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The Impact of Proactive Community Circles on Student Academic Achievement and Student Behavior in an Elementary Setting

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The Impact of Proactive Community Circles on Student Academic Achievement and Student Behavior in an Elementary Setting

A Dissertation by

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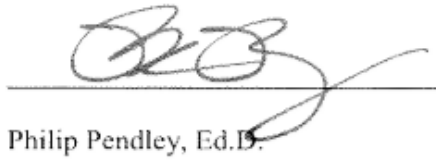

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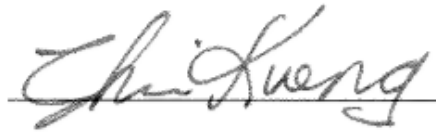

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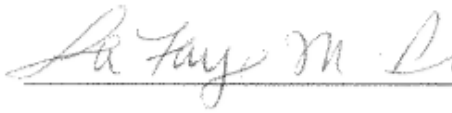

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space and time to complete my writing without any guilt for missing an event. The four of you are my greatest blessings.

ABSTRACT

The Impact of Proactive Community Circles on Student Academic Achievement and Student Behavior in an Elementary Setting

by Michele Lenertz

Purpose: The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine the differences in student academic achievement and student behavior prior to and after implementation of proactive community circles (PCC) in elementary schools in California that have implemented for a minimum of two years as measured by standardized test scores and student behavior records. The second purpose was to describe the impact of proactive community circles on student academic achievement and student behavior in elementary schools in California that have implemented proactive community circles for a minimum of two years as perceived by school administrators.

Methodology: The mixed method explanatory sequential design was selected for this study. The quantitative method was used to gather archived data on pre PCC and post PCC, academic achievement and suspension rates to determine if a difference exists. The qualitative method was used to gather data on how the site administrator felt that PCC has impacted their school. The researcher collected this qualitative data through in depth interviews.

Findings: Examination of the mixed methods research done of the three elementary schools that participated in this study indicate two findings. First that the regular use of PCC at the elementary level has a positive correlation on increased academic performance and student suspension rates. In addition site administrators also felt the

PCC had a positive impact on student academic performance and student suspension rates.

Conclusions: Based on the findings from this study it is recommend that both districts and schools look into implementation of PCC. Districts should support the allocation of time and resources to the implementation of PCC. School site administrators should support staff implementation of PCC.

Recommendations: It is recommended that further studies be conducted at the elementary level. Future studies could look at the impact of PCC on chronic attendance rates, sustainability of social emotional learning of students into middle school and the impact of suspensions from the implementation of PCC on minority students.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In 2014 the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) called for a change in practices in relation to school climate and exclusionary discipline with the release of their report *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (A. Duncan, 2014a). In the last 40 years schools nationwide have increased the use of suspension with an estimated 2 million students per year being suspended at the secondary level alone (A. Duncan, 2014b). Suspension and explosions reach all the way down to preschool programs. A study published in 2005 found that 10% of the students in state funded preschool programs had been suspended in that year alone (America, 2014b). Time spent out of the classroom is time spent away from learning. Suspended students are at risk for academic failure, retention, dropping out of school and ending up in the juvenile justice system (America, 2014b; A. Duncan, 2014b; Shepherd, 2014).

The use of exclusionary discipline has expanded over the past two decades to include non-violent behaviors such as defiance, acting out, tardiness and dress code violations. In California alone, the Department of Education reports that 43% of the suspensions in 2012-2013 school year were for defiance, a non-violent offense (Tidmarsh, 2014). Suspension data for students of color and students with disabilities is also being brought to the forefront. In California for example, African American students make up 6% of the student population yet in suspensions for defiance for 2012-2013 they accounted for 19% of the suspensions (Tidmarsh, 2014). Students who are suspended are often left unsupervised during the day putting them at risk for further acts of violence in the community (America, 2014b; Force, 2008; Union, n.d.).

The use of suspensions for nonviolent offenses increases contact with law enforcement and is pushing students into school to prison pipeline (Union, n.d.; Wilson, 2014). A study in Texas found that students suspended for a non-weapons violation were three times more likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system within the following year (A. Duncan, 2014b).

Over use of suspensions has a negative impact on school climate and decreases academic performance (J. Castillo, 2015). In 2014, California Governor Jerry Brown signed AB420 into law barring school district in California from suspending students in kindergarten through third grade for defiance (Clough, 2014). Barring suspensions is only one piece of the puzzle. The *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* developed under President Obama's administration, aims to provide a roadmap to help districts move from exclusionary practices to a climate of support and learning (Education, U.S.D.o., 2015). School climate is one of the leading influences that impacts student academic success (America, 2014a; Mediratta, 2014; Sheras, 2016). Fostering a positive school culture means moving away from exclusionary practices and towards a collaborative community focused on the whole child. A school culture that expects high academic achievement for all students, nurtures caring relationships among students and staff, and teaches behavioral expectations has higher student success rates (America, 2014b; A. Duncan, 2014b; Sheras, 2016). To increase educational opportunities and thus productive citizens, districts need to look at the underlying causes of misconduct and how to incorporate positive discipline practices to improve educational opportunities for all students (Shepherd, 2014).

Background

Historical Perspectives of School Discipline

Traditionally school discipline has focused on punishment and humiliation to change behavior (Noakes, 2014). During the early half of the 20th century school discipline modeled home discipline tending to rely heavily on corporal punishment strategies such as paddling (Findlaw, 2013; McGregor, 2017). During the second half of the century, the influence of health care professionals shifted the focus onto understanding the underlining causes of the student behavior (Findlaw, 2013). However, the early 1990s saw a sharp increase in gun violence on school campuses which lead to a move for stricter school policies and consequences (Crews, 2016). Zero Tolerance policies (ZTP) developed in the mid-1990s as state legislatures looked to secure schools after such tragedies as Columbine and Virginia Tech (America, 2014b). Under these guidelines in a recent survey conducted by the USDE, students from across the country reported a decline in carrying a weapon on school property from 12% in 1993 to 5% in 2013 (Robers, Zang, Morgan, & Musu-Gillette, 2015). ZTPs established clear consequences for such serious offenses. However, over the years the focus of Zero Tolerance polices began to exceed the original intent of targeting serious violations.

ZTPs

In 1994 the Gun Free Schools Act set the stage for exclusionary discipline by establishing a mandatory one-year expulsion for any student who brings firearms to school (Hachiya, 2010; Irby, 2009). Shortly after in 1999, ZTPs were put into place in school districts across the country to make students, teachers, and the community

feel safer in the wake of large published school shootings (Henson-Nash, 2015; Mallett, 2016; McGrew, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2014; Salole, 2015; Wilson, 2014). While zero tolerance educational policies were originally designed to deal with the most serious of infractions such as weapons, they were quickly expanded to include suspensions for acting out in class, truancy, fighting, and even using a cell phone (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Mallett, 2016).

The ZTPs designed to make the schools safer have in turn created a school to prison pipeline (Cuellar, 2015; McGrew, 2016; Schept, Wall, & Brisman, 2015; Union, n.d.; Wilson, 2014). The school to prison pipeline is known as a set of policies and practices that direct common student infractions toward the criminal justice system (Cuellar, 2015). Schools have an obligation to do all they can to keep students safe (Force, 2008). Yet the expansion of the ZTPs to nonviolent offenses has led to the criminalization of typical youth behaviors (Hachiya, 2010; Mallett, 2016). With increased use of police force on school campuses students are being arrested and pushed into the criminal justice system thus creating the prison to school pipeline (Wilson, 2014). Across the country the number of students suspended or expelled at the secondary level increased 40% over the last four decades (A. Duncan, 2014b). Students that are suspended are five times more likely to drop out of school and end up in the criminal justice system (Clough, 2014). The Council of State Governments released their report indicating the need to rethink ZTPs and move towards school based strategies that keep students in school (as cited in School Discipline Consensus Project, 2014).

New Mandates

Over the last two decades ZTPs have done little to increase school safety (Henson-Nash, 2015; Mann, 2016). These punitive environments have created a culture of negativity and uncertainty within many schools (Mann, 2016; Smith, 2015). In a swing of the pendulum, the USDE and Justice in 2014 issued joint guidelines that recommend schools adopt programs which foster positive school climates and review existing discipline policies (as cited in A. Duncan, 2014a; Mann, 2016). Schools which foster positive cultures notice improvements in mathematics, teacher optimism, lower body mass index, and lower smoking rates (Smith et al., 2015). The Resource Guide for Superintendent Action released by the USDE outlines eight strategies for districts to implement to evaluate and retool the discipline and student supports (as cited in Education, U.S.D.o., 2015). The guide indicates a desire to move away from punitive measures and towards practices that develop both the academic and emotional needs of a student.

Academic Achievement

Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner, and Wrabel (2016) and Chen (2007) identified strong correlations between school culture and positive academic outcomes. The Mental Health America Board and The USDE both call for the establishment of positive behavior systems in schools that focus on both high academics and social-emotional learning (as cited in America, 2014b; A. Duncan, 2014a). Student emotions impact the academic success of a student (Lüftenegger et al., 2016). A student's family background such as education and social economic status can also have a negative impact on the student's social behavior (Benbenishty et al., 2016; M.

J. Elias, White, & Stepney, 2014). In a study conducted by M. J. Elias, White, and Stephen (2014) academic achievement in elementary school was significantly impacted by social economic status of students. To increase academic achievement in students of poverty teachers need to build relationships of respect with students (Chen, 2007; Payne, 2001). Students are intensely aware of unspoken messages, such as body language or tone of voice, from both adults and other students about how they are perceived by individuals (Ashworth, 2008). Educators who display positive emotions develop a better relationship with their students and tend to have students who perform stronger academically (R. Castillo, Fernández-Berrocal, & Brackett, 2013).

Standardized Assessments

Standardized assessments help to measure academic success of student and the district. Standardized assessments grew out of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, that was later transformed into the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002 (Duffy, Giordano Farrell, Paneque, & Crump 2008). Both acts aimed at improving low performing schools across the nation by standardizing learning, but NCLB added assessment to the mix. Standardized testing is a method to measure reading, writing, mathematics, and science across the nation (Duffy et al., 2008). More recently in 2015 President Obama introduced Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (President, 2015), which moves away from a single national standardized assessment to state determined assessments that meet the need of the local community. In addition, the ESSA considers high school graduation rates as a measure of success for the district. The ESSA is specific in the need for district to

implement intervention programs to keep students in school, especially for minority and students of poverty (Gregory, 2015).

Social-Emotional Needs

The academic achievement pressures under NCLB did not take into account the emotional needs of students (Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, & Bergen, 2012). During the past decade, the consideration of emotional needs of students have been left out of the classroom. A. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs are broken into five levels. The two lower levels constitute the basic needs of safety, food, shelter, and rest, which are also known as deficiency needs (as cited in McLeod, 2016). Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, and Bergen (2012), believe that children in the United States experience a high level of one or more of Maslow's defined deficiency needs. Before a student can be successful academically they need to have all of their basic needs meet (Noltemeyer et al, 2012). Psychological needs of belonging and self-esteem come next and consist of relationships, friends and accomplishments (McLeod, 2016). A student who feels connected to school has positive relationship with people at the school (Henson-Nash, 2015). Students who are connected perform better academically.

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional skills in school are a necessary component of a curriculum (Barnwell, 2016; Waajid, Garnerb, & Owen, 2013; Zinsser & Dusenbury, 2015). The NCLB reform of 2002, increased the focus on academic achievement resulting in less time being spent on student emotional needs (Barnwell, 2016). According to Duffy, Giordano, Farrell, Paneque, and Crump, (2008) NCLBs focus on student cognitive

demands over social-emotional development has had serious implications for society by not focusing on the needs of the whole child. Students who are taught social-emotional skills can identify feelings in themselves and others and respond appropriately (Barthelus, 2015; Waajid et al., 2013; Zinsser, 2015). In particular students of poverty are lacking in social-emotional skills (Barthelus, 2015; Payne, 2001) and are in need of direct instruction of these skills. Students who develop component social skills perform better academically (R. Castillo et al., 2013; Payne, 2001). Students who are taught social skills will be focused more on academic instruction and less on inappropriate behaviors.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach which helps students to take responsibility for their behavior in a supportive environment focused on teaching rather than punishment (L. Mirsky, 2011). The purpose is to bring both the offending party and the victim together to discuss impact and then determine the road to redemption for the perpetrator. The perception is that if the perpetrator understands the negative impact and feels a connection to the individual the perpetrator will be less likely to repeat the same crime. Restorative Justice rose in popularity in the 1970s but began to take hold in the 1990s with the increasing cost of incarceration. However, its roots trace back to ancient civilizations and how former societies dealt with criminal acts (Rasmussen, 2011). Restorative Justice in an elementary school setting and focuses on teaching social-emotional skills as a form of intervention (Mann, 2016; Rasmussen, 2011).

Restorative Practices Theory

Restorative practices go further than restorative justice by addressing inappropriate behaviors while teaching accepted behaviors to prevent wrongdoing (Mann, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2014). The goal is for the perpetrator to understand the impact of the behavior on others and reconnect in a positive manner with the society. They are a forum for addressing problem behaviors and then teaching the student how to properly handle the situation. Restorative practices believes that empowering individuals with the necessary tools for acceptable behavior will bring about change (Nesbitt, 2004). At the school level, restorative practices focus on relationship building and school connectedness as a form of prevention. The connection between discipline and caring is brought into focus with community building circles (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011).

Proactive Community Circles

Teachers can directly impact a student's need to feel like they belong and their self-esteem. A student's relationship with staff determines their connectedness to the school and is one component that affects school climate (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Henson-Nash, 2015; Schep et al., 2015; Union, n.d.). When students feel connected they strive to keep the relationships healthy and work to repair any damages that arise (Smith et al., 2015). Community circles are a tool of restorative practices that focuses on students belonging to the community (Mahmood, n.d.; Smith et al., 2015; Wilson, 2014). Community circles can be used to support both the academic and social-emotional needs of a student. Community circles are utilized in school settings across the United States to develop relationships and teach acceptable social skills as a

method of prevention (L. Mirsky, 2014). The component of belonging connects back to social-emotional learning and helping to develop a positive connection for students to teachers and peers. Community building circles focus on teaching students how to develop relationships through constructed conversations (L. Mirsky, 2014). Connectedness relates back to the intent of restorative practices to empower students through community learning.

Research Problem

The mandates from both the federal and state governments are requiring school districts in California to rethink school discipline policies (Clough, 2014; Education, U.S.D.o., 2015; Mediratta, 2014). ZTPs were established in 1999 to increase school safety in response to highly publicized school shootings (Hachiya, 2010; Irby, 2009). Under the guise of safety districts began to expand the use of suspensions and explosions for non-violent offenses such as defiance (America, 2014b; Force, 2008). Students were excluded from classrooms thus reducing their instructional opportunities.

During the same time period, George W. Bush signed into law the NCLB in 2002 which sought in close the gap in academic achievement between poor minority students and students of higher social economic status (Klein, 2015). Under NCLB districts focused heavily on refining academic instruction in math and language arts (Barnwell, 2016). The social-emotional needs of the students were not addressed. A student's social-emotional capacity is a determining factor in their academic success (Barthelus, 2015; Noltemeyer et al., 2012; Waajid et al., 2013; Zinsser, 2015). The new federal and state guidelines developed under President Obama in 2015 are asking

districts to look at both disciplinary policies and instructional opportunities for social-emotional learning.

Restorative practices emerged as a tool to resolve discipline issues by addressing the motivations behind the behavior while decreasing exclusionary practices (Kline, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2011; Nesbitt, 2004; Ryan & Ruddy, 2014). Restorative practices help to assist in bringing together stakeholders to discuss the wrongdoing, the impact and teaching the student how to repair the damage (Kline, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2011). A preventative component of restorative practices is the use of proactive community circles (PCC) (B. Costello, Wachtel & Wachtel, 2010). Proactive community building circles help students establish relationships and address behavior expectations before problems arise. Many studies have been done at the secondary level on the positive impact of community circles to decrease suspensions (Ashworth, 2008; Dubin, 2016; Henson-Nash, 2015; Mann, 2016). Yet few studies have analyzed the use of community building circles in the elementary classroom to reduce suspensions and impact academic achievement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine what difference exists in student academic achievement and student behavior prior to and after implementation of PCCs in elementary schools in California that have implemented for a minimum of two years as measured by standardized test scores and student behavior records. The second purpose was to describe the impact of PCCs on student academic achievement and student behavior in elementary schools in California that

have implemented PCCs for a minimum of two years as perceived by school administrators.

Research Questions

Four research questions helped to guide this study and included two quantitative research questions and two qualitative research questions.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What difference exists in student academic achievement prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have the proactive community circles programs in place for a minimum of two years?
2. What difference exists in student behavior prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Qualitative Research Questions

3. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student academic achievement as perceived by administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?
4. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student behavior as perceived by administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Significance of the Problem

Suspensions in early childhood academic settings increase a student's chance of dropping out of high school by 10% (Lamont et al., 2013). During recent years' students, as young as preschool age have been expelled from state run programs (A. Duncan, 2014b). Schools are criminalizing childhood behaviors at very young ages (Hachiya, 2010; Irby, 2009). In California in 2011-2012 approximately 700,000 students were suspended for non-violent offenses such as defiance (A. Duncan, 2014b). The overuse of exclusionary discipline is keeping students from academic instruction and not addressing their emotional needs. In 2015 President Obama signed into law The Every Child Succeeds Act which calls on districts to increase the wrap around services to keep kids in school and ensure they are college and career ready at the end of high school (President, 2015). Restorative practices and community circles have been implemented in and studied in school districts outside of California as a wraparound service but not in California. Barnes (2016), who studied high schools in Ontario, Canada, suggests that the use of restorative practices and community building circles leads to relationship building between staff and students. Barnes' study suggests further research on the use of relationship building circles on younger students to keep students in school. California school districts need proven strategies to decrease punitive discipline practices such as suspensions while meeting the social needs of students.

Current research shows that schools that have adopted restorative practices have been successful in reducing suspensions at the middle and high school level while developing a positive school culture (Dubin, 2016). Restorative practices work

to discover the underlying cause of the conduct while teaching social behaviors and repairing relationships among affected parties (Henson-Nash, 2015; Lane, 2013; Mann, 2016; Nesbitt, 2004; Rasmussen, 2011; Ross, 2009). In reviewing recent literature, Kline (2016) concluded that restorative practices offer districts both preventive and reactive support when dealing with discipline matters. In addition, restorative practice have a positive impact on school culture at the middle and high school level (L. Mirsky, 2011). Community circles are a preventative strategy used within restorative practices to reinforce behavioral expectations (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011; Martin, 2015; L. Mirsky, 2014). Barthelus (2015) suggests further research is needed to understand how social-emotional learning impacts student violations. Roffey and McCarthy (2013) saw positive growth in teaching social-emotional skills during circles in primary schools in Sydney, Australia. The authors indicated that a more extensive study of circles for teaching social-emotional skills would benefit school districts. Therefore, this study may have implications for elementary school discipline practices that focus on building student social capacity to prevent violations.

Finally, young students who develop strong social-emotional skills perform better academically (Zinsser, 2015). Recent studies have suggested a positive link between school culture and academic performance (Benbenishty et al., 2016; Lüftenegger et al., 2016). Community circles are a tool to reinforce social skills while building relationships with peers and adults on campus. Students who feel connected to another individual at school have increased academic success. Roffey and McCarthy (2013) suggests more research is needed on sustainability and effect of

community circles. A study by Henson-Nash (2015) looked at the impact of restorative practices outside of California, to reduce suspensions in both elementary schools. His study found that in elementary schools outside of California the use of circles not only increased relationships but also academic performance. Henson-Nash suggests that more studies on the impact of restorative practices are needed. If the results of this study align with Henson-Nash's work, in terms of increased academic performance, then the information will be valuable to elementary schools both in and outside of California.

Of the 700,000 suspensions in California from 2011-2012, 175,000 were for students in an elementary setting (Education, C. D. o., 2013). While a study of 40 secondary schools in California concluded that caring relationships had more to do with the success than the resources available at the sites (A. Duncan, 2014b), there is not an aligned study for elementary schools. This research would fill the gap in literature on the use of PCCs at the elementary level to reduce student suspension rates and improve academic achievement. Districts across the country are looking for proven strategies to implement at elementary schools to keep students in school and on the road to college, following the mandate under Every Child Succeeds Act (President, 2015).

Definitions

The following definitions were used for the purposes of this study:

Academic Achievement. "Academic achievement is an outcome of learning, which is typically measured by classroom grades, classroom assessments, and external achievement tests" (Gajda, Karwoski, & Beghetto, 2017, p. 2).

Circles. A circle is defined as a "versatile restorative practice that can be used proactively, to develop relationships and build community or reactively, to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts and problems" (B. Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009, p. 7).

Proactive Community Circles (PCCs). The purpose of a PCC is to create bonds and build relationships among a group of people who have a shared interest. PCCs build relationships between students and improve school climate (B. Costello et al., 2010).

Restorative Circles. Restorative Circles are a defined as a "process that brings together the three 'primary stakeholders', that is, the person who caused harm; a person who was harmed; and the 'community of care' participates in the process" (Walker, 2009, p. 420).

Restorative Justice. Restorative justice is defined as providing "all stakeholders involved with an opportunity to participate in a forum to discuss the wrongdoing, who and how it has impacted, and what needs to be done to repair the harm" (Kline, 2016, p. 98).

Restorative Practice. Restorative practice is defined as a "social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making" (T. Wachtel, 2013, p. 1).

Smarter Balanced Assessment. Smarter Balanced Assessment is defined as a test to evaluate the student success with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) "through use of many new test item features, including multipart items, multiple-choice items with multiple correct answers, technological responses (e.g., highlight

parts of the text, drag and drop), and multiple texts with items requiring comparisons of the texts" (Shanahan, 2014, p. 185).

Social-Emotional Learning. Social-emotional learning is defined "as the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively" (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011, p. 406).

Standardized Assessments. Standardized Assessments are defined as a test which "consist of items which are judged to reflect important aspects of widely used curriculum materials" (Linn, 1983, p. 180) and provide a general summary of student performance in which results can be from year to year by a school to get an indication of improvement or decline in overall performance (Linn, 1983).

Suspensions. Suspensions are defined as "the disciplinary practice of removing a student from school for one or more days" (Heilbrun, Cornell, & Lovegrove, 2015, p. 489).

Zero Tolerance Policies. Zero Tolerance Policies are defined as policies "that mandates the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, that are intended to be applied regardless of the gravity of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context" (Force, 2008, p. 852).

Delimitations

The study participants were delimited to elementary schools in the southern region of California in the United States. For the purpose of this study, the southern region of California includes, Los Angeles County and Riverside County. In

addition, the pre-test and post-test quantitative data retrieved by the researcher will be on different sets of students. This data could be influenced by the variance in the academic differences between students. Next, the CAASPP is in the third year of administration and changes in scores may be reflective of changes in student familiarity with the assessment rather than the implementation of PCCs. Also, the implementation of other programs at the school site and professional development that runs simultaneously with the implementation of PCC may impact the quantitative and qualitative data. Furthermore, consistency and frequency of PCC as implemented by the classroom teacher. The researcher tries to limit this issue by only selecting schools that have an expectation of monthly community circles. Lastly, the ability level of the staff members to implement PCC with fidelity. The researcher tries to limit this issue by only selecting schools that have had training in the use of PCC as part of the restorative training.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters followed by references used during the study. Chapter II provides a review of historical perspective of school discipline, academic achievement, the importance of social-emotional learning, restorative justice, restorative practices in the school system, the use of restorative circles and PCCs. Chapter III outlines the details of the research design, methodology of the study, and includes the process that was used in population and sample selection, the survey instrument used, and the limitations of the study. Chapter IV is designed around the data gathered during the study and the analysis of said data. Chapter V

concludes the study by providing conclusions and recommendations for further research. The references and appendices are located at the end of the study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss student behavior, academic achievement, community circles, and standardized testing. This review will provide a historical look at policies and practices that have directed school punishment as well as the impact on student academic achievement. In addition, the review will define restorative practices and provides an overview of theories as to the impact restorative practices and community circles have on student behavior and academic achievement. Lastly the review will highlight the relationship between academic achievement and standardized assessments.

Suspensions in elementary school put students at a higher risk of dropping out of high school (J. Castillo, 2015; Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Mediratta, 2014). In the 2011-2012 school year, nearly 3.5 million students of all K-12 students were suspended at least once during the school year, with 91,000 of those being elementary students who are now at risk of dropping out (R. J. Skiba & Losen, 2016). With the recent changes in mandates under President Obama to increase graduation rates, districts are looking for alternatives to their current discipline policies and student retention methods (A. Duncan, 2014b). A new approach to student discipline and retention is restorative justice. Restorative justice supports students in taking responsibility for their negative actions while working to build positive relationships to keep students in school (L. Mirsky, 2011). Many public high schools and middle schools have been experiencing positive results with the implementation of restorative practices, such as PCCs, alongside their current discipline programs

(Dubin, 2016; Kline, 2016; Mann, 2016; Rasmussen, 2011; Wadhwa, 2013). The document highlights the practices that improve and sustain supportive school cultures and collaborative discipline systems. Restorative practices are seen as tools to reduce suspensions, build relationships, and keep students in school.

This chapter will review the existing literature on restorative practices and the historical influences of discipline practices in order to help situate this study. Discipline policies and social-emotional learning in elementary schools today are core areas of focus for improving school climate and academic performance. First, the literature on the historical perspective on classroom discipline along with new federal mandates will be reviewed to show the how restorative justice have been impacted and influenced by the past. Research on academic achievement and emotional learning are also reviewed in this chapter. This chapter will also review the literature on the background of restorative justice and how it was founded. Next this chapter will review the literature for restorative practice and the use of PCCs. The history of circles and the structure, and the types of PCCs also be reviewed.

Historical Perspective of Classroom Discipline

Traditionally school discipline has focused on punishment and humiliation to change behavior (Noakes, 2014). This strategy has left behind many children. The focus on punishment is criminalizing typical youth behaviors (Mallett, 2016). Schools have an obligation to do all they can to keep students safe but many agree that the historical approach to discipline has not increased school safety (Force, 2008). The history of school discipline sets the stage for the need for change.

Historical Perspective of School Discipline

Student misbehaviors and the enactment of strict school discipline are not new issues in education. Delinquency problems in education can be dated back to schooling in early colonialism of the United States (Allman, 2011). During colonial times and school discipline practices followed biblical references and beliefs. Following these teachings, it was believed that children were born evil and that it was the parents' responsibility to use corporal punishment to force them to obey (Rupper, 2010). Parents transferred the role of disciplinarian to the teacher who functioned as parental extensions in loco parentis, meaning in the place of parents (Findlaw, 2013; Rupper, 2010; Yell & Rozalski, 2008). Whipping posts and branding, such as "T" for thief, were standard practice in school discipline (D. Greenberg, 1999). Horace Mann, a supporter of free public education in the mid-19th century, reported seeing 328 floggings in one school in a one-week period (as cited in Adams, 2000; D. Greenberg, 1999). During the early 1900s educators used their role to step further into corporal discipline to extinguish behaviors (Findlaw, 2013). As more students began attending school teachers needed to maintain control of the classroom. The Baby Boom that occurred after World War II resulted in rapid expansion of schools from one room school houses to multi-classroom buildings and larger classrooms (Adams, 2000). In the 1950s the use of corporal punishment in schools grew. Physical punishment in the classroom was an expectation by both parents and teachers (McGregor, 2017). Keeping order in these growing classrooms took precedence over teaching. In 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld corporal punishment for school discipline in the Ingraham v. Wright case in which students

from a Florida junior high school questioned the use of a wooden paddle as cruel and unusual punishment (FindLaw, 2017a). The practice of corporal punishment continues today. In 2013-2014, 109,000 students were physically punished in 4,000 different schools across 21 states (Sparks & Harwin, 2016). Strauss (1994/2001) argues that these incidents of corporal punishment do not take into account future violence by the recipient towards other students. Students who are physically punished are six times more likely to become physically violent towards other juveniles (Straus, 2001). Using physical punishment to deter unwanted behaviors in school could actually promote more violence. Even with the threat of corporal punishment, students continued to committee serious felonies on school campuses (FindLaw, 2013). States continue to seek new school policies and guidelines to curb behaviors.

School Policies and Guidelines

As student populations in schools continued to increase administrators looked for new more efficient discipline practices. In the 1960s and 1970s suspensions were deemed an easy and swift practice by administrators to disciplining large numbers of troublesome students (Adams, 2000). Suspending a student makes them someone else's problem. Such nationally tragedies as Columbine and Virginia Tech led to an era of mandatory exclusionary discipline in an effort to keep students safe and guns out of schools (FindLaw, 2013).

ZTPs

ZTPs are described as a set of mandates with predetermined consequences that are severe in nature and must be applied despite any mitigating circumstances

(Force, 2008). Evidence suggests that ZTP implemented in the 1990s have not increased school safety as intended and may actually be contributing to the school to prison pipeline (Hudson, 2011; Lamont, 2013; Peyton, 2016; Salole, 2015; Schept, 2015; Wilson, 2014). The actual first use of the term was noted was in 1983 Lexis-Nexis national newspaper in reference to 40 Navy submarine crew members who were suspended for drug abuse (Tidmarsh, 2014). The War on Drugs initiative under President Reagan increased the focus by all members of the criminal justice system. In 1986 the U.S. Attorney in San Diego used the phrase "Zero Tolerance" to describe his program directing all authorities to impound any sea craft carrying even the smallest about of drugs thus giving the zero tolerance initiative national recognition. In 1988 the U.S. Attorney expanded the order to all U.S. customs officials to seize boats, automobiles, and passports of anyone trying to enter with drugs, regardless of the amount, trying to cross any U.S. border and to charge those individuals with a federal crime (R. Skiba & Peterson, 1999). The zero tolerance movement quickly took hold in schools across the United States. In 1989 several school districts from California to New York began to adopt ZTPs. In 1994 President Clinton made ZTPs mandatory for school districts with the passing of the Gun Free Schools Act (Schept et al., 2015; R. Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Under this new era of control, ZTPs quickly expanded to cover issues from skateboarding to sexual harassment.

In 1994 the Gun Free Schools Act set the stage for exclusionary discipline by establishing a mandatory one-year expulsion for any student who brings firearms to school (Hachiya, 2010; Irby, 2009; Wolf, 2015). ZTPs, which treat minor and major incidents with the same severity are meant to send a message to further perpetrators.

In 1999, ZTPs were put into place in school districts across the country in an effort to make students, teachers and the community feel safer in the wake of large published school shootings (Henson-Nash, 2015; Mallett, 2016; McGrew, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2014; Salole & Abdulle, 2015; Wilson, 2014). However, the Gun Free Schools Act may have been overkill. A survey conducted of Principals by the National Center for Education Statistics (see Figure 1) in 1998 shows that tardiness was the number one infractions in 1990 at 34% and again in 1996 at 40% followed by class cutting at 25% for both 1990 and 1996. ZTPs were intended to stop the threat of gun violence, but instead increased suspensions for students late to or ditching class. ZTPs began criminalizing students for not attending school (Adams, 2000).

Discipline Issue	1990-91 %	1996-97 %
Student tardiness	34	40
Student absenteeism/class cutting	25	25
Physical conflicts among students	23	21
Student tobacco use	13	14
Verbal abuse of teachers	11	12
Student drug use	6	9
Vandalism of school property	12	8
Student alcohol use	10	7
Robbery or theft of items over $10	7	5
Gangs	*	5
Trespassing	7	4
Racial tensions	5	3
Student possession of weapons	3	2
Physical abuse of teachers	1	2
Sale of drugs on school grounds	1	2

Figure 1. Percentage of principals reporting which discipline issues were moderate or serious issues in their schools, 1990-91 and 1996-97. * = Item was not included in 1991 survey. Adapted from "Violence and Discipline Problems in U. S. Public Schools: 1996-1997," by Washington, D. C.: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 98-030, 1998.

Despite the lack of increased violence on campus, districts increased the application of the ZTPs in the name of safety (R. Skiba & Peterson, 1999). While zero tolerance educational policies were originally designed to deal with the most serious of infractions such as weapons, they were quickly expanded to include suspensions for acting out in class, truancy, fighting and even using a cell phone (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Mallett, 2016). Students who are suspended are more likely to drop out of high school (Mediratta, 2014; J. Skiba, 2008; R. Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Tidmarsh, 2014). Over the years the application of ZTPs put many students at risk of dropping out of school. Table 1 represents the wide net cast by the expansion rigid application of ZTP. The incidents listed were reported in media and verified by J. Skiba and Peterson (1999), after the signing if the 1994 Gun Free Schools Act. The ZTP meant to curb drugs and gang violence began criminalizing youthful behaviors and throwing them into the criminal justice system at a younger and younger age (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Hachiya, 2010; Irby, 2009).

Table 1

Selected School Events Leading to Suspensions or Expulsion

Location and Date	Description of Incident	Outcome
Columbus, OH May 1998	Nine-year-old on way to school found a manicure kit with 1" knife.	Suspended for one day for violating school's zero tolerance antiviolence policy.
Alexandria, LA February 1997	Second-grader brought grandfather's watch for show and tell; had 1" pocketknife attached.	Suspended and sent for one month to local alternative school.

(continued)

Table 1

Selected School Events Leading to Suspensions or Expulsion

Location and Date	Description of Incident	Outcome
Columbia, SC October 1996	Sixth-grader brought steak knife in her lunch box to cut chicken; asked teacher if she could use it.	Police called; girl taken in cruiser; suspended even though never took knife out; threatened with expulsion.
Newport News, VA October 1996	Five-year-old brought beeper from home and showed it to classmates on field trip.	Suspended for violation of school rule forbidding students from bringing pagers to school.
Lexington, NC September 1996	Six-year-old kissed classmate; said the girl asked him to.	One-day suspension for violation of school rule prohibiting "unwarranted and unwelcome touching."
Fairborn, OH September 1996	Fourteen-year-old shared two Midol tablets with 13-year-old classmate.	Fourteen-year-old suspended for 10 days with expulsion forgiven; 13-year-old allowed back after nine days of 10-day suspension after agreeing to attend drug awareness classes.
Colorado Springs, CO October 1997	Six-year-old shared organic lemon drops with fellow students on playground.	Suspended for possession of other chemical substances"; mother complained of administrator use of scare tactics when she was called in.
San Diego, CA October 1997	Twelve-year-old scuffled with classmates when they taunted him for being fat.	Expelled for violation of zero tolerance policy toward fighting.

Note. Adapted from “The Dark Side of Zero Tolerance: Can Punishment Lead to Safe Schools?,” by R. Skiba, and R. Peterson. Retrieved from http://curry.virginia.edu/ /resourceLibrary/dark_zero_tolerance.pdf

Suspension excludes the student from an education. Students who are suspended are at a high risk for repeating a grade and eventually dropping out of

school (Force, 2008; Irby, 2009; Mallett, 2016). Overuse of suspensions leads to decreased academic achievement due to loss of instructional time (Riestenberg, 2012). A group of Ohio high school students were suspended up to 10 days for misconduct without being given a hearing. The students challenged the use of suspensions without due process in the U.S. Supreme Court in Goss v. Lopez, 1975 arguing that the application of such a severe consequence could seriously damage their reputation and future education or employment (Adams, 2000; FindLaw, 2017b; Yell & Rozalski, 2008). The Supreme Court ruled that students are entitled to due process under the 14th Amendment prior to a suspension (FindLaw, 2017b). The Goss v. Lopez ruling further states that a suspension is not a minor act and if sustained and recorded on a student's school record it could have a negative impact on later educational and employment opportunities. Suspensions, which were once designed to deliver swift punishment, can have a far-reaching impact on a student's future. As rights of students are being brought to the forefront in discipline matters, so must be considered the impact of criminalizing youthful behaviors.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

The ZTPs designed to make the schools safer have actually created the school to prison pipeline (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; McGrew, 2016; Schept et al., 2015; Union, n.d.; Wilson, 2014). The school-to-prison pipeline refers to the school policies and practices that push juveniles into the criminal justice system (Mallett, 2016; McGrew, 2016; Union, n.d.). Chen's (2007) research suggests that metal detectors, police, and video cameras are necessary to improve safety and the educational environment. Mallet (2016) noted that with the enactment of ZTP, many

districts installed security cameras and hired school resource officers. From 2004 to 2012 the number of public schools using security cameras for campus safety nearly doubled from 32.5% in 2004 to 64.3% in 2012 (Robers et al., 2015). The increase of cameras on campus means that students are always being monitored. In 2013 a *New York Times* research article found no evidence to indicate that the presences of police officers on campuses had increased campus safety (Schept et al., 2015). According to the Department of Education Report, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2010*, found that 43% of all public schools K-12 reported having a school resource officer or sworn officer on campus at least once a week during the school year 2009-2010. In the same report, 28% of elementary schools alone reported having security on campus once a week, with 16% requiring full time security (Robers et al., 2015). Mallet (2016) believes that this immediate access to police contributed to the increase the number of arrests and referrals to the juvenile courts. Hudson (2011) and McGrew (2016) believe that the increased focus on suspensions and referrals to the criminal justice system via on campus police has led to the theory of the school to prison pipeline.

While crime rates have decreased over the past two decades, school referrals to the police had increased (Wilson, 2014). The adoption and expansion of ZTP has helped to increase the use of police in public schools. ZTPs turned schools into supplemental law enforcement agencies (R. Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Suspensions and exclusion under ZTPs have become standard practices for schools to demand obedience and compliance from the students (Wilson, 2014). From 1974 to 2003 the rates of suspension for children of color have increased from 1.7 million to 3.1

million (Union, n.d.). In 2011-2012 alone of the 49 million students in the United States, 7 million of received either in school or out of school suspensions according a report by the US Department of Education (Gray & Lewis, 2015). This focus on punishment has criminalized typical youth behaviors during the last 15 years (Hachiya, 2010; Mallett, 2016) and increased the number of suspensions. Students who are suspended are often left unsupervised during the day and are more likely to become involved in criminal activities. The literature suggests that the police presence has increased referrals of students to the criminal justice system but not increased overall campus security. D. J. Skiba and Losen (2016) went on further to suggest that the over application of ZTPs and use of suspensions increase negative social outcomes for students.

Defiance Theory. Defiance theory was developed by Lawrence Sherman in 1993. Defiance theory is defined as the as the increase in criminal behaviors by an individual when the offender fells that unjust punishments were administered (Freeman, Liossis, & David, 2006; Mann, 2016). In a school setting, this perceived unfair treatment can extend to the larger student body (Force, 2008). The increase in school suspensions for youthful behaviors under ZTP has led to an increase in disengaged youth who believe that unfair punishments are being handed out (Force, 2008; Mann, 2016). The anger and frustration for the unjust treatment increases recidivism rates (Freeman et al., 2006; Mann, 2016; Noakes, 2014). Therefore, the increase use of suspensions has a negative impact on school culture, leading to students who are disengaged and dropping out of school (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Schept et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2015; Union, n.d.). The review of the literature

suggests that defiance has risen at school sites who are using the ZTP to over punish students thus leading to increased student disengagement and dropout rates.

New Guidelines

The Council of State Governments (Justice Center, 2014), released their report indicating the need to move away from ZTPs and move towards school based strategies that keep students in school. The research suggests that after over the past two decades ZTP have done little to increase school safety (Henson-Nash, 2015; Mann, 2016). This traditional form of discipline focuses on punishment and creates little opportunity for offenders to make amends. These punitive environments have created a culture of negativity and uncertainty within many schools (Mann, 2016; Smith et al., 2015). In a swing of the pendulum, the USDE and the Department of Justice in 2014 (Mann, 2016) issued joint guidelines that recommend schools adopt programs which foster positive school climates. Schools which foster positive cultures notice improvements in mathematics, teacher optimism, and lower body mass index (Smith et al., 2015). R. J. Skiba and Losen (2016) believe that interventions that focus on building student-teacher relationships can reduce the need for exclusionary discipline practices. Restorative practices, which focuses on building positive student-teacher relationships is one of the proposed actions by the USDE in 2015 in their document entitled *Rethink School Discipline: School District Leader Summit on Improving School Climate and Discipline: Resource Guide for Superintendent Action*. Restorative practices are starting to be implemented in schools across the country to proactively build relationships and a sense of community (R. J. Skiba & Losen, 2016) in an effort to keep students in school.

Academic Achievement

The Department of Justice (2014) determined that while many different systems can be used a focus on prevention, a positive culture was a key component to improving schools. Student emotions impact the academic success of a student (Lüftenegger et al., 2016). A student's family background such as education and social economic status can have a negative impact on the student's social behavior (Benbenishty et al., 2016; M. J. Elias et al., 2014). In a study conducted by M. J. Elias et al. (2014) academic achievement in elementary school was significantly impacted by social economic status of students. To increase academic achievement in students of poverty teachers need to build relationships of respect with students (Chen, 2007; Payne, 2001). Students are intensely aware of unspoken messages from adults about how they are perceived (Ashworth, 2008). Educators who display positive emotions develop a better relationship with their students and tend to have students who perform better academically (R. Castillo et al., 2013). The NCLB Act of 2001 mandated that every child make adequate yearly progress regardless of their social economic status (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). The NCLB established a goal for every child in every school to be proficient in English and mathematics by 2014. The pressures of NCLB left little time for teaching social-emotional skills (Barnwell, 2016; Gregory, 2015). The pressures of NCLB policies helped to expand of use ZTPs to include defiance in a classroom. Suspensions by a teacher for defiance allowed the teacher to increased time on academic instruction without further student interruptions. According to the Sapp (2014) an attorney for the ACLU chapter of northern California approximately 600 students a year in K-6 were expelled and

another 10,000 were suspended for willful defiance, which included not doing homework and dress code violations. In 2014 Governor Jerry Brown of California signed into law AB 420 which eliminated suspensions for willful defiance for K-3 grade students for a period of three and a half years (Clough, 2014). The School Discipline Census report released in June of 2014 calls for districts to stop using suspending students as corrective action and instead look to understand and address the underlying causes of the behaviors (Morgan, Salomon, Plotkin, & Cohen, 2014; Tidmarsh, 2014).

In 2015 President Obama changed the federal accountability program to ESSA (Gregory, 2015). ESSA provides states with flexibility in determining the accountability criteria, however, graduation rates are being more heavily weighted. The recent literature suggests that students who are connected to school are also perform better academically (Barthelus, 2015; M. Elias et al., 2016; Waajid et al., 2013; Zinsser & Dusenbury, 2015) and thus move on to graduation. Therefore, the literature is suggesting that teaching positive social-emotional skills can increase student academic achievement. The literature supports a link between school culture and positive academic outcomes (Benbenishty et al., 2016; Chen, 2007; Department of Education, C. D. O. o., 2014).

Standardized Assessment

Standardized assessments grew out of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 that was later transformed into the NCLB Act of 2002 (Duffy et al., 2008). Both acts aimed at improving low performing schools across the nation by standardizing learning, but NCLB added assessment to the mix. Standardized

testing is a method to measure reading, writing, mathematics, and science across the nation (Duffy et al., 2008). More recently in 2015 President Obama introduced ESSA (USDE, 2015), which moves away from a single national standardized assessment to state determined assessments that meet the need of the local community. In addition, the ESSA will take into account high school graduation rates as a measure of success for the district. The ESSA is specific in the need for districts to implement intervention programs to keep students in school, especially for minority and students of poverty (Gregory, 2015).

According to Almagor (2014), one of the benefits of NCLB was that the disparity in the level of instruction from one school to another, especially in the same district, had to be corrected. The introduction of standardized assessments with expected growth rates pushed all schools to increase the level of rigor, however, many districts began to teach to the multiple choice tests (Almagor, 2014). The recent changes in state standards and federal guidelines has introduced a new assessment model that requires students to problem solve (Almagor, 2014). California is in the second year of utilizing the Smarter Balanced Assessment System (California Department of Education [CDE], 2014) for accountability purposes. The Smarter Balanced Assessment System has tests in both English language arts and mathematics. The Smarter Balanced Assessment System is used in all California public schools in grades third through eighth and then again in 11th (CDE, 2014). The Smarter Balanced Assessment System scores are provided to each district and therefore can be used to compare academic impact of community circles.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The academic achievement pressures under NCLB and now ESSA do not take into account the emotional needs of students (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). In 1943 Maslow stated that people were motivated by five basic needs, psychological, safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization. He believed that if a need wasn't being met, the move to the next level of needs (McLeod, 2007). Maslow believed that the needs were arranged in a hierologically order (see Figure 2).

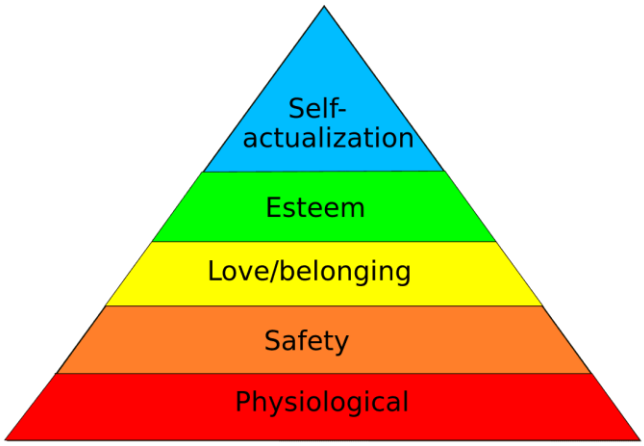

Figure 2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Adapted from "A Theory of Human Motivation," by A. Maslow, 1943. *Psychological Review*, *50*(4), 370-396.

Throughout the years A. Maslow (1943) continued to refine his pyramid, ending with eight needs identified by 1962. The needs were then split into two categories, deficiency needs and growth needs. Deficiency needs encompass four levels of the pyramid: (a) psychological needs, (b) safety needs, (c) belonging needs, and (d) esteem needs. Before a student can be successful academically they need to have all of their deficiency needs meet (as cited in Noltemeyer et al., 2012). Belonging is considered the third basic need of every human individual. School connectedness or belonging refers to a student's relationship with adults or peers at the school (Henson-

Nash, 2015). According to Maslow, students can only begin to meet cognitive needs after belonging and self-esteem needs are meet. Students who feel that they belong will are capable of performing better academically. Noltemeyer et al. (2012) found that in 2008 1 in 5 American children live in poverty. Students in poverty are more likely to experience high levels of needs in the four areas of deficiency needs, yet are expected to perform the same in school as their peers (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). Schools in high poverty areas need to consider deficiency needs of students to better support growth needs. The literature further suggests that Maslow's basics needs, such as food and safety, need to be meet in order to address the psychological needs of belonging and esteem which then leads to increased academic success. A study done by Freitas and Leonard (2011) on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and academic success of nursing students determined that it is important to help students understand the consequences of their actions and the impact on others. Helping students see their impact will help support a change in behavior to support the community. When students feel like they are a part of a classroom community, motivation and performance will increase (Levine, 2003). Restorative practices help to address the needs of belonging and self-esteem through the implementation of PCCs in classrooms (see Figure 3).

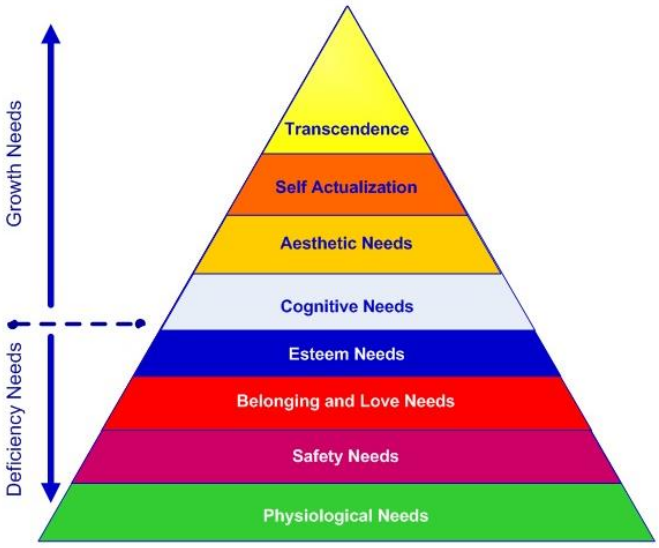

Figure 3. Maslow's Motivation Model. Adapted from "Motivation & Personality," by A. Maslow, 1954/1970. Copyright by Harper & Row.

Academic Performance and Emotional Learning

Emotions can impede or improve a student's academic performance. In a study conducted by Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, and Morrison (2008), the authors found that academic achievement could be improved if schools focused on supporting social-emotional learning as well as academics. Teaching of social-emotional skills fell to the wayside in many classrooms with the added focus on standardized assessments under NCLB. According to Weissberg and Greenberg (1998) for students to succeed in school they need to be socially, emotionally, and academically competent. As districts are looking to meet the goals of ESSA, passed under the Obama administration, social-emotional learning has become an area of focus. Twenty-first century learning asks schools to move beyond preparing students for assessments and teach skills that foster success in school and life (M. T. Greenberg et al., 2003). Social-emotional learning address areas that support skills for success in school and life, such as recognizing and controlling emotions,

appreciating the perspectives of others, goal setting, making good choices and the development of strong interpersonal skills (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; M. T. Greenberg et al., 2003; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998). Taylor and Dymnicki, (2007) stated that teaching social-emotional learning skills from kindergarten to high school has a positive impact on academic success. Social-emotional skills develop and enhance as the child grows, instruction needs to span through a student's educational career (M. T. Greenberg et al., 2003).

Setting academic goals and developing a positive emotional connection to those goals are a critical component towards success (Lüftenegger et al., 2016). Recognizing and controlling one's emotions is a component of social-emotional learning. Students who are in emotionally supportive classrooms develop a self-awareness of their feelings (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012) and can push through challenging lessons. Students learn to think about their thinking, develop positive inner talk, while understanding their strengths and weakness (Doty, 2001). In addition, social-emotional learning helps a student to develop positive relationships with both students and adults. Students who feel connected emotionally to school through both peer and teacher relationships perform stronger academically (Blankemeyer, Flannery, & Vazsonyi, 2002; M. T. Greenberg et al., (2003); Taylor & Dymnicki, 2007). In addition, restorative practices can be used to build relationships between teachers and students which leads to increased academic performance (Martin, 2015; R. J. Skiba & Losen, 2016). Social-emotional learning instruction though restorative practices helps to addresses the psychological needs of belonging

and esteem as identified by Maslow, allowing the students to then focus on their cognitive skills.

Social-Emotional Learning

Several authors agree that teaching social-emotional skills in school is a necessary component of a curriculum (Barnwell, 2016; Waajid et al., 2013; Zinsser & Dusenbury, 2015). The NCLB reform of 2002, increased the focus on academic achievement resulting in less time being spent on student emotional needs (Barnwell, 2016). Inappropriate behaviors in school is an indication that students do not feel connected at school (B. Costello et al., 2010; R. J. Skiba & Losen, 2016). According to Duffy et al. (2008) NCLBs focus on student cognitive demands over social-emotional development has had serious implications for society as a whole by not focusing on the needs of the whole child. Students who are taught social-emotional skills are able to identify feelings in themselves and others and respond appropriately (Barthelus, 2015; Taylor & Dymnicki, 2007; Waajid et al., 2013; Zinsser & Dusenbury, 2015). In particular, students of poverty are lacking in social-emotional skills (Barthelus, 2015; Noltemeyer et al., 2012; Payne, 2001) and are in need of direct instruction of these skills. Students who develop component social skills perform better academically (R. Castillo et al., 2013; Payne, 2001). In a report released by the Collaborative for Academic and Social, and Emotional Learning, researchers looked at over 317 studies of K-8 students and found social-emotional learning curriculum improved academic performance 11 to 18 percentiles points (Barthelus, 2015; Payton et al., 2008). Therefore, students who are taught social skills will be benefit both socially and academically.

Social Bond Theory

In 1969 Hirschi released his work on social bond theory. Hirschi (2002/2002/2009) explained that delinquency did not occur when individuals had positive social connections. Hirschi's theories, were a new approach in the field in that it had a reveres focus of current theories. Hirschi looked to explain why individuals did not commit a delinquent act rather than explain the motivation behind a committed act. Hirschi set out explain what prevented individuals from acting in a certain way (as cited in Ozden & Ozcan, 2006). Social bond theory is based on the premise that members of a group have a bond based on a social relationship (Grabowicz, 2013). Hirschi identified four types of social bond; attachment to others, commitment, involvement and belief (as cited in Cassino & Rogers, 2016; Ozden & Ozcan, 2006; Unal, Cukur, & Cem, 2011). Hirschi (1969) explains that the first social bond, attachment, has do with the strength of the individual's relationship with others. The second social bond, commitment, is the level of commitment to achievement. The third, bond of involvement, has to do with the individual's involvement in traditional activities such reading, homework, and school programs. The fourth relationship of belief, is the individual's personal beliefs the common value system shared by the group. In 2004, Hirschi revised his theory to focus on the theory of self-control as related to the social bonds that an individual has at that time period (as cited by Morris, Gerber, & Menard, 2011; Ward, Boman, & Jones, 2015). Research, since Hirschi's initial study in 1969, have continued to support a positive correlation to both parental relationships and school relationships and reductions in delinquency (Morris et al., 2011; Ozden & Ozcan, 2006; Unal, 2011). The literature

suggests that a student's relationships at school with adults and peers can deter negative behaviors. These relationships also impact school culture.

Individuals who engage in delinquent behaviors have a negative impact on school climate as well as their own individual academic success (Hart & Mueller, 2013). In schools with a positive climate, where students felt connected, there was lower incidents of violence (R. Skiba et al., 2004). Morrison and Vaandering (2012) found that traditional hard power punitive control measures in schools were less effective than soft power measures based on relationships with students. According to Hirschi, students don't want to know what the negative effects of things like drugs, they want to know that adults care for them and do not want them using drugs (as cited in Morris et al., 2011). Restorative justice is helping schools to move to embrace soft powers for discipline matters. Restorative justice is based on the idea that individuals thrive in an environment based on relational ecologies which examine what happened, who was affected and how to repair the harm (Morrison et al., 2012). This approach to discipline allows the student to address their role in an incident and teaches them to repair harm (T. M. P. Wachtel, 2004a). Hard discipline approaches reinforce judgement of the student through punishment. Unal and Cukur (2011) found that corrosive discipline and blame lead to increased delinquency among students. Overall schools that foster a bond to the school through relationships decrease student discipline incidents and develop a positive school culture (Hart, 2013). Soft discipline approaches allow the student to understand and work through negative emotions such as shame that can be caused by the incident.

Shame Theory

Shame is an emotion that plays an important role in our social interactions (Doern & Goss, 2014). Tomkins (2014) identified nine affects that explain the emotions in all human beings. Tomkins believed that through these nine emotions that human beings were able to build relationships. The nine affects are broken down into three categories which identify the impact of the emotions as negative, natural or positive (see Figure 4). These nine affects are innate emotions from birth based on cognitive functions (Steven, 2006). Tomkins describes two of the affects that produce positive emotions: joy, which is a social bond and excitement, which draws interest into something. Startle, which is like a reset button, is the only emotion to produce a neutral affect (Tomkins, 2014). Six of the nine affects produce negative emotions: (a) humiliation which produces shame, (b) anguish which produces distress, (c) disgust produces the need to expel, (d) terror which produces fear, (e) rage which produces anger, and (f) dismell which produces avoidance (Tomkins, 2014). Based on Tomkins diagram, people are more likely to have a negative reaction to a situation than a positive emotion. Helping children to identify these emotions in themselves and how to control outward responses can reduce the negative outcomes.

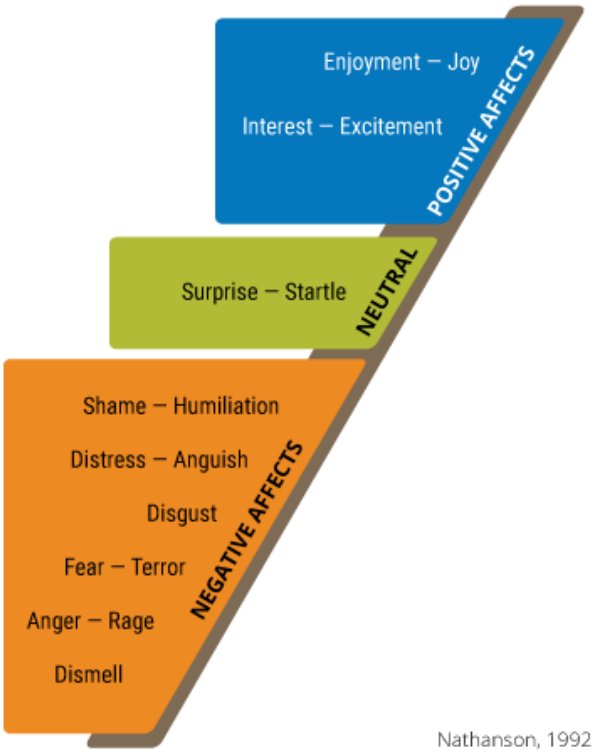

Figure 4. The Nine Affects. Adapted from "Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self," by D. L. Nathanson, 1992. Copyright by Norton: W. W. Norton.

Negative emotions are emotions that are extremely self-destructive and incapacitating (Breggin, 2015). Shame is identified by D. Nathanson (1996) as one of the six negative emotions that is a critical regulator of behavior. According to Tomkins (2014), shame occurs when positive emotions are interrupted. Individuals who experience shame do not have to commit a crime. Victims of crime experience shame because the positive emotion tied to an activity is interrupted and then becomes associated with a negative emotion (B. Costello et al., 2010). D. L. Nathanson in 1992 developed the compass of shame to help categorize the negative emotions that shame evokes when analyzing behaviors (see Figure 5). Shame is an internal emotion that can be reduced, ignored, or magnified by the individual and allow the observer to anticipate the response or actions (Elison, Lennon, & Pulos,

2006). Shame produces four emotional responses: (a) withdrawal, (b) attack self, (c) avoidance, and (d) attack others, with separate actions which produce inward or outward reactions.

Figure 5. Compass of Shame. Adapted from "Defining Restorative," by International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/what-is-restorative-practices/defining-restorative/11-history

The poles of the compass are ordered in the degree to which they produce internalization of the emotion (Elison, Lennon, & Pulos, 2006). The first response to shame is withdrawal. In this response, a person acknowledges the experience as negative and tries to isolate oneself or run and hide (B. Costello et al., 2010; Elison et al., 2006; D. Nathanson, 1996). A student in the classroom room might refuse to participate in a class discussion or isolate one's self on the playground during recess. The individual pulls away from the situation to reduce the negative feelings (Elison et al., 2006; D. Nathanson, 1996). The second emotion is attack self. In self attack, the individual again accepts the negative incident and begins to turn anger inward towards self-put-downs and defamation (B. Costello et al., 2010; Elison et al., 2006;

D. Nathanson, 1996). Individuals often compare themselves to others, seeing the negative in their actions (Doern & Goss, 2014; Hejdenberg, 2011; Murphy, 2017). In self-attack reactions, the individual internalizes the feelings and changes the behaviors to avoid the negative feelings in the future (Elison et al., 2006; D. Nathanson, 1996). Students in a classroom might refer to themselves as stupid. The third emotion is avoidance. When a person responds with avoidance the individual does not accept responsibility for the actions and denies any responsibility (Elison et al., 2006; D. Nathanson, 1996). Individuals can engage in distraction behaviors such as thrill seeking and drug abuse (B. Costello et al., 2010). A student, acting in avoidance, might feel shame for a failing grade on a test, and then blame the teacher or claim the subject is not important. The fourth response to shame is to attack others. In this reaction, the individual does not accept responsibility for the action and instead wants to be relieved of pain by making someone else feel worse (Elison et al., 2006; D. Nathanson, 1996). This attack response is the foundation for violence in society as individuals lash out physically against others, try to turn the tables and even blame the victim (B. Costello et al., 2010). A student might tease another student when they feel shame to turn the tables or even blame the other student when a physically assault occurs. The purpose of this type of outward response is to turn the negative emotion towards someone else and thus reduce personal shame (Elison et al., 2006; D. Nathanson, 1996).

Shame is a motivator to change. The withdrawal and attack-self responses, both involve internalization and a desire to change the behavior to avoid incidents of shame in the future. These forms of shame are the basis for punishment. Braithwaite

(1989) explained that shaming is a valuable tool used by parents to teach appropriate behaviors, however, over reliance on punishment to establish control often leads to delinquent behaviors. For shaming to be an effective tool in teaching appropriate social behaviors, individuals need to feel connected and supported by one another so positive emotions can flourish (Doern & Goss, 2014). Restorative justice provides the opportunity for individuals to express shame for their actions while learning how to reduce the intensity of the emotions (T. M. P. Wachtel, 2004). The goal of restorative conferences is to help individuals learn how to change negative emotions into positive emotions by acknowledge the injustice and accepting responsibility in a nonthreatening environment.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach which helps students to take responsibility for their behavior in a supportive environment focused on teaching rather than punishment (L. Mirsky, 2011). The purpose is to bring both the offending party and the victim together to discuss impact and then determine the road to redemption for the perpetrator. The theory is that if the perpetrator understands the negative impact and feels a connection the individual will be less likely to repeat the same crime. It is a forum for addressing problem behaviors and then teaching the individual how to take responsibility for their actions (Mahmood). Criminal justice focuses on a using punishment to change behavior, while restorative justice focuses on needs of the victim and offender responsibility (K. Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003). The research suggests that restorative justice can help individuals understand the negative impacts

of their behavior while taking responsibility for their actions. Table 2 illustrates the focus of criminal justice as compared to restorative justice.

Table 2

Two Different Views

Criminal Justice	Restorative Justice
Crime is a violation of the law and state.	Crime is a violation of people and relationships.
Violations create guilt.	Violations create obligations.
Justice requires the state to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment).	Justice involves victims, offenders and community members in an effort to repair the harm to "put things right."
Central focus: offenders getting what they deserve.	Central focus: victim needs and offender responsibility for repairing harm.

Note. Adapted from "The Big Book of Restorative Justice: Four Classic Justice & Peacemaking Books in one Volume 9 (Vol. 1)," by H. Zehr, L. S. Amstutz, A. MacRae, & K. Pranis, 2015. Copyright 2015 by Good Books.

History

Restorative justice began to take hold in the 1970s through mediation circles between victims and the offenders in the criminal justice system (B. Costello et al., 2010). However, its roots trace back to ancient civilizations and how they dealt with criminal acts (Rasmussen, 2011). In the 1980s New Zealand passed the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act which created the Family Group Conferences (Title, 2011) developed out of rising concerns from the Maori Aboriginal people about the punitive actions of justice system (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). Originally envisioned as a family empowering tool, the conference style justice was offered to juvenile offenders between the ages of 14 and 16 who had

been accused of non-serious crimes (Ross, 2006; Title, 2011). The one condition for participation was that the offender must accept responsibility for their involvement in the incident (B. Costello et al., 2010). Terry O'Connell, an Australian police officer, adopted the program and developed scripted questions to help foster discussion with a focus on learning from the experience while supporting the needs of the victim (B. Costello et al., 2010; International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). Marg Thorsborne, an Australian educator was the first person to use a restorative conference in a school setting (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). Following her example, the process was brought to North America in the late 1990s through the SaferSanerSchools program (B. Costello et al., 2010; T. Wachtel, 2013b) and has continued to expand across the continent.

Restorative Practices in Schools

The ideas behind restorative justice is then translated into restorative practices which go further by addressing inappropriate behaviors while teaching accepted behaviors to prevent wrongdoing (Mann, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2014). Conflicts are seen as opportunity to grow (K. Pranis et al., 2003). There are three foundational elements for restorative practices in schools: (a) creating just and equitable learning environments, (b) nurturing healthy relationships, (c) repairing harm and transforming conflict which embody the core beliefs of respect, dignity and mutual concern (see Figure 6) (Evans, 2016). Restorative practices believes that empowering Individuals with the necessary tools for acceptable behavior will bring about character change instead reactive change brought on by traditional punishment (Nesbitt, 2004).

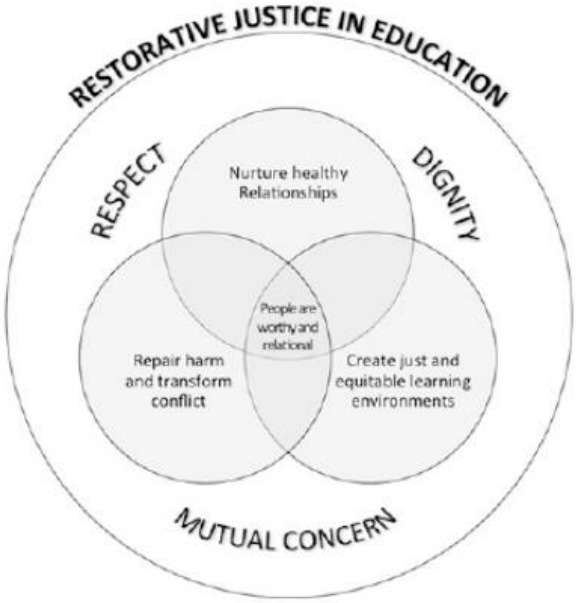

Figure 6. Restorative Justice in Education. Adapted from "The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education: Fostering Responsibility, Healing and Hope in Schools," by K. V. D. Evan, 2016. Copyright by Good Books.

Restorative practices in a school setting focuses on teaching social-emotional skills as a form of intervention (Mann, 2016; Rasmussen, 2011). The Social Discipline Window, adopted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel of the International Institute for Restorative Practices, shows how restorative practices seeks to provide both high levels of control along with support in the area of discipline (see Figure 7). The social discipline window provides a guideline for school officials to consider how they are interacting with students. When school officials act under the punitive model the staff demands compliance through punishment and the does not listen to the student. Under the neglectful category, there is not structure or guidance and messages to the student are inconsistent. In the permissive category, there is not authority apparent, adults are fearful of confrontation and students do not learn to take responsibility. The restorative window sets high expectations and boundaries for

students while providing high levels of support to help students learn from their mistakes and make positive change (B. Costello et al., 2010; International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). The underlying premise is that individuals are more willing to change when people do things with them and instead of to them (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). The research suggests that using restorative practices in a school setting can reduce negative behaviors by seeing mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow through conference circles.

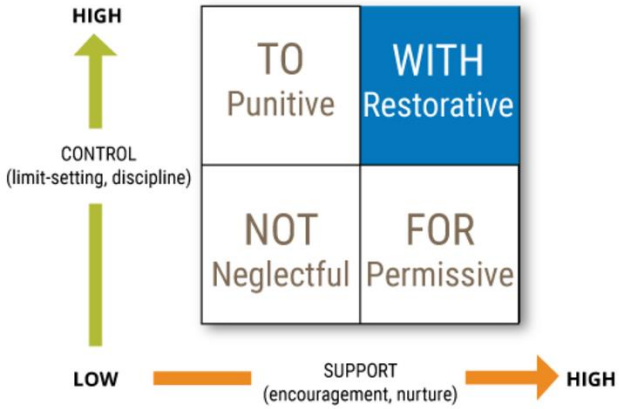

Figure 7. Social Discipline Window. Adapted from "Defining Restorative," by International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015. Retrieved from https:// www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/what-is-restorative-practices/defining-restorative/11-history

Fair Process

Fair process, allowing for one's voice to be heard, is the key component to restorative practices (B. Costello et al., 2009). Thibaut and Walker, found that people cared just as much about the process being fair as they do the fairness of the outcome (as cited in Kim & Mauborgne, 1997). Kim and Mauborgne (1997) went on to find that individuals who believed that their company had established fair process where more open and honest and actively cooperative. Kim and Mauborgne went on to identity three elements that make a process fair: (a) engagement, (b) explanation, and (c) expectation clarity. First, engagement means involving individuals in the

discussion who have been or will be impacted by the decision. Second, explanation means that once a decision has been made that everyone understands the reasoning behind the decision. Third, expectation clarity means that everyone involved understands the new expectations and consequences as outlined by the decision. Fair process is about creating open lines of communication rather than a traditional democracy setting (B. Costello et al., 2009). Participants in fair process usually describe it as having the chance to be heard, the opportunity to express feelings and tell their side of the story (T. Wachtel, 2013b). Applying this to the school setting, students who believe that they have a voice, participate in the decision and can clearly understand the expectation will be more open and able to change.

Restorative Circles

Restorative practices use restorative circles to resolve disputes by bringing together the victim, offender, and members of the community to express how the incident impacted them (Ashworth, 2008; Kline, 2016; L. Mirsky, 2011). Circles provide an opportunity for people to speak and listen in a safe environment (T. Wachtel, 2013b). Circles were first introduced in Canada as an alternative method of sentencing that allowed all stakes to participate in the decision (K. Pranis et al., 2003). Circles, unlike courts, focus on the needs of the individuals involved rather than just the punishment. Table 3 compares the focus of court and circles.

Table 3

Courts and Circles: A Comparison

-	Courts	Circles
Participation	Restricted: primarily reliant on experts	Inclusive: primarily reliant on community
Decision-making	Adversarial	Consensus
Issues	Broken state laws	Broken relationships
Focus	• Past Conduct • Individual responsibility • State Legal requirements	• Past, present, and future conduct • Individuals and collective responsibility • Needs of all parties
Tools	• Banishment • Punishment • Coercion	• Reintegration • Healing/support • Trust/understanding
Procedure	Fixed rules	Flexible guidelines
Results	Winners/losers	Finding common ground to maximize all interests

Note. Adapted from "Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community," by K. Pranis, B. Stuart, & M. Wedge, 2003. Copyright by Living Justice Press.

Participants in a circle include the victim offender, support members chosen by both the victim and offender, and any affected community members, such as family members, police officers, business owners (Title, 2011). The facilitator asks questions that help the offender to reflect on the impact of the crime towards the victim and community. The goal of the circles is focused on the five R's of: (a) relationships, (b) respect, (c) responsibility, (d) repair, and (e) reintegration (Riestenberg, 2012; Title, 2011). First the circle focuses on how the relationships have been affected and how people have been harmed (B. Costello et al., 2010; Riestenberg, 2012; Title, 2011; T. Wachtel, 2013a). The second focus is respect of humanity by listening to all sides and including the offender in the decision making of the outcome (Riestenberg, 2012; Title, 2011). The third is responsibility in that the

offender must be able to accept their role in the incident and also the reparations (Riestenberg, 2012; Title, 2011). Repair is the fourth in which the circle works with the victim and offender to determine the repair the needs to take place to make the situation right again (Riestenberg, 2012; Title, 2011). The fifth is reintegration into the community. Restorative circles focus on helping the offender work to express any feelings of shame which reduces the intensity of the emotion (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015; Riestenberg, 2012; Title, 2011). Working through emotions of shame allows the offender to be able to reintegrate into the community. Participants in the circles work collectively to help both the victim and offender heal and move forward (B. Costello et al., 2010; T. Wachtel, 2013a; T. M. P. Wachtel, 2004). Circles can be used in any type of setting such as work, school, or family and for minor to serious offenses. The focus on the circle is maintaining relationships (Boyes-Watson, 2008; Title, 2011; Zehr, Amstutz, MacRae, & Pranis, 2015). In schools were students have established relationships with teachers and peers they are more willing to work within the circle to repair any damaged relationships.

History of Circles

Community circles are based on the Native American traditions of peace making circles. Native American tribes believed that the community had a responsibility to teach and support social development (Ashworth, 2008; Henson-Nash, 2015). Tribal circles are found in the history of such cultures as the Native American, African, Tibetan and Aboriginal (Henson-Nash, 2015; Ross, 2006). Community circles help to facilitate conflict resolution and restore peace (Ashworth, 2008; Henson-Nash, 2015). Native American societies believed that the tribe had an

obligation to teach societal norms to the children as a community. These systems were based on the three tenants of caring, respect, and courage (Ashworth, 2008). Generosity is grounded in the core value of respect, which connects to the Native American foundations of being responsible to the greater community (Ashworth, 2008; Russell, 2013).

Circles also represent healing in both traditional and historical societies. Circles present a whole and do not convey hierarchy (K. Pranis et al., 2003). K. Pranis et al. (2003) state that a circle represents balance, cycles, connectedness and unity. Circles mean everyone is a part of the group and gives everyone the same status. In Native American teachings Medicine Wheel was used to discuss balance in one's life (K. Pranis et al., 2003). Native Americans viewed life as needing balance in four areas: (a) physical, (b) mental, (c) emotional, and (d) spiritual. Courts focus exclusively on mental and physical consequences leaving out the emotional and spiritual needs of both the offender and victim. Native Americans believed that crime is about broken lives, not just broken laws (K. Pranis et al., 2003). Restorative justice use of community circles is purposeful in working on all four areas to bring balance back to the community and individuals impacted. Figure 8 illustrates the four relational elements of circles based on the traditional Medicine Wheel (K. Pranis, 2014). Through this lens, the participants in a circle get to know one another, develop a sense of unity, address the issue at hand and build trust through a commitment to change (K. Pranis, 2014). Circles can be used in a variety of settings such as work, family, or school to create unity and build trust (R. Castillo et al., 2013; K. Pranis et

al., 2003; Zehr et al., 2015). The literature suggest that circles increase connectedness and build trust among participants.

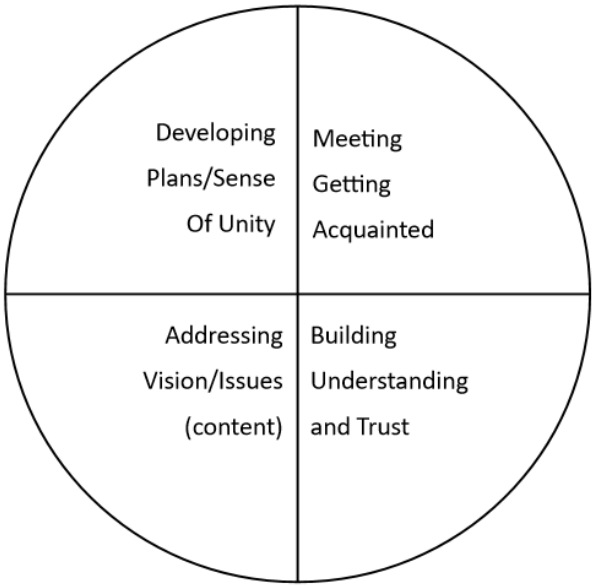

Figure 8. The Four Relational Elements of Circles. Adapted from "The Big Book of Restorative Justice: Four classis Justice & Peacemaking Books in One Volume (Vol. 1)," by H. Zehr, L. S. Amstutz, A. MacRae, and K. Pranis, 2015. Copyright by Good Books.

Community Circles in Schools

Community circles are a universal characteristic found in restorative practices (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011). Circles are based on three ideas: (a) first, everyone wants to be connected, (b) second, each is a valued member of the community, and (c) last, we all share some core values (Amstutz, 2015). Circles represent unity and healing (Boyes-Watson, 2008; B. Costello et al., 2010; Kaveney & Drewery, 2011; K. Pranis et al., 2003; Riestenberg, 2012). The connection between discipline and caring is brought into focus with community circles (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011). It offers an alternative to the traditional setting of hierarchy and win loose positioning (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). In schools, community circles are a method to build relationships with students. Students who are

continually disciplined become disengaged from school (Force, 2008; Mann, 2016). A classroom is not a community unless the teacher purposefully takes time to build relationships among students (Levine, 2003). A teacher can directly impact a student's need to feel like they belong and their connectedness to school through their relationship with the student (Barnwell, 2016; Payne, 2001). A student's relationship with staff determines their connectedness to the school and is one of the components that affects school climate (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Henson-Nash, 2015; Schept et al., 2015; Union, n.d.). Just sitting in a circle creates a sense of connectedness among individuals and when the teachers sits with them it increased the relationship between the teacher and students (J. Castillo, Watchel, & Wachtel, 2009). Circles reinforce that students are part of the whole. When students feel connected they strive to keep the relationships healthy and work to repair any damages that arise (Smith et al., 2015). The component of belonging connects back to social-emotional learning and helping to develop a positive connection to teachers and peers.

Community circles are a tool of restorative practices that focuses on students belonging to the community and learning from their mistakes (Mahmood, n.d.; Smith et al., 2015; Wilson, 2014). Circles are seen as designated spaces where relationships are intentionally built (Evans, 2016). Community circles in the classroom are used as an initial intervention to build and teach social skills, build connections, reduce inappropriate behaviors and increase academics. Circles provide an open forum for students to share thoughts, feelings, and ideas without being judged (Levine, 2003). Emotionally, community circles teach the hidden school curriculum of communication and social skills (Mahmood, n.d.; Smith et al., 2015). Practically, a

circle allows for participants to see and hear each other and thus leveling the power dynamics in the group (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011). Circles are a universal metaphor for unity, connectedness, wholeness, and balance. In a community circle, everyone has an opportunity to be part of the process, build relationships, be heard, and be healed (K. Pranis et al., 2003). The literature connects the use of community circles as a tool to teaching behavioral skills while building relationships with students.

Community Circle Process

Circles have no beginning and no end which symbolically means that all people within the circle are valued and respected (Evans, 2016). Communication is 7% verbal, 93% tone, facial expression, and body language (Riestenberg, 2012). In restorative practices the use of circles is intentional, allowing everyone to not only hear but see the communication. The circle process is a storytelling process with the belief that everyone has a story to tell and that every story has a lesson to be learned (Zehr et al., 2015). Each circle has a facilitator. Initially in a school setting the facilitator will be the teacher, as the students move through the year they can take on the role of facilitator (B. Costello et al., 2010; Zehr et al., 2015). A talking piece is another key element of community circles. The talking piece is a carefully selected item that is passed around the circle to cue participants to who should be speaking and who should be listening (Mahmood, n.d.; K. Pranis, 2014). In school settings, the teacher may have two talking pieces, one to be passed around in the circle and one the teacher keeps in the event the teacher needs to clarify a questions or statement. The talking piece creates an order and process to the flow of the discussion (Riestenberg, 2012; Zehr et al., 2015) without additional commands from the facilitator. The

talking piece limits back and forth dialogue as only the individual with the talking piece can speak, while the rest of the circle members listen. The talking piece allows everyone a chance to be heard.

Community circles also share similar processes. The first step in there is an opening ceremony. This initial step helps the group members transition from their previous activity (B. Costello et al., 2009; K. Pranis et al., 2003; Riestenberg, 2012; Zehr et al., 2015), thus allowing them to fully attend to the participants in the circle. In a classroom, opening ceremony may consists of transition to the circle and waiting for everyone to be quiet before beginning. Next, the facilitator states the purpose of the circle. Then participants commit to the circle guidelines (B. Costello et al., 2010; K. Pranis, 2014). In restorative practices there are five commitments that individuals make before beginning the circle: (a) respect the talking piece, (b) speak from the heart, (c) listen from the heart, (d) trust you'll know what to say, (e) say just enough (Clifford, n.d.; B. Costello et al., 2009; International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2015). After the facilitator asks the guiding question(s) for the circle participants to answer. During this participation phase the talking piece is passed around to each member of the circle giving them a chance to respond (Clifford, n.d.; B. Costello et al., 2010; K. Pranis, 2014). Once everyone has had an opportunity the facilitator will then ask if anyone has a closing thought or additional comment. Commitment phase is for conflict circles in which the group has to come to a resolution. Finally, the facilitator will close the circle with an ending ceremony (Clifford, n.d.; B. Costello et al., 2010; K. Pranis, 2014). In the classroom, the closing ceremony may consist of a chant, high fiving a neighbor, or simply telling

your neighbor to have a create day. While all circles follow same process the intent of the circle may vary. Community circles can be used for: (a) healing, (b) conflict resolution, (c) relationship building, (d) brainstorming, (e) support, (f) behavior, (g) checking in, or even (h) academics. PCCs help to build relationships and community in a school setting.

PCCs

Community circles under restorative practices is most often used to repair a relationship. B. Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel, (2010) state that the first and foremost use of circles should be to establish strong and supportive relationships with students before an incident occurs. The goal of PCCs is to build relationships and improve school climate before any incidents occur (B. Costello et al., 2010). Circles instill values of love, respect, honesty, humility, sharing, courage, inclusivity, empathy, trust, and forgiveness (B. Costello et al., K. Pranis, 2014; K. Pranis et al., 2003). PCCs allow people to connect in a safe forum. The use of regular PCCs helps to ensure that everyone is engaged with one another (B. Costello et al., 2010). Using PCCs on a weekly or daily basis provides an opportunity for students to talk and interact with peers.

PCCs become rituals that occur on a consistent basis (B. Costello et al., 2010). A positive classroom ritual is a circle where students look forward to the opportunity to share, support, connect, and celebrate (Levine, 2003). PCCs can be used to discuss in a variety of scenarios. B. Costello et al. (2010) offer several examples of types of proactive circles such as: (a) check in, (b) check out, (c) classroom norms, (d) classroom content, (e) academic goals, (f) behavioral expectations, (g) games, or (h)

review for an assessment. Proactive check in circles are held at the beginning of the school day and typically revolve around identifying how someone is feeling at the time. At the other end of the spectrum there are proactive check out circles which focus on how a student feels about the events of the day before dismissal. PCCs used for classroom norms are focused on expectations and procedures in the classroom and around campus. Using PCCs for course content engages the students in discussion, as students are unable to hide behind desks. These types of circles encourage positive exchanges and actively engages students in their own learning (B. Costello et al., 2009). PCCs for academic goal setting and monitoring, allow students to share their ambitions and progress in a positive, supportive setting. Using a proactive community circle focused on goal setting helps to strengthen relationships among students (B. Costello et al., 2009). Behavioral expectations addressed in a proactive community circle might include a discussion on proper behavior at an upcoming field trip. Circles have been the foundation for many child hood games such as Duck, Duck, Goose and Hot Potato. Using PCCs for games in the classroom shifts the focus to team building, ice breaker or trust building (B. Costello et al., 2010). PCCs used for review before an assessment allows students to sit in a safe environment and share what they know or if something is unclear. Assessment review circles allows a student a chance to explain what they understood and gives other students to opportunity to expand or clarify the concept (B. Costello et al., 2010). The International Institute of Restorative Practices states that 80% of circles in a school should be proactive and the remaining 20% should be restorative. PCCs focus on building relationships before problems arise. However, when a situation does, the

school can use the social capital built through PCCs to turn the problem into an opportunity (B. Costello et al., 2010). The literature suggests that PCCs help to build relationships between the teacher and student and student to student. These relationships provide a foundation to work from is a situation does arise.

Sustainability

Schools that are successful with the implementation of restorative practices participate in community circles during staff meetings (B. Costello et al., 2009). When teachers get a chance to share the experience they are more likely to implement it in their classroom (B. Costello et al., 2010). Participating in circles during staff meetings gives teacher a greater appreciation for how community circles can be used in the classroom. Individuals are more likely to change behavior when those in authority do things with them rather than to them (B. Costello et al., 2009). When administrators use community circles with teachers they are building social capital. Social capital is the building of trust, shared values, mutual understanding and behaviors among individuals that bring them together into one group (T. Wachtel, 2013a). Relational trust between teachers has a positive impact on student achievement (Zehr et al., 2015). For PCCs to become sustainable in a school, teachers and administrators need to hold circles on circles to share their learning (B. Costello et al., 2010). Circles provide a forum for teachers to reflect on the use of community circles and thus support the continued use of circles in the classroom.

Literature Gap

As restorative practices and community circles have been implemented in school districts, case studies examined the impact of restorative practices and the use

of circles for relationship building outside of California. Studies by Barnes (2016) studied the impact of restorative practices and community building circles in three high schools in Ontario, Canada. His study concluded that the students perceived restorative peacemaking circles, also known as community circles, as an inclusive process that lead to relationship building. Based on his study, Barnes suggests further research on the use of peacebuilding circles on younger students and additional interviews with administrators to examine the challenges and benefits of these circles. Henson-Nash, (2015) studied the impact of restorative practices as a tool to reduce bullying and thus suspensions in both elementary and middle school in Illinois. His study found that in schools where all staff participate and are supported in the "Circle Philosophy," relationships and academic performance improved. Henson-Nash went on to suggest that both longer studies on the impact of restorative practices were needed along with specific studies on the use of peace circles. Roffey and McCarthy (2013) studied the use of circles to teach social skills in 18 primary schools in Sydney, Australia. Their study saw positive growth in teaching social-emotional skills such as students feeling comfortable, safe, supportive and caring through the use of circles. The authors indicated that a more extensive study of circles for teaching social-emotional skills would benefit the current literature. The gap in the literature supports more research in the area of PCCs that focus on relationship building and examining the impact on both student suspension rates and academic achievement. The literature is also lacking on studies that focus on elementary schools in the southern California region.

Summary

This chapter explored the historical background of school discipline and federal policies which are the foundation for the current federal mandates. This chapter also discussed the history and principles of restorative justice. This chapter also reviewed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the impact of social-emotional learning on academic success. This chapter discussed the history of standardized assessment and academic achievement. This chapter reviewed the use of restorative practices in the school setting. The chapter also discussed the history of circles and the use of community circles in the classroom. This chapter also covered the guiding principles of PCCs. Also included in this review of literature was the use of PCCs to build relationships, improve self-esteem and academic achievement.

A synthesis matrix was used in order to organize the published literature that helped the researcher to identify key variables of research for this study (see Appendix A). The researcher discovered that there is evidence that restorative practices has been successful at reducing suspensions and improving school culture in middle and high school but it is evident that there is lack of research at elementary school. It was determined that there was an evident gap in research on the use of PCCs at the elementary level in California. The researcher then used this evidence to create a theoretical foundation that was appropriate to provide valid data on the impact that PCCs has on elementary schools in California that have been implementing PCCs effectively for two or more years. Chapter III will provide a detailed description of this study's methodology. Chapter IV then shares the academic and suspension data from the schools identified and also shares the

perspective of the site administrator on the impact that they feel PCCs has made on their schools. Chapter V reports the conclusions and recommendations for future research on this topic.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter is written to give the reader an understanding of how the study was performed. Chapter III first re-states the purpose and research questions and then describes the mixed methods research design, the research methodology, both quantitative and qualitative. Then the population, target population, and sample, including selection process for both quantitative and qualitative samples are discussed followed by instrumentation, including reliability and validity. Data collection and data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative data are discussed followed by limitations of the study and a summary of the remainder of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine difference in student academic achievement and student behavior prior to and after implementation of PCCs in elementary schools in California that have implemented for a minimum of two years as measured by standardized test scores and student behavior records. The second purpose was to describe the impact of PCC on student academic achievement and student behavior in elementary schools in California that have implemented PCC for a minimum of two years as perceived by school administrators.

Research Questions

Four research questions helped to guide this study and included two quantitative research questions and two qualitative research questions.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What difference exists in student academic achievement prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have the proactive community circle programs in place for a minimum of two years?
2. What difference exists in student behavior prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Qualitative Research Questions

3. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student academic achievement as perceived by school administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?
4. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student behavior as perceived by school administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design to determine the impact of restorative practice PCC on student behavior and student academics by analyzing student suspension rates and state assessments data along with school administrator perception of the impact. Mixed method research analyzes both numerical data and

personal statements to support a conclusion (Patton, 2015). A mixed methods design allowed the researcher to support the numerical data with personal quotes to better understand the perceived relationship between the variables from the view point of the school administrator. Mixed methods research is relatively new method in research, but the blending of quantitative instruments and qualitative interviews helps to strengthen a conclusions (Creswell, 2014).

The quantitative data for this study was collected both pre-implementation of PCC and post implementation of PCC on student achievement and school suspensions from schools that have implemented PCC for two or more years. Next, the researcher used open-ended questions and conducted interviews with both school administrators to produce qualitative data. The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data allows for triangulation. According to Creswell (2014), triangulation is the gathering of data from different sources to build a comprehensible explanation for the outcome. McMillian and Schumacher (2010) further explain that triangulation provides greater credibility when the results from one method support the results from the other method. The use of three different data sources for this study will allow the interpretation of the data to be more complete. Denzin, speaking on triangulation, stated that "no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factor" (as cited in Patton, 2015, p. 28). Therefore, different methods needed to be employed in a study to uncover different aspects of impact. Without the collection of the qualitative data, the results of the quantitative data could be slanted by other programs that are taking place at the school site. The use of multiple methods in this

study will help to lessen the doubt that other factors could have an effect on the data by triangulating the data to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact.

Mixed Methods Research

The mixed methods approach to this study allowed for both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative research sets out to test a theory based on a relationship between variables (Creswell, 2014). This study collected numerical quantitative data on the two independent variables of student suspension rates and academic achievement on state standardized assessments. Data collection for both student suspension rates and academic achievement were available from the CDE Data Quest website. Data collection compared student suspension rates and academic achievement prior to implementation of restorative practices PCC to the student suspension rates and academic achievement after implementation of PCC for a minimum of two years.

Qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of actions of individuals and groups as it sets out to capture the story of the participants (Patton, 2015). A qualitative researcher looks for tends and themes in the data collected and then draws a conclusion. The focus of this research was to understand the perceptions of the school administrators on the use of restorative practice PCC on student suspension rates and academic achievement. The qualitative research helped explain the impact student suspension rates and academic achievement by generating observations that can applied to a larger population.

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

Explanatory sequential mixed methods design research involves a two phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase and then uses these results to plan the qualitative phase (Creswell, 2014). In consideration of the population and the research questions, the researcher choose explanatory sequential mixed methods as a framework for understanding the impact of PCCs by analyzing the quantitative impact and seeking qualitative data to explain the results. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), the qualitative phase is used to augment the quantitative phase and provide an explanation for the results.

Explanatory sequential mixed methods allowed the researcher the greatest opportunity to understand the impact of restorative practices PCC as perceived by school administrators. The gathering of statistical data on student suspensions and academic performance allowed the researcher to determine trends that existed from the practice. The qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to have a comprehensive understanding of the perceived impact of restorative practice PCC by the school administrators who were integral in the implementation of the program.

Quantitative Research Design

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) stated that quantitative research uses numbers and statistics to measure and describe impact. This study utilized descriptive statistics to determine if a difference occurs in pre and post PCC data. The researcher used archived data from the CDE Data Quest website to find the total number of out of school suspensions for the elementary school's participating in the study for both per and post years PCC implementation. The researcher also used

archived data from the CDE Data Quest website to determine the academic achievement of students based on the total percentage of students in grades three through six who performed at Standard Meet level or the Standard Exceeded level on the California Assessment of Student Progress and Performance (CAASPP) for both per and post years of PCC implementation.

Qualitative Research Design

This study uses open-ended interview questions for school administrators to describe the impact that they feel PCC has had on student academic achievement and student behavior. The purpose of the interviews is to gather qualitative data that helps to explain the results of the quantitative data gathered on student academic achievement and student behavior.

Population

A population is the total set of individuals that meet certain criteria in which the results of the study can be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the population is public elementary schools in the state of California. The state of California has 5,858 elementary schools serving over 3 million students (Education, 2015). These schools educate approximately 2,871,454 million in kindergarten through grade five (Education, 2015) each year in the state of California.

Target Population

The target population of a study is a specified set of individuals that "conform to a specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research." (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). The target population of this study is elementary schools in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties in southern California

who have been using restorative practice community circles to build behavior skills for a minimum of two years. Table 4 identifies how many elementary schools are located in southern California by counties as found on the CDE website (Education, 2015).

Table 4

Number of Elementary Schools in Southern California Counties

Southern California Counties	Number of Elementary Schools
Imperial County	32
Kern County	145
Los Angeles County	1296
Orange County	396
Riverside County	281
San Bernardino County	335
San Diego County	449
San Luis Obispo County	44
Santa Barbara County	67
Ventura County	126

Note. Adopted from "Public School and Districts Data Files," by the California Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/results?search=1&counties=56&districts=0&name=&city=&zip=&cdscode=&status=3&types=60&nps=&charter=0&magnet=0&yearround=0. Copyright by California Department of Education, 2017.

The target population for this study was public elementary schools in Riverside and Los Angeles Counties, California that met the following criteria:

1. Public elementary school.
2. Located in Riverside or Los Angeles Counties.
3. Implemented PCC for a minimum of two years.
4. Has participated in the CAASPP for a minimum of two years for grades three through six.

There are five elementary schools in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties that meet these criteria.

Sample

Sample as defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) is the group from which data is collected often representing a specific population. The sample for this study was identified using both purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling is the selection of participants based upon selection criteria established by the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Convenience sampling is the selection of subjects on the basis of accessibility (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Purposive sampling ensured that data was gathered from schools using restorative PCC in southern California from Los Angeles and Riverside counties for a minimum of two years. There are approximately 1,733 public elementary schools in Los Angeles and Riverside counties (Review, 2017). Restricting the target population to elementary schools in these counties allowed the researcher to narrow the overall population and then, following identification of schools who meet the participation criteria, select those most accessible to the researcher. There are five elementary schools in Riverside and Los Angeles Counties that meet these criteria.

From the schools meeting the selection criteria, three elementary schools were identified from the target population that have implemented restorative practice PCC for a minimum of two years and were used as the sample for this study.

Sample Selection Process

The researcher worked with the Center for Urban Resilience at Loyola Marymount University and Circle Ways to identify elementary schools to identify

elementary schools meeting the to the target population for this study. In addition, the researcher contacted the Riverside County Office to identify schools that participated in restorative justice training. The researcher then contacted school districts in Los Angeles and Riverside County directly to identify schools meeting the target population for this study. Throughout California, multiple schools in northern and southern California have implemented some form of restorative practices and community circles. The researcher was able to contact schools located in the southern California region of Los Angles and Riverside counties and they were used for the sample population for this study.

Quantitative Sample

For the quantitative portion of this study three schools were selected from the southern California region. The following criteria were used to select elementary schools.

1. Public elementary school.
2. Located in Riverside or Los Angeles Counties.
3. Implemented PCC for a minimum of two years.
4. An expectation at the school site of teachers holding a monthly PCC.
5. The school has participated in the CAASPP for a minimum of two years for grades three through six.

Through the association with trainers from Loyola Marymount University Center for Urban Resilience and Circle Ways, the researcher was able to identify five elementary schools in the southern California Region of Los Angeles counties that meet the criteria. In addition, the researcher contacted school district in Riverside

County and determined that no schools meet the criteria at this time. All five schools were contacted and asked to participate in this study. A total of three schools agreed to be used for this study. All three schools were located in high poverty areas of the city. The percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in each school was over 98% with one school at 100%. In addition the English Learner population at each site was over 50% with two schools being over 56%. Archival data for school suspensions and CAASPP testing was retrieved for each school for this study.

Qualitative Sample

For the qualitative portion of this study, three the school administrators from the three schools meeting the criteria for the quantitative schools were selected for the qualitative interviews. The following criteria were used to select the individuals for interviews.

1. School administrator of all elementary schools that met the criteria for the study were contacted via phone call, the study explained to them, and a request for their participation made.
2. The researcher selected three school administrators as participants based on having two or more years of experience as an administrator at the school and having received training in the use of as PCCs as part of the restorative practices training program.
3. Participants were provided with an Informed Consent (see Appendix B), Letter of Invitation (see Appendix C), and Participant Bill of Rights documents (see Appendix D).
4. Interviews were scheduled and administered.

Instrumentation

The researcher used a mixed method design to collect the data for the study. Archived data was collected by the researcher from the CDE Data Quest website to put together descriptive statistics. The researcher was the instrument in gathering qualitative data by conducting interviews with site principals.

Quantitative Instrumentation

The researcher retrieved archived data from the CDE Data Quest website as the instrument for this study. The data that was retrieved was then converted to descriptive data to be able to explain the impact that PCC had on student academics and behavior in schools implementing PCC for two years. The total number of school suspensions for the pre and post data was recorded for each school. The researcher then measured the difference between the pre and post scores to help show what type of impact PCC may have had on the student behavior. The total number of school suspensions for the pre and post data was recorded for each school. The total percentage of students in grades three through six who performed in the Standard Meet level or the Standard Exceeded level on the CAASPP for pre and post data was collected for each school. The researcher then measured the difference between pre and post scores to help show what type of impact PCC may have had on student academics.

Qualitative Instrumentation

Patton (2012) states that the researcher acts as the instrument of inquiry in a qualitative study. In this qualitative study, the researcher used the technique of interviews to collect data from school administrators to get a better understanding of

how they feel PCC had impacted student academics and student behavior. The student success indicators are student suspension data and student performance on the CAASPP. The researcher then used open-ended interview questions to inquire into the perceived impact that the school administrators felt that PCC had on the students. The questions were adopted from a previous study conducted by Jeff Franks (2017) titled the *Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in California Middle Schools: Year Three and Beyond.* These questions were selected due to the alignment of the studies both looking at impact of a program on student behavior and academics. The use of the questions modified from a previous study also helps to increase reliability. A copy of the interview protocol is contained in Appendix E.

Reliability

Creswell (2014) states that reliability refers to the instrument being internally consistent and consistency in data collection. When conducting interviews, the researcher becomes the data collection instrument. For the qualitative portion of this study interviews are begin conducted to collect data.

Field Test

To protect against researcher bias and to assure reliability, the researcher conducted the following steps to contribute to the validity of the study:

1. Three individuals were chosen to review interview questions based on their expertise, over three years of experience, and knowledge of literature. This procedure ensured that the instruments used for the study were appropriate to answer the research question and ensured validity and reliability.

2. This feedback was received and adjustments to the instrument and the process were made.
3. Adjustments were made to the instrument based upon the feedback received.

Validity

According to Patton (2015) the validity in quantitative research depends on the construction of the instrument while the validity in qualitative research depends on the skill of the researcher. This study uses an explanatory mixed methods design which entails both quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative Validity

This study uses quantitative data comprised of archived data retrieved from the CDE Data Quest website. According to Creswell (2015), when determining the validity of quantitative data takes three areas into account: (a) content validity, (b) predictive validity, and (c) construct validity. First, the validity of the quantitative data comes from the use of content data that is collected by the CDE Data Quest website and measures the intended targets of student suspensions and student academic growth. Second, the data is predictive in that the data is collected from year to year. Third, the comparison of data from year to year on the same content allows the data to help construct a story.

Qualitative Validity

This study uses qualitative data comprised of open ended interview questions. The data is comprised of the opinion of the participants, the validity of the data comes

from the level of involvement with PCC. Each participant had to meet the selection criteria vetting their experience and expertise prior to inclusion in the study.

Triangulation Validity

Triangulation is the use of both quantitative and qualitative data methods to strengthen a study (Patton, 2015). This study uses both quantitative data when comparing the suspension data and assessment data from pre and post years. In addition, this study uses qualitative data when conducting in depth interviews of school administrators. The use of data triangulation and the use of a variety of data sources, helps to increase the validity of this study as each component provides overlapping results (Patton, 2015). The use of triangulation in this mixed methods study was used to demonstrate provide consistency among the data collected and increase validity.

Data Collection

The researcher received approval from Brandman University's Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) to conduct this research before collection of any data for this study. The rights and privacy of participants was protected and respected throughout this study.

Quantitative Data Collection

Archived data was collected for the CDE Data Quest website for the descriptive statistical data. The archived data was collected to in an effort to address Research Question 1 and 2 of this study. Schools in Riverside and Los Angeles Counties were contacted to participate in this research study based on convenience sampling. Once the schools agreed to participate in the study the researcher gathered

pre and post archival data from the CDE Data Quest. The researcher collected pre data on suspension incidents for all students and performance on the CAASPP in for students in third through sixth grade. The researcher also collected post data on suspension incidents for all students and performance on the CAASPP for students in third through sixth grade. The purpose of the study and the confidentiality clause was emailed to each site prior to the collection of any data.

Qualitative Data Collection

After the quantitative data was collected from the CDEDQ for each school, administrators were contacted to schedule interviews. Interviews were conducted with the participants over the phone. The purpose of the interview was to measure the impact that participants felt PCC had on the school site. The interviews were conducted in an effort to answer Research Question 3 and 4 for this study. Each participant was given the Informed Consent materials. The researcher only proceeded with the interview if the participant was willing to sign the informed consent. Interviews were conducted once the signed informed consent was received.

Data Analysis

This study used a mixed methods research design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was collected and analyzed first, followed by the qualitative data. The quantitative data was the mean score from both pre-and post-implementation of PCC on academic performance and suspensions. The qualitative data for this study was gathered from interviews conducted with both school administrators who have worked at the school were PCC were in place for two years.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was the process used to gather and analyze the objective numerical data. In an explanatory mixed methods study, the quantitative data and qualitative data are analyzed separately (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). The quantitative data that was collected from the archived data of schools that have implemented PCC for two or more years was analyzed as follows:

- The mean score and Standard Deviation of the pre and post data from student academic performance and suspensions was calculated and placed into a table.
- The observed differences between pre and post PCC Mean Scores was recorded to determine the change that occurred between pre and post PCC implementation.
- The observed differences between pre and post PCC. Standard Deviation was recorded to determine the variance in sample raw data that occurred between pre and post PCC implementation.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Upon completion of the analysis of the quantitative data, the qualitative data was analyzed by the researcher. McMillian and Schumacher (2010) state that the qualitative data should elaborate and explain the quantitative data. The qualitative data helps to clarify the impact of the practice. The researcher and colleagues analyzed the interviews with the participants to look for patterns that provided a clearer to support the quantitative data. All interviews were recorded by the researcher and transcribed for this study.

Analysis process. The data was analyzed to determine any associated outcomes.

- Upon completion of all interviews, each interview transcript was coded to identify themes, patterns and similarities in the data.
- A data frequency matrix was used display the data in an efficient manner to organize and analyze the data.
- The researcher constructed a master data matrix to combine common themes, patterns, and similarities in which the commonalties of the participants interviewed could be identified.
- At each step of the process colleagues served as Inter Coder Raters to assure reliability in the interpretation of the data and to assure researcher bias in interpretation was minimized by each rater reading at least one transcript and coding it independently before comparing the results with the researcher.

Limitations

In research, limitations are expected. Limitations according to Roberts (2010) are areas in which the researcher has no control and could have a negative impact on the results thereby limiting the researcher's ability to generalize findings. The researcher is expected to report any limitations of the study to allow the reader to determine the impact of the limitations on the findings (Creswell 2014; Roberts, 2010).

The following are limitations of this study.

- The pre-test and post-test data retrieved the researcher will be gathering data on different sets of students. This data could be influenced by the variance in the differences of students.
- The sample size of schools is relatively small and focuses more on one region of California. This is due to time constraints and the amount of travel required for visiting various schools throughout the state of California.
- The CAASPP is in the third year of administration and changes in scores may be reflective of changes in student familiarity with the assessment.
- The implementation of other programs and professional development that runs simultaneously with the implementation of PCC.
- Consistency and frequency of PCC as implemented by the classroom teacher. The researcher tries to limit this issue by only selecting schools that have an expectation of monthly community circles.
- The ability level of the staff members to implement PCC with fidelity. The researcher tries to limit this issue by only selecting schools that have been had training in PCC training.
- The research design itself requires the researcher to be skilled in both quantitative and qualitative research. The researcher's ability to conduct interviews could impact the results retrieved.

Summary

Chapter III of this study explained methodology, purpose of the study, research questions, and design of the study. This chapter described how this study used a mixed methods explanatory design which collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter also explained how the population, target population, and sample size was determined, the instruments used with data collection, and how the data was analyzed. The chapter concluded with the limitations of the study. Chapter IV will provide analysis of the data that was collected for this research. Chapter V will review significance of the findings, the researcher's conclusion from the study, and the recommended future research for other studies.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected from the study, which describes the differences from pre and post PCC on academic achievement and suspensions. It also describes the impact that the site administrator feel that PPCs has made on their site. Chapter IV reviews the purpose of the study, research questions, methodology, population, sample and concludes with a presentation of the data, organized by research question.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine difference in student academic achievement and student behavior prior to and after implementation of PCCs in elementary schools in California that have implemented for a minimum of two years as measured by standardized test scores and student behavior records. The second purpose was to describe the impact of PCC on student academic achievement and student behavior in elementary schools in California that have implemented PCC for a minimum of two years as perceived by school administrators.

Research Questions

Four research questions helped to guide this study and included two quantitative research questions and two qualitative research questions.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What difference exists in student academic achievement prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have the proactive community circle programs in place for a minimum of two years?

2. What difference exists in student behavior prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Qualitative Research Question

3. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student academic achievement as perceived by school administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?
4. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student behavior as perceived by school administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Methodology

This study used a mixed methods research design to determine the impact of restorative practice PCC on student behavior and student academics by analyzing student suspension rates and state assessments data along with school administrator perception of the impact. Mixed method research analyzes both numerical data and personal statements to support a conclusion (Patton, 2015). Mixed methods research is a relatively new method in research, but the blending of quantitative instruments and qualitative interviews helps to strengthen a conclusion (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher asked permission to conduct research through the appropriate district office department based on the district's procedures for conduction research.

Once consent to participate was gathered form the district office, each site was contacted for consent to participate. The quantitative data was collected first for this study from archived data available to the public on the CDE website. Both pre and post PCC implementation on SBAC assessment scores and suspension rates were gathered form the schools that have implemented PCC for two or more year to show the differences that PCC has had on pre and post data. Next, the researcher used open-ended questions when interviewing the site administrator to produce the qualitative data. The researcher conducted the interview over the phone. The data and time of the interview was selected by the participant; all interviews were held in the month of February 2017 and were conducted or the phone. Originally all three of the administrators agreed to participate in the interview, however, one administrator did not respond to numerous requests for an interview. The two remaining participants were provided the list of interview questions in advance of the interview and each participant signed a statement of consent and confidentiality prior to the interview. Interviews were recorded by two electronic devises and then transcribed by Rev Transcription service, submitted through the Rev Transcription IOS application. Following the interview, the participants received a verbatim transcript of the interview to review and edit as deemed necessary by the participant; these transcripts were shared with the participants through their email as an editable Google document. The participants were asked to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy of content and meaning. After interviews were completed a master data matrix was created to combine common themes, patterns and similarities. Any code with a frequency of one was not included in the findings of the study. To ensure reliability

in interpretation of the data and assure researcher bias in interpretation was minimized, two colleagues served as Inter Coder Raters. The researcher then triangulated the quantitative data and the qualitative data in order to determine the differences and impact that PCC has made.

Population and Sample

A population is the total set of individuals that meet certain criteria in which the results of the study can be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the population is public elementary schools in the state of California. The state of California has 5,858 elementary schools serving over 3 million students (Education, 2015). Riverside and Los Angeles County have 1,577 elementary schools. Due to the number of elementary schools a target population was created using specific criteria. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the target population of a study is a specified set of individuals that "conform to a specific criterion and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (p. 129). The target population for this study was public elementary schools in Riverside and Los Angeles Counties, California that met the following criteria:

1. Public elementary school.
2. Located in Riverside or Los Angeles Counties.
3. Implemented PCC for a minimum of two years.
4. Has participated in the CAASPP for a minimum of two years for grades three through six.

There are five elementary schools in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties that meet these criteria.

The sample population for this study was three elementary schools for the collection of the quantitative data and from two site administrators in Los Angeles County for the qualitative data. All three schools were located in high poverty areas of the city. The percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in each school was over 98% with one school at 100%. In addition the English Learner population at each site was over 50% with two schools being over 56%. The researcher received consent and permission from the district office and each school principal to conduct research with their schools. These three schools have been implementing proactive community circles for two years. All three schools received training through the Center for Urban Resilience at Loyola Marymount University.

Research Data

Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Analysis for SBAC Scores

Research Question 1 asked: *What difference exists in student academic achievement prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have the proactive community circle programs in place for a minimum of two years?*

The data shows that School C had the highest increase in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics while School A had the lowest in both categories.

ELA. The data shows that in area of ELA all three schools experienced an increase in the percentage of students who performed at the Standard Meet level or the Standard Exceeded level on the CAASPP. All three schools had an increase in academic performance on the CAASPP in the area of ELA. School A had an increase

of 10.57% in ELA. School B had an increase of 18.09% in ELA. School C showed the highest increase of 30.57% after the implementation of PCC.

ELA means. Observation of the calculated means of the group for the CAASPP ELA assessment showed a mean average of students performing at meets or exceeds standard level was 14.33% prior to implementation of PCC and 34.08% after implementation of PCC. The mean difference of 19.74% means that the number of students performing at the meets or exceeds standard level on the CAASPP increased by 218 students from 146 students in 2015 to 364 students in 2017 (see Table 5).

Table 5

Change in Academic Achievement in ELA on the CAASPP Prior to PCC and after PCC Implementation

Schools	ELA CAASPP Percentage of Students who Meet or Exceeded Standard 2015	ELA CAASPP Percentage of Students who Meet or Exceeded Standard 2017	Difference
A	18%	28.57%	10.57%
B	16%	34.09%	18.09%
C	9%	39.57%	30.57%
Mean	14.33%	34.08%	19.74%

Math. The data shows that in the area of Mathematics only two of the three schools experienced an increase in the percentage of students who performed at the Standard Meet level or the Standard Exceeded level on the CAASPP. School C had the highest increase with 30.57%. School B had an increase of 8.45%. School C had a slight decrease of -0.28%.

Math means. Observation of the calculated means for the group for the CAASPP Math assessment showed a mean of 13.67% prior to implementation of PCC and a mean score of 25.49% after implementation of PCC. The mean difference

of 11.82% means that the number of students performing at the meets or exceeds level on the CAASPP increased by 136 students from 137 in 2015 to 273 students in 2017 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Change in Academic Achievement in Math on the CAASPP Prior to PCC and after PCC Implementation

Schools	Math CAASPP Percentage of Students who Meet or Exceeded Standard 2015	Math CAASPP Percentage of Students who Meet or Exceeded Standard 2017	Difference
A	19%	18.72%	-0.28%
B	12%	20.45%	8.45%
C	10%	37.29%	27.29%
Mean	13.67%	25.49%	11.82%

Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Analysis for Suspensions

Research Question 2 asked: *What difference exists in student behavior prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?*

The data showed that all three of the schools showed a reduction in suspensions with the all three schools having a significant reduction in suspensions after the implementation of PCC. The average number of suspensions per school from 2012–2015 was determined to reflect the culture and history of the school. The average number of suspensions for each school from 2012-2015 was used as the data set for the prior to PCC. The highest year of suspensions was in 2013 in which school A suspended 55 students and School B suspended 58 students (see Table 7).

Table 7

Number of Suspensions Prior to PCC per school from 2012-2015

School	Suspensions 2012	Suspensions 2013	Suspensions 2014	Suspensions 2015	Average 2012-2015
A	1	55	16	13	21.25
B	24	19	25	9	19.25
C	9	58	24	2	23.25

With an average enrollment during this period of 350 students School A suspended 15.71% of their students and School C with an average enrollment of 326 had a 17.78% suspension rate in the year 2013.

The three schools had lightly different enrollments during the years prior to PCC implementation and after PCC implementation. To get a clearer picture of the impact of PCC on suspensions, the enrollment data was gathered from the Data Quest website for the 2014-2015 school year and the 2016-2017 school year. The enrollment shows that School C while having the highest decrease in suspensions, also had the highest growth of 5% in enrollment. School B had a decrease in suspensions of 19.25 and an increase of enrollment by 4%. School A had a reduction in suspensions of 20.25 and also a slight decrease in enrollment by 1% (see Table 8).

Table 8

Change in Number of Enrollment Prior to PCC and After PCC Implementation

School	Average Enrollment 2012-2015	Enrollment 2017	Gross Difference in Enrollment	Difference in Enrollment Percentage
A	350	347	-3	-1%
B	333	347	14.00	4%
C	326	377	17.00	5%

The average suspension rate prior to PCC from 2012-2015 is then compared to the number of suspension in 2017 after two years of PCC implementation. School C has the largest decline in suspensions reducing from an average of 23.35 suspensions a year to just one suspension in 2017. School A also reduced to one suspension in 2017 compared to a yearly average of 20.25. The data for School B shows the smallest decrease of 19.25 suspensions, yet the actual number of suspensions in 2017 was reduced to none compared to an average of 19.25 per year from 2012-2015 (see Table 9).

Table 9

Change in Number of Suspensions Prior to PCC and After PCC Implementation

Schools	Average Yearly Suspensions 2012-2015 prior to PCC	Suspensions 2017 After Two years PCC	Difference in Suspensions
A	21.25	1	-20.25
B	19.25	0	-19.25
C	23.25	1	-22.25

Research Analysis for PCC Impact on Schools

Research Question 3 asked: *What is the impact of the proactive community circles on student academic achievement as perceived by administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?*

Research Question 4 asked: *What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student behavior as perceived by administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?*

The following questions were asked during the interviews to gather qualitative data from site principals to answer Research Question 3 and Research Question 4.

1. Please share the key expectations for proactive community circles at your school.
2. Please share your thoughts on what impact proactive community circles has had on your site over the last several years.
3. Please describe in detail the impact that proactive community circles has made on your site's suspension rates.
    a. What other factors could have impacted this area as well?
4. Please describe in detail the impact that proactive community circles has made on your students' academic achievement.
    a. What factors, if any, from proactive community circles do you feel impacted these results?
5. Please share your thoughts on how you feel your staff and students think proactive community circles has impacted your site.
    a. Can you share an experience related to this?

To provide more value out of the interviews since only two administrators agreed to be participate in the interviews, themes that were found in both interviews were used in the study. The statements were then coded for frequency of statement, thus implying the importance of that theme across the interview rather than just within a question.

The themes related to key expectations of PCC at each school included weekly circles, the use of a talking piece, ritualistic, used for conflict resolution and

used for relationship building between the teacher and students. The coding of the results looked at the number of times in the interview the expectation was mentioned. Both administrators mentioned relationship building as a purpose of community circles a total of eight times in the interview. The use of circles for conflict resolution was mentioned four times. Both administrators expressed the expectation that PCC are expected to occur weekly, include the use of a talking piece and follow a ritualistic structure (see Table 10).

Table 10

Key Expectations of PCC at Site

Theme	Frequency
Weekly circles	2
Talking Piece	2
Ritualistic structure of circle	2
Used for conflict resolution	4
Relationship building between teacher and students	8

The themes related to the impact of PCC on the site that emerged were (a) improved student teacher relationships, (b) improved student to student relationships, (c) open communication between the teacher and student, and (d) shift in teacher mindset. The themes all centered on relationship building. The use of PCC as a tool to open communication between the teachers and the students was mentioned 10 times during the two interviews. The theme of an improved relationship between the student and teacher was mentioned eight times during the interviews. The theme of shift in mindset by teachers was mentioned three times during the interview as it relates to teachers taking more responsibility for discipline within the classrooms. In

addition, the theme of improved relationships between students was only mentioned two times (see Table 11).

Table 11

Impact of PCC on Site

Theme	Frequency
Improved student to student relationships	2
Shift in teacher mindset	3
Improved student teacher relationships	8
Opens communication between teacher and student	10

The themes related to student suspension looked at why suspension rates have changed since the implementation of PCC. The themes that emerged were that since implementation of PCC, teachers were more proactive with discipline matters, the development of conflict resolution skills by students and students taking responsibility for their behaviors. The theme that was most pronounced is that teachers are proactive with discipline matters which was mentioned four times during the two interviews. In addition, during the interviews the theme of student development of conflict resolution skills emerged three times. Lastly it was mentioned by both administrators that they feel that student now take more responsibility for their behaviors (see Table 12).

Table 12

Impact on Suspensions Rates

Theme	Frequency
Students taking responsibility for their behaviors	2
Development of conflict resolution skills by students	3
Teachers proactive with discipline matters	4

In themes related to the impact on academic achievement that emerged were improved focus on instruction and higher academic achievement. Higher academic achievement was mentioned eight times during the course of two interviews. Improved focus on instruction was mentioned five times during the interview (see Table 13).

Table 13

Impact on Academic Achievement

Theme	Frequency
Improved Focus on Instruction	5
Higher academic achievement	8

Three themes emerged as they related to the impact of PCC on staff and students, ownership of student conflicts and discipline, positive changes in student behavior and development of student voice. During the interviews six comments related to student ownership of conflicts or behavior were mentioned. The development of student voice was mentioned four times during the interviews. The last key theme mentioned one time in each interview was the positive changes in student behavior (see Table 14).

Table 14

Impact of PCC on Staff and Students

Theme	Frequency
Positive changes in student behavior	2
Development of student voice	4
Ownership of student conflicts or behavior	6

Summary

This chapter reviewed the data collected and the findings related to the four research questions that guided this study. All three schools showed significant difference in student suspension rates. Two of the schools showed these differences despite an increase in enrollment. In addition, all three schools had differences in the academic achievement data. The increases in academic achievement were greatest in the area of language arts on the SBAC ranging from 10% to 30% increase. In the area of mathematics one school actually decreased by .28% while the other two schools showed significant growth.

The final portion of this chapter identified the trends in how administrators felt that PCC had impacted their sites. A significant trend was that administrators felt the PCC helped to open communication between teachers and students. Another trend was the impact of positive relationships between teachers and students. Administrators also felt that PCC lead to higher academic achievement. The trend was the increased ownership of student responsibility for behaviors was a trend.

The following chapter, Chapter V, discusses the data in more detail. The chapter also reveals unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research. Chapter V ends with concluding remarks and reflections.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V provides a summary of the research study by restating the purpose statement, research questions, methods, population, and sample. The chapter then goes on to discuss the findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations for further studies, and concluding remarks.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine difference in student academic achievement and student behavior prior to and after implementation of PCC in elementary schools in California that have implemented, for a minimum of two years, as measured by standardized test scores and student behavior records. The second purpose was to describe the impact of PCC on student academic achievement and student behavior in elementary schools in California that have implemented PCC for a minimum of two years as perceived by school administrators.

Research Questions

Four research questions helped to guide this study and included two quantitative research questions and two qualitative research questions.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What difference exists in student academic achievement prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have the proactive community circle programs in place for a minimum of two years?

2. What difference exists in student behavior prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Qualitative Research Questions

3. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student academic achievement as perceived by school administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?
4. What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student behavior as perceived by school administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?

Methodology

This study used a mixed methods research design to determine the impact of restorative practice PCC on student behavior and student academics by analyzing student suspension rates and state assessments data along with school administrator perception of the impact. Mixed method research analyzes both numerical data and personal statements to support a conclusion (Patton, 2015). Mixed methods research is a relatively new method in research, but the blending of quantitative instruments and qualitative interviews helps to strengthen a conclusion (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher asked permission to conduct research through the appropriate district office department based on the district's procedures for conduction research.

Once consent to participate was granted form the district office, each site was contacted for consent to participate. The quantitative data was collected first for this study from archived data available to the public on the California Department of Education website. Both pre and post PCC implementation on the SBAC assessment scores and suspension rates were gathered form the schools that have implemented PCC for two or more year to show the differences that PCC has had on pre and post data. Next, the researcher developed open-ended questions to interview the two site administrators to produce the qualitative data. The researcher conducted the interview over the phone. The data and time of the interview was selected by the participants; all interviews were held in the month of February 2017 and were conducted or the phone. Originally all three of the administrators agreed to participate in the interview, however, one administrator did not respond to numerous requests for an interview. The two remaining participants were provided the list of interview questions in advance of the interview and each participant signed a statement of consent and confidentiality prior to the interview. Interviews were recorded by two electronic devises and then transcribed by Rev Transcription service, submitted through the Rev Transcription IOS application.

Following the interview the participants received a verbatim transcript of the interview to review and edit as deemed necessary by the participant; these transcripts were shared with the participants through their email as an editable Google document. All participants were asked to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy of content and meaning. After interviews were completed a master data matrix was used to combine common themes, patterns and similarities. Any code with a frequency of one was not

included in the findings of the study. To ensure reliability in interpretation of the data and assure researcher bias in interpretation was minimized, two colleagues served as Inter Coder Raters. The researcher then triangulated the quantitative data and the qualitative data in order to determine the differences and impact that PCC has made.

Population and Sample

A population is the total set of individuals that meet certain criteria in which the results of the study can be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the population is public elementary schools in the state of California. The state of California has 5,858 elementary schools serving over 3 million students (Education, 2015). In Riverside and Los Angeles County have 1,577 elementary schools. Due to the large number of elementary schools, a target population was created using specific criteria. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the target population of a study is a specified set of individuals that "conform to a specific criterion and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (p. 129). The target population for this study was public elementary schools in Riverside and Los Angeles Counties, California that met the following criteria:

1. Public elementary school.
2. Located in Riverside or Los Angeles Counties.
3. Implemented PCC for a minimum of two years.
4. Has participated in the CAASPP for a minimum of two years for grades three through six.

There are five elementary schools in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties that meet these criteria.

The sample population for this study was three elementary schools for the collection of the quantitative data and from two site administrators in Los Angeles County for the qualitative data. All three schools were located in high poverty areas of the city. The percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in each school was over 98% with one school at 100%. In addition the English Learner population at each site was over 50% with two schools being over 56%. The researcher received consent and permission from the district office and each school principal to conduct research with their schools. These three schools have been implementing proactive community circles for two years. All three schools received training through the Center for Urban Resilience at Loyola Marymount University.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study can be found in this section, organized by research question.

Research Question 1

Research Question asked: *What difference exists in student academic achievement prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have the proactive community circle programs in place for a minimum of two years?*

Quantitative data from this study was then triangulated with the qualitative data gathered from interviews from site administrators. The quantitative data on academic achievement significant student gains on the ELA section of the SBAC. The calculated means for the three schools pre-PCC implementation showed that 14.33% of students in third through sixth grade were considered proficient on the

ELA section of the SBAC. The calculated mean for the group after implementation of PCC showed a mean of 34.08% were proficient on the ELA section of the SBAC. The difference between scores on the ELA section of the SBAC is pre and post implementation of PCC is 19.74%. The differences per site did vary, but each site did have a significant increase in scores. The quantitative data from the schools on academic achievement gains on the SBAC pre and post in math also showed that two of the three sites had gains while one site had a slight decrease. The calculated means for the three schools' pre-PCC implementation showed that 13.67% of students in third through sixth grade were considered proficient on the math section of the SBAC. The calculated mean for the group after implementation of PCC showed a mean of 25.49% were proficient on the math section of the SBAC. The difference between scores on the math section of the SBAC is pre and post implementation of PCC is 11.82%. The differences per site varied with two of the participating sites reporting gains and one site decreasing 0.28%. The overall the SBAC data indicates that students perform better academically in an environment that focuses on building relationships.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: *What difference exists in student behavior prior to the implementation of proactive community circles and after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?*

Quantitative data from this study was triangulated with qualitative data gathered from interviews from site administrators. The quantitative data from the

schools on student suspension rates shows a significant decrease in the number of suspensions pre and post implementation of PCC. The calculated means for the three schools pre-PCC implementation showed that the average number of suspensions per year for a four-year period prior to PCC was over 21%. Two years post implementation of PCC the mean was 0.07% suspensions per year.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: *What is the impact of the proactive community circles on student academic achievement as perceived by administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?*

This question was answered through the interviews conducted with the two site administrators. The data supported that the site administrators feel that PCC has impacted academic achievement at their sites. During the interviews there were five statements about improved focus on instruction as well as eight statements about higher academic achievement. One site administrator stated that PCC are used after recess to resolve issues from the playground, thus allowing students to focus on instruction. As suggested in the literature, the use of PCC help to repair relationships and give students a forum to express themselves in a safe environment. Since the quantitative data shows positive gains on the SBAC between pre and post implementation of PCC, this supports that administers feel that PCC are having a positive impact on academic achievement. The difference between scores on the ELA section of the SBAC is pre and post implementation of PCC is 19.74%. The differences per site did vary slightly with two sites dropping to one suspension for the

school year and one site reporting zero suspensions. Restorative practices is a tool that is called out in the literature as a method of reducing suspensions. In the literature it was suggested that the regular use of PCC helps to build relationships with students and that students who have positive relationships with teachers are less likely to act out. In the interviews site administrators stated that PCC open communication between students and teachers improves relationships between students and teachers.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked: *What is the impact of the proactive community circle programs on student behavior as perceived by administrators after the implementation in elementary schools that have proactive community circle programs in place for minimum of two years?*

This question was answered through the interviews conducted with the two site administrators. The data supports that the site administrators believed that PCC has impacted student suspensions at their sites. During the interviews there were four statements about teachers being proactive with discipline matters rather than referring students to the office. In addition, there were three statements about student developing conflict resolution skills and two statements about students taking responsibility for their behaviors. One site administrator stated that teachers are using PCC to resolve conflicts repairing harm in the classroom. The use of PCC helps to build classroom community while empowering teachers. As stated in the literature, PCC helps to teach social emotional learning skills while building positive relationships. Since the quantitative data shows a decrease in suspensions between

pre and post implementation of PCC, this supports that administrators believe that PCC are having a positive impact on student suspension rates.

Unexpected Findings

There were two unexpected findings that stood out from this study. One of the unexpected findings was the shift in teacher mindset. In both interviews it was reported that the use of PCC had empowered teachers to be proactive with discipline matters. Both site administrators reported that teachers were handling issues as they arose in the classrooms by stopping and holding a community circle instead of sending students to the administrator. With limited instruction time, one would have thought that teachers would want to stay focused on instruction instead of stopping to resolve an issue. This unexpected finding leads the researcher to believe a powerful connection is developed between the teacher and students by holding regular PCCs. The use of PCC empowers the teacher to feel equipped to resolve conflicts among students. Repairing harm in the moment allows the students to be heard and to then refocus on instruction.

The second unexpected finding relates to the development of student voice. Both principals stated that the PCC allowed for teaching social emotional curriculum which lead to students taking responsibility for their actions. Community circles have become a tool for students to express themselves in a safe environment. The use of PCC has allowed the students to develop their voice. Providing students a forum for expressing themselves helps students to deal with issues instead of bottling up their feelings. The use of PCC is also empowering students.

Conclusion

Conclusions were derived based on the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data in this study and supported by a review of the literature. The results of this study indicated that implementation of regular PCC made a significantly positive difference in student academic performance and student suspension rates. The biggest impact was on the reduction of the number of suspensions given per school year. This study concludes that elementary schools that have been implementing PCC weekly for a minimum of two see a positive impact on student suspension rates and academic performance on standardized assessments. In addition, the two site administrators interviewed for this study feel that PCCs have impacted their schools in a significantly positive way. It can be further concluded that elementary sites not currently implementing PCC would have similar positive results if PCC were to be implemented.

Implications for Action

District Level Support

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, it is recommended that school districts implement restorative practices with plans to train all elementary teachers in PCC. Realizing that PCC could have a significant impact on student suspension rates and performance on standardized assessments, it is essential to allocate resources and ongoing support. District should outline expectations of implementation as relationships are developed and sustained overtime and regular use of PCC takes time away from traditional academic instruction.

Site Level Support

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, it is recommended that supports for the implementation of PCC be established by school sites to help support the needs of their students, teachers, and staff. A strategic plan should be developed to implement PCC school-wide. Administration should develop an oversite team to assist with implementation of PCC at the school site. Teachers and staff should be trained through professional development to be prepared and to understand the benefits of implementing PCC. Administration should model the use of PCC with staff and students, by leading PCC across campus both during the school day and at staff meetings. Key expectations should be developed in terms of delivery method, talking piece, rules of a circle, and frequency of classroom circles.

Teacher Credentialing Implications

Teacher credentialing programs should consider adding course work on restorative practices within the teacher preparation course work. Restorative practices is identified as a strategy to reduce suspensions in both federal and state guidelines in the area of student discipline. Stressing the importance of relationship building and giving new teachers the tools to build relationships will help improve their ability to establish a classroom culture that welcomes open communication for all. PCC should be modeled with the credentialing classrooms and expected to be implemented by the student teacher.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on this study, there are some recommendations for future research in the impact PCC has on school suspension rates and academic achievement.

Recommendation 1

One recommendation is to replicate this study with a larger sample as more schools are beginning to use PCC at the elementary level. A larger study would produce results that would be beneficial to school districts as they look to reduce suspension rates.

Recommendation 2

Based on this study another recommendation would be to study the impact of PCC on school attendance. Chronic absenteeism is one of the indicators that the California Department of Education is beginning to monitor in the 2017-2018 school year. Determining if PCC help to improve absenteeism would be extremely beneficial to school districts across California at the elementary, middle, and secondary level.

Recommendation 3

Another recommendation would be a study on the impact of students who participate in PCC at the elementary level and the rate of discipline at the middle school. Understanding the long-term benefits to PCC would be helpful to districts as they look for programs that have a lasting impact on students.

Recommendation 4

Yet another recommendation is to study the impact of PCC on student suspension rates for minority, low socioeconomic, and special education students. In reviewing the suspensions rates of minority groups, low socioeconomic, and special education students are often suspended at a higher rate than middle class students. This information would be extremely beneficial to school districts across the country.

Recommendation 5

Lastly, another recommendation is to study the different implementation methods and expectations of community circles in a middle or high school setting. The use of community circles in a secondary level is challenging due to limited time with students and the number of students a teacher sees in a day. Several studies have been done identifying different models for community circles. A study comparing the different methods of implementation of community circles in a secondary setting would be helpful to districts and schools as they seek a method for implementation of community circles.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Being responsible for the development of the whole child is a major undertaking of teachers at all grade levels. Elementary teachers spend the most amount of time with students and therefore have the greatest impact on their social and academic development. Empowering teachers to be able to use PCC to resolve conflicts and teacher social skills will allow them to refocus time on instruction. The use of PCC supports student social emotional development by providing them a safe environment to share their voice and to teacher-students conflict resolution skills. Educational leaders need to understand that students who are competent in social emotional skills better academically. Taking time out of instruction for relationship building will allow the student to better focus on academics.

Reflecting on this process I better understand the positive impact that relationships have on a student's social and academic wellbeing. To help students become productive members of the school community, they feel valued by staff and

students at the school. This study represents my desire for students to develop positive relationships at school with the staff and students while developing a positive school culture. This study has impacted me and will forever change the way I look student success.

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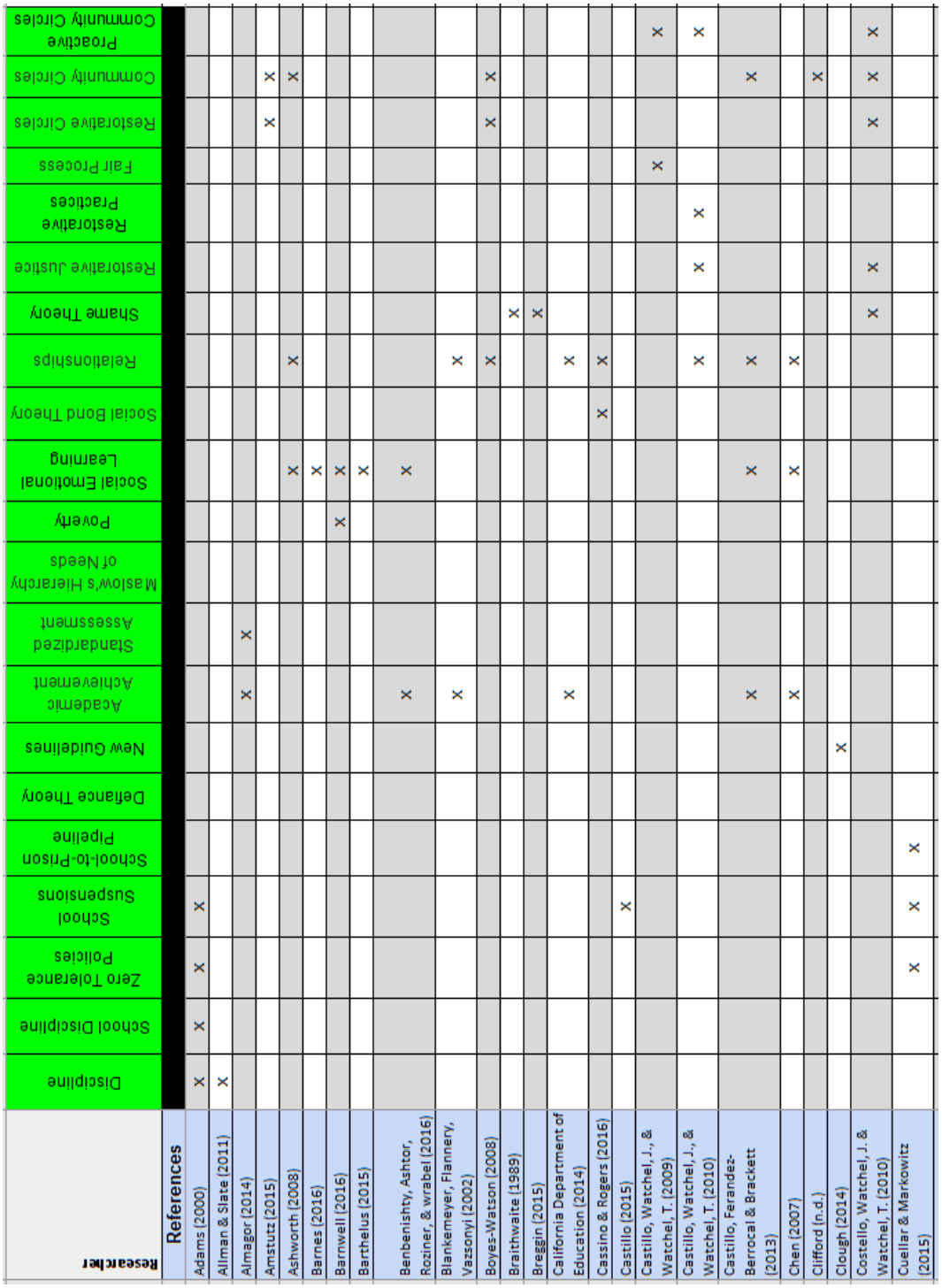
APPENDIX A

Synthesis Matrix



Researcher	References	Discipline	School Discipline	Zero Tolerance Policies	School Suspensions	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Defiance Theory	New Guidelines	Academic Achievement	Standardized Assessment	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Poverty	Social Emotional Learning	Social Bond Theory	Relationships	Shame Theory	Restorative Justice	Restorative Practices	Fair Process	Restorative Circles	Community Circles	Proactive Community Circles
	Adams (2000)	x	x	x	x																	
	Allman & Slate (2011)	x																				
	Almagor (2014)								x	x												
	Amstutz (2015)																			x	x	
	Ashworth (2008)												x		x						x	
	Barnes (2016)												x									
	Barnwell (2016)											x	x									
	Barthelus (2015)												x									
	Benbenishty, Ashtor, Roziner, & wrabel (2016)								x				x									
	Blankemeyer, Flannery, Vazsonyi (2002)								x						x							
	Boyes-Watson (2008)														x					x	x	
	Braithwaite (1989)															x						
	Breggin (2015)															x						
	California Department of Education (2014)								x						x							
	Cassino & Rogers (2016)													x	x							
	Castillo (2015)				x																	
	Castillo, Watchel, J., & Watchel, T. (2009)																			x		
	Castillo, Watchel, J., & Watchel, T. (2010)														x		x	x			x	
	Castillo, Ferandez-Berrocal & Brackett (2013)								x				x		x						x	
	Chen (2007)								x				x		x							
	Clifford (n.d.)																				x	
	Clough (2014)							x														
	Costello, Watchel, J. & Watchel, T. (2010)															x	x			x	x	
	Cuellar & Markowitz (2015)			x	x	x																

Researcher	Discipline	School Discipline	Zero Tolerance Policies	School Suspensions	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Defiance Theory	New Guidelines	Academic Achievement	Standardized Assessment	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Poverty	Social Emotional Learning	Social Bond Theory	Relationships	Shame Theory	Restorative Justice	Restorative Practices	Fair Process	Restorative Circles	Community Circles	Proactive Community Circles
References																					
Department of Education (2015)							x		x												
Doern & Goss (2014)															x						
Doty (2001)												x									
Dubin (2016)		x															x				
Duffy, Giordano, Farrell, Paneque, & Crump (2008)									x			x									
Duncan (2014)							x														
Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & schellinger (2011)												x									
Elias, Leverett, Duffell, Humphrey, Stepney, & Ferrito (2016)																					
Elias, White & Stepney (2014)								x				x									
Elison, Lennon & Pulos (2006)															x						
Evans (2016)																	x				
Findlaw (2013)	x	x	x	x																	
Force (2008)			x		x		x														
Freeman, Liossis, & David (2006)						x															
Freitas & Leonard (2011)										x											
Goss (1975)				x																	
Grabowicz, Aiello, Equiluz, Jamies (2013)													x	x							
Greenberg (1999)	x																				

Researcher	References	Discipline	School Discipline	Zero Tolerance Policies	School Suspensions	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Defiance Theory	New Guidelines	Academic Achievement	Standardized Assessment	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Poverty	Social Emotional Learning	Social Bond Theory	Relationships	Shame Theory	Restorative Justice	Restorative Practices	Fair Process	Restorative Circles	Community Circles	Proactive Community Circles
	Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brian, Zins, Fredricks, Resnik, & Elias (2003)								x				x		x							
	Gregory (2015)							x	x	x			x									
	Guerra, & Bradshaw (2008)												x									
	Hachiya (2010)			x	x	x																
	Hart & Mueller (2013)								x						x							
	Hejdenberg (2011)														x							
	Henson-Nash (2015)			x										x							x	
	Hirschi (1969)													x								
	Hudson (2011)			x																		
	Ingraham (1977)		x																			
	International (2015)															x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Irby (2009)			x		x																
	Justice Center (2014)								x													
	Kaveney & Drewery (2011)																			x		
	Kim & Mauborgne (1977)																		x			
	Kline (2016)																			x		
	Lamont, Devore, Allison, Ancona, Barnett, Gunther & Young (2013)			x																	x	
	Levine (2003)														x						x	
	Luffenegger, Klung, Harrer, Langer, Spiel, & Schober (2016)								x				x									
	Mahmood (n.d.)																x	x		x	x	x
	Mallett (2016)			x		x	x															

Researcher	References	Discipline	School Discipline	Zero Tolerance Policies	School Suspensions	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Defiance Theory	New Guidelines	Academic Achievement	Standardized Assessment	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Poverty	Social Emotional Learning	Social Bond Theory	Relationships	Shame Theory	Restorative Justice	Restorative Practices	Fair Process	Restorative Circles	Community Circles	Proactive Community Circles
	Mann (2016)		X			X	X	X					X				X	X				
	Martin (2015)							X	X						X			X				
	Maslow (1943)										X											
	McGregor (2017)		X																			
	McGrew (2016)			X		X																
	McLeod (2007, 2016)										X		X									
	Mediratta (2014)				X																	
	Mirskey (2011)			X													X					
	Mirskey (2014)			X											X		X					
	Morgan, Salomon, Plotkin & Choen (2014)				X																	
	Morris, Gerber & Menard (2011)													X	X							
	Morrison, Vaandering (2012)														X			X				
	Murphy (2017)													X		X						
	Nathanson (1992)															X						
	Nathanson (1996)													X		X						
	Nesbitt (2004)																	X				
	Noakes (2014)		X				X															
	Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, & Bergen (2012)							X			X	X	X									
	Ozden (2006)													X	X							
	Payne (2011)											X	X		X							
	Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger & Pachan (2008)								X				X									
	Peyton (2016)			X																		
	Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, & Morrison (2008)								X				X									
	Pranis (2014)																				X	X
	Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge (2003)																X	X		X	X	X

Researcher	References	Discipline	School Discipline	Zero Tolerance Policies	School Suspensions	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Defiance Theory	New Guidelines	Academic Achievement	Standardized Assessment	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Poverty	Social Emotional Learning	Social Bond Theory	Relationships	Shame Theory	Restorative Justice	Restorative Practices	Fair Process	Restorative Circles	Community Circles	Proactive Community Circles
Robers, Zhang, Morgan & Musu-Gillette (2015)						X																
Roffey, & McCarthy (2013)																						
Ross (2006)					X												X	X			X	
Rupper (2010)		X																				
Russell (2013)																					X	
Salole & Abdulle (2015)				X																		
Sapp (2014)					X		X															
Schept, Wall, & Brisman (2015)				X	X	X																
Skiba (2008)																						
Skiba & Peterson (1999)				X	X	X																
Skiba, Peterson, McKelvey, Forde, & Gallini (2004)					X										X							
Skiba & Losen (2016)				X		X			X						X			X				
Smith, Fisher & Frey (2015)					X	X									X						X	
Sparks & Harwin (2016)			X																			
Steven (2006)																X						
Straus (2001)			X																			
Taylor & Dymnicki (2007)									X				X		X							
Tidmarsh (2014)					X																	
Title (2014)															X		X	X		X		
Tomkins (2014)																X						
Unal & Cukur (2011)			X			X								X	X							
Union (n. d.)				X	X	X																
USDE (2015)								X		X												
Waajid, Garnerb, & Owen (2013)									X				X		X							
Watchel (2004)																	X	X		X		
Watchel (2013a)																	X	X		X		
Watchel (2013b)						X											X	X	X	X		
Watchel (2014)																						

Researcher	References	Discipline	School Discipline	Zero Tolerance Policies	School Suspensions	School-to-Prison Pipeline	Defiance Theory	New Guidelines	Academic Achievement	Standardized Assessment	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Poverty	Social Emotional Learning	Social Bond Theory	Relationships	Shame Theory	Restorative Justice	Restorative Practices	Fair Process	Restorative Circles	Community Circles	Proactive Community Circles
	Wadhwa (2013)		x															x				
	Ward, Boman, & Jones (2015)													x								
	Weissberg & Greenberg (1998)								x				x									
	Wilson (2014)			x	x	x																
	Wolf (2015)			x	x																	
	Yell & Rozalski (2008)	x																				
	Zehr. Amstuts, MacRae, & Pranis (2015)														x		x			x		
	Zinsser & Dusenbury (2015)								x				x		x		x			x		

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: The Impact of Proactive Community Circles on Student Academic Achievement and Student Behavior in an Elementary Setting

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Michele Lenertz, Doctoral Candidate

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this study is understand the impact of proactive community circles for a minimum of two years on student academic achievement and student behavior. This study explores the data from elementary schools and their school administrators and teachers to captures the essence of the impact that proactive community circles has had on student achievement and behavior. Results from the study will be summarized in a doctoral dissertation.

In participating in this research study, you agree to partake in an interview. The interview will take about an hour and will be audio-recorded. The interview will take place at the school you are currently attending or by phone. During this interview, you will be asked a series of questions designed to allow you to share your experiences as to how proactive community circles has impacted your school.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings, transcripts and notes taken by the researcher and transcripts from the interview will be destroyed.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding coaching programs and the impact coaching programs have on developing future school leaders. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the coaching experience in which I participated. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) Money will not be provided for my time and involvement: however, a $10.00 gift card and food will be provided.

e) Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Michele Lenertz, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate. I understand that Mrs. Lenertz may be contacted by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at lene4401@brandman.edu or Dr. Phil Pendley (advisor) by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email at pendley@brandman.edu

f) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

g) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth

_____

Signature of Participant or Responsible

_____

Party Signature of Principal Investigator

_____

Date

APPENDIX C

Letter of Invitation

February 12, 2018

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study about the impact that proactive community circles has student academics and behavior. The main investigator of this study is Michele Lenertz, Doctoral Candidate in Brandman University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were chosen to participate in this study because you are a school administrator at an elementary school that has implemented proactive community circles for two or more years. Approximately 3 school administrators will participate in this study. Participation should require about one hour of your time and is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is understand the impact of proactive community circles for a minimum of two years on student academic achievement and student behavior. This study explores the data from elementary schools and their school administrators to captures the essence of the impact that proactive community circles have had on student achievement and behavior. Results from the study will be summarized in a doctoral dissertation.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, you will be interviewed by the researcher. During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions designed to allow you to share your experience as to how proactive community circles have impacted your site. The interview sessions will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no known major risks to your participation in this research study. It may be inconvenient for you to arrange time for the interview questions.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, but your feedback could impact other school sites. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, policymakers, administrators, and educators.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study and any personal information you provide will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

You are encouraged to ask any questions, at any time, that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact the principal, Michele Lenertz, by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email lene4401@brandman.edu. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Very Respectfully,

Michele Lenertz
Principal Investigator

APPENDIX D

Participant Bill of Rights

Brandman University

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask anyq uestions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949)341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol

Interview Script:

[Interviewer states:] *I truly appreciate you taking the time to share your story with me. To review, the purpose of this study is understand the impact of proactive community circles for a minimum of two years on student academic achievement and student behavior. The questions are written to elicit this information but share stories or experiences as you see fit throughout the interview. Additionally, I encourage you to be as honest and open as possible for purposes of research and since your identity will be remain anonymous.*

As a review of our process leading up to this interview, you were invited to participate via letter and signed an informed consent form that outlined the interview process and the condition of complete anonymity for the purpose of this study. Please remember, this interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you will be provided with a copy of the complete transcripts to check for accuracy in content and meaning prior to me analyzing the data. Do you have any questions before we begin? [Begin to ask interview questions]

Background Questions:

1. Share a little about yourself personally and professionally.
2. What aspects of your current position are the most challenging?
3. What aspects of your current position do you enjoy the most?
4. What current educational initiatives, either at the local or state level, are the most compelling for your organization? (Example: Implementation of CAASPP, Restorative Practices, LCAP)

Content Questions:

6. Please share the key expectations for proactive community circles at your school.
7. Please share your thoughts on what impact proactive community circles has had on your site over the last several years.
8. Please describe in detail the impact that proactive community circles has made on your site's suspension rates.
    a. What other factors could have impacted this area as well?
9. Please describe in detail the impact that proactive community circles has made on your students' academic achievement.
    b. What factors, if any, from proactive community circles do you feel impacted these results?

10. Please share your thoughts on how you feel your staff and students think proactive community circles has impacted your site.
    a. Can you share an experience related to this?