IMPACT OF SCHOOLS' SOCIAL BONDING ON CHRONIC TRUANCY:

PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Carolyn Sherlet Gentle-Genitty

Accepted by the Faculty of Indiana University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

_____
Margaret E. Adamek, PhD

Doctoral Committee

_____
William H. Barton, PhD

_____
David Westhuis, PhD

_____
G. Roger Jarjoura, PhD

August 29, 2008

_____
Jeffrey Anderson, PhD

iii

DEDICATION

To my husband, **Keith Russell Genitty**,

who unselfishly gave and continues to give of himself, his time, and his love through

this educational journey.

And

To my mom, **Gloria Codd**,

a woman who said "If that is what you want …do it" --

a statement that has allowed me to see the world as my playground and an endless

field of opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Today you view the product but I'd like to share the process and acknowledge

those that have made the product possible. First and foremost Margaret Adamek, you saw the

potential, nurtured the dream, and celebrated the successes; while lending a shoulder through the

challenges. I thank you. You will forever be a part of my life and my success. Kathy Lay, since

the Bachelors program you have been a role model in what I wanted to do with my life. You lit

the way and guided me through. Thanks. William Barton, you stood tall as a pillar of

knowledge and strength; you pushed me to understand research beyond that of facts but to the

thought behind the research - the theory. Thanks, you serve as the foundation of my success as a

scholar. David Westhuis, you are a silent motivator, a true task master, and an effective leader.

You reminded me not to flood my plate and to keep my eyes on the prize. I did; and for your

subtle reminders of sprinting to the end, I thank you. Jeffrey Anderson, you are a true

collaborator, you informed me of what was needed to do the work, guided me to the place where

the work was to take place, and allowed me to do the work and find my way. I will never forget

your guidance even when I still needed to find myself. Jim Landers, Jim, since the beginning

you have been available for all my non-traditional questions to better understand this process and

adapt to a new place. Throughout it all you have kept your door, your cell phone, and office

phone open for my many requests. Thanks, a friend and colleague I would not trade. Roger

Jarjoura, you let me be a part of your life, your work, and your passions; in doing so you

nurtured my desire for community involvement, recognized my need for training skills, and

quest for statistical knowledge and guidance. You gave me of your time even when there was

not much to spare; you gave me opportunities when I thought I could not make it alone; and you

valued my professional knowledge and created avenues to showcase them. At each step Irene, you reminded me that the dissertation is but only the commencement of my work as a scholar; finding out who I am and what I will become is left only up to me through the experiences I allow myself to have. Together, all of you gave time you rarely had to give and for that and many other things, I am truly indebted and appreciative. I am forever grateful.

For many others that have helped me grow beyond the dissertation, Dr. Valerie Chang, Dean Michael Patchner, Dr. Bob Vernon, Dr. Crystal Garcia, Dr. James Daley, Dr. Gail Folaron, Dean Greg Lindsey Mrs. Etta Ward, Dr. Jeffry Thigpen, and of course, my social work cohort: James Brown, Valerie Decker, Virgil Gregory, Lisa Lewis, Phil Suman, Barb Burdge, Corey Pfahler, Ronnie Taylor, Delthea Hill, and Daniel Navarro.

Sameeh Khamis, there is no category that you fit in and so I must create one just for you. You have offered invaluable help in my teaching, research, practice, and study. I am truly indebted to you for years to come. Thank you.

PREFACE

After 13 years of working with young people in Belize, it was evident to me that something besides poverty, academic failure, and family history contributed to a youth's participation in crime and unwillingness to excel beyond elementary school. However, moving from this light bulb moment to the path of studying social bonding and chronic truancy in middle school was not simple. Before I realized that social bonding was a factor in chronic truancy, I began my analysis exploring youth antisocial behaviors – obviously a broad topic. After numerous conversations with Committee members and scholars and careful investigation of countless articles, books, and research, it became apparent to me that a common factor in participation in antisocial behaviors was school disengagement. I define disengagement as students who do not feel that they are part of the school they attend. These students have increased absences, engage in delinquent activities, foster a dislike for school, and eventually dropout. The school environment was looked at as a broad term to mean both its physical surroundings, resources, members, as well as its context of relationships among teachers, students, peers, and principals. Once this area was established, understanding early reasons for disengagement and comprehending reasons for participation in delinquent activities such as chronic truancy, was a natural next step. It is my hope that in reading through the pages of this dissertation that you will see this process, understand the need for the study area, learn about the study population, understand the study environment, and learn about the impact of the school's social bonding on chronic truancy and the need for future research.

ABSTRACT

Carolyn Sherlet Gentle-Genitty

IMPACT OF SCHOOLS' SOCIAL BONDING ON CHRONIC TRUANCY:
PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Background. No longer is the family the only unit of care for children and their education; schools are now the primary unit of education and are responsible for at least 6-8 hours of student connectedness. Yet, one in every 100 US students is truant. Among students ages 14-17, the number of truants is one in 10. In one township in Indiana, one in every three students is a chronic truant. Understanding why children disengage from school before reaching the compulsory attendance age of 16 is essential. This study explored the relationship of schools' social bonding opportunities and principals' perceptions of students' social bond on rates of chronic truancy in middle schools. Chronic truancy was defined as 10 or more absences reported to the Indiana Department of Education during the 2006-2007 school year.

Methods. A cross-sectional online survey consisting of 81 items was administered using Survey Monkey™. The list of participants was generated from the Indiana Department of Education's online database of middle and junior high schools in Indiana. Of the 429 principals invited to participate, 144 responded. The final sample consisted of 99 public schools. Secondary data was used to compare school demographic characteristics.

Results. Using multiple regression analyses, the results showed that schools'
social bonding opportunities and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in
middle school were positively but not significantly related to rates of chronic truancy.
The variables in the model of best fit accounted for 16% of the change in rates of chronic
truancy. Principals reported doing well at creating opportunities for students to attach
and be involved in school but that they needed to improve on building relationships to
effectively increase social bonding in their middle schools.

Conclusions. Student success is dependent on not only what the student brings to
the school environment but what the school environment provides to the student.
Creating an environment for students to thrive and succeed relies on the opportunities for
social bonding in the middle school. Truancy prevention and school engagement is a
shared responsibility.

Margaret E. Adamek, PhD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Chronic truancy is one of the top five major problems, in US middle schools

(Garry, 1996) and is a precursor to dropping out and an early sign of students being at-

risk (Abbott & Breckinridge, 1917). Annually, thousands of students are missing from

schools and often go unnoticed. One Federal census report recorded that there were over

1,572,179 unaccounted children in the US in one academic year (Center for School

Improvement and Policy Studies at Boise State University, 2006). This number

represents the amount of students denied an opportunity to learn and suggests that for

various reasons, students do not feel engaged in their schools. These numbers also

represent a substantial group of minors who are not attached, committed, or involved in

school or who do not believe in the value of school. Reid (2000) reports that two-thirds

of youthful offenders start their delinquency while truanting. Richart, Brooks, and Soler

(2003) assert that beyond permanently withdrawing, chronic truancy is the first stage of

the "school to prison pipeline" (p. 4). This pipeline is created through the substitution of

school values with unconventional values of crime and delinquency (Catalano &

Hawkins, 1996).

For the purposes of this study, middle school student disengagement has been

termed chronic truancy. The current consequences of chronic truancy have sparked the

need for this and many other studies.

Consequences of Chronic Truancy

Chronic truancy research is gaining leverage because of the increased number of

children unaccounted for in the educational system (Montecel, et al., 2004). A major

concern of current scholars is that many chronic truants often end their school career with

limited means or opportunities to return to school (Eith, 2005; Garry, 1996). In his article

Crisis Deepens among Young African American Men, Phillips (2006) writes that of every

10 Black men in prison in 2004, 6 were school dropouts.

The effects of truancy and school dropout are far-reaching. The Colorado

Foundation for Families and Children (2001) reports that 75 to 85 percent of juvenile

offenders were formerly chronic truants. What is the cost of this to the government,

schools, and society? The United States Department of Education estimates that the

financial impact to the government exceeds $25 billion annually because of students'

decisions to drop out (Alt, Choy, & Hammer, 2000). For schools, chronic truancy results

in loss of State and Federal education funding (Baker, et al., 2001). Although the

problem of chronic truancy manifests itself in the school, it impacts the entire

community. In their study on "Very Young Offenders," Loeber and Farrington (2000)

point out that the result is a burden on local social services, a commercial loss because of

students who loiter and shoplift, a decrease in the knowledgeable workforce, and an

increase in rates of daytime crime. Baker and colleagues (2001) reported that over 60%

of daytime crimes are committed between 8am and 3pm. Police claim that young students

absent from classes commit an astounding number of daytime crimes (Garry, 1996).

Reid (2000) reports that in London, in one year, "40% of all street robberies, 33% of car

thefts, 25% of burglaries, and 20% of criminal damage cases were committed by 10- to

16-year-olds and blamed on truants" (p. 3). Miami reported that over 71% of their

daytime status offenses -- acts committed by children that if committed by adults would

not be considered punishable by law, i.e., running away – including chronic truancy, were

by young people ranging in age from 13 to 16 years old (Bartollas & Miller, 2005; Garry,

1996). Montecel, Cortez, and Cortez (2004) report that in Texas over 2 million students

over a 16-year period were said to be unaccounted for in the education system, a loss to

the state of over $488 billion. On average, Texas loses track of 6 students every hour,

losing over 140,000 students to truancy or drop out in a year (Montecel, et al., 2004).

New York sets record high numbers per day for students unaccounted for in the state's

education system. Garry (1996) reports, that on average, of the one million students

enrolled daily in all public schools in New York City, over 150,000 go missing --

meaning authorities are unsure of their whereabouts during the school day. Los Angeles,

on the other hand, loses track of over 62,000 students daily who are enrolled in the public

school system. Other cities like Detroit have an average chronic truancy investigation

rate of over 66,440 students in one year (Garry, 1996). The OJJDP and OESE (1996)

report that Pittsburgh is unable to account for the whereabouts of over 3,500 public

school students per day in their school systems. Milwaukee and Philadelphia cannot

account for the whereabouts of 4,000 and 2,500 students, respectively, during a regular

school day. In Indiana 16,000 middle school children or 13% of registered middle school

students, were recorded to have 10 or more unexcused absences in the 2005-2006 school

year. In one Indiana Township, one in three students was considered a chronic truant

(*Indianapolis Star*, April 2007). More so, nationally, the number of status offenses cases

increased from 22,200 in 1989 to 41,000 in 1998, an 85% increase (Puzzanchera, et al.,

2002).

In light of such numbers, some cities, like Minneapolis, have instituted crack downs on truancy to curb daytime crime. The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention and the Office of Education (1996) report that because of truancy crackdowns Minneapolis police have shown a 68% decrease in daytime crime (e.g., purse snatching, shoplifting, vandalism of cars) (OJJDP & OESE, 1996).

The impact to society is evident -- making chronic truancy a real social problem. Other evidence of this is cited in Barton's (2005) report entitled *One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities*, where he identified that the timing of children leaving school "has shifted from … between grades 11 and 12, to between grades 9 and 10. … a significant shift, making dropouts younger and less educated than in the past" (Barton, 2005, p. 13). In addition, opportunities for middle school students to get back into the academic system after leaving have been far fewer than those for high schoolers (Barton, 2005). The Indiana Education Roundtable (2003) reported that early dropouts are in need of "far more knowledge and skill than ever before for them to make sense of the world around them and to make reasoned judgments about their lives and contribute to society" (p. 2). Richart and colleagues (2003) report that chronic truancy is the most frequent offense for which students are court-referred compared to other offenses such as disorderly conduct, abuse of teachers, possession of marijuana, assault, harassment, public intoxication or possession of alcoholic beverages (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 –Allegations of Types of School-Related Incidents (2001-02) in Kentucky
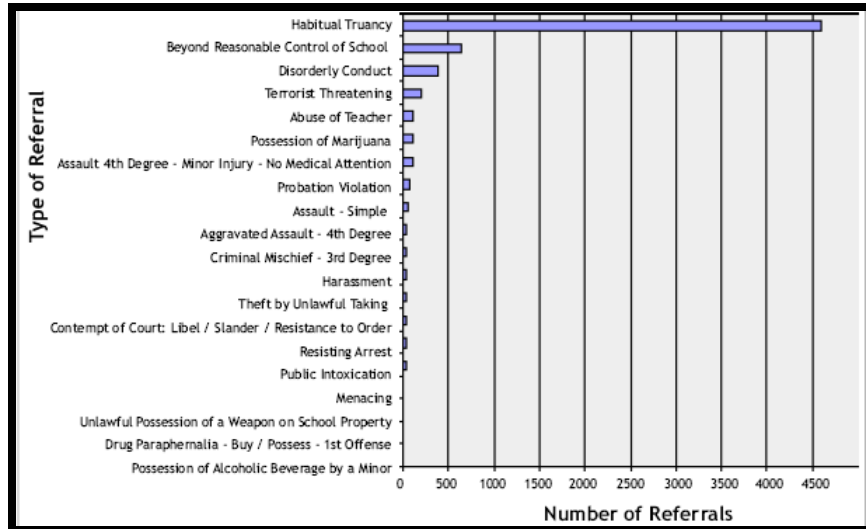
Figure 1 - Printed with permission. Richart, D., Brooks, K. & Soler, M. (2003). Unintended consequences: The impact of zero tolerance and other exclusionary polices on Kentucky students. *Building Blocks for Youth*. Retrieved from: www.buildingblocksforyouth.org. p.10

Baker and colleagues (2001) and Roderick (1993) warn that chronic truancy is a significant predicting factor in students dropping out or permanently withdrawing from school. Therefore, the profile of chronic truants includes them being more academically, socially, and psychologically ill-prepared. They lack the competence, skills, and foundation knowledge to competently participate in the fast-paced technologically driven US society. We cannot wait until students withdraw to make efforts to provide them with the foundational knowledge they need to function well in society. Though one may be alarmed by the percentage of unaccounted for children and the challenges chronic truants will and continue to face, the literature rarely reports what percent of crimes are committed by juveniles or chronic truants alone. Thus, the numbers presented herein were for illustration of the scope of the problem of chronic truancy only, rather than for

making accurate comparisons. Each author used different tracking methods and
definitions of truancy.

Defining Chronic Truancy

There is no nationally accepted definition of chronic truancy, making it difficult

to keep accurate accounts of the total number of chronic truants throughout the US or in

each state (Baker, et al., 2001). For instance, using Federal Census data, the Center for

School Improvement and Policy Studies at Boise State University (2006) reported that

truancy rates for unaccounted children in 27 states in the US ranged from a low of 3% in

Utah to a high of 18% in Hawaii. The 27 states show a total 1,572,179 unaccounted

children in the US in 2006 (See Table 1).

Table 1 – Compulsory Education Population – Unaccounted for Students

States	Compulsory Education Population	Children unaccounted in all schools	Percent of Comp. Ed. Population
Hawaii	224,147	39,142	17.5%
Virginia	1,422,261	217,611	15.3%
Missouri	818,295	112,559	13.8%
Oklahoma	701,435	96,472	13.8%
New Mexico	408,478	48,699	11.9%
Delaware	136,663	15,239	11.2%
Oregon	593,197	54,843	9.2%
Kentucky	620,697	57,187	9.2%
South Carolina	699,724	61,399	8.8%
Texas	4,515,918	364,889	8.1%
Alabama	639,026	49,465	7.7%
Wyoming	77,902	5,780	7.4%
Maryland	958,200	66,829	7.0%
Vermont	86,076	5,985	7.0%
Arkansas	499,209	33,663	6.7%
Idaho	215,042	13,954	6.5%
Arizona	921,317	43,038	4.7%
North Dakota	87,388	4,065	4.7%
Washington	985,071	43,448	4.4%
Tennessee	966,431	40,691	4.2%
Montana	130,245	5,408	4.2%
Colorado	653,308	24,989	3.8%
New Hampshire	203,296	7,696	3.8%
Kansas	485,657	17,899	3.7%
Ohio	2,129,724	73,891	3.5%
Illinois	1,872,478	52,580	2.8%
Utah	532,226	14,758	2.8%

Table 1 - Reprinted from Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies at Boise State University (2006), p.18

However, we are uncertain as to whether a standard definition was used in all states or by the authors of the study despite the use of Census data. More so, the California Youth Authority noted on their website (http://da.co.la.us/cpys/act.htm) that of those youth committed to their facilities in 1997, 76% reported not being in school or not attending school as early as the 5th and 6th grades. This is an example of self-report of truancy which does not require a definition. However, if comparisons are to be made across states, within a state, or across countries, the data may be flawed because of a lack of a standard definition.

Despite this challenge, several definitions continue to be used. For instance, one definition is that truancy involves "consistently skipping off … having fun, avoiding formal lessons and doing what you like rather than sitting inside a classroom and learning" (Reid, 2000, p. 1). Another definition identifies students "who, have been registered with a school, [but] have been identified as not attending when it, and the law says that they should" (Collins, 1998, p. 2). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (2006) defines a chronic truant as any student "who misses 20% or more of school days within a 6-week period" (p. 1). The OJJDP's definition spots, tracks, and responds to truancy much earlier than other definitions. Due to the location of this study and a state definition already in existence, the definition adopted for use in this study is that offered by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). This definition suggests that students who are absent for ten accumulated days of unexcused absences without a medical reason are chronic truants. The Indiana Code refers to chronic truancy as habitual truancy; therefore, these terms are used

interchangeably in this document. More specifically, the IDOE's definition spelled out in

the Indiana Code suggests that

> Each governing body shall establish and include as part of the written copy of its discipline rules described in IC 20-33-8-12:   (1) a definition of a child who is designated as a habitual truant, which must, at a minimum, define the term as a student who is chronically absent, by having unexcused absences from school for more than ten (10) days of school in one (1) school year; (d) An individual described in subsection (a) who is at least thirteen (13) years of age … (Personal Communication, State Attendance Officer, Gaylon Nettles, March 26, 2007).

With a definition agreed upon it was important to learn about the history of this social

problem. The history explores the context of the school environment chosen for the

study – middle schools – and reasons for students' disengagement at this stage in their

academic career.

Historical Background

Understanding the context of the school system in the United States is crucial.

There is an assumption that the best learning takes place in a school setting where

children spend most of their time outside of the home. Children spend upwards of six to

eight hours a day receiving instruction and supervision in schools -- generally up to the

minimum age of sixteen (Yecke, 2003). Schools are the only direct entity embedded in

the community with the influence of parents, teachers, peers, and the individual students

(Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Gottfredson, 2001).

The school environment plays a key role as the main *habituater* and enforcer of

society's values and norms and as an important agent in preparing children for their adult

roles in society (Gottfredson, 2001). As a result, compulsory standards -- the requirement

to remain in school until the age of sixteen -- were developed in most states in the late 1800s (Abbott & Breckinridge, 1917; Orfield, 2004). By age 18, students were expected to have achieved the minimum requirements for a high school diploma -- a "normal level of literacy required to prepare tax returns, apply for insurance benefits, pass written examinations for driver's licenses and work permits, as well as to perform other such mundane tasks" (Levin, 1972, p. 5). In American society, education is a "hierarchy [used] to fill its social, political, and economic roles" (Levin, 1972, p. 1). Therefore, the lack of education is seen as a true disadvantage because only "those who received more and better schooling were in better positions, [in a schooling-dependent society], to obtain the highest earnings, most preferable occupations, and the best jobs" (Levin, 1972, p. 1). Persons holding less than a high school diploma are believed to be unable to function appropriately in the American society (Orfield, 2004). Given this value of earning a high school diploma (or its equivalent), it is important to know what factors explain why children stop attending school before they reach the compulsory attendance age – in short, why do students disengage from middle school? For this study, this period of early schooling is defined as the middle school. By middle school I refer to the period between elementary and high school. Middle school systems cater to students in the sixth to eighth grades -- typically 10 to 14 years of age.

Various influential factors impact early disengagement from school such as the students' backgrounds, socio-economic status, school context, opportunities, and resources, familial situation, academic ability, personal perception of own competence, peer group, community, and access to resources among others. The most important

factor for this study is the school environment and its ability to provide social bonding

opportunities for students and the relationship of those opportunities to students' rates of

disengagement from school. Historically, schools have not viewed students' social

bonding or engagement in school as their primary responsibility (George & Alexander,

1993). Due to the expectation of schools to prepare students for societal participation,

they have a responsibility to meet the needs of the students; however, not all schools have

been effective in doing so.

Schools play a huge role in whether students value school and thereby invest in it.

The schools' role is often reflected in their policies and practices. For instance, schools

with zero-tolerance and out-of-school punishment policies have more students that

disengage from school and engage in negative activities (Richart, Brooks, & Soler, 2003).

Failure to meet the needs of students jeopardizes the students' entire future and lead to

early involvement in negative activities such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and

delinquency (Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Dryfoos, 1990; Huizinga, Loeber, &

Thornberry, 1995; Rohrman, 1993). Engagement in negative activities increases the

likelihood that students will be unable to get back on track academically. However, the

extent to which school policies and practices provide social bonding opportunities to

students is unclear (Eith, 2005).

While the importance of students being socially engaged in school has been

recognized (Brundrett, 2004; Gottfredson, 1990, Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg,

2004), many students still do not feel engaged. Roderick (2003) suggests that the signs

and patterns of early school disengagement begin in elementary and middle schools and

if the patterns are not disrupted, they take full effect in high school. As studies have

pointed out, beyond financial challenges and not valuing education, dropouts often report

that their school disengagement was due to ineffective interactions with teachers and an

uninvolved and uninteresting school environment (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1999; Farrell,

Peguero, Lindsey, & White, 1988; Fine, 1991). Consistent patterns of school

disengagement have been shown to be related to decreased attendance levels during

middle school (Orfield, 2004; Roderick, 2003; West, 1969). The result is that the US has

seen large numbers of students at the middle school level consistently absent from school

(Baker, et al., 2001; Montecel, et al., 2004; Reid, 2000). Because of compulsory

attendance laws, these absent students are not considered dropouts, but instead are

labeled chronic or habitual truants.

Middle schools' inability to meet the needs of middle school students is one factor

contributing to students' decisions to disengage from school, but it is not the only factor

(DeMedio, 1991). Another factor dates back to the early 1900s when there was a change

in the grade organization of elementary and high schools. At that time it was assumed

that there was a correlation between students dropping out early from high school and the

transition from elementary to high school (Kohut, 1976; Yecke, 2003). This made way

for a grade reorganization between 1908 and 1911 which resulted in the sixth grade being

brought up out of the elementary school and ninth grade being moved into high school

(Kohut, 1976; Yecke, 2003). Research by Creek (1969) and Ducas (1963) supported this

grade re-organization because students in sixth grade were more like seventh and eighth

graders due to their pubescent developmental changes. On the other hand, ninth graders

were more like tenth graders due to their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual

maturity (Ducas, 1963; Myers, 1970).

Some records show that the first recorded junior high school in the US was

created in 1909 (grades 7-8-9) with a progression to middle schools opening in the early

1940s and 1950s (grades 6-7-8) (Kohut, 1976; Yecke, 2003). Gradually, many junior

high schools were replaced with middle schools during this school reform era, as the two

entities co-existed together for a period. This new grade re-organization called for a

change in curriculum and the way in which students were educated – primarily because

the junior highs were very similar to the middle school although their curriculum

mimicked that of the high school. This grade re-organization was also expected to reduce

class size and provide a fun and educational climate for students who found themselves

'in the middle' (Doda, George, & McEwin, 1978; NASSP Committee & Council, 1983;

Yecke, 2003).

Despite creating new opportunities for early adolescents, the emerging middle

schools did little to focus on the school context itself to promote student social bonding to

the school and to prevent disengagement (Brundrett, 2004). Marks (2000) defines

disengagement as a mental process where students no longer have an interest and

investment in the work of learning. Marks' definition is somewhat vague; therefore,

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris's (2004) definition is used to further refine the

definition of disengagement. Although various studies have used Fredricks and

colleagues' definition and types of disengagement to evaluate social bonding and

disengagement, they are not widely known or cited in most studies (National Center for

School Engagement, 2006). The three types of disengagement offered by Fredricks and colleagues (2004) – posed in the positive here of what students should be doing – are: 1) behavioral (doing school work, not skipping school); 2) cognitive (motivation, effort, desire to master tasks); and 3) emotional (interest, attitudes towards school, teachers, and appreciation for school success). Although the three types of disengagement are more detailed they are similar to Hirschi's (1969) social control theory and social bond constructs (i.e., attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief). I would suggest that this is largely because when examining the school-to-student bond many external and internal factors influence this relationship. This influence is based on behavioral, cognitive, and emotional behaviors that are manifested in students' attachments, commitments, involvements, and beliefs about school and their role in it. However, the way schools and society have responded to chronic truancy have also varied.

Responses to Chronic Truancy

The calls for reform in the last two decades have been louder for high school dropouts than for middle school truants (Barton, 2005; Fine, 1991; Leone, 1990; Smith, 2006). School principals and administrators seemed to have limited knowledge about how to effectively respond to school disengagement at the middle school level (Fine, 1991). The responses to chronic truancy and chronic truants have appeared to be scattered, poorly funded, and rarely based on research of best practices (Barton, 2005; Smith 2006). This may be due in part to the lack of research. Schools were not fully equipped to deal with the rates with which students were disengaging from school. Yecke (2003) and Smith (2006) argue that the call for a more planned approach came

following the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on

Excellence in Education. The report claimed that, "The United States was unable to

compete in the global marketplace because of its *inadequacies* [emphasis added] in

providing American public education" (Smith, 2006, p.3). As a result of this report, there

was a call for change in national standards, standardized testing, academic rigor, and

graduation rates (Smith, 2006; Yecke, 2003). The implementation of the 2001 "No Child

Left Behind" (NCLB) federal standards for achievement and adequate yearly progress

was also part and parcel of the reaction to this report (Smith, 2006). Surprisingly, the

2001 reform implementation had the most effect on this study's population – middle

school students and principals. With schools called to have adequate yearly standards,

"the failure of any subgroup of students to meet adequate yearly progress results in the

school being designated a failing school" (Smith, 2006, p.5). As a result, groups that

were previously alienated, disengaged, continuously failing, or who were ignored by

schools before – such as Blacks, Latinos, children with special needs or learning

disabilities, disruptive groups, and chronic truants - now mattered (Cashin, 2004;

Scheurich, Skrla, & Johnson, 2000). The success of the school meant the success of all

students and in turn, the failure of some students meant the failure of the school as a

whole. Schools were then urged, financially, to figure out how to keep all students

engaged and how to create avenues for students to be encouraged to do well in school.

School reform then ranged from suggestions of extended school hours to new

before and after school activities. The longer school day was offered as a way to provide

more opportunities for academics and social interaction for middle school students. The

Superintendent of the Indianapolis public schools was one person calling for such

legislation (*Indianapolis Star*, February 26, 2007) and he is not alone. Many states

including Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Washington DC, and

Florida have entered the debate on extending the school day (Zuckerbrod & Trujillo,

2007). Parents, however, are concerned that with extended hours, students will be bored

(Chandler, 2007; Zuckerbroad & Trujillo, 2007). Some parents are even threatening to

pull their children from school if hours are extended and the school environment does not

engage their children. However, when assured by principals that both academic and

social participation activities will be increased, some parents are more favorable

(Chandler, 2007; Zuckerbrod & Trujillo, 2007). The question now is how do schools

know which social or academic activities they should increase to enhance student

engagement?

Changing the school environment to help students engage in schools is where this

researcher hoped to shed some light. Eith (2005) suggests that the answer lies in social

bonding to the school:

> When a student has an attachment to the school, is committed to
> school and academic success, is involved in school-related activities, and
> believes that the school rules and policies are fair, he or she is less likely
> to engage in delinquent activities [such as chronic truancy]. (p. 1)

Eith's work, the review of the literature, and Hirschi's social control theory

guided the assumption for this study. The main assumption or premise is that by

enhancing social bonding opportunities (attachment, commitment, involvement, and

belief) for all students, especially those at-risk in the school environment, schools will

inevitably meet their goals – better yearly progress reports, more students in school, fewer absentees, and fewer chronic truants. Scholarly efforts are needed to determine change efforts before more middle school students impair their future. The call is loud especially in Indiana where the local newspaper, the *Indianapolis Star,* published over 15 stories in just the first half of 2007 alone on chronic truancy and its effects with headlines ranging from *Skipping out on success* (April 22), *A battle with absentees* (April 22), *From absentees to dropout* (April 24), *We can jail them later or we can make investments now* (May 1), *Uncaring schools add to truancy problem* (May 1), To *Fix middle schools for high school success* (October 15), *Out of school out of touch* (September 1), *Summer no-shows reflect problems of truancy* (July 26). The headlines are glaring and sure attention-getters pointing to the need to effectively engage students in school.

As Kozol (2000) asserted, we have reason to view the problem of truancy as a severe failure of the education system to educate. Students who are committed, attached, and involved in school are less likely to disengage or truant if they believe in the value of school. Creating opportunities for social bonding at school though, is not reliant on the relationship and bond alone, as the policies and practices of the school are also part of the equation (Eith, 2005; Smith, 2006). In addition, Eith (2005) suggests that schools must pay attention to overall enrollment as well. High enrollment can reduce access to and therefore bonding with teachers and principals. Similarly, high rates of diversity in the school may decrease the opportunity for the schools to provide for the specific needs of each group and opportunities for students to find similar peer groups. One general assumption I have is that the schools' social bonding opportunities account for a portion

of school completion. The assumption is that if schools provided adequate social bonding opportunities, my hypothesis is that more students would remain in school and not disengage from it irrespective of the students' home, personal, or economic lives.

Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on four general research assumptions. First, it was assumed that school principals were the most informed persons, within the school system, to report on schools' social bonding opportunities and to share their perceptions of social bonding. Second, it assumed that in examining the schools' policies and practices and students' social bonding with the school from the principals' perceptions only a partial view of the social problem could be achieved. Third, it was assumed that the theoretical grounding in social control theory and the four elements of social bonding (i.e., attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief) could provide an effective framework to explore the relationship of schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their school on rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools. The fourth assumption was that the instrument created for this study, (when we failed to find an existing instrument), was adequate to measure schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding. With these assumptions underlying the study, it was hoped that a better understanding of social bonding and its relationship with chronic truancy would emerge.

Implications

The implications of the study are far-reaching. It was assumed that with greater knowledge of the relationship between opportunities in the school and principals'

perceptions of students' social bonding, guidance could be offered to school administrators on how to engage students and keep them engaged. Secondly, the hope was that the study findings would help researchers understand where to intervene and offer a general scope of factors within the school environment that were amenable to change. These factors were expected to better guide policy formulation, clarity, implementation, and enforcement of supportive social bonding opportunities in middle schools. In doing so, there was the expectation that there would be a trickle down effect to the individual student, with more students wanting to stay in school. Ultimately, there was an expectation of finding what we can do to avert chronic truancy, decrease juvenile delinquency in our communities, and increase the pool of future leaders and competent workers in our society.

Summary

Chronic truancy is a significant and emerging social problem in middle schools. To create any long term and effective change, there must be an understanding of why students disengage. Learning about the relationship among schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their school on rates of chronic truancy is a first step. Better understanding of students' social bonding in middle schools could enhance opportunities to create more effective policies and practices that address students' need to belong and encourage school engagement rather than disengagement. However, until we better understand the dynamics of school disengagement, the number of children disengaging from school will likely increase as will the rates of daytime crime, financial loss due to shoplifting, burglary, purse

snatching, and car theft. While limited research has begun to illuminate chronic truancy

in middle schools, much more is needed. The next chapter reviews the current

knowledge base on chronic truancy.

CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of the literature; highlights the needs of chronic truants, the various types and categories of chronic truants, and the theory that guided the study. It includes a summary of the current knowledge base about chronic truancy and social bonding and identifies gaps in our knowledge that the present study was designed to fill.

Types and Categories of Truancy

According to Reid (1999), there are at least three types of truancy: *specific lesson absence* – those students who skip a particular class, such as Math, English, or PE, *post registration truancy* – those students who register for class as present and then leave, and *parental-condoned truancy* – those students whose parents agree that they can miss school for various reasons (Reid, 1999). In addition to the types of truancy, Reid (1999) offers a list of possible categories for truants (See Table 2).

Categories of Truants. Having researched and studied truancy extensively, Reid (2000) believes that there are four major categories of truants: traditional, psychological, institutional, and generic. The *traditional truant* is often shy, has a low self-concept, and removes him or herself from unaccommodating surroundings, therefore missing school primarily for social conditions or difficulties. The *psychological truant* more typically shows behavioral manifestations of laziness, illness, fear of a person or thing, or other issues, thus missing school for emotional factors (Reid, 1999). Third, the *institutional truants* are often leaders. They head their own peer groups and are generally not physically absent from school – often engaged in bullying and harassment. Institutional

truants are withdrawn from lessons and skip school mainly for reasons related to the school itself or contextual school factors. Lastly, the *generic truant* is absent from school haphazardly for various reasons and shows evidence of many of the other categories of truants (Reid, 1999).

The literature reviewed for this study and on chronic truancy as a whole did not delineate between the three types of truancy and four categories of truants, nor is that the purpose of this study. The types and categories were presented to make us aware of what is known but also suggest ways that we have yet to examine truancy beyond the collection of absences. In the future however, this type of delineation may produce a more accurate account of the problem and direction about where intervention is necessary. Chronic truants are not a homogenous group and we must ascertain the ones that need and can benefit the most from specific and targeted school and community interventions.

Contributory Factors to Chronic Truancy

The decision to truant rests on various contributory factors. Rumberger's (1987) early work on truancy is noteworthy. He found that two major influences, categorized as either *push* or *pull* effects, may explain the choice to engage in truancy.

Push Effects. Rumberger (1987) defined *push effects* as factors present within the child's school environment that harm or impede the relationship-forming patterns with and within the school. Push effects are school factors that influence student's feelings of belonging in and to the school. Push effects appear in the guise of unruly or disruptive discipline problems, consecutive absences, low grades, and a sense of unwillingness to

work towards doing well in school (Rumberger, 1987). Internal factors drive these new

negative feelings towards the school and school authorities. Most times these feeling are

not evident externally. Rumberger (1987) explains that these internal school factors

become unwelcoming to the student and are related to the school climate, structure, or

context. These internal school factors influence how the student personally responds to

the school environment and their decision to disengage. It is at this point, when students

realize escaping is easier than facing their fate on their own; they then simply give up and

drop out. Push effects, according to various researchers, may include low intelligence

(West & Farrington, 1973), poor test performance (Farmer & Payne, 1992), poor study

habits (Titone, 1982), minimal level of achievement up to grade six (Wolfgang, Figlio &

Sellin, 1972), dislike of school, lack of interest in school or schoolwork, seeing no

relation of current classes to future work, lack of suitable subjects offered, feeling too old

for a particular grade (Titone, 1982), lack of success in school (Rumberger, 1995), school

failure (Loeber & Dishion, 1983), or unpopularity in school (Bonikowske, 1987; Conger

& Miller, 1966).

Pull Effects. The second influence Rumberger (1987) defined as *pull effects* are

external factors beyond the child's internal feelings and views. These effects are based

ever-changing milieu of the child and his or her environment (Rumberger, 1987). Social

work views this as the ecosystems perspective. This perspective suggests that "people

are thought of as being involved in constant interaction with various systems in the

environment including family, friends, work, social services, neighborhoods, community,

government, employment, religion, goods and services, and the educational systems

among others" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2003, p. 5). In each system people vigorously

and constantly participate in making and amending each system's boundaries, roles,

relationships, input, output, feedback, energy, and transactions in search of a sense of

balance (Schriver, 2005). These systems play a critical role in a child's ability to find

balance and stability, thereby developing feelings of purpose especially pertaining to

school and his or her role in it. These external factors are often overwhelming.

Sometimes it is as if they are compelling or pulling students to engage in behaviors such

as truancy, especially when they are in conflict (Rumberger, 1987). For instance, the

school's objective of a compulsory education may be warranted but when a child is

forced to stay home to baby-sit, or to help the family with financial duties, or even if the

student is pregnant, external factors create more of a conflict. Eventually, missing more

than the required school days may lead to disengagement from school, truancy, and early

dropout (Rumberger, 1987). More so, in my daily observation of the school system, there

are school policies that suspend students when they have missed more than the required

school days and then are expelled when they break the suspension to try to get back into

school. These external effects are normally support systems and safety nets for children;

safety nets that should catch children before they go astray and recover students when

they have lost their way. Yet, these safety nets may become more of a burden to students

in disarray or simply do not address the current needs of the students (Fraser, 2004).

Examples of pull effects may include separation from parents, a broken home

(McCord, 1982), crime in the family (Robins, 1979), parental neglect (Garry, 1996),

parental child-rearing behaviors or techniques (not believing in their child's success or

making predictions based on academic failures), socioeconomic status or poverty, poor

housing, excessive reliance on welfare (Farrington, 1980; Loeber & Dishion, 1983), or

negative peer group influence or bonding (Bonikowske, 1987; Conger & Miller, 1966).

These examples of push and pull effects have been used to help explain chronic

truancy. However, the list is not exhaustive. Reid (2000) adds that contributing factors

to chronic truancy may also include a child having any one or a combination of the

following factors that are also considered push or pull factors:

- been severely punished;

- been excluded;

- gone up or down a year in school;

- transferred to a new school in the middle of a year;

- have divorced or separated parents;

- been or is currently in foster care;

- have siblings who are truant;

- squabbles or confrontations with teachers;

- a drop in grades; low academic self-concepts;

- conflicts or fall-out with peer group;

- teasing or other classroom situations;

- being bullied; or

- parents with criminal convictions (p. 7)

The categorization of push and pull factors provides an extensive array of possible

truancy decision contributing factors. According to the National Education Longitudinal

Study, the reasons students gave for becoming truant or for leaving school before the

compulsory school age varied (Rumberger, 2004). The study found that "77% of

students cited school-related experiences, 34% family-related issues, and 32% suggested

work-related concerns" (p. 131) contributed to their decision to be truant. In addition,

46% specifically cited not liking school and 29% stated that it was because they could not

get along with their teachers (Rumberger, 2004). These are among the many reasons

students decide to truant. But obviously not the only decisions as student cite factors

such as not wanting to get up in the morning, disliking a teacher, going to bed late, not

finishing previous home-work, wanting to hang out with friends and many other reasons

for missing school (Videotaped Interviews, Gentle-Genitty, 2008).

Research suggests that in the middle years of schooling, when children are still

maturing, the school is expected to make structural and programmatic changes to aid in

students adjusting to their developing cognitive, physiological, and psychosocial bodies

and minds (Dorman, 1983). In defining what is meant by meeting the physical,

psychosocial, and cognitive needs of students as they go through developmental phases, I

refer to DeMedio's (1991) work.

Needs of Middle School Students

Physical Changes. The physical changes in adolescence are often characterized

by increases in body size, skeletal, and structural mass, body symmetry, and primary and

secondary sex characteristics (George & Alexander, 1993). These characteristics often

affect how students socialize and interact with others in their peer group. This is

especially true for girls (Stone & Baker, 1939). To address some of the physical changes

that the middle school student experiences, DeMedio (1991) suggests that middle schools avoid causing undue physical strain and stress to the student but instead offer programs, clubs and activities that value self-acceptance, hands-on opportunities, physical education and fitness, intramural and life-sporting activities, and that teach nutrition, healthy exercise and personal hygienic care.

Psychosocial Changes. Manning (1993) articulates that a psychosocial change for the middle school student begins with the need for friendship and social interaction. During early adolescence, children transfer their allegiance from their parents to peer groups, questioning rules and norms in search of independence and freedom, all at the same time. They openly mimic their peer groups' standards, adopting this standard as the primary source of how they ought to act, interact, and participate (Brough, 1990; Lewis, 1990; Toepfer, 1988). To ensure that the middle school is responding to the psychosocial needs of the middle schooler, DeMedio (1991) offers several suggestions for implementation in middle schools. Schools should promote opportunities for planned and unplanned diverse group interactions, use classroom, and public spaces to allow students to take responsibility, and allow opportunities for students to learn about diversity and other cultures. Schools should offer options for students to learn about themselves, their world, their development, their talents, and other cultures through the curriculum (DeMedio, 1991). Curriculum areas where this might occur include language arts, social studies, science, music, arts, and dating and peer relationships programs. George and Alexander (1993) add that the middle school environment must be consistent

in providing stable school support systems such as social, musical, or area specific interest clubs.

Cognitive Changes. In addition to physical and psychosocial changes, the middle school student also experiences cognitive changes. These changes include changes in thinking -- from concrete operations to formal operations, from simplistic to hypothetical, abstract, reflective, and critical thinking -- which enhances the students' ability to think rationally about moral and ethical dilemmas (Dorman, 1983; Manning, 1993; Schriver, 2005). Their perception of the world around them, their family, and friends may change and should be considered in the development and organization of the middle school curriculum (Capelluti & Brazee, 1992; Epstein & Salinas, 1992). DeMedio (1991) warns that for schools to effectively meet the cognitive needs of middle school students, they must be able to offer a constant diversity of options for learning and exploration that leads to problem-solving, creation, and development. These provisions can help to meet the progressively changing needs, attention span, interests, and learning styles of students (Albert-Green, 2005).

Together the physical, psychosocial, and cognitive changes in the middle school student, along with the pressures to succeed in school, present a challenge to those who work with students in middle schools. The needs of the middle school student, at each level of change, require specific changes in school structures and policies to ensure the environment provides opportunities for social bonding.

In addition to these developmental needs, Lipsitz (1984) offered a list of seven similarly titled needs of middle school students within the school environment. These

include the need for 1) diversity, 2) self-exploration, 3) meaningful participation in

school and community, 4) positive social interaction with peers and adults, 5) physical

activity, 6) competence and achievement, and 7) structure and clear limits. Middle

schools varied in their extent to which they successfully addressed these and other needs

of middle school students (Ogden & Germinario, 1994).

Some students have displayed evidence of decreased motivation, engagement, and

success in school because of the school's inability to meet their many needs (Eccles,

Lord, Roeser, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1999; Jung & Gunn, 1990). This is especially

evident after the transition from supported elementary schools to fragmented middle

schools, with different opportunities for teacher-student and peer relationships (MacIver,

1990). While schools have been assigned the responsibility of teaching moral character,

social responsibility, and aspects of social and emotional learning, for many students

schools have failed to balance attention to academics with attention to social and

emotional learning (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Social and emotional

learning is defined as "teaching children to be self-aware, socially cognizant, able to

make responsible decisions, and competent in self-management and relationship-

management skills, so as to foster their academic success" (Zins et al., 2004, p. 6). A

discussion of how two main systems -- public and private schools or ineffective and

effective school -- respond to the needs of students follows.

Public vs. Private Schools

Differences between public and private schools are rarely stated explicitly in the

literature. However, the general understanding is that public schools cater more to the

poor and underachievers who come from similar type neighborhoods; private schools

often cater to the upper and middle income students from those similarly typed

neighborhoods. The decision to be in one system or the other is often based on

economics with the assumption that rich children often come from educated parents and

therefore are smart. A disclaimer is not to assume that students respectively mimic the

same type of educational values and academic success from their neighborhoods or

parental income levels – as there may be different motivations for succeeding based on

economic status (Jarjoura, 1996). What are explicitly stated in the literature are the

differences between effective and ineffective schools.

Ineffective Schools. Ineffective schools have some general characteristics

including the low rating of students' perceptions of their own abilities by principals and

students' inability to participate in school activities and decision-making for various

economic and other related reasons (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997). Other

characteristics include high diversity in student composition (groups not homogenous in

color, ethnicity, academic abilities, aptitude, economic resources, etc.), lack of school

resources, dilapidated physical structure, poor layout of the school, and ineffectiveness of

the administration's policies and practices to support students (Rumberger, 2004). Fine

(1991) adds a list of 17 other characteristics that characterize ineffective schools. These

include 1) unclear teaching pedagogy; 2) lack of consistent discipline; 3) unclear rules

and inconsistent rule enforcement; 4) prison-like school structure (with high walls and

bars, lock-down, heavy security presence); 5) the affluent knowledge stance of teachers

with narrow backgrounds; 6) teachers' view of students with learning or other disabilities

or with violent past – i.e., believing that it keeps back students and their teaching; 7)

students' feeling of alienation; 8) opinions sought from students and then dismissed; 9)

overcrowded schools and classrooms; 10) no investigation into why students have

become disinterested in school; 11) teachers not creating a safe environment for mistakes

--students feel they will be teased if they give a wrong answer; 12) level of concern for

student welfare expressed by teachers and administration; 13) inexperienced teachers

teaching remedial classes; 14) students being forced to stay back a grade – confirming

feelings of inadequacy; 15) forced recommendations by teachers and principals to drop

out and take the GED because they cannot make it in the regular system; 16) little

discussion of student rights; and 17) students simply being pushed out because the

schools no longer want to deal with their disruptive behavior. It is this last situation that

results in many poor, academically challenged, and negative behavior prone students

disengaging and dropping out early. For instance, these types of students account for an

average of over 1,000 students per academic year, per public school in New York State

alone (Fine, 1991).

The result is that ineffective schools generally seem to have teachers and staff

members that do not feel satisfied but view that they are doing the best with their

teaching and student learning (Ogden & Germinario, 1994). Members of ineffective

schools do not share a commonality in goal development and achievement. Teachers

create their own lesson plans with little guidance and support from other teachers and

administration (Ogden & Germinario, 1994). In fact, it could be said that

> Ineffective schools lack intrinsic organizational vitality; they respond
> only to external forces such as central office and state mandates or

parental dissatisfaction. They make changes only when the cost in terms
of disruption and conflict is perceived as less than the cost of maintaining
the status quo. However, the change in response to these externally
identified crises are intrusions and are apt to be quickly planned,
inadequately implemented and frequently represent more form than
substance (Ogden & Germinario, 1994, p.9).

As such staff, at ineffective schools, seems to believe they have already done all they

could to enable students to succeed; any more on their part may be viewed as extra

uncompensated work.

Effective Schools. On the other hand, effective schools boast characteristics of an

interdisciplinary team approach and smaller class sizes (Plodzik & George, 1989).

Teachers have a positive self-concept, demonstrate warmth, are optimistic, enthusiastic,

flexible, and spontaneous, accept students, and listen; teachers demonstrate adequate

knowledge of subject matter, structure their instruction, monitor students' learning,

include success building into their teaching behavior, and diagnose individual learning

needs and prescribe individual instruction (Thompson, 2004). In effective schools

students believe they can do well and are more apt to remain in school with such intrinsic

support (Vallerand, et al., 1997; Zvoch, 2006). These characteristics manifest themselves

in a school curriculum that abandons disjointed subject teaching and embraces an

integrated school curriculum centered on significant issues in the child's current society

organized by thematic units (Beane, 1992).

In a study of exemplary middle schools, 154 principals were asked to share what

worked for them in making their middle school successful. To be successful, the

principals suggested that middle schools must incorporate participatory decision-making,

have a leader with a vision (Morocco, Brigham, & Aguilar, 2006), and provide

opportunities for all involved in the school and staff development. Others included

making sure that evaluation, public relations, and awareness of vulnerability, networking,

and state level support was present (Ames & Miller, 1994; Hoy & Sabo, 1998). Effective

schools set themselves apart from ineffective schools by their professional and collegial

relationships and by their student outcomes. It could be said that effective schools

> … have the intrinsic ability and habits of mind to continually renew
> themselves. They have the organizational vitality to self-assess, to set, and
> revise student-centered objectives, to plan, to act in unity, and to reassess.
> … They believe that seeking improvement … enlivens the organization
> for adults and students alike and improvement is possible regardless of the
> current state of the organization. (Ogden & Germinario, 1994, p.8).

Effective schools create a teaching and values-driven environment where involvement

and success is encouraged and all members of the school community play an active and

consultative role in the school's success and in making sure each student is attached,

involved, and committed to school.

Does the competition between public and private or ineffective and effective

schools create a war of excellence? In the *War against Excellence*, Yecke (2003) argues

that society has gotten to a point where students are taught to be average and their

intelligence is not valued because of the struggle for equality and education for all.

Programs are being developed for the at-risk and not for the gifted. I am of the opinion

that programs should be developed for all to be involved but for many years the gifted got

the goods. In the discussion on the war against excellence, Yecke (2003) centers her

argument on societal values and student education as there is an assumed macro-micro

link in the school-student relationship. For instance, the assumption is that the more time

a student spends in the company of teachers and the school, the greater the level of

influence on their success (Alston, Harley, & Lenhoff, 1995) or the greater the level of

perceived social bond. This assumption is best understood through a theoretical lens or

framework.

Theoretical Framework

Various theories can be used to help explain chronic truancy including strain,

differential association, social learning, symbolic interaction, and social control theories,

among many others. For the purposes of this study, social control theory and its four

constructs of social bonding (attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief) are used.

The theory is assumed to be the most effective to understand the truant, their decisions to

truant, and their interaction within the middle school from the principals' viewpoint.

Social control theory is ideal for understanding chronic truancy because it has become

one of the major theories in understanding delinquent behaviors. Hirschi (1969)

determined that connections to people, in the creation of a relationship, are important

factors in delinquency. In other words, social bond matters. For middle school students

who are exploring their own identity and finding their own sense of self, opportunities for

social bonding is an essential ingredient to their academic and future success (Brough,

1990; Brunsma, 2006; DeMido, 1991; Dorman, Lipsitz, & Verner, 1985; Eccles, et al.,

1999; Jung & Gunn, 1990; Manning, 1993; Toepfer, 1988; Zins, et al., 2004). A lack of

opportunities for connection and social bonding to school is purportedly linked to

students' disengagement and chronic truancy. One hypothesis is based on what Hirschi

and other colleague posit -- the absence of inhibition or lack of strong positive

relationships and presence of weak social bonding, especially to school, facilitates

engagement in truancy or various forms of antisocial behaviors (Brezina, Piquero, &

Mazerolle, 2001; Hirschi, 1969; Sigfusdottir, Farkas, & Silver, 2004). Researchers

continue to refer to this theory as one of the first theories to examine school social bond

as a primary predictor of delinquency and the four constructs of social bond as key

protective factors for the school-aged child – with even more influence than family

(Crosnoe, Erickson, & Dornbusch, 2002; Eith, 2005; Maddox & Prinz, 2003).

When these bonds are absent or weak, there is no one to influence the student

away from the negative behaviors; thereby, there is no bond to break (Brown et al., 2005;

Glueck & Glueck, 1950). Toby (1957) has termed this lack of bonding as lack of *stakes

in conformity*. Those who have less to lose because they are not attached or committed

are more likely to take risks. Early social control theory espoused that this risk is based

both on students' personal decisions to not comply and on school principals' labeling of

the non-compliant behavior (Reiss, 1951). Ideally, there is a presumed correlation of

social bond to school engagement and chronic truancy. However, this relationship may

be impacted by certain school demographics that help to create or inhibit this relationship

within the school (Eith, 2005).

Four constructs of the social bond

Hirschi (1969) delineates his four major constructs of the social bond. He

describes *Attachment* as affection or close relationships with others. This element

suggests that students with stronger attachments are less likely to truant and violate

school policies because they are actively engaged. The truants who do not feel attached

to persons or entities within the school may not be engaged in opportunities that build social bonds; thereby, they do not embrace the schools' values and norms, and have less of a stake in the school. The second major element is commitment. *Commitment* describes the investment made in conventional activities such as peer relationships and school activities. When students invest time, energy, and personal resources into school, they are less likely to abandon it (Hirschi, 1969). Therefore, middle school students who feel committed and invested in school, via academics, extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and relationships with a good teacher, friend, or peer group may be less likely to disengage from school and truant. The third element is involvement. *Involvement* speaks directly to what individuals find themselves doing to keep busy and deterred from delinquent activities. The more they are invested and engaged in pro-social, structured activities (studying habits), like school, leadership in a club or sports team, the less likely they are to engage in deviant activities, like truanting because they are busy. However, when they cannot find or are not involved in conventional activities that bring them joy in the school, they are more likely to invest in unconventional activities. The last of the four elements of social bonding is belief. *Belief* and values are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong. This element speaks to the degree to which students have belief in the value of school and feel that the school's rules and societal values are fair. Moral education is seen as having a direct effect on students' decisions to truant (Siegel & Senna, 2007). Many of these values are taught in the home and are often emphasized in the school. The societal belief in the value of education is a key factor in choosing (or

not choosing) to be truant. Many students that are truant do not yet believe that without an education they are bound to failure or limited opportunities.

Social Control theory postulates that the higher the presence of these four constructs, the higher the level of social bonding. The seven needs of middle school students outlined by Lipsitz (1984) earlier in this chapter appear to mimic Hirschi's four constructs of social bonding – attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. *Attachment* is clearly present when Lipsitz calls for positive social interaction with peers and adults, *involvement* when Lipsitz calls for meaningful participation in school and community activities, and *commitment* when Lipsitz asks that schools provide opportunities for students to explore diversity, self-exploration, and show competence and achievement to meet their personal needs for connection. *Belief* is the last of Hirschi's four constructs and is also addressed by Lipsitz' needs. Lipsitz discusses the schools' provision of clear limits, rules, and norms in the school's organizational structure. Both Lipsitz and Hirschi offer different organizing frameworks for addressing the needs of adolescents (See Table 2).

Table 2 – Organizing Framework Similarities

	Hirschi (1969) 4 Constructs	Lipsitz (1984) 7 needs of Adolescents
1	Attachment	Positive social interaction
2	Involvement	Meaningful participation in school and community, physical activity
3	Commitment	Diversity, competence and achievement
4	Belief	Structure and clear limits, self-exploration

While social control theory proposes that strong personal bonds deter delinquency, it is an individually driven theory, bringing into question the need to

include community and structural community factors. The theory was not originally

organized as a way to answer 'why people break the norms of society such as through

delinquency but what impacts those decisions. Researchers like Hoffmann (2002)

and Kornhauser (1978) suggest that social bonds are impacted by deteriorated

structural and community-driven factors that further facilitate involvement in

negative behaviors such as truancy (Bursik & Grasmick, 1983; Peeples & Loeber,

1994). Evidently, where one lives and spends most of their childhood (the school

environment) does influence behavior (Catalano, et al., 1998; Catalano & Hawkins,

1996; Goetz, 2003; Hawkins & Weis, 1985; Herrenkohl, Hawkins, Chung, Hill, &

Battin-Pearson, 2001; Sheidow, Gorman-Smith, Tolan, & Henry, 2001). In addition,

this study included selected demographic variables and controlled for their effect on

schools opportunities for social bonding and principal's perceptions of students'

social bonding on rates of chronic truancy (See Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Proposed Theoretical Framework
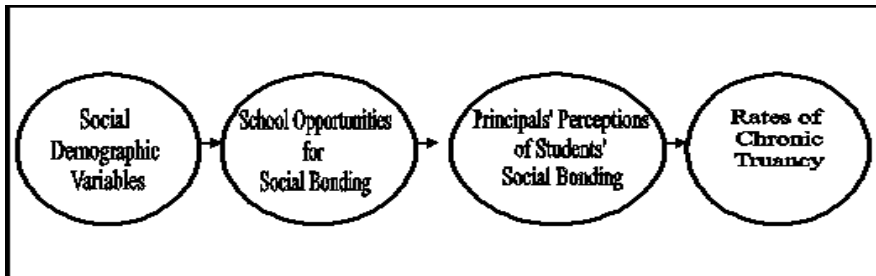
In the literature on dropouts and chronic truancy, some of these variables include

interactions in the family, peer group, community, personal characteristics, and factors in

the school environment (Geenen, Powers, & Lopez-Vasquez, 2001; Herrenkohl, et al.,

2000; Johnstone, 2002; Mizelle, 1999; Roderick, 2003). In a longitudinal study, Werner

and Smith (2001) added that emotional support provided to truants in and outside the

home is also worth considering. This support is necessary because students, in general,

are often going through physical and psychological changes themselves that may affect

their scholastic ability (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Johnstone, 2002; Werner & Smith,

2001). For example "troubled youths who had grown up in poverty, but who were

socially and intellectually competent profited more from naturally occurring

opportunities that opened up for them into adulthood" (Werner & Smith, 2001, p.180).

Similarly, the Chicago Youth Development Survey suggested that poor family

functioning, impoverished communities, and limited social networks can be mediated by

strong school support, and students' social bond to the school (Sheidow, et al., 2001).

This conclusion is very important, as some studies have argued that students most at-risk,

living in poverty-stricken communities, and from single-headed or poor functioning

families are less likely to succeed (Clark, 1994; Clark & Clark, 1984; Fine, 1991).

Clearly, social bonding manifests itself in various ways and accounting for all the factors

in the school environment would be impossible. Nonetheless, as evident from the

discussion thus far, some school-related factors have been delineated as associated with

chronic truancy. A discussion of some of these factors and a more in-depth review of the

literature follows.

Factors Associated with Chronic Truancy

To determine what factors are associated with chronic truancy, I conducted an

extensive review of the literature and found 103 factors were identified as being

associated with chronic truancy or dropout. The 103 factors can be organized into five

categories: physical environment, organizational structure, contextual factors, programs,

and policies and procedures (See Table 3).

Table 3 – School Environment Factors Contributing to Student Disengagement

Physical	Organizational	Programs	Contextual	Policies & Procedures
School structure (8) Size of school (2) Grade organization (1) Class size (1) Age of school (1) Adequacy of facilities (1)	School organization (3) Knowledge & expert at teaching 10-14 year olds (3) Organizational structure for students and teacher participation in decision making (2) Leadership (1) Teaching an academic core (1) Background of teachers (1)	Health & Fitness (4) Guidance or Advisory (2) Community Programs (2) Parental Programs (1)	History & stability of family, peer group and community (11) Perception of or belief in student success by admin. (7) Student feeling of alienation or support (bond) (5) Student perception or belief in their level of effort, school performance or satisfaction (5) Student needs (5) Inequality/race (4) Overcrowding/urban (4) Developmentally appropriate (3) Student social maturity (3) Engagement in school (2) Ability to respond to developmental diversity (2) Climate – safe environment (2) Ability to meet physical, psychosocial and cognitive development of students (2) Use of uniforms (1) Relevance to learning (1) Grade adjustment (1) Social adjustment (1) Community view of blacks (1) Perception by school peer group (1) Small learning community (1)	Staying back a grade (2) Clear limits (2) Discipline (1) Rules & Rule Enforcement (1) School control (1) Co-option of students (1) Attendance (1) Policies for the Investigation of students' disinterest in school (1)

Beside each factor is a number that indicates the frequency with which the factor was

mentioned in the literature. Category one is the ***physical environment*** defined as the

structure of the school environment and includes but is not limited to the classrooms, offices, playgrounds, gymnasiums, and so forth. The ***organizational structure*** includes the human resources within the school environment including the principal, vice principal, teachers, staff, and even the counselor. Category three is ***programs*** – academic and social programs within the school environment implemented for various reasons. The ***contextual factors***, category four, include the school climate, student needs (albeit physical, psychological, psychosocial, and cognitive), students' school satisfaction, perception of support, teacher involvement and performance, and school success, among other related factors. The ***policies and procedures***, category five, anchors the work of the principals. They frame the programs, help establish the use of the physical space, and ensure a safe environment for growth, learning, and development for students, teachers, and principals in valuing students' success and building their social bond to the school. These descriptions were derived from the discussions in the literature of the various categories.

Of the five categories, the contextual factors have been most heavily researched (e.g. Beane,1992; Brough, 1990; Clark & Clark, 1984; Crockett, Losoff, & Peterson, 1984; DeMedio, 1991; Dorman, 1983; Dorman, et al.,1985; George & Alexander, 1993; Gottfredson, 1990; Jung & Gunn, 1990; Kohut, 1976; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmans, & Blatt, 1997; Manning, 1993; Milgram, 1992; Mynard, 1986; Petersen & Crockett, 1985; Petersen, Leffert, Graham, Alwin, & Ding, 1997; Stone & Baker, 1939). The category with the least research was policies and procedures with 10 of the 103 factors accounting for this study area.

It is evident that although much has been studied, much is still unknown about reasons for early school disengagement. All students, especially those at-risk of chronic truancy, may benefit from school structures and policies that provide opportunities for increased social competence, ability, willingness, and commitment to stay in school (Catalano, et al., 1998; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Seidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchell, & Feinman, 1994). Yet from this short list of 103 factors, school structure, policies, and programs seem to be the least researched or its relationship with student engagement explored in the literature (Abbott & Breckinridge, 1917; Beane, 1992; Brough, 1990; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Cashin, 2004; Clark, 2004; Clark & Clark, 1984; Milgram, 1992). The Department of Education and the Department of Justice (1996) reported that schools that examined their own policies and practices improved their opportunities for student and parental involvement. These schools had more success in reducing rates of chronic truancy. After the release of this report from the Departments of Education and Justice, it was expected that many schools would jump at the opportunity to conduct a similar assessment in their schools; however, the number of schools that have conducted this assessment is uncertain. The National Association of Secondary School Principals, as noted by Bartlett and colleagues (1978), posits that schools that have strong policies, seek student and staff participation in policy development, and have clear and well-publicized policies consistently enforced by all within the school environment, have more success in deterring and reducing rates of chronic truancy. As such, the more school policies emphasize education and attachment to school versus punishment, the more schools will deter chronic truancy.

The arena of school policies and procedures can encompass many variables. However, the research reviewed thus far offers little to understand 1) the current structures and policies of middle schools, 2) the consistency of enforcement of the policies, 3) the extent that schools' structures and policies influence students' social bond to school, and 4) the association to rates of chronic truancy (Albert-Green, 2005; Beane, 1992; Brough, 1990; Brundrett, 2004; Clark & Clark, 1984; DeMedio, 1991; Dorman, Lipsitz, & Verner, 1985; George & Alexander, 1993; Gottfredson, 1990; Jung & Gunn, 1990; Kohut, 1976; Kuperminc, et al., 1997; Manning, 1993). This study aims to illuminate items three and four.

After the call for changes in middle school (Dorman, 1983; Dorman, et al., 1985; Eichhorn, 1966; Lipsitz, 1984), we have 1) moved the ninth grader, who is more like the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grader, to be with their peers; 2) made use of the opportunity for innovation such as team teaching, individualized instruction, flexible scheduling, flexible arrangements of space, time, materials, and people (Jung & Gunn, 1990); 3) focused programs on self-growth and personal development versus school spirit such as band; 4) began exploration studies and have begun to; 5) employ teachers with general teaching skills as well as expertise in different fields (Trauschke & Mooney, 1974). We have begun to understand, somewhat, that the racial composition of schools, overcrowded elementary schools, and the motivations of school board members and superintendents to support the proposed changes including the need for appropriate financial support impacts school engagement (Van Hoose & Strahan, 1991). More so, we know school experiences and adjustment albeit in academics, socialization, or other performances have

been shown to be strongly correlated to future negative outcomes and school failure
(Baker, et al., 2001; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). School experiences are much stronger
than the impact of social class and other family dysfunctions alone (Polk & Richmond,
1972). Schafer (1972) calls our attention to the fact that most student antisocial activities
are based on interactions that take place in the school over academic or social challenges.
Rumberger (2001) suggests that these challenges come from four school characteristics:
1) student composition; 2) school resources; 3) structural characteristics of the school
and; 4) the practices and policies used by the school and their staff. For this study these
characteristics were measured through demographic data received form the Indiana
Department of Education and two specific items in the online questionnaire on student
composition. With knowledge of what happens in our schools – students at-risk are
kicked out when they need the most help -- one would assume schools would have
already adapted to evaluating their ability to retain and teach students. As Polk and
Schafer (1972) warned, if it is "the way institutions relate to young people, and … [their
contributions to the] process that creates youthful deviance, then it is these institutions
that must be corrected, not the young who are its casualties" (p. 7). Therefore, more
emphasis must be placed on practices and policies used by school administration
(Rumberger, 2001).

It may be argued that some of these characteristics are beyond the control of the
school itself. For instance, although the school may only get a certain amount of
resources for the school year, school principals have limited choices in what to do with
those resources. In addition, the composition of the student body may not be within an

administrator's control. These factors are not often amenable to change. Not much progress has been made in regards to the measures used to track truants and this has impacted the ability of researchers to conduct quality studies.

Measurement and Study Designs

Studies examining truancy have focused on a wide variety of factors related to the problem, including, the relationship between school experiences, truancy, and grade retention (Roderick, 1993), and absence from school and long-term outcomes on delinquency, home, school environment, residential institutions, and employment (Hersov & Berg, 1980). Still other researchers like Orfield (2004) and Abbott and Breckinridge (1917) looked specifically at attendance records in schools, school transfers, and graduation rates. These factors were examined in relation to mental and physical imperfections, dependency, delinquency, transition for the school-age child and immigrant child with particular emphasis on race/ethnicity, and social backgrounds of children – especially people of color and Latinos. A common concern identified by most of the researchers was the assessment of chronic truancy and its magnitude (Hersov & Berg, 1980; Orfield, 2004; Roderick, 1993).

A variety of tools, tests, and measures are used to study chronic truancy. Most, if not all of the studies examined used a different data set or source to understand chronic truancy. For instance, Abbott and Breckinridge (1917) used attendance books kept by teachers deposited weekly in the principal's office; Reynolds, Jones, Leger, & Murgatroyd (1980) used official school records, self-reports, and various standardized tests (Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices Intelligence Test; Daniels and Diak Test of

Graded Reading Experience, Watts-Vernon Reading Test, Vernon Graded Mathematics

Test, and the Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory); Robins and Ratcliffe (1980)

primarily used school attendance records and data from hospitals, prisons, public welfare

agencies, the armed forces, etc. Others like West (1969) used psychological tests, teacher

reports, interviews, questionnaires, and home visits by social workers; Fogelman,

Tibbenham, and Lambert (1980) used teacher and parents' reports on truancy, and

students' self-report of truancy, and Roderick (1993) used homeroom registers and school

transcripts. Despite the availability and the cost-effectiveness of these methods, school

registers and attendance books have been imperfect indexes of truancy (Bonikowske,

1987). They are inaccurate and do not fully explain why truancy occurs, making it harder

to compare datasets or results. Hence, accuracy, accountability to the research, and

generalizability are key concerns. Of late, however, the studies on the school

environment, truancy, and other related factors have used survey designs. This was

particularly evident in studies like Albert-Green (2005), Brundrett (2004), Felner,

Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand, and Flowers, (1997) and Mertens, Flowers, and Mulhall

(1998). These designs have allowed for the possibility of replication, consistency, and

more accurate results. Despite some progress, there are several areas of work still

pending.

Gaps in Research

The first and notable area for work comes from the Carnegie Council on

Adolescent Development (1989). The Council offered eight challenges for middle

schools to address: 1) create small communities for learning, 2) teach an academic core,

3) ensure success for all students, 4) empower teachers and principals to make decisions

regarding educational experiences, 5) staff middle schools with teachers who are experts

at teaching 10-14 year olds, 6) improve academic performance through health and fitness,

7) re-engage families in the education of students, and 8) connect schools with

communities. The current literature shows little evidence of these challenges being

addressed in many schools.

Several researchers have called and continue to call for changes in the middle

school to meet the developmental, social, and emotional learning needs of students

(Dorman, 1983; Dorman, et al., 1985; Eichhorn, 1966; Lipsitz, 1984; Trauschke &

Mooney, 1974). The shift from focusing solely on educational goals to meeting the needs

of the student in the middle school classroom has remained elusive and difficult for

educators (Rumberger, 2001; Thompson, 2004). In his survey of 672 middle schools in

the US, Cawelti (1988) discovered that not all middle schools have made adequate

changes to help students in their care. Clark and Clark (1984) suggest that in reality the

process has involved nothing more than a name change (from junior high to middle

school) without long-term planning for effective change. In fact, middle schools continue

to struggle with increasing students' engagement and have had difficulty incorporating

structures, programs, and policies that encourage middle school students to grow and

bond to the school. The result has been a lack of security, affection, and recognition of

students' needs and experiences (Brundrett, 2004; Thompson, 2004). More recently,

Albert-Green (2005), Brundrett (2004), Hough (2003), and the National Middle School

Association Research Committee (2003) continue to call for similar changes. The current

study attempts to examine schools opportunities for social bonding and principals

perceptions of students' social bonding in their school as way of determining if schools

are meeting the developmental, social, psychological, and emotional learning of students

and helping them bond to school beyond teaching academics.

Area for Current Research

The literature on middle schools is rich in descriptions of the leadership and

management, curriculum and instruction, testing and evaluation, characteristics of

effective schools, and elements of what the middle school must put in place to meet the

needs of students (Albert-Green, 2005; Brundrett, 2004; Carnegie Council on Adolescent

Development, 1989; Clark & Clark, 1994; DeMedio, 1991; George & Alexander, 2003;

Hough, 2003; Lipsitz, 1984). However, as Brundrett (2004) points out, "The majority of

the research on middle level education has been conducted on particular portions of the

process with little attention paid to the impact on students' achievement" (p. 5). Hough

(2003), who carried out an extensive review of the middle school literature from 1991-

2002, also sheds some light. Hough identified over 3,717 studies that were carried out in

middle schools. Of these studies, Hough concluded, "one can count on one hand those

that identified programs, policies, and practices related to student outcomes that can be

generalized" (p. 11). He called for more research that can enhance our understanding of

these concepts and allow for replication and generalizability.

The National Middle School Association Research Committee (2003) found that

of the 3,717 studies identified by Hough (2003), only one-third were quantitative, none

were replications of previous studies, and only four examined the impact of middle

schools' climate and environment on students' bond to school and achievement: Backes, Ralston, and Ingwalson (1999); Felner, et al. (1997); Lee and Smith (1993); and Mertens, et al. (1998). Of the four studies, Lee and Smith (1993) found a positive correlation between the school policies and practices – these included reduced departmentalization, heterogeneous groupings and team teaching -- and the level of student engagement and achievement. Felner and colleagues (1997) examined 31 middle schools to determine the level of implementation of recommendations by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and student achievement and found a positive correlation between levels of implementation of the recommendations and relevant student outcomes -- academic achievement, social emotional development, and behavioral adjustment. Backes and colleagues (1999) also evaluated the level of implementation of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) recommendations in six middle schools and looked at the impact of middle school practices on student achievement compared to other non-project schools. Students in programs that implemented the recommendations had better outcomes, especially in academic subjects like study skills, social studies, and science. Mertens and colleagues (1998) examined relationships between middle schools' learning environment and teaching practices and students' attitudes, behaviors, and achievement in 21 grant-aided and 134 non-grant schools. They reported that students in the grant schools had higher scores in reading and math achievement, higher self-esteem, academic efficacy, better adjustment to school, decreases in substance use, and felt safer in their schools (Mertens, et al., 1998). A notable difference between the grant schools and the non-grant schools was that the grant schools got reform services such as on-site technical

assistance, networking opportunities, and professional development -- services not available to non-grant schools. Even though Hough's work gives a current context to the problem, the Committee concluded that little was known of the influence of school's structures, policies, and practices on students' achievement in school and their social bonding. Admittedly, though the studies add to understanding the context of the current study, none of the four studies examined attendance as an outcome or suggested a relationship with rates of chronic truancy or student disengagement. Based on the shortcomings of past studies, the present study used the four social control theory constructs to examine schools opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and their relationship with rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.

Purpose of the Study

This study has one descriptive aim and four exploratory aims:

Descriptive Aim.

To describe how Indiana public middle school principals define chronic truancy; what they see as the biggest factors contributing to chronic truancy in their school; who they think are most responsible for enhancing the social bond to school; what their school does well in enhancing the social bond to school; and the top three areas they believe need improvement to enhance students' social bond to school.

Exploratory Aims

Aim 1 (Primary): To explore the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals perceptions of social bonding in middle schools.

Aim 2: To explore the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy and how this relationship is influenced when controlling for selected demographic variables.

Aim 3: To explore the relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy and how this relationship is influenced when controlling for selected demographic variables.

Aim 4: To explore the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy and how this relationship is influenced when controlling for selected demographic variables.

In light of these aims, there were a set of subsequent research questions generated to address each aim. The research questions presented below begins with the descriptive aim and is followed by the exploratory aims. Hypotheses for each exploratory research question are also presented.

Descriptive Research Questions

1) How do principals in Indiana public middle schools define chronic truancy?

2) What do principals in Indiana public middle schools believe contributes the most to chronic truancy?

3) Who do principals see as responsible for creating students' social bond to school?

4) What do principals in Indiana public middle schools think are the top three things their school does well in enhancing students' social bond to school?

5) What three areas do principals in Indiana public middle schools need to improve to enhance the students' social bond to school?

Exploratory Research Questions

1) What is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding in middle schools and principals' perceptions of students' social bond to school?

> H_o1: *There is a positive relationship between schools' social bonding opportunities in middle schools and principals' perceptions of students' social bond in middle school.*

2a) What is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy?

> H_o2a: *There is an inverse relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy.*

2b) How is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy influenced when controlling for selected demographics?

> H_o2b: *When controlling for selected demographics, there is an inverse relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.*

3a) What is the relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy?

> H_o3a: *There is an inverse relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy.*

3b) How is the relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy influenced when controlling for selected demographics?

> H_o3b: *When controlling for selected demographics, there is a negative relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their schools and rates of chronic truancy in middle schools.*

4a) What is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in middle school?

> H_o4a: *There is an inverse relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.*

4b) How is the relationship among schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in middle school influenced when controlling for demographics?

> H_o4b: *When controlling for demographics, there is an inverse relationship among schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.*
>
> H_o4c: *Schools with large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics and few school opportunities for social bonding will have higher rates of chronic truancy.*

Rationale for Hypotheses. Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans demonstrate the highest levels of disengagement and are deemed at-risk of truancy or early dropout

(Clark, 1994). In fact, the founder of the National Council on Educating Black Children was quoted as stating, "Black children are the proxy for what ails American education in general. And so when we fashion solutions which help Black children, we fashion solutions which help all children" (Honorable Augustus Hawkins, 2007, p.1). These populations -- Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans -- disproportionately experience more suspensions and expulsions for discipline in school when compared to their white counterparts (McDonald Brown & Birrane, 1994; Richart, 2004; Roderick, 1993). This was especially true if they came from lower socio-economic backgrounds, lived in dilapidated or crowded communities, came from single parent, large families or poorly functioning family structures, congregated around persons where school success was not common, and were enrolled in overcrowded urban public schools (Cashin, 2004; Clark, 1994; Fine, 1991; Jencks, et al., 1972; Polk & Richmond, 1972). In one study, Blacks were two to seven times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts (Richart, et al., 2003). For law violators the rate of suspension increases to a range of two to 17 times more than their white counterparts. Many of these students do not have the parental or community support or time required to appeal the decisions of the schools. Many apply for school transfers that are rarely completed or tracked (Montecel, et al., 2004; Swanson, 2003) and then go unaccounted for by the school system. Thus one can conjecture that a student's ethnicity may influence the opportunities for social bonding available in their school and their school engagement (Dryfoos, 1994; Meier, Stewart, & England, 1989).

The cumulative effects of the developmental changes in early adolescence and the constellation of factors from self, family, peer, and community directly and indirectly influence a youth's decision to truant (Lichtenstein & Blackorby, 1995; Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987). However, due to overcrowding and scarce resources in urban middle schools "rather than deal with disruptive behavior, principals tend simply to get rid of the disruptor. … As a result, those who require the most supervision are, in fact, the least likely to receive it" (McDonald Brown & Birrane, 1994, p. 35). Dunlop (1996) quotes an Indiana Public School Commissioner who said, "Our allegiance should go to the kids who want to be there and not the kids who don't want to learn" (p. 3). Allegiance, in fact, should go to all children. When students disengage from school, there is a responsibility to investigate the cause of the disengagement. The goal is not to exclude students from their education or potential for learning, but to find ways to include them. The assumption here is that the number of disruptive, suspended, and/or expelled students may directly influence the schools' opportunities for social bonding, the principal's perception of students' social bond with the school, and the rate of chronic truancy in the school.

Richart and colleagues (2003) found that middle schools in Kentucky [a similar Midwestern state like Indiana] used many exclusionary policies such as out-of-school suspensions, expulsions with services, and expulsions without support services that encouraged students to be more withdrawn from school (See Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Percentage of Disciplinary Actions for School Board Violations

Percentage of Disciplinary Actions for School Board Violations

Total Disciplinary Actions (Year)	Out-of-School Suspensions	Alternative Placements Services	Corporal Punishment Services	Expulsions With Services	Expulsions Without Services
85,367 (99-00)	77%	17%	6%	.32%	.06%
77,706 (00-01)	88%	6%	5%	.21%	.06%

Figure 3 - Printed with permission. Richart, D., Brooks, K. & Soler, M. (2003). Unintended consequences: The impact of zero tolerance and other exclusionary polices on Kentucky students. *Building Blocks for Youth*. Retrieved from: www.buildingblocksforyouth.org. p.19

Figure 3 displays the percentages of students suspended, sent home, sent to alternative placements (e.g., alternative schools, but not "in-school" suspensions or Saturday schools), subjected to corporal punishment, expelled *with* services (meaning that the student is expelled, but is still receiving some form of schooling from the school district), and expelled *without* services (where the student is receiving no educational services from the school district) (Richart, et al., 2003, p.19). These findings call our attention not only to those already withdrawn from the school environment, but also to those we can help to stay in school -- those students who show signs of early school disengagement. The point here is that the policies used by the school to deal with students disengaging and those that have disengaged are important factors that may influence students' social bond to school and increase their likelihood of becoming a chronic truant.

Summary

Meeting the many needs of middle school students presents a difficult challenge for parents, principals, teachers, and policy-makers. While the answers remain elusive, we do know that the needs of middle school students and the provisions made by middle

schools to meet those needs are vaguely understood, implemented, or examined

(Bergmann & Baxter, 1983; Brough, 1990; Carnegie Council on Adolescent

Development, 1989; Cawelti, 1988; Dorman, et al., 1985; Eith, 2005; Fine, 1991; Jung &

Gunn, 1990; Kuperminc, et al., 1997; MacIver, 1990; Manning, 1993; Smith, 2006).

Researchers continue to highlight those physical, psychosocial, and cognitive needs not

adequately met in middle school that can result in severe ramifications for future social

and academic adjustments (Cawelti, 1988; Clark & Clark, 1984; Doda, et al., 1978;

Ducas, 1963; Fine, 1991; Schafer & Polk, 1972). A commonly proposed solution is that

middle schools offer full participation for all students (Meier, 2000; Tucker & Codding,

1998) and make efforts to address the social and emotional learning needs (Zins, et al.,

2004) as well as physical, psychosocial, and cognitive needs of students (DeMedio,

1991).

It is assumed that when the needs of students are not met, the students may

continue to meet those needs elsewhere and thereafter disengage. The result may be

increased participation in negative behaviors such as truancy (Whitman, 2000). Not

surprisingly, Zins and colleagues (2004) have found that students who are emotionally

engaged in school easily abide by school rules and have better outcomes and school

experiences compared to those who are antisocial in the classroom. It follows that these

engaged students want to come to school (DiPerna & Elliott, 1999; Feshbach &

Feshbach, 1987). Brundrett (2004), Hough (2003), and the NMSA Research Committee

(2003) continue to call for more research on the impact of middle schools' environment

and climate on students' bond to school to support subsequent achievement. As such, it

is the expectation of this study to begin to fill this gap.

CHAPTER III - METHODS

This chapter presents the study sample, study design, instrumentation, survey preparation, conceptual definitions, procedures, ethical considerations, and the data analysis plan.

Basic Model

The study examined the schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in middle school, and the influence of these factors on rates of chronic truancy. Several analyses also examined influence among the key variables while accounting for selected school demographics. Social bonding was defined using four social bond constructs from Hirschi's (1969) theory of Social Control – attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Specific questions were developed to measure each construct using an online questionnaire.

Study Design

The study was both descriptive and exploratory; for each study purpose, different sets of research questions were developed. A cross-sectional online survey design was used that allowed for the entire sample to be surveyed at once. This survey design also provided the opportunity to yield large amounts of information in a cost-effective and efficient manner (Fowler, 2002). This study was considered multi-method because it used survey data and secondary data from the Indiana Department of Education (Brewer & Hunter, 1990).

Research Questions

There were five descriptive research questions and four exploratory research questions in this study.

Descriptive Research Questions

The descriptive research questions were those open-ended questions included at the end of the online questionnaire to get a better understanding of the principals' general perceptions about their school environment and social bonding.

1) How do principals in Indiana public middle schools define chronic truancy?

2) What do principals in Indiana public middle schools believe contributes the most to chronic truancy?

3) Who do principals see as responsible for creating students' social bond to school?

4) What do principals in Indiana public middle schools think are the top three things their school does well in enhancing students' social bond to school?

5) What three areas do principals in Indiana public middle schools need to improve to enhance the students' social bond to school?

Exploratory Research Questions

The exploratory research questions were the main research questions of the study for which hypotheses were developed.

Exploratory Research Question 1: What is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bond to school?

Exploratory Research Question 2a&b: What is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy? 2b) How is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy influenced when controlling for selected demographics?

Exploratory Research Question 3a&b: What is the relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy? 3b) How is the relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy influenced when controlling for selected demographics?

Exploratory Research Question 4a&b: What is the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in middle school?

Measurement of Variables

The variables used to answer the research questions included the dependent variable, indexes that measured social bonding, and selected demographics. Two categories of social bonding were created. The first measured schools' opportunities for social bonding hereinafter called '*Opportunities*' in the analysis. The second measured principals' perceptions of students' social bonding hereinafter called '*Perceptions*' in the analysis. The demographic variables were percentages of dropout and suspended students. These two variables were also transformed and hereinafter referred to as '*SMEAN Dropout Percent*' and '*SMEAN Suspended Percent*'. A brief discussion of each variable follows beginning with the dependent variable.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable, rates of chronic truancy, was

derived from 2006-2007 school corporation webpage data for each middle school. This

data was available, online, from the Indiana Department of Education. For each middle

school, the number of truants listed on their school page was divided by the number of

total enrolled students to get the rate of chronic truancy in their school. In this dataset

many of the cases were skewed and some variables clustered to the positive end of the

distribution. To ensure a better distribution of the data, and correct for skewness, a

logarithmic transformation was used resulting in a modified dependent variable.

Thereafter, whenever the dependent variable (rates of chronic truancy) is referred to, it is

the *lntruancy* version of the dependent variable (See old and new distribution below in

Figure 4 & Figure 5).

Figure 4 – Distribution of Absences prior to Logarithm Transformation

Mean = 4.38

SD = -6.898

N = 99
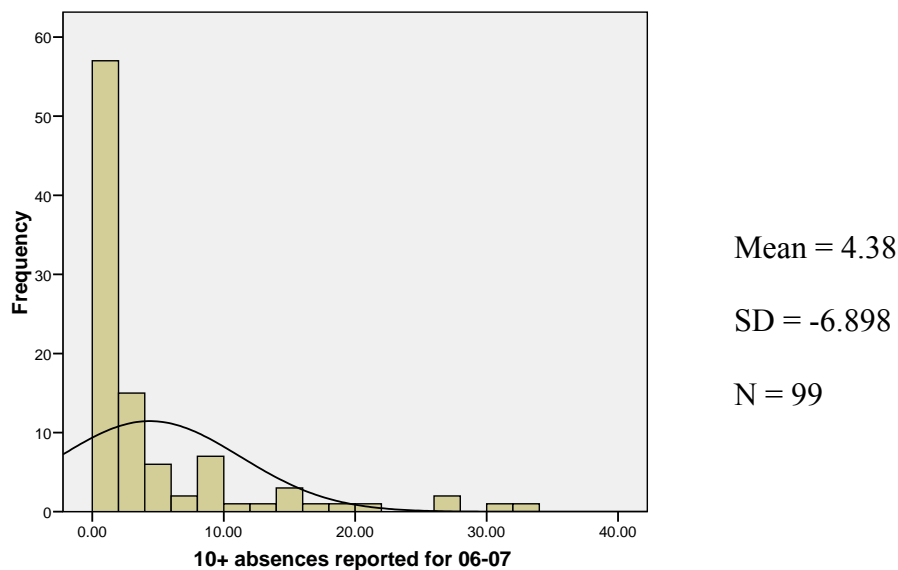
Figure 5 – Logarithm Transformation of Rates of Chronic Truancy (DV)

Mean = 1.16

SD = -0.955

N = 99
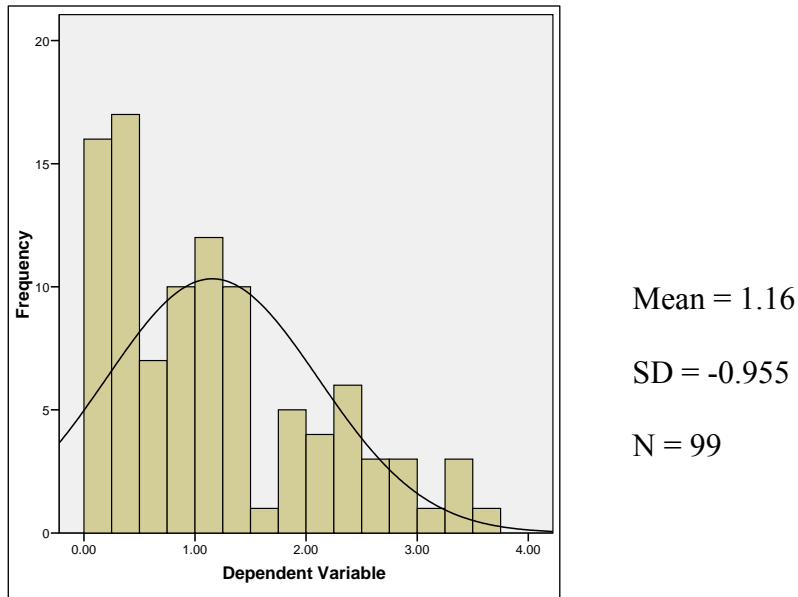
Measurement of Schools Opportunities for Social Bond. The study looked at the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their middle schools and rates of chronic truancy. The opportunities variable included schools' policies and practices, activities offered in the schools, and programs that encourage students to bond to the school. Forty questionnaire items were developed to measure opportunities for social bonding using variations of Hirschi's (1969) constructs of social bond (See Figure 6). Using a Likert scale of 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree, principals rated their responses to questions such as "Our structure and policies … provide someone for students to turn to in time of need;" "Our structure and policies … encourage students to look forward to coming to school," and "Our structure and policies … encourage students to keep busy under adult supervision."

Measurement of Principals' Perceptions of Students' Social Bonding. Principals'

perceptions of students' social bond examined the percent of the school's student body

principals perceived as bonded to the school and what percent of the student body

principals perceived would agree with specific questions developed to measure social

bond. Twenty questionnaire items were developed to measure principals' perceptions of

students' social bond to school using variations of Hirschi's (1969) constructs of social

bond (See Figure 6). Principals were asked to report perceived percentages using a scale

of 1 = 10% to 10 = 100% in response to questions such as "What percent of your

students do you believe show … that they dedicate time to participate in conventional

ways of society?" "What percent of your students would agree with the following

statements … at my school there's always someone to turn to in time of need; I have

participated in school activities beyond the classroom; I generally keep busy with school

and other productive activities; and it is important to graduate from school."

Figure 6 – Hirschi (1969) Elements of Social Bond
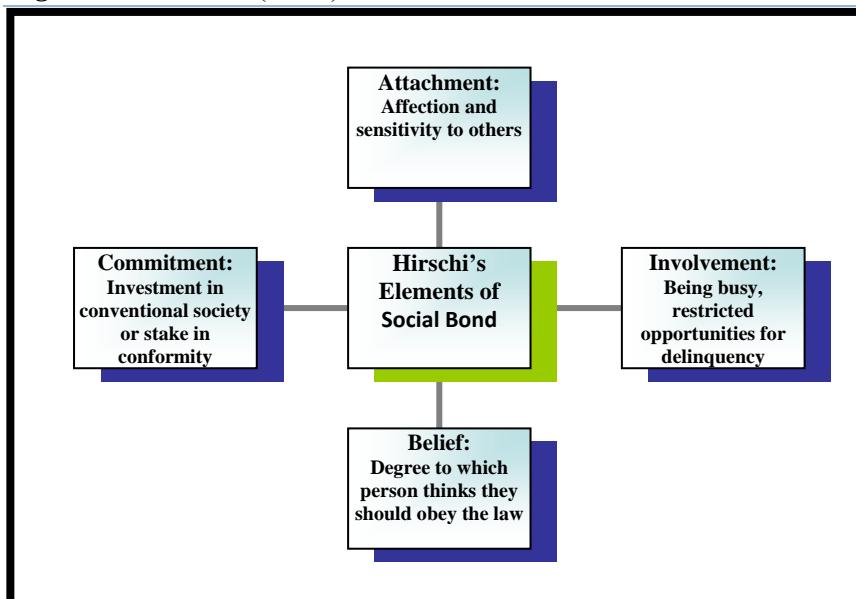
To prepare the 60 (40 – schools' opportunities and 20 – principals'' perception of students' social bonding) questionnaire items for analysis, factor indices were created. The extraction method employed for the factor analyses was principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. Varimax rotation simplifies interpretation per column and the factor loadings of all variables are often on one factor or a smaller number of factors (Kim & Mueller, 1978). This is desirable because it creates a linear combination of the variables under study to maximize the variance that could be achieved. After the rotation of the retained factors, the components that converged, after 25 iterations, were assessed for the number of factors extracted. The extracted factors were then transformed and computed using the means of the high-loading items. Items with loadings of .60 or higher created the final *Opportunities* and *Perception* indices.

To ensure that the basic assumptions of correlation and multiple regressions were not violated, tests for normality and multicollinearity were conducted. Several variables were removed from the model due to problems with multicollinearity. Multicollinearity was assessed from the SPSS output of the regression using Tolerance and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores. Tolerance levels with 1 or higher and VIF scores with 10 or higher were removed because the scores suggested that the variables were very similar to that which was being measured. Where there was evidence of multicollinearity, I examined the degree of the influence those variables had on other variables in the model.

Selected Demographics. The selected demographics used in this study included # of students suspended and # of students that have dropped out. This dataset came from the IDOE. The raw numbers from the dataset were converted into percentages, MeanSub

(MEANSuspended% and MEANDropout %). Several other variables (i.e. type of school system, type of community in which school is located, average # of students per class, presence of activity courts, gym, and library and current usage of library, and if students are required to wear uniforms) were initially included for analysis but when the relationship to the dependent variable was examined the relationships were not significant. Therefore those variables were not included. For all the variables and their relationships, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15 (2007) was used to analyze the data.

Layout and Design of Survey Instrument

Failing to find an appropriate and comprehensive instrument following literature review, expert contact, and telephone and email explorations, the researcher developed one. Questionnaire items were developed using the four general constructs of Social Control Theory -- attachment, commitment, involvement and belief -- offered by Hirschi (1969). This process was guided by input from research committee members, the literature, and previous studies, including the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), Catalano and Hawkins (1996), DeMedio (1991), Dorman, et al. (1985), Eith (2005), Fine (1991), Gottfredson (1990), Hirschi (1969), Manning (1993), and Reynolds, et al. (1980). Beyond the theoretical and demographic items, five general attendance questions were also included. These questions included action taken when a student misses school, school's definition of habitual truancy, # of days student must miss before being considered a habitual truant, % of currently enrolled students who are habitual truants, and methods used to track habitual truants.

The result was an 81-item, five part survey instrument (See Appendix A). Section A (*School Demographics*) had 11 close-ended questions with radio buttons and drop down menu choices and interval/ratio level questions; Section B (*Attendance*) had 5 open and close-ended questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and answer choice questions; Section C (*Opportunities for Social Bonding*) had 40 Likert scaled questions with response choices ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree (SA) to 5 = Strongly Disagree (SD); Section D (*Perception of Student Social Bonding*) Part I had 4 Likert scale questions and Part II had 16 Likert scaled questions; with response choices ranging from 10% to 100%; and Section E (*General School Perceptions*) had a mixture of open-ended, Likert scaled, rank ordered, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Study Sample

The final sample included 99 Indiana public middle school principals. The schools included were those listed on the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) website (http://www.doe.state.in.us/htmls/k12.html) as of March 2007.

Response Rate

Of the schools listed on the IDOE website as of March 2007, all 428 public and private middle schools were initially invited to participate in the study. The expectation was that each principal of each school would complete one survey. The principal, vice-principal, or mid-level managers who responded to the questionnaire were defined in this study as principals. These persons were invited because of their access to and responsibility for monitoring and safeguarding information for the school (Blanford, 2006). Since principals can generally provide voices or act as advocates for what

happens in their schools, their perceptions matter. Six rounds of invitations (See Appendix C & Appendix E for copies of emails sent) with the survey link were sent by email between May and July 2007. This process of sending separate emails was a strategy to increase participant response rates and the speed of response (Schonlau, Ficker, & Elliott, 2002). Dillman (2000) recommends that in addition to emails, researchers should consider sending out a pre-notification letter to participants to further increase the response rate. The pre-notification letter for this study also served as the endorsement letter from Dr. Suellen Reed, Superintendent of Indiana Public Schools.

Of the 428 schools invited, 78 cases were dropped for various reasons (21 returned as undeliverable emails, 21 failed to go to their respective respondents due to them being out of office, no longer employed at location, or having moved, 3 were email duplications in the data set, and 33 opted out). Of the 144 principals that responded, 45 were from private middle schools. The number of respondents from private middle schools was less than half of those that responded from the public schools and less than 25% of their responses were complete. Many of their comments read "To be frank, we do not experience truancy. It may be because parents are fully involved and paying tuition. Also, students seem to enjoy attending school." "We do not have any problem with truancy at our school." "We have not had trouble with truancy." "Not an issue – we are a boarding school." Therefore, private schools were removed from the sample and actual study sample was composed of 99 public middle schools. Considering the total responses (144/428), there was a response rate of 34%. However, since the sample consisted of only public schools, and public schools accounted for 302 of the 428 invited,

the response rate was assessed using the number of public schools invited to participate

divided by the number of respondents, resulting in a response rate of 33%.

Planned Analysis

Following the close of the survey period responses were downloaded into

Microsoft Excel and transported into SPSS for analysis in Windows Version 15. The

data was cleaned and missing data coded '9009'. SPSS was used to analyze and code the

close-ended responses. The open-ended responses were categorized into themes using

the Social Theory constructs – attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief –

analyzed. Other descriptive data was analyzed using frequencies and total percentages or

numbers. Thereafter the chronic truancy data was gathered from IDOE, cleaned, and

prepared for use as the dependent variable. Preparations included examining the data for

missing data, understanding how the data was coded, reviewing for normal distribution,

and where necessary, ensuring that most of the 99 cases were included. The

questionnaire items served as the measurement for the Schools' Opportunities for Social

Bonding (items 17-56) and Principals' Perceptions of Students' Social Bond (items 57-

76). Factors and factor indices were created using Principal Component and Varimax

Rotation and included only those items that loaded high with a Cronbach's alpha of .60 or

higher. Assessment for multicollinearity, correlations, and reliability were performed.

Correlation testing and assessment for multicollinearity used demographic variables with

the dependent variable from the dataset provided by the IDOE. The results of these steps

are presented in the next chapter.

Discussion of Quality of Pilot Instrument

External validity was a concern for the survey instrument particularly because the goal was to be able to generalize the results to the study population (Engel & Schutt, 2005). Considering the 33% response rate, generalizability was limited only to those schools in the study (public middle schools in Indiana). To reduce internal validity flaws, elementary school principals participated in a pre-test that was conducted to evaluate the quality of the questionnaire. In so doing, there was an assumption that the elementary school principals had similar educational backgrounds, work schedules, and contact with the students and staff to be able to assess the instrument's quality and appropriateness (Ogden & Germinario, 1994). A list of potential elementary school principals were found from the IDOE website. They were emailed to solicit their participation. The elementary school principals were asked to offer input on seven areas: 1) ease of completion, 2) ease of reading, 3) ease of understanding question expectation, 4) organization, 5) clarity of questions, 6) types of questions asked, and 7) length. (See Appendix B). Of the 19 participants invited, four emails were returned with the note of 'address not current.' The telephone numbers of these principals were sought and the list was updated and emails re-sent. One participant responded to the request. His feedback suggested the questionnaire was hard to complete, suggested giving some incentive for completing it, increasing the depth of the questions, and attempting to address issues of student engagement. Another attempt to get input from elementary school principals was made; there were no other responses. Third party personal contacts were then used to seek local elementary school principals' feedback. This resulted in two more evaluations.

The results indicated that the "survey was easy and clear." One commented it seemed to

"focus on truancy a lot!" School data will bother most principals, could you upload from

ASAP (Accountability System for Academic Progress)? Good Luck" (One respondent,

March 30th). The third respondent suggested, "Looks like it is well done." Following

these suggestions, the questionnaire was amended to include an incentive raffle, to ensure

that student engagement opportunities were examined, and that the data requested on

truancy was not overwhelming. IDOE was also consulted to use the data on their ASAP

program to minimize the questions principals were asked. Committee members also

suggested revision to make the questions more specific, using more data from IDOE.

Study Questionnaire Procedures. In regards to the actual questionnaire,

respondents were allowed one submission. Respondents were not allowed to partially

complete, save their responses, and return to complete the questionnaire. To avoid

selection biases, the questionnaire was administered to all middle schools in the state of

Indiana. To ensure outside factors did not interfere with the data collection process, the

questionnaire had at least six or more questions that measured the four constructs of the

social bond – attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (See Table 4).

Table 4 – Questions Measuring Social Bond Constructs in Questionnaire

Multiple Questions Measured Constructs of Social Bond	
Attachment	1. Provide someone for students to turn to in time of need 2. Provide socialization opportunities with other students 3. Provide activities that foster a desire to stay in school 4. Provide opportunities for good role models for students 5. Provide student interaction opportunities with role models. 6. Provide opportunities for students to build school pride. 7. Provide a safe environment to build positive relationships 8. Generally request and use student input
Commitment	1. Encourage students to come to school 2. Use more in-school rather than out-of-school punishment options 3. Offer extended extracurricular opportunities for academically at-risk students 4. Offer on-going and seasonal extracurricular activities 5. Offer various community-linked and school campaigns to encourage in and out of school 6. Offer opportunities for student participation 7. Provide opportunities for student leadership 8. Encourage students to have a stake in their education 9. Foster and value students' creativity 10. Reward students for following school rules and policies
Involvement	1. Encourage students to keep busy under adult supervision 2. Encourage parents to participate in their child's learning 3. Encourage teachers to spend time with students at-risk 4. Encourage student participation in school decision-making 5. Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities 6. Encourage student participation in student governance 7. Create opportunities for all students to get involved
Belief	1. Our school structure and policies are perceived to be generally fair and equal 2. Our school structure and policies show the value for remaining in school 3. Our school structure and policies encourage respect for teachers and authority 4. Our school structure and policies encourage students to believe teachers are basically good 5. Our school policies have clear written rules and related consequences 6. Our school structure and policies encourage consistent enforcement of school rules 7. Our school structure and policies encourage students to advance their education 8. Our school structure and policies encourage students' belief in themselves 9. Our school structure and policies generally enforce that the law should be obeyed

Data Collection

Data collection took place from May 2007 to July 2007 using the online survey

instrument designed by the researcher and administered using Survey Monkey

(support@surveymonkey.com), an online market research tool. Survey Monkey™ was

selected due to its easy web-based interface that allowed both novice and advanced computer users to feel comfortable using it (internetnewsbureau.com, 2000). The online tool enabled the researcher to choose from a list of 12 different types of questions, create and authenticate questions, choose various response choices, and provide for skip options. In addition, the software provided a list manager to assess respondents and non-respondents and store completed responses. Another benefit of using Survey Monkey™ was that the respondents were not forced to rummage through pages of survey material or worry about mailing their completed questionnaires. For the investigator, the online survey tool provided numerous options to cut down on cost, delivery, re-mailing, mail reminders, communication, and the input of data for analysis into a software-based statistical package (Dillman, 2000; Engel & Schutt, 2005; Schonlau, et al., 2002). Schonlau and colleagues (2002) suggest that the decision to use a web-based survey is preferable when a list of email addresses of the sample or population is readily available. This was true of this study's pool of participants.

An introductory message that included a brief description of the research, notification of the incentive raffle (LCD projector), and invitation to voluntarily participate was sent to all middle school principals in Indiana (See Appendix C). Schools that completed the questionnaire were automatically entered into the LCD raffle drawing. This incentive was expected to entice participation and questionnaire completion. The study endorsement letter, from the Superintendent of Indiana Public Schools, Dr. Suellen Reed (See Appendix D) was sent electronically two weeks before the online questionnaire with access to the hyperlink. The letter from Dr. Suellen Reed was used as

another motivation strategy. One final thank you and announcement of the winner of the incentive raffle was distributed in July 2007.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are essential to any research with human subjects to ensure their protection. In keeping with this responsibility, the researcher applied for and was granted exempt study status from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis on March 21, 2007, study number EX0703-28B. The study qualified for the status of exempt on the basis that the study exposed participants to minimal or no risk.

Participants were told that their participation was voluntary and non-participation in no way affected their standing within their school system. The foreseeable benefits to participation in the study were the opportunity to win an LCD projector for their school and to gain a summary of the study's results. The next chapter presents the results of the factor analyses, reliability analyses, and correlations along with the study findings.

CHAPTER IV - RESULTS

The findings are presented in three parts. In part I, I present the general descriptive findings about the study sample and discuss the results of the descriptive research questions. Part II describes the results of the factor analysis, reliability analysis, and correlations. In Part III results for the Exploratory Research Questions are presented in light of the relevant questions and hypotheses.

PART I – DESCRIPTION OF STUDY SAMPLE AND CHRONIC TRUANCY

The middle school principals that responded to the survey (N = 144) were mainly from rural (57%) Indiana; 23% were from urban communities, and 19% from suburban public schools; very similar to the population from which the sample was derived. Based on data reported by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) for 2005-2006, of the schools that responded, over 85% of their student body was white. Again, using IDOE data, the attendance rate (percent of the student body that has attended 180 school days within a one year period) for the respondents was 83% or higher. Academically, on average, the public middle schools invited to participate (N = 428) scored relatively low on the ISTEP scores for Math and English. The highest scores were evident for grade six with the average pass rate in this grade being 66% and gradually decreasing as students progressed in grades – grade 9 had an average 58% pass rate (See Table 5).

Table 5 – ISTEP Scores for Public Middle Schools (n = 529)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Average
% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 6	18%	92%	66%
% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 7	27%	93%	65%
% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 8	14%	90%	61%
% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 9	47%	73%	58%

Class Sizes

Class size was examined using the responses to the questionnaire item 5 that

asked principals to report, "On average, how many students are in a classroom in your

school?" Frequencies were calculated on the responses resulting in over 50% of the

principals' responding that on average they had a class size of 25 students. The mean

was 24 students. The range, however, was a minimum of 12 students per class to a

maximum of 40 students in a classroom. However, these numbers do not represent the

public school system in its entirety. In general, smaller class sizes are considered to be

better for enhancing student – teacher relationships (Ogden & Germinario, 1994).

Between Groups Comparison

For this study the comparison group consisted of those public schools who were

invited to participate and did not respond (non-respondents =203). The results were

compared with the average of the data available for the non-response schools using the

data from the Indiana Department of Education for 2005-2006. Of these schools, on

average 84% of their student bodies were White, 6% were Black, and 5% were Hispanic

(See Table 6).

Table 6 – Response and Non-Response Comparisons

School Characteristics	Study Sample N=99	Non-Response Sample *Averages reported* N=203	Universe/ Population N=302	t-test of difference
%Black	6	13	11	2.78*
%White	85	76	79	.830
%Hispanic	5	6	6	1.066

*p<.01

Compared to the typical Indiana public middle school, the study sample (n = 99) tended to have larger percentages of White students and smaller percentages of Black students. In fact, the difference in proportion of Black students between the study sample and the non-response sample (n = 203) was statistically significant. To the extent that rates of chronic truancy are related to the percentages of Black students in the school, (which may also point to differences in poverty or urban location), then the study sample is perhaps under-representing the extent of the relationship to rates of chronic truancy. This has implications for the study results as the literature has identified that struggling schools often have high percentages of African American students (Skiba, 2004). There were no statistically significant differences for Hispanic and White students. Future research should reexamine these same questions with more representative samples.

Responses to Descriptive Research Questions

Descriptive research question 1: 1) How do principals in Indiana public middle schools define chronic truancy?

Definition of Chronic Truancy. The study sample seemed to have varied definitions of chronic or habitual truancy irrespective of the fact that the State has a standard definition. The IDOE definition states that any student who misses 10 or more unexcused days of school within the school year would be considered a habitual truant. The absences do not have to be consecutive. This definition was not widely adopted by all public schools. Some schools had their own definitions viewing habitual or chronic truancy as one or more of the following …

- The act of unauthorized absence from school or class for any period of time or leaving school without proper permission,

- Multiple unverified absences,

- Repeated absences without parent notification to the school,

- Failure to report to assigned classes,

- Willful refusal to attend school in defiance of parental authority,

- Absence without just cause,

- Being somewhere other than directed by school personnel, or

- Student who repeatedly misses school.

In addition to these qualitative definitions of chronic truancy, many of the public middle school principals reported a numerical number of absences that were used to determine and define chronic truancy (See Table 7).

Table 7 – Reported Numerical Definitions Used to Determine Chronic Truancy

Percent of schools (N = 99)	Numerical # of Absences reported to determine truancy
39	0-5
26	6-10
9	11-14
1	15-20
1	Other/No definition
24	Only use Narrative definition

Table 7 represents the % of schools that reported a certain number of absences

While 24% of the schools defined chronic truancy narratively and used no other numerical definitions, the remaining schools defined chronic truancy with numerical absences ranging from 1 absence to 20 absences. In fact, 39% of the principals defined the range of 0 to 5 absences as chronic truancy. This number was followed closely by

26% of the principals defining chronic truancy as 6-10 absences. In some instances, the results indicated that schools were actually identifying students as chronic truants much earlier than stipulated by the State of Indiana. Two-thirds (65%) of the schools that responded were using 10 or less absences as their definition of chronic truancy. On average, schools required that students miss eight days before they were considered chronic truants.

Percent of Habitual Truants. In addition to their numerical absences, I wanted to get a view of what percent of their student body principals considered were habitual truants. This information was requested as it was presumed to influence principals' perception of social bonding in their school. In their responses to item 15 of the questionnaire (What percentage of your school's currently enrolled students are habitual truants?), the principals reported that on average, a very small percentage of their students (2%) were chronic or habitual truants. For all the schools surveyed, there was a range of 0% to 14% of the total school population whom principals considered chronic truants (See Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Histogram of Percent Enrolled Students who are Habitual Truants
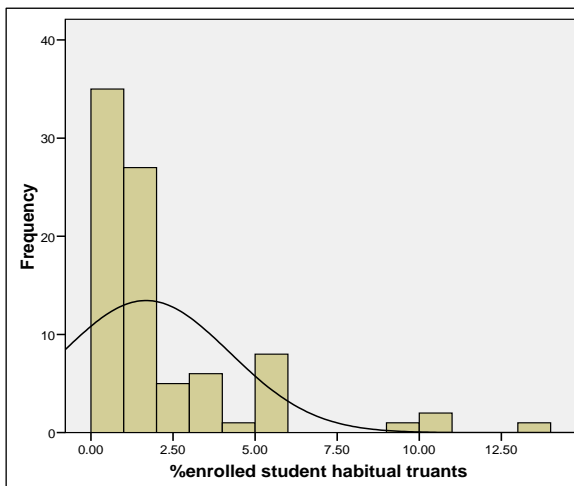
Mean: 1.68

SD: 2.55

N = 86

Tracking and Responding to Truants

On average, over 67% of the public school principals used a combination of attendance records (registers used by homeroom teachers) and school-recorded absences (records kept by the school on overall attendance – sometimes called attendance books) to track chronic truants. Less than 24% used school-recorded absences alone. However, when asked what action was taken after a certain number of absences, there was much variation in principals' responses (See Table 8). Principals were asked "What action is taken when a student misses school?" Their responses were entered into four separate response categories – what happens after 1-3 absences, after 4-6 absences, after 7-9 absences, and after 10+ absences.

After 1-3 absences, 60% or more of the principals reported that their teachers notified the parents of the child's absence. This was done through official or unofficial letters sent home, mandatory parent-student conferences, or phone calls; 19% of the principals reported not doing anything after 1-3 absences. After 4-6 absences, 84% or more of the principals reported that they or their teachers continued to send home parental notifications and warning letters. This time, however, the letters warned parents of pending actions to be taken by the school, referral to the truancy court, notification of attendance hearing, student suspension/expulsion, or loss of course credit. After 7-9 absences, on average 65% of the principals reported that more letters were sent home but this time letters were sent by the principals with more warnings of impending court action if the parent did nothing. In addition to this measure, 34% of principals reported that they simultaneously initiated direct disciplinary actions (detention, suspension) against the

student and/or required the student and/or parent to attend conference talks. After 10 or

more absences, the schools used more direct action. About half (47%) of school

principals reported that they called for back-up from community partners such as truancy

and probation officers, the police, and the juvenile courts; 30% continued to use parental

notification and the administering of harsher student discipline strategies (22%) such as

expulsion, out-of-school suspension, and loss of course credit, among others.

Table 8 – Action Taken After Certain Number of Absences

Absences	Most Often	Somewhat Often	Least Often
1-3	Parent Notification = 62%	Nothing = 19%	Student Discipline (warning, detention, conference call, talk) = 16%
4-6	Parent Notification with warning = 84%	Student Discipline (make-up time and work, in-school suspension) = 12%	Nothing = 2%
7-9	Parent Notification (with description of court action and formal policies) = 65%	Student Discipline (warning, detention, conference, talk) = 34%	*None reported*
10+	Outside Assistance (from police, prosecutor, attendance officers, court etc.) = 47%	Parent Notification (court action, formal policies, mandatory conferences etc.) = 30%	Student Discipline (expelled, out of school suspension, loss of credit etc.) = 22%

Descriptive research question 2: Who do you see as most responsible for creating

the social bond? What do principals in Indiana public middle schools see as the biggest

factors contributing to chronic truancy?

Who is Most Responsible? From the results on actions taken after a certain

number of absences, there seemed to be an assumption that middle school principals

believe parents have a significant role in the chronic truancy equation. This assumption

was supported by the principals' responses to two specific items (Q78 & Q81) from the

online questionnaire. The first question, item 78, asked: "Who do you see as most responsible for encouraging students' social bond to school?" [Answer choices: (a) the student him/herself, b) parents, c) teachers, d) school principals, e) the community, f) school].

Using the five response choices, principals were asked to rank the entities most responsible with "1" being most responsible and "5" being least responsible. Each principal had one response per answer choice. Overall, the rank order as chosen by principals, using the highest percentage score for each category, showed that parents (31%) were chosen as the most responsible in rank 1. In rank two, parents (31%) were chosen as the second most responsible for creating the social bond. In rank three, the student him/herself (39%) was responsible for creating the social bond. In rank four and five parents (25%) and teachers (25%) were tied for fourth and community was ranked as the fifth most responsible (48%). Since parents were ranked as most responsible in several categories, I was curious as to what the true rank would be for each answer choice. To ascertain a rank order of total responses, the mean rank was found using the numerical frequency score for each answer choice. For example, all the scores for parents from each category were added together to get a rank order. Although school was not an answer choice it was understood to be a 'default' category and served as a sixth category in the answer choices. Since principals had five answer choices it was understood that totals would exceed 99 – the total number of respondents – when totals for each entity in each rank were added together. The result was that the highest score was for parents with over 108 principals believing that parents were responsible for

creating the social bond to school. The second rank was the student him/herself 96; third

rank school with 94, rank four was teachers with 75; rank five and sixth were school

administrators and the community with 61 of the 99 principals viewing them as most

responsible for creating the social bond to school (See Table 9). These results are in line

with the published literature that largely suggests that parents are perceived as the most

responsible for students' behavior (Fiske, 1991).

Table 9 – Rank of Who is Most Responsible for Creating Social Bond (n = 99)

Rank	Total # of respondents for each choice	
Rank 1	Parents	108
Rank 2	Student him/herself	96
Rank 3	School	94
Rank 4	Teachers	75
Rank 5	School Principals	61
Rank 6	Community	61

What contributes the most to chronic truancy? Principals were also asked "What

do you think contributes the most to chronic truancy in your school?" (See Table 10).

The respondents typed their answers into the open space provided in the questionnaire.

Since the responses were open-ended, the answers were categorized into themes and then

analyzed. The themes that emerged were 1 = Family/Parental Influence, 2 = Home

Environment, 3 = School Factors, 4 = Student Abilities and Attitudes, and 5 = Other.

Examples of responses that emerged under **Theme 1 – *Family/Parental Influence***

included "lack of belief from parents and close family members that school is important

and necessary," "Parents who do not have control of their own lives or the lives of their

children. Discipline is not enforced," "Lack of supervision outside of school due to

single parent homes or two parents working," "Lack of role models in the home. If

education is unimportant to the parent, the student sees this and believes it," and "Parents who do not think school is important; Court system that does little to help." Examples of responses that emerged under **Theme 2 –** *Home Environment* included "Poor family structure and support for school," "Many times students with poor attendance have tough situations at home," and "Home situations -- the most chronic cases of truancy we have had through the years have been due to home transitions." Examples of responses that emerged under **Theme 3 –** *School Factors* included "Students who are not connected and don't see the importance of school," Students' lack of interest in the curriculum as they do not see that as relevant to their lives," "Our inability to connect with a child" and "Lack of interest in school and non-supportive parents. Not be able to make connections with all students." Examples of responses that emerged under **Theme 4 –** *Student Abilities and Attitudes* included "Student and parent apathy toward attendance," "Student frustration and dislike of school. Also there is evidence of drug and alcohol influence," and "Students just don't enjoy school. And there is no parental support encouraging them or making them." **Theme 5 –** *Other* included "We have a very low incident rate. The two students who are chronically truant are going to have a conference, "This really is not a problem in our school. Our attendance rate is over 96%," and "unsure." Of the 68 actual responses for all categories *Theme 1 –* *Family/Parental Influence* included 42 of the responses or over 62% of all the responses.

The answers of each principal were then re-coded with the numerical number of the related theme (For instance, Theme 1 – Family/Parental Influence = 1, Theme 2 – Home Environment = 2) and re-entered into SPSS to run frequencies. This step helped to

ascertain the percentage distribution of what principals believed contributed the most to truancy in their schools. The results indicated that, on average, 75% of the middle school principals perceived that the Family/Parental Influence and Home Environment contributed the most to chronic truancy in their school. This percentage accounted for 62% of the principals choosing family/parent and 13% home/environment as contributing to chronic truancy.

Table 10 – Principals' Perceptions of Factors Contributing to Chronic Truancy

Factors	Percent Contribution
Family/Parental Influence	62
School Factors	18
Home environment	13
Other	6
Student Abilities	2

Descriptive Research Question 3: What do principals in Indiana public middle schools think are the top three things their school does well in combating chronic truancy?

Top Three Things School Does Well and Areas for Improvement. Principals believed that parents were most responsible for creating the social bond to school and viewed that the family/home environment, inclusive of the role of the parents, contributed the most to chronic truancy in their school. With this in mind, I wanted to know what the middle school principals thought they were doing well in enhancing the students' social bond to school and what three areas they thought needed improvement to better enhance the social bond to school for students.

Does Well. The respondents were asked to type their responses in the open space provided in the questionnaire. Since the responses were open-ended, all the answers

were categorized into themes and then analyzed. The themes that emerged were

organized according to the four social bond constructs of Social Control Theory (1 =

Opportunities for Attachment, 2 = Opportunities for Involvement, 3 = Opportunities for

Belief, and 4 = Opportunities for Commitment). The answers of each principal were then

re-coded with the numerical number of the related theme and re-entered into SPSS to run

frequencies. This step helped to ascertain the percentage distribution of the top three

things principals believed they did well to enhance the social bond for students in their

school. Using the Social Control theory constructs also allowed for an understanding of

how the social bond was created in the school from what the principals reported. The

result was that on average, middle school principals in Indiana believed they were doing

well at offering opportunities for students to build attachment to the school (See Table

11). Specifically, middle school principals felt they were doing relatively well at

building opportunities for attachment (50%) and involvement (34%) in their school.

When principals felt they were doing well at creating opportunities for attachment they

reported statements such as "great student-ratio, mentoring, get to know student, provide

role models, kind teachers, activities, and safe environment, among others." When

principals felt they were doing well at creating opportunities for involvement they

reported that they provided "activities, strong extracurricular programs, dance, sporting

events, group gatherings, and field trips among others" (See Appendix G). This finding

reflected only principals' perceptions and may vary from students' perceptions of what

the school does well.

Table 11 – Top 3 Things School Does Well

Thematic Responses based on Measures of Social Bond	Total % - each rank
Opportunities for Attachment	50
Opportunities for Involvement *(attendance)*	34
Opportunities for Belief *(rewards etc.)*	9
Opportunities for Commitment *(membership)*	7

Descriptive research question 4: What three areas do principals in Indiana public middle schools see as in need of improvement in their school to combat chronic truancy?

Areas for Improvement. The principals were also asked to "Name the 3 areas your school needs to improve upon in enhancing students' social bond to school." The respondents typed their open-ended answers into the space provided in the questionnaire. Since the responses were open-ended, all the answers were categorized into themes and then analyzed. The themes that emerged were 1 = Relationship Building, 2 = Life Skill Development, 3 = School Environment Enhancements, 4 = More Parent Involvement, 5 = More Teacher Involvement, 6 = Academic Related Programs, and 7 = Other. The answers of each principal were then re-coded with the numerical number of the related theme and re-entered into SPSS to run frequencies. This step helped to ascertain the percentage distribution of what principals' felt they needed to improve to enhance students' social bond to school. The result was that on average, middle school principals perceived that the area that needed the most improvement was opportunities for relationship building (50%) in their school (See Table 12). Other areas identified as needing improvement were life skill development (12%) and school environment enhancements (10%) (See Appendix F for actual responses to Q 80). When principals reported that they needed to improve on Relationship Building they reported statements such as … improve "individual meetings, survey of student interest, reaching all kids,

more opportunities to get students involved, reaching out to the disengaged students more deliberately, time with staff, and be more sensitive to student perception of fairness and equity among others." When principals reported that they needed to improve on Life Skill development they reported statements such as …"teaching respect, student empowerment, socialization skills, Model Character education, respect for others, and confidence among others." When principals reported that they needed to improve on School Environment Enhancements they reported statements such as … "provide transportation, stop bullying, social workers needed, prevent peer harassment, and improve 6th grade transition to middle school among others" (See Appendix F).

Table 12 – Top 3 Areas that Need Improvement

Categories	Valid % per Rank
Relationship Building	50
Life Skill Development	12
School Environment Enhancements	10
More Parent Involvement	9
More Teacher Involvement	7
Academic Related Programs	7
Other	5

Table 12 - Valid % per Rank = the total for each answer choice in each rank

PART II – ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Factor Analysis Results. Factor analysis was conducted to reduce the 60 online questionnaire items (items 17-76) into indexes. For this procedure, extraction of the factors was done using Principal Component Analysis with a Varimax Rotation method with Kaiser Normalization. The result was a 16 factor solution. Eleven factors loaded on the social bonding opportunities indices and five factors loaded on the perception of social bonding indices. The items (Q17-Q56) that were designed to measure social bonding opportunities in fact loaded together resulting in 11 components. In examining

the components for the social bonding opportunities factor loadings, I found there were

two factors (factor 9 [Q25] & factor 10 [Q42]) that had only one item loading on them,

respectively. Since reliability tests could not be performed on these factors and they did

not help to explain the underlying structure of the variables, they were discarded. Factor

11, which had only two items loading on it (Q44 & Q51) had an alpha lower than the

standard set for exploratory research (.60) (Babbie, 1973) and therefore was excluded

from the list of components included in the analysis. The remaining eight components

constituted the indexes measuring Social Bonding Opportunities. Table 13 summarizes

the results of the rotated component matrix for Social Bonding Opportunities.

Similarly, the items (Q57-Q76) designed to measure perception of social bond

also loaded together as was expected. No items were dropped. Table 14 summarizes the

results for the rotated component matrix for Perception. The results supported the design

of the survey items to measure the elements of social bond.

Table 13 – Opportunities for Bonding - Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix – Opportunities	Factors
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School	*Factor I*
Q35 – Reward students for following school rules & policies	.559
Q37 – Encourage parents to participate in their child's learning	.805
Q46 – Show the value of remaining in school	.739
Q53 – Encourage students to advance their education	.756
Q54 – Encourage students' belief in themselves	.588
O2 – Participation in School decision-making	*Factor II*
Q22 – Generally solicit student input	.845
Q29 – Conduct school campaigns to encourage student involvement in school	.574
Q39 – Encourage student participation in school decision-making	.762
Q43 – Generally use student input	.871
O3 – Teachers & Peers are Good	*Factor III*
Q49 – Encourage students to believe teachers are basically good	.838
Q50 – Encourage students to believe students are basically good	.828
O4 – Involvement in School	*Factor IV*
Q24 – Use more in-school rather than out-of-school responses to behavior problems	.577
Q30 – Provide opportunities for student leadership	.581
Q40 – Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities	.583
Q41 – Have activities contingent on student performance	.735
O5 – Expression and Pride	*Factor V*
Q20 – Provide opportunities for students to express school pride	.733
Q27 – Offer on-going and seasonal extracurricular activities	.663
Q28 – Support linkages between students and the community	.532
O6 – Value Education	*Factor VI*
Q33 – Encourage students to have a stake in their education	.777
Q52 – Encourage consistent enforcement of school rules	.603
O7 – Create Attachment	*Factor VII*
Q17 – Provide someone for students to turn to in time of need	.786
Q21 – Provide a safe environment to build positive relationships	.599
Q32 – Encourage teachers to bond with students	.577
O8 – Policy Enforcement	*Factor VIII*
Q55 – Generally enforce that the law should be obeyed	.521
Q56 – Have zero tolerance for racism	.854

Table 14 –Perceptions of Students' Social Bonding Indices - Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix – Perception	Factors
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	*Factor I*
Q60 – …that they have a higher degree of obedience for the law and rules of the school	.596
Q73 – … it is important to graduate from school	.722
Q74 – … it is important to respect authority	.751
Q75 – … teachers are good role models	.663
Q76 – … generally, the law and the school rules should be obeyed	.656
P2 – Stakes in Education	*Factor II*
Q61 – At my school there is always someone to turn to in time of need	.733
Q63 – I like school	.838
Q64 – I care what teachers think of me	.696
P3 – Involvement in Pro-Social Activities	*Factor III*
Q65 – I have participated in school activities beyond the classroom	.691
Q70 – I spend time with my teachers in addition to regular classroom time	.737
Q71 – I have participated in extracurricular school activities	.854
Q72 – I generally keep busy with school and other productive activities	.713
P4 – Non-Participation in Unconventional Activities	*Factor IV*
Q66 – I have not smoked in school	.943
Q67 – I have not drank alcohol	.933
Q68 I have not skipped school	.639
P5 – Commitment to Participate in Productive Activities	*Factor V*
Q57 – …% of students you believe show affection and sensitivity to others in school	.696
Q58 – …% of students you believe that they dedicate time to participate in conventional ways of society	.838
Q59 – …% of students you believe that they are active in productive activities in the school	.697

(Reported factors that rotated with $\acute{\alpha} \leq .60$)

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha (measured from 0.00 to 1.00) was calculated for reliability

testing. The results of the index reliabilities are seen in Tables 15 and 16. The item

statistic was requested to acquire the mean and standard deviation. The results represent

the alpha score for each factor index. Since this study was designed to be exploratory, a

Cronbach's Alpha of .60 or higher was considered desirable (Babbie, 1973). Overall, the

Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .634 to .963 on scores of reliability and this is considered

relatively good. The means are also presented in Tables 15 and 16 to show the average

scores on the indexes.

Using the Likert scale of 1=Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree for the

Social Bonding Index, on average principals agreed mean range of -1.43 to -1.82 that

their schools were providing social bonding opportunities for students. To make the

direction of the score similar to that of perception of social bonding, the scores of the

respondents were reverse-coded resulting in negative means. Each set of means for the

components of social bonding opportunities showed that principals believed that they

were providing opportunities for their students to bond to school. The mean for

Opportunities2 index that measured Participation in school decision-making was the

lowest with (-2.47). This was the only index where the principals' mean score was at the

midpoint range -2.5, suggesting that principals were neutral on providing opportunities

for students to participate in school decision-making.

In regards to the perception of social bonding on the five components (P1-Value

of Education [8.33], P2 – Stakes in Education [7.87], P3 – Involvement in Pro-Social

Activities [6.58], P4 - Non-Participation in Unconventional Activities [8.86], and P5 –

commitment to participate in productive activities [7.28]), the mean (with a scale of 1 =

10% to 10 = 100%,) ranged from 6.58 to 8.86 or 65.8% to 88.6%. Overall, the results

suggested that on average principals perceived two-thirds or more (66% – 89%) of their

students would agree that they were socially bonded to the school. Specifically, the

principals reported that an average of over 80% of their students would agree that they

believe in and valued education (P1) and they (students) did not participate in non-

conventional activities (P4) (i.e., smoking, drinking, and skipping school). According to

principals, over 70% of their students would agree that they were committed to

participating in productive activities (P5) and had positive stakes in their education (P2).

Lastly, the principals reported that two-thirds (65%) of their students would agree that

they were involved in pro-social activities in their school (P3). Cumulatively, the

instrument showcased a strong reliability coefficient across all 13 factors.

Table 15 – Index Reliabilities and Means for Opportunities for Social Bond Measures

	N	Mean	S.D.	Alpha
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to stay in School	86	-1.80	.502	.800
O2 – Participation in School decision-making	86	-2.47	.734	.837
O3 – Teachers & Peers are Good	86	-1.72	.621	.963
O4 – Involvement in School	86	-1.75	.499	.674
O5 – Expression and Pride	86	-1.86	.538	.634
O6 – Value Education	86	-1.61	.489	.694
O7 – Create Attachment	86	-1.55	.496	.697
O8 – Policy Enforcement	86	-1.43	.479	.658

   Table 15 – Indexes derived from mean of components.   The scores of the respondents were reversed
scored to allow for better reporting when compared with principals' perceptions of students' social bonding
reports. Mean and Standard Deviation are derived from reliabilities of single item statistics. *Scale: (1 =
Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree). The higher the score, the better the opportunity for bonding*

Table 16 – Index Reliabilities and Means for Perception of Social Bond Measures

	N	Mean	S.D.	Alpha
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	83	8.33	.788	.863
P2 – Stakes in Education	83	7.87	1.056	.767
P3— Involvement in Pro-social Activities	83	6.58	1.410	.824
P4 – Non-Participation in Unconventional Activities	83	8.86	1.075	.837
P5 – Commitment to Participate in Productive Activities	83	7.28	1.503	.851

   Table 16 – Indexes derived from mean of components. Mean and Standard Deviation are derived from
reliabilities of single item statistics. Scale: (1 = *10%* to 10 = *100%*). The higher the score, the greater
principals' perceptions of students' social bond to school.

Correlations

       The relationship of social bonding opportunities and perception of social bonding

with chronic truancy (the logarithm transformation - *lntruancy*) was also examined. To

do this, standard bivariate correlations were calculated. Each component on the measure for social bonding opportunities and perception of social bonding was evaluated for its association with chronic truancy. The results are reported in Table 17 along with each related significance level. There were no significant correlations with rates of chronic truancy at the .05 level and only two showed significance at the .10 level (Opportunities 1 – Reward & Encouragement to stay in School [.079] and Perception 3 – Involvement in pro-social activities [.062]). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted suggesting that there were no relationships between the variables under study and rates of chronic truancy.

Table 17 – Correlation of Indices & Chronic Truancy (*lntruancy*)

Opportunities	N	Correlation	Sig. Level
Opportunities1	86	**.190**	**.079**
Opportunities2	86	.021	.848
Opportunities3	86	.079	.471
Opportunities4	86	-.062	.573
Opportunities5	**86**	**.096**	**.377**
Opportunities6	86	-.027	.805
Opportunities7	**86**	**.171**	**.112**
Opportunities8	86	.044	.686
Perception	N	Correlation	Sig. Level
Perception1	**83**	**-.122**	**.265**
Perception2	83	-.023	.839
Perception3	**83**	**-.205**	**.062**
Perception4	83	-.045	.684
Perception5	83	-.041	.712

Table 17 – Bolded Correlations of +.1/-.1 or higher: Included in model of best fit. For the Opportunities components the higher scores represent more opportunities for social bonding in school. For the Perception of Social Bonding indexes, the higher the score the greater the perception of social bonding in the middle school. $p < .05$.

In addition to the correlation of the components with the dependent variable, chronic truancy, selected demographic variables (Suburban, Urban, Dropout percent,

Suspended percent, Expelled percent, Black percent, Hispanic percent, White percent, number of student in the classroom, percent enrolled habitual students, and ISTEP scores for Math and English for Grade 7) were considered for use in the model. The data were downloaded from the Indiana Department of Education for school year 2006/2007 and were assessed for their association with the predictor variables. Of these associations, there were only three significant relationships at the .05 level – urban, dropout percent, and suspended percent (See Table 18). The results suggested that a relationship existed with rates of chronic truancy only when a middle school was urban, had high percentages of students who have dropped out from the middle school, and had high percentages of students suspended. In general, the results indicate that there were no significant relationships between the dependent measure, rates of chronic truancy, and suburban schools (-.067), the number of white students in the school system (-.177), the number of students expelled (.190), the number of students in the classroom (.044), and the percent of habitual students in a middle school (.118). However, when accounting for school the number of Black (.198) and Hispanic (.079) students in middle schools and the relationship with rates of chronic truancy there was a significant correlation for schools in urban communities (.206) and percent of dropout (.223) and percent of suspended students (.212) in the middle school. Therefore, as the percent of dropout and suspended students increased in middle schools, one can conjecture that the rates of chronic truancy would increase. However, this result is somewhat a self-fulfilling prophecy as the relationship was foreseeable.

Table 18 - Correlation of Demographic Variables and (Chronic Truancy - *lntruancy*)

Demographic Variables	Correlation	Sig. Level
Suburban	-.067	**.511**
Urban	.206*	**.041**
Dropout Percent	.223*	**.040**
[a]SMEAN (DropoutPercent)	**.223***	.020
Suspended Percent	.247*	**.021**
[a]SMEAN (Suspended Percent)	**.212***	.035
Expelled Percent	.190	**.074**
Black Percent	.198	**.058**
Hispanic Percent	.079	**.457**
White Percent	-.177	**.094**
# of students in classroom	.044	**.666**
% enrolled habitual students	.118	**.278**
ISTEP Math & English Grade 7	.153	**.142**

Table 18 – * = p < .05 – SMEAN – the mean of the set was used in place of missing data. Bolded items are the demographic variables included in the model of best fit.

Model

To assess the relationship between schools' social bonding opportunities, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy, a determination was made about which components to retain in the trimmed model. The decision to include certain components and exclude others was based on components that had correlations of 0.10 or higher on the social bond indices with the exception of Opportunities5 (.096) which was included because with rounding, the correlation was effectively 0.10. The demographic variables included were chosen for inclusion based on whether there were no concerns of multicollinearity. Although urban was significant (.041), it was related to the dummy variable created to code the community variable of 0 = rural, 1 = urban, and 2 = suburban. For the use of the dummy variable, two of the community variables had to be in the model to assess correlation and only urban was significant. The demographic variables included were SMEAN Dropout Percent and

SMEAN Suspended Percent as these two variables showed significance. The SMEAN

transformation was used to substitute the mean for missing values and to be able to retain

those cases in the analyses. One assumption here, is that in examining the relationship of

principal's perceptions with the number of suspended and dropout students in their

schools, principals' perceptions of student-to-school bonds may be impaired. For

instance, principals with schools where there are high numbers of disruptive, suspended,

and/or expelled students in their schools, above the average of other schools, may believe

that the bond students have with their schools is low. As a result, the principal may

formulate harsher policies, reduce opportunities for participation, and make participation

contingent on academic performance which may directly influence students' belief in the

value of school and their involvement, commitment, and attachment to school. The result

of the trimmed model was Opportunities1 (-.336), Opportunities5 (.195), Opportunities7

(-.117), Perception1 (-.020), Perception3 (-.034), SMEAN Dropout Percent (.266,

p=.020) and SMEAN Suspended Percent (.187, p=.035) (See Table 19). The model was

significant (.055) at the .05 level (See Table 20) and accounted for 16% of the variance in

chronic truancy with an R squared of .163.

In examining the social bond relationships, the results indicated that where

schools offered more opportunities for students to stay in school using rewards and

encouragement (Opportunities1: Reward & Encouragement to stay in school [-.336])

there were lower rates of chronic truancy. On the other hand, since there were no

significant relationships recorded, it was assumed that there was no direct relationship

between schools offering more opportunities for students to express themselves and show

school pride (Opportunities5: Expression and Pride [.195]) and rates of chronic truancy.

No relationship was found between schools offering opportunities for students to create

attachment (Opportunities7: Create Attachment [-.117]) to school and rates of chronic

truancy. There was also no relationship found between principals' perceptions of

students' belief and value of education (Perception1: Belief & Value of Education [-

.020]) and rates of chronic truancy. Similarly, there was no relationship found between

principals' perceptions of students' involvement in pro-social activities (Perception3:

Involvement in Pro-Social Activities [-.034]) and rates of chronic truancy. These

relationships were not considered associated because they were not significant at the .05

level, the standard set for the study to access relationships.

Table 19 – Model of Best Fit for Variables Include in Study Analysis – N = 83

Variables Included	Standard Coefficients	Sig. Level	Tolerance	Eigenvalues	R^2
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to stay in School	-.336	.022	.542	.743	**.163**
O5 – Expression and Pride	.195	.178	.539	.334	
O7 – Create Attachment	-.117	.368	.665	.117	
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	-.020	.876	.690	.003	
P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities	-.034	.796	.645	.046	
SMEAN Dropout Percent	.266	.020	.893	.029	
SMEAN Suspended Percent	**.187**	**.123**	**.771**	**.015**	

Table 20 – Model Significance for Variables to include in Study Analysis

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	651.387	7	93.055	2.090	.055a
Residual	3339.005	75	44.520		
Total	3990.391	82			

Table 20 – a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception1, SMEAN (Suspended Percent), SMEAN (Dropout Percent), Opportunities5, Opportunities7, Perception3, Opportunities1   b. Dependent Variable: Chronic Truancy

PART III –RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

The purpose of the study was four-fold. First, I explored the association between schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding. Second, I explored the relationship of schools' opportunities for social bonding with rates of chronic truancy and how this relationship was influenced when controlling for selected demographics. Thirdly, I explored the relationship between principals' perception of social bonding with rates of chronic truancy and how this relationship was influenced when controlling for selected demographics. Lastly, I explored the relationship of schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their school, and rates of chronic truancy and how this relationship was influenced when controlling for selected demographics. These four aims were further developed into specific research questions:

Research Question 1

Relationship between social bonding opportunities and perception of social bonding

Question1. What is the relationship between social bonding opportunities and perception of social bonding?

The relationship between the schools' opportunities for social bond and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding was examined using the previously created factor indices. The correlation analysis measured the relationship between the opportunities for social bonding index and principals' perceptions of social bonding index. To assess the relationship, each set of indices were inputted into a factor analysis using Principal Component as the extraction method with Varimax rotation. According

to Pike, Hudson, and McCuan (1998) this method is called second-order factor analysis

(See Table 21). Because each set of indices, for each measure (Social Bonding

Opportunities and Perception of Social Bond), resulted in only one component extracted,

no rotation was possible. The results suggested that there was a moderate, positive, and

significant (p<.000) relationship between schools' social bonding opportunities in middle

schools and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their schools (r =.452,

p< .01). It was assumed that the components extracted were a true measure of schools'

social bond opportunities and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding.

Table 21 – Second Order Factor Analysis of SB Opportunities & Perception of SB

Indexes	Communalities Extraction	Component Extracted	Eigenvalues % of Variance
Opportunities	Opportunities	1 Component Extracted	
O1	.541	.736	49.68%
O2	.410	.641	
O3	.469	.685	
O4	.493	.705	
O5	.512	.715	
O6	.602	.776	
O7	.589	.767	
O8	.359	.599	
Perception	Perception	1 Component Extracted	
P1	.675	.821	55.19%
P2	.673	.821	
P3	.532	.730	
P4	.218	.467	
P5	.661	.813	

The hypothesis for research question one – *H$_o$1: There is a positive relationship

between schools' opportunities for social bonding in middle schools and principals'

perceptions of students' social bond in middle school* – was supported.

Research Question 2

Question2a. What is the relationship between schools' social bonding

opportunities and rates of chronic truancy? 2b) How is the relationship between social

bonding opportunities and rates of chronic truancy affected when controlling for selected

demographics?

To measure the relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding

and rates of chronic truancy, a second order factor analysis was conducted. The

component extracted from this procedure was entered into a correlation analysis with

lntruancy, the measure of rates of chronic truancy, to analyze the relationship between

the two variables. Although the Pearson Correlation approached .10 (r =.090, p =.204), it

was not significant. The results suggested that there was not a relationship between

schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy.

In addition, a correlation analysis was conducted with the eight factor components

that represented social bonding opportunities. What is important to remember here is that

the strength of the relationship is more important than the significance of the relationship.

The results suggested that of the eight components only two (O1 – Opportunities for

Reward & Encouragement to stay in School [.190], O7 – Opportunities to Create

Attachment [.171]) had a correlation of .10 or higher and were considered to be positively

correlated with chronic truancy. Opportunties5 – Opportunities for Expression and Pride

[.096] approached a correlation of .10 and may be mediated by other factors. In sum,

only three of the eight components used to account for schools' opportunities for social

bonding showed some association with rates of chronic truancy but they were not

significant. None of the relationships were significant at the .05 level (See Table 22). No

relationship was found between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of

chronic truancy.

Table 22 – Correlation of SB Opportunities Indices & *lntruancy*

Opportunities	N	Correlation	Sig. Level
Opportunities1 – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School	86	**.190**	**.079**
Opportunities2 – Participating in School Decision-Making	86	.021	.848
Opportunities3 – Teachers & Peers are Basically Good	86	.079	.471
Opportunities4 – Involvement in School	86	-.062	.573
Opportunities5 – Expression and Pride	**86**	**.096**	**.377**
Opportunities6 – Value in Education	86	-.027	.805
Opportunities7 – Create Attachment	86	**.171**	**.112**
Opportunities8 – Policy Enforcement	86	.044	.686

Table 22 – Bolded Correlations of +.1/-.1 or higher. The higher scores represent more opportunities for school social bonding

The hypothesis for research question 2 – *H$_o$2a*: *There is an inverse relationship*

between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy - was not

supported.

When examining how the relationship between schools' opportunities for social

bonding and rates of chronic truancy were impacted, when controlling for selected

demographics the results were about the same. To conduct the analysis, a simple linear

regression was conducted with rates of chronic truancy serving as the dependent variable

and the results of the second order analysis for the variable "Opportunities" served as the

second independent variable and the SMEAN Suspended% and SMEAN Dropout%

serving as the predictor variables. The variables in the model accounted for almost 13%

of the variation in rates of chronic truancy (See Table 23).

The hypothesis for research question 2b was H_o2b: *When controlling for selected demographics, there is an inverse relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.* Like in 2a, this hypothesis was not supported and in fact there was a relatively weak positive relationship. Because the relationship was not significant, I would agree with the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between the variables. This finding was contrary to expected outcomes.

Table 23 – Regression Results: Opportunities and *lntruancy*, Perception and *lntruancy*, Opportunities, Perception, *lntruancy* and Demo variables

	Standardized Beta	Sig level	R^2
Opportunities and *lntruancy*			
Opportunities	.107	.301	**.134**
SMEAN Dropout%	.261	.014	
SMEAN Suspended%	.266	.012	
Perception and *lntruancy*			
Perception	.014	.901	**.128**
SMEAN Dropout%	.270	.015*	
SMEAN Suspended%	.268	.017*	
Opportunities, Perception, *lntruancy* and Demographic variables			
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School	-.336	.022	**.163**
O5 – Expression and Pride	.195	.178	
O7 – Create Attachment	-.117	.368	
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	-.020	.876	
P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities	-.034	.796	
SMEAN Dropout Percent	.266	.020	
SMEAN Suspended Percent	.187	.123	

Research Question 3

3a) What is the relationship between perceptions of social bonding and rates of chronic truancy? 3b) How is the relationship between perception of social bonding and rates of chronic truancy affected when controlling for selected demographics?

To examine the relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bond and rates of chronic truancy, a second order factor analysis was conducted. The component that resulted from this step was entered into a correlation analysis with *Intruancy* -- the measure of rates of chronic truancy, to analyze the relationship between the two variables. The results suggest that although the Pearson correlation was .10 or higher (r = -.114, p =.152), it was not significant. There was not a relationship between principals' perceptions of students' social bond and chronic truancy.

In addition, a correlation analysis was conducted with the five factor components that represented perception of social bond. The results indicated that only two of the components (P1 – Perception of Belief and Value of Education [-.122], P3 – Perception of involvement in unconventional activities [-.205]) had a correlation of .10 or higher and had relatively weak relationships with rates of chronic truancy. However, none of the relationships were significant at the .05 level (See Table 23). Nonetheless, there seemed to be a correlation between principals' perceptions of their students' involvement in unconventional activities (drinking, smoking, skipping school) and rates of chronic truancy.

All five of the components used to measure principals' perceptions of students' social bond were negatively related to rates of chronic truancy with one significant at the .10 level. The results suggested that there was no direct relationship with principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their school and rates of chronic truancy. This finding provided no real support for the hypothesis proposed for this research question.

H$_o$3a: *There is an inverse relationship between principals' perceptions of students'*

social bond and rates of chronic truancy.

In another measure of principals' perceptions of students' social bond, principals

were asked to rate their responses from 10% to 100% (Q57-Q60). These items were

single items included in the questionnaire to measure each of the constructs of social

bonding. On average, the principals' perceived that 100% of their students would agree

that they believed in the value of school and that rules and laws should be obeyed. In

addition, principals' perceived that 91% of their students would agree that they were

attached to the school; 87% were involved, and 78% were committed to school (See

Table 24). On average, most of the middle school principals (89%) perceived that at least

60% or more of their students showed that they had a social bond to school.

Table 24 – Principals' Perception of Students' Social Bond (n = 85)

Social Bond Construct	Items - % of your students you believe show…	Total % believe that their students show social bond
Attachment	Q57:…affection and sensitivity to others in the school	91
Commitment	Q58:… that they dedicate time to participate in conventional ways of society	79
Involvement	Q59: … that they are active in productive activities in school	87
Belief	Q60: … that they have a high degree of obedience for the law and rules of the school	100
	Total Perception of Social Bond	**89 %** believing that **60%** or more of their students show that they have a social bond to school

To conduct the analysis for the second hypothesis a simple linear regression was

conducted with chronic truancy serving as the dependent variable and principals'

perception of students' opportunities for social bonding and the SMEAN Suspended%

and SMEAN Dropout% as predictors. The variables in the model accounted for almost

13% of the differences in rates of chronic truancy (See Table 23). The hypothesis (H_o3b:

When controlling for selected demographics, there is a negative relationship between

principals' perceptions of students' opportunities for social bonding in their schools and

rates of chronic truancy in middle schools) was not supported as there was not an inverse

relationship but a positive association.

Research Question 4

Question 4a) What is the relationship between social bonding opportunities,

perception of social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in middle schools? 4b) How is

the relationship among social bonding opportunities, perception of social bonding, and

rates of chronic truancy in middle school affected when controlling for selected

demographics?

To examine the relationship among schools' opportunities for social bonding,

principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy, a model

of best fit of factors representing social bonding opportunities and perceptions of social

bond was found (O1, O5, O7, P1, & P3). This model was composed of factors that were

.10 or higher on the correlation analysis. All five social bonding factors were then

entered into a standard multiple regression model with *lntruancy* representing the

dependent variable. The results, shown in Table 25, indicated that 12% of the variation

in rates of chronic truancy was represented by the variables in the model.

Table 25 – Model of Fit for Opportunities & Perception of Bonding and *lntruancy*(N=83)

Variables Included	Standardized Coefficients	Sig. Level	Tolerance	Eigenvalues	R^2
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School	-.197	.159	.600	.030	**.118**
O5 – Expression and Pride	.035	.809	.563	.020	
O7 – Create Attachment	-.142	.275	.690	.004	
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	-.008	.948	.692	.121	
P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities	**-.265**	**.035**	**.756**	**.047**	

Table 25 - Dependent Variable: Chronic Truancy   Method: Enter

A correlation analysis showed significant relationships between Opportunities 1 – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School (p =.036) and Perception 3 - Involvement in Pro-social Activities (p =.021) and the dependent variable (See Table 26). This suggested that chronic truancy was significantly related to opportunities provided for reward and encouragement to stay in school and principals' perceptions of students' involvement in pro-social activities. This relationship, as well as those in the model, was inversely related to rates of chronic truancy.

Table 26 – Correlations for Opportunities and Perception of Bonding and *lntruancy (*N = 83)

Variables Included	Correlations	Sig. Level
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to stay in School	-.198	**.036***
O5 – Expression and Pride	-.103	**.178**
O7 – Create Attachment	-.164	**.069**
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	-.045	**.343**
P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities	**-.223**	**.021***

Table 26 - p<.05

The hypothesis formulated for research questions 4 a was -- *H$_o$4a*: *There is an inverse relationship between schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.* This hypothesis showed that indeed there was an inverse relationship among the

variables in the model and chronic truancy. The hypothesis was supported. As schools'

opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding

increased, rates of chronic truancy decreased.

Because the relationship with Opportunities and Perception was moderately

strong (r =.452, p = < .01), I was curious to see if the second order variables for

Opportunities and Perception could be used to replace the indexes created earlier for

Opportunities and Perception. This was an attempt to increase the R^2 for the relationship

with Opportunities, Perception, *lntruancy* and the demographic variables. However, after

running the analyses, I found there were no significant effects on the dependent variable.

Question 4b. The findings for research question 4b were derived from the

regression results. To measure how the relationship among social bonding opportunities,

principals' perceptions of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy are

affected when controlling for select demographics, a model of best fit was found. The set

of factors for social bond opportunities and perception of social bond (O1, O5, O7, P1, &

P3) and the two variables that represented the selected demographics, SMEAN Dropout

Percent and SMEAN Suspended Percent were entered into a standard multiple regression

model with *lntruancy* representing the dependent variable. The results, presented in

Table 23, suggested that 16% of rates of chronic truancy could be represented by the

variables in the model. Using the One Way ANOVA (F = 2.09, p<.05), the model was

considered significant at the .05 level (See Table 27).

Table 27 – Model Significance - Opportunities, Perception, *lntruancy* and Demo Variables

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	651.387	7	93.055	2.090	.055a
Residual	3339.005	75	44.520		
Total	3990.391	82			

Table 27 – a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception1, SMEAN (Suspended Percent), SMEAN (Dropout Percent), Opportunities5, Opportunities7, Perception3, Opportunities1   b. Dependent Variable: Chronic Truancy

Overall, the results suggested that schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding exert some influence on rates of chronic truancy in middle school despite other variables having some level of influence in the school and on students.

The hypothesis formulated for research question 4b was that – *H_o4b*: *When controlling for demographics, there is an inverse relationship among schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.*

In general, all social bond measures except for Opportunities5, had an inverse relationship suggesting that as these factors increase, there was a decrease in rates of chronic truancy. In regards to the relationship with the dropout percent and suspended percent, there was an expected positive relationship. The results indicated that as the percent of suspended students increase and students drop out of school, there was an increase in rates of chronic truancy. Therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported.

One other hypothesis was formulated for research question 4b to examine demographic variables other than those included in the model of best fit. The hypothesis

was – *H$_o$4c*: *Schools with large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics and few opportunities for social bonding will have higher rates of chronic truancy.*

Table 28 illustrates that the hypothesis was partially supported in that when schools have high rates of Black and Hispanic students, they will also have high rates of chronic truancy. This was especially true for the total percent of Black students in the school as there was a significant positive relationship in the model (.036). However, in regards to the social bonding constructs, the results suggested that when schools' opportunities for social bonding increased, so did the rates of chronic truancy when controlling for Black and Hispanic percentages in the school.

Table 28 – Correlations of Opportunities, Perception, Demo Variables and *lntruancy* (N = 77)

Variables Included	Correlations	Sig. Level	Mean	SD	R^2
O1 – Reward & Encouragement to stay in School	.201	.040*	-1.80	.523	**.177**
O5 – Expression and Pride	.122	.144	-1.85	.555	
O7 – Create Attachment	.160	.082	-1.57	.503	
P1 – Belief & Value of Education	-.106	.179	8.30	.805	
P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities	-.206	.036*	6.53	1.40	
HispanicPercentage	.122	1.46	4.99	8.70	
BlackPercentage	**.263**	**.010***	**5.67**	**12.41**	

*p<.05

CHAPTER V – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their school, and their influence on rates of chronic truancy. The discussion and interpretations of the findings are presented in two parts – Part I – general summary of results and conclusions, Part II Recommendations – limitations, future studies, and other general recommendations.

PART I – SUMMARY

A key finding from the descriptive portion of the study was that principals perceived that, on the various social bonding indices, 66 to 89% of their students would agree they were socially bonded to the school in some way. This supported the principals' perceptions that they were effective at providing opportunities to create attachment to the school through extra-curricular activities, offering recognition and rewards, having caring staff and teachers, offering guidance and counseling, and providing a safe environment for students that follow the rules and are engaged. However, the principals perceived that they were doing little to enhance the bond for students who were considered problematic or less desirable in their schools. Principals acknowledged a need to improve the relationship building that takes place in the school, particularly in valuing student input, involving parents, providing mentoring opportunities, offering more help to students, and offering more activities for low achievers.

As Chavkin (1993) pointed out, this perception of needing to improve on relationship building in school was because in the past, schools were extensions of the

home and the relationship with the students and their educational success was shared.

Anderson and Carter (1990) argue that this relationship has changed. "Hospitals and

extended care facilities look after the ill family member; foster care and juvenile

institutions provide for children needing care or control; domestic courts provide

counseling for parents and children; schools educate with little involvement by parents"

(p. 164). I believe that we have outsourced the education of our children to the schools.

We have done so, to the point where during school hours parents do not want to be

bothered with the care of their children – feeling it is the schools' responsibility. This

seemed to be the opinion of the principals as well, who believed that only the *education*

of the child has been outsourced; not the care, discipline, and support for the child. As a

result, at least 75% of the principals surveyed believed that the parents were the most

responsible for creating students' social bond to school and that the family/parent and

home environment were the main contributors to chronic truancy.

This perception may attest to why principals in the early stages of absences (1–3

and 4–6 absences) send home letters and not until 7–9 absences send warnings of pending

court action and after 10+ absences begin to involve other community members such as

attendance officers, police, etc. Principals perceived that as long as parents were notified

it would be sufficient for the problem to be addressed. Although more support for the

school and student does not come until 10 or more absences, many schools in Indiana are

defining chronic truancy on average as eight or fewer absences, two absences less than

the State's definition. In fact, over 65% of the principals defined chronic truancy as

being less than 10 absences. This finding suggested that principals were responding to chronic truancy before students completely disengaged.

For the most part, schools in Indiana defined chronic truancy with a numerical number of absences. Nearly 40% of the schools defined chronic truancy as 0 to 5 absences, while 26% of schools defined chronic truancy as 6-10 absences. It appeared that the majority of public schools were attempting to respond to repeated absences much earlier than stipulated by the State of Indiana (10 absences). Only a few schools defined chronic truancy as 11-15 absences (9%) or 15–20 absences (1%). A very small percentage of public schools were waiting until students met the 10 absences requirement by the Indiana Code to respond to truancy. This was a positive finding as it indicated that schools were realizing that they shared a large portion of the responsibility for students remaining engaged in school. As the society adapts to changing environments, where expectations change for both the school and family, responsibility for responding to chronic truancy must be shared. Perceptions of who's responsible does not negate us from taking responsibility – albeit the parent, the school, or the community.

One clear indication where steps can be taken is to increase communication and involvement with students long before they disengage (Eith, 2005). Less than half of the principals reported that they actively advertised for students to get involved in school, that they encouraged their students' participation in school decision-making, and that their policies were equipped to use student input. And surprisingly, over 97% of the principals perceived that their school's structures and policies did not provide an avenue for students to go to someone in a time of need. More so, 82% of the principals agreed

that students' participation in school activities was contingent on student performance. This meant that students who needed to be engaged were not allowed an opportunity to do so, or they were excluded from participation when they needed it the most. These results were disheartening and suggested that schools rarely cared for all students to be involved; they were satisfied with the participation of a selected few.

Overall, Indiana middle school principals perceived that their schools' policies and practices were providing opportunities for students to bond to school (with over 85% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing). This was expected as most schools and principals perceived that they were engaging their students.

Interpretation of Key Findings

Not surprisingly, the data revealed a relationship between the two social bond variables -- 'opportunities' and 'perception'. Schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding had a moderate and significant relationship. This meant that when schools provided opportunities for students to bond to school, there was a positive influence on principal's perceptions of students' social bonding in middle school. It was important to see that these two factors were significantly correlated because a large portion of the theoretical grounding for the research rested on the variables being correlated. That a relationship existed between 'opportunities' and 'perceptions' was essential as together the variables helped to measure the social bond – the key independent variables in the study. One assumption, based on this finding, is that when principals perceived their students were socially bonded to school, the policies and practices instituted within the school may work in

favor of providing more opportunities for all students to bond. On the contrary, since the relationship was positive, the finding also suggested that when principals perceived that their students were not bonded to school, there was a negative influence on the opportunities offered to students – albeit in type, number, and quality of the opportunities.

Despite a significant relationship with 'opportunities' and 'perceptions,' there was no relationship with rates of chronic truancy – the expected relationship to the dependent variable. The anticipation was that social bonding levels, measured by the schools' opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in the school, would influence rates of chronic truancy in middle school. This result may indicate several opportunities for future research. For instance, using rates instead of actual absences may be a factor, relying on secondary data and having to transform the data to suit the study's needs may need to be resolved, and relying on principals' perceptions as a proxy for student's views on their social bond to the school may not be getting to the effects of the social bond. Future studies may identify different variables to measure social bond, garner perceptions directly from students, and find true measures of truancy – rather than rates – from direct rather than secondary sources. These approaches may effectively help to establish a relationship between social bonding and chronic truancy in middle school – of one exists. The current study was not able to establish a relationship between these key variables.

As such, until more is known about truancy, all entities that interact with students must take responsibility for the creation of their social bond to school. This shared

responsibility urges researchers and educators to study multiple perceptions before a true understanding of the relationship to school outcomes can be determined. A caveat as we continue to investigate chronic truancy is that all children must be involved not only a selected, gifted, and motivated few. The voices of all students must be heard, those in school and those that have been causalities of schools particularly Blacks and Hispanics.

When behavior problems occur, African American students are often pushed out (Cashin, 2004; Fine, 1991). But what is even more alarming as Cassidy and Bates (2005) suggest, "Schools may reflect these disparities through discriminatory school practices and formulaic school policies" (p. 68). This is not a new phenomenon. In fact, Dunlop (2006) points out that "historically educators have conceived of African American students or students of lower-economic backgrounds as predisposed to violent or disruptive behavior" (p. 2). In a recent study in Pittsburgh, Morrow (2006) concluded that discipline in the middle schools was failing African Americans. Likewise, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions were 55% higher for African Americans students in Indiana than their white counterparts in 1994 (Dunlop, 2006). The aspect of pigeonholing persons into class structures and treating them accordingly, albeit manifesting itself as racism, discrimination, or social injustice, must also be examined for us to better understand chronic truancy. As such another study could examine the expectations that principals, teachers, counselors, and educators have for various types of students in their care. The expectations of school personnel can strongly influence students' motivation to engage in school – thereby being a catalyst to their future success or failure. Blacks and Hispanics are now part of our culture and who America is. Efforts

to meet their needs is as important as meeting the needs of white American children (Cashin, 2004; Fine, 1991).

Research Question two. The expected association between schools' opportunities for social bonding and rates of chronic truancy was found to be not significant. This result may be due to many factors some of which may include, lack of appropriate measurement of the social bond factors, the choice of dependent variable (i.e. rates of truancy) the model simply not having enough variation in factors to account for any significant differences, or a true relationship may not exist.

One explanation may be that large urban school systems do not effectively offer enough opportunities for students to get involved. Another is that sometimes students may have opportunities for social bonding but do not experience bonding and thus avoid school. Secondly, though not suggested from the study results, one opinion would be that as competition to get access to these opportunities increases, many students may feel that the policies for inclusion are unfair and may not feel connected to school. Therefore, students may find or develop their own groups elsewhere that are contrary to conventional involvement in pro-social activities. Other explanations may include that the social bonding opportunities offered in many urban schools may not be culturally relevant and therefore not attractive to all students. These explanations could benefit from further research and exploration. The caveat here is that chronic truancy rates will not decrease as schools simply add more opportunities for students to be involved, but that the opportunities provided must be meaningful and culturally engaging.

Research question three investigated the relationship between principals'

perceptions of students' social bonding and rates of chronic truancy. The data showed

that there were no significant relationships between the variables under study and rates of

chronic truancy. As indicated for research question two, this result may be due to other

factors influencing the model that was unaccounted for. Other possible reasons may

include principals giving socially desirable responses that inflate reports of opportunities

for social bonding, the lack of appropriate measurement of the social bond factor, the

choice of dependent variable, or the model simply not having enough variation for any

significant differences to appear. It could also be that there is no true relationship

between principals' perceptions of students' social bond and rates of chronic truancy.

Even as selected demographic variables were inputted into the model, no significant

relationships appeared. If a relationship did exist it was anticipated that as principals'

perceptions of students' belief in and value for education and students involvement in

pro-social activities went up, rates of chronic truancy would decrease. Or the reverse,

when principals perceived that some students were not bonded to school and were

involved in unconventional activities, principals would institute harsher penalties such as

out-of-school suspensions or expulsions and similar zero-tolerance policies to increase

compliance in their schools.

Research question four examined the relationship among schools' opportunities

for social bonding, principals' perception of students' social bonding, and rates of chronic

truancy. Opportunities for social bonding and principals' perceptions of students' social

bonding accounted for 12% of the variance in rates of chronic truancy. When controlling

for the demographic variables of suspended percent and dropout percent, the percent

accounted for increased by 4 (16%). Thus, over 16% of the variance in rates of chronic

truancy could be accounted for by schools' opportunities for social bonding, principals'

perception of students' social bonding, suspended percent, and dropout percent. Clearly,

many other factors such as parents' view, income, educational history, value and past

interactions with schools, students' perceptions, factors which were not included in this

model, may influence rates of chronic truancy in middle schools. Perhaps qualitative

studies, more mixed methods studies, and more complete assessment and tracking models

can enhance what we know about this relationship. If this study were to be replicated, an

exploration of other variables and a stepwise rather than an enter regression model should

be used. I believe that if schools increased opportunities for rewards and encouragement

to stay in school, opportunities for expression and school pride, opportunities to create

positive attachments, opportunities to enhance belief in the value of an education and

involvement in pro-social activities, there will be a decrease in rates of chronic truancy.

In addition, if student populations are more diverse and more is done intentionally to

work with ethnically diverse students, we may better address their needs and encourage

them to bond to school rather than disengage (Lipsitz, 1984).

Many of the variables explored in this study were not significantly correlated with

rates of chronic truancy. However, the results give some indication of what could be

explored and supplemented when advocating for programs and activities in middle

schools that could influence chronic truancy. For years there have been debates about

whether program investments and opportunities for student involvement are a good use of

federal and local funds for education (Yecke, 2003). This study offers some hope that there may indeed be a link.

PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations are offered to guide future study of chronic truancy and social bonding in school, namely, definitional recommendations, policy recommendations, recommendations for theory, for practice, and for future study.

Definition Recommendations

The results herein reflect Indiana middle schools principals' perceptions only; generalizations beyond the study sample should be made with caution due to non-random sampling. This is largely because the definitions of chronic truancy and methods of responding to chronic truancy vary. Thus, the first recommendation is for a standard US definition of chronic truancy to be adopted by all States.

A standardized truancy definition will facilitate better comparisons among schools and states, researchers and authors, and statistical reporting. The definition of truancy must take into consideration more than the number of absences and have the potential to yield accurate accounts of the frequency of the behavior and the number of students. It must be specific, and should address the problem earlier. One such definition already in existence and currently in use by various truancy reduction programs is that of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The OJJDP (1996) defines chronic truancy as a person "who misses 20% or more of school days within a six week period" (p. 1). Though this definition could potentially have students missing much more than 10 days over a school year, it can encourage principals to have an earlier

identification and intervention point with chronic truants. However, to this definition I would recommend that there be an opportunity to categorize or type-set truants, where possible. For instance, the review of the literature noted that there can be lesson-absence, post-registration, and parental-condoned truancy types. In addition, awareness of various categories of truants, such as traditional, psychological, institutional, recreational, and life-style can help us develop program-specific responses for truants (Bonikowske, 1987; Reid, 1999). I believe that there is also a need to incorporate some way of not just collecting and storing data on absences but using various categories and type-sets, like those presented herein, with no intention of purposely labeling students further, to help us effectively respond to chronic truancy. Blanket responses to address chronic truancy will not affect attitudinal or belief changes in students who are experiencing different reasons for disengagement and different levels of social bonding (i.e., lesson-absence students, who may love school and believe in the value of school but simply hate their physical education classes). Expending energy and time to help lesson-absent students believe in the value of school would likely be ineffective (Fine, 1991). We may simply need to evaluate what aspect of the physical education course the child does not like. This may give insights into how to address the student's concern and thereby help them to attend. Nonetheless, if we know other students are in the same category, with similar experiences, then group-specific responses would be appropriate.

As the definition is revised, the tracking methods would be improved. Today many schools use attendance registers held by teachers; however, this option of tracking is often flawed, despite its convenience and cost-effectiveness. Students often leave the

school system and are dropped from registers with little to no verification of their

whereabouts (Montecel, Cortez, & Cortez, 2004). Bonikowske (1987) reported that

attendance registers are imperfect indexes of tracking truancy, as they are inaccurate,

provide only a partial picture, and cannot be consistently compared and used in research.

Given the variety of methods used to track chronic truancy, conducting comparison

studies may be difficult, to say the least. A more effective tracking system has yet to be

developed but it must combine the use of an attendance officer, school-recorded absences

based on a standardized definition of truancy, teachers' logs of full or partial absences,

and a method of calculation based on total student enrollment.

Policy Implications

After a truant died in the State of Washington, there was public outcry, awareness

was brought to the issues, and policy and legislation were developed to respond to the

tragedy. According to the National Center for School Engagement (2005) the "Becca

Bill" called schools, courts, prosecutors, juvenile services staff, and advocacy groups to

focus on reducing truancy. With funding from the OJJDP, King County Juvenile Court

began to address truancy as a problem with startling results. Those involved realized that

truancy was a community problem and put the youth as the stakeholder (National Center

for School Engagement, 2005). This model could be further studied and tailored for

other states. However, like with all reported data, it was uncertain whether the changes

that occurred were all directly due to the program and initiatives instituted through this

partnership.

There must be new strategies and laws to respond to truancy. As budgets

continue to be constrained, programs -- especially extracurricular -- are often the first to

go (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992). This becomes more of a reality when per student

daily attendance rates are attached to school finances following the "No Child Left

Behind" legislation (Finlay, 2005). Without students connected, schools will inevitably

continue to lose children. Bonding is key to school success; therefore, policies must

recognize social bonding to be as important as academics and the provision of libraries

and books. To bring this policy change about, decision-makers ought to be equipped

with the facts about the number of students affected, who, how, and why students truant,

the impact of truancy on society and the future of truants themselves, and what can be

done to address these challenges. It is only through efforts like these that change can be

made country-wide to effectively and strategically respond to truancy.

Secondly, methods such as of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or transfers,

and participation in various diversion programs or alternative court options with imposed

sanctions for parents and child have largely failed. The challenge of effectively and

efficiently responding to chronic truancy still exists (Encyclopedia of Everyday Law,

2006; Garry, 1996). When it comes to education, the society is the standard setter.

Therefore, government has the responsibility to tax its citizens to acquire the funds and

resources necessary to pay for public education from kindergarten to high school (Abbott

& Breckinridge, 1917). If the resources are provided for schools to adequately respond to

disengaged children early, in school, society may benefit from engaged students and less

students unsupervised during the daytime (Garry, 1996). Options to school are

decreasing for high school dropouts and currently few exist for middle school students who become chronic truants. The first option is for effective implementation of current programs. The second is the use of intensive case management and academic programs that enable students to be assessed regarding reasons for missing school. Third, schools should develop individualized program plans with students to address and cater to their specific needs. For students already out of the formal school system but of middle school age, programs should offer the same resources as those in school, work to link the student to a school system, assess the student's academic skill and record, and formulate a new plan to help them complete their middle school education. In doing so, programs should use ecological resiliency approaches where the goal is to increase protective factors in the home, school, community, and self while decreasing risk factors (Fraser, 2004).

Lastly, federal and local policies must begin to support children struggling to bond with the school rather than allowing them to disengage from school. They must create safety nets for at-risk students, decrease school activities contingent on performance, and create more options for middle school students to return to school without loss of previous work, and use alternative schools not to warehouse *bad* kids but for students that require a different method of teaching, engagement, and assessment.

More programs are being developed to respond to chronic truancy once at-risk students have been identified. Despite more of these programs being necessary, there is also a need to develop programs to assess risk and respond to various levels of engagement before the student has missed 10 or more school days. Outcomes are still forthcoming for the programs identified below. However, the list below identifies

programs that offer positive alternatives to the deficit-based, 'throw-them out' models

that have permeated US schools. Some noteworthy programs include:

- ❏ Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) (Atlanta and Minneapolis),
- ❏ Truancy Habits Reduced Increasing Valuable Education (THRIVE) (Oklahoma),
- ❏ Stop Truancy and Recommend Treatment (START) project (Philadelphia)
- ❏ Truancy Reduction Demonstration programs (implemented out of the OJJDP) (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001) (See Appendix L).

Theoretical Recommendations

The theoretical model used for this study was social control theory. This

theoretical framework was well suited for the purpose of the study. Social control theory

broke down social bond into a framework that allowed specific types of questions to be

formulated and adopted to suit the environment under analysis. Other researchers like

Jenkins (1993) and Eith (2005) used the theory to guide similar work. I would consider

exploring at least two other sets of supplemental questions using the strain, resiliency,

and the ethic of care perspectives to broaden to the overall study findings. These

theoretical frameworks would add to the understanding of the student-school bond and

chronic truancy analysis by exploring the student and their perspectives and struggles,

their home environment, and how caring relationships influence who they are and the

decisions they make about their education.

Social Work Recommendations

Middle school chronic truants are a population whose needs are often overlooked.

There is limited staff to work as regulators in the school to advocate for the needs of

chronic truants (Fine, 1991). In fact, according to the 2007 Survey of Indiana School

Counselors, despite a recommended student-counselor ratio of 250 to 1 by the American

School Counselor Association, Indiana currently averages 560 students to 1 counselor.

This leaves less time for one-to-one student attention especially with over 45% of the

counselors reporting that their caseloads continue to increase (Center for Evaluation and

Education Policy at IU, 2007). To ensure accountability for each student and the

maximum support offered to them before they disengage totally, I offer several

recommendations, a truancy assessment model, and sample work plan that schools can

use to assess and respond to truancy (See Sample in Appendix I). This model allows the

school social worker to have one-on-one contact with the student and offer a plan of

action that include more than sending letters home to the parents when the truant's

behavior is first noticed. It also provides an opportunity to assess the type of truancy,

categorize the behavior, and draft a work plan with a statement of mutual work

responsibilities. This allows school social workers and schools to be proactive before

giving up on the child or waiting until 10+ absences occur to send them to another system

(juvenile court or detention) for processing.

Recommendations for Future Study

There were several identifiable flaws in this study. For these I offer

recommendations for future studies. First, in only seeking principals' perspectives I was

limited in my ability to conjecture about students' feelings, perceptions, and their own

beliefs about their social bond with the school. Future studies should supplement the data

collection with student and parent interviews. Secondly, I used cross-sectional data that

was limited only to a certain time and did not tell the true picture of current truancy

happenings. For instance, I used data from the Indiana Department of Education.

Despite getting 2007 truancy statistics from visiting each school site through their online

records, I was limited to demographic data from 2005-06; data one years older than the

survey data. Synchronizing the year of data collection, if possible, could make a

difference in the findings. Thirdly, most of the schools that did respond to the survey

were from rural areas, thus the schools from urban areas and those with large minority

populations were not adequately represented. This resulted in findings that were

somewhat contrary to expectations and limited generalizations.

Other observations revolved around having to design a questionnaire instrument.

This meant that the instrument was only tested for the first time in this study. Potential

flaws such as wording, organization, scoring, order of questions, and many other factors

were not adequately addressed prior to the questionnaire distribution. This too may have

impacted the anticipated support for the hypotheses. A revised structure of the

questionnaire instrument could include more rounds of testing and refinement, recoding

of items that are currently assessed in a different direction than the rest of the items, and

including questions that gathered some factual data rather than only perceptions and

included an addendum that interviewed students. A tripartite analysis of parent, student,

and principals/teachers would be ideal.

In addition, if this study were replicated, I would first conduct an exploratory

study of the variables to include in the model and analyze their fit using a stepwise

multiple regression model until at least 50% or more of the variance in rates of

chronic truancy could be explained. Currently, with 16% of the variance in chronic

truancy accounted for by the variables in the model of best fit, it is hard to argue that

without social bonding opportunities schools are inadvertently pushing their students

to truant. Many, if not most, of the limitations identified previously may contribute to

this outcome. Lastly, I would have liked to conduct both mail and online surveys to

get those persons that did not respond to the online questionnaire. I would also

consider conducting the study in the months of January and February. This would

hopefully allow for higher response rates. The current study was conducted in April

to July when principals were preparing for the ISTEP tests, spring break, and summer

vacation. This may have influenced the response rate.

I would recommend that future studies include an understanding of how truancy is

defined so that the research can be pooled together (See Appendix K). Finding ways to

consistently and accurately track students is part of the research process as well.

Swanson (2003) recommended that we use the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI). This

tracking method is gaining a lot of support, as it is also the method suggested by the

NCLB legislation. This method suggests that we track the number of enrollees and

divide by the number of graduates. These steps can assist researchers in better

understanding students at-risk for academic and adulthood failure; to explore specific

interventions to respond to multifaceted needs of different types of truants; to examine

the long-term effects of bonding at various levels on outcomes; to assess different truancy

tracking, assessment, and response models with built-in aspects of fidelity over various

school systems, ethnicities, suburban/urban communities, and states; and most

importantly, to conduct research that can be duplicated to draft a true picture of who is

truanting, when, where, how often, for what reasons, and best practices to respond. A

last recommendation would be to conduct an in-depth study of at-risk students and how they bond or do not bond to school.

Conclusions

Truancy has been studied in schools as early as 1917 and efforts have been made to understand how to combat student disengagement. Understanding disengagement involves the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional disengagement from school that may lead to what Richart and colleagues (2004) called the 'school-to-prison pipeline.' Yet, it seemed as if schools have yet to re-organize themselves as needing to respond to chronic truancy beyond the counting of unexcused absences and sending notices to parents. The works of many educational researchers like Chavkin (1993), Cashin (2004), Dryoofs (2005), Kozol (1995, 2005), and Reid (2000) have concluded that academics is still the key. However, beyond the academics, many schools have failed to fill the school context with opportunities to bond. Social bonding happens within a social context of forming relationships that build belief, commitment, and involvement in school. "In fact, education in the United States has always occurred within a social context" – a context that seems to have not been effectively harnessed (Chavkin, 1993, p. 3). In my opinion, we provide a curriculum to address primarily academics, and insufficient opportunities to help students meet their social learning, cognitive, psychosocial, and biological needs. For some students, we provide books, but little learning; we provide interaction but little attachment and bonding to those that educate us; we provide schools but few opportunities to be committed to the value of an education and successful futures. As long as students feel that their needs are not being met at school, that their teachers do not

care about them, and that school is irrelevant to their futures, they will continue to disengage and truant earlier and earlier in hopes of finding avenues to be attached, committed, and involved. Without proactive responses to truancy, we will continue to lose our children long before they manifest themselves in crime and juvenile statistics.

Until we understand chronic truancy, define it, categorize it, and learn what it takes to recognize the early signs evident in lack of social bonding, our efforts to combat it through letters to parents, warnings of pending court actions, in-school and out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions will only be adding fuel to a blaze without knowing the dynamics of the cause of the fire. Students want to learn and early disengagement is a sign of them crying out for help rather than a refusal to learn. Hearing the cry comes from us understanding the centrality of school bonding. The goal is no longer to fix the child but to amend the environment within which they must interact to have a successful future.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Survey Instrument

Social Bonding and Chronic Truancy
Principal Survey

Directions: Thank you for your willingness to complete this online survey. This survey is part of a statewide study on chronic truancy in middle schools and is intended to be completed by principals. Your participation is critical to the success of the study. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Please answer the questions based on current school happenings rather than on what you think the ideal should be. We are interested in how the school is doing currently. Items marked with an * must be completed before moving on. Thanks for your honesty, time, and feedback.

Section A - School Demographics

1.   What type of school system are you in? _____

2.   In what type of community is your school located?   ❏ **Rural** ❏ **Suburban**   ❏ **Urban**

3.   What is the name of your school corporation? _____

4.   What is your school number? _____

5.   On average, how many students are in a classroom in your school? _____

6.   Is there a library in your school?   ❏ **YES** ❏ **NO**

7.   If yes, what are the typical uses of the library? (I.e. research, group work, teaching study, etc.)

_____

8.   Does your school have activity courts or fields? (i.e. tennis or basketball)❏ **YES**   ❏**NO**

9.   Does your school have a gym?   ❏ **YES**   ❏ **NO**

10.   Does your school have an auditorium?   ❏ **YES**   ❏ **NO**

11.   Are students required to wear uniforms?   ❏ **YES**   ❏ **NO**

Section B – Attendance

12. What action is taken when a student misses school?

    1)   After 1-3 absences _____

    2)   After 4-6 absences _____

    3)   After 7-9 absences _____

    4)   After 10+ absences _____

13. What is your school's definition of chronic truancy? _____

14. How many days of school must a student miss before being considered a habitual truant? ___

15. What percentage of your school's currently enrolled students are habitual truants? _____

16. What methods are used to track habitual truants? Check all that applies

❏ **Teacher Attendance Records** ❏ **School recorded # of Absences**   ❏ **Other** _____

Section C – Opportunities for Social Bonding

In this section you are being asked to consider the impact of your schools' policies and procedures on the activities and opportunities available to students. Check the box that best describes your answer using a scale of Strongly Agree (**SA**), Agree (**A**), Neutral (**N**), Disagree (**D**), and Strongly Disagree (**SD**).

Remember to provide an honest assessment of the current situation in your school rather than what you would like to see ideally.

Our school structure and policies …

17. Provide someone for students to turn to in time of need   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

18. Provide socialization opportunities with other students   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

19. Provide activities that foster a desire to stay in school   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

20. Provide opportunities for students to express school pride   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

21. Provide a safe environment to build positive relationships **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

22. Generally solicit student input.   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

23. Encourage students to look forward to coming to school   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

24. Use more in-school rather than out-of-school responses to behavior problems

   SA   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

25. Make after school academic activities available to students **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

26. Offer extended opportunities for academically at-risk students to participate in school

   SA   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

27. Offer on-going and seasonal extracurricular activities   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

28. Support linkages between students and the community   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

29. Conduct school campaigns to encourage student involvement in school

   SA   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

30. Provide opportunities for student leadership   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

31. Provide opportunities for student interaction with role models

   SA   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

32. Encourage teachers to bond with students   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

33. Encourage students to have a stake in their education   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

34. Foster students' creativity   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

35. Reward students for following school rules and policies   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

36. Encourage students to keep busy under adult supervision **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

37. Encourage parents to participate in their child's learning   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

38. Encourage teachers to spend time with at-risk students   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

39. Encourage student participation in school decision-making **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

40. Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

41. Encourage student participation in student governance   **SA**   **A**   **N**   **D**   **SD**

42. Have activities contingent on student performance **SA A N D SD**

43. Generally use student input **SA A N D SD**

44. Create opportunities for all students to get involved in school activities

    SA A N D SD

45. Are perceived by students to be generally fair and equitable **SA A N D SD**

46. Show the value of remaining in school **SA A N D SD**

47. Encourage respect for teachers and authority **SA A N D SD**

48. Have zero tolerance for bullying or student harassment **SA A N D SD**

49. Encourage students to believe teachers are basically good **SA A N D SD**

50. Encourage students to believe peers are basically good **SA A N D SD**

51. Are clearly written with related consequences **SA A N D SD**

52. Encourage consistent enforcement of school rules **SA A N D SD**

53. Encourage students to advance their education **SA A N D SD**

54. Encourage students' belief in themselves **SA A N D SD**

55. Generally enforce that the law should be obeyed **SA A N D SD**

56. Have zero tolerance for racism **SA A N D SD**

Section D – Perception of Student Social Bonding

What percent of your students do you believe show …
57.   … affection and sensitivity to others in the school?

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

58.   … that they dedicate time to participate in conventional ways of society?

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

59.   … that they are active in productive activities in the school?

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

60.   … that they have a high degree of obedience for the law and rules of the school?

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

Part II – Perception of Student Bonding

What percentage of your students would agree with the following statements?
61. At my school there's always someone to turn to in time of need

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

62. I have a lot of close friends at school

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

63. I like school

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

64. I care what teachers think of me

❏10%   ❏20% ❏30%   ❏40% ❏50%   ❏60%   ❏70%   ❏80%   ❏90%   ❏100%

65.   I have participated in school activities beyond the classroom

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

66.   I have not smoked in school

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

67.   I have not drank in school

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

68.   I have not skipped school

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

69.   I do not waste time at school

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

70.   I spend time with my teachers in addition to regular classroom time

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

71.   I have participated in extracurricular school activities

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

72.   I generally keep busy with school and other productive activities

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

73.   It is important to graduate from school

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

74.   It is important to respect authority

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

75.   Teachers are good role models

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

76.   Generally, the law and school rules should be obeyed

❑10%   ❑20% ❑30%   ❑40% ❑50%   ❑60%   ❑70%   ❑80%   ❑90%   ❑100%

Part II – General School Perceptions

77.   Chronic truancy is a problem in my school

          Strongly Agree Agree   Neutral Disagree   Strongly Disagree

78.   Who do you see as responsible for encouraging students' social bond to middle school? Please

rank order your responses from 1-5 showing who is most responsible (1) to least responsible (5).

N/A
The student him/herself   O   O   O   O   O   O
Parents   O   O   O   O   O   O
Teachers   O   O   O   O   O   O
School principals   O   O   O   O   O   O
The Community   O   O   O   O   O   O

79.   Name the top 3 things your school does well in enhancing students' social bond to school.

          1.   _____

     2.   _____
     3.   _____

80.   Name the 3 areas your school needs to improve upon in enhancing students' social bond to school.
     1.   _____
     2.   _____
     3.   _____

81.   What do you think contributes the most chronic truancy in your school?
_____
_____

You have come to the end of the survey. We appreciate your honest responses and the time you have taken to complete it. Please click the **DONE** button to submit your responses.

Thank You!

Appendix B – Pre-Test Survey Evaluation Sheet

General Response sheet for Survey Evaluation

Using the scale assessment of 1-10, **1** being very hard, and **10** being very easy, please **Bold, Circle** or <u>Underline</u> the number that correctly corresponds to your evaluation of the concepts being evaluated, following the survey review.

CATEGORIES	RATING	COMMENT

1) Ease of completion   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

2) Ease of reading   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

3) Ease of understanding question purpose   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

4) Organization of the survey   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

5) Clarity of questions   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

6) Types of questions asked   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

7) Length of questionnaire   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

Research question:
> To what extent do Indiana middle school principals perceive that their schools' structures and policies impact students' social bond to school and these factors correlates to the schools' rates of chronic truancy?**"**

Please offer any changes or recommendations to the improvement of the survey

Thank you for your participation in evaluating this survey.

NOW – After completing this evaluation, please save this file onto your computer desktop and then attach to an email to Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, at <u>cgentleg@iupui.edu</u> to ensure that your evaluation is counted in improving the survey research instrument. Thanks for your cooperation.

Appendix C – Invitation Letter

RE: *Invitation to participate*
Date:

Dear Principal,

My name is Carolyn Gentle-Genitty and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at IUPUI. The purpose of this letter is to seek your participation in a study entitled "*Impact of Schools' Social Bonding on Chronic Truancy: Perceptions of Middle School Principals*".

This study is part of the doctoral dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the School of Social Work. The study is being conducted to examine how student opportunities for social bonding may impact rates of chronic truancy. I am interested in your views about how your school creates opportunities and connections for students that may reduce truanting.

The population of study will include all public and private middle school principals in Indiana.
Participants are invited to complete an online questionnaire that will take approximately *10 minutes* to complete. The information collected in this study is confidential and school names or principals will not be reported in the publication of the results. School data will be collected in aggregate form only. The study has been approved by IU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and is being supervised by an advisory committee of five PhD level professors.

Once you have submitted the online questionnaire, your school will automatically be entered in a raffle pool to *win an LCD projector*. At the end of the data collection period, Thursday June 30th, the winner will be drawn and notified via email. After data analysis, the results will be shared with all survey respondents via email.

Please click on the hyperlink (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=144023814628) to go directly to the questionnaire. In the event you encounter a question(s) that cannot be answered, please feel comfortable to skip. Your honest, rather than an ideal answer is expected. Thank you for your time and assistance. Please contact if you have questions or comments.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, MSW
PhD Candidate
902 West New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Email: cgentleg@iupui.edu

Appendix D – Endorsement Letter – Suellen Reed

Indiana Department of Education
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

May 11, 2007

Indiana School Principals:

Chronic truancy is a growing concern as we work to reduce drop outs in Indiana. As educators, we need to identify factors within our control, so that we can effectively intervene to help students. From our research to identify factors that lead to students dropping out of school, we know that the problems start prior to or during the middle school years and that absenteeism is a leading indicator of whether a student will eventually drop out of school.

A doctoral student at Indiana University has proposed a study of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools as part of her thesis work. Together with her advisory committee and with input from principals, she has developed a survey that meets the standards of Indiana University for quality research.

This study on chronic truancy in Indiana middle and junior high schools will be conducted in the next few weeks. As middle or junior high school principals you will be invited to complete a brief online survey. All participating schools will be entered into a raffle for an LCD projector for their school. The study is being conducted by Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, doctoral candidate in the School of Social Work at Indiana University. She can be contacted with further questions at cgentleg@iupui.edu.

The results of the research will be used for Ms. Gentle-Genitty's dissertation and will be copyrighted in her name for program and publication purposes. No individual schools will be identified in any publications. She is also willing to collaborate and share the data and results with the Department and participants.

Please expect this email, requesting your participation in the study, in the next week or so. The work proposed should help inform us of ways to better deal with this issue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Suellen Reed
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Appendix E – Email Reminders and Invitations

1st Email to Participants

To: [Email]

From: cgentleg@iupui.edu

Subject: Middle School Chronic Truancy - Gentle-Genitty

Body: Dear [Email], [LastName],

We are conducting a survey, and your response would be appreciated.

My name is Carolyn Gentle-Genitty and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at IUPUI. The purpose of this letter is to seek your participation in a statewide study entitled "Impact of Schools' Social Bonding on Chronic Truancy: Perceptions of Middle School Principals".

This study is part of the doctoral dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the School of Social Work. The study is being conducted to examine how student opportunities for social bonding may impact rates of chronic truancy. I am interested in your views about how your school creates opportunities and connections for students that may reduce truanting.

The population of study will include all public and private middle school principals in Indiana. Participants are invited to complete an online questionnaire that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The information collected in this study is confidential and school names or principals will not be reported in the publication of the results. School data will be collected in aggregate form only. The study has been approved by IU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and is being supervised by an advisory committee of five PhD level professors.

Once you have submitted the online questionnaire, your school will automatically be entered in a raffle pool to win an LCD projector. At the end of the data collection period, Thursday June 30th, the winner will be drawn and notified via email. After data analysis, the results will be shared with all survey respondents via email. Please rest assured that your email address will not be sold, marketed, or used for any other purpose than that of this study.

Please click on the hyperlink http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx to go directly to the questionnaire. In the event you encounter a question(s) that cannot be answered, please feel comfortable to skip that question. Your honest, rather than an ideal answer is expected. Thank you for your time and assistance. Please contact if you have questions or comments.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, MSW
PhD Candidate
902 West New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Here is a link to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Thanks for your participation, Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

3ʳᵈ Email to Participants

Subject: Reminder : INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE in Online Study

Body: Dear [First Name] [Last Name]

We are conducting a survey, and your response would be appreciated. This reminder is being sent again based on feedback from principals who felt that mid-June was a better time to get and complete the survey. Thank you for the suggestion.

My name is Carolyn Gentle-Genitty and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at IUPUI. I write to elicit your participation in an ongoing statewide study on chronic truancy entitled "Impact of Schools' Social Bonding on Chronic Truancy: Perceptions of Middle School Principals".

The study has been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects and endorsed by Dr. Suellen Reed, the Inspector of Superintendent of Public Instruction with the Indiana Department of Education. This letter was emailed to all middle school superintendents on May 11, 2007 (The link to the letter is http://www.doe.state.in.us/super/2007/05-May/051107/cov051107.html).

If you have already participated, thank you and please ignore this email. If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, please consider taking a few moments and doing so now. Completing the survey will only take about 8-10 minutes. You have been selected to participate in this survey, as you are part of the study population - - all public and private middle school principals in the state of Indiana.

The purpose of this survey is to examine how student opportunities for social bonding may impact rates of chronic truancy. I am interested in your views about how your school creates opportunities and connections for students that may reduce truanting. It is not expected that all principals or schools will have experienced truancy during their tenure. As such even if you do not experience truancy we would like your feedback on what opportunities for social bonding are provided for students in your school.

The information collected in this study is confidential and school names or principals will not be reported in the publication of the results. School data will be collected in aggregate form only. Once you have submitted the online survey, your school will automatically be entered in a raffle pool to win an LCD projector. At the end of the data collection period, Thursday June 30th, the winner will be drawn and notified via email. After data analysis, the results will be shared with all survey respondents via email. Please rest assured that your email address will not be sold, marketed, or used for any other purpose than that of this study.

Please click on the hyperlink http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx to go directly to the survey. In the event you encounter difficulty with a question(s), please feel comfortable to skip that question. Your honest, rather than an ideal answer is expected. Thank you for your time and assistance. Please contact if you have comments.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, MSW
PhD Candidate
902 West New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Email: cgentleg@iupui.edu

Here is a link to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Thanks for your participation! Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
 http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

4th Email to Participants

Subject: Reminder Invitation to participate in Study on Social Bonding & Chronic Truancy

Body: Dear [First Name] [Last Name]

We are conducting a survey, and your response would be appreciated. This reminder is being sent again based on feedback from principals who felt that mid-June was a better time to get and complete the survey. Thank you for the suggestion.

My name is Carolyn Gentle-Genitty and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at IUPUI. I write to elicit your participation in an ongoing statewide study on chronic truancy entitled "Impact of Schools' Social Bonding on Chronic Truancy: Perceptions of Middle School Principals".

The study has been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects and endorsed by Dr. Suellen Reed, the Inspector of Superintendent of Public Instruction with the Indiana Department of Education. This letter was emailed to all middle school superintendents on May 11, 2007 (The link to the letter is http://www.doe.state.in.us/super/2007/05-May/051107/cov051107.html).

If you have already participated, thank you and please ignore this email.   If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, please consider taking a few moments and doing so now. Completing the survey will only take about 8-10 minutes. You have been selected to participate in this survey, as you are part of the study population - - all public and private middle school principals in the state of Indiana.

The purpose of this survey is to examine how student opportunities for social bonding may impact rates of chronic truancy. I am interested in your views about how your school creates opportunities and connections for students that may reduce truanting. It is not expected that all principals or schools will have experienced truancy during their tenure. As such even if you do not experience truancy we would like your feedback on what opportunities for social bonding are provided for students in your school.

The information collected in this study is confidential and school names or principals will not be reported in the publication of the results. School data will be collected in aggregate form only.   Once you have submitted the online survey, your school will automatically be entered in a raffle pool to win an LCD projector. At the end of the data collection period, Thursday June 30th, the winner will be drawn and notified via email. After data analysis, the results will be shared with all survey respondents via email.   Please rest assured that your email address will not be sold, marketed, or used for any other purpose than that of this study.

Please click on the hyperlink http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx to go directly to the survey. In the event you encounter difficulty with a question(s), please feel comfortable to skip that question. Your honest, rather than an ideal answer is expected. Thank you for your time and

assistance. Please contact if you have
comments.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, MSW
PhD Candidate
902 West New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Email: cgentleg@iupui.edu

Here is a link to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Thanks for your participation! Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us,
please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
 http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

5th Email to Participants

 Subject: Invitation to Participate in IU Study

   Body: Dear [First Name] [Last Name]

We are conducting a survey, and your response would be appreciated. This reminder is being
sent again based on feedback from principals who felt that mid-June was a better time to get
and complete the survey. Thank you for the suggestion.

My name is Carolyn Gentle-Genitty and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at
IUPUI. I write to elicit your participation in an ongoing statewide study on social bonding
entitled "Impact of Schools' Social Bonding on Chronic Truancy: Perceptions of Middle School
Principals".

The study has been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects
and endorsed by Dr. Suellen Reed, the Inspector of Superintendent of Public Instruction with
the Indiana Department of Education. This letter was emailed to all middle school
superintendents on May 11, 2007 (The link to the letter is
http://www.doe.state.in.us/super/2007/05-May/051107/cov051107.html).

If you have already participated, thank you and please ignore this email.   If you have not had a
chance to complete the survey, please consider taking a few moments and doing so now.
 Completing the survey will only take about 8-10 minutes. You have been selected to
participate in this survey, as you are part of the study population - - all public and private
middle school principals in the state of Indiana.

The purpose of this survey is to examine how student opportunities for social bonding may
impact rates of chronic truancy. I am interested in your views about how your school creates
opportunities and connections for students that may reduce truanting. It is not expected that all
principals or schools will have experienced truancy during their tenure. As such even if you do
not experience truancy we would like your feedback on what opportunities for social bonding
are provided for students in your school.

The information collected in this study is confidential and school names or principals will not
be reported in the publication of the results. School data will be collected in aggregate form
only. Once you have submitted the online survey, your school will automatically be entered in

a raffle pool to win an LCD projector. At the end of the data collection period, Thursday June 30th, the winner will be drawn and notified via email. After data analysis, the results will be shared with all survey respondents via email. Please rest assured that your email address will not be sold, marketed, or used for any other purpose than that of this study.

Please click on the hyperlink http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx to go directly to the survey. In the event you encounter difficulty with a question(s), please feel comfortable to skip that question. Your honest, rather than an ideal answer is expected. Thank you for your time and assistance. Please contact if you have
comments.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, MSW
PhD Candidate
902 West New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Email: cgentleg@iupui.edu

Here is a link to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Thanks for your participation! Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
 http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

6th and Final Email to Participants

Subject: Final Invitation to participate in IU Study

Body: Dear [First Name] [Last Name]

If you have already responded to the study, thank you. You will be kept abreast of the findings and be entered in the raffle for the LCD projector for your school. If you are receiving this message in error, please ignore.

If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, please consider taking a few moments and doing so now http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx. Completing the survey will only take about 8-10 minutes. You have been selected to participate in this survey, as you are part of the study population - - all public and private middle school principals in the state of Indiana.

We are conducting a survey, and your response would be very much appreciated. My name is Carolyn Gentle-Genitty and I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work at IUPUI. I write to elicit your participation in an ongoing statewide study on social bonding entitled "Impact of Schools' Social Bonding on Chronic Truancy: Perceptions of Middle School Principals".

The study has been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects and endorsed by Dr. Suellen Reed, the Inspector of Superintendent of Public Instruction with the Indiana Department of Education. This letter was emailed to all middle school superintendents on May 11, 2007 (The link to the letter is http://www.doe.state.in.us/super/2007/05-May/051107/cov051107.html).

The purpose of this survey is to examine how student opportunities for social bonding may impact rates of chronic truancy. I am interested in your views about how your school creates opportunities and connections for students that may reduce truanting. It is not expected that all

principals or schools will have experienced truancy during their tenure. As such even if you do not experience truancy we would like your feedback on what opportunities for social bonding are provided for students in your school.

The information collected in this study is confidential and school names or principals will not be reported in the publication of the results. School data will be collected in aggregate form only. Once you have submitted the online survey, your school will automatically be entered in a raffle pool to win an LCD projector. At the end of the data collection period, Thursday July 3rd, the winner will be drawn and notified via email. After data analysis, the results will be shared with all survey respondents via email. Please rest assured that your email address will not be sold, marketed, or used for any other purpose than that of this study.

Please click on the hyperlink http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx to go directly to the survey. In the event you encounter difficulty with a question(s), please feel comfortable to skip that question. Your honest, rather than an ideal answer, is expected. Thank you for your time and assistance. Please contact if you have comments.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, MSW
PhD Candidate
902 West New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Email: cgentleg@iupui.edu

Here is a link to the survey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Thanks for your participation! Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
 http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Thank You Email

Subject: Thank You

Body: Hi All,

The study on social bonding and chronic truancy is now closed. I want to thank you for your response and for taking the time to share information about your school and work.

The raffle for the projector was held on July 6th. The winner was Judy Jenkins, principal of the Hasten Hebrew Academy.

Again thanks for all your support. A short report will be forthcoming after the data is downloaded and analyzed.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspxhttp://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Appendix F – Responses - Areas for Improvement to Build Social Bond

Column 1	Column 2
• Recognize them more for the positive things they do • Individual meetings • Help for low achievers • Survey student interests • Parent support for importance • For all students to participate in after school activities • Getting parents to become more involved with school • Work to end social groups on campus that exclude • Encourage education and post-secondary education • More community involvement • Provide transportation following after school functions • More teacher connections • Peer mentoring groups • More immediate intervention • Increase parent involvement • More opportunities for students to get involved • More junior high only activities • Parent involvement • Teacher-student relationships • Getting all students involved • Teaching respect • One on one bonding with an adult in the school • Valuing their input • All students connected to school • Dealing with bullying issues/ additional programs • Parents to understand the importance of attendance • Make students and parents aware of all extra-activities • Create a better social grouping of students • Involvement of parents • Student empowerment • Mentor program • Improve communication with parents • Reaching out to disengaged students more deliberately • Time with staff • Provide more after-school activities for non-athletes • More school pride • Finding an activity of interest for all • Need our media center open for use after school. • Provide incentives for those that work hard, follow rules, etc. • More hands on activities • Be more sensitive to student perception of fairness • Be more sensitive to quiet students • Including more of the at-risk students • Meet cultural needs • After school activities • Socialization skills • Offering of extra-curricular for non-traditional students • Better student/teacher relationships • Teachers should care more • Involvement of more of the at-risk students • More mentoring needed	• Increase parental involvement • Create a Student Council • Variety of experience for varied interest groups • Community support • We need more money to offer more activities to students • Provide more targeted interventions • Teach Character Education • Get info to parents about education possibilities • Parental involvement • Getting parental participation • Create more ways to recognize students who are displaying positive behaviors • More family contact • Better cooperation and support from law enforcement • Increase numbers of students in extracurricular activities • More parent involvement • Depth of mentoring • Provide more rewards for drama, academics • Consistent Policy Enforcement • Smaller student to teacher ratio • Better integration of our special education students into co- & extra- curricular • Increased community involvement • Getting more parents involved • More activities for all students • Making learning relevant • All students having a friend or relationship with an adult • Better "plug" every student into some positive school activity • Have more staff involved in extracurricular activities • Involvement of free and reduced lunch students • Student/Parent/Community Involvement • Provide bonding opportunities to the 10% - 20% who are not involved • Track students involvement and design more effective practices • Getting each student connected to a staff member • Greater teacher interaction with students • Connect better to those that do not feel needed, wanted, and welcome. • Social workers needed • Start mentor program • Promoting involvement • Be more diligent with absentees and why they are absent • More activities for younger students • More students in student government • Increase in after school activities • Better educating parents of opportunities • More positive reinforcement on right choices • Counselor programs • Making sure all kids feel safe • More student involvement • Teachers should be more creative in the classroom with their students • Teacher involvement • Teacher-student bonding

Appendix G – Responses - Areas Schools are Doing Well

Column 1	Column 2
▪ Collaboration with feeder schools to stress importance of school	▪ Social gatherings/school social worker
▪ Clubs/ activities	▪ Post cards/home contacts
▪ Age mixing social events	▪ Teachers attitudes
▪ Social activities dances	▪ We talk about it in our classes
▪ Student representatives	▪ Parent group
▪ Advisory program 30 minutes each day	▪ Active parent group
▪ Offering fun after school activities - i.e. Dances	▪ Middle school minded teachers
▪ Recognizing birthdays, students of the month, etc.	▪ We all push students to get involved
▪ We have clubs every Wednesday during the school day	▪ Providing many varied activities both during and after school
▪ Great student-teacher ratio	▪ Parents on campus during school day
▪ Orientation	▪ Teachers are with kids for 6 years
▪ Rewards	▪ Discussion with students
▪ Support and recognize ALL extra-curricular groups and members	▪ Allow students to socialize in cafeteria before school
▪ Provides opportunities for broad participation	▪ Advisory
▪ Advisor/advisee student advocate group	▪ Academic recognitions
▪ Teaming	▪ Fun activities to enhance learning
▪ Provide athletic and fine art opportunities during and after school	▪ Extracurricular activities and events
▪ Mentoring	▪ Creating a safe learning environment
▪ Advocacy class	▪ Explore time each morning in home-room
▪ Strong daily advisory program	▪ Developmentally appropriate instructional strategies
▪ Advisory class - activities	▪ March madness
▪ Homeroom activities	▪ Relationship building opportunities
▪ Manner's Matter - focus on social 'grace' and putting others first	▪ Teacher/student relationships
▪ Advisory groups	▪ Home base & Grade level competitions
▪ Incentive program	▪ Teachers as good role models
▪ Strong music program	▪ Extra-curricular activities
▪ Guidance & counseling	▪ Caring staff
▪ Students are members of instructional teams	▪ Encouraging atmosphere
▪ Create a student friendly atmosphere for students	▪ Providing social events
▪ Provide many, many opportunities	▪ After school clubs
▪ Advisor/advisee program	▪ Strong extra curricular program
▪ Dances and activities	▪ Pro-active guidance program
▪ Begin with Scavenger hunt	▪ Clubs besides athletics and band/choir
▪ Opportunities for students to get involved in school activities.	▪ Providing for positive social interactions
▪ Offers extra-curricular activities (athletic & non-athletic)	▪ We have students grouped in academic teams
▪ Safe environment	▪ Dedicated teachers to the whole child
▪ Provide multiple extracurricular activities	▪ Group gatherings
▪ Small class sizes	▪ Relationships
▪ Role model behaviors	▪ Encourage students to fund-raise for the needy
▪ Academic/social interventions	▪ Field trips
▪ Build staff - student relationships	▪ Band and choir
▪ Incentives	▪ Student-led parent teacher conferences
▪ Various after-school activities	▪ Extra-curricular offering
▪ Get to know each student	▪ Small class size
▪ Peer counseling	▪ Peer tutors
▪ School spirit activities	▪ Provide occasional reward parties
▪ Form relationships between staff and students	▪ Counselor
▪ Kind teachers	▪ Teaching teams with clear identities
▪ Provides many activities for students to participate in	▪ Dances / PTO activities
▪ Having spirit days	▪ Engaging curriculum
▪ Provide extra opportunities to become engaged with school	▪ Extra curricular activities
▪ Clubs and organizations for students to get involved	▪ Small school setting
▪ Promoting a safe environment	▪ Extra- & Co-curricular Activities
▪ Encourage students to get involved beyond the classroom	
▪ Large number of extracurricular programs	
▪ Orientation for new students (given a tour & asked to sit at	
▪ lunch with a student council member)	

Appendix H – Research Factors that Contribute to Chronic Truancy and Dropout

DeMedio (1991); Manning (1993); Jung & Gunn (1990); Stone & Baker (1939); Kohut (1976); George & Alexander (1993)
- Ability to respond to Physical, Psychosocial, and Cognitive needs

Clark (2004)
- Ethnicity

Cashin (2004); Jencks, Smith, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Hevns & Michelson (1972)
- Race
- School structure
- Overcrowding
- Inequality
- Community view of education for blacks

Petersen & Crockett (1985); Petersen, Leffert, Graham, Alwin & Ding (1997); Brough (1990); Milgram (1992); Mynard (1986)
- Pubertal changes
- Grade adjustment
- Impact of cumulative changes
- School ability to address student development diversity

Theory – 6 Constructs (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996)
- Involvement with others
- Degree of involvement
- Rewards and punishment
- Socio-emotional and cognitive skills
- Bonding
- Beliefs

Ducas (1963); Eichhorn (1966);
- Grade organization
- Social maturity of students

Beane (1992); Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmans, & Blatt (1997); Clark & Clark (1984); Crockett, Losoff & Peterson (1984); Dorman (1983); Dorman, Lipsitz & Verner (1985); Gottfredson (1990); Manning (1993)
- School climate
- Social adjustment
- Presence of Guidance or Advisory programs
- School Structure
- School organization
- School leadership
- Responsive middle school to the needs of the students
- Perception of peer groups
- Developmentally appropriate middle schools

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989)
- Small communities for learning
- Teaching an academic core
- Ensure success for all students
- Empower teachers and principals in decision making
- Staff middle schools with teachers who are experts at teaching 10-14 year olds
- Foster health and fitness

- Engage families in child's education
- Connect schools with community

Rumberger (2001)
- Student composition
- School resources
- Structural characteristics of the school
- Practices and policies used by school and staff

Lipsitz (1984)
- Diversity
- Self-Exploration and Self-Definition
- Meaningful participation in their schools and communities
- Positive social interaction with peers and adults
- Physical activity
- Competence and achievement
- Structure and clear limits

Fine (1991)
- Teaching pedagogy
- Discipline
- Rules and rule enforcement
- Structure of school
- Knowledge and background of teachers
- Teacher view of poor functioning students
- Student feelings of alienation
- Opinions from students sought but not discussed or used
- Overcrowded schools and classrooms
- No investigation into why students have become disinterested in school
- Teachers not creating safe classroom environment for mistakes
- Level of teacher concern for students' welfare
- Inexperienced teachers teaching remedial classes
- Students staying back a grade
- Forces recommendations to dropout if average or poor student and seek GED
- No discussion with students of student rights
- Being pushed due to behavior

Vallerand, Fortier & Guay (1997)
- Child level of effort
- Experiences of positive feelings in the classroom about themselves and ability
- Quality and relevance of their learning
- How they feel about their psychological adjustment to school
- School performance
- Satisfaction with academic life
- Satisfaction with social life in school
- Engagement in school

Elliott & Voss (1974); Leone (1990); Polk & Schafer (1972); Roderick (1993); Abbott & Breckinridge (1917)
- History and stability of …
- Family
- Peer

- Community
- Personal deficiencies in regards to ability, motivation, and support

South Wales Truancy Study **- Reynolds, Jones, Leger, and Murgatroyd (1980)**
- Uniform use
- School control
- Enforcement of rules for nonsmoking and no gum chewing
- Size of school
- Co-option of pupils (e.g., prefectship)
- Class size
- School/parent relations
- Age of school
- Adequacy of facilities
- School structural resources and age

St. Louis Public School Study **Robins and Ratcliffe (1980); Roderick (1993)**
- Truanting in elementary school

Cambridge Study **West, 1969; West & Farrington, 1973; West, Farrington, Gundry, Knight, & Osborn, 1977**
- Rating of troublesomeness assessed by student's classmates at age 10
- Student personal nervousness,
- labeled as *lazy* by their teachers
- Low intelligence,
- Less developed bodies,
- Extroverted personalities
- Parental criminality,
- Family income,
- Large family size,
- Unemployed father when child was 14
- Marital discord of parents at eight to ten years,
- Antisocial siblings,
- Inappropriate child-rearing practices

The National Child Development Study **- Folgelman, et al., 1980**
- Education
- Health
- Economic

Fall River Study **– Roderick (1993)**
- Signs decline in attendance from 6th to 8th grade
- Repeated one grade or more (3x likely)

Appendix I – Gentle-Genitty - Truancy Assessment Model & Work Plan

Truancy Assessment Model & Work Plan

Section A - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name of Student:

_____

      First Name   *Last Name*   *Middle Initial*

School Name: _____ Days of Absence per quarter: _____

Grade: _____ Age: ____ Sex: ❒ Male ❒ Female

Referred by: ❒ Court ❒School ❒Community ❒ Other _____ Date of Referral:

_____

MM/DD/YY

Section B - TYPE OF TRUANT
Check one box that applies to the student based on the student, school, and parent reports.

Type of truant based on **Student Self-Report**
❒ Specific lesson absence,
❒ Post registration truancy,
❒ Parental-condoned truancy,
❒ Other: _____

Type of truant based on **School Self-Report**
❒ Specific lesson absence,
❒ Post registration truancy,
❒ Parental-condoned truancy,
❒ Other: _____

Type of truant based on **Parent Self-Report**
❒ Specific lesson absence,
❒ Post registration truancy,
❒ Parental-condoned truancy,
❒ Other: _____

Section C - CATEGORIES OF TRUANT
From the list provided check one box that applies to the student.

❒ **Traditional** (shy, low self-concept, misses because of school **social conditions**)

❒ **Psychological** (laziness, illness, fear, miss school for **emotional reasons**)

❐ **Institutional** (leader, miss school because of reasons related to the **school itself**)
❐ **Generic** (haphazardly misses school for **different reasons**)
❐ **Recreational** (misses school for pleasure or **to avoid an activity or task**)
❐ **Life-style truants** (Marginal member, misses school because has no bond to it)

Overall Report of the Truant

This section of the report combines the ✓ marks above to identify the truant you are working with. This will help you tailor a plan to meet the needs of the student and create gradual change in behavior.

Directions: Review the types and categories checked off above and write up one statement about the current behavior of the child in regards to their truancy.

For example:
Let's say in Section B (**Type of Truant**) and Section C (**Category of truant**) the student is defined as specific *lesson absent* by himself, teacher and parent and categorized as a recreational truant. Your statement would be …

Statement:
Based on my assessment thus far Johnny King is a student that primarily misses lessons and does so for recreational reasons and to avoid an activity or task. Therefore when we develop our plan of action to change the behavior we will focus on which lessons he is having trouble with and why. Then develop an alternative strategy to missing classes when he feels the need to avoid those classes. It is the hope that within 3 months Johnny King would attend 90% or more of those classes rather than skipping them.

STATEMENT OF WORK RESPONSIBILITY

Theory USE & Plan of Action

Assessing the problem

☐   How do you feel about school? (i.e. Good, Sad, Happy, Disconnected, etc.)

_____

☐   What do you think could be done to help you feel better about school?

_____

☐   Who would you like to help you feel better about school?

_____

☐   Do you think we can help you do this in 3months?

_____

☐   Are you willing to try to make these changes?

_____

Determining the Needs
Let's list some of the barriers you think affects you from attending classes regularly?
1)

2)

3)

Determining the Resources
Let's list some of the resources you think you need in order to attend classes regularly?
(I.e. more opportunities or activities for to be involved, attached, and committed in so that you will value attending classes regularly).
1)

2)

3)

Action Plan (Measurable Attainable Positive and Specific – MAPS)

Week 1: To identify all the lessons Johnny dislikes or has difficulty with
1) Assess current attendance: Of this week how many days of school did you miss?
2) Of this week how many classes did you miss?
(Repeat questions 1 & 2 each week – for weekly self-report and monitoring)
Week 2: To work with Johnny to determine 2 alternatives for missing classes he dislikes
Week 3: To practice using the 2 alternatives to missing classes & determine 3 strategies to improve his commitment to doing well in the classes he dislikes
Week 4: Invite teacher and parent for one consultation on how to get the Johnny more involved in his school, with his teachers, and classes.
Week 5: Discuss strategies with Johnny and get his buy in. Implement the strategies he feels comfortable using
Week 6:
Week 7:
Week 8:
Week 9:
Week 10:
Week 11:
Week 12:

SAMPLE Weekly Report Sheet

Name of Student: _____

Name of Mentor: _____

Date: _____

Week 1: To identify all the lessons Johnny dislikes or has difficulty with
1) Assess current attendance: Of this week how many days of school did you miss?
2) Of this week how many classes did you miss?

Summary of Week 1:

Appendix J – Structures and Policies that influence School Opportunities for Social Bond

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Total %
Structures (S) and Policies (P) enforce law should be obeyed	59.5	40.5	100.00
Build positive relationship	55.3	43.5	98.8
S and P encourage respect for teachers and authority	45.9	52.9	98.8
S and P encourage consistent enforcement of rules	47.7	51.2	98.8
S and P encourage students to advance their education	44.2	53.5	97.7
Socialization	47.7	48.8	96.5
Offer on-going extracurricular activities	56.5	40.0	96.5
Encourage participation in extracurricular activities	53.6	42.9	96.4
S and P encourage students to believe in themselves	35.7	60.7	96.4
Encourage students to have a stake in their education	37.2	57.0	94.2
S and P are fair and equitable	15.7	78.3	94.0
S and P zero tolerance for racism	59.5	34.5	94.0
Offer opportunities for teacher-student bonding	44.0	47.6	91.7
Offer opportunities for student leadership	26.7	64.0	90.7
S and P show value of remaining in school	25.6	65.1	90.7
Encourage parents to participate in child's learning	21.2	69.4	90.6
S and P encourage belief that teachers are good	38.8	51.8	90.6
S and P are clearly written with consequences	39.5	50.6	90.1
Use in-school rather than out-of school responses	54.7	34.9	89.5
Express school pride	27.1	62.4	89.4
S and P show zero tolerance for bullying/harassment	40.0	49.4	89.4
S and P encourage peers are good	34.1	55.3	89.4
Encourage teachers to spend time with at risk students	29.8	57.1	86.9
Look forward to coming to school	25.6	60.5	86.0
Encourage student creativity	20.9	65.1	86.0
Encourage students to be involved in school activities	27.1	58.8	85.9
Encourage students to keep busy	19.8	64.0	83.7
Offer after school activities	31.4	51.2	82.6
opportunities for student interaction w/ role models	20.0	62.4	82.4
Have activities contingent on student performance	24.7	57.6	82.4
Encourage participation in student government	20.0	60.0	80.0
Foster desire to stay in school	31.8	47.1	78.8
Reward students for following rules	30.2	46.5	76.7
Provide extended opportunities for students at risk	25.0	50.0	75.0
Seek student input	16.3	54.7	70.9
Offer student-community linkages	14.1	52.9	67.1
Use student input	7.1	51.8	58.8
Offer campaigns for student involvement	11.6	37.2	48.8
Encourage participation in school decision making	8.3	40.5	48.8
			86 Total extent
	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Total Disagreement %
Had someone to turn to in times of need	50.6	46.6	96.6

Appendix K – Examples of State Truancy Laws

Examples of State Truancy Laws

CALIFORNIA   Any school-aged child who is absent from school without valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during one school day on three occasions during the school year or any combination thereof is considered truant and should be reported to the supervisor of the school district.

CONNECTICUT   A truant is a child between the ages of five and 18 who is enrolled in any public or private school and has four unexcused absences in a month or 10 in any school year. A habitual truant is a child of the same age who has 20 unexcused absences from school during a school year.

ILLINOIS   A truant is defined as any child subject to compulsory schooling and who is absent from school unexcused. Absences that are excused are determined by the school board. A chronic or habitual truant is a school-age child who is absent without valid cause for 10 percent out of 180 consecutive days. The truant officer in Illinois is responsible for informing parents of truancy and referring the case to juvenile court.

LOUISIANA   Any student between the ages of seven and seventeen is required to attend school. A student is considered truant when the child has been absent from school for five school days in schools operating on a semester system and for ten days in schools not operating on a semester basis. A student may be referred to juvenile court for habitual absence when all reasonable efforts by school principals have failed and there have been five unexcused absences in one month. The school principal or truancy officer shall file a report indicating dates of absences, contacts with parents and other information.

VIRGINIA   Any student between the ages of five and 18 is subject to compulsory school attendance. After a pupil has been absent for five days during the school year without valid excuse, a notice is sent to parents outlining the consequences of truancy. A conference with school officials and parents is arranged within fifteen school days of the sixth absence. Once a truant has accumulated more than seven absences during the school year, the case will be referred to juvenile and domestic relations court.

Appendix L – Model Truancy Reduction Initiatives

Retrieved from: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Truancy/index.html

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Program elements: Parents, police, and the school system focus on the causes of truancy in the Truancy Abatement and Burglary Suppression (TABS) initiative in Milwaukee. Attendance is taken every period in all high schools. Local police officers pi ck up truant students and bring them to a Boys and Girls Club for counseling. Parents are called at home automatically every night if their child did not attend school that day. If the parent is not supportive of regular school attendance, then the district attorney is contacted.

Results: In a recent sample of students who went through the TABS process, 73 percent returned to school the next day, 66 percent remained in school on the 15th day, and 64 percent still are in school 30 days later. Since the TABS initiative began, daytime burglary in Milwaukee has decreased 33 percent, and daytime aggravated battery has decreased 29 percent. Aquine Jackson, Director of the Parent and Student Services Division of the Milwaukee Public Schools, says, "I think the TABS program is so effective because it is a collaboration among...the Milwaukee Public Schools, the Milwaukee Boys and Girls Clubs, the Milwaukee Police Department, and the County Sheriff, and because it is now a part of state statute that police officers can stop students on the street during school hours."

Rohnert Park, California

Program elements: The 'Stop, Cite, and Return' Program is designed to reduce truancy and juvenile crime in the community and to increase average daily attendance for the schools. Patrol officers issue citations to suspected truants contacted during school hours, and students are returned to school to meet with their parents and a vice principal. Two citations are issued without penalty; the third citation results in referral to appropriate support services.

Results: Due in large part to this initiative, the daytime burglary rate is 75 percent below what it was in 1979. Haynes Hunter, who has worked in different capacities on the issue of truancy in Rohnert Park for over 15 years, says the program is effective because it is a "high visibility" effort. "Being on the street, being in contact with the kids makes them aware of the fact that we care. We want them to get their education."

New Haven, Connecticut

Program elements: The Stay in School Program targets middle school students who have just begun to have problems. Targeted students go to truancy court, at which a panel of high school students question them and try to identify solutions. After court, youth and attorney mentors are assigned to each student for support. The student and the court sign a written agreement, and after two months, students return to the court to review their contract and report on their progress.

Results: Denise Keyes Page, who recruits and trains mentors for this initiative, says "This program works because it harnesses the power of peer pressure. Truants are judged and mentored by their peers, instead of just by adults who may seem dist ant and unconnected. Our program uses both the carrot and stick approaches, providing both supportive mentorship and real courtroom accountability to truant students. One of the evolving strengths of the program is that not only are we providing support to the truant, but we are serving as a resource to their parents."

Atlantic County, New Jersey

Program elements: The Atlantic County Project Helping Hand receives referrals from six Atlantic City and four Pleasantville elementary schools for youth in K through eighth grades who have five to 15 days of unexcused absences. A truancy worker meets with the youth and family to provide short-term family counseling, usually up to eight sessions. Referrals for additional social services are made on an as needed basis. If the family fails to keep appointments, home visits are made to encourage cooperation. Once a truancy problem is corrected, the case is closed and placed on an aftercare/monitoring status with contact made at 30, 60, and 90 day intervals to ensure that truancy does not persist.

Results: During the past school year, 84 percent of the students who participated in the Atlantic County program had no recurrence of truancy. Colleen Denelsback of project Helping Hand says that "our philosophy is one of early intervention, both at the age level and the number of unexcused absences. We stress that the earlier intervention takes place, the greater the chance for positive outcomes. Early intervention will prevent truancy and later delinquency."

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Program elements: The THRIVE (Truancy Habits Reduced Increasing Valuable Education) initiative is a comprehensive anti-truancy program spurred by an ongoing community partnership of law enforcement, education, and social service officials. Police bring a suspected truant to a community-run detention center where, within one hour of arrival, officials assess the youth's school status, release the youth to a parent or relative, and refer the family to any needed social service agencies. Parents are notified by the district attorney of potential consequences for repeat

behavior. Parents who harbor youth with 15 days of consecutive unexcused absences are subject to misdemeanor charges.

Results: Since THRIVE's inception in 1989, the Oklahoma City Police Department reports a 33 percent drop in daytime burglary rates. Tom Steemen, the parent of a student who went through THRIVE, says, "The first I heard of the program was when my son was caught and taken to the center. I was real glad to know they had something like THRIVE." His son Ken, age 15, says, "THRIVE shook me up. I knew (while in the police car) just how wrong I was."

Norfolk, Virginia

Program elements: The Norfolk, Virginia school district uses software to collect data on students who are tardy, cut class, leave grounds without permission, are truant but brought back to school by police, or are absent without cause. Each school has a team composed of teachers, parents, and school staff that examines the data to analyze truancy trends. For example, a team may try to pinpoint particular locations where truant students are found during school hours and then place additional monitors in these locations. A team may also notice certain months when truancy is prevalent and then design special programs to curb truancy during those months.

Results: Ann Hall of the Norfolk Public Schools says, "Attendance has improved at all levels of schools since 1992 - two percent at the elementary and secondary levels. The overall district average is up one percent. This is significant in that leg al attendance is at the 93rd percentile. Tighter attendance policies, grading practices, and teamwork have lead to this improvement...There are few, if any, teachers complaining that discipline and law violations are not being handled consistently through out the district. This is a marked improvement over the report that was made in the teacher satisfaction survey conducted in 1988."

Marion, Ohio

Program elements: The Community Service Early Intervention Program focuses on potential truants during freshman year. Referred students are required to attend tutoring sessions as directed, give their time to community service projects, and participate in a counseling program. In addition, students are required to give back to the Intervention initiative by sharing what they have learned with new students in the program and by recommending others who might benefit. Parental participation is required throughout the program. Upon completion of the six-week sequence, school records relative to truancy are nullified. If the student fails the program, formal court intervention is the next step.

Results: Of the 28 students who took part in the program this semester, 20 have improved attendance records and will pass freshman year. The eight who did not improve their attendance records either moved from the school district or were removed from the school for failure to meet attendance requirements. Misty Swanger, Community Educator for this initiative, saw a general improvement in the grades and behavior of the students. Executive Director Christine Haas says, "This program is a combination of early intervention and early attention. As long as the child knows that someone is watching out for them and taking an interest in them, they will not be truant. The attention factor is very important. It creates success." The intervention program h as already identified 100 ninth grade students with truancy problems to work with in the coming year.

Peoria, Arizona

Program elements: In Operation Save Kids, school officials contact the parents of students with three unexcused absences. Parents are expected to relay back to school officials steps they have taken to ensure their children regularly attend school. When students continue to be truant, cases are referred to the local district attorney. To avoid criminal penalty and a $150 parent fine, youth are required to participate in an intensive counseling program, and parents must attend a parenting skills training program.

Results: Since Operation Save Kids began two years ago, daytime juvenile property crime rates have declined by 65 percent. Truancy citywide has been cut in half. "Look at today's truant, and you're looking at tomorrow's criminal," says Assistant City Attorney Terry Bays Smith.

Bakersfield, California

Program elements: A consortium of school districts in Kern County, California has formed the Truancy Reduction Program. Local schools reach out to youth with a history of truancy through parent contact, peer tutoring, and mentoring services. Persistently truant youth are referred to the County Probation Office. Probation officers visit parents at home one-on-one, check on the youth at school weekly, and in the majority of cases refer youth and their families to one or more needed social service agencies. The County Probation Office and local school continue to track the youth for a full year before making referral to the local District Attorney's Office.

Results: "The majority of graduates of the Truancy Reduction Program's first year no longer present a truancy problem," according to the Kern County Public Schools Coordinator, Steve Hageman. Over a fifth of that 1994 class had perfect school attendance records in the year following their participation.

Resources

The U.S. Department of Justice provides federal funding to states to implement local delinquency prevention programs, including programs that address truancy. Many of these programs address risk and protective factors. A large portion of the funding has come from the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Formula Grants Program that is administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs. For more information contact the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 1-800-638-8736.

Under a jointly-funded project, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education have developed a training and technical assistance project to help communities develop or enhance truancy prevention/intervention programs and programs that target r elated problems of youth out of the education mainstream. Training and technical assistance will be made available to 10 jurisdictions through a competitive application process in 1996. For more information contact Ron Stephens at the National School Safety Center, 805-373-9977.

For more information about the information presented in this guide, please call the U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools Office at 202-260-3954.

Prepared by the U.S. Department of Education with input from the U.S. Department of Justice and in consultation with local communities and the National School Safety Center.

REFERENCES

Abbott, E. & Breckinridge, S.P. (1917). *Truancy and non-attendance in the Chicago schools: A study of the social aspects of the compulsory education and child labor legislation of Illinois*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago.

Albert-Green, D. (2005). *Teachers', parents', and students' perceptions of effective school characteristics of two Texan urban exemplary open-enrollment charter schools.* Retrieved February 9, 2007 from Digital Repository at Texas A&M University from https://txspace.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/2566.

Alston, R.J., Harley, D., & Lenhoff, K. (Fall, 1995). Hirschi's social control theory: A sociological perspective on drug abuse among persons with disabilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 31-35.

Alt, M.N., Choy, S.P., & Hammer, C.H. (2000). *In the middle: Characteristics of public schools with a focus on middle schools*, NCES 2000-312. Washington, DC: US Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics.

Ames, N.L. & Miller, E. (1994). *Changing middle schools: How to make schools work for young adolescents*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Anderson, R.E. & Cater, I. (1990). *Human behavior in the social environment: A social systems approach* (4Ed.) Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter

Babbie, E. (1973). *Survey research methods*. (1st Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Backes, J., Ralston, A., & Ingwalson, G. (1999). Middle level reform: The impact on student achievement. *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly*, *22*(3), 43-57.

Baker, M.L., Sigmon, J.N., & Nugent, M.E. (2001). *Truancy reduction: Keeping students in school*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Bartlett, L., et al. (1978). *Absences: A model policy and rule.* Des Moines, IA: Iowa State Department of Public Instruction.

Bartollas, C. & Miller, S.J. (2005). *Juvenile justice in America*. (4th Ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Barton, P.E. (2005). *One-third of a nation: Rising dropout rates and declining opportunities*. Policy Information Report. Policy Information Center Educational Testing Services. Retrieved June 25, 2006 from http:www.ets.org/research/pic.

Beane, J.A. (1992). Turning the floor over: Reflections on a middle school curriculum. *Middle School Journal*, *23*(3), 34-40.

Bell, A.J., Rosen, L.A., & Dynlacht, D. (1994). Truancy intervention. *The Journal of Research and Development in Education*, *57*(3), 203-211.

Bergmann, S. & Baxter, J. (1983). Building a guidance program and advisory concept for early adolescents. *NASSP Bulletin, 67*(463), 49-55.

Blanford, S. (2006). *Middle leadership in schools: Harmonizing leadership and learning*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Bonikowske, D. (1987). *Truancy: A prelude to dropping out*. Bloomington, IN:

National Education Service.

Brewer, J. & Hunter, A. (1990). *Multi-method research: A synthesis of styles*. Thousand

Oaks: Sage.

Brezina, T., Piquero, A.R., & Mazerolle, P. (2001). Student anger and aggressive

behavior in school: An initial test of Agnew's macro-level strain theory. *Journal*

of Research in Crime and Delinquency, *38*(4), 362-386.

Brough, J.A. (1990). Changing conditions for young adolescents: Reminiscences and

realities. *Educational Horizons, 68*(2), 78-81.

Brown, E.C., Catalano, R.F., Fleming, C.B., Haggerty, K.P., Abbott, R.D., Cortes, R.R.,

& Park, J. (2005). Mediator effects in the social development model: An

examination of constituent theories. *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health*,

15(4), 221-235.

Brundrett, R.C. (2004). *The effects of the middle school concept on student achievement*

as identified by principals and the academic excellence indicator system reports

in selected middle schools in Texas. Retrieved from Digital Repository at Texas

A&M University from http://handle.tamu.edu/1969.1/1362 on February 9, 2007.

Brunsma, D.L. (Ed.) (2006). *Uniforms in public schools: A decade of research and*

debate. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Education.

Bursik, R.J. & Grasmick, H.G. (1983). *Neighborhoods and crime: The dimensions of*

effective community control. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Capelluti, J. & Brazee, E.N. (1992). Middle-level curriculum: Making sense. *Middle school Journal*, *23*(3), 11-15.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1989). *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21ˢᵗ century.* Washington, DC: Author.

Cashin, S. (2004). *The failures of integration: How race and class are undermining the American dream.* NY: Public Affairs.

Cassidy, W. & Bates, A. (2005). Drop-outs and push-outs: Finding hope at a school that actualizes the ethic of care. *American Journal of Education*, *112*(1), 66-102.

Catalano, R.F., Berglaund, H.L., Ryan, J.A.M., Lonczak, H.S., & Hawkins, J.D. (1998). *Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs.* Social Development Research Group: University of Washington. Retrieved March 16, 2006 from: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PositiveYouthDev99/index.htm.

Catalano, R.F. & Hawkins, J.D. (1996). The social development model: A theory of antisocial behavior. In J.D. Hawkins, (Ed.) *Delinquency and crime: Current theories* (pp.149-197). NY: Cambridge University.

Cawelti, G. (1988). Middle schools a better match with early adolescent needs: ASCD survey finds. *ASCD Curriculum Update*, *15*, 7-12.

Center for Evaluation and Education Policy at IU. (2007). *2007 Survey of Indiana school counselors.* Indiana Department of Education. Retrieved February 28, from http://www.doe.in.gov/reed/newsr/2008/01-January/Counselors.html

Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies. (2006). *Educational neglect and compulsory schooling: A status report (2004-2005).* Author. Retrieved April 9, 2007 from http://csi.boisestate.edu/pdffiles/Educational%20Neglect%20&%20Compulsory%20Schooling%20Status%20Report.pdf.

Cernkovich, S. & Giordano, P. (1992). School bonding and race. *Criminology, 30,* 261-291.

Chandler, M.A. (2007). Black parents seek to raise ambitions: Loudon group works to keep sons interested in academics and achievement. *Washington Post.* Retrieved March 6, 2007 from http:www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article2007/02/19/AR2007021900952.html

Chavkin, N.F. (Ed). (1993). *Families and schools in a pluralistic society.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Clark, A.S. (1994). Dropping out in America: A national dilemma. *In OERI Native American Youth at Risk Study*, 1-13. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Clark, S.N. & Clark, D.C. (1984). Creating a responsive middle school through systematic long-range planning. *NASSP Bulletin, 68*(473), 42-51.

Collins, D. (1998). *Management and leadership in education: Managing truancy in schools.* NY: Cassell.

Colorado Foundation for Families and Children (2001). *Overview of truancy.* Denver Colorado: Author.

Conger, J.J. & Miller, W.C. (1966). *Personality, social class, and delinquency*. NY: Wiley.

Creek, R.J. (1969). *Middle school rationale: The sixth grade component.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh.

Crockett, L., Losoff, M., & Peterson, A. (1984). Perceptions of the peer group and friendship in early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *4*, 155-181.

Crosnoe, R., Erickson, K.G., & Dornbusch, S.M. (2002). Protective functions of family relationships and school factors on the deviant behaviors of adolescent boys and girls: Reducing the impact of risky friendships. *Youth & Society*, *33*(4), 515-544.

DeMedio, D.L. (1991). *Using the unique developmental traits of middle school students to build effective curriculum.* Paper presented at the meeting of the National Middle School Association, Louisville, KY.

DiPerna, J.C. & Elliott, S.N. (1999). The development and validation of the Academic Competence Evaluation Scales. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, *17*, 207-225.

Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. 2nd. NY: John Wiley.

Doda, N., George, P., & McEwin, K. (1978). Ten current truths about effective schools. *Middle School Journal*, *18*(3), 3-5.

Dorman, G. (1983). Making schools for young adolescents work. *Educational Horizons*, *61*, 175-182.

Dorman, G., Lipsitz, J., & Verner, P. (1985). Improving schools for young adolescents. *Educational Leadership*, *42*(6), 44-49.

Dryfoos, J.G. (1990). *Adolescents at risk: Prevalence and prevention*. NY: Oxford University.

Dryfoos, J.G. (1994). Full-service schools: *A revolution in health and social services for children youth, and families*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Dryfoos, J.G. (1996). Adolescents at risk: Shaping programs to fit the need. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *65*(1), 5-18.

Ducas, W.P. (1963). *A study of the grade organizational structure of the junior high school as measured by social maturity and opposite sex choice*. Houston, TX: University of Houston.

Dunlop, K. (1996). One strike and you're out: *Expulsions and suspensions in the Indianapolis schools*. Retrieved July 24, 2006 from http:www.digitas.harvard.edu/~perspy/old/issues/1996/apr/school.html.

Elliott, D.S. & Voss, H.L. (1974). *Delinquency and dropout.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Eccles, J.S., Lord, S.E., Roeser, R.W., Barber, B.L., & Jozefowicz, D.M. (1999). The association of school transitions in early adolescence with developmental trajectories through high school. In J. Schulenberg, J.L. Maggs, & K. Hurrelmann (Eds.) *Health risks and developmental transitions during adolescence* (pp.283-320). NY: Cambridge University.

Eichhorn, D.H. (1966). *The middle school*. NY: Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc.

Eith, C.A. (2005). *Delinquency, schools, and the social bond*. NY: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Encyclopedia of Everyday Law (2006). *Examples of state truancy laws*. Retrieved on July 24, 2006 from http://law.enotes.com/everyday-law-encylopedia/truancy pp 1-9.

Engel, R.J. & Schutt, R.K. (2005). *The practice of research in social work*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Epstein, J.L. (2005). Epstein's framework of six types of involvement. Baltimore, MD: Center for the Social Organization of Schools.

Epstein, J. & Salinas, K. (1992). Promising programs in the middle grades. *Childhood Education, 67*, 285-291.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management and Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Ed.) (1999). *Student truancy*. Eugene, OR: Jay ED 4290334.

Farmer, J.A. & Payne, Y. (1992). *Dropping out: Issues and answers*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.

Farrell, E., Peguero, G., Lindsey, R., & White, R. (1988). Giving voice to high school students: "Pressure and boredom, ya know what I'm saying?" *American Educational Research Journal, 25*, 489-502.

Farrington, D.P. (1980). Truancy, delinquency, the home, and the school. In L.,

    Hersov & I. Berg (Eds.) (1980). *Out of school: Modern perspectives in*

    truancy and school refusal (pp.49-64). NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Felner, R.D., Jackson, A.W., Kasak, D., Mulhall, P., Brand, S., & Flowers, N. (1997).

    The impact of school reform for the middle years. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *78*(7), 528-

    532.

Feshbach, N.D. & Feshbach, S. (1987). Affective processes and academic achievement.

    Child Development, *58*, 1335-1347.

Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public high school*.

    Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Finlay, K. (2005). *School attendance tracking: Challenges and effective practices*.

    Denver, CO: National Center for School Engagement.

Fiske, E.B. (1991). *Smart schools, smart kids.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Fogelman, K, Tibbenham, A., & Lambert, L. (1980). Absence from school: Findings

    from the national child development study. In L. Hersov & I. Berg (Eds.).

    Out of school: Modern perspectives in truancy and school refusal (pp.7-24).

    NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Fowler, F.J. (2002). *Survey research methods*. (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fraser, M.W. (Ed.). (2004). *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective*,

    (2nd Ed.) Washington, DC: NASW.

Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C., & Paris, A.H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, *74*(1), 59-109.

Garry, E.M. (1996). *Truancy: First step to a lifetime of problems.* Washington, DC: US Department of Justice: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Geenen, S., Powers, L.E., & Lopez-Vasquez, A. (2001). Multicultural aspects of parent involvement in transition planning. *Exceptional Children*, *67*(2), 265-282.

George, P.S. & Alexander, W.M. (1993). *The exemplary middle school.* (2nd Ed.). NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Glueck, S. & Glueck, E. (1950). *Unraveling juvenile delinquency*. Oxford: Commonwealth Fund.

Goetz, E.G. (2003). *Clearing the way: Deconcentrating the poor in urban America.* Washington D.C.: Urban Institute.

Gottfredson, D.C. (1990). Changing school structures to benefit high risk youths. In P.E. Leone (Eds). *Understanding troubled and troubling youth* (pp. 246-271). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gottfredson, D.C. (2001). *Schools and delinquency*. NY: Cambridge University.

Gutman, M.L. & Midgley, C. (2000). The role of protective factors in support of the academic achievement of poor African American students during the middle school transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *29*(2), 223-248.

Hawkins, J.D. & Weis, J.G. (1985). The social development model: An integrated approach to delinquency prevention. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, *6*, 73-97.

Herrenkohl, T.I, Maguin, E., Hill, K.G., Hawkins, J.D., Abbott, R.D., & Catalano, R.F. (2000). Developmental risk factors for youth violence. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *26*(3), 176-186.

Herrenkohl, T.I., Hawkins, J.D., Chung, I.J., Hill, K.G., & Battin-Pearson, S. (2001). School and community risk factors and interventions. In R. Loeber & D.P. Farrington (Eds). *Child delinquents: Development, intervention, and service needs* (pp.211-246). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hersov, L. & Berg, I. (Eds.) (1980). *Out of school: Modern perspectives in truancy and school refusal*. NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. Berkley, CA: University of California.

Hoffman, J.P. (2002). A contextual analysis of differential associations, social control, and strain theories of delinquency. *Social Forces*, *81*(3), 753-785.

Honorable Augustus Hawkins (2007). National Council on Educating Black Children. (2007). *National blueprint for action IV*. Indianapolis, IN: Author

Hough, D.L. (2003). R^3 = *research, rhetoric, and reality: A study of studies*. Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Hoy, W.K. & Sabo, D.J. (1998). *Quality middle schools: Open and healthy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Huizinga, D., Loeber, R., & Thornberry, T. (1995). *Urban delinquency and substance abuse: Initial findings.* Washington, DC: OJJDP.

Indiana Education Roundtable. (2003). *Indiana P-16 plan for improving student achievement.* Retrieved January 12, 2006 from http://www.edroundtable.in.gov/pdf/P16/P-16plan.rtf.

Internetnewsbureau.com (2000). *SurveyMonkey description.* Retrieved April 3, 2007 from http://www.internetnewsbureau.com/archives/2000/may00/surveymonkey.htm

Jarjoura, G.R. (1996). The conditional effect of social class on the dropout-delinquency relationship. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 33*(2), 232-255.

Jencks, C., Smith, M., Bane, M.J., Cohen, D., Gintis, H., Heyns, B., & Michelson, S. (1972). *Inequality: A reassessment of the effects of family and schooling in America.* NY: Basic Books.

Jenkins, P. (1993). *School delinquency and the school social bond.* Dissertation Abstracts International: *The Humanities and Social Sciences, 54(*3).

Johnstone, K. (2002). The transition to high school: A journey of uncertainty. Retrieved March 7, 2006 from http://www.aare.edu.au/02pap/joho22562.htm. (1-8).

Jung, P.W. & Gunn, R.M. (1990). Serving the educational and developmental needs of middle-level students. *NASSP Bulletin, 74*(525), 73-79.

Kim, J.O. & Mueller, C.W. (1978). *Factor analysis: Statistical methods and practical issues.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Kohut, S. (1976). *What research says to the teacher – The middle school: A bridge between elementary and secondary schools*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Kornhauser, R. (1978). *Social sources of delinquency*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kozol, J. (1995). *Amazing grace: The lives of children and the conscience of a nation*. NY: Crown.

Kozol, J. (2000). *Ordinary resurrections: Children in the years of hope.* NY: Crown.

Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. NY: Crown.

Kuperminc, G.P., Leadbeater, B.J., Emmans, C., & Blatt, S.J. (1997). Perceived school climate and difficulties in the social adjustment of middle school students. *Applied Developmental Science*, *1*(2), 76-88.

Lee, V.E. & Smith, J.B. (1993). Effects of school restructuring on the achievement and engagement of middle-grade students. *Sociology of Education*, *66*(3), 164-187.

Leone, P.E. (Ed.). (1990). *Understanding troubled and troubling youth.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Levin, H.M. (1972). The costs to the nation of inadequate education. In Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity United States Senate. *The effects of dropping out.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Lewis, A. C. (1990). *Making it in the middle*. NY: The Edna McConnel Clark Foundation.

Lichtenstein, S. & Blackorby, J. (1995). Who drops out and what happens to them?

The Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education, 18(1), 6-11.

Lipsitz, J. (1984). *Successful schools for young adolescents*. New Brunswick, NJ:

Transaction.

Loeber, R. & Dishion, T. (1983). Early predictors of male delinquency: A review.

Psychological Bulletin, *94*(1), 68-99.

Loeber, R. & Farrington, D. (2000). Young children who commit crime: Epidemiology,

developmental origins, risk factors, early interventions, and policy implications.

Development and Psychopathology, *12*(4), 737-762.

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. (2006). Truancy*: A.C.T.* Retrieved July

24, 2006, from http://da.co.la.ca.us/cpys/act.htm.

MacIver, D.J. (1990). Meeting the needs of young adolescents: Advisory groups,

interdisciplinary teaching teams and school transition programs. *Phi Delta

Kappan*, *71*(6), 458-464.

Maddox, S.J. & Prinz, R.J. (2003). School bonding in children and adolescents:

Conceptualization, assessment, and associated variables. *Clinical Child and

Family Psychology Review*, *6*(1), 31-49.

Manning, M.L. (1993). *Developmentally appropriate middle level schools*. Wheaton,

MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Marks, H.M. (2000). Student engagement in instructional activity: Patterns in the

elementary, middle, and high school years. *American Educational Research

Journal*, *37*(1), 153-184).

McCord, J. (1982). A longitudinal view of the relationship between paternal absence

and crime. In J. Gunn & D.P. Farrington (Eds.). *Abnormal offenders,*

delinquency, and the criminal justice system (pp. 113-128). Chichester:

Wiley.

McDonald Brown, C. & Birrane, K.A. (1994). What's happening to our children?

Maryland Journal, 27(3), 35-39.

Meier, D. (2000). *Will standards save public education?* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Meier, K.J., Stewart, J., & England, R.E. (1989). *Race, class, and education: The politics*

of second-generation discrimination. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press

Mertens, S.B., Flowers, N., & Mulhall, P. (1998). *The middle start initiative, phase I: A*

longitudinal analysis of Michigan middle-level schools. (A report to the W.K.

Kellogg Foundation). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois. Retrieved from

http://www.cprd.uiuc.edu.

Milgram, J. (1992). A portrait of diversity: The middle level student. In J.L. Irvin (Ed).

Transforming middle level education: Perspective and possibilities (pp.16-27).

Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Mizelle, N.B. (1999). *Helping middle school students make the transition into high*

school. ERIC Digest, [Electronic Source] Retrieved March 7, 2006 from

http://www.spannj.org/BridgeArchives/helping_middle_school_students_m.htm.

Montecel, M.R., Cortez, J.D., & Cortez, A. (2004). Dropout-prevention programs:

Right intent, wrong focus, and some suggestions on where to go from here.

Education and Urban Society, 36(2), 169-188.

Morocco, C.C., Brigham, N., & Aguilar, C.M. (2006). *Visionary middle schools: Signature practices and the power of local intervention.* NY: Teachers College.

Morrow, C. (2006). *Middle-school discipline fails African American kids.* Chicago Defender [Online]. Retrieved February 27, 2006 from http://www.chicagodefender.com/page/national.cfm?ArticleID=4171.

Myers, N.K. (1970). *Physical, intellectual, emotional, and social maturity levels of eight, ninth, and tenth grade students with implications for school grade organization.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri.

Mynard, G. (1986). The reality of diversity at the middle level. *The Clearing House, 60,* 21-23.

National Center for School Engagement (2005). *What happens when a state takes action on truancy?: A state of Washington case brief.* Denver, CO: Author. (www.truancyprevention.org).

National Center for School Engagement. (December, 2006). *Quantifying school engagement: Research report.* Denver, CO: Colorado Foundation for Families and Children.

NASSP Committee and Council on Middle School Level Education. (1983). Articulating middle level and high school program: An elusive goal. *NASSP Bulletin, 67*(463), 2-7.

National Middle School Association (NMSA) Research Committee. (2003). *Research and resources in support of this we believe.* Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Office of Elementary and

Secondary Education. (1996). *Truancy: Creating safe and drug-free schools: An action guide.* Washington, DC: US Department of Justice and US Department of Education.

Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention. (2006). *Model programs guide: Chronic truancy initiative.* Retrieved July 24, 2006 from

http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?ID=594

Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention. (2005). *Juvenile arrests rates by offense, sex, and race.* Retrieved April 2007from:

http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstabb/crime/excel/JAR_2005228.xls

Ogden, E.H. & Germinario, V. (1994). *The nation's best schools: Blueprints for excellence,* Volume 1 & 2 Elementary and Middle schools. Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Technomic Publishing Company

Orfield, G. (Ed.) (2004). *Dropouts in America: Confronting the graduation rate crisis.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education.

Peeples, F. & Loeber, R. (1994). Do individual factors and neighborhood context explain ethnic differences in juvenile delinquency? *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *10*, 141-157.

Petersen, A.C. & Crockett, L. (1985). Pubertal timing and grade effects on adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *14*, 191-206.

Petersen, A.C., Leffert, N., Graham, B., Alwin, J., & Ding, S. (1997). Promoting mental

    health during the transition into adolescence. In J. Schulenberg, Maggs, J.L., &

    Hurrelmann, K. (Eds.). *Health risks and developmental transitions during*

    adolescence (pp.471-497). NY: Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, A. (2006). *Crisis deepens among young African American men*. Retrieved on

    July 2006 from http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-03/2006-03-28-

    voa62.cfm?rend

Pike, C. K., Hudson, W.W., Murphy, D.L., & McCuan, E.R. (1998). Using second-order

    factor analysis in examining multiple problems of clients. *Research on Social*

    Work Practice, 8(2), 200-211.

Plodzik, K. & George, P. (1989). Interdisciplinary team organization. *Middle School*

    Journal, 20(5), 15-17.

Polk, K. & Richmond, F.L. (1972). Those who fail. In K.Polk & W.E. Schafer (Eds.).

    Schools and delinquency (pp.55-69). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Polk, K. & Schafer, W.E. (1972). The changing context of education. In K.Polk & W.E.

    Schafer (Eds.). *Schools and delinquency* (pp.9-15). Englewood Cliffs, NJ:

    Prentice-Hall.

Puzzanchera, C., Stahl, A., Finnegan, T., Snyder, H., Poole, R., & Tierney, N. (2002).

    Juvenile court statistics 1998 report. Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice,

    Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

    Prevention.

Reid, K. (1999). *Truancy and schools.* NY: Routledge.

Reid, K. (2000). *Tackling truancy in schools*. NY: Routledge.

Reiss, A. (1951). Delinquency as the failure of personal and social controls.
American Sociological Review, *16*, 196-207.

Reynolds, D., Jones, D., Leger, S.S., & Murgatroyd, S. (1980). School factors and
truancy. In L. Hersov & I. Berg (Eds.). *Out of school: Modern perspectives in
truancy and school refusal (85-110).* NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Richart, D. (2004). Northern lights: Success in student achievement and school
discipline at Northern Elementary school. *Building Blocks for Youth.* Retrieved
from: www.buildingblocksforyouth.org.

Richart, D., Brooks, K., & Soler, M. (2003). Unintended consequences: The impact of
zero tolerance and other exclusionary polices on Kentucky students. *Building
Blocks for Youth*. Retrieved May 20, 2007, from:
www.buildingblocksforyouth.org.

Robins, L.N. (1979). Sturdy childhood predictors of adult outcomes: Replications from
longitudinal studies. In J.E. Barrett, R.M. Rose, & G.L. Klerman (Eds.), *Stress
and mental disorder* (pp.219-235). NY: Raven.

Robins, L. & Ratcliffe, K. (1980). The long-term outcome of truancy. In L., Hersov
& I. Berg (Eds.). *Out of school: Modern perspectives in truancy and school
refusal* (pp.65-84). NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Roderick, M. (1993). *The path to dropping out: Evidence for intervention*. Westport,
CT: Auburn.

Roderick, M. (2003). What's happening to the boys? Early high school experiences and

school outcomes among African American male adolescents in Chicago. *Urban*

Education, *38*(5), 538-607.

Rohrman, D. (1993). *Combating truancy in our schools*. NA Community effort.

NASSP Bulletin, 76(549), 40-45.

Rumberger, R.W. (1987). High school drop-outs: A review of issues and evidences.

Review of Education Research, *57*, 101-122.

Rumberger, R.W. (1995). Dropping out of middle school: A multilevel analysis of

students and schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*, 583-625.

Rumberger, R.W. (2001). *Why students drop out of school and what can be done*. Paper

prepared for the conference, *"Dropouts in America: How severe is the problem?*

What do we know about intervention and prevention? Harvard University.

Retrieved July 2006 from

http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/dropouts/rumberger.pdf.

Rumberger, R.W. (2004). Why student drop out of school. In G. Orfield (Ed.). Dropouts

in America: Confronting the graduation rate crisis (pp.131-155). Cambridge,

MA: Harvard Education.

Schafer, W.E. (1972). Deviance in the public school: An interactional view. In K.Polk &

W.E. Schafer (Eds.). *Schools and delinquency* (pp. 145-163). Englewood Cliffs,

NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Schafer, W.E. & Polk, K. (1972). School conditions contributing to delinquency. In
K.Polk & W.E. Schafer (Eds.). *Schools and delinquency* (pp. 181-238).
Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Scheurich, J., Skrla, L., & Johnson, J. (2000). Thinking carefully about equity and
accountability. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *82*(4), 293-299.

Schonlau, M., Ficker, R.D., & Elliott, M.N. (2002). *Conducting research surveys via
email on the web*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Schriver, J.M. (2005). *Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting
paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice* (4th Ed.) Boston,
MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Seidman, E., Allen, L., Aber, J.L., Mitchell, C., & Feinman, J. (1994). The impact of
school transitions in early adolescence on the self-esteem and perceived social
context of poor urban youth. *Child Development*, *65*(1), 507-522.

Sheidow, A.J., Gorman-Smith, D., Tolan, P.H., & Henry, D.B. (2001). Family and
community characteristics: Risk factors for violence exposure in inner-city youth.
Journal of Community Psychology, *29*(3), 345-360.

Siegel, L.J. & Senna, J.J. (2007). *Essentials of criminal justice. (5th Ed.).* Belmont, CA:
Thomson Learning Inc.

Sigfusdottir, I., Farkas, G., & Silver, E. (2004). The role of depressed mood and anger in
the relationship between family conflict and delinquent behavior. *Journal of
Youth and Adolescence*, *33*(6), 509-522.

Simmons, R.G. & Blythe, D.A. (1987). *Moving into adolescence: The impact of pubertal change and school context.* NY: Aldine De Gruyter.

Simmons, R.G., Blythe, D.A., Van Cleave, E.F., & Bush, D.M. (1979). Entry into early adolescence: The impact of school structure, puberty, and early dating on self-esteem. *American Sociological Review, 44*, 948-967.

Simmons, R.G., Burgeson, R., Carlton-Ford, S.L., & Blyth, D.A. (1987). The impact of cumulative change in early adolescence. *Child Development, 58*, 1220-1234.

Skiba, R. (2004). Zero tolerance: The assumption and the facts. *Center for Evaluation and Education Policy: Education Policy Briefs.*

Smith, R.W. (Ed.) (2006). *Time for change: New visions for high school.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Stone, C.P. & Baker, R.G. (1939). The attitudes and interest of premenarcheal and postimenarcheal girls. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 54*, 61-62.

Swanson, C.B. (2003). *Who graduates? Who doesn't?: A statistical portrait of public high school graduation, class of 2001.* Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute. Retrieved November, 2006 from http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=410934.

Titone, J.S. (1982). *Educational strategies for preventing students from dropping out of high school.* Palo Alto, CA: R & E Research Associates, Inc. Publishers.

Thompson, S.C. (Ed.). (2004). *Reforming middle level education: Considerations for policymakers.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Toby, J. (1957). Social disorganization and stake in conformity. *Journal of Crime*

     Law & Criminology, *48*, 12-17.

Toepfer, C.F. (1988). What to know about young adolescents. *Social Education*, *52(2)*,

     110-112.

Trauschke, E.M. & Mooney, P.F. (1974). *Middle school accountability: Middle school*

     in the making. Washington, DC: Association for Supervision and Curriculum

     Development, 9-12.

Tucker, M.S. & Codding, J.B. (1998). *Standards for our schools: How to set them,*

     measure them and reach them. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Vallerand, R.J., Fortier, M.S., & Guay, F. (1997). Self-determination and persistence in a

     real-life setting: Toward a motivational model of high school dropout. *Journal of*

     Personality and Social Psychology, *72*(5), 1161-1176.

Van Hoose, J. & Strahan, D. (1991). Politically astute processes for middle –level

     improvement. *NASSP Bulletin*, *75*(532), 63-71.

Werner, E.E. & Smith, R.S. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to midlife: Risk, resilience,*

     and recovery. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

West, D.J. (1969). *Present conduct and future delinquency: First report of the*

     Cambridge study in delinquent development. NY: International Universities Inc.

West, D.J. & Farrington, D.P. (1973). *Who becomes delinquent?* London:

     Heinemann.

Whitman, N.C. (2000). *A case study of Japanese middle schools 1983-1998: A reflection*

     on practices, trends, and issues. NY: University Press of America, Inc.

Wolfgang, M.E., Figlio, R.M., & Sellin, T. (1972). *Delinquency in a birth cohort.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Yecke, C.P. (2003). *The war against excellence: The rising tide of mediocrity in America's middle schools.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Zastrow, C. & Kirst-Ashman, K.K. (2003). *Understanding human behavior in the social environment.* (6th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Zins, J.E., Weissberg, R.P., Wang, M.C., & Walberg H.J. (Eds.). (2004). *Building academics success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* NY: Teachers College.

Zuckerbroad, N. & Trujillo, M. (2007). US schools weigh extending hours. Retrieved March 18, 2007 from http://www.redorbit.com/modules/news/tools.php?tool=print&id=852489, p. 1-3.

Zvoch, K. (2006). Freshman year dropouts: Interactions between student and social characteristics and student dropout status. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 11*(1), 97-117.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Carolyn Sherlet Gentle-Genitty

EDUCATION
St. John's College Junior College, Associates of Arts, 1996, *Major*: General Studies
Spalding University, Bachelor of Science in Social Work, 1998 *Major*: Social Work
Spalding University, Master of Social Work, 1999 *Major*: Social Work
Indiana University, Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work, 2008 *Major*: Social Work
    Minor: Public and Environmental Affairs

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS
        Assistant Professor, August 2008 – present
        Indiana University School of Social Work

        Associate Faculty May 2005 – present
        Indiana University School of Social Work

        Associate Faculty August 2005 – December 2007
        Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

OTHER APPOINTMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTSHIPS

Indiana University School of Social Work

Associate Faculty Mentor   Summer 2005 – Summer 2008
Assist in mentoring new Associate Faculty members in teaching, course preparation,
technological usage, and work with students for practice course S504 and S514:
Professional Practice Skills with individuals, families, and groups and S514.

Assistant to Interim Director for Labor Studies – June 2007 – present
Utilized my skill of student advising, program development, policy and procedures
development and revision, strategic planning and organizing, mission development,
course development and advertising, course schedule development, faculty contract and
agreements, and many other administrative and program tasks and duties.

Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring (AIM)

Trainer, National Re-entry Training Institute –   October 2006 – present
Conduct training for probation officers, AmeriCorp members, and local case mangers in
the art of re-entry preparation, case management, and the psychology of re-entry.

Trainer –   August 2007 – present
Conducted monthly six hour trainings on "How to Be a Mentor" with potential AIM
mentors working with juveniles re-entering the community from detentions centers, jails,
or prisons.

Trainer –   December 2005 & May 2006
Train participants in the Steps to Re-entry – Re-entry Policy Statements – Juveniles and Adults.

Women's Issues Network (WIN Belize)
Board Chairperson –   September 2003 – July 2004
Served as the President of the Board of Directors and guided the organizations work, development, and grant flow**.**

Consultant, Women Issues Network (WIN) –   June – July 2004
Developed a staff training manual and conducted training in Public Relations, Marketing and Work Plan Development.

UNICEF
Consultant, United Nations Children's Fund –   February 2002 – April 2002
Conducted a consultancy with the United Nations Children's Fund: Belize Children Advisory Committee (BCAC)**:** To work with core group of youths to develop the Bylaws, Constitution, Mission, Vision, registering the body as an independent structure and how to run as an advisory body.

Consultant, UNICEF –   June 2003 – November 2003
Department of Corrections (Sponsored by UNICEF) Was contracted to research, compile, and develop a Juvenile Offender Training Manual. After completion was hired to conduct a pilot of the manual with the officers and train them in the use of the manual. Juvenile Offender Training Manual: *A Tool for Juvenile Justice Officers: A rights based approach.*

Government of Belize: Youth Sector
Member, Steering Committee – Operation Positive Reinforcement – 2003–2004
Sat on the steering committee and guided the work of the Government arm, Youth for the Future and Belize Police Department in drafting programs, implementing activities, and evaluating success of their work to enable opportunities for positive reinforcement.

National Coordinator, Global Youth Service Day National Committee – 2001–2004
A professional activity developed and carried out through the YMCA of Belize in collaboration with worldwide participants on the same day each year. Engaged in planning, networking, organizing and implementing with various youth and development organizations in Belize.

Consultant, Youth for the Future –   February 2004 –
Hired to draft a Agreement of Friendship between Belize and Mexico in collaboration with Youth for the Future.

Member, Board of Governors: Princess Royal Youth Hostel *(local juvenile detention center)* August 2003 – August 2004
Assisted in hiring, evaluating, supervising, fundraising, and program planning for the Hostel. Board of Governors (Youth Hostel)

Chair, Task Force Department of Youth: Adhoc Committee – 2002–2003
Oversaw the ad hoc Restructuring Committee. The body was responsible for the revision of job descriptions for management and staff of headquarters and the three programs under its management Youth Hostel, 4-H Center, and National Cadet Service Corp.

Co-Chair, Task Force Department of Youth: Youth Enterprise Fund – 2002–2004
Along with members of the Committee developed and researched the process and market need for the establishment of a Youth Enterprise Fund in Belize with the help of Commonwealth Youth Programme donating funds to project.

Chair, Task Force, Department of Corrections & Youth: Aftercare Support Program – 2002–2003
Lead a group of local stakeholders from all sectors in brainstorm a system of care for youth/juvenile offender re-entry into community after incarceration and formulating program plans for its implementation and marketing for community-buy-in

Member, Task Force, Department of Corrections: Youth Enhancement Academy – 2001-2002
Assisted in guiding the work of the youth organization in how to work with youths that have been committed to their care in the prison and to develop programs for inside preparation and for outside ability to not re-offend.

Consultant, National Youth Council Bill: Ministry of Youth & Tourism – 2000-2001
After representing the country as a delegate and advisor was asked to play a consultative and expert role in the development of a National Youth Policy Belize. The work began in Jamaica in 1996 and thereafter with other youth delegates of the Caribbean supported by Commonwealth Youth Programme.

Youth Advisor, Ministry of Youth: Department of Youth – 1994-2004
Conducted training and facilitation sessions, attended conferences, served on committees, attended meetings, served on 1st National Youth Commission etc. Including delegate to Jamaica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and Trinidad & Tobago

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
National Association of Black Social Worker	Member
Bachelor Program Directors	Member
International Association of Truancy and Dropout Prevention	Member
Social Work Association of Belize	Founding Member, Member

RESEARCH AND TRAINING EXPERIENCES

Indiana University   **Co-Investigator**   August 2005 – present
Title: Assessment of Online Social Work Learning and Satisfaction
Project is part of a larger assessment plan developed by the IU School of Social Work to evaluate online courses. This particular project aimed at assessing learning in online courses by comparing students' acquisition of learning in online and face-to-face courses. It also seeks to learn the perspectives of consumers of online BSW courses.

Indiana University   **Co-Investigator**   December 2005 – May 2006
Title: Family Life Education Black Parenting Program
Assessed African American relationship parenting patterns. Family Life Education Black Parenting Program (a program developed to respect and honors the history and traditions of people of African descent).

Indiana University   **Co-Investigator**   August 2006 – present
Title: Assessment of Learner Outcomes
Project is intended to ascertain whether similar learning outcomes result for MSW social work students following their participation in two separate practice courses with similar content variables such as (syllabi, course content, course sequence, assignments, grading rubrics, grading, textbooks, day and time).

Indiana University   **Investigator**   Summer 2007 – present
Title: Middle School Chronic truancy and Social Bonding
As fulfillment for dissertation, examined Indiana middle school principals' perceptions of students' social bonding in their school and its impact on rates of chronic truancy

Midwest Institute of Mentoring   **National Trainer**   2006 – present
Certified as a national re-entry and mentor trainer to conduct mentoring sessions and re-entry workshops throughout the state of Indiana and the US under the auspices of AIM (Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring)

Preparing Future Faculty   **Alumni**   2005
Trained in the use of various teaching modules such as classroom management techniques, dealing with difficult behaviors in the classroom, civility in the classroom, using OnCourse, grant writing, using service learning in the classroom, using technology in the classroom, and assessing student learner outcomes

HONORS AND AWARDS
2008   A June Affair Planning Committee Service Award (Co-Chair)
2008   Academic Achievement Award, NABSW
2008   Indiana University Nominated *Outstanding Student Female Leader*
2007   Indiana University *Certificate of Excellence in Teaching Award*

2007   **Indiana University Espirit Award – Spirit of Inquiry**
2006   IUPUI *Amazing Student*
2005-06 IUPUI *Sam H Jones Community Service Learning Scholar*
2005   *Meritorious Volunteer* Award, Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring (AIM)
2002   Named one of Inter American Development Bank's *five Protagonist Youth of Development in Central America*
2002   Certificate in Training Course: From Community to Prison to Community
2001   Certification in Training course: From Prison to Community: Sharing Models of Treatment, Inter American Drug Abuse control Commission of Organization of American States and National Drug Abuse control Council
2001   Certificate of Appreciation, Ministry of Women, Human Development & Civil Society
2001   Certificate of Appreciation, presentation on Strengthening for Excellence, Belmopan
2000   Certificate of Recognition for Service to Youth, Ministry of Tourism and Youth
2000   Certificate of Appreciation, Organizer, "Dance with Me Latin Competition" YMCA BZE
1999   Certificate of Appreciation Cadet Life Skills Training, Ministry of Tourism & Youth
1999   Certificate of Achievement Grant Writing Workshop, Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies for Caribbean Action
1999   Honorary Chief of Police, Metropolitan Area, Louisville, KY Research on behalf of Seniors
1999   Certificate of Appreciation, Mayor, City of Louisville
1999   Metro disability Certificate of Appreciation
1998   **Who's Who Among Students in America Universities & Colleges**
1998 & 1997 Academic Honor Student, Spalding University
1998   Academic Award of Excellence
1998   Spalding University's Most Outstanding Public Relations Assistant
1998   Spalding University's Most Outstanding student leader of the International Club
1998 & 1997 Spalding University All Around Best Support Staff
1997   Spalding University's Most Dependable Student Support Staff Award
1996   Honorary Citizen of Louisville, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Mayor Abramson
1996   Distinguished Delegate in Spalding University Model United Nations Conference
1996   Certificate of Community Service, Sister Cities of Louisville, Inc.
1996   Graduating Honor Student Award, St. John's College Junior College
1996   Saint John's College Junior College Dean's List
1996-95 Elected Saint John's Junior College Student Government President
1995   Saint John's College Junior College Dean's List
1995   Valuable Member of Lion's Club Award
1993   Literary Award, September Celebrations Committee

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS
Indiana University October 2005 – present **School of Social Work, MSW & BSW**
Courses taught:

S504 Substitute - Professional Practice Skills	Fall 2005
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2005
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2005
S503 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	Fall 2005
S514 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Spring 2006
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2006
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2006
S504 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Fall 2006
S504 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Fall 2006
S514 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Spring 2007
S514 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Spring 2007
S514 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Spring 2007
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2007
S514 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Summer 2007
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2007
S231 Generalist Social Work Practice 1: Theory & Skills	Fall 2007
S504 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Fall 2007
S514 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Spring 2008
S332 Generalist Social Work Practice II: Theory & Skills	Spring 2008
S504 Professional Practice Skills Individual, Families, & Groups	Summer 2008
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	Summer 2008

    (*all courses use a blended online and in-person approach*)

Indiana University May 2005 – August 2008 **School of Public & Environmental Affairs**

J305 Intro to Juvenile Justice System	Fall 2005
J470 Seminar in Criminal Justice	Spring 2006
J550 Mentoring Juveniles as a Form of Aftercare	Spring 2006
J470/J550 Seminar in Criminal Justice	Summer 2006
J101 American Criminal Justice System (Mentor)	Fall 2006
J470/J550 Seminar in Criminal Justice	Fall 2006
J470/J550 Seminar in Criminal Justice	Spring 2007
J470/J550 Seminar in Criminal Justice	Summer 2007
J470/J550 Seminar in Criminal Justice	Fall 2007

University of Belize   1999 – 2004   **Department of Social Work**
Faculties of Health Science, Nursing, and Social Work

Introduction to Social Work	Fall 1999
Introduction to Social Work	Spring 2000
Introduction to Social Work	Summer 2000
Introduction to Social Work	Summer 2000

Human Behavior & Social Environment I	Fall 2000
Social Work Practice with Communities/Groups	Spring 2001
Introduction to Social Work	Summer 2001
Introduction to Social Work	Fall 2001
Social Work Practice with Communities/Groups	Spring 2002
Introduction to Social Work	Summer 2002
Introduction to Social Work	Fall 2002
Field Practice: Internship	Fall 2002
Social Work Practice with Communities/Groups	Fall 2003
Introduction to Social Work	Summer 2003
Introduction to Social Work	Fall 2003
Social Work Seminar I & II	Fall 2003
Field Practice: Internship	Spring 2004

University of the West Indies 1999 – 2000 **Youth Development Certificate Program**
   Working with Adolescents Course: Practice with Communities Summer/Fall 1999
   Working with Adolescents Course: Practice with Communities Spring 2000

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
2000 – 2004   Belize City Community Counseling Center [Department of Human
               Development] – *Individual & Marriage/Couples Therapy*
1999 – 2004   Youth Department and Youth for the Future Initiative [Government of
               Belize] – *Work with Groups, Organizations, and Communities*
               Community Development, Assessment, and Planned Change
1996 – 2004   Youth Department and Youth for the Future Initiative [Government of
               Belize] – *Work with Groups, Organization, and Communities*
               Policy Development & Policy Planning

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS:
Community Scholar (Spring, 2007) Sam H. Jones Community Service Learning
Scholarship, Center for Service Learning Indiana University-Purdue University at
Indianapolis (1 semester $3,500US)

Community Scholar (Fall, 2006) Sam H. Jones Community Service Learning
Scholarship, Center for Service Learning Indiana University-Purdue University at
Indianapolis (1 semester $3,375US)

Research Assistant (Summer 2006) Service Learning Assistant, Center for Service
Learning, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (2 Summer sessions
$2,200US)

Recipient (2004) Tuition Scholarship & Research Assistantship, Indiana University
Purdue University Indianapolis, School of Social Work Scholarship ($25,000US)

Recipient (2004) Government of Belize partial (3yr) Academic grant ($7,500US annually)

Executive Director (2003) Primary School Examination Program Support YMCA of Greater St. Louis (2 yrs. - $54,000US)

Executive Director/ Grant Writer (2002) Organization of American States –Workplace Preparedness Skills Training for building national Leadership (2yrs. - $65,000US)

Executive Director/ Grant Writer (2000) UNICEF Belize development of Leadership through proximity program ($15,000 U.S.) Grant requested and received while at the YMCA of Belize

Recipient (1996) Full (2YR) Academic Scholarship Recipient to pursue B.S. in Social Work at Spalding University (SU) ($75,000) incl. lodging, meal plan, work study, tuition and fees.

PRINT AND ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS:

I – Teaching
Gentle-Genitty, C. (***Under Review***). SALT: A model for teaching theory. *Journal of Human Behavior.*
Gentle-Genitty, C. (2008). The 10th street community comes together. In V.N. Chang, S.T. Scott, & C.L. Decker (Eds.). *Developing helping skills: A step-by-step approach.* Mason, OH: Thompson Publishing.
Gentle-Genitty, C. (2007). Book review: bell hooks' 1994 Teaching to transgress – Education as the practice of freedom. *Perspectives on Social Work 5*(1), 31-34.
Gentle-Genitty, C. (April, 2007). SALT: A teaching method for theories of human behavior. *The 11th Annual PhD Spring Research Symposium, Indiana University School of Social Work,* Indianapolis, IN.
Gentle-Genitty, C. & Suman, P. (March, 2007). TDPE method of teaching and learning: Teach, demonstrate, practice, & evaluate. *The2007 Edward C. Moore Research Symposium: Multiculturalism Matters: Educating for a Global Society,* Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN.
Gentle-Genitty, C. (March, 2007). Teaching method for theories of human behavior. *The 2007 Edward C. Moore Research Symposium: Multiculturalism Matters: Educating for a Global Society,* Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN.

II – Research
Gentle-Genitty, C. (June, 2008). Understanding the stakes in juvenile bonding. *National Mental Health Conference: Unlocking the mystery.* Indiana Department of Corrections, Indianapolis, IN.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (July, 2008). Impact of schools' social bonding on chronic truancy. *First National Conference on Families and Children.* Bridgewater State College, Division of External Affairs Bridgewater, MA.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (October, 2008). Social Bonding and Chronic Truancy: The Role of Schools *98th Annual International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention Conference: Putting our money on student success.* Las Vegas, Nevada.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (*Under Editorial Review*). African American students in transition from middle to high school: Evaluation and identification of best practice programs. *Children and Schools*.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (In press). Common predictors for explaining youth antisocial behavior: A longitudinal studies perspective. *Social Work in Mental Health.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Social Work Practice Press.

Gentle-Genitty, C., Gregory, V., Pfahler, C., Thomas, M., Lewis, L., Campbell, K., Ballard, K., Compton, K., & Daley, J. (2008, in press). A critical review of theory in social work journals: A replication study. *Advances in Social Work.*

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2006). Unmasking the doctored image of foreign aid: A mirror model. *Social Development Issues, 28*(3), 16-29.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2006, November). African American Youth in transition. *Communities Aligned Toward Children's Health (CATCH-Indiana) Midwest Regional Conference hosted by the Indiana Department of Education.* Indianapolis, IN.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2005, July). Foreign aid: A doctored image of impact on social welfare development in developing nations. *The 14th Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development,* Racife, Brazil.

III – Professional Service

Gentle-Genitty, C. (September & October). Cognitive Tools for Juvenile Re-entry. *Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring 1st National Re-entry Training Institute,* Indianapolis, IN.

Gentle – Genitty, C. (January, 2008). Case Management – Seamless Transition to the Community. *Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring 1st National Re-entry Training Institute,* Minneapolis, St. Paul, MN.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (November, 2007). *Mentoring as a Critical Form of Juvenile Justice Program.* Indiana Association of Community Corrections, Annual conference. Hilton Hotel, Indiana.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2006, October). Strengths based case management: Steps for a seamless re-entry transition. *Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring 1st National Re-entry Training Institute,* Indianapolis, IN.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2006, April). Youth antisocial behavior: Understanding the predictors. *The10th Annual PhD Spring Research Symposium, Indiana University School of Social Work, Indianapolis, IN.*

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2005, November). Re-entry policy statements: From detention to community. *Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring Training of Trainers,* Indianapolis, IN.

Gentle-Genitty, C. (2005, April). Skill teaching in social work: Transference to field. *The 9th Annual PhD Spring Research Symposium, Indiana University School of Social Work*, Indianapolis, IN.