A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

by

BRENDA SUE SAVAGE SMITH

(Under the direction of William W. Swan)

ABSTRACT

This study was designed as a longitudinal study of an alternative education program where students self-elect to enroll. Quantitative data collected compared grade point average, average daily attendance, and number of discipline infractions between the student's traditional high school experience and the student's alternative high school experience across the subgroups of sex and race/ethnicity. A survey was conducted to determine the student's post-graduation status: employment and/or enrollment in a post-secondary education/training program.

The sample was taken from the population of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School yielded an initial sample of 227 subjects. Descriptive statistics included means and standard deviations for each indicator of effectiveness. Inferential statistics calculated by using paired t-tests compared the variables between the traditional high school experience and the alternative high school experience.

Results indicated an increase in grade point average, improved average daily attendance and fewer disciplinary infractions in the Evening School over their traditional high school attendance. Respondents to the survey provided positive evidence of employment and/or post-secondary enrollment after graduation from the alternative program.

INDEX WORDS: Dropouts, Dropout Prevention, Alternative Schools, Alternative Education

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

by

BRENDA SUE SAVAGE SMITH

B.A., Piedmont College, 1978

M. Ed., North Georgia College, 1981

Ed.S., University of Georgia, 1992

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2005

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

by

BRENDA SUE SAVAGE SMITH

Major Professor:	William W. Swan
Committee:	Thomas Holmes Kenneth Tanner

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Goals and Students at Risk

Goodlad (1984, p. 34) said, "Our expectations for schools are both idealistic and grandiose, representing a synthesis of what many diverse segments of our population wants." Parents expect that students will benefit from a diversified curriculum that will prepare them for independence after graduation and that graduation is attainable for their student(s). Society expects that schools will prepare students for the responsibilities of citizenship and equip them with the skills to meet those responsibilities. Educators expect schools to provide safe environments for the attainment of knowledge from a curriculum sufficiently diversified to encourage problem solving and exploration of interests and talents. Mission statements of schools formally identify the collective expectations of their stakeholders and display them on bulletin boards and print them in literature to share with the parents and communities they serve.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the traditional school to provide a well rounded education for all students, there continues to be the call for programs that address the unique needs of the "dis" kids as referred to by Arnove and Strout (1980, p. 454): the disenchanted, the disaffected, disaffiliated, disturbed, and disruptive. Similarly, Gregory (1988, p. 2) identified the "dis" kids as the student who was disaffected by school, the chronically disruptive, the disproportionately poor, the helplessly disadvantaged, and the one that is described as just plain distasteful. Roderick (1994) described these students as disengaged from school. Coyl, Jones, and Dick (2004) described at risk students as disconnected. Guerin and Denti (1999) and Razeghi (1998) included students with disabilities among those students that often need unique

programming for success. "Dis" kids have emerged in the literature as students characterized as "at-risk" of poor performance or dropping out of school.

Taylor-Dunlop and Norton (1997) recognized that all students are at risk, but for some students at a certain point, the risk becomes too high and dropping out is an event in a long series of life stresses. Catterall (1986, p. 22) described dropping out as a "cumulative process" in the lives of students. Alexander, Entwisle, and Kabbani (2001) described a long-term process of disengagement from school that often traces back to children's earliest experiences in school, where they don't necessarily drop out as an event but fade out through chronic truancy and disengage from academics by getting into trouble or putting little effort into their work. Conversely, Wehlage (1983) stated that the single most influential factor in a student's decision to drop out of school is recent school experiences.

Contributing to the reasons students drop out is the fact that many students fail to see the real-world relevance of what they are learning (Razeghi, 1998), compounded with an increase in standards (Catterall, 1986; Goertz, 1986; Gratz, 2000; Kerry, 2003; Leone & Drakeford, 1999), an increase in graduation requirements (Arnstine & Futernick, 1999; Catterall, 1986, 1987b, 1988; Goetrz, 1986; McDill, Natriello, & Pallas, 1986), and a lowering tolerance for serious violations of school disciplinary codes (Adams, 2000; Kibort, 1999; King, Silvey, Holliday, & Johnston, 1998; McDonald, 1998; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998; Walters, 1995).

Students with disabilities who are dropping out of school are not well served by the traditional academic education model (Roessler, 1991), nor are they well served by existing special education programs (Edgar, 1988). A disproportionate percentage of high school students with disabilities drop out (Scanlon & Mellard, 2002) and are employed at half the rate of graduates (Edgar, 1988).

Taylor-Dunlop and Norton (1997) attributed an increase in dropouts from traditional schools to the result of the overuse of suspensions as a disciplinary consequence in what they called the revolving door policy. Students who are routinely disciplined by being suspended are more likely to drop out of school (DeRidder, 1990; McDill et al., 1986).

Schargel and Smink (2001, p. 26) described three types of dropouts: dropouts—students who are leaving or have left school; tuneouts—students who stay in school but disengage from learning; and the forceouts—those who are suspended or expelled. These nontraditional learners make up the bulk of those who are at risk of dropping out or have dropped out of school (Schargel & Smink, 2001).

Costs of Dropping Out

America's dropout problem is costly to the individual, to business, and to society (Beck & Muia, 1980; McDill, et al., 1986; Schargel & Smink, 2001). Dropouts tend to have lower-paying jobs, lower employment rates, and generally lower standards of living (Catterall, 1987a). Dropouts' earnings lag far behind those of degree holders (Catterall, 1987a), even when they work full time (Alexander, et al., 2001). Because high school graduates earn 70 percent more than dropouts (Schargel & Smink, 2001), each dropout means losses of gainful employment and tax revenue (Catterall, 1987a). De La Rosa (1998) contended the dropout problem is too costly to our economy to be ignored.

Dropping out leads to social costs in the form of increased welfare, health care, unemployment subsidies, and lowered tax revenue from the state (Catterall, 1987a; Groth, 1998; McDill, et al., 1986). Eighty percent of mothers and 97% of fathers on public assistance are high school dropouts (Friedenberg, 1999). Furthermore, dropouts today are more likely to be single parents, receive welfare benefits, commit crimes, and go to prison (Beck & Muia, 1980;

Alexander, et al., 2001; Schargel & Smink, 2001). There is a high incidence of high school dropouts in America's prisons (Alexander, et al., 2001; Freidenberg, 1999; Schargel & Smink, 2001). The cost of incarcerations and institutionalization is argument enough to support early intervention (Ashcroft, 1999).

In Texas, a 1986 study on the cost-benefit ratio of dropping out of school found substantial savings in expenditures related to welfare, crime, incarceration, and unemployment insurance payments as a result of reducing the dropout rate (De La Rosa, 1998). The study projected that for every $1 spent on prevention and education of potential dropouts, $9 would be returned to the state (De La Rosa, 1998).

Given an economic demand for a higher educated work force, the rise in dropouts has attracted much attention (Alspaugh, 1997; Carnevale & Porro, 1994). Callison (1994) described a screening process is widely used by employers to deny non-graduates opportunity for employment and an increase in the screening process is predicted to continue as skills become more specialized. Carnevale and Porro (1994, p. 10) described a "proven relationship" among educational attainment, work ethic and skill as a "sorting device" to help them choose among their applicants. Employers expect a minimum of academic skills and the ability to learn things quickly, along with good work habits, proper attitudes about work and supervisors, and ability to get along with others (Wagner, 1993).

A high school diploma has become almost mandatory and is often viewed as an entry level requirement into the labor force for even skilled laborers (Little, 1999). Within the United States, the bulk of employment (78%) is in service industries which require knowledge, skills, and the use of technology (Schargel & Smink, 2001). Kearns, formerly chairman and CEO of Xerox Corporation, wrote in an article for the Los Angeles Times, "It's schools' not business's

job to offer basic education. American business will have to hire more than a million service and production workers a year who can't read and write or even count. Teaching them how, and absorbing the lost productivity while they are learning will cost industry $25 billion a year, and nobody seems to know how long such remedial training will be necessary" (Callison, 1994, p. 17).

Students with disabilities are often unsuccessful in the workplace (Razeghi, 1998) as evidenced by a 50% to 75% unemployment rate for people with disabilities (Wehman, 2001). Projections for the year 2000 indicated that new jobs being created would require an average of 13.5 years of schooling (Little, 1999) but students with learning disabilities are usually only qualified for entry-level, part-time jobs in which they make minimum wage (Okolo & Sitlington, 1988). Even students with mild disabilities experience higher unemployment rates than the general population, both during and after high school (Edgar, 1988; Razeghi, 1998; Wehman, 2001), and the majority of these students do not enter training programs (Razeghi, 1998). In fact, they may even become burdens to the community, and with only entry level job skills, few look forward to a high quality of life (Razeghi, 1998). High schools have found it necessary to become more responsive to the transition from school to work for students with disabilities (Wagner, 1993).

Dropout rates for Blacks and Whites have been declining for the past 20 years, but they have remained constant for Hispanics, with Hispanics having the highest dropout among minorities (Friedenburg, 1999). Contributing to the high rate of Hispanic dropouts is the relationship between their English language acquisition and fluency and a high number of pregnancies and marriages at an early age among Hispanic girls (Friedenburg, 1999). Neumann (1996) identified scarcity of employment, gang culture, and low academic standards as impacting

the dropout rate among Hispanic students. The dropout rate of our Hispanic population has significantly impacted our public assistance costs (Neumann, 1996).

The economic welfare of the nation is based on the high educational attainment of its people (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Dropouts have insufficient fundamental skills and training to meet the needs of American business (Catterall, 1988) and a high dropout rate threatens the nation's productivity (Hahn, 1987). National concern over the quality of the American labor force and the ability of American businesses to compete successfully with foreign companies both at home and abroad has prompted research on both the causes of dropping out and prevention strategies (Catterall, 1988). Schargel and Smink (2001) predicted that without a quality education, today's students will not be prepared to meet the challenges of the new economy and contribute fully to American society.

Alternatives to Dropping Out

The needs of the underachieving student, the aggressive, disruptive student, the socially ill-equipped student, and the student with disabilities all present challenges to the traditional educational setting. These nontraditional students have been the target population for programs that have characteristically been referred to as alternative schools. Groves (1998) stated that the research has documented and analyzed the ways in which different populations of students continually fall through the cracks of the traditional system of schooling. While the traditional school has implemented various programs to keep students in school through at-risk, dropout prevention, and drug awareness/safe school programs, the dropout numbers continue to rise. Educational alternatives, carefully planned and implemented, increase the probability of success for non-traditional students who are at risk of dropping out (Barton, 1998; Groves, 1998; Hefner-Packer, 1991).

Alternative Education Programs

There is one point on which researchers agreed--there is no succinct definition of "alternative education." Due to the diverse programs and student populations, rather than define alternative education, a number of researchers have elected to identify alternative schools in a variety of ways: by philosophy (Raywid, 1994), by student characteristics (Cox, 1995), by setting or location (Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995), or by describing characteristics of model programs or schools (Barton, 1998; De La Rosa, 1998; Kattner, 1996; Kibort, 1999; Lloyd, 1997; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998; Rose, 1996). It is generally accepted that alternative schools fall into one of the three categories based on Raywid's study (1994): Type I are designed for the gifted or talented, Type II are "Last Chance" schools for the chronically disruptive, and Type III are remedial or rehabilitative in philosophy.

Alternative schools began as "havens for students disaffected with schooling" (Ascher, 1982, p. 66) and recently have become "dumping grounds" for students who have been labeled delinquent (Cox, 1999, p. 334). Typically, any school that has adopted curriculum or instructional strategies that depart from what is considered to be traditional has been identified as an alternative school (Deal & Nolan, 1978; Hefner-Packer, 1991). Young (1990) contended that unlike the traditional public schools, alternative schools do not try to be all things to all people. Deal and Nolan (1978, p. 3) asserted that "instead of claiming to have found the best way to educate all children, many members of the alternative school movement have advanced to more modest claims of having developed better ways to educate some children."

Katsiyannis and Williams (1998) identified concerns over violence, disruption, substance abuse, school failure, and dropout rates in schools as reasons for an increased emphasis on alternative education among state legislators. Legislation now provides, and in some states

mandates, the initiation of alternative education programs for students whose behavior or discipline makes it unsafe for their participation in regular classroom settings (Schargel & Smink, 2001). On the federal level, three significant pieces of legislation have impacted the development of alternative programs: Two of the eight goals of America 2000 targeted a reduction in the dropout rate and improvement in school safety (Hamm, 1999; Miller, 1991); the Reauthorization of IDEA 1997 provided alternative settings for special education students (Rutherford & Quinn, 1999); and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 holds public schools accountable for student academic performance ((NCLB, 2002).

Georgia's Alternative Education Program began as a state grant funded program in 1994 and was known as the CrossRoads School Program (Georgia Department of Education, 2003a). CrossRoads primarily served students who had been removed from the regular program due to chronic disruption and provided these students with the services needed to succeed academically (Chalker, 1994; Wiley, 2000). With the passage of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000, CrossRoads grants were eliminated and QBE funds began providing for alternative programs for students in grades 6-12 (GDOE, 2003b).

Justification for the Study

Just as the number of alternative settings has increased in the last decade, so has the research available on types of programs, the students they serve, their strengths and weaknesses, and implications for the future. Very prevalent in the literature is the call for needs assessment and evaluation of such programs to determine their effectiveness (Amory & Wolf, 1978; Barton, 1998; Carpenter-Abey, 1999; Chalker, 1994; Cox, 1995; Deal & Nolan, 1978; Freeman, 2000; Hamm, 1999; Johnson & Parker, 1978; Karlin & Harnish, 1995; Kershaw & Blank, 1993; Lange, 1998; Macauley, 1999; Raywid, 1984; Wiley, 2000).

As researchers focused on alternative school outcomes, they recognized that some alternative programs were highly successful with the at-risk student they served (Barr, 1981; Barr & Parret, 1997; Macauley, 1999; Raywid, 1983a, 1983b, 1999; Young, 1990). However, due to the lack of documentation related to effectiveness of alternative schools, there is little insight into why some alternative education programs are more successful than others (Cox, 1995; Hall, 2000). Hall (2000) revealed a lack of scientific data regarding the impact of alternative schools on their students. Much of the research available is qualitative and often in the form of anecdotal records (Freeman, 2000) or testimonials (Deal & Nolan, 1978). Even though more rigorous evaluations of alternative programs are now taking place, the research base for these programs is still extremely limited (Barton, 1998; Kellmayer, 1995; Kershaw & Blank, 1993).

While there is no globally accepted assessment tool to measure effectiveness of alternative programs, several indicators that can be used have been identified through the literature (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). For example, successful outcomes are indicated by increased attendance, increased achievement, increased graduation rates, increased parent involvement, and the reduction of discipline referrals (Kellmayer, 1995; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Barton (1998) suggested that if alternative schools have the ability to reduce dropout rates, improve student achievement, and provide a positive experience for students who are dissatisfied or unable to attend traditional programs, we cannot afford not to study them.

Carpenter-Aeby (1999) said that a major complaint from legislators is that students who are assigned to an alternative school rarely graduate. Therefore, a longitudinal study that would trace the educational careers of the students assigned to an alternative program through graduation would be valuable in terms of improving evaluation and public support.

Few studies have included a long-term follow-up component (Cox, 1995, 1999). Cox (1995) maintained that research on the effectiveness of an alternative program is diminished without some knowledge of the student's activities upon leaving the alternative school.

Chalker's (1994) study of Georgia's alternative secondary schools revealed that the majority of alternative programs did not keep written evaluative data showing that predetermined student objectives and needs had been effectively met. This shortage of evaluative data was perceived by Wiley (2000) as impacting decisions relative to future goals and objectives. Chalker (1994) and Karlin and Harnish (1995) concluded that the variances in models and types of alternative school programs further inhibits any comparison of effective alternative programs.

Chalker (1994), Karlin and Harnish (1995), and Wiley (2000) conducted studies of the CrossRoads programs in Georgia. This study, unlike the previous studies of Georgia alternative programs, could identify characteristics of effectiveness for a program where students self-elect to enroll, as opposed to a CrossRoads program, wherein students have been placed as a result of suspension or expulsion. The data will provide insights into the effectiveness of the program overall, and it will provide a comparison of subgroups including gender and race/ethnicity. Second, alternative schools in Georgia could benefit from the longitudinal data absent from current research on Georgia's alternative school programs. Third, a follow-up component of the research will identify the status of students one year after graduating from the Hall County Evening School.

Local school superintendents can use the information pertaining to indicators of effectiveness as well as the post graduation data to assist in the formulation of policy and procedures for operating alternative schools. The information pertaining to characteristics of effective alternative programs and the characteristics of alternative school students can provide a

"basis for developing tools to measure current interventions within alternative schools" (Wiley, 2000, p.126). Kershaw and Blank (1993) stated that research has implications for communities considering establishing alternative school programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to determine the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School by including: longitudinal data from a six year period of time, quantitative data that can be compared across sub-groups, determination of a difference in attendance, grades, and discipline between the traditional high school and the alternative high school, percentage of full time enrolled students that graduate, and post-graduation status.

This research study was designed to utilize longitudinal data to determine the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School, an alternative school where students self-elect to enroll. Demographic data collected allowed a comparison of data across sub-groups including sex and race/ethnicity. In contrast to much of the research on alternative programs which is qualitative in design, this study provided quantitative data to determine effectiveness based on three indicators identified in the literature. The indicators most prominently described in the literature included improved attendance, improved grades, and improved discipline. To determine the effectiveness of an alternative program, it is important to identify positive outcomes based on the goals and mission of the program (Barr, Colston, & Parrett, 1977; Case, 1981; Kellmayer, 1995; Reilly & Reilly, 1983; and Young 1990). Given the Hall County Evening School's mission to help students graduate who are at risk of not graduating, an important indicator of effectiveness would be rate of graduation from the total population. Finally, Cox (1999) maintained that knowledge of the student's activities after leaving the program was important to an evaluation of effectiveness. The follow-up data so often missing

from other research was acquired through a phone and/or mail survey that determined the student's post-graduation status: employment and/or enrollment in a post-secondary/training program through an educational institution or job skills provided by an employer.

Research Questions/Null Hypotheses

The questions for this study regarding the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School for students who have elected to enroll in this non-traditional program were as follows:

1. What percentage of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School during the 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 school years graduated?

2. Does the grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their grade point average for their traditional high school experience? Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School and mean grade point average of students in their traditional high school (Base School) environment for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

3. Does the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their average daily attendance rate for their traditional high school experience? Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School and the average daily attendance rate of their traditional high school (Base School) environment for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

4. Does the number of discipline infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from the number of discipline infractions for their traditional high school enrollment? Ho4: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean number of

disciplinary infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School and mean number of disciplinary infractions of students in their traditional high school (Base School)environments for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

5. What percentage of students that graduated from the Hall County Evening School were employed one year post graduation?

6. What percentage of students that graduated from the Hall County Evening School entered a post-secondary education/training program within one year following graduation?

Definition of Terms

CrossRoads Programs—a type of alternative education program that provided for the educational and behavioral needs of students who have been adjudicated, have been removed from the regular school program due to disruptive or violent behavior, or are returning from placement in a Department of Juvenile Justice facility.

Hall County Evening School (Evening School)—a type of alternative education program, where the student self-elects to enroll and is designed to meet the educational and behavioral needs of students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of their base school.

Base School—the traditional high school setting students attended before enrolling the Hall County Evening School.

Self-elect to enroll—students who have choice in the school they attend. These students enroll in an alternative program as a choice of other options and have not been placed there as a punitive consequence.

Target Population—alternative programs are often designed for a specified population of student, with a philosophy and clear mission and purpose for the needs and goals of that

particular population of students. The target population for the Hall County Evening School is any student who has dropped out or was at risk of dropping out of school.

At risk student—any student who may dropout, fadeout, or tuneout from his/her educational environment or opportunities.

Credit Recovery—students who are enrolled to repeat courses which they have failed.

Transient population—students who may move into a school system from another country, state, or system, or from school to school within a system multiple time during a school year.

Program Effectiveness for Alternative Programs (as defined by Georgia Department of Education)—Academic progress of students toward performing at grade level; decreased participation in at-risk behaviors that result in a decreased likelihood of school success, such as poor school attendance and drug/alcohol abuse; decreased incidents and/or severity of disruptive behavior while attending the alternative education program; and the individualization of exit requirements including transition to home (base) school, graduation, or passing of the Georgia Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Wrap-around Services—Available services including but not limited to Health Department, Mental Health, Office of Juvenile Justice, Labor Department, and Department of Family and Children Services, for the purpose of access as well as avoiding duplication of services.

Constraints and Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School, a non-punitive alternative high school, whose enrollment is voluntary and therefore would not generalize to alternative programs where enrollment is mandated by the school system.

2. Availability of data may often be inconsistent due to the changing of administrative procedures and enrollment restrictions and schedules.

3. Due to the transient nature of the population and the dropout risk of this population, sample sizes for particular questions will vary because of missing or incomplete data.

4. Part-time students who enrolled at the Hall County Evening School for the purpose of credit recovery were not included in the total enrollment. Full time students included in the study were (1) students who enrolled at the Evening School and were not enrolled jointly with any other Hall County School and (2) were on roll for a minimum of two consecutive semesters, taking at least two courses per semester.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter I included an introduction with a description of traditional educational programs, costs of dropping out, alternatives to dropping out and alternative education programs, justification for the study, purpose of the study, the research questions, definition of terms utilized and the constraints of the study. Chapter II includes a review of the literature related to dropout prevention and alternative programs as one alternative to dropping out; a history of alternative education; factors that contributed to the growth of alternative programs; alternative programs defined by philosophy, setting and models; alternative programs in Georgia; characteristics of successful alternative programs; and criticism of programs. Chapter III presents a restatement of the purpose, a description of the Hall County Evening School, research questions, the research approach, the identification of students for data collection, and the procedures for data collection and statistical analysis. Chapter IV includes the results of data collection and summary. Chapter V includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

America's dream for education encompasses the availability of a public education to all. Our founding fathers, e.g., Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, stressed the importance of a public education (Walker, Kozma, & Green, 1989). Webster concluded that "Society requires that the education of youth should be watched with the most scrupulous attention . . . In our American republics, where government is in the hands of the people, knowledge should be universally diffused by means of public school" (Walker, et al., 1989, pp. 52-53).

Despite the fact that public schooling effectively paved the way to a more abundant life for some Americans, the original version of who should be served by public schooling was very narrow according to Clabaugh and Rozycki (1990, p. 399): "Those with wealth went their own way, immigrants often dropped out in bewilderment or disgust, women were granted very limited opportunities, and minorities and the handicapped were either excluded altogether or segregated." Society has changed much since traditional schools were expected to reach everyone and students who could not adjust to the expectations of a public school had the option of leaving school and entering the job market (Barton, 1998).

Schargel and Smink (2001) held that statistics reveal not all students fit into what we consider to be traditional education, particularly at the high school level. Hefner-Packer (1991) contended that American public education has attempted to teach every child in the same way at the same time often at the expense of students who need different learning experiences. Nationally parents are opting for an education other than the traditional school (Knutson, 1996).

Barton (1998) stated that alternatives to traditional school settings are a necessity because choice is part of our society. Alternatives help to meet the needs of all students with the goal of providing a place for everyone (Barton, 1998). The development of alternatives can provide choices for students, parents and teachers in every community (Barton, 1998; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

History of Alternative Education

Alternative education is not a new concept and can be dated back to colonial days when entrepreneurial schools like Benjamin Franklin's academy for talented boys offered a career preparation in economics and business (Young, 1990). Given the broadness of the definition of alternative programs, its history includes a range of options for parents and students including public and private settings, traditional schools as well as experiential schools, programs for a myriad of target populations including the gifted or the undisciplined, and schools that range from permissive to authoritarian.

Research on alternative education has included schools from the progressive era when Dewey and his wife directed a laboratory school at the turn of the nineteenth century, where education was built around the experiences of the child (Barton, 1998; Clabaugh & Rozycki, 1990; Hamm, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995; Korn, 1991; Macauley, 1999; Serow, Castelli, & Castelli, 2000). Progressive education focused on the bond between classroom and community, problem solving, and instilling discipline for contribution to a society (Barton, 1998; Serow, et al., 2000; Young, 1990). The works and ideas of Dewey associated with the Progressive Movement are generally considered the framework of what has become known as alternative education but it was not until the late 1960s that the term alternative school became commonplace in American public education (Neumann, 1994).

The progressive era lasted well into the 1950's but died with the Cold War when public education and curriculum became prescribed and academic in focus (Caudle, 1999; Young, 1990) and were dominated by the "back to basics" (Clabaugh & Rozycki, 1990; Serow, et al.; 2000; Young, 1990). Critics of education during this time demanded that the schools produce more and better scientists and engineers (Clabaugh, & Rozycki, 1990) and the push became more urgent when the Soviet Union was able to launch the world's first man-made satellite (Caudle, 1999; Clabaugh & Rozycki, 1990; Young, 1990). According to Smink (1997) alternative schools of this era had an emphasis on dropout prevention and emerged as a primary intervention to encourage students to earn their diploma.

Most of the early humanistic schools of the 1960's were private endeavors (Raywid, 1981), but were considered models for public programs (Barton, 1998). Humanistic focused schools built curriculum centered on the values and interests of students often in response to the political upheavals of the 1960's (Case, 1981; Raywid, 1981). Americans in the 1960's began to reassess political, social, and economic institutions and maintained that there were two public views of education--one for reforming the public education system, the other for rejecting the public education in favor of more humanistic schools (Graubard, 1972; Raywid, 1981). Urban riots, student activism, the human rights movements, flower power, the counter culture, and the frustrating war in Vietnam stirred antagonism towards authority and stimulated growth toward a non-traditional organization of schools in the 1970's (Clabaugh & Rozycki, 1990, Korn, 1991; Young, 1990). As a consequence, schools were being criticized for their inhumanity, lock step scheduling, cell-like classrooms, and mindless memorization (Clabaugh & Rozycki, 1990, p. 396). These schools--known as freedom schools (Arnove & Strout, 1978; Barr & Parrett, 1997; Barton, 1998; Caudle, 1999; Freeman, 2000; Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998;

Korn, 1991; Raywid, 1983a) often reflected the counter-culture of the times and emphasized student freedom to choose what and how they learned (Barr & Parrett, 1997; Case, 1981). Graubard (1972) described the free school movement as an emphasis on the inherent nature of the child and the societal change through the development of happy free children (p. 7), which is in direct opposition to the typical authoritarian pressure for conformity (p. 15). Abbot (1994) proposed that alternative schools tried to harness the rebellious spirit of the times.

The curriculum of the freedom schools included instruction in art, music, dance, or even jewelry-making (Barr & Parrett, 1997, Caudle, 1999). Teachers became guides instead of authorities (Caudle, 1999). Free schools attempted to enhance the opportunities of the less advantaged to enter higher education (Caudle, 1999). Arnove and Strout (1978, p. 76) characterized this movement as reflecting a variety of developments--growing public concern over dropout numbers, students who were not adequately served by conventional schools, realization that students learn in different ways, and the desire to utilize community-based resources and facilities. The free school movement concerned the educational establishment because it was neither endorsed by programs of the federal government nor endorsed by a university or foundation (Caudle, 1999). The free schools peaked in the 1970's, but never gained widespread acceptance (Young, 1990).

Public schools of the 1970's began offering parents and students the opportunity to select their educational experiences from a variety of alternatives (Korn, 1991) many of which were reflective of the humanistic era of education, when students, especially the poor and less successful, became alienated from school society (Rich, 1985; Young, 1990). These alternative programs challenged schools to become more meaningful to the disadvantaged by developing an affective curriculum and centering the school in social consciousness (Arnove & Strout, 1978;

Rich, 1985; Sagor, 1999; Young, 1990). This movement held that the teacher should endeavor to gain an empathetic understanding of the students' feelings and values and an understanding of how students perceived their schooling (Arnove, & Strout, 1980; Rich, 1985). Raywid (1981) stated that the values and goals of the alternative schools of the 1960's were typically individualistic and private; but by the mid 1970's, alternative programs had moved toward group awareness and responsibility for building a sense of community.

Young (1990) described the open education movement that was popular in the 1970's as a setting where students worked at their own pace and frequently on their own. Progress was evaluated in terms of individual improvement rather than by comparison to a standard or the performance of others (Young, 1990).

In the late 1960's and 1970's, alternative schools multiplied across the country (Clark, 2000; Raywid, 1981; Sagor, 1999) and were a trend of secondary education (Neumann, 1994). Public school boards and school administrators expressed sympathy for those students who couldn't or wouldn't succeed in mainstream education and were willing to allocate funds to help at risk youth who didn't fit into the mainstream (Clark, 2000). Sagor (1999, p. 73) concluded that what nearly all of these publicly funded programs had in common was a "de facto form of segregation" and consequently had become the publicly funded preserve for public education's outcasts. As a higher percentage of minority students were suspended or excluded from schools, these alternatives had become "enclaves" for African American, Latino, Native American, and poor white students (Arnove & Strout, 1980, p. 463).

Alternative schools during this period embodied concepts, theories, and ideas which emphasized the uniqueness of the individual and openness and choice which influenced the organization and operation of the school (Neumann, 1994). Consequently, alternative programs

often attempted to blend academic subjects with practical areas of knowledge and personal interests by creating individualized learning plans for each student (Neumann, 1994).

Magnet schools grew out of a response to school desegregation during the 1970's (Barton, 1998). Young (1990) described the magnet schools as concentrating resources in one location and usually featuring a theme or area of emphasis, such as academic/fundamental, fine arts, vocation/career, science/math, multicultural/bilingual, or humanities/social science. Magnet schools continue to be a popular choice for parents (Barton, 1998; Korn, 1991).

The 1980's saw a shift in the populations of students served in alternative programs, from white, middle class, high achieving students to disruptive, troubled students who were removed from the mainstream and needed an opportunity to complete their educational careers (Arnove & Strout, 1978; Barton, 1998; Carpenter-Aeby, 1999; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Macauley, 1999). The prevailing characteristic of the alternative programs of the 1980's was a conservative educational climate where structure and support, close interpersonal relationships, flexibility, a relevant curriculum, and pursuit of a diploma was evident (Barton, 1998), which also attracted average or above-average students who could function in the traditional programs but received greater benefit in a nontraditional program (Hefner-Packer, 1991).

An initiative aimed at decreasing juvenile delinquency through alternative education began in the 1980's (Cox, 1995). The philosophy of this initiative was that disruptive and failing students could be placed in alternative schools where students would be given more specialized and individual instruction, decreasing the likelihood that they would participate in delinquent and criminal behaviors (Cox, 1995a). The alternative school concept had emerged as the reform strategy with the greatest potential to improve public education for at-risk students in traditional, public high schools (Barton, 1998).

Bauman (1998, p. 259) maintained that alternative education by the late 1990's did not carry "nearly the romance of the innovation it once did." Most students now attended alternative schools not because of the school's innovative, creative curricular approaches but because they were no longer succeeding in the traditional school systems (Bauman, 1998). The truly non-traditional schools of this period were established with the intent of preventing students from dropping out of school (Barton, 1998). Historically, alternative schools connoted choice, but became last chances before dropping out (Raywid, 1994). The students' failures in their home schools were attributed to individual character flaws (e.g., at-risk students' maladaptive behavior) and fostered sympathy for the home school's decision to remove these disruptive students (Bauman, 1998).

Moving into the 1990's a dramatic increase in school discipline problems that occurred in public schools resulted in large numbers of alternative programs being created to educate chronically disruptive students (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Kellmayer, 1995) and those identified as juvenile delinquents (Cox, 1995). Shanker (1995) advocated separate schools for students who were chronically disruptive in order to preserve the education of the majority of the students who do succeed in education. These schools are characterized by Raywid (1994) as "last chance" schools or by Kellmayer (1995) as "soft jails" and were typically punitive in nature. Too frequently the philosophy of these schools advocated punishment, isolation, and segregation (Kellmayer, 1995; Raywid, 1994) and students were assigned to the alternative setting rather than being enrolled by choice (Kibort, 1999). As a result, many of today's alternative programs bear little resemblance to earlier humanistic models (Kellmayer, 1995).

Arnstine and Futernick (1999, p. 124) said that "calling such schools 'alternative' is ironic because students who attend them are the very ones who are running out of alternatives:

they are failing academically, are from low-income families, and in some cases are already parents themselves." Arnove and Strout (1978) described the character of alternative schools as undergoing a "remarkable metamorphosis" (p.92): changing alternatives for public schooling to alternatives within public schooling. Alternative programs have been as varied in educational goals and objectives as were the communities in which they existed (Barton, 1998).

Factors Contributing to the Growth of Alternative Programs

Dropout Prevention

Our dropout rate at the beginning of the 20th century was estimated at about 90 percent for high school students (Schargel & Smink, 2001; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986); however, until about 1945, school dropouts could be absorbed by our economy and our military (Schargel & Smink, 2001). Many students dropped out of school because, with the exception of the most skilled industrial work, jobs required little or no knowledge of reading, writing, and calculation (Walker, et. al, 1989). After World War II, there was a shift in emphasis on education, as industry became more technical and jobs required more complex skills resulting in graduation becoming an expectation or the norm (Matthews, 1997). As the American economy moved from a "brawn-based to a brain-based economy," the absence of a high school diploma became a major deterrent to employability (Schargel & Smink, 2001, p. 4). Given the costs to society in lost revenue, and increased welfare, health care, and unemployment, alternatives to dropping out had to be explored.

Retention

There is substantial research evidence that for the average student, retention in grade level does not improve achievement (Hahn, 1987; Roderick,1994). Poor academic performance resulting in retention in one grade level is the strongest school-related predictor of dropping out

(Alexander, et al., 2001; Kellmayer, 1995; Roderick, 1994; Schargel & Smink, 2001). One grade retention increases the risk of dropping out by 40% to 50%, and more than one by 90% (Schargel & Smink, 2001). Despite this research, retention is the number one strategy utilized by the great majority of schools in educating at-risk students (Kellmayer, 1995, p. 106).

Smith and Shephard (1989) found that despite the popular belief that repeating a grade is an effective remedy for marginal students, the body of research on grade retention is almost uniformly negative. Holmes and Matthews (1984) stated that retention practices continued even though research showed negative effects consistently outweighed positive outcomes. Rather than leading to success in schools, numerous studies have found that retaining students actually contributes to greater academic failure, higher levels of dropping out, and greater behavioral difficulties (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

The alternative schools are attractive to students who have been retained, as a large proportion of the students enrolled in these programs share this characteristic. Given the poor academic and motivation histories of these students, alternative schools provide a remedial curriculum and strategies to keep students in school although not usually available until middle or high school.

Delinquent Behavior

National polls reflected violent and disruptive behavior as the number one concern of parents and teachers in regard to our schools (Cotton, 1990; Kellmayer, 1995). Kellmayer (1995) documented that each month, 280,000 students and 5,200 secondary school teachers are physically attacked in America's secondary schools. Violence has placed students, teachers, administrators, and staff in fear, which has negatively impacted the educational process (Adams, 2000).

A study conducted by the California Department of Education comparing the major discipline problems in the 1940's with those of the 1990's illustrated just how much times have changed (Kellmayer, 1995). The most common discipline problems of the 1940s were talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the hallways, getting out of line, wearing improper clothing and not putting paper in wastebaskets; the list of the 1990's included assault, arson, rape, drug and alcohol abuse, weapons, and bombing (Kellmayer, 1995). In response to the increased number of chronic offenders of the discipline policies as well as the severity of the offenses, school suspensions and expulsions increased (Adams, 2000; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

There appeared to be a causal relationship between the reasons students drop out of school and the reasons they committed crimes including school performance, school attendance and attitudes toward school (Cox, 1995; Cox et al., 1995). Aggressive behavior at age 8 is one of the strongest predictors we have for aggressive behavior at age 19 (Ashcroft, 1999). Because aggressive behavior is a hallmark of delinquency, its early appearance should trigger intervention responses from school staffs (Ashcroft, 1999). Practitioners and policy makers are calling for policies and program interventions that will effectively reintegrate juvenile offenders into the mainstream of society (Caudle, 1999). One answer is the alternative school (Caudle, 1999).

Typical inmates of correctional institutions share the following characteristics: maladaptive, passive learning styles; limited academic success; history of drug and alcohol abuse; experience physical or sexual abuse; and never held a full or part time job (Winters, 1997). The vast majority of school-aged children who are arrested are either truant, expelled, or under suspension at the time of their arrest (Ashcroft, 1999). Not all dropouts commit crimes, but when they lack the education to find gainful employment, crime is often the course of action

chosen (Winters, 1997). The lack of intervention at an early age, increases the risk of delinquent behavior later in school (Ashcroft, 1999).

The United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention first promoted alternative education programs for delinquency prevention in the 1980's (Cox, 1995, 1999; Cox et al., 1995). According to Cox (1999), at-risk students feel comfortable in the alternative environment and are more motivated to attend this type of school. Students attending alternative schools were believed to have had higher self-esteem, more positive attitudes toward school, improved school attendance, higher academic performance, and decreased delinquent behaviors than when they attended traditional schools (Cox, 1995).

Breakdown of the Family

The breakdown of the traditional family has also contributed to the dramatic increase in the number of alternative programs (Kellmayer, 1995). The home and the church have traditionally been the two stable institutions providing much of the education for centuries, but by 1970 both were found to be seriously weakened (Goodlad, 1984). The home can no longer be counted on to transmit the three C's: care, concern, and connection (Martin, 1995). The assumption was that schools need only concern themselves with the 3 R's, but it became apparent that schools would have to supplement the curriculum (Goodlad, 1984), becoming a moral equivalent of home (Martin, 1995).

Rumberger (1983) as well as Seaman and Yoo (2001) concluded that family background including parent's educational attainment, family structure (one or two parent homes), and family income status was a significant predictor of dropout behavior. Cardenas and First (1985, p. 5) contended the income level of a child's family was still the major determinant of the quality and quantity of the education a child receives. Dropouts were three times more likely than high

school graduates to come from families with a lower socieo-economic background (Beck & Muia, 1980; Hahn, 1987; Rydeen, 2003). Family-related factors for leaving school included living in a single-parent home; living in a low-income home; living in a home with another school dropout, especially a parent; and having little solidarity with one's family (Alexander, et al., 2001; Catterall, 1986; Catterall & Stern, 1986; Erkstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Seaman & Yoo, 2001).

Parent apathy toward education impacted decisions to drop out, as a result of indifference, hostility and resentment often felt by parents (Beck & Muia, 1980). Studies revealed that dysfunctional families tended to reproduce their patterns of hopelessness, alienation, and anti-social behavior (Little, 1999). In research conducted in a high school in California, it was found that parents of dropouts were more likely to have permissive parenting styles, to use negative emotions in regard to their children's academic abilities, and tended to be less involved in their children's school activities (Clark, 2000; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, & Phillip, 1990; Seaman & Yoo, 2001).

Higher Expectations

With a heightened commitment to accountability in education at the federal, state, and local level, there is a new focus on student achievement and graduation exit exams. Educational reformers contended rigorous academic standards make achievement expectations clear, detailing what students should know and be able to do in various subjects at each grade level or at specified benchmarks in the curriculum (National Governors Association, 2003). Opponents of higher standards viewed them as detrimental to learning, as they emphasized core academics, were tied to standardized testing, and supported the notion that harder is better (Kerry, 2003). One component of many accountability systems was the graduation exit exam. The National

Governor's Association identified 23 states that required graduation exams in order to receive a diploma, with only three of those states offering a waiver process (National Governor's Association, 2002). For students who were already struggling with traditional education, an increase in standards to be measured by standardized tests or graduation exams increased student frustration and gave students an extra push out of school (Catterall, 1986, 1987b; Kerry, 2003; Leone & Drakeford, 1999). Critics of the exam argued that it would increase an already high dropout rate, especially among minorities (Arnstine & Futernick, 1999; Catterall, 1987a, 1988; Hamilton, 1986).

As a result of increasing governmental pressure to perform, educators were interested in providing options for their students (Groth, 1998) and alternative schools was one viable option for promoting excellence and high expectations within a nontraditional setting (Leone & Drakeford, 1999). The dilemma for policymakers was how to introduce high academic standards in alternative programs without sacrificing the elements that make alternative programs successful or compromising the integrity of the high standards (Curran & MacLellan, 2001).

Disabilities

Students with disabilities graduate from high schools at a rate that is half that of their general education peers (Bakken & Kortering, 1999) and are less prepared for the world of work (Edgar, 1988; Scanlon & Mellard, 2002). Despite access to educational programs that were tailored to students' unique needs, almost 50% of students identified with disabilities dropped out of school (Bakken & Kortering, 1999; Caudle, 1999; Wagner, 1991).

Scanlon and Mellard (2002) described factors that acted increased the likelihood that students with disabilities would not complete their education--repeating grades, low academic achievement, insufficient school personnel care, employment prior to school completion, and

pregnancy. Returning to education once they have dropped out was not a common option for students with learning disabilities or behavior disorders (Scanlon & Mellard, 2002). Lange (1998) was not surprised by the large number of students who enrolled in "second chance" programs, given the large number of students with disabilities who drop out. Alternative programs have the opportunity to create curriculum and strategies for students with disabilities to engage in activities valued by society in additional to employment transition, offering them a chance at a higher quality of life (Edgar, 1988, Scanlon & Mellard, 2002).

Multicultural Concerns

More and more teachers are encountering the challenge of teaching classes containing students with a wide mix of languages and cultural backgrounds (Schargel & Smink, 2001). These students bring new energy and talents to our nation, but they also bring with them new challenges for instruction (Hodgkinson, 1993) and contribute to problems in the educational culture of schools (Groth, 1998). This issue of diversity is especially relevant to the study of dropout prevention because of the disproportionate numbers of minority youth being served by alternative programs (Groth, 1998).

Today, many immigrant students come from nations without compulsory education (Schargel & Smink, 2001). Some have never attended school; some are illiterate in their own language as well as English; many have severe reading limitations (Schargel & Smink, 2001). In addition, today's immigration patterns are leading to a more culturally and ethnically diverse population (Schargel & Smink, 2001).

Not only are people moving into the United States, but also they are moving within the country (Schargel & Smink, 2001). One in six Americans move each year, with the average American moving eleven times in his lifetime (Schargel & Smink, 2001). A student who moved

from a school with a high educational standard was disadvantaged in one way, but a student who moved to a more challenging school fell far behind, became discouraged, and even dropped out (Schargel & Smink, 2001). A high degree of moving around and changing schools as a result of culture and economic conditions were contributing factors to dropping out among Hispanics (Friedenberg, 1999).

Legislation

The public is concerned about school safety and favors a zero tolerance position regarding disruptive behavior, violence, drugs, and alcohol, with offenders being transferred to "separate facilities" (Elam & Rose, 1995, p. 41). Adams (2000) stated that one problem with zero tolerance was that the students expelled from school were the students who needed education the most. Adams (2000) said this disciplinary method absolved schools of their responsibility to provide nurturing, caring, and mentoring relations that prepared students for participation in society.

Three significant pieces of federal legislation have impacted the development of alternative programs. Goal Two of the eight goals of America 2000 targeted a reduction of the dropout rate and Goal Six was directed toward improvement in school safety (Hamm, 1999; McDonald, 1998; Miller, 1991). Legislators recognized that students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in schools where guns and other weapons are present, drugs are exchanged or used, students are threatened or victimized, or where disorder exists (Modzeleski, 1996). Violence and criminal activities on school grounds have prompted state legislators to take action to preserve and maintain safe learning environments (Kibort, 1999). Alternative schools provide for the removal of unsafe students and allow the offending student an opportunity to continue his/her education in a setting of highly structured behavior (Kibort, 1999).

Within the 1997 amendments to IDEA, the mission of alternative programs expanded to provide alternative settings for not more than 45 days for students with disabilities who have been suspended (Rutherford & Quinn, 1999). The student's IEP determined the appropriateness of the alternative setting in allowing the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum and to benefit from program modifications, services, and supports indicated in his/her IEP (Rutherford & Quinn, 1999).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) held public schools accountable for student academic performance (NCLB, 2002.). Under No Child Left Behind, parents have been given options for their children in schools which do not meet high academic standards.

The alternative school movement for disruptive or rebellious students in Georgia gained legislative support when Georgia's Governor Roy Barnes made safe schools a campaign issue and promised to provide relief for school districts (Alternative Schools, 1999). The schools under this initiative were called CrossRoads and their popularity increased as districts endeavored to find funding for educating students with diverse needs who were not benefiting from the traditional schools, particularly the chronically disruptive (Wiley, 2000). The CrossRoads programs varied in design, mission and focus across school systems in Georgia (Wiley, 2000).

In Georgia, the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000, as amended in 2003, combined in-school suspension and alternative schools as alternative program options (GDOE, 2003b). Further, the act described the intent of the alternative education program as meeting the educational needs of a student suspended from his/her regular classroom, and also of a student who was eligible to remain in his or her regular classroom but is more likely to succeed in a nontraditional setting (GDOE. 2003b).

Alternative Education Defined

There is one point on which researchers agree: There is no succinct definition of alternative education. The literature does not provide a formally accepted definition of alternative education (Chalker, 1994). Chalker (1994) described alternative education as being whatever the school system wants it to be. The term itself was most often used to describe schools that were alternatives to existing public schools (Bauman, 1998).

The term alternative education was originally a term covering a range of options for schooling (Kellmayer, 1995; Knutson, 1996; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998) encompassing magnet schools with specialized curriculum, programs designed to meet special needs populations, "last chance" programs for disruptive students, and therapeutic programs which focus on behavior modification (Hamm, 1999; Raywid, 1994). Presently its meaning has evolved into an understanding of programming for at-risk youth, those who are not likely to finish high school (Knutson, 1996).

Carpenter-Aeby (1999) concluded that comparing alternative programs was like comparing apples to oranges due to the lack of consistent program definitions and common outcomes (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). Some alternative programs offered students more choice, while others limited choices (Kershaw & Blank, 1993). Some could be described as permissive and others as strict; some concentrated on basic scholastic skills, while others pursued special talents and interests (Gold & Mann, 1982; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). The settings ranged from short-term, in-school suspension rooms housed within a public school to separate residential facilities designed for intensive, long-term care and treatment (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Some alternatives were developed for target populations (Cox, 1995). Some alternative programs were designed to deliver educational services, while others viewed themselves as

social service agencies, offering extensive social and emotional support through mental health interventions (Kellmayer, 1995; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

The premise of alternative programs is that students respond differently to a variety of learning environments, teaching strategies, and expectations (Deal & Nolan, 1978; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Smith, 1974). Alternative programs or schools have been designed to provide learning experiences which meet students' needs in a more positive environment, using strategies that may be more structured or less structured than traditional education programs and settings (Cox, 1995; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995). The educational potential of alternative programs is that these options provide a vehicle for making schools more responsive to families who are dissatisfied with traditional schools, without imposing on the rights of families who are satisfied with traditional schools (Barton, 1998). Kershaw and Blank (1993) advocated for alternative schools and traditional schools to "work in concert, rather than in isolation, opposition or competition with each other (p. 14)."

Smith (1974) and Raywid (1983a) defined an alternative school as any school that provides alternative learning experiences to those provided by conventional schools within its community and that is available by choice to every family within its community at no extra cost. In general, alternative schools can be described as specialized educational programs taking place outside the mainstream school system (Cox, 1995, Young, 1990) and having the support of the community (Raywid, 1983a). While varied models of alternative schools are described in the literature, including a school-within-a school or even in-school suspension classes, Raywid (1983a), Cox (1995), and Kellmayer (1995) supported the importance of alternative education programs being autonomous, having a separate administrative unit with its own personnel, and not being a special class or series of classes in the regular school for optimum effectiveness.

Deal and Nolan (1978) identified any educational program that departed significantly from traditional patterns of school organization as alternative education. The historical roots of the alternative movement are diverse yet have the following (Deal & Nolan, 1978, p. 3):

a. the individual student's needs and experiences as a beginning point

b. the teacher as an advisor

c. the school as a community where education is seen as a social activity

d. active rather than passive learning

e. a variety of learning resources, especially using those of the local community

f. skills as a means, not an end

g. student participation in at least some of the major decisions of the school

h. individuality of both students and teachers.

Raywid (1994) stated that advocates for and against alternative schools disagreed on the definition of and the purpose for alternative schooling. She argued that despite conflicting views and ambiguous research data, alternative schools were characterized by two consistencies--(a) they were designed to respond to a group that had not been optimally served by traditional schools; and (b) they had represented varying degrees of departure from traditional schools.

Most school systems only have one alternative school, even though the at-risk student presents a wide variety of issues "a one size fits all" approach (Rayle, 1998, p. 245). Duke and Griesdorn (1999) and Rayle (1998) contended that one alternative school is unlikely to provide an effective learning environment for all students at risk. They contended, instead, that school systems should develop a continuum of alternatives, each targeting a distinct group of students and involving a design suited to their needs. Programs should be differentiated on the basis of students' age, the seriousness of violations of the student code of conduct, the likelihood that

students can earn a regular diploma, and whether students are assigned to or choose to attend the alternative school (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999).

Philosophies of Programs

Successful alternative schools are grounded on well-defined philosophies and clear goals (Case, 1981; Korn, 1991), implementing their philosophies daily (Korn, 1991). Young (1990) indicated the history of alternative schools was replete with contrasting philosophical and ideological rationales. Schools without a satisfactory relationship between program and philosophy were weakened by internal dissension, external stresses, and eventual erosion of support (Case, 1981).

Historically the first alternative schools aimed to educate, while the purpose of many new alternative settings is correctional—whether disciplinary or therapeutic (Abbott, 1994; Gregg, 1999). It is generally accepted by researchers that alternative schools fall into one of the following three categories based on Raywid's study (1994): Type I are designed for the gifted or talented, Type II are "Last Chance" schools for the chronically disruptive, and Type III are remedial or rehabilitative in philosophy.

Having a clear concept of philosophy and goals, provides the standard by which to evaluate all decisions, and prevent reverting to the practices of the traditional school or foundering (Case, 1981). Alternative schools with clear philosophies and goals have been in better positions to defend themselves from external forces which have contributed to their survival (Case, 1981).

Program Themes

Alternative schools based on programmatic themes centered their learning on specific curriculum or content areas and used a variety of instructional strategies (Macauley, 1999).

Magnet schools are an example of an alterative school that may have a specific programmatic focus intended to attract students (Macauley, 1999). Gifted students could choose an alternative school settings because they are under-challenged at a traditionally structured high school (Barton, 1998). At-risk students could choose an alternative school because they either were not succeeding in a traditional school or could not go to a traditional school because of attendance or discipline problems (Barton, 1998).

Specific Student Population

Successful programs targeted a designated population by structuring its organization and curriculum based on specific needs (Clark, 2000). Unlike large, traditional schools, which must be all things to all people, alternative schools created specialized programs and utilized specialized teaching and counseling methodologies that had been targeted to clearly differentiated populations (Kellmayer, 1995; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

Researchers have concluded that alternative high schools designed for particular populations tended to be more successful than those which attempted to serve everyone (Clark, 2000; Cox, 1995; Raywid & Mintz, 1998). Structuring programs around a special population of students created a more comfortable environment because students interacted with other students who had similar characteristics or experiences (Macauley, 1999). Black (1997) described the bottom line, "Alternative education programs that target delinquents specifically are more likely to produce larger effects than programs with open admissions" (p. 42).

Fizzel and Raywid (1997) proposed that alternative schools differed according to the types of roles they played and the population that would benefit from their existence. The questions of whether alternative school programs should be designed and limited to gifted, special needs, or at-risk students continues to be an issue in school systems with limited

resources (Wiley, 2000). Magnet and charter schools have gained public support and attention for providing specialized instruction for special populations.

Many school districts have developed alternative education programs for students whose behavior disrupted the learning of others and interfered with the general order of the school environment (Clark, 2000; Kibort, 1999). The current education dilemma of providing safe schools, while fostering appropriate learning environments for all students, has prompted communities to create alternative forms of education for students whose behaviors interfere with learning (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). Similar to many delinquency prevention programs, alternative education programs were looked upon with high expectations (Cox, 1995).

Punitive Programs

Schools are getting serious about weeding out violence-prone students (Walters, 1995). Students assigned to punitive type schools are those with weapons, drugs, and alcohol, who have committed serious violent acts such as fighting, assault on teachers/administrators, rape, insubordination, and interference with school personnel (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). The result is severe problem students being dumped into alternative schools that did not have the available resources to provide necessary services for them (Cox, 1995). Arnove and Strout (1980) described these programs as too little too late.

There is evidence to suggest that disruptive students interfere with the educational process of other students (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999, CrossRoads Grant, 1994). Mandatory alternative programs represent temporary educational settings where disruptive students can avoid interruption to their educations while being prevented from further disrupting the education of others (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). At the same time, they are a setting where students can access social services, explore educational opportunities, and develop support for transition

to the most appropriate educational setting (traditional school, evening school, psycho-educational schools) (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). Early attempts to segregate disruptive students were in-school suspension programs (Adams, 2000).

Zero tolerance policies, safe schools legislation, and the commitment to provide orderly learning environments have prompted states and districts to adapt an alternative model for disciplinary purposes (Gregg, 1999; Kibort, 1999). Without alternative schools, the time-honored remedy for so-called at risk students has been suspension or expulsion (Fuller & Sabatino, 1996). Adams (2000) described suspension and expulsions as attractive measures for traditional schools because they are administratively efficient ways to handle large numbers of disruptive students. Further, suspensions provided a sense of control for administrators over students who were perceived as uncontrollable (Adams, 2000). Students get into trouble when they are expelled from school, and alternative settings give them some place to go other than the streets (Glass, 1995).

Arnove and Strout (1980) determined that programs for disruptive youth presently comprise about one-third of the alternative programs in the United States. One-hundred fifty-eight of the 173 programs in Georgia were CrossRoads programs that were opened as punitive settings for disruptive youth in Georgia (GDOE, 2003a). The research on Georgia alternative programs indicated the prevalence of programs with a focus on serving disruptive students (Wiley, 2000). Local school systems funded a few alternative school programs, while others such as CrossRoads Programs were funded by state government grants administered through the Georgia Department of Education. More than half of the students studied in the CrossRoads Programs were regarded as chronically disruptive and remained in the alternative schools from 10 to 324 days (Wiley, 2000).

Disciplinary schools that are second chances for students who are assigned or sentenced in lieu of long-term suspension or expulsion are really often the last chance schools (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). A meta-analysis of alternative programs provides evidence that students attending alternative schools have higher self-esteem, more positive attitudes toward school, improved school attendance, higher academic performance, and decreased delinquent behaviors than when they attended traditional school (Cox, Davidson & Bynum, 1995).

To maintain a positive and healthy culture, it is important to insure that the program does not become a dumping ground for students who are just not wanted in the traditional high school (Clark, 2000). Punitive attitudes carry the risk of creating a two-tiered system of education, "good schools and good teachers for good kids, and bad schools and bad teachers for bad kids" (Gregg, 1999, p. 109).

With the increased costs of incarceration and the prediction of an increase of juvenile offenders comes the reality that more juvenile offenders will be in our schools, and more than likely placed in an alternative school environment (Caudle, 1999). The cost difference between incarceration and public education is reason enough to examine the implementation of alternative programs as a means to lower recidivism (Caudle, 1999). Although per pupil expenditures in these programs are nearly double the average cost in regular schools, they are not as expensive as juvenile incarceration (Walters, 1995). Education remains the key to rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. (Caudle, 1999).

The United States Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention advocated for alternative programs with the following characteristics (Cox, 1995): 1) individualized instruction with clearly stated goals, flexible pacing; 2) positive reinforcement; 3) classroom structure; 4) small student population; 5) low pupil-teacher ration; 6) positive relationships

among students and between teachers in a caring atmosphere; and 7) administration committed to ensuring academic success, establishing a climate of respect, maintaining fair and consistent discipline. Hamm (1999) recommended that before a school district moves to create a punitive alternative program, it should consider the research that indicates the climate of a successful alternative school is supportive and caring, not punitive.

Settings

Morley (1991) called alternative education a perspective, not a procedure or program based upon the belief that there are many ways to become educated, as well as many types of environments and structures within which this may occur. Of the alternative programs in Georgia, the most common setting is the separate facility with an autonomous administration and school staff (Wiley, 2000). Kellmayer (1995) described alternative settings that included programs on college campuses and in shopping malls as well as identifying characteristics of programs designed for elementary and middle school aged students. Georgia included in-school suspension programs in their list of alternative programs (GDOE, 2003a).

Hefner-Packer (1991) described the following alternative program settings:

Alternative Classroom (p. 9): A self-contained classroom within a traditional school.

School-within-a-school (p. 10): A semi-autonomous, non-traditional, or specialized education program housed within a traditional school that has strong organizational ties to the parent school. Students usually attend the alternate setting for a portion of the day and return to the traditional setting for electives or special courses.

Separate Alternative School (p. 11): A separate, self-contained facility that uses a non-traditional structure or strategies to promote learning and social adjustment. Usually this type setting has its own administration and enrollment procedures.

Continuation School (p. 12): An evening or in-school program that provides instruction to individuals no longer attending a traditional school, including dropout centers, pregnancy-maternity centers, evening and adult classes, and re-entry classes.

Magnet School (p. 13): A self-contained program offering an intensified curriculum in one or several closely related subject or skill areas.

Kellmayer (1995) expanded a list of settings to include specialized programs or target populations as well as settings:

College Based Models (p. 39): Integrated classroom of disruptive and disaffected high school students into the adult environment creating a change in mind set that promotes cognitive and affective growth. Kellmayer described this model as the most successful but the least prevalent of the models.

Schools Without Walls (p. 46): Built on the premise that the community can be a classroom and utilizing locations such as businesses, hospitals, museums, zoos, courtrooms, airports, etc as classrooms.

Mall/Shopping District Based Schools (p. 48): Essentially organized to provide a school-to-work transition for students who might otherwise drop out of school.

Schools Organized Around a Single Unifying Theme and located in an Environment Related to that Theme (p. 52): More commonly referred to as magnet schools, these schools provide intensive exploration of the subject area and are usually attended by gifted or talented students.

Schools Organized Around A Single Unifying Theme but Located in an Environment Unrelated to that Theme (p. 54): Because the number of sites for specific schools is small and the enrollment limited, they may be located in sites unrelated to the theme.

School-within-a-school (Full Day Model) (p. 55): the most common full-time day alternative school. Usually it is located in a wing of a district school where students have access to all the same facilities as students who attend the traditional school. Most appropriate model when the goal of the program is to transition students back to the mainstream.

Schools located in an Isolated Location: Punitive in nature, their goal is to segregate and exclude students form the mainstream.

School-within-a-school (After School Model) (p. 57): programs designed to isolate, segregate and exclude students for a predetermined period of time, after accumulating referrals or suspensions.

Schools Located in an Isolated Location (p. 58): Generally punitive programs that are designed to exclude students from the mainstream.

Elementary Model (p. 59): programs developed to intervene with elementary students who have been identified at risk for failure in schools.

Middle School Model (p. 65): The most common middle school model is the school-within-a-school model. Depending on their level of risk, many students who attend alternative middle schools will need an alternative program as they enter high school.

Model Programs

Alternative schools have been used as experimental laboratories for field-testing and validating new educational concepts (Barr, 1981). It is here that public schools have experimented with written evaluations instead of letter grades and have perfected the concepts for peer tutoring, social internships, and a variety of out-of-school learning programs (Barr, 1981). Alternatives have been instrumental in moving education out of the classroom and into businesses, social agencies, museums, and government offices (Barr, 1981).

Social responsibility and restorative justice are characteristics of programs such as The Foundry, San Jose, California, and the Montgomery County Youth Center (MCYC), Norristown, Pennsylvania (Guerin & Denti, 1999). Serving delinquent, abused, neglected, and beyond-control youth, the Foundry provided an academic and activity focused program that sought to build inner strength and responsibility and was designed so that youth could "survive obstacles they encounter throughout life" (Guerin & Denti, 1999, p. 77). Academic skill building, active parent participation, physical activity, community service, and family and group counseling were incorporated into a caring disciplined environment (Guerin & Denti, 1999). The MCYC juvenile detention center endeavored to fulfill its mission by creating a school community that emphasized dignity for each member, positive attitudes toward school, accountability for choices, development of character, and strong basic academic skills (Guerin & Denti, 1999).

At the Redirection Academy in Rapids Parish, Louisiana, students wear uniforms, talk only during class discussion, and study military drill along with basic core subjects (Harrington-Leuker, 1995). Discipline is the primary mission, and students respond well to the structure (Harrington-Leuker, 1995).

"Sheila Morrison College School—Utopia" is the name of a school founded by Morrison in 1977, which she described as a "salvage operation" (Dwyer, 1996. p 56). Here the day starts at 7 a.m. with roll call and room inspection and ends 14 hours later, after a 2 1/2 hour study hall. Daily chores include dishwashing and vacuuming, which are required; junk food is forbidden; and misbehavior is punished with a minimum of 15 minutes around the track (Dwyer, 1996). The school's philosophy carries with it a determination to make students work and to reap the benefits of pride. At a cost of $20,000 a year for tuition, room and board, it is in effect a private school of hard knocks (Dwyer, 1996).

Corpus Christi, Texas, is one school district exploring its alternative education for students who might otherwise be expelled from school (Harrington-Lueker, 1995). Corpus Christi, Texas was one of the first districts to make use of a law that provided teachers the right to remove permanently chronically disruptive students from the classroom (Rose, 1996). Students are required to wear white shirts and dark jeans, slacks, or skirts; and coats must be left at the door (Harrington-Lueker, 1995; Rose, 1996). Breaks are limited to three minutes between classes (Rose, 1996). Students carry a chart with them throughout the day, so teachers can grade them on conduct, make notes of the work they've completed, or record rule infractions (Harrington-Leuker, 1995). Students are assigned to school until they have moved through three levels of behavioral improvement, accomplished through positive behavior, 90% school attendance, and passing all subjects (Harrington-Leuker, 1995). At least 60 days of orderly behavior are needed to return to the regular classroom (Rose, 1996). The Corpus Christi Student Learning and Guidance Center started as a 30-day short program with a capacity of 200 students, but due to intense community pressure and a $350,000 allocation by the local school board, the program doubled its capacity and added a new long-term program that can last a full year (Rose, 1996).

Baltimore County Public Schools in Maryland established an alternative program for high school students who had violated school rules and/or were unable to succeed in the regular classroom (Lloyd, 1997). The program expanded to include middle school students and blossomed into three alternative high schools and three alternative middle schools (Lloyd, 1997). Students must earn 70 points per day, or they are assigned to in-school suspension (Lloyd, 1997). There are six levels of behavioral expectations through which the student moved and upon reaching the highest level, the student could return to his/her home school (Lloyd, 1997).

At West Shores, an alternative-day treatment program for students with emotional and behavioral problems, preparation for his/her reintegration into his/her home school begins with his/her enrollment (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Through classroom observation and meetings with home-school personnel, the case manager identifies target skills and behaviors and works collaboratively with the student's treatment team to help the student acquire all of the skills necessary for successful reintegration (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Students learn skills to replace negative, inappropriate, or maladaptive behaviors with appropriate home, school, and community behaviors (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

La Communidad, an alternative school in Los Angeles, serves a large community of both native-born Angelinos, mostly Mexican American, and recently arrived Latino immigrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala (Castaneda, 1997). The alternative program is called a community school because it supports the community through community service and networking, as well as the community providing services to the school through business partnerships and a wide range of services at the site. These services include personal/family counseling, drug/substance abuse counseling, peace and mediation training, medical assistance, artistic expression intervention, gang intervention and probation services (Castaneda, 1997). Notable characteristics of the school are the incorporation of the students' home culture into the curriculum, a culture of respect, high standards for all students, and service-based programs for the community where the members of the group live (Castaneda, 1997).

Alternative Programs in Georgia

In the state of Georgia, alternative school programs have been created from the passage of several pieces of legislation, including House Bill 605, the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000, and the new State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-12, (Nelson, 2000; Clark, 2000). In

1994, Georgia instituted a statewide educational initiative known as CrossRoads, created with $16.5 million appropriated to the Georgia Department of Education by the legislature from general and lottery funds (GDOE, 2003a). Governor Zell Miller initiated the program with the dual purpose of removing chronically disruptive students from regular classrooms and providing these students with the services and environment they needed to succeed academically (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999).

A CrossRoads alternative school is a public school that received state funding in Georgia to provide chronically disruptive students the social services, individualized instruction, intervention strategies, and/or transitions to other programs that they need to become successful students and good citizens (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999; Karlin & Harnish, 1995; Wiley, 2000). CrossRoads alternative education programs were created to provide a setting where students can assess their learning strengths and barriers and receive appropriate social services to improve their learning and thereby become more successful in school (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999; Wiley, 2000). The mission, philosophy, and purpose of the CrossRoads Alternative School reflects the programs' recognition of the relationship between socio-emotional factors and academic achievement (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999).

The purposes of the Cross Roads Program were to do the following: 1) Provide social services to chronically disruptive, committed, and/or non attending students; 2) Provide individualized instruction and/or transitions to other programs; 3) Facilitate students' success and to promote good citizenship in the school and larger community; and 4) Make the public school safer and more secure by removing chronically disruptive students from the regular classroom (GDOE, 2003a). Assignments to these schools are the result of a due process hearing and are time limited; assignment time is dependent on the severity of the offense (Carpenter-Aeby,

1999). CrossRoads programs are not voluntary, and are the students are assigned as the result of some administrative or judicial process due to problems they have experienced in their regular school (Wiley, 2000).

Wiley (2000) argued that alternative schools targeted and served a select group of students whose behavior and other variables could prevent them from optimizing their chances for success in traditional public schools. Wiley (2000) disclosed in his research on alternative schools in Georgia that the primary goal of over half of the Georgia alternative schools was to isolate students temporarily.

CrossRoads programs operated as schools-within-a-school, separate programs, or multi-collaborations with other systems (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). At the end of the assignment, usually made by a disciplinary hearing officer, the student returned to traditional school or transitions to an appropriate academic setting (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). In Georgia, the assumption with disciplinary alternative schools is that students will receive either educational or social services, or both, and transition to another setting (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999).

In a descriptive study of 27 Georgia Secondary Alternative Schools by Chalker in 1994, the typical alternative school was a separate secondary program for students who had been suspended or expelled. Chalker's study found that the majority of the schools did not use a profile of student characteristics as a means of either problem diagnosis or development of intervention strategies; there were discrepancies related to data collection; program evaluation and standardization of operating procedures at these schools were not identified; there was no target population identified; local guidelines were used for planning; there was little networking; schools had little means of funding outside of their locality; and staff development for teachers was not consistently planned (Chalker, 1994).

Wiley's research (2000) found that most of the schools were located in separate facilities, the schools were at least five years old, had an enrollment that was slightly less than the school's capacity for enrollment, had a teacher-pupil ratio of 1-15, and reported a per-pupil cost that was higher than that of other schools in the district/school system. Wiley (2000) found that the recidivism rate, which was the percentage of students that enrolled in the alternative schools for a second time or more, ranged as high as 75% for the schools studied in Georgia.

Wiley (2000) found that limited research revealed that even CrossRoads programs in different school systems varied in design, mission, and focus in terms of students served. As a result of these differences, the perceptions of the effectiveness of CrossRoads programs also varied. Wiley (2000) found the following data of CrossRoads programs: 50% of the students were African-American; 67% of all the students were male; 72% of the students lived in single-parent homes; 75% of them were eligible for free/reduced lunch; and Juvenile Justice representatives were the most frequent social service visitors to the CrossRoads schools, followed by Department of Family and Children Services and Mental Health employees respectively.

With the passage of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000, CrossRoads grants were eliminated and QBE funds began providing for a new alternative program for students in grades 6-12 (Nelson, 2000). In Georgia's Alternative Education Program Guidelines, information concerning specific program models was detailed. According to the Georgia Code and the State Board of Education Rules and Regulations, an alternative education program must follow one of the following models (Clark, 2000; Nelson, 2000):

Community-based Alternative Education Program Model: Engages students in educationally relevant and meaningful learning experiences in the school and larger community.

Work-based learning and structured work experiences in partnerships with community businesses and the government are an essential part of the curriculum. This model is most useful with high school students who want to acquire skills necessary to be successful in the workplace.

In-School Suspension Program Model: Provides for short-term behavioral intervention because of student misbehavior in the traditional school setting. As part of a student's disciplinary consequence, in-school suspension isolates the student rather than suspending or expelling such a student from school. This model is most useful with secondary students for whom other behavior interventions in the classrooms are not working.

School-Community Guidance Center Model: Creates small, caring communities of support through organizations and agencies, while at the same time emphasizing high expectations for excellence and educational achievement. This model is most useful for students who are experiencing specific and significant academic difficulties that can be helped in a short-term, intensive program in a nontraditional setting.

The mission of the CrossRoads program was two-fold--academically, the mission is to enable students to perform at grade level; behaviorally, the mission is to enable students to develop high character and make appropriate choices for their success in school and the larger community (Nelson, 2000). Effectiveness would then be measured against the mission. According to the Georgia Alternative School Guidelines, the effectiveness of the CrossRoads program was based primarily on the progress of students toward performing at grade level while attending the alternative program (Clark, 2000; Nelson, 2000). Other effectiveness measures included decreased participation in risk behaviors such as criminal activity, drug/alcohol abuse, and poor school attendance, as well as decreased incidents and/or severity of disruptive behavior while attending the program (Clark, 2000; Nelson, 2000). The flexibility of the alternative

setting was a contributing factor to the success of students, however, upon return to their home schools, their progress diminished (Clark, 2000, Cox, 1999).

Wiley (2000) described a trend in evaluation of the effectiveness of alternative programs was to report effectiveness in terms of the individual's progress relative to predetermined criteria. Emerging trends related to alternative education in Georgia included (Hefner-Packer, 1991, p. 45): Increased acceptance of the alternative education concept; risk taking, proactive stances toward providing early intervention; alternatives at the elementary and middle levels; school districts offering multiple options from which parents and students choose the alternative best suited to their individual needs and interests; emphasis on magnet schools with curricula centering around accelerated academics and fine arts; increased number of schools using the school-within-a-school concept; Schools whose primary purpose is punishment; and where in-school suspension programs are not considered alternative education options; increased site-based decision making and teacher empowerment; and increased flexibility in education delivery systems (night school, extended day, extended year and use of technology for individualized instruction, and record keeping).

Characteristics of Successful Alternative Programs

Overview

Leone and Drakeford (1999) promoted the development of academically rigorous, engaging alternative schools in contrast to the deficit model often adopted by school systems to house children and adolescents who fail in or disrupt, traditional school settings. Carefully planned and implemented alternative education programs provide an environment in which students can be educationally successful, thereby producing life-long learners and contributors to society (Hefner-Packer, 1991).

Alternative schools have been used to keep high-risk students in school, to attract dropouts back to school, and to teach difficult students, including the gifted and talented, more effectively (Barr & Parrett, 1997). Because there are different types of alternative schools with various theories and practices behind each program, there are varying degrees of success and failures (Clark, 2000).

Alternative programs are generally designed to create a more positive learning environment through lower teacher-to-student ratios, individualized and self-paced instruction, noncompetitive performance and an informal classroom structure that allows a student to work independently and the staff to have more time for individualized instruction (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Cox, 1995; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995).

Some of the most inventive alternative programs involve the following new and creative ways of organizing and administering schools (Barr & Parrett, 1997): 1) Many are organized and operated as year round schools, others as extended-day programs; 2) Some divide the school year into three-week or five-week blocks so that students study a few subjects intensively for a short time; 3) Some operate on a university-type schedule, with alternating days; 4) Some students have Friday off if they have successfully completed the week's academic expectations; 5) Others are late-afternoon and evening programs; and 6) Some have electronic access 24 hours a day.

Lange (1998) stated that in order to determine the effectiveness of a program, the characteristics of the program must be identified. Despite their great variety, alternative schools share a number of qualities that make alternative schools successful (Ascher, 1982; Deal & Nolan, 1978; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995; Leone & Drakeford, 1999; Little, 1999; Neumann, 1994; Raywid, 1984). Five basic factors have been identified as contributing

longevity of decade-old alternative programs: they are attractive to students and parents, they have a clear goal focus, their legitimacy is recognized by important educators, their funding is reliable, and they have created positive school climates (Case, 1981; Korn, 1991). Expected outcomes for students in alternative programs are: increased commitment to schooling and learning, reduced levels of disruptive behavior, increased levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, improved attendance, reduced dropout rates, and increased achievement (Hefner-Packer, 1991).

Students Who Enroll in Alternative Programs.

Alternative schools most frequently serve two types of students—those who are intellectually gifted or artistically talented and those whose school experiences are characterized by failure (Arnove & Strout, 1980). Generally, at-risk students are placed in alternative school programs once it is determined that chronic disruptive and norm-violating behaviors will prohibit them from attaining academic and social success in a regular school environment (Fuller & Sabatino, 1996; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Students in alternative settings either have been strongly encouraged to leave (Guerin & Denti, 1999) or have been "elbowed out" of the traditional campus (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998, p. 4).

Traditional educational models typically reject or are rejected by high-risk children and youth (Ashcroft, 1999). At risk students are disproportionately poor, disabled, bilingual and from minority groups (Guerin & Denti, 1999; Sagor, 1999). Students who attend alternative programs come from backgrounds characterized by low parental socioeconomic status (Kellmayer, 1995). The proportion of minority students enrolled in alternative programs increases as the level of restriction increases (Guerin & Denti, 1999). Students who enroll in alternative programs are often the products of tragic histories: Dysfunctional families, sexually

transmitted diseases, teen pregnancies, violent outbursts, substance abuse, runaways, weapons offenses, gang involvement, depression and suicide, eating disorders, and juvenile crime (Kellmayer, 1995).

Clearly Stated Mission and Goals

Successful alternative schools are grounded on well-defined philosophies with a mission and clear goals (Case, 1981; Kellmayer, 1995; Schorr, 1997; Young, 1990). Schools that were structured around clearly defined mission statements, that had comprehensible behavioral expectations, and that were fairly and consistently enforced, were more highly regarded by students and staff (Macauley, 1999).

Kellmayer (1995) stated that a mission creates a sense of community, commitment and shared values. Clear goals and a focus contribute to a school longevity (Case, 1981; Korn, 1991). Alternative schools have been effective in achieving positive outcomes and program goals (Barr, et al., 1977; Case, 1981; Reilly & Reilly, 1983; Young, 1990). Alternative schools gain legitimacy when they actually produce predicted outcomes (Case, 1981).

Alternative programs vary in terms of services and the ways those services are provided (Kellmayer, 1995; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). These services are determined by the mission and the goals of the program. Some alternative schools are strictly designed to deliver educational service (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Other programs view themselves as social service agencies, offering extensive social and emotional, as well as educational, support through mental health interventions (Kellmayer, 1995; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

While most alternative programs are currently designed for high school aged youth, there appears to be a trend toward providing alternative programs to middle school students who need the social, behavioral, emotional and academic support necessary to prevent them from dropping

out (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998). Regardless of philosophy, programs that include components of functional analysis, effective teaching, transition planning, comprehensive systems, and specialized teacher training and resources are more effective at successfully meeting the special needs of the children and youth in their care than are those programs generally seen as "reactionary" in their approach (Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

In an effective alternative school, the disciplinary philosophy and instructional philosophy are of equal importance (DeVore & Gentilcore, 1999). DeVore and Gentilcore (1999) stated that when young people are disciplined without violating their dignity, they are held accountable without further damaging their self-esteem, increasing the likelihood that they will ultimately desire to become better citizens.

Enrollment Practices and Policies/Choice

Local education agencies have the latitude to develop specific criteria for placement and develop the structure of their alternative program to serve their system best (Fuller & Sabatino, 1996). While assignment to alternative programs, particularly punitive programs, is not uncommon, the literature supports the importance for schools to be voluntary and available to every student in the school district, rather than being based on assignment or strict enrollment criteria (Ascher, 1982).

Teachers and students agree that the students who attend voluntarily are those who most reap the benefits of the program and find it effective (Caudle, 1999; Groves, 1998; Kellmayer, 1995). Students have a better chance of success if they had a choice where they attended school (Gregg, 1999; Macauley, 1999; Neumann, 1994; Young, 1990).

Raywid (1983a) identified the benefits of choice and voluntary enrollment as the following: 1) Making the school responsive to the diversity of the students; 2) Maintaining

responsiveness to the needs of the minority groups; 3) Enhancing student interest and commitment to education; and 4) Restoring public confidence in the schools.

Macauley (1999) related the importance of student choice in selection of and participation in an alternative school, as giving the students a sense of control of their options and ownership of their program. The students may be more attached and committed to the alternative school curriculum because it was their choice to attend (Cox, 1995). Barton (1998) said that choice is a key ingredient, whether the student either chooses to attend because of unsuccessful attempts in a traditional high school or loses his or her privilege to attend a traditional setting for disciplinary reasons in which case the choice is alternative school or no school at all.

Most alternative schools are created, with the intention of providing effective interventions that allow students to return to regular schools settings (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999; Kibort, 1999; Souza, 1999). Research has revealed that a substantial number of students, once enrolled in alternative schools, prefer to remain there (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995). Often students have been forced to return to traditional programs because a limited number of positions are available in the alternative program, and other students are deemed to access it more (Kellmayer, 1995). Kellmayer (1995) supported that students should be allowed to remain in the alternative program until graduation, creating an impetus to increase enrollment steadily, so that other at-risk students may be admitted (Kellmayer, 1995).

School Size

The most cited reason for improvements in academic achievement and attendance has been smaller school and class size, which promotes more individualized and personal attention (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Ascher, 1982; Barton, 1998; Bates, 1993; Castleberry & Enger, 1998;

Cox, 1995, 1999; De La Rosa, 1998; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995; Neumann, 1994; Raywid, 1994, 1998a; Schanke, 1998; Young, 1990). Academically marginal students, in particular, experience school life differently within big and small institutions (Korn, 1991; Kozbert & Winegar, 1981; Macauley, 1999; Raywid, 1998b). Borderline students in big schools felt they were outsiders, but borderline students in schools small enough to need every student to carry out voluntary school activities were active, needed participants (Korn, 1991). School size has negative effects on students from low socioeconomic settings that it does not have in high socioeconomic settings (Raywid, 1998b). Cox (1999) held that small size is identified as a benefit because when students returned to the traditional school, they did not receive the individual and supportive attention they had the in the alternative program and their academic performance was not rated as high.

Cuban (1989) confirmed that small numbers help to foster enduring relationships among adults and students. Small size helps schools become caring communities by allowing teachers and students to get to know each other (Ayers, Bracey & Smith, 2000; Finn, 1993; Morley, 1991). Smaller schools have a deeper sense of community (De La Rosa, 1998; Fine, 1991; Raywid, 1998a; Young, 1990), and discipline tends to improve because behavioral norms are not as powerful as in a large group (Cox, 1995; Kellmayer, 1995; Raywid, 1998b; Raywid & Oshiyama, 2000). In fact, students generally behave more appropriately in schools where they are known. It is in large schools, where alienation often goes hand in hand with anonymity, that danger comes (Raywid & Oshiyama, 2000).

Finn (1993) reported that small school size allows for participation of students who might otherwise be excluded in larger schools due to superior competition by a larger number of more talented students. Very few students feel comfortable in a competitive grading atmosphere,

which is often instilled in large traditional high schools (Barton, 1998). Alternative schools attempt to avoid harmful effects of competition, allowing student progress to be measured by self-improvement and mastery rather than by comparison to others (Young, 1990).

Alternative schools typically have student-adult ratios of approximately 15 to 1 and sometimes lower (Hefner-Packer, 1991). This is accomplished through diversified staffing, and the use of student teachers, graduate interns, community volunteers and parents (Hefner-Packer, 1991). The lower student ratio allows the teachers to spend more time with students on a one-to-one basis (Boyer, 1987; Cox, 1999; Finn, 1993).

Teachers in small alternative schools are more inclined to use one-to-one and small group instruction, to use computerized instruction, to socialize, and to provide academic and career counseling to students (Johnston & Wetherill, 1998). Gold and Mann (1982) recognized small enrollment because it enabled staff to be more attentive to the needs and interests of the students, ensuring they do not become lost and drop out.

Barton's (1998) study of alternative programs in the state of Washington demonstrated that keeping programs small provided more opportunities to earn credit with an integrated curriculum, more individualized attention from teachers, and closer relationships between teachers and students. Additional benefits of small programs were described as open and flexible environments for scheduling, sensitivity to the individual needs of students; contracting for grades, welcoming parents, improving community connections, and developing new methods for instruction/assessment.

Foley (1983) said that schools need to be small enough to feel a part of a group, yet large enough to provide necessary resources. The environment of the typical alternative school is more relaxed, caring, supportive and friendly than the traditional school (Cox, 1999). Barr and

Parrett (1997) advised to start small, but not too small, and not to expand too rapidly. Raywid (1994) said that programs must be small enough to permit personalization of the school experience.

Curriculum and Strategies

Hefner-Packer (1991) maintained that not all students respond positively to traditional education program structure. Carefully planned and implemented educational alternatives were found to be characteristic of alternative programs, as they increased the probability of success for the non-traditional learner through alternative curricula and alternative modes of instruction (Bates, 1993; Colvin, 1997; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995; Linker & Marion, 1995; Woods, 1995).

For a successful learning experience, a learner must be actively participating both in planning and following through with his or her learning (Barton, 1998). According to Kellmayer (1995), an individualized program plan should be developed for each student, including a record of each student's course of study and a rationale to explain why a particular course of study and credit-awarding option was selected; information about the student's current educational performance such as academic achievement, specific behavioral and educational objectives to be addressed, vocational aspirations, and plans for employment or continuing education following graduation from high school, and any contracts that stipulate goals, outcomes, learning materials, and timelines.

Kellmayer (1995) regarded the alternative programs as having two curricula--a time-based program where the student attended classes for all or most of the school day, as well as a proficiency-based model where students earned credits by successful completion of a comprehensive examination that demonstrated mastery of locally determined proficiencies,

including but not limited to the statewide core in a curricula area for which credit is awarded (Kellmayer, 1995). Kellmayer suggested that credit be awarded for out of school learning experiences, community service, internships, and school to work transitions (Kellmayer, 1995). Young (1990) supported multiple course credits for integrated units.

If alternative education programs stressing real world courses designed to increase engagement are not available to these students, many will lose interest, become disruptive, fail and drop out (Hefner-Packer, 1991) To make education more relevant, many alternative schools combined academic learning with vocational and career education (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Ascher, 1982; Hefner-Packer, 1991). The benefits of a work component are a sense of responsibility and dignity to the students and a means of developing pre-job and on-the–job socialization skills (Arnove & Strout, 1980).

Kellmayer (1995) advocated for technology to be incorporated into the curriculum throughout the entire alternative school program, providing students at least the same level of access to technology as is available to students who attend a traditional program. For disadvantaged students, technological illiteracy implied constrained vocational opportunities, as well as limited performance of basic living skills like bill paying, grocery shopping, and banking (Kellmayer, 1995).

Young (1990) claimed that the emphasis on affective education (e.g. social skills) is a key ingredient in the effectiveness of alternative programs. With at-risk students, affective development usually precedes cognitive growth (Kellmayer, 1995). The alternative schools program needs to address the whole child--which includes emotional needs, self-esteem needs, physical needs, and social needs--without allowing academic learning and improvement to fall by the wayside (Barton, 1998; Korn, 1991). The curriculum should be hands-on, students'

feelings of self-worth and accomplishments should be nurtured by the work itself, and academic assignments should be integrally related to real work in the real world (Kellmayer, 1995).

Many alternative schools emphasize service learning which provides students the opportunity to connect what they are learning in school to the community (Burns, 1998; Meyers, 1999). It is a structured learning process that allows academic and social skills acquisition, as well as development of problem-solving skills, social competence and a sense of purpose, decision-making, collaboration, writing and thinking skills, critical job readiness, and pre-employment skills (Burns, 1998; Meyers, 1999). An important outcome for the at-risk student is the development of a sense of civic and social responsibility (Burns, 1998).

To be effective, alternative school programs should include intensive individual and group counseling focusing on self-esteem, self-concept, personal responsibility, appropriate expression of feelings, drug/alcohol prevention, vocational assessment, and career exploration and preparation (Fuller & Sabatino, 1996). Prosocial skills training in self-awareness, values clarification, cooperation, and the development of helping skills have been used successfully to improve the behavior of misbehaving students (Cotton, 1990). Special resources such as Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention are beneficial because at-risk students have a higher incidence of suicide (Kellmayer, 1995). Wraparound services or the coordination of services in the community allows proactive strategies and creative solutions for students by providing interventions from agencies that support the school (Eber, 1997).

Learning should not only meet the individual needs of students but also be conducted in a way that fully engages all students (Raywid, 1994). Innovative programs offer differentiated methods of instructional delivery such as individualized or small group instruction, self-paced independent studies, video and computer-guided instruction, vocational components, and other

support services (De La Rosa, 1998). The daily activities vary in schools but most have the following curricular features (Korn, 1991, p.63): the student is the focal point of a flexible curriculum that addresses the developmental needs of the student; the student participates in the decision regarding pace, content, and order of learning; and whenever possible, the curriculum is experiential and interrelated. Strategies common to alternative schools are the level system and programmed instruction with token systems where students master behaviors at each level before advancing to the next (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Bauer, Shea, & Keppler, 1986; Gable & Strain, 1981; Smith & Farrell, 1993).

Transitions

Effective alternative schools advocated for students and continued to work with them, keeping track of their progress after they returned to regular schools (Glass, 1995). Providing transition services and follow-up meetings with these students as they re-enter their home schools may improve long-term outcomes (Clark, 2000). Kellmayer (1995) recommended that alternative programs should have a transition specialist on staff.

Program Evaluation

Continual evaluation leading to modification is another common characteristic of successful alternative programs which contributed to their longevity (Case, 1981; Korn, 1991). Carpenter-Aeby (1999) advocated for evaluation to occur at regular intervals throughout the year, including follow-up and monitoring. Organizational issues, such as program size, staff roles, and program goals, were found to be key components in the evaluation of alternative schools and programs (Bates, 1993; Woods, 1995). Lange (1998) indicated that examining the organization of alternative schools enabled policy makers to have a better understanding of their effectiveness. Since many programs began with external funding as seed money, evaluation

activities are often required in the design of the program (Case, 1981). Wiley (2000) cautioned that lack of empirical data reduced the opportunity to substantiate the school's efficacy.

The administration and staff are accountable for progress toward goals and objectives of the school and the district, as well as legal guidelines of national and state education laws (Hamm, 1999). Teachers and administrators want to know if the program helps encourage the student to come to school, if it helps students' grades improve, and if the program prevents dropouts (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). Due to the large percentage of students who return for a second time or more in punitive model schools, it is imperative that a system of continuous program evaluation be established and maintained (Wiley, 2000).

The research of Deal and Nolan (1978) claimed the most prominent assessment of alternative programs is testimonials of the successes of students made by parents and teachers of the alternative program. One method of assuring awareness of worthwhile program features has been to involve members of the school community in the ongoing process of program evaluation and modification (Case, 1981).

Problems with Evaluations.

Ideological inconsistencies often give organizations mixed messages about their mission, or the means through which that mission will be achieved (Deal & Nolan, 1978), making assessment of outcomes difficult. Wiley (2000) asserted that the lack of continuity between the established goals and objectives of alternative schools makes it difficult to assess their ability to meet the needs of the students they serve.

It may be counterproductive to hold alternative schools to exactly the same standards as those used for conventional schools (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999). Further, it is assumed that alternative schools exist for different audiences and different purposes, so there is little reason to

judge the effectiveness of all alternative schools using identical criteria (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999). Ascher (1982) observed that just as no two alternative schools are alike, no two evaluations of alternative programs have been alike. There are no systematic evaluations because every alternative school is different, fulfilling the needs and interests of a specific community (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999).

A concern expressed through the literature is a lack of scientific data to measure effectiveness (Aronson, 1995; Karlin & Harnish, 1995), and what does exist is haphazard (Duke & Muzio, 1978). Duke (1978) described the task of gathering data as frustrating to the researcher because on-site records are frequently incomplete or non-existent. Data are often difficult to collect when the alternative school has gone through internal changes, changing the value of the data collected at one point in time, when the school may alter its program, decision-making structure, and goals several times over the span of a few years (Duke, 1978).

Evaluation should also include important affective and health-related data, such as information concerning substance use and abuse; incidents of depression; mental illness and suicide attempts; involvement in acts of delinquent behavior; the number of students who have babies; and changes in the quality of students' relationships with significant adults (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995). A change in attitude and behavior, reflected in these outcomes, serves to pave the way for students to return to their home school or to enter the work force (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999; Quinn & Rutherford, 1998).

Staff and Support Personnel

With relatively small numbers of students, alternative schools have small staffs (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999; Hamm, 1999; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995). Ideally, alternative schools are staffed by compassionate, understanding, committed, flexible, creative, mature,

developing, enthusiastic, talented, and cooperative individuals (Korn, 1991). The staff is supportive of each other, works together as a team, and is committed to the school (Caudle, 1999).

To establish flexibility, respond to the needs of at-risk students, and create a sense of community, the alternative program needs a separate administrative unit (Cox, 1995; Foley, 1983; Kellmayer, 1995, Raywid, 1984). A characteristic common to effective alternative programs is that staff members believed that the principal and administrative staff were concerned with their needs, were approachable, provided them with encouragement, and supported their professional growth and development (Little, 1999). The principal or administrator was a pivotal component of a successful alternative school because he/she set the direction, supported and guided the faculty, encouraged innovation, and served as the liaison with parents and community (Bates, 1981). Principals were compassionate and supportive, visionary, and resourceful; they demonstrated a good understanding of current trends and curriculum (Kellmayer, 1995).

Kellmayer (1995) identified the principal as having three functions as a leader: management, instruction, and politics. Administrators may write curriculum, observe teachers, counsel students, plan new programs, write grant proposals, give presentations, contact parents, or attend meetings (Foley, 1983; Kellmayer, 1995). The administrative leader must demonstrate political skills as well as be an instructional leader with experience in working with diverse populations (Caudle, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995). Political leadership skills are imperative on the part of the administrator to ensure the positive perceptions of outside organizations and promote credibility of programs (Kellmayer, 1995). Principals give staff and students in effective alternative settings as much decision-making opportunity as possible in the day-to-day

operations (Caudle, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995). Involvement in school decision-making can potentially increase student attachment and commitment to school (Duke & Perry, 1978). Trust facilitates autonomy, both of which are critical to shared governance and teacher empowerment (Kellmayer, 1995).

A frequent problem, although not unique to alternative schools, was staff burnout (Case, 1981). Kellmayer (1990) indicated that teachers in alternative programs must be able to distance themselves from the increased stresses found in the alternative setting. The effective alternative schools have managed to maintain climates in which staff members do not exhaust their energies but continually renew them; thus the climate actually provides an element of stability (Case, 1981). Strong leadership can generate needed morale and energy (Ascher, 1982).

Participation in the alternative program should be voluntary for both students and staff (Kellmayer, 1995; Raywid, 1984). Teachers and students have freely chosen to work and study in these schools (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981). Staff and students have the opportunity to choose to participate in the program; but if they opt to participate, it is made clear to all involved that with choice come responsibility and commitment (Macauley, 1999). Volunteer participation, both for teachers and students, creates an atmosphere of teamwork and collaboration among students, teachers and outside social agencies (Macauley, 1999). Choice or voluntary participation by both students and teachers promotes affiliation, bonding, and membership (Barton, 1998; Morley, 1991). Young (1990) contended that allowing students a choice among their options is a reflection of respect.

A problem for school districts has been finding teachers successful in reaching at-risk learners (Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992), as many teachers have not had special training for alternative programs (Arnove & Strout, 1980). Teachers are recruited to alternative programs

because of their interest in working with disruptive students, their flexibility, and their skills for individualizing and personalizing teaching (Arnove & Strout, 1980).

Kellmayer (1995) cautioned that teachers should not be assigned to a program in which they do not wish to teach. Many districts' alternative programs lacked appropriately certified teachers, and some districts "sentenced" teachers to alternative placements (Gregg, 1999). Often the least qualified teachers were assigned to the lowest achieving students year after year (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Raywid (1984) attributed much of the success of alternative schools to having a faculty that was there by choice.

Studies of alternative programs have consistently found that caring teachers are a vital component to any successful alternative program (Macauley, 1999). The most important student need is the presence of an understanding, sensitive, friendly, enthusiastic, supportive, flexible, and honest adult (Barr, 1981; Korn, 1991). A sense of humor, patience, sensitivity and a sincere interest in others were the most prominent teacher traits (Kibort, 1999). After leaving the alternative program, students remembered their teachers' human qualities—their personality and style, passions and caring, even their eccentricities (Macauley, 1999).

Even socially adept adolescents often are lonely and need adults who will talk and listen to them (Raywid & Oshiyama, 2000). In some aspects this teacher role can be likened to that of a surrogate parent (Korn, 1991). Alternative schools may be similar to extended families with the exception that the school teacher possesses professional expertise and objectivity, understands human development, and is knowledgeable about the many ways humans learn (Korn, 1991). Especially for students who come from dysfunctional families, the teacher provides a safe home base for the student and a knowledgeable companion, role model, and advisor whose presence is a solid, dependable fact (Korn, 1991).

Teachers' roles in alternative schools are increased and responsibilities extend beyond the classroom (Macauley, 1999), and may include student counseling and guidance (Foley, 1983; Neumann, 1994), often providing a safety net for students (Brown, 1998). A flexible, trusting culture with open communication among staff and students is necessary for teacher and student roles to be expanded (Barton, 1998). Because teachers in alternative schools frequently perceive inappropriate behavior as opportunities to work on problems affecting the student resulting in the behavior, the teacher becomes a student advocate and consultant (Arnove & Strout, 1980).

Teachers who work in an alternative school must be exceptionally skilled communicators (Kellmayer, 1995). Foley (1983) indicated the strength of the schools not only lies in their well-focused academic programs but also in their capacity to engage students and teachers in a dialogue which fosters creative human relationships. The staff has a background working with diverse populations and for the most part is proactive rather than reactive (Hamm, 1999), positively involved in adolescents' lives before serious problems arise—taking the time to build a healthy relationship with its students (Kellmayer, 1995). Teachers in alternative programs must be well trained in human relations and understand the important distinction between influence and control (Kellmayer, 1995) and exhibit strong classroom management in non-authoritarian ways (Hefner-Packer, 1991). With the high incidence of students with behavior disorders in alternative settings, teachers need at a minimum, training in special education, especially if they work in a correctional educational facility (McIntyre, 1993).

Teachers display a high degree of collegiality--depending more on one another, talking together, sharing problems, and seeking solutions (Korn, 1991). Raywid found that teachers in alternative schools are likely to feel they are practicing professionals, free to invent new strategies for reaching individual students (Korn, 1991).

Duties of the counselor in the alternative setting were as follows (Doyle, 1971; Downs, 1999): Student counseling, appraisal, education and occupational planning, consulting and counseling with parents, consulting with school staff members, and research and evaluation. Downs (1999) identified the counselor as the main resource in the school for information about the case, the custodian of students' records, and the case manager (Humes, 1982). The counselor must be organized and objective (Downs, 1999).

Although at one time delivering social services to students was not recognized as a legitimate school function, given the current educational climate, the school is now the most logical intervention setting (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). Terms such as wraparound services, family-school collaborations, school-linked services, and in-school services are used to describe the coordination of social services in conjunction with the delivery of academic material (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). From a social work perspective, those who are in the greatest need should be wrapped with services to maintain their personal empowerment and dignity (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999).

The social worker serves in a number of roles to facilitate the delivery and coordination of services in effective alternative programs-- assessment and intervention, development, service delivery (individual counseling, family therapy, group work, staffing, evaluation, and collaboration/networking of community agencies and resources (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). Carpenter-Aeby (1999, p. 103) concluded that there were three implications for school social work and practice: 1) Alternative schools using the multisystemic assessment and intervention model, such as the Family-School-Community Collaboration Model, seem to create an environment where students can survive and perhaps even thrive both psychosocially and academically; 2) The findings confirm that these students continue to need additional assistance

even after they have successfully completed their assignments at the alternative educational program; 3) Findings support and confirm the alternative educational program as a viable intervention for dropout prevention.

Transition back to the traditional school is the goal for many alternative programs. A transition specialist is responsible for contacting each student's sending school to determine the student's status in particular courses and enrollments (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999; Guerin & Denti, 1999). The transition specialist paves the way for return to a regular school by meeting with teachers, informing them of a returning student's progress in various subject matter areas and periodically monitoring the student's readjustment (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999).

Staff Development

Kellmayer's (1995) position was that administration, faculty, and staff who work in alternative schools should become absolute professionals aware of the literature in their respective fields, committed to continual professional growth, and through their professionalism able to distance themselves from day-to-day stresses that manage to burn out so many teachers in alternative schools. Kellmayer (1995) cautioned that placing personnel who are unsuited to work with students who are disruptive and disaffected in the classroom and the potential for disaster has been created.

Few teachers in alternative schools have received specific training regarding the characteristics of their students or the atypical teaching environments of the alternative school to equip them to work with this special population (Ashcroft, 1999). There is no special license required beyond general education certification for teachers who teach high-risk youth in alternative and correctional settings (Ashcroft, 1999). Ashcroft (1999) advocated for pre-service training models and certification for teachers acknowledging the need for specific training for

teaching in alternative and institutional settings; these settings should be recognized as a legitimate career path for educators with their own training paradigms and licensures.

Researchers have identified staff development programs and strategies that would enhance the alternative school program. Guerin and Denti (1999) recommended that all teachers in alternative schools be trained in behavior management strategies, reading remediation, and special education and counseling skills, and that there should be a transition specialist on staff. Greene and Uroff (1989) described teacher training for the Apollo High School in California as consisting of instruction in learning styles, group process, communication skills, classroom management techniques, effective discipline methods, and problem-solving skills. Comer (1987) stated that with teacher training in child development and behavior, most teachers could help children at risk close the developmental gap that prevents them from performing well.

Alternative and correctional educators seek professional growth activities that emphasize the characteristics of their student populations and the features of their institutional settings rather than subject matter training (Ashcroft, 1999). Training that supports the specific needs of the alternative program is a strong feature in selecting and attending staff development programs (Ashcroft, 1999).

Staff development can help combat teacher burnout and stress by stimulating and renewing enthusiasm (Kellmayer, 1995). Kellmayer (1995) listed other topics of staff development--sessions should offer practical advice related to how to deal with ongoing problems faced in the classroom; the views of the staff should be incorporated in planning the staff development program; the experience level of teachers should be considered in regarding staff development programs; opportunities should not be limited to one or two sessions each year; personal professional goals should be integrated into staff development including

visitations to other programs, retreats, and workshops; and staff development should be concrete, with an emphasis on demonstrations, trials and feedback.

Organization

Barr and Parrett (1997) recommended being as autonomous as possible. Schorr (1997) stated that effective schools provide autonomy that builds trust and loyalty among staff through decision making. Having a separate administration reduces the stress attached to sharing facilities and having a different set of rules and procedures within the traditional setting.

Hefner-Packer (1991) said that alternative education programs are not intended to replace traditional schools, but should complement them by being more responsive to the needs of students and providing a structure that accommodates a variety of learning styles. Communication should be open between the home school and the alternative program, especially if transition back to the traditional school is an objective (Kellmayer, 1995).

Groth (1998) identified the following ways in which the alternative school contrasted with the regular education setting:

1. The pursuit of credits and diplomas
2. The relationships between students and teachers and administrators
3. The construction of time frames
4. Classroom management and work context
5. The effects of rules and policies

Some of the most inventive alternative programs involve new and creative ways of organizing and administering alternative schools (Barr & Parrett, 1997). Many are organized and operated as year round schools; others are extended-day programs; some divide the school year into three-week or five week blocks so that students study a few subjects intensively for a

short time; others operate on a university-type schedule, with alternating days; some have Fridays off if they have successfully completed the week's academic expectations; others are late-afternoon and evening programs; and still others have electronic access 24 hours a day.

Flexibility

Alternative schools were committed to change (De La Rosa, 1998; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Little, 1999). The dilemma of alternative schools was to provide flexibility without giving up stability, regularity, and predictability (Hamilton, 1981). Flexibility allowed for matching students' learning styles with instruction (Ascher, 1982)

Alternative programs offered open entry and exit, shortened hours, and/or an extended school year (De La Rosa, 1998). Some schools run on shorter days and some on several shifts; some operated during the day, while others operated in the evening and offered work-study programs on job sites (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999). The primary concern guiding scheduling and instructional groups was flexibility (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999).

Gold and Mann's study (1982) suggested that being in separate buildings contributed to flexibility of the programs. The more casual comings and goings of alternative students, the occasionally higher noise level, the regular availability of coffee and a place to smoke, and other deliberate informalities that created the ambience of the programs could not have been tolerated in a conventional secondary school (Gold & Mann, 1982).

School Culture

In alternative schools, a positive climate was the rule, not the exception (Barr & Parrett, 1997). Positive school culture and healthy school environment were essential to success (Woods, 1995) and contributed to the longevity of alternative schools (Case, 1981; Korn, 1991). Positive climate was influenced by characteristics developed in alternative schools, such as trust,

caring, access to decision-making, and opportunities for academic success (Case, 1981). Membership in an alternative school provided a caring place, where staff felt like family (Castaneda, 1997) and the environment was more relaxed, caring, supportive and friendlier than the traditional school (Cox, 1999). A common goal of these innovative schools was the creation of both an attractive and comfortable learning environment and a curriculum which fit each individual (Korn, 1991).

Alternative schools created small, supportive, caring communities that bonded teachers, students, and their parents (Barr & Parrett, 1997; Schorr, 1997) with shared values (Kellmayer, 1995). Raywid (1994) observed that an alternative school, its students and its staff should function much the same as a community, with significant effort spent developing a strong sense of connection among students and between students and teacher.

Students in alternative schools were surrounded by adults who cared and advocated for them, held high expectations for excellence, and helped them develop personal goals for their lives and for their futures (Barr & Parrett, 1997). A strength of the alternative school was the ability to develop environments in which different students' needs could be met (Ascher, 1982).

Positive climates resulted because students and staff felt positive about themselves and enthusiastic about their programs in schools that were both productive and satisfying (Case, 1981). The degree to which students felt in control, the extent to which students felt they were cared about in the schools, and the degree to which the curriculum met their individual needs enabled them to experience success (Case, 1981). Successful alternative programs provide noncompetitive classrooms where peer cooperation and sharing were emphasized (Young, 1990). An absence of competition was critical to a successful alternative school environment (Young, 1990).

Funding Sources

One major problem that still exists is the issue of funding (Schanke, 1998). There are many alternative programs that are working on small budgets and meager supplies (Schanke, 1998). Only if alternative schools are perceived as legitimate enterprises will they receive long-term public funding (Case, 1981; Fantini, 1973). According to Hartzler and Jones (2002) alternatives only succeed to the point that district and school leadership fully support them with adequate resources.

During the growth years, alternatives were often funded by federal money, private grants, money from state and local governments, charitable contributions, and fund-raising activities (Case, 1981, Hartzler & Jones, 2002). However, schools that survived made the transition at some point from this so-called soft money to hard money—most frequently, general funding under the control of the local school board (Case, 1981). If an alternative is started through grant money, or a two or three year allocation of budget, danger of inadequate funds may loom in its future (Barton, 1998). A long term budget plan is a critical characteristic for successful alternative schools (Barton, 1998).

Alternative schools, in their quest to maximize the efficiency with which they use their limited monetary resources, have fostered a variety of creative approaches to stretching budgets (Duke, 1978). One way schools economize while simultaneously reducing the ratio of students to teachers has been by employing parent volunteers, part-time teachers, and teachers-in-training (Duke, 1978). Creative use of part-time retired teachers and college students as volunteers increases faculty without creating additional funding burdens (Hartzler & Jones, 2002). Effective alternative programs find ways to efficiently access and use resources and enjoy a stable funding source from the Board of Education (Kellmayer, 1995).

Family and Community Collaboration

Community participation and responsiveness are important in the development and maintenance of the alternative school (Ascher, 1982; Cox, 1995; Hefner-Packer, 1991). Barton (1998) described three kinds of community in alternative programs--the in-school community consisting of students, teachers, parents and administrators; the community between alternative programs and the traditional schools with which they work; and the larger town-based community wherein the program exists.

The primary source of support for an alternative school should be parents and students (Duke, 1978). Parents and the community were offered opportunities to participate in special school activities such as open house, parent training classes, adult education classes, and special summer school (Hamm, 1999).

Altschuler and Armstrong (1994) found community agencies must collaborate to insure all needs of the student are addressed while avoiding duplication of services. A multidisciplinary approach to coordinating professionals from education, psychology, and social work provides a "wraparound" plan for planning and treatment (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 1997). Use of mentors from business and private sources strengthened the ties with community organizations and coordinating school services (Walls, 1990). Kellmayer (1995) said the program should be conceived as credible by outside organizations.

Alternative education programs need to find ways of linking their classrooms and instructional experiences to the community (Leone & Drakeford, 1999). They may also provide a bridge to postsecondary education or training for employment (Leone & Drakeford, 1999). Transition services for students with disabilities could support not only training but job placement after graduation (Wagner, 1993).

Kellmayer (1995) stated that it is imperative for alternative programs to maintain a positive relationship with the parent school as well as those agencies and organizations with which the programs are involved. Hefner-Packer (1991) stated that alternative schools provided a vehicle for community involvement and a mechanism for continuous change.

Criticism of Programs

Kellmayer (1995) cautioned that even if the school system succeeded in designing an effective and high quality alternative program, there will be those who don't understand or who will doubt what has been accomplished. This criticism must be handled in a positive and professional manner, by explaining the rationale behind the program design, educating critics as to the proper way to deal with difficult students, and continually publicizing successes (Kellmayer, 1995). Alternative programs have bad reputations, in part, because within the past 20 years, the term "alternative education" has been applied indiscriminately to such a wide variety of programs that its meaning has been clouded in confusion among educators, students, and the general public (Kellmayer, 1995).

Evaluations of early alternative schools generally found that these programs failed to produce long lasting positive evidence of effectiveness (Cox, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995; Raywid, 1981). The lack of effectiveness of the delinquency-related programs appeared to be attributed to school officials' improper use of the alterative schools as a form of punishment for troublesome students in the traditional schools, without providing appropriate programming (Cox, 1999). Barr and Parrett (1997) described it as a purging of the most difficult, disruptive, and emotionally disturbed children. The students with severe problems were being "dumped" into alternative schools that did not have the available resources to provide necessary services for them (Cox, 1999; Henry, 1999; Kellmayer, 1995; Raywid, 1984).

Cox (1995) indicated that very few studies have been dedicated to testing which students perform better in alternative schools compared to students in traditional schools (e. g. high academic achievers vs. low academic achievers). Research shows that disciplinary programs reap no positive long-term gains and may even increase negative outcomes (Cox, et al., 1995; Raywid, 1994). Students who return to their home school are most likely to repeat their offenses (Clark, 2000; Morley, 1991). According to Wiley's research (2000) on Georgia's alternative programs, a large number of students are enrolled in the alternative schools for a second time or more. Forty percent of the alternative schools in Georgia's CrossRoads program had 20% to 75% of the student population returning for a second time (Wiley, 2000).

Attendance and grades improved significantly in the alternative educational setting but declined when students returned to traditional school (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999; Cox, 1999; Cox, et al, 1995; Duke & Muzio, 1978; Gold & Mann, 1984; Raywid, 1994). Considering grade point averages, students improved their school performances, particularly grade point averages, but not enough to pass except at the alternative educational program (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999).

Kellmayer (1995) warned that educators, advocates and parents must oppose alternative programs that are based on segregation and exclusion. Some of these programs are punitive in nature, designed to separate disruptive students from the mainstream until it is decided that they can conform to the mainstream (Kellmayer, 1995). Others are considered remedial, designed to help students catch up so they can reenter traditional classrooms (Kellmayer, 1995; Raywid, 1984). Because of this segregation, the act of enrolling in alternative programs further labeled the school's clientele (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Sagor, 1999).

Alternative programs are viewed with suspicion for diluting (Souza, 1999) or watering down curriculum (Barr & Parrett, 1997). Wiley (2000) cautioned leaders to refrain from offering

at-risk students a watered down curriculum that emphasizes the acquisition of basic academic skills and asserted that all students need to be engaged in interesting and challenging learning that goes beyond basic proficiencies. Researchers also claim that dropout prevention programs require only minimal scholastic standards (Groth, 1998). They say these programs have been criticized because students earn scholastic credits with less effort, they receive passing grades for below standard work, and they are privileged to break ordinary school rules (Gold & Mann, 1983). One problem with alternative schools is trying to relate interdisciplinary and non-traditional study into high school graduation requirements (Barr & Parrett, 1997). An award of credits based upon some standard other than the Carnegie unit will be criticized as giving away credits (Kellmayer, 1995). Gold and Mann (1982) recognized that the desirable flexibility of alternative schools creates a perception of unfairness due to the reputation of allowing students to earn scholastic credits with less effort, to receive passing grades for below-standard work, and to be privileged to break ordinary rules.

Traditional high school staffs frequently are ill-informed about the rationale of alternative schools (Kellmayer, 1995; Morley, 2000). A relaxing of standards, short class periods, diverting financial resources from regular classes, and a lack of objective evaluation data are reasons contributing to the misconception of the alternative goals and strategies (Morley, 2000).

Rarely are alternative education programs available as a proactive choice to students or parents before serious problems develop in middle or high school (Leone & Drakeford, 1999; Morley, 2000). Clark (2000) observed that failure in traditional middle and high school programs was a prerequisite for admission. Many alternative programs operate on the erroneous assumption that after a certain period of time in the program, students will want to return to a traditional program (Kellmayer, 1995). This is only the case if the alternative program is

perceived by students as punitive or inferior to the traditional program (Kellmayer, 1995). To return students to the mainstream is to invite a perpetuation of previous failures and problems (Kellmayer, 1995). Students who attend the most effective alternative programs generally graduate from the program, receiving the same diplomas as students who attend the parent school (Kellmayer, 1995).

Students attending alternative programs are stigmatized as losers because of the perception they couldn't make it at the traditional high school (Barton, 1998; Gold & Mann, 1982). Schools should be vigilant about ending all negative connotations of alternative groupings to prevent life-long consequences in terms of students' self-esteem and their ability to interact productively as full members of society (Sagor, 1999). Students in alternative schools express an awareness of their second-class status and feel they have failed academically (Souza, 1999). Sagor (1997) encouraged school systems to develop alternative schools that were separate but equal, not segregated.

In a number of alternative programs, there are no teachers with special education certification, and students with disabilities are not identified, evaluated, or provided with appropriate special education services (Rutherford, & Quinn, 1999). In most alternative schools, a full continuum of special education services is not in place for students with disabilities (Rutherford & Quinn, 1999). If we are to assume that special education procedural safeguards and services are in the student's best interest, the promise of that special education as mandated by IDEA is not being met in many alternative programs (Rutherford & Quinn, 1999).

Although staff are committed to the goals of alternative schools and in general are very satisfied with their work, they frequently burn out from the high demands of these schools (Ascher, 1982). A dangerous pitfall for alternative programs is getting too caught up in the

emotional and social needs of the at-risk student, at the expense of neglecting the academic needs (Barton, 1998). Henry (1999) described one criticism of alternative programs as the practice of using these programs as "dumping grounds" for ineffective teachers.

The most frequently cited problems concerned the physical space in which alternative programs are conducted (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999). It was not uncommon for alternative schools to be located in basements, storage areas and outdated elementary schools; to be overcrowded and lacking science labs; and to have inadequate eating and recreation areas and other amenities (Duke & Griesdorn, 1999). Duke and Griesdorn (1999) contended that the physical structures housing alterative programs should not reinforce in the minds of students the idea that they are losers.

The advantage of a school within a school is that resources can be shared (Barton, 1998; Kellmayer, 1995). These programs usually are smaller and have the option of taking elective courses at the traditional school (Barton, 1998; Kellmayer, 1995). The disadvantage of this model is that it is difficult for the alternative school to establish its own culture (Barton, 1998). Conflicts often arise regarding enforcement of school rules, and students may find it difficult to conform to traditional high school rules while being allowed more freedom and flexibility in the alternative program setting (Barton, 1998; Kellmayer, 1995). Alternative program staff in the school with this program must have a trusting relationship with the traditional school, otherwise, conflicts can be intensified (Barton, 1998; Kellmayer, 1995).

Although the idea of providing assistance to at-risk students at as early an age as possible seems to be just common sense, it is only in the past decade that early intervention programs have been developed and become widespread (Kellmayer, 1995). More and more educators and mental health professionals are realizing that the earlier the intervention, the greater the chance

of producing meaningful change in a child (Kellmayer, 1995). Results from programs that intervene when students are already in trouble behaviorally or academically are often disappointing, because by the time a student is in trouble, the behaviors and attitudes are deeply ingrained (Kellmayer, 1995, p. 20). Middle School and elementary alternatives are few, but are gaining attention as a viable option for early intervention (Kellmayer, 1995).

It is imperative in organizing alternative programs to avoid creating a "high-status" mainstream and then several "low status" alternatives for those who don't fit the mainstream (Sagor, 1999, p.75). An organizational goal of an equitable school system should be a commitment to create an appreciation by all members of the school community for the diversity of learning modalities (Resnick, 1995; Sagor, 1999). Every student, regardless of the program in which he or she is enrolled, should be given regular opportunities to collaborate with peers, particularly those whose learning modalities are different and who possess different strengths (Sagor, 1999).

Chapter Summary

Alternative education programs have had many names and varying definitions. Research has been difficult due to varied philosophies and models of programs. The literature review indicated that a significant number of studies are related to schools described as punitive and require placement due to suspension or expulsion. Comparison of punitive programs with schools of choice is difficult given the different philosophies and goals for the target populations.

Alternative programs represent the efforts of the school system to provide a continuum of services within a school or separate from the home school. From the earliest study of alternative programs there has been evidence of the need for improved research. Much of the research has been in the form of surveys of student and teacher perspectives. Alternative programs have not

consistently kept documentation of student information that could facilitate research for effectiveness. In Georgia, the most recent research described the number of alternative programs in Georgia and categorized them as CrossRoads or non-CrossRoads programs. Few studies have included a follow-up component to follow graduates or determine the reasons students did not complete the program if they withdrew or were withdrawn.

A study of alternative programs that allow students and faculty a proactive choice in enrollment would provide school systems with the data needed to make decisions for future alternative programs. Research could provide the data to support the effectiveness of target populations and the predictability of their success, given the characteristics of the student and the characteristics of the alternative program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research procedures employed to complete this quantitative study of an alternative school where students self-elect to enroll. Chapter three includes the restatement of the purpose, a brief program description, research questions/null hypotheses, a description of the research approach, selection of subjects, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and statistical analyses.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School by studying: longitudinal data from a five year period of time; quantitative data that can be compared across sub-groups; determination of a difference in grade point average, average daily attendance and the number of disciplinary infractions between the traditional high school and the alternative high school; documentation of student enrollment to determine the percentage of students enrolled full time that graduate; and a survey of graduates to determine their employment and post-secondary enrollment status one year after graduation.

This research study was designed to utilize longitudinal data to determine the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School, an alternative school where students self-elect to enroll. Demographic data collected allowed a comparison of data across sub-groups including sex and race/ethnicity.

In contrast to much of the research on alternative programs which is qualitative in design, this study provided quantitative data to determine effectiveness based on three indicators identified in the literature. The indicators most prominently described in the literature included

improved grades, improved attendance, and improved discipline. To determine the effectiveness of an alternative program, it is important to identify positive outcomes based on the goals and mission of the program (Barr, et al., 1977; Case, 1981; Kellmayer, 1995; Reilly & Reilly, 1983; and Young 1990). Given the Hall County Evening School's mission to help students graduate who are at risk of not graduating, an important indicator of effectiveness would be percentage of graduation from the total population.

Finally, Cox (1999) maintained that knowledge of the student's activities after leaving the program was important to an evaluation of effectiveness. The follow-up data often missing from other research were acquired through a phone and/or mail survey that determined the student's post-graduation status: employment and/or enrollment in a post-secondary educational/training program.

A Brief Description of the Program

The Hall County Evening School opened in January, 1995, and was in its tenth year of operation at the completion of this study. The first year of the program was funded by local dollars, and subsequent years by both local and state monies including a collaboration with the Gainesville City School System. Grant monies have been provided for support services. Collaboration for other services has also provided needed income to maintain wraparound services such as childcare, GED classes, and health care. The director of the Evening School has been the director since it opened. Enrollment in the Evening School was voluntary. The director of the Evening School indicated that the policies and practices have not changed over the ten years, but the program has experienced a change in student population. The population has become younger, with the average age dropping from 19 to 17 at the time of enrollment. The growth of the program has forced the alternative program to adopt maximum class sizes,

especially since the full time student population has increased. Initially, the program did not include students who were under the age of 16, but the administration found it necessary to accept students under the age of 16 under special circumstances. Under special circumstances, the Evening School has accepted students from other systems, provided these students could pay tuition and the maximum class size had not been reached by the Hall County student population. In 2001, the Evening School began to accept students in grades 10-12 who had serious disciplinary issues, often resulting in long-term suspension. These students were removed from the traditional high school, but were given the option of applying for enrollment in the Evening School. It is important to note for the purpose of this study that students who enrolled during suspension were not placed at the alternative school by the school board. They were given the opportunity to apply and were accepted only under strict guidelines for their participation and behavior including a behavior contract.

The Hall County Evening School was developed out of a growing need to address the dropout population of the Hall County School System. There were several needs assessments, the most comprehensive being completed by the United Way in the early 1990's which addressed issues across the community. Hall County has a long history, dating back to the 1950's, of a large dropout rate. The failure rate of one or more classes in a given school year among 9th graders reached 50% or greater for one or more class failures in a given school year. Phi Delta Kappa conducted a study of dropouts locally and found that disengagement was a contributing factor in students dropping out. Finally, research indicated that once a student got "off track" for graduation, the student was less likely to graduate. Overall, the community of Hall County had an illiteracy rate of 25%. All of these factors were considered in the development, organization, and operation of the Hall County Evening School. The Evening

School was designed specifically for students who had dropped out of school but wished to return to complete their education, students who were at risk of dropping out of school, and students who did not seem to benefit from the structured environment of the traditional setting. Initially, the program was administered by a principal, three teachers, and a part time counselor and was organized as a school within a school sharing the facility with Johnson High School in the evening hours of 3:00-10:00, Monday through Thursday. It served 30 students, each volunteering for enrollment. Enrollment now exceeds 90 students served by a full time faculty of six teachers and several part time teachers, including a special education teacher. Students with serious discipline issues signed a contract that included random drug testing, special education students have Individual Education Programs, and the remainder of the students were given the expectations—Respect yourself, respect others, and respect our facility. Regularly provided services available to the Evening School students included social work services, health services (nurses visit twice a month, WIC (Women, Infants & Children), STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease) information, immunizations, screenings, etc., United Way (support groups for pregnant and parenting teens, health related seminars), WIA (Workers Investment Act) Youth Program sponsored by the Labor Department, and prevention programs. There is a Medicaid worker on site as well as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) application availability. Since the Evening School opened in 1995, the graduation rate for Hall County has increased from 60% to 75%. A SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales) allocation passed by the taxpayers to build a new six million dollar facility for the Hall County Evening School which opened Fall, 2004 in collaboration with Lanier Technical College, was evidence of the success of the program. Future plans include a site for the Labor Department on the Evening School campus to work collaboratively in job placement for students.

Selection of Subjects

All students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School during the 1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003 school years were selected for this study. Permanent records and discipline files have been reviewed to determine the student's status in relation to the variables studied for both the traditional and alternative school settings. Demographic information was instrumental in determining the subgroups for comparison. Subgroups have been examined to determine if there were relationships between segments of the student population and the outcome of students following their exit from the alternative program.

Based on the nature of alternative education programs and the at risk population it serves, gaps in the data are evident. Given the transient nature of the at risk population typically enrolled in the alternative school and the unavailability of un-transferred grades, attendance or discipline records from previous systems, there are gaps in the data. For simplicity, any enrolled student who did not complete a minimum of two semesters with a minimum of two courses per semester in both the traditional and alternative setting was excluded from the study. The remaining students were initially divided into subgroups of sex and race/ethnicity. Alterations in the number of subjects per subgroup from the beginning of the study were the result of missing data, repeat enrollments by the same student, students enrolled from other school systems, and change in graduation policies by both the Georgia Department of Education and the local school board.

Instrumentation

A pre- and post- profile of student information was completed for this study and organized into subgroups using permanent records and student information archived in the AS400 network for Hall County. A structured interview for identifying post enrollment

information was used with former students by phone or mail. Questions included on the student interview only made inquiry regarding the student's employability and/or continued education/training one year after the enrollment period of the Hall County Evening School.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The questions for this study regarding the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School for students who have elected to enroll in this non-traditional program were as follows:

1. What percentage of students enrolled full time in the Hall County Evening School during the 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 school years graduated?

2. Does the grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their grade point average for their traditional high school experience? Ho2 There is no statistically significant difference in the mean grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School and mean grade point average of students in their traditional high school (Base School) environment for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

3. Does the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their average daily attendance rate for their traditional high school experience? Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School and the average daily attendance rate of their traditional high school (Base School) environment for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

4. Does the number of discipline infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from the number of discipline infractions for their traditional high school enrollment? Ho4: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean number of

disciplinary infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School and mean number of disciplinary infractions of students in their traditional high school (Base School)environments for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

5. What percentage of students that graduated from the Hall County Evening School were employed one year post graduation?

6. What percentage of students that graduated from the Hall County Evening School entered a post-secondary education/training program one year following graduation?

Research Approach

Completion of the program by graduation was considered a factor to indicate effectiveness. A study of total enrollment less the students who were enrolled for the purpose of GED preparation and credit recovery were considered in determining the percentage of students who graduated each year of the study. The research approach for research questions/null hypotheses #2-4 of this study followed a repeated measures design because measures were taken pre- and post- enrollment at the Evening School on the same individuals. Paired t-tests provided a comparison of subgroups by dependent variables including mean grade point average, mean average daily attendance and mean number of disciplinary infractions. Post-graduation information has been obtained through a two question survey to determine employability status and/or post secondary enrollment one year after graduation.

Data Collection Procedures

Data for enrollment in both the traditional and alternative settings were collected by accessing the Hall County Student Information Data Base (AS400) with permission of the Superintendent's Office, and the Hall County Evening School Director. Students' permanent records were also made available where there were gaps in the Student Information Data Base at

the Central Office. Information indicating the student's employment and/or post secondary status one year after graduation was collected by a phone or mail survey of students or family members, via certified teachers trained by the researcher using a script prepared by the researcher.

A student profile was compiled for each student in two parts; information from the traditional setting (base school) and information from the alternative setting (Evening School). The student profile contained for each student that graduated during the study period: a student transcript, the calculation of grade point average for courses taken at the base school, the calculation of grade point average for courses taken at the Evening School, the attendance record including days present, days absent and day not on roll for each grading period of enrollment at the base school, the attendance record including days present, days absent and days not on roll for each grading period of enrollment at the Evening School, the number of disciplinary infractions acquired by code at the base school, the number of disciplinary infractions acquired by code at the Evening School, documentation of phone attempts to complete the post-graduation survey, and the documentation of all mailed surveys and recorded survey responses by phone or returned mail.

Careful attention has been paid to protect the confidentiality of the student and the personal data collected through confidential records or survey information. The result of the study does not reflect any personally identifying information.

Statistical Analysis

Data was collected for each of the dependent variables and organized by subgroups. Descriptive data was organized by total group, subgroups of sex and race/ethnicity, and a comparison of students by graduation year across the study period. Inferential statistical

analyses consisted of paired t-tests to determine differences among the subgroups, depending on the sample sizes and available data for each of the groups. Analyses of interview responses from a phone/mail survey described the post graduation status of students who successfully graduated. Survey responses were used to identify patterns among students for inferring effective program outcomes by subgroups.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected during this study are detailed in this chapter. The chapter is organized as follows: (a) Description of the population/sample in the study, (b) Description of the data by research question/null hypotheses, (c) Discussion of the data, and (d) Summary.

Description of Population/Sample of the Study

In order to determine the percentage of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School during the academic years of 1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 (Research Question 1), it was necessary to determine the total enrollment for each school year. The sample for question 1 included the total enrollment for each school year which included the number of seniors on roll, the number of underclassmen, the number of GED only students, and the students enrolled for credit recovery.

For research questions 2-4, the sample was taken from the population of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School in the Hall County School System, Gainesville, Georgia for each school year included in the study. The Hall County Evening School is an alternative education program where students self-elect to enroll. Data were collected from permanent records, AS400 archived data, attendance records, and Full Time Equivalency (FTE) reports, as well as a survey to determine post-graduation status one year after graduation. Only students who attended the Hall County Evening School for a minimum of two semesters and who had attended a minimum of two semesters in their Base School were included in the study to allow for a comparison of the two academic settings. The total number of graduates during these five academic years yielded an initial sample of 227 subjects. Students who were not

enrolled for a minimum of two semesters in both the Base School and the Evening School setting totaled 89 students reducing the sample to 138 subjects. The number of students with missing or inconsistent data varied across research questions due to incomplete data or data that were inconsistent between transcript and attendance record. Transfer students had omissions in their archived student record, as grades were recorded on a transcript for each transfer; however, attendance records and discipline history were not transferred from the previous system, or was transferred but not entered by the school into the AS400 archive.

All graduates (n=227) for the study period where included in the survey for questions 5-6 to determine their status one year after graduation. The sample size used for statistical analysis for each research question is provided in Table 1.

The demographic information of the sample relating to Sex and Race/Ethnicity are provided in Table 2. The sample of students, exclusive of students who attended either educational setting for less than two semesters (n=138), was comprised of 42 White Non-Hispanic males, 61 White Non-Hispanic females, 6 African-American males, 9 African-American females, 5 Hispanic males, 9 Hispanic females, 3 Other males (Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Interracial), 3 Other females (Asian, Pacific Islander, Native America, Interracial).

The range in age at graduation for the Evening School was from 16 years, 9 months to 23 years, 4 months with a mean age at graduation of 18 years 8 months. The number of years to complete high school ranged from three years to eight years with an average high school enrollment, including Base School and Evening School combined, of four years. A student profile was created for each student in the sample (n=138) which included: (a) grade point average for their traditional education experience, (b) grade point average for the student's

Table 1

Sample Size per Research Question

Research Question	Total in Population	Excluded for Fewer than Two Semesters	Excluded Due to Missing or Inconsistent Data	Excluded Due to Transfer	Total Studied Per Related Research Question
Question # 1	1999—433 2000—454 2001—453 2002—405 2003—421				1999—433 2000—454 2001—453 2002—405 2003—421
Question # 2	227	89	17	0	121
Question # 3	227	89	22	36	80
Question # 4	227	89	5	36	97
Question # 5	227				227
Questions # 6	227				227

Table 2

Ethnicity/Race by Sex (n=138) (Questions #2, #3, #4)

	White Non-Hispanic	African-American	Hispanic	Other	Total
Male	42 (30.43%)	6 (4.35%)	5 (3.62%)	3 (2.17%)	56 (40.6%)
Female	61 (44.2%)	9 (6.52%)	9 (6.52%)	3 (2.17%)	82 (59.4%)

alternative education experience, (c) average daily attendance for the student's traditional education experience, (d) average daily attendance for the student's alternative education experience, (e) number of discipline infractions during the student's traditional education experience, and (f) number of discipline infractions during the student's alternative education experience. A comparison of the traditional and alternative variables across subgroups including Sex, and Race/Ethnicity was conducted. A comparison across school years was also examined to identify any possible trends in the variables studied from year to year.

In addition to the collection of data, all students in the initial sample (n=227) were invited to participate in a two question interview conducted by phone. After three failed attempts to contact the student by phone, a survey was mailed to the student for completion.

Description of Data by Research Question

Each research question/null hypothesis is presented with descriptive and inferential analyses as appropriate. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 11.5 for Windows was utilized in the analysis of the data for each question/null hypothesis. Discussion follows each set of analyses.

Research Question # 1

What percentage of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School during the 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 school years graduated?

Descriptive Statistics. Data were collected indicating the total number of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School for each year of the study. Further, it was determined by compiling information from school rosters, grade reports, and FTE reports how many students were classified as underclassmen, how many were enrolled for the purpose of preparing to take the GED test in lieu of graduation, and how many students were enrolled

jointly with their Base School for the purpose of credit recovery. It is important to note that grade/class placement does not match the typical grade/class placement of the traditional school setting, as fewer courses are required for graduation at the Hall County Evening School than in the traditional high schools of the Hall County System or surrounding systems from which students transfer.

The total enrollment over the five years of the study fluctuated each year, as did the number of seniors enrolled and the percentage of students who graduated. Total enrollment for 2003 was impacted by the opening of two additional high schools in Hall County. The description of total enrollment is presented in Table 3.

Discussion. The percentage of students who graduated by school year does not reflect the total percentage of graduates who did not graduate in the year they earned Senior Class status but who could have graduated in a subsequent school year. Students may have taken multiple years to graduate, even though they had earned Senior Class status in a given year. The data documents in the student profiles indicated that seven students graduated in as few as three years from the date they entered ninth grade, while one student graduated eight years after entry into the ninth grade. Due to the flexibility in graduation procedures, a reduced number of courses required for graduation from the Evening School, the length of time a student was recorded as not on roll, or students who had dropped out and returned to school, the percentage of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School should not be compared to the typical graduation rate reported in school report cards of Georgia Department of Education Statistics which calculates graduation rate by the number of students who graduate four years from the date they enter the ninth grade. Current data available from the Evening School would not allow an accurate determination of graduation rate for such a comparison.

Table 3

Percentage of Students who Graduated by School Year

School Year	Total Enrollment by School Year	Number of Seniors	Number of Underclassmen	Number of GED Only Students	Number of Credit Recovery Only	Number of Seniors who Graduated	Percentage of Students who Graduated by School Year
1999	433	50	260	32	91	27	54%
2000	454	79	160	50	165	46	58%
2001	453	77	188	38	150	47	61%
2002	405	96	160	31	118	52	54%
2003	421	148	184	0	89	55	37%

Research Question #2

Does the grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their grade point average for their traditional high school experience? Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School (Evening School) and mean grade point average of students in their traditional high school (Base School) environment for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

In order to determine the Grade Point Average, student transcripts were evaluated to determine which courses were taken at their Base School, and which courses were taken at the Hall County Evening School. Each transcript had to be studied by course number, and then compared to enrollment/attendance rosters for accuracy. Where courses on the transcript did not correspond to the enrollment and attendance information, the student was omitted from the statistical analysis due to missing or inconsistent data. Further, it was necessary to observe course credit in determining Grade Point Average, as students earned full units during their traditional enrollments, but only half units were earned at the Hall County Evening School due to enrollment in mini-mesters (nine weeks) as opposed to the traditional semesters, with an exception that students who took courses for the purposes of credit recovery, did earn a full unit even though they were enrolled at the Hall County Evening School. This circumstance was consequential to students who enrolled initially as credit recovery students, but later transferred to the Hall County Evening School full time. Finally, it was necessary to use separate calculations for students who earned credits prior to 1998, as the GPA weight changed from a 5.0 scale to a 4.0 scale in 1998 for all Hall County Schools. It was also important to note the grading scale for students who transferred grades from other systems.

Descriptive Statistics: Once the data were collected, they were entered into the GPA program utilized by counselors and Student Services Personnel in the Hall County School System to determine Grade Point Averages for students. Grade Point Average was calculated separately for courses taken in the traditional high school setting and the Hall County Evening School. The initial sample size was reduced from 227 to 138 due to students having been enrolled for fewer than two semesters in either setting. Of the 138 students in the target sample, 17 were excluded due to missing or inconsistent data. Missing data included students' records where incompletes were recorded, but the final grade was never earned or the final grade was recorded but no credit was awarded. Inconsistent data included students whose grades reflected half unit credits, but was not indicated on the attendance roster or FTE report as having been enrolled in the Hall County Evening School during that grading period or enrollment was identified on attendance roster, but was recorded for a different grading period on transcript or for atypical course credit.

a. Total The total number of students included in the statistical analysis for Research Question 2 was 121 comprised of 72 females and 49 males. The subgroup of Race/Ethnicity included 91 White Non-Hispanic students, 14 African-American students, 12 Hispanic students and 4 students of Other Race/Ethnicity. Descriptive statistics provided the mean GPA for the Base School setting as 2.79 with a standard deviation of .36 and the mean GPA for the Evening School was 3.22 with a standard deviation of .40.

b. Sex Descriptive statistics provided the mean GPA for females as 2.83 with a standard deviation of .36 at the Base School and 3.30 at the Evening school with a standard deviation of .35. The mean GPA for males at the Base School was 2.73 with a standard deviation of .36 and the mean GPA at the Evening School was 3.11 with a standard deviation of .45. Table 4

provides the range of GPA scores, the mean GPA for each subgroup as well as the standard deviation.

c. Race/Ethnicity Descriptive statistics provided the mean GPA for White Non-Hispanic, African American, Hispanic and Other subgroups for both the Base School and the Evening School settings. The mean GPA was higher at the Evening School than the mean GPA for the Base School. The mean GPA was higher for White Non-Hispanic followed by Other, Hispanic and then African-American at the Evening School which is consistent with the mean GPA for the Base School. Table 5 provides the descriptive data for Race/Ethnic subgroups indicating range of GPA scores for each subgroup, mean GPA, and standard deviation.

d. Five Year Comparison An increase in GPA mean for each school year from the Base School to the Evening School is indicated for each year of the study. No trend in the GPA mean is evident for the Base School or Evening School setting from year to year over the five year study. Table 6 provides descriptive data for the target sample across the five years of the study including GPA range, the mean for both Base School and the Evening School settings and the standard deviation by school year.

Inferential Statistics. In order to test the null hypothesis, a paired t-test was conducted for the dependent variables. The mean GPA was calculated for the Base School and for the Evening School setting for the subgroups Sex and Race/Ethnicity. A comparison was also made across school years to determine if a trend was evident over time. The difference in the mean grade point average for the total group (n=121) was found to be statistically significant ($t=11.154$, df 120) at the $p \leq .05$ level. The difference in the mean grade point average for females was statistically significant ($t=10.107$, df 71) at the $p \leq .05$ level as was the mean grade

Table 4

Mean GPA for Subgroup Sex

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
121	Total Mean Evening School	2.25-4.20	3.22	.40	t = 11.54 p = .0
	Total Mean Base School	1.88-3.75	2.79	.36	
72	Female Mean Evening School	2.63-3.93	3.30	.35	t = 10.107 p = .001
	Female Mean Base School	1.86-3.75	2.83	.36	
49	Male Mean Evening School	2.25-4.20	3.11	.45	t = 5.64 p = .0
	Male Mean Base School	2.00-3.75	2.73	.36	

Table 5

Mean GPA for Subgroup Race/Ethnicity

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
121	Total Mean Evening School	2.25-4.20	3.22	.4	t = 11.54 p = .0
	Total Mean Base School	1.88-3.75	2.79	.36	
91	White Non-Hispanic Mean Evening School	2.25-4.20	3.27	.40	t = 9.745 p = .0
	White Non-Hispanic Mean Base School	2.00-3.75	2.84	.34	
14	African-American Mean Evening School	2.25-3.67	2.97	.40	t = 4.137 p = .001
	African-American Base School	1.99-3.18	2.53	.33	
12	Hispanic Mean Evening School	2.53-3.60	3.14	.32	t = 3.264 p = .008
	Hispanic Mean Base School	1.88-3.42	2.67	.44	
4	Other Mean Evening School	3.00-3.61	3.24	.28	t = 1.126 p = .342
	Other Mean Base School	1.88-3.75	2.79	.36	

Table 6

Mean GPA across School Years

N	Graduates	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
121	Total Mean Evening School	2.25-4.20	3.22	.40	t = 11.154 p = .0
	Total Mean Base School	1.88-3.75	2.79	.36	
16	1999 Evening School	2.53-4.20	3.31	.44	t = 5.022 p = .0
	1999 Base School	2.18-3.71	2.86	.45	
24	2000 Evening School	2.25-4.04	3.26	.40	t = 4.528 p = .0
	2000 Base School	1.88-3.42	2.78	.36	
21	2001 Evening School	2.42-3.63	3.15	.35	t = 3.363 p = .003
	2001 Base School	1.99-3.56	2.82	.44	
31	2002 Evening School	2.55-3.93	3.18	.42	t = 6.322 p = .0
	2002 Base School	2.23-3.75	2.72	.36	
29	2003 Evening School	2.60-3.96	3.24	.40	t = 5.834 p = .0
	2003 Base School	2.39-3.40	2.81	.25	

point average (t=5.640, df 48) for males. The results of the paired t-test for subgroup Race/Ethnicity indicated a difference in the mean grade point average of the Base School and the Evening School for White Non-Hispanic (t=9.745, df 90), African-American (t=4.137, df 13), and Hispanic (t=.3.264, df 11) at the $p \leq .05$ level. The paired t-test for Other (t=1.126, df 3) was not statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level. The t-test also provided evidence of the difference of the mean grade point average of the Base School and the Evening School for each graduation year included in the study at the $p \leq .05$ level; 1999 (t=5.022, df 15), 2000 (t=4.528, df 23), 2001 (t=3.363, df 20), 2002 (t=6.322, df 30), and 2003 (t=5.834, df 28).

Discussion. The paired t-test allowed the study of two different sets of scores from the same sample, by subgroup and over a five year period of time. The mean grade point average at the Base School and mean grade point average at the Evening School were tested. Results of the paired t-test indicated rejection of the null hypothesis as there was a statistically significant difference between the means in the two settings. The mean grade point average was higher for the Hall County Evening School for the total group, and for the subgroups, Sex and Race/Ethnicity. No trend in mean grade point average for the Evening School setting was indicated by the mean grade point averages over the five year study. Mean grade point averages in both the Base School and Evening School settings fluctuated from year to year.

Improvement in mean grade point average at the Evening School may be attributed to smaller class size, opportunities for accelerated reading program, and increased student support services through the social work and counselors offices. Student improvement was often impacted by a time away from school (dropout or non-credit for high absenteeism) and improved attitude and higher drive to achieve upon their return to the academic setting. Evening School teachers are available each Friday morning for tutoring or work make-up for students.

Research Question #3

Does the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their average daily attendance rate for their traditional high school experience? Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School (Evening School) and the average daily attendance rate of their traditional high school (Base School) environment for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

Descriptive Statistics. In order to determine the average daily attendance for students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School, a student by student inquiry was made through the AS400 for the Hall County School System. This inquiry provided date of enrollment, any withdrawal dates and the days absent. Average daily attendance (ADA) was then calculated by determining the number of days, on roll for a school year, subtracting the days absent which provided the total days present, and then dividing by the total number of days on roll.

Attendance for the Evening School was not included in the AS400 system due to variances in school calendar. Attendance/absenteeism was recorded by hand by individual teacher and no formal system of recording attendance was maintained. In order to document the attendance/absenteeism of students, each weekly attendance record maintained by the individual teacher was reviewed by the researcher and tallies were recorded for each student. Average daily attendance was then calculated by nine week periods and then averaged for the school year.

a. Total The initial sample size was 227 graduates but was reduced to 138 due to students having been enrolled for fewer than two semesters in either setting. Of the 138 students in the target sample 22 students were excluded from the statistical analysis due to missing or inconsistent attendance data and 36 students were excluded due to non-transfer of attendance

data from the student's previous school system leaving a total of 80 students for statistical analysis. The sample (n=80) included 44 females and 36 males. The subgroup Race/Ethnicity was composed of 65 White Non-Hispanic subjects, 5 African-American subjects, 6 Hispanic subjects and 4 Others subjects. Descriptive statistics provided the mean ADA for the Base School as 86.56 with a standard deviation of 8.32 and a mean ADA for the Evening School as 89.36 with a standard deviation of 5.01.

b. Sex Descriptive statistics provided the mean ADA for females as 84.14 at the Base School with a standard deviation of 9.24 and the mean ADA of 88.55 at the Evening School with a standard deviation of 4.80. Male ADA was higher in both settings with a mean ADA of 89.53 at the Base School with a standard deviation of 5.92 and a mean ADA at the Evening School of 90.36 with a standard deviation of 5.13. Table 7 provides the range of ADA percentages for each both male and female, the mean ADA and standard deviation.

c. Race/Ethnicity Descriptive statistics provided the mean ADA for the subgroup Race/Ethnicity including White Non-Hispanic, African-American, Hispanic and Other for both the Base School and the Evening School settings. The mean ADA reflects better attendance for African American students in the Evening School followed by White Non-Hispanics, Hispanics and Other, respectively. At the Base School, Hispanics had better attendance followed by Other, African-American and White Non-Hispanic, respectively. Table 8 provides the range ADA for subgroup Race/Ethnicity, the mean ADA and the standard deviation.

d. Five Year Comparison The mean ADA fluctuated each year for both the Base School and the Evening School. For the school year 1999, attendance was better in the Base School than in the Evening School. An improvement in attendance is noted for the school years 2000-

Table 7

Mean ADA (% Days Present) for Subgroup Sex

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
80	Total Mean Evening School	74-99	89.36	5.01	t = 2.699 p = .00
	Total Mean Base School	57-99	86.56	8.32	
44	Female Mean Evening School	74-96	88.55	4.80	t = 3.352 p = .002
	Female Mean Base School	57-98	84.14	9.24	
36	Male Mean Evening School	80-99	90.36	5.13	t = 1.109 p = .275
	Male Mean Base School	60-99	89.53	5.92	

Table 8

Mean ADA (% Days Present) for Subgroup Race/Ethnicity

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
80	Total Mean Evening School	74-99	89.36	5.00	t = 2.699 p = .009
	Total Mean Base School	57-99	86.56	8.32	
65	White Non-Hispanic Mean Evening School	74-99	89.48	4.98	t = 2.955 p = .004
	White Non-Hispanic Mean Base School	57-99	84.65	8.84	
5	African-American Mean Evening School	90-99	94.20	3.27	t = 3.523 p =.024
	African-American Base School	82-97	88.20	5.67	
6	Hispanic Mean Evening School	83-93	87.33	3.18	t = 2.197 p =.079
	Hispanic Mean Base School	89-96	92.00	3.46	
4	Other Mean Evening School	80-87	84.50	3.11	t = -1.265 p = .295
	Other Mean Base School	85-92	88.50	3.51	

2003 from the base school to the Evening School. No trend is evident from year to year. Table 9 provides descriptive data for the target sample (n=80) across the five years of the study including the mean for both Base School and the Evening School settings.

Inferential Statistics. In order to test the null hypothesis, a paired t-test was conducted for the dependent variables. The mean ADA was calculated for the Base School and for the Evening School setting for the subgroups Sex and Race/Ethnicity. A comparison was also made across school years to determine if a trend was evident over time. The difference in the mean ADA for the total group (n=80) was found to be statistically significant (t=2.699, df 79) at the $p \leq .05$ level. The results of the paired t-test for females ADA from the Base School to the Evening School was found to be statistically significant (t= 3.352, df 43) at the . $p \leq .05$ level, rejecting the null hypothesis, but this was not true for males. The difference in the ADA for males from the Base School to the Evening School (t=1.109, df 35) was not statistically significant as $p > .05$.

The paired t-tests conducted for the subgroup Race/Ethnicity resulted in a statistically significant difference in the mean ADA for White Non-Hispanic (t=2.955, df 64) and African-American (t=3.523, df 4) subjects at the $p \leq .05$ level, but was not statistically significant for Hispanic (t=-2.197, df 5) and Other (t=-1.254, df 3) subjects as $p > .05$. The null hypothesis is rejected for White Non-Hispanic and African-American subjects as there is a statistically significant difference in the mean ADA between the Base School and the Evening School.

The paired t-test was conducted for the ADA of each school year between the Base School and the Evening School. The paired t-test for the school years 1999-2002 indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the mean percent attendance between the Base

Table 9

Mean ADA (% of Days Present) across School Years

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
80	Total Mean Evening School	74-99	89.36	5.00	t = 2.699 p = .099
	Total Mean Base School	57-99	85.61	8.32	
11	1999 Graduates Evening School	82-91	85.55	2.88	t = .855 p = .413
	1999 Graduates Base School	73-96	87.55	7.35	
17	2000 Graduates Evening School	79-96	88.71	5.95	t = 1.191 p = .251
	2000 Graduates Base School	69-97	86.41	7.42	
12	2001 Graduates Evening School	85-99	91.33	5.10	t = 1.614 p = .135
	2001 Graduates Base School	66-99	87.58	9.98	
17	2002 Graduates Evening School	80-95	89.30	4.34	t = 1.80 p = .089
	2002 Graduates Base School	57-98	85.06	10.54	
23	2003 Graduates Evening School	74-97	90.70	4.71	t = 1.850 p = .078
	2003 Graduates Base School	65-96	86.78	7.12	

School and the Evening School. The paired t-test indicated a statistically significant difference in the ADA of the Base School and the Evening School for the 2003 school year.

Discussion. Average daily attendance continues to be a problem area for the Evening School. Included in the school improvement plan is an emphasis for implementing strategies to improve attendance (SACS, 2004). Average daily attendance is impacted by job schedules, parenting issues for the students enrolled, and irregular attendance history. Students typically having regular attendance in the Base School, typically had regular attendance during their enrollment at the Evening School. Students typically having irregular attendance in the Base School, typically had irregular attendance in the Evening School. Irregular attendance is a primary factor in why students have not graduated from the Evening School. The statistically significant difference in the ADA for the 2003 school year could be attributed to a more concerted effort by the administration to implement the Hall County adopted attendance policy which reduces credit awarded for students who exceed eight days of school during a semester. The subjects for this study have successfully completed graduation requirements. The study does not reflect the attendance or lack of attendance of the seniors who did not earn credits due to excessive absences and are included in the number of students who did not graduate, which could be a concern for further study.

Research Question #4

Does the number of discipline infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from the number of discipline infractions for their traditional high school enrollment? Ho4: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean number of disciplinary infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School (Evening School)

and mean number of disciplinary infractions of students in their traditional high school (Base School) environments for the total group and for the subgroups (Sex, Race/Ethnicity).

Descriptive Statistics. In order to determine the number of disciplinary infractions committed by students enrolled in the Base School setting, an inquiry was conducted student by student in the AS400 archived discipline data. Discipline records for students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School were documented only in the student's permanent record. Each file was pulled to tally the number of infractions as well as to identify the code for the infraction. The frequency of disciplinary infractions in both settings is detailed in Table 10. Table 11 provides the number of disciplinary infractions by code for each setting.

a. Total The initial sample (n= 227) graduates but was reduced to 138 due to students who had fewer than two full semesters in either setting. Further, five students were excluded due to missing or inconsistent data and 36 students were excluded due to no documented discipline information reported in the transfer from another system leaving a total of 97 subjects for the statistical analysis of disciplinary infractions in both settings. The data indicated that 54 female and 43 male subjects were included in the statistical analysis. The subgroup Racial/Ethnicity description identified infractions among 77 White Non Hispanic subjects, 7 African-American subjects, 8 Hispanic subjects and 5 subjects from Other. Of the 97 subjects in the statistical analysis, 76 subjects had no documented disciplinary infractions in the Base School and 91 subjects had no documented disciplinary infractions in the Evening School.

b. Sex Descriptive statistics provided the mean number of disciplinary infractions for females to be .76 at the Base School with a standard deviation of 2.07. The mean number of disciplinary infractions for females at the Evening School was .07 with a standard deviation of .43. The mean number of infractions for males at the Base School was .72 with a standard

Table 10

Frequency of Disciplinary Infractions

Number of Offenses	0	1	2	3	4	6	11	13
Base School	76	5	7	3	2	2	1	1
Evening School	91	4	1	1				

Table 11

Disciplinary Infractions by Behavior Codes

Code	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total Infractions
Base School	5	1	11	18	5	3	1	2	13	1	7	1	3	1		72
Evening School	3				1		1			1					1	6

01 Disruptive Behavior	05 Skipping School	09 Disrespect/Defiance	13 Cheating
02 Threats/Intimidation	06 Giving False Information	10 Drug Possession on campus	14 Tobacco
03 Excessive Tardies	07 Drug Use on campus	11 Profanity	15 Drugs Distribution
04 Cutting Class	08 Fighting	12 Failure to serve detention	

deviation of 2.03 and a mean for the Evening School of .16 and a standard deviation of .65. The range of disciplinary infractions for females and males in each setting, the mean number of infractions, as well as the standard deviation are provided in Table 12.

c. Race/Ethnicity Descriptive statistics provided the number of disciplinary infractions for the subgroups White Non-Hispanic, African American, Hispanic and Other. The subgroup of White Non-Hispanic represented the largest number of disciplinary infractions for the Base School as well as the Evening School. The subgroup of Hispanics had no documented infractions at the Base School or Evening School over the five year period of study. The disciplinary infractions by Race/Ethnicity are provided in Table 13 by range of number of infractions, mean number of infractions and standard deviation.

d. Five Year Comparison The graduates of the school year 2003 records the highest number of disciplinary infractions for their Base School experience and the lowest number of disciplinary infractions for their Evening School experience. The frequency of disciplinary infractions across the five year study period is represented in Table 14.

Inferential Statistics. The paired t-test for the total sample (n=97) reflects a statistically significant difference in the number of disciplinary infractions from the base school to the Evening School (t=-2.878, df 96) at the $p \leq .05$ level indicating the rejection of the null hypothesis. The paired t-test for females (t=-2.348, df 53) was statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level indicating the rejection of the null hypothesis, however, the paired t-test does not reject the null hypothesis for males (t=-1.675, df 42) as there was no statistical difference at the $p \leq .05$ level in the number of disciplinary infractions between the Base School and the Evening School. The paired t-tests for the subgroup Race/Ethnicity reflects a statistically significant difference in the number of disciplinary infractions for White Non-Hispanics (t=-2.794, df 76) at

Table 12

Total Disciplinary Infractions for Subgroup Sex

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results
97	Total Mean Evening School	0-4	.11	.54	t = -2.878 p = .005
	Total Mean Base School	0-13	.74	2.04	
54	Female Mean Evening School	0-3	.07	.43	t = -2.348 p = .023
	Female Mean Base School	0-13	.76	2.07	
43	Male Mean Evening School	0-4	.16	.65	t = -1.675 p = .101
	Male Mean Base School	0-11	.72	2.03	

Table 13

Total Disciplinary Infractions by Subgroup Race/Ethnicity

N		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired t Results	
97	Total Mean Evening School	0-4	.11	.54	t = -2.878	p = .005
	Total Mean Base School	0-13	.74	2.04		
77	White Non-Hispanic Mean Evening School	0-4	.10	.50	t = -2.794	p = .007
	White Non-Hispanic Mean Base School	0-13	.84	2.23		
7	African-American Mean Evening School	0-0	.00	.00	t = -1.000	p = .356
	African-American Base School	0-4	.57	1.51		
8	Hispanic Mean Evening School	0-0	.00	.00	no offenses	
	Hispanic Mean Base School	0-0	.00	.00		
5	Other Mean Evening School	0-2	.60	1.34	t = .0	p = 1.0
	Other Mean Base School	0-3	.60	.89		

Table 14

Frequency of Infractions by School Year

	N	0	1	2	3	4	6	11	13
Total Mean Evening School	97	91	4		1	1			
Total Mean Base School	97	76	5	7	3	2	2	1	1
1999 Graduates Evening School	13	11	2						
1999 Graduates Base School	13	13							
2000 Graduates Evening School	18	15	2			1			
2000 Graduates Base School	18	17		1					
2001 Graduates Evening School	14	13			1				
2001 Graduates Base School	14	13	1						
2002 Graduates Evening School	24	24							
2002 Graduates Base School	24	23	1						
2003 Graduates Evening School	27	27							
2003 Graduates Base School	27	9	3	7	2	2	6	1	1

the $p \leq .05$ level indicating the rejection of the null hypothesis, but does not reflect a statistically significant difference in the number of disciplinary infractions for African-Americans (t=-1.000, df 6) and Other (t=.000, df 4) subgroups at the $p \leq .05$. The difference could not be calculated for the paired t-test for the Hispanic subgroup as the standard error of the difference was 0. Results of the paired t-test for the graduates for each year included 1999 (t=1.477, df 12), 2000 (t=.566, df 17), and 2002 (t=-1.000, df 23). There was no statistically significant difference in the number of disciplinary infractions. For the graduates of 2001 the t could not be computed because the sum of the caseweights was less than or equal to one. For the graduates of 2003 (t=-3.952, df 26), there was a statistically significant difference in the number of infractions between the Base School and the Evening School at the $p \leq .05$.

Discussion. Unlike the alternative programs where students are placed due to chronic behavior problems, the students who enroll the Hall County Evening School self-elect to enroll. As evidenced by the data included in this study, there are relatively few disciplinary infractions recorded for the graduates for the school years included in the study. What the data do not reflect is that no student who had a discipline history at the base school had a discipline history at the Evening School. No student who had a discipline history at the Evening School had a discipline history at their Base School. It is important to note that students who had discipline histories at enrollment at the Evening School were subject to signing a behavior contract as an admission requirement. Students who did not have a discipline history at enrollment were not required to sign a behavior contract as an admission requirement. As the data do not reflect the discipline history of students who did not graduate, a study might be conducted to determine the correlation between discipline infractions and consequences of the non-graduate at the Evening School.

Research Question # 5

What percentage of students that graduated from the Hall County Evening School were employed one year post graduation?

Descriptive Statistics. The initial sample of students (n =227) who graduated during the school years identified for the study were included in a survey to determine their employability one year after graduation. Student transcripts provided the most recently recorded phone numbers for the phone survey. Three attempts were made to contact each graduate; a morning call, an afternoon call and a weekend call was made. After three failed attempts to contact the graduate, a survey was mailed to the students at the address identified on their school transcripts. Student phone numbers that had been disconnected prompted a survey to be mailed immediately. Thirty-two students were reached by phone and each participated in the short survey. A total of 195 surveys were mailed, 16 were returned completed, 54 were returned as undeliverable and 124 resulted in no response or return of survey by post office. Of the 227 surveys completed by phone or returned by mail, a total of 21% responded. Of the 48 respondents to the survey, 44 subjects (92%) indicated they were employed one year after graduation. Thirty-three of the respondents indicated they were working full time, 12 indicated they were working part time, and three respondents reported working both a full time and part time job. Four subjects (8%) indicated they were not employed one year after graduation. Three of the four subjects not employed one year after graduation indicated they were enrolled in a post-secondary education program.

Discussion. Employability is cited in the literature as a reason for seeking successful drop-out prevention programs (Alexander et al., 2001; Catterall, 1987a;. Schargel & Smink, 2001). The literature identified lower paying jobs, lower employment rates, and generally lower

standards of living as costs of dropping out. Students who have graduated from the Evening School have successfully obtained employment within one year after graduation. Employability after graduation was indicated in the literature as an indicator of successful alternative programs (Kellmayer, 1995).

Post hoc analyses were attempted to infer a relationship between GPA, ADA and disciplinary infraction of the subgroups and the employability survey results. Data analysis was inconclusive given the small sample resulting from the respondents of the survey and the item responses.

Research Question # 6

What percentage of students that graduated from the Hall County Evening School entered a post-secondary education/training program within one year following graduation?

D*escriptive Statistics.* The second part of the survey inquired about post-secondary training including two year college, four year college, technical school, military training, training provided by an employer, training provided by the labor department or other post-secondary training. Of the 48 respondents one year after graduation, 13 (27.1%) were enrolled in a two year college, 4 (8.3%) were enrolled in a four year college, 3 (6.3%) were enrolled in a technical school, one (2.1%) received job training through the military, 14 (29.1%) received job training provided by their employer, no students recorded training through the Labor Department and three (6.3%) respondents described other training to include self-employment, CCSA, para-professional training through Staff Development Units in the Hall County School System and one recipient of Health Department certified body piercing training. Of the 48 respondents, 28 (58.3%) were both employed and in a post-secondary education institution or job skills training program one year following graduation.

Discussion. The Vision for the Hall County Evening School incorporates a belief that students will value themselves as responsible members of the community, make positive personal and educational choices; develop respectful relationships, acknowledge the importance of education and attain an education in order to further future learning and advancement (SACS, 2004). Evidence of the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School can be seen not only in the employability of its students but the continued education through post-secondary institutions or on the job training by employers. Students at the Evening School are continually encouraged to seek continuous improvement to enable them to become self-sufficient and self-directed.

Post hoc analyses were attempted to infer a relationship between GPA, ADA and disciplinary infraction of the subgroups and the post-secondary education/training survey results. Data analysis was inconclusive given the small sample resulting from the respondents of the survey and the item responses.

Summary

Chapter IV reported on the data analysis conducted in this study. Research Question 1 required a study of the total enrollment in order to determine the percentage of students who graduated for each school year in the study. For Research Questions 2-4, descriptive analysis was conducted using the SSPS program which provided paired t-tests to determine if there was a difference in the GPA, ADA and number of disciplinary infractions at the Base School and the Hall County Evening School. Survey results provided evidence of employability and continued education one year following graduation from the Hall County Evening School. A summary of analyses is provided in Table 15.

Table 15 Summary of Analyses

Question/Null Hypothesis		Variables		Result	
1.	What percentage of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School during the 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 school years graduated?	Total Enrollment Underclassmen GED Only Credit Recovery Seniors		1999 54% 2000 58% 2001 61% 2002 54% 2003 37%	
2.	Does the grade point average of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their grade point average for their traditional high school enrollment?				
	a. Total	Base School and Evening School	a.	t = 11.54	p = .0
	b. Sex	GPA Females	b.	t = 10.107	p = .001
		GPA Males		t = 5.64	p = .0
	c. Race/Ethnicity	GPA White Non-Hispanic	c.	t = 9.745	p = .0
		GPA African-American		t = 4.137	p = .001
		GPA Hispanic		t = 3.264	p = .008
		GPA Other		t = 1.126	p = .342
3.	Does the average daily attendance rate of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from their average daily attendance rate for their traditional high school enrollment?				
	a. Total	Base School and Evening School	a.	t = 2.699	p = .009
	b. Sex	ADA Females	b.	t = 3.352	p = .002
		ADA Males		t = 1.109	p = .275
	c. Race/Ethnicity	ADA White Non-Hispanic	c.	t = 2.955	p = .004
		ADA African-American		t = 3.523	p = .024
		ADA Hispanic		t = -2.197	p = .079
		ADA Other		t = -1.265	p = .295

Table 15 Summary of Analyses

Question/Null Hypothesis		Variables		Result	
4.	Does the number of discipline infractions of students enrolled in the Hall County Evening School differ from the number of discipline infractions for their traditional high school enrollment				
	a. Total	Base School and Evening School	a.	t = -2.878	p = .005
	b. Sex	Infractions Females	b.	t = -2.348	p = .023
		Infractions Males		t = -1.675	p = .101
	c. Race/Ethnicity	Infractions White Non-Hispanic	c.	t = -2.794	p = .007
		Infractions African-American		t = -1.000	p = .356
		Infractions Hispanic		no offenses	
		Infractions Other		t = .000	p =1.000
5.	What percentage of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School was employed one year post graduation?			Total Respondents = 48 Employed 92% Unemployed 8%	
6.	What percentage of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School entered a post-secondary education/training program within one year following graduation?			Total Respondents = 48 Two Yr. College 27.1% Four Year College 6.3% Military 2.1% Training/Employer 29.1% Training/Labor 0 Other Training 6.3%	

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to utilize the indicators of effectiveness identified in the literature to determine the effectiveness of the Hall County Evening School, an alternative school where students self-elect to enroll. The target population included the 227 graduates from the Hall County Evening School during the school years of 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. From the initial population, 89 students were excluded due to having attended either the home school setting or the Hall County Evening School for fewer than two semesters. The number of students with missing or inconsistent data varied across the research questions, as did the information that was incomplete as a result of a transfer from another school system. Data were collected from student transcripts, AS400 Archived data, FTE reports, class rosters, discipline records and individual student's permanent records. The data were analyzed through the SSPS Version 11.5 for Windows which provided statistical analysis using paired t-tests for grade point average, average daily attendance and number of disciplinary infractions. A survey was conducted to determine the employability and continued education status of graduates one year following their graduation from the Hall County Evening School.

Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the analyzed data are presented in this section. The data can be used to infer the outcome of grade point average, average daily attendance, number of disciplinary infractions, employability after graduation and/or enrollment in post-secondary training for students who self-elect to enroll in the Hall County Evening School.

The population of the Hall County Evening School during this study was composed of more females than males, and the White Non-Hispanic Race/Ethnic subgroup accounted for 74.63% of the total enrollment. The average age at graduation was 18 years, 8 months with an average high school completion in four years.

The literature described concerns by lawmakers and school boards relative to the graduation rate of students who received education through alternative programs (Kellmayer, 1995). The recidivism rate was high and it was indicated that many students did not complete their education through the alternative programs (Kellmayer, 1995). It is important to note that the studies reviewed were predominantly programs for students who had chronic disciplinary histories and often were placed in alternative settings for a specified period, particularly the students enrolled the CrossRoads programs in Georgia. There was little literature on the graduation percentage or rate of model programs that were not punitive in nature. The longitudinal study of the Hall County Evening School examined the percentage of students who graduated from an alternative program where students self-elect to enroll. There are few data for comparison to other alternative programs in the current literature. The percentage of students who graduated as identified in this study was an accurate account of students who graduated for each year of the study, however, it would not accurately represent the total percentage of students who have graduated from the Evening School. Students who earn senior class status may be unable to earn the necessary credits for graduation in one school year due to job schedule conflicts, marital or parental restraints or transportation difficulties. These factors, along with many others, prevent students from earning their diplomas in one school year by limiting the number of courses they may take in a semester. Flexibility of scheduling at the Hall County Evening School allows students to take as few as one course per semester or as many as four.

Students may skip a semester without having to withdraw from the program and may re-enter when circumstances allow their attendance. Data collection for determining the percentage of students who graduate would require an organized data collection system for enrollment, withdrawals, re-entry information and graduation statistics. The initial purpose of the school was to increase the graduation rate by providing a mechanism for students to earn credits needed to complete a diploma program. According to Georgia's Family Connection Collaborative (SACS, 2004) the graduation rate for the system has increased from 59% to 75% since the opening of the Hall County Evening School in 1995.

Grade Point Averages were increased from the Base School setting to the Evening School setting. Of the 121 students included in the statistical data, 95% had an increased GPA in the Hall County Evening School when compared to their Base School. The literature contributed an increase in grade point average as an indicator of the effectiveness of a school (Cox, 1995; Hefner-Packer, 1991; Kellmayer, 1995).

The literature also contributed improved school attendance to the effectiveness of a school (Carpenter-Aeby, 1999). For this study, Average Daily Attendance was calculated for both the Base School and Evening School settings. Sixty one percent of the students showed improved average daily attendance in the Evening School, 33 percent had lower average daily attendance in the Evening School and four showed no change in attendance. The Hall County Attendance Policy requiring non-credit for students who exceed eight unexcused absences in a semester was fully implemented in 2003 resulting in 78 students receiving no credit for course work. The faculty and staff recognize the importance of consistent classroom attendance, but also recognize that attendance policies could deter students from enrolling. Careful

consideration must be given to the benefits and consequences of an attendance policy for the Evening School.

The literature for alternative education programs had predominately been related to schools where students were placed due to academic failure resulting from disciplinary infractions and behavior problems (Chalker, 1994; Wiley, 2000). Typically, the students in these programs return to their Base Schools at the end of a designated period of time. The target population for the Hall County Evening School attracted students who have dropped out of school or are risk of dropping out and they may complete their education at the Evening School without returning to their base school. Unlike the alternative programs whose target population were those students who were placed there due to disciplinary offenses or chronic misbehavior, students who enroll in the Hall County Evening School would not be described as chronic offenders. Disciplinary reasons would not be a primary factor in choosing to enroll in the Hall County Evening School.

Survey results were positive based on the completed surveys. Of the 48 respondents, 92% of Hall County School graduates were employed one year after graduation. Only four respondents indicated they were not working one year after graduation, and three of those were enrolled in post-secondary education. Forty three percent of the respondents were enrolled in a two year, four year or technical college. Twenty nine percent indicated having received job training from an employer. More than half of the respondents were both employed and in a post-secondary education institution or job skills training program.

This study has infers that students who entered the Hall County Evening School had Grade Point Averages that would have allowed graduation in their home schools if they had continued enrollment and met attendance requirements. This study would infer that if a student

had regular attendance in their Base School, their attendance in the Evening School would be regular. This study has revealed that students who self-elect to enroll in the Hall County Evening School had few disciplinary infractions in their home schools prior to entry and there were fewer discipline offenses in the Evening School setting. Factors contributing to why students drop out of the traditional school can be addressed in the Hall County Evening School due to its smaller class size, flexibility in scheduling, on site social worker and guidance counselor, community partnerships and a caring supportive staff.

The literature also describes longevity as an indicator of success (Case, 1981; Korn, 1991). The Hall County Evening School admitted students for its first session on January 15, 1995 as a school-within-a-school, sharing the Johnson High School facility. In 2000, it moved to its own facility near Johnson High School. In Fall, 2004, the Hall County Evening School was renamed the Lanier Career Academy and moved into a new 45,000 square foot facility on 30 acres. This expansion of the program included Lanier Tech post-secondary courses, and the Ninth District Opportunity Child Care Program.

Recommendations

1. Modify and adapt the current data collection system for the Hall County School System to record and analyze grade point average, average daily attendance, discipline infractions and graduation statistics for the Hall County Evening School more easily for the purposes of program planning and to prompt continued financial support for the school board and community partnerships. Develop an organized data collection system that would enable the Hall County Evening School to record statistics related to returning dropouts, expectant or single mothers, low achievers, special needs students, low income status students and correlate the relationship of these factors to non-graduation statistics.

2. The Hall County Evening School might consider attendance incentives to encourage regular attendance that would benefit students, provided attendance policies would continue to allow flexibility for enrollment.

3. Require an academic plan, attendance agreement, and behavioral contract for all students enrolling in the Hall County Evening School.

Implications for Further Study

1. Conduct a longitudinal follow-up study on students who have graduated at one year post graduation and five years post graduation as part of an on-going program evaluation.

2. Conduct a follow-up study of students who did not graduate to determine factors that impacted their withdrawal or drop out decision.

3. Conduct a study of the collaborative/support services provided to students who are enrolled to determine if there is a correlation between those services and continued enrollment and completion by graduation.

4. Conduct a study of other alternative education high schools where students self-elect to enroll to identify program attributes that encourage student participation and completion by graduation.

REFERENCES

Abbott, G. M. (1994). ALPHA: A survivor. *Educational Leadership, 52*(1), 23-25.

Adams, A. T. (2000). The status of school discipline and violence. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 567*(1), 140-156.

Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D.R., & Kabbani, N.S. (2001). The dropout process in life course perspective: Early risk factors at home and school. *Teachers College Record, 103*(5), 570- 822.

Alspaugh, J. W. (1997). Maybe schools encourage dropping out. *American Secondary Education, 25*(4), 10-17.

Alternative schools try to turn lives from wrong path. (1999, January 24). The Augusta Chronicle, p. 6C.

Altschuler, D. M., & Armstrong, T. L. (1994). *Intensive aftercare for high-risk juveniles: policies and procedures.* Sacremento, CA: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September, 1994.

Amory, J., & Wolf, T. (1978). Evaluating non-traditional programs: A handbook of issues and options. In T. E. Deal, & R. R. Nolan (Eds.), *Alternative schools: Ideologies, realities and guidelines* (pp. 231-271). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Arnove, R., & Strout, T. (1978). Alternative schools and cultural pluralism: Promise and reality. *Educational Research Quarterly, 2*(4), 74-95.

Arnove, R., & Strout, T. (1980). Alternative schools for disruptive youth. *Educational*

Arnstine, B., & Futernick, K. (1999). The LegiSchool Project: Teaching democracy as an alternative for all schools. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 124-126.
Forum, 44(4), 453-471.

Ascher, C. (1982). Alternative schools—Some answers and questions. *Urban Review, 14*(1), 65-69.

Ashcroft, R. (1999). Training and professional identify for educators in alternative education settings. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 82-85.

Aronson, S. R., (1995). *Alternative learning environments. Insights on education policy and Practice.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory.

Ayers, W., Bracey, G., & Smith, G. (2000). The ultimate education reform? Make schools smaller. *Center for Education Research, Analysis and Innovation.* Retrieved March 18, 2003, from (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CERAI/documents/archives/00/cerai-00-35.htm).

Bakken, T., & Kortering, L. (1999). The constitutional and statutory obligations of schools to prevent students with disabilities from dropping out. *Remedial and Special Education 20*(6), 360-366. Retrieved February 22, 2003 from (http://proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu:2123/hww/results/results_single.jhtml).

Barr, R. D. (1981). Alternatives for the eighties: A second decade of development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 62*(8), 570-573.

Barr, R. D., Colston, B., & Parrett, W. H., (1997). An analysis of six school evaluations: The effectiveness of alternative public schools. *Viewpoints. Bulletin of the School of Education*. (Indiana University)*, 53,* 1-30.

Barr, R. D., & Parrett, W. H. (1997). *How to create alternative, magnet and charter schools that work.* Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Bates, J. T. (1993). Portrait of a successful rural alternative school. *Rural Educator, 14*(3), 20-24.

Barton, C. (1998). *Perceptions of success in public secondary alternative programs.* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Oregon, 1998).

Bauer, A. M., Shea, T. M., & Keppler, R. (1986). Levels systems: A framework for the individualization of behavior management. *Behavioral Disorders November*, 12(1), 28-35.

Bauman, A. (1998). Finding experts in unexpected places: Learning from those who have failed. *High School Journal, 81*(4), 258-267.

Beck, L., & Muia, J. A. (1980). A portrait of a tragedy: Research findings on the dropout. *High School Journal, 64*(2), 65-72.

Black, S. (1997). One last chance, research report. *American School Journal, 184*(5), 40-42.

Boyer, E. L. (1987). Early schooling and the nation's future. *Educational Leadership, 44*(6), 4-6.

Brown, M. J. (1998). *A profile of the mission, organizational structure and perceptions of administrators and teachers of selected alternative schools in central Texas.* (Doctoral Dissertation, Office of Graduate Studies of Texas A & M University, 1998).

Bucci, J. A. & Reitzammer, A. F. (1992). Teachers make the critical difference in dropout prevention. *Educational Forum, 57*(1), 63-69.

Burns, L. T. (1998). Make sure it's service learning, not just community service. *Education Digest, 64* (2), 38-41.

Callison, W. (1994). *Dropout prevention handbook: Apprenticeships and other solutions.* Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Cardenas, J., & First, J. M. (1985). Children at risk. *Educational Leadership, 43*(1), 4-8.

Carnevale, A. P. & Porro, J. D. (1994) *Quality Education: School reform for the New American Economy. American Society for Training and Development*, U. S. Department of Educational Research and Improvement, Contract Number: 433JAJ301013

Carpenter-Aeby, T. (1999). *An evaluation of psychosocial and educational outcomes in an alternative educational program.* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1999).

Case, B. J. (1981). Lasting alternatives: A lesson in survival. *Phi Delta Kappan, 62*(8), 554-557.

Castaneda, L. V. (1997). Alternative to failure: A community-based school program for Latino teens. *Education and Urban Society, 30*(1), 90-106.

Castleberry, S. E., & Enger, J. M. (1998). Alternative school students' concepts of success. *NASSP Bulletin, 82*(606), 105-111.

Catterall, J. S. (1986). *A process model of dropping out of school: Implications for research and policy in an era of raised academic standards.* Center for Research on Evaluations, Standards, and Student Testing, CSE Report No. 264. University of California, Los Angeles.

Catterall, J. S. (1987a). On the social costs of dropping out of school. *High School Journal, 71*(1), 19-30.

Catterall, J. S. (1987b). *Standards and school dropouts: A national study of the minimum competency test.* Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing. University of California, Los Angeles.

Catterall, J. S. (1988). *School dropouts: Here today, here tomorrow*. Center for Research on evaluation, Standards and Student Testing, CSE Report No. 296. UCLA Journal of Education.

Catterall, J. S., & Stern, D. (1986). The effects of alternative school programs on high school completion and labor market outcomes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 8*(1), 77-86.

Caudle, M. (1999). *Reintegration from alternative schools to mainstream settings*. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of New Orleans, 1999).

Chalker, S. C. (1994). *A description of separate secondary alternative school programs in Georgia in 1993-1994.* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1994).

Clabaugh, G. K., & Rozycki, E. G. (1990). *Understanding schools: The foundations of education.* New York: Harper & Row.

Clark, A. M. (2000). *An exploratory study of attitudes toward middle school alternative education programs.* (Masters thesis, University of Georgia, 2000).

Colvin, G. L. (1997). Focusing on alternative focus schools. *American Secondary Education, 25*(4), 29-32.

Comer, J. P. (1987). New Haven's School-Community connection. *Educational Leadership, 44*(6), 13-16.

Cotton, K. (1990). School wide and classroom discipline. School Improvement Research Series # 9. http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html.

Coyl, D. D., Jones, R. M. & Dick, A. J. (2004). The influence of peer status and peer relationships on school-related behaviors, attitudes, and intentions among alternative high school students. *American Secondary Education, 32*(2), 39-62.

Cox, S. M. (1995). *The effectiveness of an alternative education program targeting youth who are at risk of becoming seriously delinquent* (Doctoral Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1995, UMI No. 9605852).

Cox, S. M. (1999). An assessment of an alternative education program for at-risk delinquent youth. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 36*(3), 323-336.

Cox, S, Davidson, N., & Bynum, T. (1995). A meta-analysis assessment of delinquent outcomes of alternative education programs. *Crime and Delinquency, 41*(2), 219-235.

CrossRoads Grant (1994). *Cities in schools: An alternative model*. Atlanta, GA: State Department of Education.

Cuban, L. (1989). At-risk students. What teachers and principals can do. *Educational Leadership, 46*(5), 29-32.

Curran, B., & MacLellan, T. (2001). *Setting high academic standards in alternative education.* National Governor's Association. Center for Best Practices. Retrieved December 21, 2001 from (http://www.nga.org/center/division/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF^2984.00,html)

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Avoiding both grade retention and social promotion. *Education Digest, 64*(3), 48-53.

Deal, T. E. & Nolan, R. R. (1978). An overview of alternative schools. In T. E. Deal, & R. R. Nolan (Eds.), *Alternative Schools: Ideologies, realities and guidelines* (pp. 1-17). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

De La Rosa, D. (1998). Why alternative education works. *High School Journal, 81*(4) 268-272.

DeRidder, L. M. (1990). How suspension and expulsion contribute to dropping out. *Educational Horizons, 68*(3), 153-157.

DeVore, D., & Gentilecore, K. (1999). Balanced and restorative justice and educational programming for youth at-risk. *Clearing House; 73*(2), 96-100.

Doyle, D. P. (1993). American schools: Good, bad, or indifferent. *Phi Delta Kappan, 74*(8), 626-631.

Downs, L. (1999). The educational counselor's role in alternative education. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 118-120.

Duke, D. L. (1978) Investigating unanticipated educational phenomena: A special plea for more research on alternative schools. *Interchange, 19*(1), 67-81.

Duke, D. L., & Griesdorn, J. (1999). Considerations in the design of alternative schools. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 89-92.

Duke, D. L., & Muzio, I. (1978). How effective are alternative schools? A review of recent evaluations and reports. *Teacher's College Record, 79*(3), 461-483.

Duke, D. L., & Perry, C. (1978). Can alternative schools succeed where Benjamin Spock, Spiro Agnew, and B. F. Skinner have failed? *Adolescence, 13*(51), 375-392.

Dwyer, V. (1996). Discipline rules. *Macleans' 109*(21), 56.

Eber, L. (1997). Improving school-based behavioral interventions through use of the wraparound process. *Reaching Today's Youth, 1*(2), 32-36.

Edgar, E. (1988). Employment as an outcome for mildly handicapped students: Current status and future directions. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 21*(1), 1-8.

Elam, S. M., & Rose, L. C. (1995). The 27th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 77*(1), 41-54.

Erkstrom, R. B.,, Goertz, M. E., Pollack, J. M., & Rock, D. A. (1986). Who drops out of high school and why? Findings from a national study. *Teachers College Press Record 87*(3), 356-373.

Fantini, M. D. (1973). *Public schools of choice: A plan for reform of American education*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Fine, M., (1991). *Framing dropouts*. Albany, NY; Suny Press.

Finn, J. D. (1993). School engagement and student at risk. Washington, D. C.: US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.

Fizzel, R., & Raywid, M. A. (1997). If alternative schools are the answer. . .What's the question? *Reaching Today's Youth, 1*(2), 7-9.

Foley, E. (1983). Alternative schools: New findings. *Social Policy, 13*(3), 44-46.

Freeman, F. J. (2000). Selected characteristics of students voluntarily enrolled in an alternative education program. (Doctoral Dissertation, Baylor University, 2000).

Friedenberg, J. E. (1999). Predicting dropouts among Hispanic youth and children, *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education, 36*(3), 70-85.

Fuller, C. G., & Sabatino, D. A. (1996). Who attends alternative high schools? *High School Journal, 79*(4), 293-297.

Gable, R., & Strain, P. (1981). Individualizing a token reinforcement system for the treatment of children's behavior disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 7*(1), 39-45.

Georgia Department of Education (GDOE, 2003a). *Alternative education programs*. Retrieved March 4, 2003 from http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/sla/sss/aep.html. 3/4/03

Georgia Department of Education (GDOE, 2003b). Summary of HB 1187 (The A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000). Retrieved January 18, 2003 from http://www.doe.k12.ga.ga.us/communications/releases/hb1187summary.html.

Glass, R. S. (1995). Alternative schools help kids succeed. *Education Digest, 60*(5), p. 21-24.

Goertz, M. E. (1986). *State educational standards: A 50 state survey.* Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service.

Gold, M., & Mann, D. W. (1982). Alternative schools for troublesome secondary students. *Urban Review, 14*(4), 305-316.

Goodlad, J. I. (1984). *A place called school. Prospects for the future*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.

Graubard, A. (1972). *Free the children: Radical reform and the free school movement*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gratz, D. B. (2000). High standards for whom? *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*(9), 681-687.

Gregg, S. (1999). Creating effective alternatives for disruptive students. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 107-113.

Greene, B., & Uroff, S. (1989). Apollo High School: Achievement through self-esteem. *Educational Leadership, 46*(5), 80-81.

Gregory, T. (1988). What makes alternative schools alternative? *Holistic Education Review, 1*(2), 12-26. (Find this)

Groth, C. (1998). Dumping ground or effective alternative: Dropout prevention programs in urban schools. *Urban Education, 33*(2), 218-242.

Groves, P. (1998). Meeting the needs of 'at risk' students: The day and night school. *High School Journal, 81*(4), 251-257.

Guerin, G., & Denti, L. (1999). Alternative education support for Youth at-risk. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 76-78.

Hahn, A. (1987). Reaching out to America's dropouts: What to do? *Phi Delta Kappan, 69*(4), 256-263.

Hall, P. A. (2000). *Student perceptions regarding components of alternative high schools.* (Doctoral Dissertation, Northern Arizona University, 2000).

Hamilton, S. F. (1981). Alternative schools for the '80s: Lessons from the past. *Urban Education, 16*(2), 131-148.

Hamilton, S. F. (1986). Raising standards and reducing dropout rates. *Teachers College Record, 87*(3), 410-429.

Hamm, S. C. (1999). *Alternative Schools: Meeting the needs of non-traditional students*. (Doctoral Dissertation, Texas A & M-Commerce, 1999. UMI No. 9948277).

Hancock, V. E. (1993). The at-risk student. *Educational Leadership, 50*(4), p. 84-85.

Harrington-Leuker, D. (1995). Ideas for alternative schools for troubled kids. *Education Digest, 60*(8), p. 8-22.

Hartzler, L. P., & Jones, M. (2002). One size doesn't fit all. *Leadership, 31*(5), p. 8-11.

Hefner-Packer, R. (1991). *Alternative education programs: A prescription for success*. Monographs in Education, 12, C. T. Holmes (Ed.), Athens, GA: College of Education, University of Georgia, Winter, 1991.

Henry, T. (1999, July 12). Alternative schools march to the beat of safer, stricter drum. Top teachers, computers make programs more than soft jails. *USA Today*, p. 04D.

Hodgkinson, H. L., (1993). American education: The good, the bad and the task. *Phi Delta Kappan, 74(*8), 619-23.

Holmes, C. T., & Matthews, K. M., (1984). The effects of nonpromotion on elementary and junior high school pupils. A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 54*(2), 225-236.

Humes, C. W. (1982). Counselor roles and responsibilities in special education hearings. *School Counselor, 30*(1), 32-36.

Johnson, D. L., & Parker, J. V. (1978). Walden III: An alternative high school survives evaluation quite nicely, thank you. In T. E. Deal, & R. R. Nolan (Eds.), *Alternative Schools: Ideologies, realities, and guidelines* (pp. 272-279). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Johnston, B. J., & Wetherill, K. S. (1998). HSJ Special Issue: Introduction alternative Schooling. *High School Journal, 81*(4), 177-182.

Karlin, S., & Harnish, D. (1995). *An evaluative assessment of the crossroads alternative schools in Georgia*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, College of Education.

Katsiyannis, A. & Williams, B. (1998). A National Survey of state initiatives on alternative education. *Remedial and Special Education, 19*(5), 276-284.

Kattner, C. L. (1996). Keeping juvenile offenders in school and in their homes while rehabilitating them. *Middle School Journal 27*(3), 26-32.

Kellmayer, J. (1995). *How to establish an alternative school*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Kerry, S. (2003). Educational reform: The tough standards movement. Retrieved March 18, 2003 from http://www.education.reform.net.

Kershaw, C. A., & Blank, M. A. (1993). *Student and educator perceptions of the impact of an alternative school structure* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 360 726.)

Kibort, D. K. (1999). *Alternative school project: Combining populations of special and regular education students.* (Doctoral Dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1999) UMI No. 9942790.

King, L., Silvey, M., Holliday, R., & Johnson, B. J. (1998). Reinventing the alternative school. From Juvenile Detention to academic alternative. *High School Journal, 81*(4), 229-243.

Kirk, S. A., Gallagher, J. J., & Anastasiow, N. J. (2003). *Educating exceptional children.* 10th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Korn, C. V. (1991). *Alternative American schools*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kozbert, G. & Winegar, J. (1981). The South Boston Story: Implications for secondary schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 62*(8), 565-569.

Knutson, G. G. (1996). Alternative high schools: Models for the future? *High School Journal*, 72(2), 119-124.

Lange, C. M. (1998). Characteristics of alternative schools and programs serving at-risk students. *High School Journal, 81*(4), 183-198.

Leone, P. E., & Drakeford, W. (1999). Alternative education: From a "last chance" to a proactive model. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 86-88.

Linker, J., & Marion, B. (1995). *A study of the effects of options, an alternative education program on the personal success of at-risk students: A five year study.* Allegheny County, NC: U. S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ERIC Reproduction Service No. 398 338.)

Little, D. L. (1999). *Rescuing the dropout, A case study of at-risk students attending an alternative high school.* (Doctoral Dissertation, Arizona State University, 1999). UMI No. 9924190.

Lloyd, D. L. (1997). From high school to middle school: An alternative school program for both. *Education Digest, 62*(7), 32-35.

Macauley, B. D. (1999). *The relationship of organizational culture, school structure and curriculum to school membership and educational engagement as perceived by alternative high school students.* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Hartford, 1999).

Martin, J. R. (1995). A philosophy of education for the year 2000. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(5), 355-359.

Matthews, A. L. (1997). *A Longitudinal study of two at-risk student programs in Henry County*. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1997).

Meyers, S. (1999). Service learning in alternative education settings. *Clearing House, 73*(20), 114-117.

McDill, E. L., Natriello, G., & Pallas, A. M. (1986). A population at risk: Potential consequences of tough school standards for student dropouts. *American Journal of Education*, *94*(2), 135-181.

McDonald, P. A. (1998). *Students in alternative schools aggressive behavior: A descriptive analysis.* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1998).

McIntyre, T. (1993). Behaviorally disordered youth in correctional settings: Prevalence, programming and teacher training. *Behavioral Disorders, 18(*3), 167-176.

Miller, R. D. (1991). *America 2000: Where school leaders stand*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Modzeleski, W. (1996). Creating safe schools: Roles and challenges, a federal perspective. *Education & Urban Society, 28*(4), 412-423.

Morley, R. E., (1991). *Alternative education: Dropout prevention research reports*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center. (ERIC Reproduction Services No. 349 652).

National Governor's Association. Center for Best Practices. *Graduation Exit Exams* (2002). Retrieved March 18, 2003 from http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF^_3007,00.html.

National Governor's Association. Center for Best Practices (2003). Standards, assessment and accountability. Retrieved on March 18, 2003 from http://www.nga.org/center/topics/1,1188,D_413,00.html.

Nelson, D. (2000). *Georgia's alternative Education Program FY 2001 Program Guidelines*. Georgia Department of Education Memorandum. http://www.doe.k12.gov.us/curriculum/instructional/aep/asp.

Neumann, R. A. (1994). A report from the 23rd international conference on alternative education. *Phi Delta Kappan, 75*(7), 547-549.

Neumann, R. A. (1996). Reducing Hispanic dropout: A case of success. *Educational Policy, 10*(1), 22-45

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Retrieved December 11, 2002 from http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/federal/nclb/nclb.html.

Okolo, C., & Sitlington, P. (1988). The role of special education in LD adolescents' transition from school to work. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 11*(3), 292-306.

Quinn, M. M., & Rutherford, R. B. (1998). *Alternative programs for students with social, emotional, or behavioral problems.* Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, Monograph.

Rayle, J. M. (1998). The exploration alternative school: A case study. *High School Journal, 81*(4), 244-250.

Raywid, M. A. (1981). The first decade of public school alternatives. *Phi Delta Kappan, 62*(8), 551-554.

Raywid, M. A. (1983a) Alternative schools as a model for public school alternatives. *Theory into practice, 22*(3), 190-197.

Raywid, M. A. (1983b). Schools of choice. Their current nature and prospects. *Phi Delta Kappan, 64*(10), 684-688.

Raywid, M. A. (1984). Synthesis of research on schools of choice. *Educational Leadership, 41*(7), 70-78.

Raywid, M. E. (1994). Alternative schools: The state of the art. *Educational Leadership, 52*(1), 26.

Raywid, M. A. (1998a). Big Ideas for Downsizing schools. *Education Digest, 63*(5), 9-14.

Raywid, M. A. (1998b). Synthesis of research—Small schools: A reform that works. *Educational Leadership, 55*(4), 34-39.

Raywid, M. A. (1999). History and issues of alternative schools. *Education Digest, 64*(9), 47-51.

Raywid, M. A., & Mintz, J. (1998). The journey of the alternative schools movement: Where's it been and where it's going? *High School Magazine, 6*(2), 10-14.

Raywid, M. A., & Oshiyama, L. (2000). Musings in the wake of Columbine: What can schools do? *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*(6), 444-449.

Razeghi, J. A. (1998). A first step toward solving the problem of special education dropouts: infusing career education into the curriculum. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*(3), 148-156.

Reilly, D. H., & Reilly, J. L. (1983). Alternative schools: Issues and direction. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 10*(2), 89-98.

Resnick L. B. (1995). From aptitude to effort: A new foundation for our schools. *Daedalus, 124*(4), 55-62.

Rich, J. A. (1985). *Innovations in education, reformers and their critics*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Roderick, M. R. (1994). Grade retention and school dropout: investigating the association. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31 (winter) 729-759.

Rose, M. (1996). Tougher discipline, safer schools. *The Education Digest, 62*(2), 15-18.

Roessler, R. T. (1991). A problem solving approach to implementing career education. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 14*(1), 59-66.

Rumberger, R. W. (1983). Dropping out of high school: The influence of race, sex, and family background. *American Educational Research Journal, 20*(2), 199-220.

Rumberger, R. W., Ghatak, R., Poulos, G., & Phillip, L. R., (1990). Family influences on dropout behavior in one California high school. *Sociology of Education, 63*(4), 283-299.

Rutherford, R. B., & Quinn, M. M. (1999). Special education in alternative education programs. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 79-81.

Rydeen, J. E. (2003). Finding Alternatives: At-risk students can succeed in well-thought-out ALCs. *American School and University, 76*(4), p. 43.

Sagor, R. (1997). Alternative programs for at-risk students: Wolves in sheep's clothing? *Reaching Today's Youth, 1*(2), 18-22.

Sagor, R. (1999). Equity and excellence in public schools: the role of the alternative school. *Clearing House, 73*(2), 72-75.

Scanlon, D., & Mellard, D. F. (2002). Academic and Participation profiles of school-age dropouts with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 68*(2), 239-57.

Schorr, L. S. (1997). *Common purpose: strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America.* New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday.

Schanke, R. (1998). *A guide to alternative education and literature review*. (Doctoral Dissertation, Union Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1998).

Schargel, F. P., & Smink, J. (2001). *Strategies to help solve our school dropout problem*. Larchmont, N. Y.: Eye on Education.

Seaman, D. F., & Yoo, C. Y. (2001). The potential for Even Start family literacy programs to reduce school dropouts. *Preventing School Failure, 46*(1), 42-46.

Serow, R., Castelli, P., & Castelli, V. (2000). *Social Foundations of American Education.* Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Shanker, A. (1995). Education reform: What's not being said. *Daedalus, 124*(4), 45-54.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). (2005) *School Improvement Plan for the Lanier Learning Academy (Hall County Evening School*). Gainesville, Georgia.

Smink, J. (1997). All students can learn. Best practices for alternative schooling. *National Education Service, 1*(2), 65-68.

Smith, G. R., Gregory, T. B., & Pugh, R. C. (1981). Meeting student needs: Evidence for the superiority of alternative schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 62*(8), 561-564.

Smith, M. L., & Shephard, L. A. (1989). Flunking Grades: A recapitulation. In Shepherd, L. A. & Smith, M. L. (Eds.), *Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention*. (pp. 214-235). New York: Falmer Press.

Smith, S. W., & Farrell, D. T. (1993). Level system use in special education: classroom intervention with prima facie appeal. *Behavioral Disorders, 18*(4), 251-264.

Smith, V. H. (1974). *Alternative schools: The development of options in public education*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Professional Educators Publications.

Souza, T. J. (1999). Communication and alternative school student socialization. *Communication Education, 48(*2), 91-108. Overview. Retrieved on March 18, 2003 from http://www.nga.org/center/topics/1,1188.D_413.00.html.

Taylor-Dunlop, K. & Norton, M. M. (1997). Out of the mouth of babes: Voices of the at-risk adolescents. *Clearing House, 70*(5), 274-278.

Wagner, M. (1991). *National longitudinal transition study of special education students.* Washington, D.C., United States Office of Juvenile Justice.

Wagner, M. (1993). *The Secondary School Programs of Students with Disabilities. A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students.* Washington, D.C. Special Education Programs.

Walker, J. H., Kozma, E. J., & Green (1989). *American Education: founders and policy*, St. Paul: West Publishing Co.

Walls, M. W. (1990). The promise of a job keeps dropout-prone kids in school. *Executive Educator, 12*(4), 21-28.

Walters, L. S. (1995). Expelled for violence, young toughs get schools of their own. *Christian Science Monitor, 87(250), 1.*

Wehlage, G. G. (1983). *Effective programs for marginal high school students*. Phi Delta Kappa Fastback # 197. ED235132

Wehlage, G. G., & Rutter, R. A. (1986). Dropping out: How much do schools contribute to the problem? *Teachers College Record, 98*(3), 374-392

Wehman, P. (2001). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (3rd ed.) Baltimore: Brookes.

Wiley, W. J. (2000). *A descriptive study of public alternative schools in Georgia* (Doctoral Dissertation, Georgia Southern University, 2000).

Winters, C. A. (1997). Learning disabilities, crime, delinquency and special education placement. *Adolescence, 32*(126), 451-462.

Woods, E. G, (1995). *Reducing the drop-out rate*. Internet, School Improvement Research Series (SIRS). http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/9/cu9.html.

Young, T (1990). *Public alternative education: Options and choice for today's schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Appendices

Phone Survey Script:

Hello, my name is _____, and I am calling on behalf of Sue Smith, a graduate student in the Educational Leadership Department at the University of Georgia, in Athens, Georgia. Mrs. Smith is conducting research through a survey of students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School.

According to our records, you graduated from the Evening School on _____.
My records also indicate that you are over 18 years of age, is that correct?
Record response. Yes No

Your participation in this two question survey would be very helpful. The purpose of the survey is to determine what students were doing one year after graduation. The survey will take less than five minutes to complete by phone.

Would you like to answer these questions. Record response Yes No

(Negative response) Thank you very much for your time. On behalf of Mrs. Smith, we wish you continued success.

(Positive response) Thank you for your time. Please allow me to give you some information about this study before I ask you the questions.

Your name, nor any other identifying information will be used in the final report of this study. Your responses will be counted along with the other graduates that respond. Your response is voluntary and there is no other obligation. There are no benefits for participating. No discomforts or risks are expected. Your participation may terminate at any time during this interview.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. One year after graduation from the Hall County Evening School were you employed?

   Record response Yes No
   If yes, Full time Part time

2. One year after graduation from the Hall County Evening School were you enrolled in any of the following?

   _____ two year college? _____skill training provided by an employer?

   _____ four year college? _____skill training provided by the labor department or other agency?

   _____ technical college?

   _____ military? _____ Other: _____

That concludes our survey.

If you have any additional questions you may call Sue Smith at 706-499-2646 or write to her at 3914 Demorest-Mt. Airy Hwy, Demorest, Georgia 30535. Her e-mail address is sue.smith@hallco.org.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant you may write or call Dr. Chris Joseph at the University of Georgia. Would you like information on how to contact Dr. Joseph? Record Response
Yes No

(Provide this information if requested) Dr. Joseph may be contacted in the Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone 706-542-3199, or e-mail him at IRB@uga.edu.

Phone Survey Script (Spanish Version)

Guión de la encuesta teléfonica:

¿Hola! Mi nombre es _____,y le llamo de parte de la Sra. Sue Smith, una estudiante doctoral en el departamento de lideragzo educacional de la Universidad de Georgia, en Athens, Georgia. La Sra. Smith está haciendo una investigación por medio de una encuesta de estudiantes graduados de la escuela nocturna de Hall County.

Según nuestros documentos, usted se graduó de la escuela nocturalen _____. Los documentos también indican que usted tiene más de 18 años de edad, ¿es cierto?
Anote la respuesta Sí No

Su participación en esta encuesta de dos preguntas será muy útil. El propósito de la encuesta es determiner lo que hacen los estudiantes un año después de haberse graduado. La encuesta dura menos de cinco minutos por teléfono.

¿Le gustaría a usted contester estas preguntas? Anote la respuesta Sí No

(Respuesta negativea) Gracías. De parte de la Sra. Smith le deseamos éxito en el futuro.

(Respuesta afirmativa) Gracías. Por favor, permítame darle un poco de información sobre este estudio, antes de hacerle las preguntas.

No se va a usar en el reporte final de este estudio ni su nombre ni ninguna información que le puede identificar. Sus respuestas serán contadas entre las respuestas de los otros graduados que responden. Su respuesta es voluntaria y no hay ninguna otra obligación. No hay beneficios en su participación. No se espera ningunos riesgos ni molestias. Usted puede terminar su participación en cualquier momento durante la encuesta.

¿Tiene usted preguntas antes de empezar?

1. ¿Un año después de haberse graduado de la escuela noctura de Hall County, estaba empleado?
   Anote la respuesta: Sí No
   Si sí, Tiempo Completa A medio tiempo

2. ¿Un año después de haberse graduado de la escuela noctura de Hall County estaba usted inscrito en cualquier de los siguientes instituciones?

   _____¿Una universidad de dos años?
   _____¿Una universidad?
   _____¿Una escuela técnica?
   _____¿Las fuerzas armadas?
   _____¿Entrenamiento proveido por un empresario?
   _____¿Entrenamiento proveído por el deparamento de trabajo u otra agencia?
   _____Otro: _____

Concluimos la encuesta.

Si usted tiene algunas preguntas adicionales, usted puede llamar a la Sra. Smith 706-499-2646 o escribirla a 3914 Demorest-Mt. Airy Hwy. Demorest, Georgia 30535. La dirección de su correo electrónico es suesmith@hallco.org.

Si usted tiene algunas preguntas con respecto a sus derechos como participante en la encuesta, usted puede escribir o llamar a Dr. Chris Joseph de la Universidad de Georgia. Le gustaria información para ponerse en contacto con el Dr. Joseph? Anote la respuesta Sí No

(Provea esta información si la solicitan) Se puede ponerse en contacto con el Dr. Joseph en la Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Teléfono: 706-542-3199, o mandarle un correo electrónico a IRB@uga.edu.

De parte de la Sra. Smith, gracias de nuevo por haber participado en nuestra encuesta.

Cover Letter for Mailed Survey

Dear Hall County Evening School Graduate:

You are invited to participate in a research study titled "A Longitudinal Study of the Hall County Evening School" conducted by Sue Smith, Department of Educational Leadership, University of Georgia, 706-542-4070 under the direction of Dr. William Swan, Department of Educational Leadership, University of Georgia, Rivers Crossing, Athens, Georgia 30602-1619.

A component of the study is to determine if students who graduated from the Hall County Evening School were enrolled in post-secondary education and/or were employed one year after graduation.

If you should choose to participate in this study, your participation will involve completing the enclosed survey composed of two questions and returning it to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by the researcher. Completion of the survey is expected to take a maximum of five minutes. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or may withdraw your survey any time without penalty, or skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

Your name, nor any other identifying information will be used in the final report of this study. Your responses will be counted along with the other graduates that respond. Your response is voluntary and there is no other obligation. There are no benefits for participating. No discomforts or risks are expected. Once the completed surveys have been received, they will be stored in a locked cabinet in my office and all information will remain confidential, and not be shared by the researcher except as required by law. All surveys will be destroyed within three years of the completion of the study.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask now or at a later date. You may contact Sue Smith at 706-499-2646, 3914 Demorest-Mt. Airy Hwy., Demorest, GA 3035 or sue.smith@hallco.org.

Thank you for your invaluable help in this research study.

Sincerely,

Sue Smith
Department of Educational Leadership
University of Georgia
Rivers Crossing
Athens, GA 30602-1619
sue.smith@hallco.org
706-499-2646

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia, 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

Cover Letter for Mailed Survey (Spanish Version)

Estimado graduado de Hall County Evening School:

Le invita participar en un estudio de investigación titulado "A Longitudinal Study of the Hall County Evening School" (Un estudio longitudinal de la escuela de noche del Condado de Hall), dirigido por Sue Smith, Departament of Educational Leadership, University of Georgia 706-542-4070 bajo la dirección del Dr. William Swan, Departament of Educational Leadership, University of Georgia, Rivers Crossing, Athens, GA 30602-1619.

Un componente del estudio es determinar si los estudiantes que se graduaron de la Escuela de Noche del Condado de Hall fueron matriculados en la educación pos-secundaria y/o fueron empleados un año después de la graduación.

Si ud. escoge participar en este estudio, su participación incluirá llenar la encuesta adjunta compuesta de dos preguntas y devolverla a la invesigadora en el sobre adjunto preparado proporcionado por la investigadora. Se estima que se requiere un máximo de unos cinco minutos para hacer la encuesta. Su participación en esta investigación es completamente voluntaria. Puede escoger no participar o retirar su encuesta en cualquier momento sin problema, o no contestar cualquier pregunta que le haga incómodo contestar.

Ni su nombre, ni ninguna otra información que le identifique se usará en el reporte final de este estudio. Sus respuestas serán contados con las de los otros graduados que respondan. Su respuesta es voluntaria y no hay otro compromiso. No hay beneficios en participar. No se espera ni riesgos ni inconvenientes. Al ser recibidos las encuestas terminadas, serán almacenadas en un cabinete cerrado en mi oficina y toda información será confidencial, y no puede ser compartida por la investigadora aparte de según se require la ley. Todas las encuestas se destruirán dentro de tres años después de la terminación y la publicación del estudio.

Si tiene preguntas no dude en hacerlas ahora o más tarde. Puede ponerse en contacto con Sue Smith a 706-499-2646, 3914 Demorest-Mt. Airy Hwy., Demorest, GA 30535 o sue.smith@hallco.org.

Gracias por su ayuda importante en este estudio de investigación.

Atentamente,

Sue Smith
Departament of Educational Leadership
University of Georgia
Rivers Crossing
Athens, GA 30602-1619
sue.smith@hallco.org
706-499-2646

Otras preguntas o problemas relacionados con sus derechos como participante de investigación deben ser dirigidos a Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Services Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Reseach Center, Athens, GA 30602-7411 Telephone (706) 542-3199 Email Address IRB@uga.edu.

Mailed Survey Form

A Longitudinal Study of the Hall County Evening School

Survey Form

Student Name _____ Graduation Date _____

1. One year after graduation from the Hall County Evening School were you employed?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, were you employed: _____ Full Time _____ Part Time

2. One year after graduation from the Hall County Evening School were you enrolled in any of the following? Check all that apply:

_____ two year college?

_____ four year college?

_____ technical college?

_____ military?

_____ skill training provided by an employer?

_____ skill training provided by the labor department or other agency?

_____ Other: _____

Your survey may be returned in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sue Smith
3914 Demorest-Mt. Airy Hwy.
Demorest, GA 30535
706-499-2646
e-mail sue.smith@hallco.org

Mailed Survey Form (Spanish Version)

A Longitudinal Study of the Hall County Evening School
Estudio longitudional de la "Hall County Evening School"

Survey Form

1. Un año después de graduarse de la Hall County Evening School, ¿tenía usted empleo?

_____Sí _____No

Si sí estaba empleado____ Tíempo completo____ Medio Tíempo____

2. Un año después de graduarse de la Hall County Evening School ¿estaba inscrito en cualquier de los siguientes? (Marque todos aplicables)

_____ colegio pos-secundario de dos años

_____ colegio pos-secundario de cuatro años

_____ escuela/colegio técnico

_____ servicio militar

_____ entrenamiento de destrezas proveído por un empleador

_____ entrenamiento de destrezas proveído por el departamento de labor u otra agencia

_____ otro:_____

Se puede devolver la encuesta en el sobre con estampa y dirección adjunto.

Gracias otra vez por su participación.

Sue Smith
3914 Demorest-Mt. Airy Hwy.
Demorest, GA 30535
706-499-2646
e-mail: sue.smith@hallco.org