R. Dowden, 2009). The evidence shows that doing something truly is better than doing nothing.

Check & Connect. Check & Connect is an intervention for urban middle school students with academic and behavioral issues and is aligned with the developmental asset framework in that school engagement is key to keeping kids in school (Lehr, 2005). Check & Connect employs multiple layers of support for at-risk youth, beginning with the pairing of a student mentor with the at-risk student. The program focuses on relationship building, the importance of education, monitoring of several indicators by the mentor once per week (such as academics, suspensions, attendance, and grades), and empowers students to participate in school activities. Studies have shown that students participating in Check & Connect were less likely to drop out and more likely to have graduated within 5 years (Finn, 2006; Lehr, 2005; Sinclair, Christenson, Lehr, & Anderson, 2003).

Adult, noneducator mentoring. One mentoring program with positive outcomes was a “near peer” program that paired at-risk students with City Year corps member mentors who provided tutoring, mentoring, or just a contact to eat lunch with the student regularly. For those issues that went beyond what the mentors could provide support with, wraparound services came in as a support through the Communities in Schools and Diplomas Now program, another example of evidence-based practice supporting the external asset component of the developmental asset framework whereby support can come from family, positive family communication, and other adult relationships (Search Institute, 2014). The combined guidance showed a decrease in suspensions from 50% to 15%, and a decrease in academic failures from 25% to 7% (Fritz, 2012).

High School Success. High School Success is a class scheduled for entering ninth graders with literacy deficiencies who are at risk for dropping out. This strategic

instruction model (SIM) intervention has been shown to keep students on track academically and improves attendance and at-risk student relationships with their teachers, in effect teaching students the hidden curriculum often missing from their everyday lives. The built-in mentor/mentee relationship between the staff and students was shown in a mixed-methods study to be the most important feature of the program to the students who demonstrated improved academic outcomes (Lowder, 2012).

Empowerment programs. The Brotherhood is another mentoring program that pairs at-risk students with adult Black mentors who connect for outings and group meetings as they work to build their internal assets. The curriculum operates from empowerment theory, and results from a study showed a 16% increase in at-risk student grade point average (GPA) from 2005 to 2008 (Wyatt, 2009). Other empowerment programs have shown success in at-risk teens. A study in Pennsylvania examined self-esteem, community participation, and student locus of control in a matched pairs study and found a significant difference between activity level and locus of control following the program (participants experienced a more internal focus whereas nonparticipants experienced a more external focus), but not in self-esteem. The study revealed how the transition from middle to high school can often impact the activity level of students, leading to disengagement (Fertman & Chubb, 1990). Another empowerment program developed for females, the Go Girls Program, focused on developmental stages of emotional and social literacy development. A matched pairs experiment also looked at the pre- and postoutcomes for students and found significant improvement in beliefs and emotional literacy following the program experience (LeCroy, 2004).

Finally, Empowerment Groups for Academic Success (EGAS) was initially for African American high school females (Bemak, Chung, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005) but was subsequently adapted for use with African American middle school females (Hilton-Pitre, 2007). Although EGAS is designed for African American females, the focus of the weekly group design in a yearlong format includes empowerment features as group participants select their own agenda with a main focus being academic success. Participants in the study by Hilton-Pitre (2007) identified the following improvements in their own estimation: attendance, relationships, communication, grades, decreased disciplinary action on the part of the school, and improved outlook for their future. Students were empowered by having ownership over the discussion; they experienced a strong sense of personal growth, a strengthening of their relationships, and believed they were on the right path toward making good future decisions that would impact their life and career choices (Bemak et al., 2005; Berger, 2011).

Although all of these programs worked to empower students with support and internal assets leading to improved outcomes for students, one aspect these programs does not cover is those who treat mental health and/or substance abuse problems, encompassing tertiary level support programs. Those who do can significantly impact at-risk student behaviors (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011).

Tertiary Level Support Programs for At-Risk Youth

Unlike primary support programs that seek to encompass more whole-school character education programs—and secondary support programs that typically target small groups of students—tertiary level support programs seek to provide alternatives for juvenile offenders. Programs like YouthBuild combine vocational skills training with

academic supports in an effort to bolster student skills and the ability to rejoin the school system and/or the work force (Cohen & Piquero, 2009). For youth in these programs, specific treatment is often needed above and beyond the programs already listed to serve specific issues that tie into emotional literacy or developmental asset needs. Two such programs are the Enhanced Mental Health Services Initiative and the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice program in Texas and Ohio, which reroute juvenile offenders to mental health interventions and treatment.

There are nearly 500 drug courts and 68 mental health treatment courts for young offenders that operate nationwide, which seek to provide alternatives to the juvenile criminal justice system (Marlowe, 2010) as well as family therapies like Brief Strategic Family Therapy that offer treatment for substance abuse problems. This program has shown statistically significant changes in delinquency, alcohol use, and substance abuse (Chassin, Knight, Vargas-Chanes, Losoya, & Narangjo, 2009). These alternatives to the juvenile justice system demonstrate effective means by which to reduce criminal behavior in youth that is both destructive to themselves and to the greater community in both the short and long term—and moves them toward recovery through group work in emotional literacy development.

The programs described above all attempt to address the emotional literacy needs of at-risk students; one program in San Diego schools that is specifically focused on teaching at-risk students emotional literacy skills is Project AWARE.

Project AWAREProject AWARE (Attitude When Angry and Resolving Emotional Issues Non-Violently) is an emotional literacy program in San Diego County that seeks to address the building of healthy development in at-risk teens by teaching students aspects

of the hidden curriculum they may have missed. The hidden curriculum is not always understood by all students (Kanpol, 1999), especially those who are considered at risk (Lock, 2010). The hidden curriculum is composed of feelings, values, attitudes and habits of the social world the student inhabits (Yüksel, 2004) and generally refers to the unwritten attitudes, behaviors, ideas, and social norms that contribute to the culture of interpersonal relationships and communication (Cubukcu, 2012).

Student population. Students served by Project AWARE tend to be at-risk youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with a disability, or those who have experienced ACE such as trauma, abuse, or neglect in their homes. These students have acted out in school, and as a result, have been sent to the administrator’s office, often due to not knowing the hidden curriculum in schools (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003). Students in Project AWARE may miss social or behavioral cues, whether due to disability or lack of early childhood exposure (M. Anderson, 2011; Janowski, 2009; Learn NC, 2014). School success often depends on mastering this hidden curriculum. When students do not adhere to the norms expected, they tend to be singled out for interventions and discipline, which was the purpose of introducing this program into district schools—to shift the paradigm of support for at-risk students.

Project AWARE curriculum. Project AWARE builds resilience factors through research-based practices, including growing student emotional intelligence and literacy through teaching students how to ask for help, helping others, experiencing success, and cultivating hope, which has shown to move students beyond their circumstances (Stevens, 2012). Masten and Coatsworth (1998) found that the ability to self-regulate and control one’s emotional state and his or her emotional intelligence, largely impacts

academic and social competence. The development of these skills is influenced by a child's adverse experiences, hence the need to process this trauma in order to effectively grow the student's emotional intelligence.

Research shows that emotional intelligence is so critical to success that it accounts for 58% of performance in all types of jobs, is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace, and is the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence. Further, the link between emotional intelligence and earnings is so direct that every point increase in emotional intelligence adds \$1,300 to an annual salary (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Research shows that student self-awareness skills are a wise investment: 83% of people high in self-awareness are top performers, and just 2% of bottom performers are high in self-awareness (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

Because emotions are contagious and travel rapidly between people, emotions are an open-loop system and require training. Indeed, most people are not taught empathy or compassion in schools or professional development (McKee et al., 2008). The impact a lack of training in emotional literacy has on successful career and life outcomes and development is severe, and a lack of emotional self-control is a major impediment to success. Project AWARE is one district's solution to the at-risk student crisis and aims to teach students how to respond to life on life's terms.

Project AWARE mission, vision, and purpose. Project AWARE's vision is to create a climate where young people can learn to communicate and contribute to the overall well-being of their own lives and the lives of those in the community in which they live; by becoming emotionally literate, learning social skills, and employing

rigorous self-examination, at-risk students will become productive members of society (Washington, 2013).

Project AWARE's purpose is as follows:

1. To help at-risk youth deal with their emotions without resorting to violence.
2. To teach participants social skills that will help them deal with society in a positive manner.
3. To help youth take charge of their lives and their reactions to events, which will result in more effective ways of thinking and behaving.
4. To allow for an outlet to express feelings and opinions on issues that are relevant and important to youth in the community. (Washington, 2013, p. 2)

Because Project AWARE is the most prevalent program for teaching emotional literacy in San Diego County schools, the model of social-emotional literacy instruction employed by Project AWARE is the focus of this study.

Conclusions

Currently, the American education system reacts to the action of the at-risk student as opposed to considering what lies behind the action. A major paradigm shift is needed to provide developmental asset cultivation for students via help, treatment, connection, emotional literacy training, and resilience building in at-risk youth if educators are to change how the educational system works. The impact of connection, relationships, mentoring, family outreach, providing extra help, and curricular reform in meeting the needs of America's most vulnerable student population has been shown—and will continue to be—significant in terms of positive life outcomes (Dynarski et al., 2008; Tyler & Loftstrom, 2009).

In all communities, the research shows that children represent the future, and how they live their childhood often determines their future. High ACE scores, without resiliency factors, cost the community more in social services, prisons, police, and medical care than schools, libraries, and playgrounds and almost always guarantee negative outcomes (Moore, 2007; Stevens, 2012). By creating social connection, providing support, and providing opportunities for students to learn emotional literacy skills, students can build their resiliency and respond appropriately to life's challenges.

Schools can support this behaviorist approach by providing, then supporting, the relationships that can make the difference for many students (Lock, 2010). Unless purposeful steps are taken with social justice in mind, students will continue to fail to be engaged and connected (Lock, 2010; Theoharis, 2008). A successful school climate for at-risk students should include a caring and supportive environment, high academic

expectations, and engaging opportunities, all of which have been shown to foster resilience and trump the risk factors present in many children's lives (Deci et al., 2001).

Many studies have found that traditional high schools struggle to engage students because they are so focused on academics (Joselowsky, 2007) that they bypass the importance of building student relationships and connection within their communities (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). Yet when students are given opportunities to build their emotional literacy skills, they have been shown to improve their lives on many indicators—less destructive behaviors, more developmental asset building, and greater capacity in school (Bencivenga & Elias, 2003).

The consensus reached by a large number of evaluation studies is that those offering counseling and treatment that help young people address their own personal struggles through a therapeutic/cognitive behavior philosophy typically reduce disciplinary action, maladaptive behavior, and recidivism, while those that employ punitive, coercive measures either increase negative behaviors or have no impact at all (Lipsey, 2009). Daniel Pink (2006) predicted an age where empathy and emotional intelligence are essential skills for positive life outcomes. Because at-risk students can often be controlled by their emotions and are frequently not yet skilled enough at spotting them and using them to their benefit, emotional awareness and understanding should be taught via small group instructional interventions, which allow at-risk students to acquire prosocial strategies for successful lifestyles (Tuggle Scott, 2009). There is therefore a strong need to study the effectiveness of programs that focus on teaching at-risk students emotional literacy, seek to address student ACEs, connect them to their schools, and allow them to craft their own vision of a successful future.

With the results of this study, school boards and district administrators can evaluate program recommendations and launch new programs that address at-risk student outcomes that align with state priorities. School faculty can use the study findings to launch emotional intelligence character education programs that can be infused into curriculum, such as history and English as part of the regular curriculum, and universities can use the study findings to train new teachers and administrators on the importance of character education, relationship building, and connection with at-risk students. While these changes may be grounded in the at-risk high and middle school student experiences, the implication of empowering all students in making or changing intervention policy is significant.

Overall, this study provides answers to the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on several factors related to the unique needs of at-risk students, whose impact has not been examined on a large, systematic scale (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). Chapter III discusses the study's research mixed-methods methodology and design, sampling techniques, statistical tests that were employed, and limitations of the research.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter illustrates the methodology used to effectively gather and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data to determine the impact that social-emotional literacy instruction had upon the problematic behavior of students in a secondary setting. The chapter begins with another look at the study's purpose statement and research questions, followed by the study's design, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, analysis, and limitations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk youth Grades 9-12 in secondary high schools' 8-week-long emotional literacy class through Project AWARE, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates.

Research Questions

The following are this study's principal research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in referral, suspension, and expulsion for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?
2. Is there a significant difference in attendance for at-risk students following the social-emotional literacy program experience?
3. What are teacher, counselor, and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of social-emotional literacy instruction on improving problem behavior within the classroom?

Research Design

This study was a mixed-methods study, employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure that the data collected would provide a rich and varied source of information for responding to the data elicited from the research questions. A mixed-methods research design mixes quantitative and qualitative research and methods to explore a research problem. The qualitative approach generally involves finding common themes in the data, can be more exploratory in nature (with interviews, open-ended questionnaires) and be subjective, while the quantitative approach tends to include numbers, statistical testing, and more objective data (Creswell, 2012; Fischler, 2014). According to Creswell (2008), these approaches, when mixed, can provide a well-rounded and better understanding than using one of those approaches by itself, and can include multiple viewpoints, thereby addressing the research problem and questions in a more thorough manner (Fishchler, 2014). This approach fits this research study due to the nature of the design, which includes not only an examination of the quantitative discipline and attendance archival data but also the qualitative or human experience of the social-emotional intervention through interviews with administrators, counselors, and teachers. The first approach in this mixed-methods study was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through qualitative methods.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research is one of the two methods this research employed as the research aimed to use adult perceptions to gain a more thorough understanding of how the social-emotional program impacted students. Qualitative research aims to discover broad patterns among participants and produces meaning about lived experiences within

social settings and how that meaning influences behavior, a major part of this research study (Patten, 2009). Specifically, this study employed the use of phenomenological analysis, which, according to Patton (2002), explores the meaning of the human experience at the center of the research study. This qualitative approach was relevant to this study in that it addressed Research Question 3 and assisted in providing insight into the perspectives of staff relative to the acquisition of emotional literacy through program participation as well as the impact of this participation.

In order to gather the information needed to employ phenomenological analysis, several interviews were conducted in an effort to explore these themes. The interviews gathered staff feedback regarding program impact through administrator, counselor, and teacher interviews at the selected schools. By employing logical analysis and working inductively through data collected through these interviews, emergent patterns were gleaned from the data to identify themes of program impact upon student connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates.

Data Coding One barrier to credible qualitative findings stems from the suspicion that researchers shape their results to their worldview (Patton, 2002). However, with a process used to code data, a person may employ a clear method of trend analysis. By coding qualitative data, researchers can assure critics that a true picture of the phenomena being studied can be presented (Shenton, 2003). Coding is the development and use of a language that is used to transfer data from the instrument that was employed in the data collection process to a code book that is appropriate for data analysis and reporting results (“Coding and Entering Data,” 2013).

When coding data, it is important for the researcher to think about the big picture. Thinking about the purpose of evaluation—before, during, and after data collection—is critical (“Tips and Tools,” 2013). Additionally, it is common for much of the data collected and entered into a system to have some degree of repetition and redundancy (i.e., extra information that does not add anything). Identifying this pattern or repetition is why it is efficient to code the data in some way (“Reasons to Code Data,” 2013).

Codes can be based on any number of themes, ideas, concepts, terms, phrases, or keywords found in the data. Usually it is passages of text that are coded, but it can be sections of an audio or video recording or parts of images. All passages and chunks that are coded the same way—that are given the same label—have been judged (by the researcher) to be about the same topic, theme, or concept (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). In the case of this research, several themes were identified, as outlined in the next section.

Quantitative Methods

The next approach in this mixed-methods study was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through quantitative methods. Quantitative methods focus on using structured research instruments to make objective measurements, classify features, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed in the pursuit of numerical data or statistics of a sample, followed by the analysis of the sample, and ending in a generalization across a population; these generalizations can predict future results and investigate relationships and associations (Babbie, 2010; Brians, 2011; McNabb, 2008). This quantitative approach was relevant to this study in that it addressed Research Questions 1 and 2 and assisted in providing

insight into whether social-emotional literacy intervention had an impact on disciplinary and attendance rates.

In order to gather the information needed to conduct statistical analysis, archival data were collected from the two schools, and chi-square, one-sample t tests, and correlation statistical techniques were employed to determine whether students who experienced the social-emotional intervention program had statistically significant outcomes and correlations of significance to answer the first two research questions as to whether the program impacted student referral, suspension, expulsion, and attendance rates.

Chi-square test of significance. This test of significance sought to discover whether there was an association between student attendance in the program and student referral, suspension, expulsion, and attendance rates at the school.

1. Was there an association between social-emotional intervention program attendance and improved student discipline?
2. Was there an association between social-emotional intervention program attendance and improved overall school attendance?

One-sample t tests. These tests of significance sought to discover whether attending the social-emotional intervention program had an impact on student attendance and discipline rates.

1. Was there a statistically significant difference in individual student discipline rates before and after the social-emotional intervention program?
2. Was there a statistically significant difference in student truancy rates before and after a social-emotional intervention class?

Correlation. This statistical technique sought to determine the following: Is there a correlation between the number of social-emotional intervention program sessions and the number of referral, suspensions, and expulsion entries in each student’s disciplinary record following social-emotional intervention program participation?

Population

A population consists of an entire group of things from which one may draw information and then conclusions (Easton & McCall, 2014). The social-emotional program under consideration in this study is offered throughout San Diego County to at-risk students in Oceanside, San Marcos, Vista, Carlsbad, and San Diego school districts as well as in the San Diego Juvenile Justice and Community Court Schools, which numbers approximately 500 students. The population of this study is at-risk students Grades 9-12 in a district in San Diego County, and the teachers, counselors, and administrators in these schools in order to obtain their perception of the students’ experience. Teachers, counselors, and administrators range in age from 24 to 65 and have a variety of experiences in their backgrounds with social-emotional learning; some have cofacilitated social-emotional learning, while others have referred students to the program, and their educational backgrounds range from bachelor’s to doctoral degrees.

Sample

Qualitative Sampling Techniques

A sample is a selection of members selected from a population or an entire group. By examining samples, researchers are able to draw inferences and conclusions about the population (Easton & McCall, 2014). Ten adults with familiarity with the program—including administrators, counselors, and teachers—with experience with the social-

emotional intervention as an alternative to suspension and expulsion were interview participants. These staff members worked at the two selected high schools within one San Diego County district with both schools offering the social-emotional intervention program.

The study sample was drawn from two high school locations from a district in San Diego County that housed this study’s social-emotional intervention program. This district’s high school students lived in a thriving, diverse community. The population of the city was approximately 93,834 in a land area of 18.68 square miles, as reported in the 2010 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). At the time of this study, the city had a large Hispanic community representing 48% of the city’s population, while the White, non-Hispanic population represented 40.8% of the population (City of Vista, 2014). The district served more than 22,000 students from preschool to 12th grade and was 39 square miles, encompassing part of four cities: Vista, Oceanside, Carlsbad, and San Marcos. The district itself was incredibly diverse, with more than 6,000 students who were learning English as a second language with more than 3,000 in special education. Overall student body population in the district is reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Ethnicity of Students

American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/ no response
%	3%	1%	1%	60%	4%	28%	3%

Additionally, 58% of this district's student population qualified for free lunch, 24% were English learners, and 10% were homeless (Vista Unified School District, 2012-2013). As evidenced by Table 2, Latino students dominate the ethnicities in this district. In contrast, Hispanic students make up 44.1% of the students in the county and 49% of all students in the state of California (California Department of Education, 2013).

A broad level of student demographics in Grades 9-12 were represented in social-emotional intervention on the high school campuses including English language learners as well as students of color. The student participant ages ranged from 14 to 18.

Qualitative Sampling Techniques—Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators

Qualitative samples should be large enough to ensure that important areas of study are covered, yet if the sample is too large, the data can become overwhelming and repetitive; therefore, sample size should generally follow the concept of saturation in that if the collection of new information does not produce significant new information, the research has reached the saturation point. In this case, that sample size is 10, which is one of the most common sample sizes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2010). Teachers, counselors, and administrators were chosen for participation using purposive sampling first, followed by convenience sampling techniques. The researcher approached teachers, counselors, and administrators who were directly involved with the program on campus, including assistant principals who referred students to the program and counselors and teachers who cofacilitated the program and who had an intimate knowledge of the social-emotional intervention program. These teachers, counselors, and administrators included those that directly referred students to the social-emotional intervention program and the cofacilitators of the social-emotional intervention program. Ten faculty members who

expressed an interest were selected for interview. These individuals were given research agreements prior to being interviewed and interviews were conducted in person at a location of the participant's choice by the researcher. By interviewing each subject on her or his experience with the social-emotional intervention program, the researcher identified trends and patterns of her or his perception of how the program impacted students the most.

The overall sample of administrators, teachers, and counselors who were selected for this study is depicted in Tables 3 and 4. All faculty listed had knowledge of the purpose and content of the program, were trained on social-emotional literacy, and were provided with an orientation. Two administrators were interviewed; their ages were 54 and 30. The former had over 20 years of experience at the elementary, middle, and high school level, while the latter had 7 years of experience at the high school level; both obtained master's degrees and had been involved in social-emotional literacy learning, as they made student referrals to the program based upon student need. The six interviewed teachers' ages ranged from 29 to 65, and their education levels ranged from bachelor's to master's degrees. All had referred students to social-emotional literacy instruction and/or had students on their caseload or in class participating in the program.

Table 3

Ethnicity of Administrators

American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/no response
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%

Table 4

Demographics of Administrators, Counselors, and Teachers

American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/no response
%	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%	80%	0%

Quantitative Sampling—Archival Data

Archival data are any data that are collected for research that are either public or private; in the case of this research study, the archival data are private (Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences University of Virginia, 2012). After the researcher secured school principal permission to access student archival data, 50 students (approximately 10% of the total program population in San Diego County and representing four social-emotional learning groups enrolled since the beginning of the year) who were enrolled in social-emotional intervention were selected for this study of archival data in an effort to examine the impact of social-emotional intervention upon discipline and attendance rates. These students were those who were at risk due to academic failure, suspension, and dropout due to their disciplinary record indicators, but who were given a social-emotional learning program as an alternative to traditional discipline.

The sample in this study was randomly drawn from two schools housing the socio-emotional program in the district including all program participants since the beginning of the year. According to Williams (2004), if the sample size is larger than 40, one may reliably employ a variety of statistical measures, including *t* tests, chi-square tests of association, and correlation (Williams, 2004). Larger samples have an advantage

over smaller samples in that the larger the sample, the greater the possibility the sample will be more representative of the population. Large sample sizes produce less variability and produce a number closer to the actual parameter(s) in the population (Yates, Moore, & McCabe, 1999).

Because the study sought to discover whether social-emotional intervention affected at-risk student referral, suspension, expulsion rates, attendance, relational aggression, depression, and connection rates, the study sample was necessarily at-risk students who were defined as being “at risk” if they came from a diverse background, were from a low socioeconomic background, had been involved in crime, suffered from drug or alcohol addiction, were at risk of dropping out, or had any combination of any those risk factors (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2001). A sample is a subset of a population (Williams, 2004), and this study sample drew from two high schools in the school district that were offering the same social-emotional intervention program.

Instrumentation

For this study, there was one instrument that was used to record the data to examine how a social-emotional intervention program impacted student discipline rates (referral, suspension, and expulsions), attendance, connectivity, student attitudes toward school, and resiliency skills in at-risk secondary students; this instrument includes the interview questions located in Appendix A.

Ten interview sessions were conducted with eight faculty members from selected sites on the impact social-emotional intervention had on students (Appendix A). Finally, archival data were examined with 54 students as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5

Participants

Participants	Data collection	Description of participants	Number in group
Educators	Interviews	Staff	10
Students	Archival data	“At risk” students	54

Instruments

Prior to staff interviews, the researcher tested the validity and reliability of the interview questions via a trial interview period with a similar population prior to doing the research. According to Williams (2004), validity refers to the question of whether or not two different variables are measuring the same thing. For this research study, the faculty interview questions listed in Appendix A were designed based on a consensus of the authors derived from the literature review as outlined in the research, concepts, and contexts in the Chapter II Literature Matrix in Appendix B, specifically the research cited under Secondary Level Support Program for At-Risk Youth (The Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Berger, 2011; Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2011; Bowers, 2002; Crone & Homer, 2003; Crone et al., 2004; Croninger & Lee, 2001; Esbensen et al., 2012; Filter et al., 2007; Flay & Alred, 2003; Hawken & Horner, 2003; Hawken et al., 2004; Highland, et al., 1999; High School Survey of Student Engagement, 2006; Knesting, 2008; March & Horner, 2002; Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2009; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Mazzotta-Perretti, 2009; Moore, 2007; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Stevens, 2012; Walker et al., 1996).

According to Williams (2004), reliability refers to the question of how consistent a measurement procedure is across different administrations. To test the reliability of the

research questions, the researcher tested the interview questions with two faculty members to determine if they were able to understand and answer the questions. These questions, which are listed in Appendix A, gathered the data this research study was seeking to collect. These faculty members were chosen using the same procedure as the sample, which included using a random selection process; questions were delivered in a private setting selected by those answering the interview questions to ensure confidentiality and enhance the comfort level of the participant.

Instrument: Adult Interview

The purpose of this instrument was to interview and assess the educators' experience of their students' change in behavior since participating in the social-emotional intervention program. Administrator, counselor, and teacher questions are found in Appendix A; the Faculty Consent form is found in Appendix B.

Consents

For adult faculty interviews, the interview process was explained; at this session, the project, safeguards, and issues of confidentiality were explained to students, and they were informed of the research process project, safeguards, and issues of confidentiality via an information meeting, e-mail, and information sheet. The adults signed the consent form themselves.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

An IRB is a committee that performs ethical reviews of proposed research (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). The IRB process ensures protection for all research subjects including vulnerable populations. Potential risks for those participating in this research study are described in the following section.

There were some potential minor risks to the adult participants of this study, including loss of time (approximately 45 minutes), recalling distressing events/unhappy rumination about student school connection and conflict/social life, discomfort with some questions and concerns regarding privacy. The following strategies were offered for each point of risk: The interview results were kept anonymous; verbal and written reminders were provided to seek counselor or administrative support if any risks came to light; and contact information was provided if there were questions regarding the researcher and her work. Finally, reminders were provided that participation in the study was voluntary and the participants could withdraw at any time without any effect on their academic standing.

Documentation was kept confidential, and only the researcher had access to the data for analysis purposes. Data from the archives were kept in a password-protected Google document, while taped interviews were kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home, and only the researcher had a key to the cabinet. When research results were reported, there were no identifiers connected to the results. Pseudonyms were used for the research site and for reporting all survey results.

Data Collection

In this research study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. The following sections describe the methods of data collection, data analysis, limitations, and risks.

The researcher interviewed administrators, counselors, and teachers with intimate knowledge of the program; all had been trained on the program's purpose and content, and many had cofacilitated the program and experience/relationships with the at-risk

students themselves. Only those who signed the consent form were interviewed. Faculty were asked to participate in a short interview and made arrangements to meet faculty interviewees at a location of their choice; interviews were conducted at each school site in a private room. Interviews were digitally taped, and this was explained on the consent form and in person. Recordings were transcribed by the researcher for data analysis. The consent form explained how confidentiality and the taped data would be protected. Study timelines are described in Table 6.

Table 6

Faculty and Student Interview Schedule

Interview	Participant	When conducted
School 1 interview	Administrator, cofacilitator, special ed case manager, general ed teacher	January, Week 4
School 2 interview	Administrator, cofacilitator, special ed case manager, general ed teacher	January, Week 4

Data Analysis

Quantitative significance tests and inference procedures were performed in order to determine what, if any, impact social-emotional intervention had upon student discipline and attendance rates, while qualitative research was conducted via analysis of faculty interview to examine the impact the program had upon student aggression, attitude, resilience, and connection.

Quantitative Analysis

Chi-square test of association. The first goal of the quantitative analysis was to conduct two chi-square tests of association: (a) to determine if there was an association

between attendance in the school's social-emotional intervention program and the at-risk students' disciplinary rates, as evidenced by student archival data; and (b) to determine if there was an association between social-emotional intervention program attendance and improved overall school attendance. Chi-square tests of significance are nonparametric statistical procedures used to determine the significance of differences between groups comparing what is observed against what is expected (Starnes, Yates, & Moore, 2010).

One-sample proportion *t* tests. The second point of quantitative analysis was to conduct matched paired *t* tests to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in individual student discipline rates before and after the social-emotional intervention program, and to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in student truancy rates before and after the social-emotional intervention class. For this data, quantitative methods were employed to carry out matched paired *t* tests in an effort to determine if the suspension and expulsion rates were less in the at-risk student following participation in social-emotional intervention than before participating in social-emotional intervention. *T* tests can be used when there are two sets of data (before and after) and the researcher wishes to compare the mean score on some continuous variable (Pallant, 2010).

Correlation study. In a bivariate correlation study, researchers obtain scores from two variables for each subject and then use the pairs of scores to calculate a correlation coefficient. Correlation coefficients are widely used in research and are indices of relationships (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For these data, quantitative methods were employed to determine whether or not there was a correlation between an independent and dependent variable, in three separate cases. The independent variable in

all three cases was the number of social-emotional intervention program sessions; the dependent variable in three separate correlation calculations was that of number of referral, suspensions, and expulsion entries in each student's disciplinary record following social-emotional intervention program participation.

Qualitative Analysis

Because this study utilized qualitative data, the researcher triangulated the information collected in order to accurately depict multiple viewpoints, and schema theory was used to view and filter the results of the qualitative data collection (Patton, 2002). Following data collection and coding, logical analysis was employed through the lens of schema theory to determine how students' prior knowledge and experience influenced their acquisition of new knowledge. In this research, this meant that the researcher was looking for evidence of students' recreating new schemas of behavior following program experience, or linking together schemas already learned in new ways as a result of the social-emotional literacy program (J. Anderson, 1977; "Learning Theory-Schema Theory," 2014; Wiseman, 2008).

Data triangulation was accomplished through interviews, archival data analysis, and member checks. Member checks are when data and conclusions are tested with those who provided the data, can provide an opportunity to assess what the interviewees planned to do through their actions, and allows them to correct their own accounts and to have the opportunity to assess the findings (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To successfully achieve this aim, this study sought to identify themes and trends through qualitative data coding using the software program NVIVO, and inductive logical analysis was used to identify emergent patterns in the data. Finally,

phenomenological analysis was used to grasp and elucidate the meaning of the lived experience of the at-risk students depicted in the data (Patton, 2002).

The staff interviews were conducted, recorded, then transcribed with 10 members of staff who were intimately acquainted with the program and could describe what they thought about the program and its impact upon at-risk students. The resulting transcripts were coded by the researcher, as described in the next section.

This research study achieved reliability and validity in the data through data and methodological triangulation. In data triangulation, different sources of information were incorporated from participant interviews, archival data review, and member checks and were synthesized to identify differences and similarities in the data. In methodological triangulation, multiple qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to study social-emotional intervention impact. By comparing the results from the data, the researcher ensured that reliability and validity was established (Patton, 2002).

Limitations

For the statistical analysis portion of this study, the data were derived from a matched-pairs experiment and chi-square tests of association. As such, inferences were made about a single population, the population of all differences within matched pairs (Yates et al., 1999). Inference procedures for comparing two samples assume that the samples are selected independently from each other, but this assumption does not hold when the same subjects are measured twice (Yates et al., 1999). Therefore, this assumption was not made in the case of the matched-pairs one-sample t statistical test.

Assumptions that should be checked prior to conducting a matched pairs t test include that the sample was a simple random sampling, but in this case, the sample was

not a simple random sample as there was selection bias in favor of students who are actually at-risk of suspension, expulsion, or dropping out. Although any student can request to participate in social-emotional intervention, the majority of those enrolled were targeted by administration and counseling (hence the simple random sample condition does not apply). The results therefore may not be applicable to a broader population of at-risk students, particularly those who have not participated in this specific program.

Next, because students were told at the beginning of social-emotional intervention that they do not have to continue to participate for the entire 8-week course, those who were not enthusiastic about the program may not have stayed the course of the program, possibly contributing to a false sense of efficacy in the program's final results. Final results include close examination of student archival data (prior to and following the program) including truancy and disciplinary rates, and student interview feedback regarding their connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency skills, and relational aggression rates following participation in social-emotional intervention. Further, students who missed more than three of the program's eight sessions were eliminated from the study. Because of this, it may give a false sense of security as to the program's efficacy. It may be difficult to generalize the results of this study to other at-risk students due to the individualized nature of the at-risk student and due to the individualized influences upon those students to complete the course. However, the study provides important information about programs that may be appropriate for other at-risk students.

Summary

Having presented the study's research design, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, analysis, and limitations, the results of this study are

discussed in the next chapter in relation to the school's at-risk population and the impact of involvement in a social-emotional literacy program.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This study was a mixed-methods study, employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure that the data collected would provide a rich and varied source of information for responding to the data elicited from the research questions. This approach fits this research study due to the nature of the design, which includes not only an examination of the quantitative discipline and attendance archival data but also the qualitative or human experience of the social-emotional intervention through interviews with administrators, counselors, and teachers.

The first approach in this mixed-methods study was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through qualitative methods. Qualitative research is one of the two methods this research employed as the researcher aimed to use adult perceptions to gain a more thorough understanding of how the social-emotional program impacted students and staff. This qualitative approach was relevant to this study in that it provided insight into the perspectives of staff relative to the acquisition of emotional literacy through program participation as well as through the impact of this participation.

Researchers and audiences operating from the perspective of traditional scientific research criteria, and who view the world through the lens of social construction, emphasize qualitative inquiry as both science and art and mix the two motifs (Patton, 2002). Because this study utilized qualitative data, the researcher triangulated the information collected in order to capture and report multiple perspectives rather than seek a singular truth (Patton, 2002). There were several reasons for this. According to Patton (2002), those engaged in qualitative inquiry as a form of critical analysis aimed at social

and political change, as this project sought to do, eschew any pretense of open-mindedness or objectivity; they take an activist stance (Patton, 2002). Additionally, unlike the traditionally aloof stance of basic researchers, evaluators of social and political programs are challenged to take responsibility for the use of those programs. Therefore, implementation of a utility-focused, feasibility-conscious, propriety-oriented, and accuracy-based evaluation requires situational responsiveness, methodological flexibility, multiple evaluator roles, political sophistication, and substantial doses of creativity to ensure that an activist stance is not what comes across in the study (Patton, 2002). Therefore, in order to successfully achieve this aim, this study sought to identify themes and trends through qualitative data coding.

The next approach in this mixed-methods study was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through quantitative methods. This approach was relevant to this study in that it sought to provide insight into whether social-emotional literacy intervention had an impact upon discipline (expulsions, suspensions, and referrals) and attendance rates. In order to conduct a statistical analysis, archival data were collected from the two schools, and chi-square, matched pair *t* tests, and correlation statistical techniques were employed to determine whether students who experienced the social-emotional intervention program had statistically significant outcomes and correlations of significance to answer the first two research questions as to whether the program impacted student referral, suspension, expulsion, and attendance rates.

This chapter reviews this study's purpose statement, research questions, research methods, data collection procedures, population, and sample. It then presents the study's sample demographics and presents and analyzes the quantitative data as a result of the

statistical testing and correlation on the student archival data. Finally, this chapter presents a qualitative analysis of the coding that resulted from the educator interviews.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk youth Grades 9-12 in secondary high schools' 8-week-long emotional literacy class through Project AWARE, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates.

Research Questions

The following are this study's principal research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in referral, suspension, and expulsion for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?
2. Is there a significant difference in attendance for at-risk students following the social-emotional literacy program experience?
3. What are teacher, counselor, and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of social-emotional literacy instruction on improving problem behavior within the classroom?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

In order to gather the information needed, 10 interviews were conducted and recorded in an effort to explore these themes. The researcher interviewed administrators, counselors, and teachers with intimate knowledge of the program. All had been trained on the program's purpose and content, and many had cofacilitated the program and experience/relationships with the at-risk students themselves. The interviews gathered

staff feedback regarding program impact through administrator, counselor, and teacher interviews using the instrument in Appendix A (Faculty Interview Questions). Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder, and recordings were transcribed by the researcher and stored in password protected digital files for data analysis (Appendix A). Next, the transcription from the interviews was coded in NVIVO, a software program used to code qualitative data, on the impact of social-emotional literacy in NVIVO.

Data Coding

Coding is the development and use of a language that is used to transfer data from the instrument that was employed in the data collection process to a “codebook” or directly to the computer in a form that is appropriate for data analysis and reporting results (“Coding and Entering Data,” 2013, p. 1). Several themes were identified through the coding process with NVIVO, the program used in the data coding process. The codes that were generated from the pattern of initial codes included positive behavior support, communication, connection, emotional literacy, adult impact, empowerment, new tools, program expansion, recovery, resiliency, safety, and self-esteem. Based upon this initial pattern, a shorter list of codes was created, including resilience, safety, emotional literacy, empowerment, and mindset shift in adults.

The next approach in this mixed-methods study was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through quantitative methods. This quantitative approach was relevant to this study in that it addressed Research Questions 1 and 2 and assisted in providing insight into whether social-emotional literacy intervention had an impact upon disciplinary and attendance rates.

Population

A population consists of an entire group of things from which educators may draw information and then conclusions (Easton & McCall, 2014). The subset of the population from which the study sample was drawn included at-risk students attending North and Central San Diego County public and alternative high schools and the teachers, counselors, and administrators in these schools who were familiar with the social-emotional intervention program that is the focus of this study.

Sample

The study sample was drawn from two high school locations from a district in San Diego County that housed this study's social-emotional intervention program with students in Grades 9-12 represented in social-emotional intervention including English language learners as well as students of color. Student ages ranged from 14 to 18 years, and there were 54 students in the sample from the archival data used for statistical analysis for the quantitative portion of the study. Ten teachers, counselors, and administrator participants were drawn from the same two high school locations, ranging in age from 31 to 54 years with a variety of experiences related to social-emotional learning, and these interviews were used for coding qualitative data. Some had cofacilitated social-emotional learning and some had referred students to the targeted intervention program. The educational background of the adult participants ranged from bachelor's to master's degrees, and there were 10 adult participants with ages ranging from 31 to 54. These staff members worked at the two selected high schools within one San Diego County district with both schools offering the social-emotional intervention program.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators were chosen for participation using purposive sampling first, followed by convenience sampling techniques. The researcher approached teachers, counselors, and administrators who were directly involved with the program on campus, including those who referred students to the program and counselors and teachers who cofacilitated the program and who had an intimate knowledge of the social-emotional intervention program. Each school had a “point person” in charge of social-emotional literacy instruction; those program administrators were surveyed to obtain names of those faculty members who were involved with the program facilitation and/or administration of the program. At one school, the researcher e-mailed each of these faculty members and set up individual interviews; at another school, the school principal arranged the interviews for this research.

Before the interview, each interview participant was e-mailed an invitation to participate and the Research Participant’s Bill of Rights. Once the researcher scheduled the interviews, the researcher met the interviewee in person, the interviewee was given the Administrator/Counselor/Teacher Consent Form, and the study was explained. After securing written and verbal consent, the interviewee was then interviewed.

After the researcher secured school principal permission to access student archival data, archival attendance and discipline data from 54 students who were enrolled in social-emotional intervention were selected for this study. This was the total population of students enrolled in social-emotional literacy instruction at the school sites. Out of this 54, only 37 students finished the program, so this comprised the final sample size as many students had transferred out of the school. Therefore, this was the criterion for

selection of the final sample size, and it was these students' data that comprised the final sample.

Demographic Data

It was important to compare the school's overall demographics with the at-risk population in social-emotional literacy instruction in order to see if there were any trends in the at-risk population being served. Additionally, the demographics of administrators, counselors, and teachers who participated in the study are also described and were measured by ethnicity and age (see Tables 7-11).

Table 7

Race/Ethnicity of Administrators, Counselors, and Teachers

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/ no response
<i>N</i>	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	0
%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%	80%	0%

Note. Totals do not add up to 100%, as Hispanic as an identifier is an ethnicity, not a race.

Table 8

Age of Administrators, Counselors, and Teachers

	31-40	41-50	51-60
<i>N</i>	3	1	6
%	30%	10%	60%

Table 9

Race/Ethnicity of Social-Emotional Literacy Instruction Student Sample (Archival Data)

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/ no response
<i>N</i>	1	0	2	0	37	5	9	0
%	2%	0%	4%	0%	69%	9%	17%	0%

Note. Totals do not add up to 100%, as Hispanic as an identifier is an ethnicity, not a race.

Table 10

Race/Ethnicity of School A Students (Archival Data)

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/ No Response
<i>N</i>	270	74	49	73	1,416	147	1,351	491
%	11%	3%	2%	3%	58%	6%	55%	20%

Note. Totals do not add up to 100%, as Hispanic as an identifier is an ethnicity, not a race.

Table 11

Race/Ethnicity of School B Students (Archival Data)

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White (not Hispanic)	Multiple/ no response
<i>N</i>	51	2	2	4	175	10	98	48
%	24%	1%	1%	2%	81%	5%	45.6%	22.3%

Note. Totals do not add up to 100%, as Hispanic as an identifier is an ethnicity, not a race.

As evidenced by this demographic ethnicity breakdown in Tables 7-11, the two groups that make up the largest group in the social-emotional at-risk group sample are Hispanic and White students, followed by African American students. Additionally,

White educators over the age of 50 make up the majority in the administrator, counselor, and teacher group.

Presentation and Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this research study was to assess the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk students. At the selected schools from which data and participants were drawn, the social-emotional literacy program used was Project AWARE; therefore, this specific program was referenced by interview participants. The research questions that follow sought to determine if social-emotional literacy instruction has an effect on at-risk students, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates. Both qualitative and quantitative (mixed methods) were used to address Research Questions 1 and 2 while only qualitative methods were used to answer Research Question 3. In all statistical testing cases—including chi-square and matched pair t testing—the significance level of .10 was employed; if the p -value was as small or smaller than this level, it was concluded that the data were statistically significant at that level, as there would be such strong evidence against H_0 , that it would not happen by chance by more than 10% of the time. Using significance levels above 0.10 can be rather risky in that the evidence is not generally considered to be particularly strong against the null hypothesis, whereas using significance levels equal to or lower than .10 is considered safer and a stronger level of evidence is needed in order to prove the alternative hypothesis (Starnes et al., 2010).

Data Analysis: Research Question 1

This study's first principal research question was, "Is there a significant difference in at-risk referral, suspension, and expulsion for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?"

Chi-square tests of association: Test 1. For the first test of significance, a chi-square test of association, a two-way table with two categorical variables was used to classify the data. The first variable classified the number of subjects according to social-emotional literacy completion (defined as those who did not miss more than three sessions in an 8-week program) and the second variable classified whether or not the students' overall discipline improved, which was a holistic measurement that looked at each student's discipline to observe whether or not the students had more student discipline entries in the prior semester than the semester following social-emotional program completion. The two-way table that follows summarizes the observed data, which tests if the two variables (program completion and improved discipline) are related to each other (see Tables 12 and 13).

H_0 . There is no relationship between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student discipline.

H_a . There is a relationship between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student discipline.

Although the sample is not a simple random sample, this study achieved a near-census of the sample pool, making the data representative, and each student independent of each other. However, the condition that no more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 is violated. Therefore, although the significance test was employed, accuracy

Table 12

Observed Values: Completed Social-Emotional Literacy Program/Improved Student Discipline

Observed values	Completed program	Did not complete program	Totals
Yes, improved student discipline	32	1	33
No, discipline stayed the same or did not improve	5	8	13
Totals	37	9	46

Table 13

Expected Values: Completed Social-Emotional Literacy Program/Improved Student Discipline

Expected values	Completed program	Did not complete program
Yes, improved student discipline	26.5435	6.4565
No, discipline stayed the same or did not improve	10.4565	2.5435

of the results is not guaranteed and presents a limitation of the results due to the lack of randomness and possible influence factor. The chi-square test revealed there is strong association between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student discipline, $\chi^2 (1) = 20.29, p < .05$, so there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student discipline.

Matched pairs *t* tests: Test 2–Test 4. Matched pairs was employed for the second through fourth tests of significance. Here μ is the mean difference signifying that for the null hypothesis H_0 , no improvement occurred in each of the three separate cases (for discipline, suspensions, and expulsions), while H_a states that there were improvements on average in each of the three categories. In each case, a histogram of the

differences showed that their distribution was symmetric and appeared reasonably normal in shape, a condition of inference for this procedure. In a matched pairs analysis, the population of differences must have a normal distribution because the t procedures are applied to the differences (Starnes et al., 2010). T tests are often used in matched pairs experiments despite there being selection bias. In this study, the selection bias was in favor of students enrolled in social-emotional literacy class, a targeted intervention group, so it is not clear as to exactly what population the results apply, a common occurrence when a simple random sample is not selected from the population (another condition for inference for this statistical procedure). However, in all cases although the sample was not a simple random sample, this study achieved a near census of the social-emotional literacy class pool, which was achieved for two cohorts, making the data representative. The condition that the sample size be over 30 was met in every case. Further, t procedures can safely be used when the sample size is at least 15, except in the case of outliers or strong skewness, as the p -value does not change very much when the assumptions of the procedure are violated (Starnes et al., 2010).

Test 2: Matched pairs t test comparing discipline before and after social-emotional literacy instruction. To test the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction impacts student discipline, 36 subjects' discipline was compared for a 10-week period before and after social-emotional literacy instruction. To analyze the data, student discipline entries were counted prior to social-emotional literacy instruction for a 10-week period, then were counted after social-emotional literacy instruction. The differences in these numbers were then calculated. To assess whether social-emotional

literacy instruction significantly impacted student discipline, the researcher tested the following hypothesis:

Let μ_1 be the mean discipline before social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Let μ_2 be the mean discipline after Project AWARE in each subject. Since the claim is that the need for discipline decreases following social-emotional literacy instruction, the following equation represents that claim: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$. Subtracting μ_2 from one side results in the following equation: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$.

Let $\mu = \mu_1 - \mu_2$, defined as the mean difference in the social-emotional literacy instruction population from which the subjects were drawn. The null hypothesis states that no improvement occurs, and H_a states that improvement in discipline occurs on the average. The null and alternative hypotheses sought to assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly improves student discipline.

It was hypothesized that that the average number of discipline entries would decrease after receiving social-emotional literacy instruction. Raw data are summarized in Table 14.

In the 10 weeks preceding social-emotional literacy intervention, 36 students earned 67 disciplinary incidents; in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy intervention, those same students earned 49 disciplinary incidents, a reduction of 26.87%. Statistical testing produced the following: $t(35) = 1.46$, $p = .077$, $\bar{x} = .4167$, $s_x = 1.7134$, $n = 36$. The p -value is less than the significance level of .10, so the null hypothesis was rejected. There is strong sufficient evidence at the .10 level to conclude that the data support the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction decreases the need for student disciplinary action for these participants.

Table 14

Number of Disciplinary Entries Before and After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of disciplinary entries 10 weeks before the program	Number of disciplinary entries 10 weeks after the program
1	1	0
2	1	0
3	1	0
4	1	1
5	1	0
6	1	0
7	1	1
8	0	0
9	1	1
10	1	0
11	1	3
12	1	1
13	1	2
14	2	1
15	2	3
16	8	8
17	1	0
18	4	4
19	4	4
20	2	2
21	1	0
22	1	0
23	1	1
24	6	1
25	3	1
26	1	0
27	3	0
28	2	2
29	9	6
30	1	0
31	1	6
32	1	0
33	1	5
34	1	0
35	0	0
36	1	0

Test 3: Matched pairs t test comparing suspensions before and after AWARE.

To test the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction impacts student suspension rates, 36 subjects' suspension data were compared for a 10-week period before and after

social-emotional literacy instruction. Ten weeks was chosen to ensure a representative sample as, after 10 weeks, many students had transferred out of the school for a variety of reasons (credit deficiency, moved locations, etc.). To analyze the data, student suspension entries were counted prior to social-emotional literacy instruction for a 10-week period, then were counted after social-emotional literacy instruction. The differences in these numbers were then calculated. To assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly impacted student suspension rates, the researcher tested the following hypothesis:

Let μ_1 be the mean suspension rates before social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Let μ_2 be the mean suspension rates after social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Since the claim is that suspensions decrease following social-emotional literacy instruction, the following equation represents that claim: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$. Subtracting μ_2 from one side results in the following equation: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$. Let $\mu = \mu_1 - \mu_2$, defined as the mean difference in the social-emotional literacy instruction from which the subjects were drawn. The null hypothesis states that no improvement in suspensions occurs, and H_a states that improvement in suspensions occurs on the average. The null and alternative hypothesis seeks to assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly improves student suspension rates.

It was hypothesized that that the average number of suspensions would decrease after receiving social-emotional literacy instruction. Results from the hypothesis testing are shown in Table 15.

In the 10 weeks preceding social-emotional literacy intervention, 36 students earned 19 suspensions; in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy intervention,

Table 15

Number of Suspensions Before and After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of suspensions 10 weeks before the program	Number of suspensions 10 weeks after the program
1	0	0
2	1	0
3	1	0
4	1	0
5	0	0
6	1	1
7	0	0
8	1	0
9	1	0
10	1	2
11	0	0
12	1	2
13	0	1
14	1	0
15	1	0
16	0	0
17	0	0
18	1	0
19	1	0
20	0	0
21	0	0
22	2	0
23	0	0
24	2	0
25	0	0
26	0	0
27	0	0
28	2	0
29	1	0
30	0	0
31	0	0
32	0	0
33	0	0
34	0	0
35	0	0
36	0	0

those same students earned five suspensions, a reduction of 73.68%. Statistical testing resulted in the following: $t(35) = 1.46$, $p = .077$, $\bar{x} = .3714$, $s_x = .7702$, $n = 36$. The p -value is less than the significance level of .10, so the null hypothesis was rejected. This

was a statistically significant outcome with evidence at the .10 level and concludes that fewer suspensions in the population studied following social-emotional literacy class were unlikely to have been caused by chance.

Test 4: Matched pairs t test comparing expulsions before and after social-emotional literacy instruction. To test the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction impacts student expulsion rates, 36 subjects' expulsion data were compared for the entirety of their discipline record. To analyze the data, student expulsion entries were counted prior to social-emotional literacy instruction for any time, then were counted after social-emotional literacy instruction. The differences in these numbers were then calculated. To assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly impacted student expulsions rates, the researcher tested the following hypothesis:

Let μ_1 be the mean expulsion rates before social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Let μ_2 be the mean expulsion rates after social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Since the claim is that expulsions decrease following social-emotional literacy instruction, the following equation represents that claim: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$. Subtracting μ_2 from one side results in the following equation: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$. Let $\mu = \mu_1 - \mu_2$, defined as the mean difference in the social-emotional literacy instruction population from which the subjects were drawn. The null hypothesis states that no improvement in expulsions occur, and H_a states that improvement in expulsions occurs on the average. Thus the null and alternative hypothesis seeks to assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly improves student expulsion rates. It was hypothesized that the average number of expulsions would decrease after receiving social-emotional literacy instruction. Raw data are included in Table 16.

Table 16

Number of Expulsions Before and After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of expulsions 10 weeks before the program	Number of expulsions 10 weeks after the program
1	0	0
2	1	1
3	0	0
4	1	0
5	0	0
6	0	0
7	0	0
8	1	0
9	0	0
10	0	0
11	0	0
12	0	0
13	0	0
14	0	0
15	0	0
16	1	0
17	1	0
18	1	0
19	0	0
20	0	0
21	0	0
22	0	0
23	0	0
24	0	0
25	0	0
26	0	0
27	0	0
28	0	0
29	0	0
30	0	0
31	0	0
32	0	0
33	0	0
34	0	0
35	0	0
36	0	0

In the year preceding social-emotional literacy intervention, 36 students earned six expulsions; in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy intervention, those same students earned one expulsion, a reduction of 83.3%. Results from the hypothesis

testing are the following: $t(35) = 2.3760$, $p = .0116$, $\bar{x} = .1389$, $s_x = .3507$, $n = 36$.

The p -value is less than the significance level of .10, so the null hypothesis was rejected.

There is strong sufficient evidence at the .10 level that there was a positive association between social-emotional literacy instruction and improved expulsion rates for the participants in this study.

Correlation. Three correlation calculations were employed related to Research Question 1 to determine if the number of social-emotional literacy instruction sessions were correlated with student discipline in three separate cases: referrals (discipline entries), suspensions, and expulsions.

Correlation 1. In Correlation 1, the x-variable was the number of social-emotional literacy instruction sessions students attended; the y-variable was the number of referral/discipline entries in the 10 weeks after social-emotional literacy instruction program completion (see Figure 1). Raw data are included in Table 17.

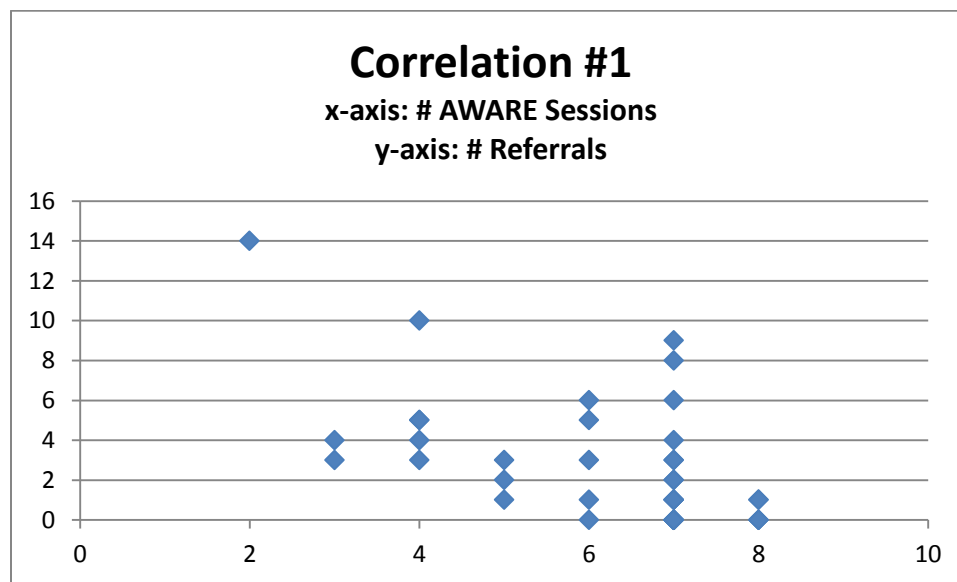


Figure 1. Correlation 1 scatterplot.

Table 17

Number of Social-Emotional Literacy Sessions/Number of Discipline Entries After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of social-emotional literacy sessions	Number of discipline entries 10 weeks after social-emotional literacy program
1	4	5
2	6	1
3	3	4
4	7	2
5	7	0
6	7	1
7	5	1
8	3	3
9	2	14
10	7	0
11	7	1
12	7	9
13	7	0
14	7	1
15	7	0
16	7	3
17	7	1
18	7	2
19	7	3
20	7	8
21	7	0
22	6	5
23	4	10
24	7	4
25	5	2
26	8	1
27	8	1
28	7	0
29	6	0
30	4	3
31	6	3
32	6	6
33	7	0
34	7	6
35	4	4
36	4	5
37	8	0
38	8	0
39	5	3
40	8	0
41	7	0

The scatterplot and correlation coefficient revealed a moderately linear, negative correlation: $a = 10.0033$, $b = -1.1940$, $r^2 = .3311$, $r = -.5754$. This was a moderately negative association between the number of emotional literacy instruction sessions students attended and the number of referral/discipline entries in the 10 weeks following student participation in the program.

Correlation 2. In Correlation 2, the x-variable was the number of social-emotional literacy instruction sessions students attended; the y-variable was the number of suspensions in the 10 weeks after social-emotional literacy program completion (see Figure 2). Raw data are included in Table 18.

The scatterplot and correlation coefficient revealed a weak, nonlinear, negative correlation: $a = .9721$, $b = -.1074$, $r^2 = .0917$, $r = -.3028$. There was weak evidence of an association between the number of emotional literacy sessions and the number of suspensions in the 10 weeks following student participation in the program.

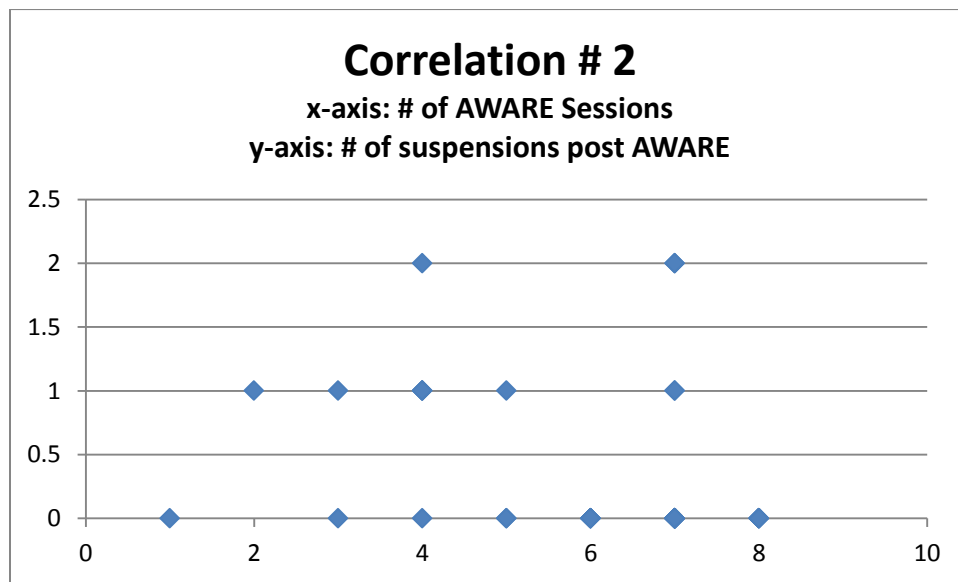


Figure 2. Correlation 2 scatterplot.

Table 18

Number of Social-Emotional Literacy Sessions/Number of Suspension Entries After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of social-emotional literacy sessions	Number of suspension entries 10 weeks after social-emotional literacy program
1	4	2
2	6	0
3	3	1
4	7	0
5	7	0
6	7	0
7	5	0
8	3	0
9	2	1
10	1	0
11	7	1
12	7	2
13	7	0
14	7	0
15	7	0
16	7	1
17	7	0
18	7	2
19	7	0
20	7	0
21	7	0
22	6	0
23	4	1
24	7	0
25	5	0
26	8	0
27	8	0
28	7	0
29	6	0
30	4	0
31	6	0
32	6	0
33	7	0
34	7	0
35	4	1
36	4	1
37	8	0
38	8	0
39	5	1
40	8	0
41	7	0

Correlation 3. In Correlation 3, the x-variable was the number of social-emotional literacy class sessions students attended; the y-variable was the number of expulsions at any time after social-emotional literacy instruction class completion. The scatterplot in this case was not graphable, as every y was zero with the exception of one expulsion (there was only one expulsion following social-emotional literacy class instruction in all the student cases). Raw data are included in Table 19.

The correlation coefficient revealed a weak, nonlinear, negative correlation: $a = .0988$, $b = -.0122$, $r^2 = .0147$, $r = -.1211$. There was no association found between the number of social-emotional literacy instruction class sessions attended and the number of expulsions following social-emotional literacy instruction.

Summary: Research Question 1. The statistical testing data revealed that the social-emotional program did have statistically significant outcomes in terms of reduced disciplinary outcomes following social-emotional literacy training (for expulsions, suspensions, and referrals) that were unlikely to be attributable to chance. However, the correlations revealed only one moderate negative association. No conclusions could be drawn about the relationship between the number of social-emotional literacy instruction class sessions attended and the number of suspensions in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy instruction or the number of expulsions following social-emotional literacy instruction.

Table 19

Number of Social-Emotional Literacy Sessions/Number of Expulsion Entries After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of social-emotional literacy sessions	Number of expulsions after social-emotional literacy program
1	4	0
2	6	0
3	3	0
4	7	0
5	7	0
6	7	0
7	5	1
8	3	0
9	2	0
10	1	0
11	7	0
12	7	0
13	7	0
14	7	0
15	7	0
16	7	0
17	7	0
18	7	0
19	7	0
20	7	0
21	7	0
22	6	0
23	4	0
24	7	0
25	5	0
26	8	0
27	8	0
28	7	0
29	6	0
30	4	0
31	6	0
32	6	0
33	7	0
34	7	0
35	4	0
36	4	0
37	8	0
38	8	0
39	5	0
40	8	0
41	7	0

Data Analysis: Research Question 2

This study's second principal research question was, "Is there a significant difference in attendance for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?"

Chi-square tests of significance: Test 5. For the fifth test of significance, the number of subjects was classified according to social-emotional literacy program completion (defined as those who did not miss more than three sessions in an 8-week program) and then for the second category, whether or not the students' overall attendance improved, which looked at each student's attendance in the 10 weeks before and after social-emotional literacy instruction to observe whether or not the students had more student truancy entries following social-emotional literacy instruction program completion. The two-way tables that follow summarize the observed data, which tests if the two variables (program completion and improved attendance) are related to each other (see Tables 20 and 21).

H_0 : There is no relationship between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student attendance.

H_a : There is a relationship between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student attendance.

Conditions for inference. Although the sample is not a simple random sample, a near census of the social-emotional literacy class pool was achieved, making the data representative, and each student independent of the others. However, the condition that no more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 was violated. Therefore, although the significance test was carried out, accuracy of the results was not guaranteed;

$\chi^2(1) = .557, df = 1.00; p = .456$ is not less than a significance level of .10, so there was insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. There was no statistical evidence to conclude that there was an association between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student attendance.

Table 20

Observed Values: Completed Social-Emotional Literacy Program/Improved Student Attendance

Observed values	Completed program	Did not complete program	Totals
Yes, improved student attendance	8	1	9
No, attendance stayed the same or did not improve	28	8	36
Totals	36	9	45

Table 21

Expected Values: Completed Social-Emotional Literacy Program/Improved Student Attendance

Expected values	Completed program	Did not complete program
Yes, improved student attendance	7.2000	1.8000
No, attendance stayed the same or did not improve	28.8000	7.2000

Test 6: Matched pairs *t* test comparing truancies before and after social-emotional literacy instruction. To test the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction impacts student truancies, 36 subjects' truancy records were compared for a 10-week period before and after the program. To analyze the data, student truancy entries were counted prior to social-emotional literacy instruction for a 10-week period, then were counted after program completion. The differences in these numbers were then

calculated. To assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly impacted student truancy, the researcher tested the following hypothesis:

Let μ_1 be the mean truancy before social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Let μ_2 be the mean truancy after social-emotional literacy instruction in each subject. Since the claim is that truancy decreases following social-emotional literacy instruction, the following equation represents that claim: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$. Subtracting μ_2 from one side results in the following equation: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0$.

Let $\mu = \mu_1 - \mu_2$, defined as the mean difference in the social-emotional literacy population from which the subjects were drawn. The null hypothesis states that no improvement occurs, and H_a states that improvement in attendance occurs on the average. The null and alternative hypotheses sought to assess whether social-emotional literacy instruction significantly improves student truancy.

It was hypothesized that the average number of truancies would decrease after receiving social-emotional literacy instruction. Raw data are included in Table 22.

In the 10 weeks preceding social-emotional literacy intervention, 35 students earned 506 truancies; in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy intervention, those same students earned 525 truancies, a rise of 2.96%. Results from the hypothesis testing are the following: $t(35) = -.2380$, $p = .5934$, $\bar{x} = -.5278$, $s_x = 13.3041$, $n = 36$. The p -value is not less than the significance level of .10, so the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was insufficient evidence at the .10 level to conclude that the data support the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction improves student truancy.

Table 22

Number of Social-Emotional Literacy Sessions/Number of Truancy Entries After Social-Emotional Literacy Program

Student ID	Number of truanancies 10 weeks before social-emotional literacy sessions	Number of truancies 10 weeks after social-emotional literacy program
1	6	10
2	5	5
3	14	18
4	18	23
5	10	5
6	0	8
7	12	14
8	4	3
9	7	19
10	12	12
11	18	25
12	5	0
13	6	12
14	1	3
15	53	60
16	3	1
17	31	62
18	66	34
19	13	9
20	11	1
21	0	0
22	5	6
23	67	14
24	2	8
25	0	0
26	12	30
27	29	30
28	26	46
29	3	3
30	29	23
31	2	5
32	15	11
33	4	5
34	4	4
35	9	12
36	4	4

Summary: Research Question 2. As evidenced by the statistical testing, there was no statistical evidence to conclude that there was an association between social-

emotional literacy program completion and improved student attendance, nor was there sufficient evidence to conclude that social-emotional literacy instruction improves student truancy.

Data Analysis: Research Question 3

The study's third principal question was, "What are teacher, counselor, and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of social-emotional literacy instruction in improving problem behavior within the classroom?" This section presents a qualitative analysis of the program based upon interviews with adults familiar with social-emotional literacy instruction.

Administrator, teacher, and counselor interviews. Questions that were asked of the administrators, teachers, and counselors included the following:

- 1) Please state your name, age, background in education (years, subjects taught, levels), your education, and your experience with social-emotional literacy instruction.
- 2) Tell me about your experience with social-emotional literacy instruction.
- 3) In your opinion, how did participation in social-emotional literacy instruction affect participants?
- 4) How do you feel social-emotional literacy instruction affects students' perception of aggression?
- 5) How has social-emotional literacy instruction impacted student resiliency?
- 6) How has social-emotional literacy instruction impacted student connection?
- 7) How has social-emotional literacy instruction impacted student attitude towards school?

- 8) How satisfied are you with social-emotional literacy instruction? (a) Very satisfied (b) Somewhat satisfied with the school's social-emotional literacy instruction (c) not too satisfied or (d) not at all satisfied?
- 9) Why did you answer the last question the way that you did?
- 10) Do you think the program could be improved? In what ways?
- 11) Based on your experience, what do you feel are the strengths of this program?
- 12) What about weaknesses?
- 13) How, if at all, have you been changed by your exposure to this program?

Data analysis. What follows is a complete and thorough analysis of the data related to the themes identified in qualitative research. First, the interview transcripts, survey responses, and observations were uploaded to NVIVO, and at this time, initial codes were drawn from the data (see Table 23).

“Positive behavior support” was the code assigned to statements that involved correction employing positive methods (i.e., reinforcement of desired behavior over punishment of negative behavior). If an interviewee observed students using communication skills to bring themselves closer to other members of the group during instruction—or observed students sharing their experience with the group—this was coded “communication.” When students were mentioned connecting with staff or other students in a meaningful way (which included being engaged, validated, supported, or accepted), this was coded as “connection.” When students were mentioned having demonstrated empathy or new social-emotional tools for life, this was coded “emotional literacy.” Whenever an adult mentioned the impact or perception shift they had experienced as a result of the program, this was coded “adult impact.” If students gained

Table 23

Emotional Literacy Nodes, Sources, and References

Emotional literacy nodes from NVIVO	Sources	References
Positive behavior support	7	9
Communication	4	4
Connection	8	17
Emotional literacy	8	14
Adult impact (empathy/inspiration)	3	6
Empowerment	4	5
New tools (students learn)	9	9
Other		
(Attendance	1	1
Neutralized peer pressure	1	1
Prevention	1	1
Professional development for teachers	2	2
Missed instruction	2	2
Facilitators need training	2	2
Breaking barriers	2	2
Alternative to suspension	1	1
Worksheets not productive)	2	2
Program expansion	5	5
Recovery	4	5
Resiliency	5	5
Safety (trust, security)	5	5
Self-esteem	4	4

self-esteem and were able to look at their lives or themselves in a positive light, this was coded “empowerment”—and when students were mentioned using different responses to life than they had been used to employing and changing their paradigm of behavior, this was coded “new tools.” When the facilitators mentioned the program needed to include more students and be open to more kids, this was coded “program expansion,” and if an interviewee spoke about students’ feeling relief, or observed them being able to help others through sharing their own story or were able to observe students understanding

their own anger, this was coded as “recovery.” When students were observed displaying resiliency and/or being able to recover from trauma or difficulties, this was coded as “resiliency.” If an interviewee discussed seeing students self-advocate or move into acceptance, this was coded as “self-esteem.” Other themes that emerged in the interviews were noted in Table 23 as “other.”

Through an iterative process, these codes were then further analyzed and categorized into themes. These themes included the following:

Resilience. Several of the educators mentioned that resiliency was a key component of student growth in the program, as was students’ ability to change their reactions to events (recovery), the ability to persevere, take responsibility for their actions, and be accountable for their behaviors. Subject A stated,

Students loved to attend Project AWARE; they felt . . . validated and listened to. I feel that nearly all of my students were able to take responsibility for all of their actions and not be just a victim. Project AWARE definitely helps students become more resilient.”

In another example related to resiliency, Subject F stated:

I think the fact that they have a group where they feel they can share and they feel that they are not alone—it gives them resiliency . . . that’s resiliency, that at least one person that you talk to can help you with problems that you have. The program helps students build resiliency, which gets them through current situations and helps them get a better understanding of their lives in general.

Safety. Educators cited a number of ideas related to the theme of safety, including trust, security, and self-advocacy—creating a safe environment for oneself.

Subject A stated, “The strength of the program was that students learn to advocate for themselves,” while Subject B stated,

It’s a counseling program that has been brought to the campus, for the safety and security of the students to get to know each other better, get to know themselves better, and we give them tools that they can then take outside of that group and apply to their life.

Other examples of statements made by participants that support the theme of “safety” include the following:

I believe their attitudes towards school improves because it gives them a level of safety and security, which leads to a level of trust to us as a staff and reinforces the fact that we are actually on their side and looking out for their best interests as they go through our school and on the way to graduation. (Subject E)

It seems the work of Project AWARE is great at breaking down barriers between kids and kids and adults. As a result, doors are open for conversation for a level of trust that might not otherwise be there . . . it’s not just the hammer coming down, but it’s the teaching of responsibility for decisions. (Subject G)

Emotional literacy. A number of themes emerged for emotional literacy, including connection, communication, empathy, and new social-emotional tools for life.

Subject A stated, “Students were definitely made more aware of how to connect with others including staff members, teachers, and counselors” while Subject B noted,

It taught them also that they’re not the only ones who are going through tough times, so they didn’t feel so alone. I think it changed their behavior with

themselves because they didn't feel like they were just one person struggling against a ton of things in the world.

Related to connection and communication, statements such as the following were coded within the theme of emotional literacy:

Students in the program feel very connected to each other and it extends beyond the classroom and helps them build a connection with those of us staff members that are participating in the program. With those in the program, there are no barriers, and they feel free to talk about whatever they want to talk about . . . they just feel it's a comfortable place to be to connect with other students and talk about real issues. (Subject F)

Connections between students I think is the word that came to my mind when I've had conversations with students who actually demonstrate empathy especially for somebody they didn't like or get along with—and after AWARE, they are able to give them some grace and some understanding and be more patient with them and that leads to a greater degree of trust between individuals. (Subject G)

Empathy was also frequently cited by participants as an outcome of social-emotional literacy instruction. The following is an example of a statement that was coded as empathy and social-emotional literacy:

They can express themselves here and they can just open up to other students, get feedback, and learn they're not alone and that they have other options to guide them into what they can or cannot do. They have learned a lot of empathy and I have seen several of them take matters into their own hands—they talk amongst each other or help each other out and lend a hand. (Subject H)

Empowerment. Educator observation themes that emerged from empowerment included increased self-esteem, and being able to find and employ alternatives to violence. For example, Subjects B and C stated,

It just taught them that violence really isn't the way, gave them a lot of tools in their tool belt . . . instead of just getting high or getting into a fight. I think prior to Project AWARE, students felt that being aggressive was almost like a form of strength. . . . they now feel some empowerment that they didn't feel before. Their whole demeanor changes, their whole sense of self, if you will, changes, because now they have a better sense of self, they understand themselves better than they did before their experience in the program. (Subject B)

Many students couldn't care less about school to start with, but after spending time in AWARE, I've seen them become more confident with themselves, and more positive about where school could help them go . . . a lot of the kids had not received any positive reinforcement that they could be successful and once that starts to happen, we really see the light go on for them. (Subject C)

Mindset shift in adults. Of particular interest is the impact the social-emotional program had upon the adults on the campus. Subject G stated,

The program itself has deepened my empathy and understanding of the students on our campus and their background—and it has deepened the hope factor that I have for work that we can do with kids . . . it has changed me . . . to look beyond the surface . . . and that has helped me probably be a little more patient.

Subject I stated, “I learned a lot of what the kids are going through at home . . . it’s given me a good understanding of where they are and where they come from; it’s given me empathy for them.”

Summary: Research Question 3. Based on the data, teachers, counselors, and administrators felt that students gained valuable skills in the areas of resiliency, had cultivated a strong sense of safety as a result of the social-emotional learning program, and had acquired a new set of social-emotional literacy tools including learning to connect and build relationships with others, learning to communicate, to take responsibility, to cultivate healthy relationships, to develop tolerance and empathy for others, to establish boundaries, and to be accountable for their behaviors. Further, teachers, counselors, and administrators felt that the social-emotional program clearly empowered students and was often cited as a positive behavior support for students, which allowed them to make better choices. Lastly, teachers, counselors, and administrators also consistently reported that the program had impacted their own approach to at-risk students, and had built their own empathy, tolerance, and patience for at-risk students. These acquired skills are all consistent with the goal of social-emotional learning instruction.

Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of social-emotional literacy instruction’s impact on the at-risk population. By examining archival data and identifying trends and patterns in the data, a strong association was found between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student discipline as well as evidence to support the claim that social-emotional literacy

instruction decreases the need for student disciplinary action for participants. There are also statistically significant outcomes that demonstrate fewer suspensions in the population studied following social-emotional literacy class and a positive association between social-emotional literacy instruction and improved expulsion rates for the participants in this study. Due to the small *p*-values in the statistical testing, it is beyond chance there was an association of key variables examined.

Finally, there was a moderately negative association between the number of emotional literacy instruction sessions students attended and the number of referral/discipline entries in the 10 weeks following student participation in the program, yet the data also revealed weak evidence of an association between the number of emotional literacy sessions and the number of suspensions in the 10 weeks following student participation in the program. There was no association found between the number of social-emotional literacy instruction class sessions attended and the number of expulsions following social-emotional literacy instruction, nor was there statistical evidence to conclude that there is an association between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student attendance.

By conducting interviews and identifying trends and patterns in the qualitative data, it was revealed that the educators noted building students' emotional literacy skills resulted in students' tending to feel more connected, safe, and empowered, while student discipline rates were shown to be positively impacted by the program.

The following chapter examines the possible implications of this data for at-risk student populations. This includes suggestions for how the findings of this study might

be used to improve instruction and intervention for this student population as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter covers the major findings of the study (via the three research questions), unexpected findings (of which there were three), conclusions as a result of the study, implications for action, recommendations for further research (including the impact of social-emotional learning on grades, long-term outcomes, juvenile justice impact, professional development for staff, and social-emotional learning for grades not covered, specifically K-8). Finally, this chapter closes with concluding remarks and statements.

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk youth Grades 9-12 in secondary high schools' 8-week-long emotional literacy class through Project AWARE, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates.

The following are this study's principal research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in referral, suspension, and expulsion for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?
2. Is there a significant difference in attendance for at-risk students following the social-emotional literacy program experience?
3. What are teacher, counselor, and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of social-emotional literacy instruction on improving problem behavior within the classroom?

This study was a mixed-methods study, employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The first approach was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through qualitative methods in an effort to use adult perceptions to gain a more thorough understanding of how the social-emotional program impacted students and staff by identifying themes and trends through qualitative data coding. The next approach was to examine the impact of the social-emotional intervention program through quantitative methods in an effort to gain insight into whether social-emotional literacy intervention had an impact upon discipline (expulsions, suspensions, and referrals) and attendance rates. In order to conduct a statistical analysis, archival data were collected from the two schools, and chi-square, matched pair *t* tests, and correlation statistical techniques were employed to determine whether students who experienced the social-emotional intervention program had statistically significant outcomes and to determine in the findings as a result of the data elicited if there were correlations of significance.

For this study, the population was at-risk students Grades 9-12 in a district in San Diego County, and the teachers, counselors, and administrators in these schools in order to obtain their perception of the student's experience. The study sample was drawn from two high school locations from a district in San Diego County that housed this study's social-emotional intervention program with students in Grades 9-12 represented in social-emotional intervention. The student sample participant ages ranged from 14 to 18 years, and there were 54 students in the sample.

Exclusionary discipline is a common tool used by educators to address student misbehavior in schools; suspension and expulsion are a common, accepted response to a

variety of student behaviors, and students of color and those with disabilities are the most negatively impacted by disciplinary policies (Horn & Evans, 2013). In the United States today, the inclusion of social-emotional learning intervention programs as a solution to student trauma is missing from the new Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). Although the new standards address a variety of gaps in this nation's previous state instructional standards, a large gap remains: character and social-emotional education (Freire, 2009; Libbey, 2004).

Because there is currently very little known about the systematic impact of social-emotional literacy training for students at the middle and high school level as a key to combating at-risk behaviors, the purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify and describe the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on at-risk youth Grades 9-12 in secondary high schools' 8-week-long emotional literacy class. The emotional literacy class that was researched was Project AWARE, and this study examined student suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates following Project AWARE intervention class.

The qualitative portion of the study examined the perspectives of administrators, counselors, and teachers on the perceived impact of social-emotional literacy instruction on the population of student participants, while the quantitative portion of the study analyzed archival data and employed chi-square, matched pair *t* tests, and correlation statistical techniques to determine whether students who experienced the social-emotional intervention program had statistically significant outcomes and correlations of significance to determine whether the program impacted student referral, suspension, expulsion, and attendance rates.

The study sample was drawn from two high school locations from a district in San Diego County that housed this study's social-emotional intervention program with students in Grades 9-12 represented in social-emotional intervention. The student sample participant ages ranged from 14 to 18 years, and there were 54 students in the sample.

Major Findings

The research questions sought to determine the extent to which social-emotional intervention impacts at-risk students, particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates. Research Questions 1 and 2 both used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions; Research Question 3 only employed the use of qualitative data, as described in the following sections.

Data Analysis: Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "Is there a significant difference in at-risk referral, suspension, and expulsion for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?" It was hypothesized that average student discipline would decrease overall (as measured by disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions), and results of the quantitative analysis revealed that those involved in the social-emotional instruction program had fewer expulsions, suspensions, and overall disciplinary incidents after the program than before.

The chi-square test revealed that there is a strong association between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student discipline as evidenced by the small p -value ($p < 0.5$) $\chi^2 (1) = 20.29$. There was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between social-emotional literacy

program completion and improved student discipline. Further, in the 10 weeks preceding social-emotional literacy intervention, 36 students earned 67 disciplinary incidents, 19 suspensions, and six expulsions. In the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy intervention, those same students earned 49 disciplinary incidents, a reduction of 26.87%; five suspensions, a reduction of 73.68%; and one expulsion, a reduction of 83.3%. The statistical testing revealed $t(35) = 1.46, p = .077$ for disciplinary referrals indicating there was strong sufficient evidence to conclude that the data support the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction decreases the need for student disciplinary action for these participants. The average number of suspensions decreased after receiving social-emotional literacy instruction, $t(35) = 1.46, p = .077$, indicating sufficient evidence to conclude that the data support the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction significantly improves student suspension rates. Finally, the average number of expulsions decreased after social-emotional literacy instruction, $t(35) = 2.3760, p = .0116$, indicating sufficient evidence to conclude that the data support the claim that social-emotional literacy instruction significantly improved expulsion rates for the participants in this study.

All statistical tests revealed statistically significant outcomes with evidence at the .10 level or less. The statistical tests showed that due to the small p -values associated with the reduced disciplinary incidents in the population studied following social-emotional literacy class, the chance of disciplinary outcomes improving on their own was unlikely to have been caused by chance.

The correlation data produced mixed results. The scatterplot and correlation coefficient revealed only one relationship of note; a moderately linear, negative

correlation between the number of emotional literacy instruction sessions students attended and the number of referral/discipline entries in the 10 weeks following student participation in the program ($a = 10.0033$, $b = -1.1940$, $r^2 = .3311$, $r = -.5754$). The higher the number of social-emotional intervention classes experienced by the student, the fewer discipline entries there were. Another scatterplot and correlation coefficient revealed weak evidence of an association between the number of emotional literacy sessions and the number of suspensions in the 10 weeks following student participation in the program ($a = .9721$, $b = -.1074$, $r^2 = .0917$, $r = -.3028$); the scatterplot and correlation coefficient revealed a weak, nonlinear, negative correlation. Finally, there was no association found between the number of social-emotional literacy instruction class sessions attended and the number of expulsions following social-emotional literacy instruction; the correlation coefficient revealed a weak, nonlinear, negative correlation: $a = .0988$, $b = -.0122$, $r^2 = .0147$, $r = -.1211$.

In summary, the data revealed that social-emotional intervention mostly impacted disciplinary, suspension, and expulsion rates and revealed a moderate correlation with discipline. However, correlation does not imply causation, it simply illustrates that a relationship exists, and further study is needed to determine the extent of the nature of the relationship.

As evidenced by the demographic ethnicity breakdown in Tables 7 through 9, Hispanic and African American students were overrepresented in the social-emotional course of instruction (they comprised 69% and 9% of the student population in the social-emotional course of instruction, while representing only 60% and 4% of the total district student population), while White students were underrepresented in the social-emotional

literacy class (17%) compared to their overall population in the district (28%).

Additionally, White educators over the age of 50 were overrepresented in the administrator, counselor, and teacher group, which does not parallel the ethnicity or racial demographics of the at-risk student population (White students only make up 28% of the student population, and only 17% of the at-risk student population in the social-emotional literacy class).

In summary, the statistical testing data revealed that the social-emotional program did have statistically significant outcomes in terms of reduced disciplinary outcomes following social-emotional literacy training (for expulsions, suspensions, and referrals) that were unlikely to be attributable to chance. However, the correlations revealed only one moderate negative association. No conclusions could be drawn about the relationship between the number of social-emotional literacy instruction class sessions attended and the number of suspensions in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy instruction or the number of expulsions following social-emotional literacy instruction.

Data Analysis: Research Question 2

The second research question asked, “Is there a significant difference in attendance for at-risk students following social-emotional literacy program experience?” For the fifth test of significance, the researcher investigated whether there was an association between student attendance improving and social-emotional intervention program completion. The results were $\chi^2(1) = .557, df = 1.00; p = .456$ is not less than a significance level of .10, so there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, and no statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was an

association between social-emotional literacy program completion and improved student attendance.

The sixth statistical test, a matched pairs t test that sought to compare truancies before and after social-emotional intervention, hypothesized that the average number of truancies would decrease after receiving social-emotional literacy instruction. However, there was insufficient evidence at the .10 level to conclude that the data support that claim, $t(35) = -.2379$, $p = .5933$, $\bar{x} = -.5429$, $s_x = 13.4980$, $n = 36$.

Further analysis revealed that in the 10 weeks preceding social-emotional literacy intervention, 35 students earned 506 truancies; in the 10 weeks following social-emotional literacy intervention, those same students earned 525 truancies, a rise of 2.96%. Results from the hypothesis testing include the following: $t(35) = 2.3760$, $p = .0116$, $\bar{x} = .1389$, $s_x = .3507$, $n = 36$.

As a result, there are no statistically significant findings that demonstrated evidence that social-emotional intervention impacts student truancy rates. It should be noted that the curriculum for social-emotional intervention does not include a truancy or attendance component, so these results were not entirely unexpected.

Data Analysis: Research Question 3

The third research question asked, “What are teacher, counselor, and administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of social emotional literacy instruction in improving problem behavior within the classroom?” The strongest themes that came out of the study are summarized in Table 24.

The improved student ability to connect and build relationships, communicate, and build emotional literacy skills, including the ability to take responsibility, cultivating

healthy relationships with others, developing tolerance and empathy for others, establishing boundaries, and being accountable for their behaviors were the strongest themes that emerged from the qualitative data coding. Social-emotional intervention was often cited as a positive behavior support for students, which allowed them to make better choices, and students were observed by adults to be building resiliency through the acquiring of new tools that the majority of students in the social-emotional intervention class did not have before.

Table 24

Strongest Themes for Research Question 3

Emotional literacy nodes from NVIVO	Sources	References
Positive behavior support	7	9
Communication	4	4
Connection	8	17
Emotional literacy	8	14
Adult impact (empathy/inspiration)	3	6
Empowerment	4	5
New tools (students learn)	9	9
Program expansion	5	5
Recovery	4	5
Resiliency	5	5
Safety (trust, security)	5	5
Self-esteem	4	4

At least half of the adults interviewed cited needing to expand the program beyond its current scope to make it more available. Finally, three teachers, administrators, and counselors reported that their own empathy and understanding of at-risk students was expanded through exposure to the program (a total of six times).

Indeed, through the inclusion of faculty interview, educators can learn how to engage the faculty involved in creating inclusive educational environments and how they can take responsibility for building their own learning and empathy for the at-risk students (Joselowsky, 2007).

Unexpected Findings

There were five unexpected findings that emerged as a result of this study:

1. Social-emotional intervention facilitators need training.
2. Students missing instruction is a problem.
3. Worksheets are ineffective.
4. There are no findings for the impact of social-emotional literacy on depression.
5. There are no findings for impact of social-emotional literacy on attendance.

The first finding was the need for greater social-emotional intervention facilitator training, as cited by at least two educators with experience in the classroom. As one counselor reported,

They don't seem to have much training themselves . . . they could use a lot more training . . . kids will get emotional . . . you need incredible skills to help kids feel and be that authentic,, but they come out a little traumatized and there's not really a change to help the kids transition back into the classroom really well . . . they call it upshifting. That component is often missing.

The second unexpected finding was missed instruction, which was also cited as a problem for at-risk students who were pulled from regularly scheduled classes in order to attend a social-emotional intervention class. As another counselor said,

The logistics of getting them out of class was very problematic all of the years that I saw it; the assignments they missed in class were really hard to make up. Many teachers tried to make concessions but I feel they didn't get the same education as they would have had they been in class.

The third unexpected finding was that some tools utilized within the social-emotional literacy class were cited as ineffective by educators who had been involved in the group, in particular, worksheets. As the same educator mentioned,

I think we could take it to level where we talk about your future and help them develop future goals; maybe do more reflection from week to week and make it a little bit of a tighter program. It feels that sometimes they come in and there's a worksheet but they don't really do the worksheet, they decide to do something else.

The fourth unexpected finding was that no educator mentioned a reduction in depression in students in the at-risk program during the interviews, but the interview questions did not directly ask about this as a student outcome as a result of social-emotional intervention.

The final unexpected finding was that there were no statistically significant outcomes or findings related to the impact of social-emotional literacy on attendance, nor were there correlations found between the number of social-emotional literacy class sessions attended and the number of suspensions or the number of expulsions following social-emotional literacy instruction.

These unexpected findings came about as a result of asking educators to cite weaknesses with the social-emotional program and were limited in scope to these three categories.

Conclusions

This study may shed light on the at-risk school culture and help educators identify the environments, instruction, and support that lead students to feel connected. This, in turn, might assist schools in assisting and maintaining students within their school settings as opposed to expulsion or alternative settings that may not ultimately serve a student who already feels marginalized. Although practice in schools supports the notion that removing disruptive students from school will improve the school climate and appropriately discipline those who have misbehaved, studies replicated across the country have now proven that zero tolerance has not been shown to improve the school setting, the safety of the school, or the disruptive child's behavior, and in fact, lead students into a host of unintended consequences including arrest and incarceration (APA, 2008).

The quantitative data obtained by the study showed that students who completed social-emotional intervention had statistically significant outcomes in average reduction of referrals, suspensions, and expulsions, though the program had no discernible impact upon truancy rates. Based upon this statistical testing, when those same topics were pursued with the educators involved with the program, it emerged from the interviews that social-emotional training provided new adaptive skills for the students who were the subjects of this study, and it is possible that these skills may help to mitigate some of the problems they have historically faced both inside and outside of the school setting; the interviewees perceived the emotional literacy skills students learned to be important to

the students' experience and that the course was beneficial to students. While not all the data were completely positive (namely, the impact the program had upon truancy and a sometime-noted lack of facilitator training), most of the effects of social-emotional intervention were beneficial for at-risk students involved in this study.

As supported by the content of the transcripts and qualitative outcomes in Appendix D, interpersonal relationships between caring individuals are believed to be key to supporting our most at-risk students and thus must return to the forefront, since these data and several studies have shown how students succeed in academic and social pursuits when their relationships are strong (Rich, 2006). The data from this study revealed that when students feel connected and belong at their school, they are more likely to feel safe, more likely to be resilient to life's challenges, and are less likely to engage in disruptive/aggressive ways that result in disciplinary action. As seen in the results of the data and educator interviews, those interviewed perceived that when students learn to navigate the emotional terrain of their lives, are heard, listened to, and guided on appropriate responses to the challenges they face in their lives, students are more successful in general, particularly when they are supported by strong, involved, culturally proficient, connected leaders and educators. This finding corroborates the research that student connection leads to a feeling of empowerment for the school's students (McEwan, 2003). This study further revealed that adult and peer support bolstered the self-esteem and empowerment of at-risk students, and increasing connection in at-risk students, as evidenced by educator interview, which is supported literature on the subject in the field (Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Pianta, 2006; Scales, 1996).

Highly effective schools know that students learn when they are connected and empowered, and learn as individuals, which is why programs like social-emotional intervention can be so effective; they target specific groups of at-risk students who need opportunities for skill-based emotional booster sessions, individual attention, and empathy training (McEwan, 2003). When those positive environments are built for students, at-risk outcomes clearly improve.

However, it should be noted that it may be difficult to generalize the results of this study to other at-risk students due to the individualized nature of the at-risk student and due to the individualized influences upon those students to complete the course. However, the study provides important information about programs that may be appropriate for other at-risk students.

Implications for Action

In today's educational and career marketplace, change is a requirement for continued success (D. Anderson & Anderson, 2010), and to change the condition of disconnection and disenfranchisement for at-risk students and create success, their experiences must be validated. This study illustrates what happens when students are introduced to social-emotional learning that validates their experiences and builds their capacity for handling their emotions. Disciplinary outcomes improve and students learn how to communicate, trust, and improve their capacity to cultivate positive relationships with themselves, their peers, and school faculty, including school leaders in charge of discipline and positive behavior supports when provided the necessary skills and tools.

Building Cultural Proficiency in Educators

Based upon educator interviews, cultural proficiency for at-risk students should be a priority for professional development in schools. Cultural proficiency is a frame of mind and value set that educators need to effectively communicate and relate in cross-cultural environments (Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2005). Schools should work to build an ongoing professional obligation to cultural proficiency in an effort to improve teachers' skills in relating to at-risk students, to support classroom and behavior management, and should also seek to include teachers and paraprofessionals in how to approach behavioral problems at school. Research demonstrates that when school administration works with classroom educators to define classroom and office-level discipline, discipline is more effective (Skiba & Rausch, 2006); however, most schools' go-to response continues to be exclusionary discipline practices. Schools should work together and include a broad community of stakeholders in an effort to employ best practices that will best support the at-risk student.

Teacher Preparation Should Include At-Risk Training

Classroom management and exposure to at-risk student experiences should also be included in teacher preparation programs so that beginning teachers are properly equipped to handle the majority of minor classroom disruptions, to defuse rather than escalate behavioral incidents, and to build empathy in new teachers for the at-risk students' plight. One of the most effective disciplinary strategies is to prevent the occurrence of misbehavior in the first place through culturally responsive classroom behavior management and instruction, engaging instruction, and classroom management, thereby maximizing student opportunity to learn and reducing disciplinary referrals

(APA, 2008; Brophy, 1986; Jones & Jones, 2004). Based upon this study's findings, it has become apparent that teachers need to become versed in social-emotional literacy and incorporate strategies into classroom instruction.

Schoolwide Preventative Measures

According to the APA Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008), teachers should always be the first line of communication with parents and caregivers regarding disciplinary incidents. Regular and continuous contact about less serious behavior, or even positive interactions, is more likely to yield constructive relations between parents and schools than occasional, crisis-centered communication. Further, all prevention and discipline practices should be evaluated to ensure they have a positive impact on student behavior, and schools should work to implement schoolwide preventative measures to improve school climate and connection, including the incorporation of social-emotional literacy classes for students at-risk, which the 10 educators in this study cited as an important part of at-risk student support, empowerment, and success.

Early At-Risk Warning Indicators

School systems should also work on early intervention and develop criteria that identify students who are at risk of dropping out as early as elementary school—as most of the indicators for dropout and/or emotional literacy instruction that currently exist in schools typically only target middle and high school students who are already at risk, failing multiple classes, and have attendance problems. As evidenced by the difficulty in tracking this study's student participants for the archival data portion, many at-risk students move schools, drop out, and are otherwise already in trouble at the time an intervention is assigned. Waiting until students are off track not only does not serve the

students in question, it often is too late to help them stay in school; thus interventions must start as early as elementary school to ensure that students are getting the help and support they need to succeed, and they should be identified before they actually fail.

Because of the stark contrast between what at-risk students require and the systems in place to support early intervention and long-term success, it is clear that at-risk students need more support, and they need it sooner; the rate of disciplinary outcomes in high school and the dropout crisis both support the argument for this need. Students can and should be identified for failure by multiple measures, including attendance rate, grade retention, and discipline. Although many schools and districts employ Response to Intervention (RTI) to help students at the first sign of academic difficulty, many fail to recognize the behavioral difficulties and interventions needed, believing only individual therapy (for a select few) and character education (for the entire student body) is sufficient for students' behavioral needs.

Most schools do not offer social-emotional literacy training for at-risk students as the district in this study provides; this should be a requirement at all schools, to ensure at-risk student needs are served. Although individual therapy and whole-school character education is often provided, it is clear that a middle step is needed to provide instruction in social-emotional literacy instruction, particularly for those at risk. Locke (2010) found that students who were given a voice were the most influential in their abilities to be successful and engaged in high school. Researchers have also found that students who had traditionally been disenfranchised became more engaged in school and found their learning more meaningful when affirmed and given opportunities to have a voice (Giroux, 2009; Kanpol, 1999). According to educator interview, in social-emotional

literacy support group, students' voices are heard—and they become connected, validated, and feel supported.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study identified and described the impact of social-emotional literacy instruction in the areas of suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates. However, the length of time examined for this study, and the breadth of the study, was somewhat limited. Recommendations for further research include the following.

Grades

This study did not examine the impact of social-emotional instruction on grades, which could be a further extension to this study. According to the New York State Education Department (2014) and Booth (2011), resiliency-building, connection, and emotional literacy all impact school discipline, connectivity, and relational aggression rates, but it would be useful to know if they also impact student academic performance.

Long-Term Impact

The timeframe examined for student outcomes (attendance and discipline) was relatively short for this study. At-risk students at the high school level can be difficult to track due to their high dropout and transfer rates due to credit deficiency. Fifteen students dropped out of the two cohorts (many transferred or left the school); the original student sample of 54 was reduced to 39. Further, some students left the school after 10 weeks, hence the shortened study window of 10 weeks that was used to track disciplinary and attendance outcomes. A more in-depth approach could involve tracking students to their next school of residence or to determine whether or if they dropped out, finished,

improved in their behavior, attendance, and so forth. For this reason, researching the sustainability of the results found in this study related to program participation over time with a longitudinal study could add to the body of knowledge this study has contributed to as well as the sustainability across environments beyond the school setting.

Juvenile Justice Impact

Data available for this study were not coupled with referrals to the juvenile justice court system. Because of the severe nature of juvenile justice contact depicted in the literature and the long-term impact on students who are arrested in schools, this too should be examined in San Diego local schools to determine how police in schools impact student futures and academic outcomes. Additionally, examining whether social-emotional instruction results in less contact with the juvenile justice system postprogram would also be of benefit to the research base, as currently, there is very little research tracking such outcomes. Lastly, the research needs to explore how an officer training program or joint police/school program could establish goals for targeted students in social-emotional classes so officers and educators alike receive aligned training to ensure students receive the same messages from all invested authorities.

Student Voice

Another potentially powerful contributor to this research would be the inclusion of student voice into the research. Although the study was able to identify themes through qualitative methods regarding the impact of social-emotional literacy on student outcomes from an adult perspective, it could be useful to compare what students have to say about the impact of social-emotional learning on their lives with educator perspective.

Professional Development for Staff

A theme that reoccurred in the qualitative study was the need for faculty training in social-emotional literacy and the needs of at-risk students. Although some schools may be shifting the paradigm and their approach to school discipline as cited in the literature review, classroom teachers often still expect exclusionary disciplinary practices and harsh consequences for students who misbehave. They, too, need to learn the impact zero tolerance has upon student outcomes, and this mindshift will require education and ongoing program development. The educators in this study referred to their own empathy growing. It would be useful to see how empathy training for the educators who work with at-risk youth impacts students over time. A study in 2009 found that school educators (classroom teachers and principals) do not believe students can overcome family or social issues (Bridgeland et al., 2009). It would therefore be useful to know how a shift in educator approach and mindset could impact students.

Elementary Social-Emotional Learning Impact and Secondary Character Education

It would be useful to further examine how social-emotional learning impacts students at the elementary level. Further, most social-emotional learning programs are not a part of the of the standard general education curriculum, so it would be useful to study the impact a social-emotional program could have if introduced early and/or integrated into every classroom.

Although many character education programs include a social-emotional component, they are not a requirement in schools; the Common Core State Standards do not address this need. It would therefore be useful to examine schools that have schoolwide programs to teach social-emotional literacy against those that do not offer

such programs—to determine the impact specifically upon the at-risk student. Most character education programs remain at the elementary school level when they are employed. Therefore, it would be a significant change to see programs not only put into place at the high school level—but to evaluate the social-emotional literacy program’s impact upon students who are struggling behaviorally.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Currently, there are some schools and programs across the country that try to fill the emotional literacy training gap, though they are not funded by the federal government. As demonstrated by the data in this study, teaching emotional literacy to students and staff has an impact upon at-risk student outcomes particularly in the areas of suspension, expulsion, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency, and relational aggression rates. Researchers now know that the current mainstream approach to at-risk student behavior—the model of exclusionary disciplinary practices—does not succeed in transforming at-risk student behavior. Most students who suffer from an extreme lack of emotional literacy skills are also at risk of failure in school, and high school dropouts do and will continue to have major impacts in America. Navigating unfamiliar academic terrain, and contending with violence in their communities or in the home as well as with drug and alcohol abuse have a direct impact on the achievement of students in the United States and prevent them from reaching their true potential.

If educational institutions continue to employ harsh zero tolerance policies versus counseling, social-emotional group therapy, and restorative practices, this neglect becomes the educational institution’s weak link and ultimately causes failure for both the student and the school. Ignoring the at-risk student crisis will continue to be an issue at

the county, state, and national level as evidenced by this country's resulting dropout crisis, unless national standards address this need (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

Despite there not being standards for emotional literacy in schools, educators still have the responsibility to establish, protect, and cultivate a culture that works to nurture kids and neutralize those factors that take them off track. By educating students on how to respond to their emotions, teachers present solutions to support their youth. An educators' job is to give students the tools they need to resolve their conflicts nonviolently, thereby increasing opportunities for success in life.

As demonstrated by the results of this study, educators need to help at-risk students build a prosocial lifestyle by helping them develop blocks of healthy development through social-emotional learning in order to help students reach the higher stages of Maslow's hierarchy. If schools are to achieve the desired goal of success for all students, they must hold high expectations for all, especially at-risk learners and view these students as having strengths, not deficits. Further, by adopting programs such as Project AWARE, the program under study in this research—and whole-school practices that help all students to achieve their true potential—schools can reduce the marginalization of at-risk youth that are typically handled with unproven strategies such as grade retention, special education, and pull-out programs (Lepper & Henderlong, 2000; Mazzotta-Perretti, 2009; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2000).

Changing the mindsets of educators, as cited by the educators interviewed in this study, will be a key component of transforming the way educators think about supporting at-risk students. By examining a model that infuses emotional literacy instruction and

curriculum as a primary intervention for at-risk students, an empathetic environment can be created in which at-risk students can succeed. Allowing students to share their authentic experiences following emotional literacy training within comprehensive and continuation school settings provides the groundwork for transforming education to better meet the needs of all students.

In order to support this transformation in education that will ultimately incorporate the teaching of emotional literacy skills into U.S. schools, leaders must lead the charge to generate support for reform and be able to challenge the organization to innovate to a better solution (Riggio, 2009). As the research shows, transformational leadership has been shown to have a sizeable influence on collaboration within a community (Liontos, 1992). When such a change in attitude occurs, particularly toward the at-risk student, these students will be better able to navigate the academic terrain, which will benefit the school, the teachers, and of course, those students themselves.

In order to bring about the change educators need to ensure they reach all students, they will need to transform the way they look at education and make emotional literacy skills a national standard. Academic performance and character education are not and should not be perceived as mutually exclusive, and although the current Common Core State Standards continue to ignore the importance of emotional literacy, developmental asset research shows that although student performance and achievement is important—so is personal growth.

As shown by the data in this study, behavioral interventions that teach emotional literacy to students are worth pursuing, as students who have emotional literacy skills pursue their passions and dreams while avoiding discipline and crime. Further, by

educating students on how to respond to their emotions through social-emotional literacy instruction, students gain the tools they need to resolve their conflicts nonviolently, thereby increasing opportunities for success in life. By leading schools toward a transformational solution, educators will no longer move along or expel troubled students like Ricardo to become someone else's problem—but will support, encourage, and nurture every student to a life of support and success—the American dream.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Faculty Interview Questions

- 1) Please state your name, age, background in education (years, subjects taught, levels), your education, and your experience with social-emotional literacy instruction.
- 2) Tell me about your experience with Project AWARE.
- 3) In your opinion, how did participation in Project AWARE affect participants?
- 4) How do you feel Project AWARE affects students' perception of aggression?
- 5) How has Project AWARE impacted student resiliency?
- 6) How has Project AWARE impacted student connection?
- 7) How has Project AWARE impacted student attitude towards school?
- 8) How satisfied are you with Project AWARE? (a) Very satisfied (b) Somewhat satisfied (c) not too satisfied or (d) not at all satisfied?
- 9) Why did you answer the last question the way that you did?
- 10) Do you think the program could be improved? In what ways?
- 11) Based on your experience, what do you feel are the strengths of this program?
- 12) What about weaknesses?
- 13) How, if at all, have you been changed by your exposure to this program?

APPENDIX B

Administrator/Counselor/Teacher Consent Form

Information Sheet

The purpose of this research study is to research an emotional literacy program offered at your school in an effort to assess its effectiveness. Your school currently offers Project AWARE (an emotional literacy intervention/prevention class) in an effort to help at-risk students succeed in school and bring about a greater sense of community, connection, and well-being. (A student is considered “at risk” if they qualify for one or more of the following: earned a referral to the Assistant Principal’s office, were suspended, returned from expulsion, or were referred to administration via teacher or counselor after being identified as a student in need of more support at school). Students are chosen to participate in Project AWARE by a combination of self-selection, teacher, counselor, and administrator referral. Faculty participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and the faculty member may withdraw at any time. Interviews with faculty and students will be taped, with no names included in the taping.

All faculty being interviewed have opinions and feelings about their school and experiences with Project AWARE. This research project will seek to discover whether or not Project AWARE emotional literacy class affects suspension, expulsion, attendance, connectivity, attitude toward school, resiliency skills, and relational aggression rates. This research is social science/behavioral in nature; therefore, although the associated risks are minimal, they still exist. The following details the potential risks in participating in this study:

- Loss of time (ten to fifteen minutes).
- Recalling distressing events/unhappy rumination about student school connectivity and conflict/social life.
- Boredom, frustration, embarrassment. Although the study will be anonymous, some educators may feel discomfort with some questions and experience feelings of invasions of privacy.

Should any of these risks come to light, participants in the study are urged to seek the free guidance of one (or all) of the following:

- 1) School Counselor
- 2) School Assistant Principal

Thank you for your time!

Research will be conducted by Shannon Hampton Garcia, Principal of Bobier Elementary. If you have any questions, you may make an appointment Monday through Friday (7:45–3:30 pm) by contacting her at shannongarcia@vistausd.org or by phone: (760) 724-8501. Faculty sponsor: Krysti DeZonia, Ed.D. Professor, Brandman University. Email: dezonia@Brandman.edu. Phone: (760) 522-6138. IRB Office: (714) 628-7392

Consent Section

I have read the attached "Information Sheet," and give consent to participate in the research study.

Name (signature)

Name (print)

By filling in my email address below, I am indicating that I would like to receive the results of this study via email. Please send the results, when ready, to the following email address:

Email address

APPENDIX C

Chapter II Synthesis Matrix

Theme	Contributing Titles						
Zero Tolerance: Impact and Outcomes	APA, 2008; Bonta & Andrews, 2006-2007; Ewing, 2000; Lipton, Martinson, & Wilks, 1975; Pogarsky & Piquero, 2003; Pratt & Cullen, 2005; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Villettaz, Killias, & Zoder, 2006; von Hirsch, Bottoms, Burney, & Wikström, 1999.						
Zero Tolerance and Suspension/Expulsion	DeVoe et al., 2004; Fabelo et al., 2011; Heaviside et al., 1998; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006; Petras et al., 2011; Schreck et al., 2003.						
Zero Tolerance and Minority/Disabled Youth	<p>Hawley & Ready, 2003; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Warwick & Christensen, 2013.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="524 716 1382 1262"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="524 716 829 783">African American Students</th> <th data-bbox="862 716 1084 747">Latino Students</th> <th data-bbox="1117 716 1382 747">Disabled Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="524 789 829 1262"> APA, 2008; Dillon, 2010; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; C. C. Lee, 1996; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden et al., 1992a; Skiba et al., 2002; Swanson et al., 2003; U.S. Education Department's Office of Civil Rights, 2012. </td> <td data-bbox="862 789 1084 856"> Skiba & Horner, 2009 </td> <td data-bbox="1117 789 1382 1041"> T. Johnson, Boyden, & Pitz; Kim et al., 2010; Losen, 2011; Leone et al., 2000; Stevens, 2012; Verdugo, 2002; Wagner et al., 2005. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	African American Students	Latino Students	Disabled Students	APA, 2008; Dillon, 2010; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; C. C. Lee, 1996; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden et al., 1992a; Skiba et al., 2002; Swanson et al., 2003; U.S. Education Department's Office of Civil Rights, 2012.	Skiba & Horner, 2009	T. Johnson, Boyden, & Pitz; Kim et al., 2010; Losen, 2011; Leone et al., 2000; Stevens, 2012; Verdugo, 2002; Wagner et al., 2005.
African American Students	Latino Students	Disabled Students					
APA, 2008; Dillon, 2010; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; C. C. Lee, 1996; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden et al., 1992a; Skiba et al., 2002; Swanson et al., 2003; U.S. Education Department's Office of Civil Rights, 2012.	Skiba & Horner, 2009	T. Johnson, Boyden, & Pitz; Kim et al., 2010; Losen, 2011; Leone et al., 2000; Stevens, 2012; Verdugo, 2002; Wagner et al., 2005.					
Zero Tolerance, Juvenile Justice System, and the School to Prison Pipeline	ACLU, 2008; APA, 2008; Casella, 2003; Children's Defense Fund, 2007; Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Model Code Working Group, 2009; Resmovitz, 2012; Reyes, 2006; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Stevens, 2012; Rosenzweig & England, 2004; Wald & Losen, 2003.						
Failures of Zero Tolerance	<p>APA, 2008; Pediatrics, 2003.</p> <p>Zero tolerance does not ensure consistent discipline.</p> <p>Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; Kaeser, 1979; Kelly, 2014; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden et al., 1992b; Morrison, Peterson, O'Farrell, & Redding, 2004; Mukuria, 2002; Raffaele-Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Rausch & Skiba, 2005; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2009; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000;</p>						

	<p>Wu et al., 1982.</p> <p>Zero tolerance does not foster higher academic achievement. J. E. Davis & Jordan, 1994; Ewing, 2000; Losen, 2011; Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Roeser & Eccles, 2000; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Warwick & Christensen, 2013.</p> <p>Zero tolerance does not create a safer climate. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014; APA, 2008; Bickel & Qualls, 1980; Scott & Barrett, 2004.</p> <p>Zero tolerance does not change behavior. APA, 2008; Arnett, 1992; Baird & Fugelsang, 2004; Bowditch, 1993; Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Gardner & Steinberg, 2005; Giedd et al., 1999; Hooper, Luciana, Conklin, & Yarger, 2004; Luna, Garver, Urban, Lazar, & Sweeney, 2004; Luna & Sweeney, 2004; Nelson, 2003; Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Sowell, Trauner, Gamst, & Jernigan, 2002; Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996; Zimring, 1998.</p> <p>Zero tolerance is associated with school dropout. Allensworth & Easton, 2005; Balfanz & Herzog, 2005; Barber & Olson, 1997; Bridgeland et al., 2009; Brophy, 1988; Fritz, 2012; Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, 2006; Levin, 2009; Levin et al., 2007; Model Code Working Group, 2009; Monrad, 2007; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001; Princiotta & Renya, 2009; Rouse, 2005; Rumberger, 2011; Scott & Barrett, 2004; Sugai & Horner, 1994; Sweeten, 2006; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006; J. C. Wilson, 2011.</p> <p><i>Dropouts in California.</i> Bowen, 2009; Levin, 2009; J. C. Wilson, 2011.</p> <p><i>Dropouts in San Diego</i> J. C. Wilson, 2011.</p> <p><i>Dropout demographics.</i> Agran et al., 2002; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; A. Davis, 1999; Repetto et al., 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 2007.</p>
<p>Factors that Impact At-Risk Youth</p>	<p>ACLU, 2006; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982</p> <p>Criminogenic Risk Factors American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Bonta & Andrews, 2006-2007; Cepeda, 2011; T. Lee & Breen, 2007; Sedlak & McPherson, 2010.</p>

	<p>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Felitti, 1991, 1993; Gould et al., 1994; McCauley et al., 1997; McGinnis & Foege, 1993; “Mortality Patterns: United States,” 1996; Stevens, 2012; Springs & Friedrich, 1992.</p> <p>Impact of ACE. Felitti et al., 1998; Rivara et al., 1997; Stevens, 2009, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.</p> <p>ACE and multiple risk factors. Cassidy & Bates, 2005; England, 2005; Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode, 1996; Rumberger, 2011; Stevens, 2012.</p> <p>School and justice system response to ACE. The Annie E Casey Foundation, 2011; Rumberger, 2011; Sedlak & McPherson, 2010.</p> <p>Overcoming ACE. Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Deci et al., 2001; Fabelo et al., 2011; Knesting, 2008; Knesting & Waldron, 2006; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Murray & Naranjo, 2008; McIntyre, 2013.</p>
<p>Primary Level Support Programs for At-Risk Youth</p>	<p>The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; APA, 2008; Carneiro & Heckman, 2003; Christensen, 2011; C. Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Gornick, 2002; Inciardi & Saum, 1997; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1999; Suh & Suh, 2007.</p> <p>Lens for Success: Promoting Developmental Assets Dunleavy, 2008; Scales & Leffert, 2004; Scales, Sesma, & Bolstrom, 2004; also see Benson, 2006; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006; Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003; Search Institute, 2014.</p> <p>External assets: Support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive time. Steinberg & Allen, 2002</p> <p>Internal assets: Commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity. Search Institute, 2014.</p> <p>Developmental assets and school success. Duncan, & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Leffert et al., 2001; Lock, 2010; New York State Education Department, 2014; Scales et al., 2000; Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003; Search Institute, 2014; Singh et al., 2008.</p>

	<p>Education-Based Programs and Supports The Annie E. Casey Foundation , 2011; APA, 2008; Bear et al., 2000; Catalano et al., 2004; Cornell & Sheras, 2006; Dwyer et al., 1998; Elliott et al., 2001; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Kingery et al., 1996; McNeil et al., 2008; NASP Resources, 2001; Olweus & Limber, 1999; Osher et al., 2001; Tolan et al., 1995; Vossekuil et al., 2002; Walker et al., 1996.</p> <p>Teacher training in classroom management. Ferguson, 2001; Graham & Lowery, 2004; Green, 2010; Kratochwill, 2014; Lock, 2010; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010; Vavrus & Cole, 2002; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004.</p> <p>Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support and Bullying Prevention. APA, 2008; Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen, 2012; Resmovitz, 2012; Rosenberg & Jackman, 2003; Skiba et al., 2006; Stevens, 2012.</p> <p>Attendance Intervention. Barro & Kolstad, 1987; Berger, 2011; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986.</p> <p>Family Programs. Akos & Galassi, 2004; McIntyre, 2013; Trainor, 2005; R. Wilson, 2010.</p> <p>Strengthening Families Framework. Center for the Study of Social Policy’s Strengthening Families, 2014.</p> <p>Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Functional Family Therapy, 2014; Swenson et al., 2011.</p> <p>Florida Redirection Program. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2010.</p>
<p>Secondary Level Support Programs for At-risk Youth</p>	<p>Crone & Homer, 2003; Mazzotta-Perretti, 2009; Moore, 2007; Walker et al., 1996.</p> <p>Behavior Support Programs The Arc Model. Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2011; Massachusetts Advocates for Children, 2009; Stevens, 2012.</p>

	<p>Positive Action (PA). Flay & Allred, 2003.</p> <p>Behavior Education Program (BEP). Bowers, 2002; Crone et al., 2004; Filter et al., 2007; Hawken & Horner, 2003; Hawken et al., 2004; March & Horner, 2002.</p> <p>Why Try Intervention. Highland et al., 1999; Mazzotta-Perretti, 2009; Moore, 2007.</p> <p>G.R.E.A.T. Gang Resistance Education and Training. Esbensen et al., 2012.</p> <p>Project Success. Berger, 2011</p> <p>Mentoring Programs The Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Croninger & Lee, 2001; High School Survey of Student Engagement, 2006; Knesting, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Stanton-Salazar, 1997.</p> <p>Strong Teens. A. R. Dowden, 2009; White & Rayle, 2007.</p> <p>Check & Connect. Finn, 2006; Lehr, 2005; Sinclair et al., 2003.</p> <p>Adult, noneducator mentoring. Fritz, 2012.</p> <p>High School Success. Lowder, 2012.</p> <p>Empowerment Programs. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Bemak et al., 2005; Berger, 2011; Fertman & Chubb, 1990; Hilton-Pitre, 2007; LeCroy, 2004; Wyatt, 2009.</p>
<p>Tertiary Level Support Programs for At Risk Youth</p>	<p>Chassin et al., 2009; Cohen & Piquero, 2009; Marlowe, 2010.</p> <p>Project AWARE Cubukcu, 2012; Kanpol, 1999; Lock, 2010; Yüksel, 2004.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">Student population.</p> <p>M. Anderson, 2011; Janowski, 2009; Learn NC, 2014; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Project AWARE curriculum.</p> <p>Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Masten & Coatsworth; 1998; McKee et al., 2008; Stevens, 2012.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Project AWARE mission, vision, and purpose.</p> <p>California Department of Education, 2014; Washington, 2013.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Bencivenga & Elias, 2003; California Department of Education, 2014; Deci et al., 2001; Dynarski et al., 2008; Joselowsky, 2007; Lipsey, 2009; Lock, 2010; Moore 2007; Pink, 2006; Stevens, 2012; Theoharis, 2008; Tuggle Scott, 2009; Tyler & Loftstrom, 2009; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007.</p>

APPENDIX D

Transcript of Interviews

Transcription – Interview #1

Subject: School Counselor, Subject A

Time: 9 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 1/15/15

Place: High School Counselor's Office

File Name: Interview #1

Duration: 5:33

Total Pages: 2 pages

My name is (Counselor name), age 40. I have 23 years in education, a master's in counseling, a bachelor's in communication, and minor in Spanish. I taught Spanish for 14 years. Many of my students have been in Project AWARE. Students loved to attend Project AWARE; they felt that they were validated and listened to. I feel that nearly all of my students were able to take responsibility for all of their actions and not be just a victim. Project AWARE definitely help students become more resilient. Students were definitely made more aware of how to connect with others including staff members, teachers, and counselors. They also were better able to self-advocate. Students were definitely more able to want to try new things, and open to other ideas far as trying to communicate with teachers as to what they needed. I'm somewhere between very satisfied and somewhat satisfied with the program. The logistics of getting them out of class was very problematic all of the years that I saw it; the assignments they missed in class were really hard to make up. Many teachers tried to make concessions, but I feel they didn't get the same education as they would have had they been in class. I think it

could be improved if it was a common language everyone was speaking. It's a little pullout program for a few selected students. The strengths of the program were that students learn to advocate for themselves, stop being victims, and I understand that everybody comes from some kind of or has some kind of garbage in their background and they can overcome that. For weaknesses, sometimes there was a lack of communication regarding some students. How have I been changed? It is always good to have more tools in your toolbox. And without it, it definitely does not feel like students are getting the help that they need. I liken it to group therapy, and we don't really have anything like that. I also felt kids were not held as accountable for their actions because they were in Project AWARE. Meaning academically, and also sometimes with discipline. They would not have consequences as a result of being in Project Aware. For example, suspensions. The students of Project AWARE might have had special privileges.

Transcription – Interview # 2

Subject: Teacher, Co-Facilitator, Project AWARE, Subject B

Time: 8:30 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/10/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #2

Duration: 15:27

Total Pages: 3

Ok, well my experience, after we've done one whole year of Project AWARE is that it is eye-opening, nothing I've ever seen before in my 9 years of being a teacher, just an amazing program, something amazing that I want to continue to work with. I mean,

honestly, I feel like it's a counseling program that has been brought to the campus, for the safety and security of the students to get to know each other better, get to know themselves better, and we give them tools that they can then take outside of that group and apply to their life. Each cohort was 8 weeks, so we had four 8-week cohorts. What we did was we took attendance each week the students were there, and if the student missed two or more sessions, if they missed two sessions, we called them in to talk to them about coming back. If they then missed three sessions, we did not any longer invite them to join us. I think that it made them be less impulsive with their behavior, I think that can be, in a classroom setting, when they know they would become upset with teachers or with other peers, it would give them more impulse control. I think it also taught them, well I know it taught them also that, they're not the only ones who are going through tough times, so they didn't feel so alone. I think it changed their behavior with themselves because they didn't feel like they were just one person struggling against a ton of things in the world. They felt validated in the group that they were in, they had a family that they developed being in the cohort, and it taught them better impulse control in school and outside of school, when they're confronted with somebody who wants to fight them or somebody who's upsetting them. It just taught them that violence really isn't a way, gave them a lot of tools in their tool belt. We always used to say, gave them tools in their tool belt to pull out when they got upset, instead of just getting high or getting into a fight. I think prior to Project AWARE, students felt that being aggressive was almost like a form of strength. They got mad, they punched something or someone, and that was kind of a measure of their strength. I really think that after participating in Project AWARE, they truly learn that stronger people control their emotions, and they

communicate their feelings with just that, with words, instead of with violence, instead of just flying off the handle, so I think it gave them a completely different perspective of what it means to be in control of their emotions and not just flip out, and go from 0 to 100 in 8 seconds. Students who come back to us who have experience of abusive situations . . . when they come to the program, notice that first of all, they have empathy now for what other people go through. They now know what it means to truly feel the pain or to feel the anger and to know what that means even if somebody else that they know is going through that, and have empathy, not just their small little world that they are in; but I think it's a generalization that they now know that there's a lot of people who come from broken situations and need some help and need some resources, and I think that they've come to Project AWARE. They come back knowing that they now feel some empowerment that they didn't feel before, they felt more of a victim before and they come back feeling more empowered and really they have a whole sense of, their whole demeanor changes, their whole sense of self, if you will, changes, because now that they have a better sense of self, they understand themselves better than they did before their experience in the program. It's definitely given them a better understanding of what a healthy relationship. . . . I mean look, a lot of the kids in the program didn't know what a healthy relationship was. They thought that a healthy relationship was throwing something or hitting someone. So their perception of what a healthy relationship is—they now have a definition truly of that—which is a relationship that's based on love, and it's based on communicating when you're upset or when you're angry or when. . . . It's okay to be upset, it's okay to get mad, it's what you choose to do with those emotions that I think that we've helped changed those students because their lives have now been

changed because they don't just fly off the handle. They now know that a loving relationship doesn't involve abuse. Verbal abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse, those aren't part of the definitions of a loving relationship. A loving relationship is, they now know that they are able to be themselves or they should be able to be themselves with somebody else, and that's a healthy relationship. You don't have to lie to the person you're with or be violent with the person you're with; they now have a better understanding of what it means to be healthy, to be with each other because you want to be, not because there's a control issue or an abuse going on. I think students who were involved in gang life, prior to Project AWARE felt that that kind of, that was a sense of strength, they had their clan, they had their clique, they had their group, their gang, and together they were very powerful. I think that we've kind of broken down some of those myths about what it means to join a gang and why people join gangs, and I think that their perception is now of gangs is that being in a gang, they weren't really, students who were in gangs who were in the program, really weren't allowed to think for themselves. See, they left one gang, if you will, their family, and joined another gang on the street, but I think that they've learned that a lot of times, they didn't have the idea of free thinking. Their individual thoughts weren't, there was no value put upon their individual thought, so being in a gang and knowing that they were just one of several, truly, these students were doing things that they didn't want to do. They were just in gangs, and acting as though they were told. And I think having them take a step back from that, they realize their perception has changed, because they realize that they are an individual, and really, they can empower themselves by thinking and acting as they wish, not because someone else is acting or telling them to be a certain way. I'm very satisfied with the

program; I think that with any good program, there's always room for improvement. I think it's been a fantastic program that first year of trying it, and it's been wonderful, and I think it can be improved; one thing that would be very beneficial, I mean, we allow the kids to be in the program for 8 weeks and then typically, we cycle them out and put new kiddos in. There's some students that we allowed to stay in for a second or third cohort, and I think one way it could be improved would be to allow some of these kids, maybe a large majority of them to stay in the program the entire school year. I think that could be something that could be a way that we can maybe improve the program, just to let them be in the program all year long. We ran into some times where we just had to cut certain kids just because of numbers. We had to put new kids in, and that was a little bit of a disappointment. I also think that it being the first year that we did the program, it being on campus, I think of course, not everyone knew what the program was about and it just kind of happened word of mouth around the campus when other teachers began to realize what the program does. I think there was some breakdown if you will in the relation to the program with the general ed teachers who sometimes maybe there were assignments that kids were supposed to get credit for, then they didn't get credit for them because they were in Project AWARE, there were some times where students were given maybe, you know, a zero on an assignment because they weren't in their class; however, those students were at a mandated program, that being Project AWARE, so I think there was a breakdown again, kind of external to Project AWARE, if you will, external to the students, that did affect the general education teachers, and some of the individual students, and you know, them not getting credit for certain assignments and things like that, I think that was a weakness.

Transcription – Interview # 3

Subject: Teacher, Special Education, Subject C

Time: 9:15 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/10/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #3

Duration: 10:12

Total Pages: 2

My name is (teacher name), I'm 54. I've taught for 32 years, four years of physical education, 28 of special education and regular education. The remainder special education, SDC and RSP. I got my undergrad sports medicine degree from Chapman University and Cal State Fullerton, and my special education master's from Cal State Fullerton. I had numerous students in Project AWARE. A number of my SEAS kids participate in Project AWARE. My students benefited greatly from the program. With SEAS kids it's very important to work with emotional issues prior to educational issues. Once they were able to get within themselves and straighten those things out and understand they are not the only ones living in that world it was very beneficial to them. At first the students were really hesitant to join the program but having gone and been a part of it and seeing the other students not only did, it helped them realize it's not just them by themselves but gave them a group and a sense of belonging as well. There are a number of students that I know that came back after graduating and assisted in the program and assist with students in the program now. Strategies and discussions used in the program . . . the kids will come back and utilize those when issues might arise. Having a positive group for the kids, it's huge. Finding a positive place for them is really

important. Many students who could care less about school to start with, but after spending time in AWARE, I've seen them become more confident with themselves, and more positive about where school could help them go and the fact that they could actually get there. A lot of the kids had not received any positive reinforcement that they could be successful and once that starts to happen we could really see the light go on for them.

And make a move to why this is important rather. I'm very satisfied with Project AWARE, I just wish it could house more students because there are so many that could benefit from the program and there are just limitations for the number that can be in the program. I would like to see more of the mid sector of our campus there are a lot of special ed kids who fall through the cracks that don't get to participate that could really benefit from the program as well. That would be nice, to see if there were more that could participate. Improving it would be availability; additional opportunity for the kids to have someone available to them would be great. I think the kids do well because of their ability to relate, that's really important for the kids to participate in the program. Many adults can't imagine what the kids have to go through on campus so when you have individuals running a program that are kind of on that same place and can talk with them and not just lecture but that can relate to the kids and the kids can relate to them and respect them and give respect back—in learning how to give respect back it's huge for these kids. Then once again they need mentors, people that are similar to them that will mentor them and that is lacking in the classroom for a lot of these kids it's good to have a situation and program that provides those adults for these kids. Weaknesses, I wish it could be more often as I said. Usually it's for kids in crisis but it would be nice to hit the kids before they hit bottom. If we could find a way to open up the opportunities and

figure out who those kids are a little earlier and get them involved before they find another place to go to, we could grab a hold of them sooner and get them on the pathway to a better place before they have to deal with a lot of the things that could be taken care of if we get a hold of them earlier.

Transcription – Interview # 4

Subject: Teacher, Physical Education and Coach, Subject D

Time: 10:00 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/10/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #4

Duration: 12:34

Total Pages: 2

(Teacher name), my background is I have a BA from UCLA, and a master's degree in education and I have been teaching for 15 years; I'm a PE teacher. Before that I was in special ed where I did special day class resource and I did the handicap and transition program. Project Aware is something that we instituted here at our school. I can tell you that it's a needed project completely for any school because kids that are having trouble with being a part of the high school especially a place to go where they can share their experiences and problems that they have, and it completely helps. There were kids that were in my classroom that were in Project Aware that I believe if they would not have had that we'd have all kinds of troubles on this campus. I believe it keeps kids from going over the deep end. I think it's nice that they can share their experiences in their problems and realize that there are kids that are in the same position that they are in. I think it was handled correctly; it is a warm place that's open for kids and unfortunately in

our society there is not enough of it. When kids that are actually caught up in Project Aware really understand the benefits of it there's no doubt you can tell coming out of it that they have improved and that they realize life actually is worth pursuing and you can tell that there is definitely a turn around and the way they act at school and more and from the social side of it the benefits that they get from it. The only thing I can say that makes it difficult is that it is not universally accepted. I do believe that there some stubbornness and biases against groups like this in schools, which is a problem with our society as a whole. But saying that to have a group and a place the kids actually can go and experience and discuss and try to figure themselves out and the environment that is structured with some people that are caring for our kids it really makes a huge difference because regardless of what happens in Project AWARE; they know they are in a caring environment that structures them to change and try to see who they are as human beings. I'm very satisfied with Project AWARE because I do know there are kids that have problems and at least they are in an environment where they can safely tell what is actually going on in their life; and again, when you are in a position where you're comfortable with other people that have problems that you do, I believe it really helps them out. I think it can be improved if it's actually spread across the school so all kids can be open to this. I do believe that the more the kids are exposed to normalcy that is going on in life, it improves everybody. The direction Project AWARE has taken for some of these kids that are probably having the worst exposure to life, some of the things they put up with and that they've seen and done at such a young age, I believe can benefit the whole school. Unfortunately, it comes down to money and I understand how districts are, but in my opinion we need more things like Project AWARE that should be

expanded upon where other kids could actually be a part of this so that people can really understand when there are problems. First of all, there's places to go and there's also ways to be shown how those problems go away or at least be able to deal with them. I do believe that kids have seen so much at a young age now in regards to how you want to look at it from TV to technology and sex and drugs and everything else before they even get into high school, it's nice to have a place where they are actually being nurtured and have people care about them—I think that's really important. Obviously, the weaknesses come to acceptability. I believe that we still have old thinking in society with some teachers and districts and thought processes on what Project AWARE should and should not do, but as far as I'm concerned I believe it should be something that should be expanded because problems are not going to get easier for our kids. I believe in Project AWARE and think it's great for our kids and our society and it's an area in my opinion that we so sorely lacking education there has to be areas for kids to be able to go where again they can deal with the problems that they are up against, and Project AWARE in my opinion deals with this type of stuff and helps kids move forward and makes kids do better for themselves.

Transcription – Interview # 5

Subject: Intervention Teacher, Co-Facilitator, Project AWARE, Subject E

Time: 10:30 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/11/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #5

Duration: 9:26

Total Pages: 3

My name is (teacher name). I'm 54 years old and I have 10 years in education, 2 years as a special-education aide, and 8 years as a certificated teacher of social studies. I have a bachelor's and master's and a juris doctorate. My previous experience was that of a criminal defense attorney and a former prosecutor. Two years I was a special ed assistant where I was able to sit in on Project AWARE and work with a few teachers who were involved with it. I'm an intervention teacher at (school name) and I oversee the program there. Over the 3 years I've dealt with this program, I've seen some very positive developments in some of the students I've had the pleasure of dealing with. One particular student, we had some real difficult battles in classrooms with trying to keep him focused and trying to get him to graduation. Project Aware gave him the opportunity to vent and to deal with things in another arena and gave him options behavior-wise that he did not have either modeled at home or in his own personal experience. So that made it significant for me. I think the perception of aggression—students are able to take a look at the way they deal with things and there's a judgment that's rendered as to whether or not the behavior is acceptable or suitable to solve the situation, not necessarily within the situation but . . . in order to solve that situation. That gives the students the greatest opportunity to understand anger even though they may be upset it may not be the best way to solve that situation, and there were times when anger is appropriate, but they start to learn more and more where those places are appropriate and inappropriate. I think by building up and giving students alternatives to behaviors that they thought were normal it's given them other options, and I think with those options it increases their opportunity of greater resiliency. Students learn to model behavior that's more acceptable and appropriate and are able to recognize behaviors that are more acceptable and appropriate

and this is helpful because it puts the burden on the students for the well-being of that classroom. That's been one of the best skills and I've seen it work in a classroom a couple times where children are acting out and one of those AWARE students help settle the situation down with tools they learned from the program. Project Aware has impacted student attitude towards school. I believe their attitudes towards school improves because it gives them a level of safety and security, which leads to a level of trust to us as a staff and reinforces the fact that we are actually on their side and looking out for their best interests as they go through our school and on the way to graduation. I'm somewhat satisfied with the program, and I say that only because I want it to get better involving more of our kids. I'd like to see more of our Hispanic males get into the program as I really believe that given the nature of the demographics of our school it is really important to get that input. It can be improved by involving more of our students. Maybe we can give an incentive to do that and ask parents to put them in mandatorily. Based upon my experience, the strengths are that they impact our students' attitude towards school resiliency and connection, it's so positive. The only weakness I see is that I'd like to see a better consistency by the counselors to the way (the counselor) does the program and as his business is growing and he is educating more facilitators and counselors to do these things . . . it's going to be a time factor and (the counselor) cannot be in 100 different places in one time even though we all love him. As a result of exposure to this program, I have learned more empathy towards students which allows for a great relationship and I appreciate that. It has made me a better educator as I am able to understand where they are in their life journey.

Transcription – Interview # 6

Subject: Counselor, Co-Facilitator, Project AWARE, Subject F

Time: 11:00 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/11/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #6

Duration: 9:26

Total Pages: 2

I'm (counselor name). I'm 52 years old I have been in education for 10 years. I have a single subject credential in English, a BCLAD, and I also have a pupil personnel services credential. I have taught ESL/ELD for lots of years. I also served as an ELD resource teacher at the high school level. I've worked in San Diego, Oakland, and now Vista. I'm a counselor and been doing that for 6 years. As part of my counseling credential, I took courses in social-emotional development, and I've also had experience working with programs through lifeline and just working with students in general. I have been working overseeing Project Aware and sitting in with the group for the last two cohorts of 8 weeks each and have been conferencing with (the counselor) on ways to improve the program and his getting feedback on different things going on with the kids. The students are really engaged and generally feel this program is making a difference in their lives or at least they feel this program is meaningful and worthwhile. I talk to many students individually in my office about this program and they are all super engaged. They love being involved in it they feel it is helpful for them; they feel comfortable sharing their experiences without being judged or ridiculed and it's a place where they can go and think or talk about the things that are bothering them or the things they feel upset about

and I'm also impressed that they feel ownership towards the group and want to work on making the group productive and supportive and they are open to changes and are just working on making it the best experience that they can and getting the most out of it. I think due to group, this is the first time many students have actually reflected on the aggression in their lives and seeing it for what it is and to see how it has manifested itself throughout their lives with their parents with the relatives and really reflecting on why it is that they feel angry or what it is they feel. They have been resolving conflicts in an aggressive manner, and so in that respect I think it's huge and helping them gain a new perspective on why it is that they feel angry or why it is that they are sometimes aggressive. I think the fact that they have a group where they feel they can share and they feel that they are not alone it gives them resiliency because that is part of resiliency is having at least one person that you can talk to and help you with problems that you have. The program helps students build resiliency which gets them through current situations and helps them get a better understanding of their lives in general and hopefully build resiliency. Students in the program feel very connected to each other and it extends beyond the classroom and helps them build a connection with those of us staff members that are participating in the program. With those in the program, there are no barriers, and they feel free to talk about whatever they want to talk about and that's great and I think that's one of the most important things you can have. I talked to specific students and they don't feel like it's fake and they don't feel required to participate—they just feel it's a comfortable place to be where they can connect with other students and talk about real issues. Project AWARE helps kids expand upon a whole new way of caring about people and caring about each other. I am somewhat satisfied; the core of the

program is awesome, as I've sat in on other groups and this one, and other programs don't even compare with this one—it's light years ahead in terms of working for kids. Getting kids to talk can often be the most difficult part in group, and it's so phenomenal; that part I love. The reason it needs to go to the next level is that the kids are aware of the issues that they have, and they are becoming understanding where they've been, where they are, and where they need to be, but I think that future piece isn't really there. Now I think we could take it to a level where we talk about your future and help them develop future goals; maybe do more reflection from week to week and make it a little bit of a tighter program. It feels that sometimes they come in and there's a worksheet, but they don't really do the worksheet, they decide to do something else and speaking with the counselor, it's not a real tight program. The counselor has facilitators come in and he doesn't communicate with us if he's going to be here or not or who the facilitators are. And they don't seem to have much training themselves or know, what is the program? And I've talk to the counselor about this—that they could use a lot more training and group dynamic something kids will get emotional you need incredible skills to help kids feel and be that authentic but they come out a little traumatized and there's not really a change to help the kids transition back into the classroom really well. From my own experience and my own training and leading group, there's talk about when you get kids to a certain point, you need to help them transition back into a regular program and be recovered; they call it upshifting. That component is often missing. So that would be a weakness. But I think all of these things can be addressed and the counselor is aware of them and he's expanding very quickly and not able to cover all of these bases well. This program has renewed my hope and faith that there are programs that can genuinely make

a difference in our kids' lives. Having been a counselor and sat in various groups that I felt were not genuine, I mean, the kids are sitting in there so they can check off the box so they've been in the program like anger management—and the kids would tell me those anger management classes make me so angry! There's something very incredible about the power of this program, and it moves me. It makes me want to figure out how I can add my own experience to it and it's incredible to see students that we feel are not as educated as the students in the rest of the district—and I have watched them engage and have very high-level discussions about their emotional concerns and we've even had political discussions in group and it makes me think of different ways we can engage our kids in the classroom and in the academic setting as well as the emotional setting.

Transcription – Interview # 7

Subject: Administrator, Subject G

Time: 11:30 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/11/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #7

Duration: 8:12

Total Pages: 2

Hi, my name is (administrator name). I'm 59, and my background in education is 34 years; I've taught social studies, government, world history, and some English and computer classes. My education; I have my bachelor's in social studies and my master's in educational administration with a technology emphasis. I have my admin credential, and my experience with social-emotional literacy is mostly hands-on from the job and intervention through Lifeline, Vista community clinic, and other community-based

organizations through social workers. I was a classroom teacher for 20 years and admin for the last 14 years. In those 14 years, I've been 2 years at a community day school where kids were expelled, and I was the head of the alternative program there and I've been an elementary school principal for 2 years, assistant principal for 5 years and this is my third year here. I think my biggest experience with Project AWARE is the opportunity I had to be taxi driver between (two schools) and picking up kids who had (other school) as their home school, and they had started Project AWARE and found themselves at (this school) because they were credit deficient, so I transported anywhere between four to eight different kids at different times back and forth, and just the conversations—listening to them give me a lot of background in terms of the positive impact of Project AWARE on their lives. It seems the work of Project AWARE is great at breaking down barriers between kids and kids and adults. As a result, doors are open for conversation for a level of trust that might not otherwise be there because it's not just the hammer coming down but it's the teaching of responsibility for decisions. In terms of student participation, I've heard many of them tell me that they know that they need to be responsible for their behaviors and their attitudes and their actions and that they can't just blame it on somebody else. They're not perfect, but that is a real positive affect that I have seen on them that allows me to have an open door to have honest conversations with them that will draw them to a higher level of expectations of themselves. It helps many areas, too; one girl I saw today—she's clean again. We almost lost her earlier this year and this is been a real positive turn around for her and affirming what she does, so her being in AWARE opened that door that we might not otherwise have. The words that come to my mind are attitude towards school and safety—they feel safe and they feel like

people care. Before AWARE, our results on the California healthy kids survey showed us that the kids did feel safe here—they already felt that. So it's not like this site had nothing right going on. But what my gut is telling me and my observations are telling me and what I'm hearing from the staff here that works with these kids and hear from the kids themselves is that Project AWARE has increased those elements. When kids are disenfranchised or rejected from the big schools and that's not the big school's fault that's just what happens—they come here and they feel like someone really cares and it's a combination of factors. Project AWARE is just adding to that factor then even so than what we had before. In terms of perception of aggression, I think two thoughts. One conversation I had was about the negative impact that aggression has had on others and on themselves and many other layers of people. When a particular student realized that he had something he carries with him into other relationships that is generational—we can have a conversation about, what are the options? What is the third option? One option is to be a coward or be aggressive. I have often talked with kids not only with Project AWARE but in general about using your brain and being proactive and doing things beforehand so you don't get put into those situations—you find a way to get out of them beforehand so you avoid the actual aggression. Kids actually continue to show up to school—and I wish I could say Project AWARE was perfect on that—but the fact that the student attends school on a routine basis if not every day, I've seen that in a number of our AWARE kids' lives. And the other part of attendance is that they actually truly are here. They are not checked out, and in our particular situation and other schools you can have students that just kind of hide, whether in the classroom or in the hallways, wherever it might be, but there are a number of kids, one in particular who engages in

discussions with teachers and fellow students more—he is still kind of a loner and he struggles with major issues, but he’s really made an effort to engage in school and ultimately it’s one of the best things for him, and that’s a resiliency he did not have a month ago before Project AWARE. Connections between students I think is the word that came to my mind when I’ve had conversations with students who actually demonstrate empathy especially for somebody they didn’t like or get along with—and after AWARE, they are able to give them some grace and some understanding and be more patient with them, and that leads to a greater degree of trust between individuals—and I have seen that where kids that have never gotten along and not best friends but they have conversations on campus and are willing to reach out to others. The other part in terms of student connection is, specifically a number of our kids have been encouraged and asked by the counselor to branch out and speak to others about the impact of Project AWARE. So for a kid coming into Project AWARE that did not want to be there at first, who was assigned there and who could really care less—who ends up reaching out to others and demonstrating leadership—it’s amazing. They become spokespeople for the program. I’m very satisfied with the program, although I’m aware of the concerns being addressed by the others so far. Absent this, we have very little or nothing. We’ve had experience with outside agencies that have done an adequate job but not an agency that is had an impact on as many kids as consistently on a weekly basis. There are areas of growth—how you maintain the beauty or integrity of this program—because it’s got to be very dynamic and you really need to have structure. You don’t need it so formalized but there has to be some dynamic to it those are all things that have to be reflected upon and looked at. I don’t know if there is a formula per se, I don’t know of one, but

confidentiality is a real strength of the program and the counselor addressed it. To mend a cracked relationship—that is one of the hallmarks of the program for the kids—they are told that and they hold to it. That’s really supreme. The program itself has deepened my empathy and understanding of the students on our campus and their background—and it has deepened the hope factor that I have for work that we can do with kids and it does have an impact. You can try to do something so many times, and I guess coming from a mindset administratively, it was ingrained in us to punish and really no second chances—kind of like the “three strikes you’re out” mentality. It has changed me, and one area I would say is it’s the area in which we need to look deeper, to look beyond the surface and even when you get below the surface, go even deeper. And that has helped me probably be a little more patient because I want to see change now and I want to give consequences and have kids change and that does not happen so neatly. And so this program has given me that exposure to really look deeper and look for option three and help communicate that with kids—and with the founder’s background coming out of prison to realize that somebody like (the founder) and how he responded to the drama in his life—it’s our duty and it’s our privilege to be able to do that now for these kids so they don’t have to live as (the founder) did.

Transcription – Interview # 8

Subject: Counseling Intern, Subject H

Time: 12:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/11/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #8

Duration: 10:53

Total Pages: 2

Hi, I'm (name). I'm 31 and I have a social degree and I'm finishing up my bachelor's in counseling, and I'm here as an intern; I don't have much experience with social-emotional learning but I have a lot of personal experience with at-risk youth with family and just growing up and rural communities. The last 8 weeks I have participated in both groups and it was a great experience. They have been unbelievable; everything the kids are willing to share, it's breathtaking. I believe the students have gotten a big motivation and are able to share what they have going on at home instead of doing drugs or alcohol to hide their emotions—they can express themselves here and they can just open up to other students, get feedback, and learn they're not alone and that they have other options to guide them into what they can or cannot do. They have learned a lot of empathy and I have seen several of them take matters into their own hands—and even when it's not a Project AWARE day, they talk amongst each other or help each other out and lend a hand. Having just to give out a box of tissues they come out of their comfort zone—they're not used to giving a hug or receiving one and have shown a lot of empathy towards each other. I have noticed that the students actually listen to the mentors and how to handle their aggression especially when dealing with their parents—and their parents don't understand them, but the students actually learn how to avoid getting into trouble. Today I had a student who exploded over the holidays and he was able to manage his anger and now he's happier just because he can now hit a beanbag instead of taking it out—and he has tools on how to talk to his parents to get a different reaction. As an observer and intern here, from the moment I walked in, I noticed people here are very happy and there's that warmth and connection from the students and Project

AWARE puts the cherry on top and makes it that much better because now they can express themselves a lot better and now they're being affected like I'm a person, and I am being accepted for who I am. I am somewhat satisfied with the program, because there's always room for improvement and I see a lot of things in this program that are good—but the mentors don't seem 100% well educated with regards to dealing with certain issues, such as during the opening activity, some students say they are depressed, but they don't go back to that and that is my fear. Why don't they go back to that student and why does he feel depressed? Getting more into that and helping the students and getting the appropriate help the student needs is important. At the beginning, I was hoping that's what we were going to do, we would dig more into these kids—I think worksheets are a waste of time as the kids use that time to mess around and talk to each other and don't take the worksheets too seriously. I've notice a difference from the first group to the second group and the first group tends to mess around more and the second group tends to be more serious and it has to do with the adult mentors. (Facilitator) has done an awesome job at keeping the circle together, and he tries to go back to this problem with the student and dig in instead of having the curriculum like, oh we have to get this done. He shows concern for the student, and the other mentor isn't like that. So that's one of the weaknesses that they should be focusing on, and I think they're lacking in communication themselves as mentors and with the teachers—there should be communication between them, and some students still come to the program that are doing okay which doesn't make sense when we could be having students come in that really need the program. Coming into this program, I did not know what to expect. I just knew it was students who needed a place to talk. I fell in love with it right away, coming from

a rural community and being exposed to this is something I was looking for and going for my bachelor's degree, this is exactly the environment I had been looking for. I want to be able to help students who come from those communities and show them that there's more out there than violence and this program is giving them exactly that. To know that there is more behind the curtain.

Transcription – Interview # 9

Subject: Teacher, Subject I

Time: 12:30 p.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/11/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #9

Duration: 11:08

Total Pages: 2

I am (teacher name) age 49; my background in education is, I spent 5 years as a special ed classroom aide at (school name) high school and I'm about to get my teaching credential; I've spent 2 1/2 years as a special ed teacher and have a degree in business management; I don't have a lot of experience with social-emotional learning. After I started being involve in Project AWARE, I was in the second cohort for the past 8 weeks and I'm really shocked at the things the kids are willing to share. I learned a lot of what the kids are going through at home that they don't get to share on a daily basis. It's given me a good understanding of where they are and where they come from; it's given me empathy for them. In my opinion, I think it affects the participants very positively; the students become more tolerant of others and they feel the school as a safe haven especially in the classroom because everything that is said there stays there, and the

students love it and it's about breaking down barriers and the students realize that what they are going through—that they are not alone. It becomes like a family and they help each other, support each other, which is really amazing. Student perception of aggression—they learn it's okay to be mad and angry, it's just how you show—it needs to be curtailed and the program has taught the kids the best way to let out their anger is by talking about it, writing it down, instead of just “I'm going to kill somebody.” There are different ways to handle their anger and they learn they are not alone. Working together really helps them. I've only been here a few months and I love the school. Kids here don't get lost in the shuffle and they have good attitudes towards school but by being in Project AWARE; students know that we are on their side and are here to make a connection—and they also learn that we are human too and make mistakes and we're here to better our lives and to be better humans in the world. The students learn to listen to their peers and adults and it's given kids the ability to bounce back from major issues that arise at home. I think it helps to find the one person that you can talk to and trust to keep going and knowing that they found somebody they can talk to and trust and work out their problems—that's huge. I'm overall somewhat satisfied because one facilitator pushed a kid for a reaction and she did it twice; this goes back to needing more training for the facilitators. How much training do they have? Did they talk to one another? I do know I'll stop and think about what I see and not judge so quickly and jump to conclusions—if that helps the student—whatever helps the student I'm up for it.

Transcription – Interview # 10

Subject: Project AWARE Teacher, Subject J

Time: 1:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time, 2/11/15

Place: Classroom

File Name: Interview #10

Duration: 14:15

Total Pages: 2

My experience with Project AWARE, what I found out is that a lot of our kids are lacking emotional literacy skills, so it has been of great value of me that I've been able to work with the kids on basic social skills, basic problem-solving skills, and being able to get them probably their first steps into empathy training, and being able to be on the level where they can actually take a look at their feelings and be able to actually hear other people who have those same emotions and how they are reacting to those also. So when I look at Project AWARE I look at it as an emotional literacy skills program that focuses on teaching our kids the basic skills on how to deal with the everyday emotions that they have to deal with in society. And dealing with them in a nonviolent way, because if our kids aren't really learning how to deal with the emotions, they are probably going to be a little hesitant on making that skill something that they can live their life by. In other words, you know, what I've noticed is that when a lot of our kids get angry, they tend to get violent, and I'm looking at how that's how they deal with anger, which we know is a regular emotion that you don't deal with anger with violence. The main way that it affects participants is that they came more in-tune with their feelings. They've been able to definitely connect their feelings with their actions. And in a way that made them

actually better people. That once they've been able to more or less get in touch with their feelings and get in touch with their emotions, they were better equipped to deal with those emotions that weren't so like the positive ones, like happy and glad, but some of the ones that tend to cause destructive behavior like disappointment and anger, like some of our kids reach out through drug use, some of our kids deal with some of these emotions through violence, that they now understand that they can be angry without being violent. They now understand that they can be disappointed and sad without compensating by using drugs or alcohol. I believe that the program has been able to give them a gateway into at least an understanding that aggression isn't actually an emotion, that it's actually an action. I feel like they now have an understanding that, you know, that there are certain ways to deal with aggression, and a lot of it doesn't have to be actually with violence. You can be aggressive and this is a good and bad factor that these kids have learned because a lot of our kids have been aggressive just with their tones and just with their body language and not actually with their actions, so now they've learned that aggression can be seen as a negative even though they haven't actually put their hands on someone. You know, they can see for themselves it's a form of intimidation, that's a skill, that tells me it's a lack of life skills when you have to be aggressive, when you have to, you know, this is how you get things, almost as a form of intimidations, so I think I gave them some knowledge on that, for them to be able to understand that they don't have to be like that to get some of the things that they want. And they have to recognize that that's a form of intimidation, and could be seen as a negative in society. When I see kids who have been involved in abuse or who have had abuse in their lives, some of the things that I notice is that they don't actually have a full understanding of what abuse is.

A lot of the kids in the program don't even have a definition of abuse. A lot of them felt that abuse was only physical. Some of them understood that it was verbal, and then some of them actually understood that it was emotional, but after being in our class, our kids now understood that abuse comes in at least eight different styles. It can be financial abuse, it can be sexual abuse. It can be physical abuse, it can be intimidation and minimizing; it can be these several forms of abuse, and more importantly, what they've come to understand, which they didn't understand at first, is that abuse actually by definition, is a form of power and control and they use those several tactics to get that power and control. So they understand that that's just a way individuals use to get power and control over them. But when I first recognized some of our kids who have been abused, when they've been in abusive relationships, one of the things that I recognized was that they didn't even have an understanding of what abuse actually was. Project AWARE has affected our kids about what a healthy relationship is that they now understand that it is okay to communicate. That that's something that they have to do if they want to be in a healthy relationship. They understand now through Project AWARE that part of being in a healthy relationship is communication, and is being able to speak about some of the things that are concerns for you, and more importantly, to understand that some of their background might have a, how do I say this, their background basically has an understanding of how they perceive a relationship to be. A lot of our kids who have been in an unhealthy relationship, a lot of our kids who have been in abusive relationships, and to their knowledge, that was a healthy relationship, something that they've seen since they were with their families, that they've seen through their mother and father's actions, so what's considered a healthy relationship by society is completely

different from what some of our kids have seen, so I just more or less gave them a full understanding of what a healthy relationship looks like, like communication, like no form of intimidation, like being able to both having a say-so in the relationship.

APPENDIX E

**Brandman University Institutional Review Board IRB Application Action—
Approval**



BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB Application Action – Approval

Date:

Name of Investigator/Researcher:

Faculty or Student ID Number:

Title of Research Project:

Project Type: New Continuation Resubmission

Category that applies to your research:

- Doctoral Dissertation EdD
- DNP Clinical Project
- Masters' Thesis
- Course Project
- Faculty Professional/Academic Research
- Other:

Funded: No Yes
(Funding Agency; Type of Funding; Grant Number)

Principal Investigator's Address: _____
Email Address: garc4122@mail.brandman.edu Telephone Number: 7603306848
Faculty Advisor/Sponsor/Chair Name: Krysti DeZonia
Email Address: krystid@teriinc.org Telephone Number: (760) 522-6138

Category of Review:
 Exempt Review Expedited Review Standard Review

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14 Adopted November 2014

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I have completed the NIH Certification and included a copy with this proposal
<input type="checkbox"/>	NIH Certificate currently on file in the office of the IRB Chair or Department Office

Signature of Principal Investigator: Shannon Hampton Garcia Digitally signed by Shannon Hampton Garcia
DN: cn=Shannon Hampton Garcia, o=Brandman
University, ou=IRB Student,
email=garc4122@mail.brandman.edu, ou=US
Date: 2014.10.31 13:44:22 -0800 Date: 10.31.14

Signature of Faculty Advisor/ Sponsor/Dissertation Chair: Krysti DeZonia Digitally signed by Krysti DeZonia
DN: cn=Krysti DeZonia, o=Brandman
University, ou, email=krystid@teriinc.org,
ou=US
Date: 2015.01.04 21:48:22 -0800 Date: 01-04-15

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB APPLICATION ACTION – APPROVAL
COMPLETED BY BUIRB

IRB ACTION/APPROVAL

Name of Investigator/Researcher: _____

- Returned without review. Insufficient detail to adequately assess risks, protections and benefits.
- Approved/Certified as Exempt from IRB Review.
- Approved as submitted.
- Approved, contingent on minor revisions (see attached)
- Requires significant modifications of the protocol before approval. Research must resubmit with modifications (see attached)
- Researcher must contact IRB member and discuss revisions to research proposal and protocol.

Level of Risk: No Risk Minimal Risk More than Minimal Risk

IRB Comments:

Please note the following:
IRB is in need of clarification of the following items please
- Which secondary (K-12) school site, where the AAWAS program is currently running, will adult faculty be recruited from?
- Staff who are directly involved with the program on campus is mentioned, but from which school(s)?
- Has approval from these identified schools or districts been obtained or via Project AAWAS administration?
- The "School Principal" mentioned under recruitment, but from which school(s)?
- In addition to what areas of focus exist, is there an outline of what is covered via the 8 week Project AAWAS program/course?
- How will the students (prior to receiving the student/parent letter) be identified and from which secondary (K-12) school site?
- Please include the full of rights along with your informed consent.
- In the IRB application, under "Risks and Benefits," "Other Risk" is checked. Please specify.
- Under Data collection, "Audio/Video recording" is not checked. Video is however mentioned in the informed consent. Please clarify.

Jalin Brooks
IRB Reviewer: Johnson
Telephone: 909.481.1804
Email: jbrooks@brandman.edu
BUIRB Chair: _____ Date: _____

REVISED IRB Application Approved Returned

Name: Keith Larick
Telephone: _____ Email: _____ Date: _____
BUIRB Chair: Keith Larick
Digitally signed by Keith Larick
DN: cn=Keith Larick, o=Ed D, ou=SOE,
email=klarick@brandman.edu, c=US
Date: 2016.02.04 21:49:04 -0800