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

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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.
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.
IMPACT OF SCHOOLS’ SOCIAL BONDING ON CHRONIC TRUANCY:
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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
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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).
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Compulsory Education Population</th>
<th>Children unaccounted in all schools</th>
<th>Percent of Comp. Ed. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>224,147</td>
<td>39,142</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1,422,261</td>
<td>217,611</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>816,295</td>
<td>112,569</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>701,435</td>
<td>96,472</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>408,478</td>
<td>48,689</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>366,663</td>
<td>15,239</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>683,197</td>
<td>54,843</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>620,657</td>
<td>57,167</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>659,724</td>
<td>51,359</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>4,515,918</td>
<td>384,889</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>639,026</td>
<td>49,465</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>77,902</td>
<td>5,760</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>968,200</td>
<td>66,529</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>85,076</td>
<td>5,965</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>499,205</td>
<td>33,563</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>215,042</td>
<td>13,954</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>921,317</td>
<td>43,038</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>87,388</td>
<td>4,065</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>986,071</td>
<td>43,446</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>965,031</td>
<td>40,601</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>130,245</td>
<td>5,408</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>653,308</td>
<td>24,969</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>203,296</td>
<td>7,686</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>486,657</td>
<td>17,889</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2,129,724</td>
<td>73,861</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1,572,478</td>
<td>52,560</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>532,220</td>
<td>14,758</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.ca.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; Zuckerbrod & 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
truant 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 within 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 students 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**

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

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

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

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 from 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?

   \( H_0.1: \) *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?

   \( H_0.2a: \) *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?

   \( H_0.2b: \) *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?

   \( H_0.3a: \) *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?

\[ H_{o3b}: \text{When controlling for selected demographics, there is a negative relationship between principals’ perceptions of students’ social bonding in their schools and rates of chronic truancy in middle schools.} \]

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?

\[ H_{o4a}: \text{There is an inverse relationship between schools’ opportunities for social bonding, principals’ perceptions of students’ social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.} \]

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?

\[ H_{o4b}: \text{When controlling for demographics, there is an inverse relationship among schools’ opportunities for social bonding, principals’ perceptions of social bonding, and rates of chronic truancy in Indiana middle schools.} \]

\[ H_{o4c}: \text{Schools with large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics and few school opportunities for social bonding will have higher rates of chronic truancy.} \]

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Disciplinary Actions (Year)</th>
<th>Out-of-School Suspensions</th>
<th>Alternative Placements Services</th>
<th>Corporal Punishment Services</th>
<th>Expulsions With Services</th>
<th>Expulsions Without Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85,367 (99-00)</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>.12%</td>
<td>.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77,706 (00-01)</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>.11%</td>
<td>.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
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.”

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

Mean = 1.16
SD = -0.955
N = 99
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
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](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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Questions Measured Constructs of Social Bond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 6</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 7</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 8</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pass Rate for ISTEP Score 9</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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

*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

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

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*

![Histogram of Percent Enrolled Students who are Habitual Truants](image)

*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**

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

*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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Total # of respondents for each choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank 1</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 2</td>
<td>Student him/herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 3</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 4</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 5</td>
<td>School Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 6</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Percent Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family/Parental Influence</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Factors</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home environment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Abilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Responses based on Measures of Social Bond</th>
<th>Total % - each rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Attachment</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Involvement (attendance)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Belief (rewards etc.)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Commitment (membership)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Valid % per Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skill Development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Environment Enhancements</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Parent Involvement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Teacher Involvement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Related Programs</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
### Rotated Component Matrix – Opportunities

| Factor I – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School | Q35 – Reward students for following school rules & policies | .559 |
| Factor I – Reward & Encouragement to Stay in School | 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 |

| Factor II – Participation in School decision-making | Q22 – Generally solicit student input | .845 |
| Factor II – Participation in School decision-making | Q29 – Conduct school campaigns to encourage student involvement in school | .574 |
| Factor II – Participation in School decision-making | Q39 – Encourage student participation in school decision-making | .762 |
| Factor II – Participation in School decision-making | Q43 – Generally use student input | .871 |

| Factor III – Teachers & Peers are Good | Q49 – Encourage students to believe teachers are basically good | .838 |
| Factor III – Teachers & Peers are Good | Q50 – Encourage students to believe students are basically good | .828 |

| Factor IV – Involvement in School | Q24 – Use more in-school rather than out-of-school responses to behavior problems | .577 |
| Factor IV – Involvement in School | Q30 – Provide opportunities for student leadership | .581 |
| Factor IV – Involvement in School | Q40 – Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities | .583 |
| Factor IV – Involvement in School | Q41 – Have activities contingent on student performance | .735 |

| Factor V – Expression and Pride | Q20 – Provide opportunities for students to express school pride | .733 |
| Factor V – Expression and Pride | Q27 – Offer on-going and seasonal extracurricular activities | .663 |
| Factor V – Expression and Pride | Q28 – Support linkages between students and the community | .532 |

| Factor VI – Value Education | Q33 – Encourage students to have a stake in their education | .777 |
| Factor VI – Value Education | Q52 – Encourage consistent enforcement of school rules | .603 |

| Factor VII – Create Attachment | Q17 – Provide someone for students to turn to in time of need | .786 |
| Factor VII – Create Attachment | Q21 – Provide a safe environment to build positive relationships | .599 |
| Factor VII – Create Attachment | Q32 – Encourage teachers to bond with students | .577 |

| Factor VIII – Policy Enforcement | Q55 – Generally enforce that the law should be obeyed | .521 |
| Factor VIII – Policy Enforcement | Q56 – Have zero tolerance for racism | .854 |
Table 14 – Perceptions of Students’ Social Bonding Indices - Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotated Component Matrix – Perception</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1 – Belief &amp; Value of Education</strong></td>
<td>Factor I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q60 – …that they have a higher degree of obedience for the law and rules of the school</td>
<td>.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q73 – … it is important to graduate from school</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q74 – … it is important to respect authority</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q75 – … teachers are good role models</td>
<td>.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q76 – … generally, the law and the school rules should be obeyed</td>
<td>.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2 – Stakes in Education</strong></td>
<td>Factor II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q61 – At my school there is always someone to turn to in time of need</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q63 – I like school</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q64 – I care what teachers think of me</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3 – Involvement in Pro-Social Activities</strong></td>
<td>Factor III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q65 – I have participated in school activities beyond the classroom</td>
<td>.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q70 – I spend time with my teachers in addition to regular classroom time</td>
<td>.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q71 – I have participated in extracurricular school activities</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q72 – I generally keep busy with school and other productive activities</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4 – Non-Participation in Unconventional Activities</strong></td>
<td>Factor IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q66 – I have not smoked in school</td>
<td>.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q67 – I have not drank alcohol</td>
<td>.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q68 I have not skipped school</td>
<td>.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5 – Commitment to Participate in Productive Activities</strong></td>
<td>Factor V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q57 – …% of students you believe show affection and sensitivity to others in school</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q58 – …% of students you believe that they dedicate time to participate in conventional ways of society</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q59 – …% of students you believe that they are active in productive activities in the school</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Reported factors that rotated with \( \alpha \leq .60 \))

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**

| 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 16 – Index Reliabilities and Means for Perception of Social Bond Measures**

| 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 |

The relationship of social bonding opportunities and perception of social bonding with chronic truancy (the logarithm transformation - *Intruancy*) 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 (Intruancy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities1</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities2</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities3</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>- .062</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities6</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities7</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities8</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception2</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception3</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.205</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception4</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception5</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>.206*</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout Percent</td>
<td>.223*</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;SMEAN (Dropout Percent)&quot;</td>
<td>.223*</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended Percent</td>
<td>.247*</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;SMEAN (Suspended Percent)&quot;</td>
<td>.212*</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expelled Percent</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Percent</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Percent</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Percent</td>
<td>-.177</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of students in classroom</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% enrolled habitual students</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTEP Math &amp; English Grade 7</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Included</th>
<th>Standard Coefficients</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>Eigenvalues</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>O1 – Reward &amp; Encouragement to stay in School</strong></td>
<td>- .336</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.542</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O5 – Expression and Pride</strong></td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.539</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O7 – Create Attachment</strong></td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1 – Belief &amp; Value of Education</strong></td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities</strong></td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMEAN Dropout Percent</strong></td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMEAN Suspended Percent</strong></td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 20** – Model Significance for Variables to include in Study Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Regression</td>
<td>651.387</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93.055</td>
<td>2.090</td>
<td>.055a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>3339.005</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>44.520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3990.391</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

Question 1. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indexes</th>
<th>Communalities Extraction</th>
<th>Component Extracted</th>
<th>Eigenvalues % of Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O1</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td>49.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O4</td>
<td>.493</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O6</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O7</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.767</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O8</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>.599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td>55.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>.661</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hypothesis for research question one – \( H_0 \): *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

Question 2a. 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. Opportunities5 – 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 & Intruancy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities1 – Reward &amp; Encouragement to Stay in School</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities2 – Participating in School Decision-Making</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities3 – Teachers &amp; Peers are Basically Good</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities4 – Involvement in School</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities5 – Expression and Pride</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities6 – Value in Education</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities7 – Create Attachment</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities8 – Policy Enforcement</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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 – *H₂a: 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 $H_{2b}$: *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 *Intracy*, Perception and *Intracy*, Opportunities, Perception, *Intracy* and Demo variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities and <em>Intracy</em></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEAN Dropout%</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEAN Suspended%</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception and <em>Intracy</em></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEAN Dropout%</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td>.015*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEAN Suspended%</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.017*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities, Perception, <em>Intracy</em> and Demographic variables</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1 – Reward &amp; Encouragement to Stay in School</td>
<td>-.336</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5 – Expression and Pride</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O7 – Create Attachment</td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 – Belief &amp; Value of Education</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEAN Dropout Percent</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEAN Suspended Percent</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.
$H_{0.3a}$: 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Bond Construct</th>
<th>Items - % of your students you believe show…</th>
<th>Total % believe that their students show social bond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>Q57:…affection and sensitivity to others in the school</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Q58:… that they dedicate time to participate in conventional ways of society</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Q59: … that they are active in productive activities in school</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>Q60: … that they have a high degree of obedience for the law and rules of the school</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 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 ($H_{o,3b}$: *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 Intruancy (N=83)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Included</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>Eigenvalues</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1 – Reward &amp; Encouragement to Stay in School</td>
<td>-.197</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5 – Expression and Pride</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.809</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O7 – Create Attachment</td>
<td>-.142</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 – Belief &amp; Value of Education</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.948</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities</td>
<td>-.265</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Intruancy (N = 83)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Included</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1 – Reward &amp; Encouragement to stay in School</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>.036*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5 – Expression and Pride</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O7 – Create Attachment</td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 – Belief &amp; Value of Education</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities</td>
<td>-.223</td>
<td>.021*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26 - p<.05

The hypothesis formulated for research questions 4 a was -- $H_{04a}$: 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, Intruancy 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 Intruancy 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, Intruancy and Demo Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>651.387</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93.055</td>
<td>2.090</td>
<td>.055a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>3339.005</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>44.520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3990.391</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 – $H_{04b}$: 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 – $H_{0AC}$: 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 Truancy (N = 77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Included</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1 – Reward &amp; Encouragement to stay in School</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>.040*</td>
<td>-1.80</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5 – Expression and Pride</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>-1.85</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O7 – Create Attachment</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>-1.57</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 – Belief &amp; Value of Education</td>
<td>-.106</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>.805</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 – Involvement in Pro-social Activities</td>
<td>-.206</td>
<td>.036*</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HispanicPercentage</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BlackPercentage</strong></td>
<td><strong>.263</strong></td>
<td><strong>.010</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>5.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.41</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.
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

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What type of school system are you in? __________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>In what type of community is your school located?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What is the name of your school corporation? ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>What is your school number? ______________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>On average, how many students are in a classroom in your school? ______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Is there a library in your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>If yes, what are the typical uses of the library? (I.e. research, group work, teaching study, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Does your school have activity courts or fields? (i.e. tennis or basketball )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does your school have a gym?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Does your school have an auditorium?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Are students required to wear uniforms?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section B – Attendance

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>What action is taken when a student misses school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>After 1-3 absences ________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>After 4-6 absences ________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>After 7-9 absences ________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>After 10+ absences ________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>What is your school’s definition of chronic truancy? ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>How many days of school must a student miss before being considered a habitual truant? ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>What percentage of your school’s currently enrolled students are habitual truants? ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>What methods are used to track habitual truants? Check all that applies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ 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 school’s 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 …

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. Provide someone for students to turn to in time of need</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provide socialization opportunities with other students</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Provide activities that foster a desire to stay in school</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Provide opportunities for students to express school pride</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Provide a safe environment to build positive relationships</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Generally solicit student input.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Encourage students to look forward to coming to school</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Use more in-school rather than out-of-school responses to behavior problems</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Make after school academic activities available to students</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Offer extended opportunities for academically at-risk students to participate in school</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Offer on-going and seasonal extracurricular activities</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Support linkages between students and the community</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Conduct school campaigns to encourage student involvement in school</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Provide opportunities for student leadership</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Provide opportunities for student interaction with role models</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Encourage teachers to bond with students</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Encourage students to have a stake in their education</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Foster students’ creativity</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Reward students for following school rules and policies</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Encourage students to keep busy under adult supervision</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Encourage parents to participate in their child’s learning</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Encourage teachers to spend time with at-risk students</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Encourage student participation in school decision-making</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Encourage student participation in extracurricular activities</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Encourage student participation in student governance</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
Parents  o  o  o  o  o
Teachers  o  o  o  o  o
School principals  o  o  o  o  o
The Community  o  o  o  o  o

79. Name the top 3 things your school does well in enhancing students’ social bond to school.
1.  ________________________________________________
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!
## 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 **Underline** the number that correctly corresponds to your evaluation of the concepts being evaluated, following the survey review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ease of completion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Ease of reading</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Ease of understanding question purpose</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Organization of the survey</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Clarity of questions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Types of questions asked</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Length of questionnaire</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 cgentleg@iupui.edu 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
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@iu.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 truancy.

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 truancy. 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”.

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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: egentleg@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 truancy. 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  
### Appendix F – Responses - Areas for Improvement to Build Social Bond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Recognize them more for the positive things they do</td>
<td>• Increase parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual meetings</td>
<td>• Create a Student Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help for low achievers</td>
<td>• Variety of experience for varied interest groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Survey student interests</td>
<td>• Community support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent support for importance</td>
<td>• We need more money to offer more activities to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For all students to participate in after school activities</td>
<td>• Provide more targeted interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting parents to become more involved with school</td>
<td>• Teach Character Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work to end social groups on campus that exclude</td>
<td>• Get info to parents about education possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage education and post-secondary education</td>
<td>• Parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More community involvement</td>
<td>• Getting parental participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide transportation following after school functions</td>
<td>• Create more ways to recognize students who are displaying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More teacher connections</td>
<td>positive behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Peer mentoring groups</td>
<td>• More family contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More immediate intervention</td>
<td>• Better cooperation and support from law enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase parent involvement</td>
<td>• Increase numbers of students in extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More opportunities for students to get involved</td>
<td>• More parent involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More junior high only activities</td>
<td>• Depth of mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent involvement</td>
<td>• Provide more rewards for drama, academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher-student relationships</td>
<td>• Consistent Policy Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting all students involved</td>
<td>• Smaller student to teacher ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching respect</td>
<td>• Better integration of our special education students into co- &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One on one bonding with an adult in the school</td>
<td>extra-curricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Valuing their input</td>
<td>• Increased community involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All students connected to school</td>
<td>• Getting more parents involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dealing with bullying issues/ additional programs</td>
<td>• More activities for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents to understand the importance of attendance</td>
<td>• Making learning relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make students and parents aware of all extra-activities</td>
<td>• All students having a friend or relationship with an adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a better social grouping of students</td>
<td>• Better &quot;plug&quot; every student into some positive school activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement of parents</td>
<td>• Have more staff involved in extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student empowerment</td>
<td>• Involvement of free and reduced lunch students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentor program</td>
<td>• Student/Parent/Community Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve communication with parents</td>
<td>• Provide bonding opportunities to the 10% - 20% who are not involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reaching out to disengaged students more deliberately</td>
<td>• Track students involvement and design more effective practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time with staff</td>
<td>• Getting each student connected to a staff member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide more after-school activities for non-athletes</td>
<td>• Greater teacher interaction with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More school pride</td>
<td>• Connect better to those that do not feel needed, wanted, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Finding an activity of interest for all</td>
<td>welcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need our media center open for use after school.</td>
<td>• Social workers needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide incentives for those that work hard, follow rules, etc.</td>
<td>• Start mentor program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More hands on activities</td>
<td>• Promoting involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be more sensitive to student perception of fairness</td>
<td>• Be more diligent with absentees and why they are absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be more sensitive to quiet students</td>
<td>• More activities for younger students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Including more of the at-risk students</td>
<td>• More students in student government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet cultural needs</td>
<td>• Increase in after school activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After school activities</td>
<td>• Better educating parents of opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socialization skills</td>
<td>• More positive reinforcement on right choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offering of extra-curricular for non-traditional students</td>
<td>• Counselor programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better student/teacher relationships</td>
<td>• Making sure all kids feel safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers should care more</td>
<td>• More student involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement of more of the at-risk students</td>
<td>• Teachers should be more creative in the classroom with their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More mentoring needed</td>
<td>students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement of more of the at-risk students</td>
<td>• Teacher involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher-student bonding</td>
<td>• Teacher-student bonding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix G – Responses - Areas Schools are Doing Well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration with feeder schools to stress importance of school</td>
<td>• Social gatherings/school social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clubs/ activities</td>
<td>• Post cards/home contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age mixing social events</td>
<td>• Teachers attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social activities dances</td>
<td>• We talk about it in our classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student representatives</td>
<td>• Parent group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisory program 30 minutes each day</td>
<td>• Active parent group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offering fun after school activities - i.e. Dances</td>
<td>• Middle school minded teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognizing birthdays, students of the month, etc.</td>
<td>• We all push students to get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We have clubs every Wednesday during the school day</td>
<td>• Providing many varied activities both during and after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Great student-teacher ratio</td>
<td>• Parents on campus during school day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation</td>
<td>• Teachers are with kids for 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rewards</td>
<td>• Discussing with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support and recognize ALL extra-curricular groups and members</td>
<td>• Allow students to socialize in cafeteria before school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides opportunities for broad participation</td>
<td>• Advisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisor/advisee student advocate group</td>
<td>• Academic recognitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaming</td>
<td>• Fun activities to enhance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide athletic and fine art opportunities during and after school</td>
<td>• Extracurricular activities and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentoring</td>
<td>• Creating a safe learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advocacy class</td>
<td>• Explore time each morning in home-room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong daily advisory program</td>
<td>• Developmentally appropriate instructional strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisory class - activities</td>
<td>• March madness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homeroom activities</td>
<td>• Relationship building opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manner's Matter - focus on social 'grace' and putting others first</td>
<td>• Teacher/student relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisory groups</td>
<td>• Home base &amp; Grade level competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incentive program</td>
<td>• Teachers as good role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong music program</td>
<td>• Extra-curricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guidance &amp; counseling</td>
<td>• Caring staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students are members of instructional teams</td>
<td>• Encouraging atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a student friendly atmosphere for students</td>
<td>• Providing social events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide many, many opportunities</td>
<td>• After school clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisor/advisee program</td>
<td>• Strong extra curricular program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dances and activities</td>
<td>• Pro-active guidance program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begin with Scavenger hunt</td>
<td>• Clubs besides athletics and band/choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities for students to get involved in school activities.</td>
<td>• Providing for positive social interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offers extra-curricular activities (athletic &amp; non-athletic)</td>
<td>• We have students grouped in academic teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safe environment</td>
<td>• Dedicated teachers to the whole child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide multiple extracurricular activities</td>
<td>• Group gatherings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small class sizes</td>
<td>• Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role model behaviors</td>
<td>• Encourage students to fund-raise for the needy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic/social interventions</td>
<td>• Field trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build staff - student relationships</td>
<td>• Band and choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incentives</td>
<td>• Student-led parent teacher conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Various after-school activities</td>
<td>• Extra-curricular offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get to know each student</td>
<td>• Small school setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Peer counseling</td>
<td>• Peer tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School spirit activities</td>
<td>• Provide occasional reward parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Form relationships between staff and students</td>
<td>• Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kind teachers</td>
<td>• Teaching teams with clear identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides many activities for students to participate in</td>
<td>• Dances / PTO activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Having spirit days</td>
<td>• Engaging curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide extra opportunities to become engaged with school</td>
<td>• Extra curricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clubs and organizations for students to get involved</td>
<td>• Small school setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoting a safe environment</td>
<td>• Extra- &amp; Co-curricular Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage students to get involved beyond the classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large number of extracurricular programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation for new students (given a tour &amp; asked to sit at lunch)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student council members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

- 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**
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 3 months?

☐ Are you willing to try to make these changes?

Determining the Needs

Let’s list some of the barriers you think affect 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>To identify all the lessons Johnny dislikes or has difficulty with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Assess current attendance: Of this week how many days of school did you miss?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Of this week how many classes did you miss?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Repeat questions 1 & 2 each week – for weekly self-report and monitoring)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>To work with Johnny to determine 2 alternatives for missing classes he dislikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>To practice using the 2 alternatives to missing classes &amp; determine 3 strategies to improve his commitment to doing well in the classes he dislikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Invite teacher and parent for one consultation on how to get the Johnny more involved in his school, with his teachers, and classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Discuss strategies with Johnny and get his buy in. Implement the strategies he feels comfortable using</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structures (S) and Policies (P) enforce law should be obeyed</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build positive relationship</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P encourage respect for teachers and authority</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P encourage consistent enforcement of rules</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P encourage students to advance their education</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer on-going extracurricular activities</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage participation in extracurricular activities</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P encourage students to believe in themselves</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to have a stake in their education</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P are fair and equitable</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P zero tolerance for racism</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer opportunities for teacher-student bonding</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer opportunities for student leadership</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P show value of remaining in school</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage parents to participate in child’s learning</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P encourage belief that teachers are good</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P are clearly written with consequences</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use in-school rather than out-of school responses</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express school pride</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P show zero tolerance for bullying/harassment</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S and P encourage peers are good</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage teachers to spend time with at risk students</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look forward to coming to school</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage student creativity</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to be involved in school activities</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to keep busy</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer after school activities</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities for student interaction w/ role models</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have activities contingent on student performance</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage participation in student government</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster desire to stay in school</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward students for following rules</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide extended opportunities for students at risk</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek student input</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer student-community linkages</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use student input</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer campaigns for student involvement</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage participation in school decision making</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Had someone to turn to in times of need                                           | 50.6           | 46.6  | 96.6  |

86 Total extent
Appendix K – Examples of State Truancy Laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONNECTICUT</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOUISIANA</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIRGINIA</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L – Model Truancy Reduction Initiatives


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 pick 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 distant 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 legal 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 has 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 related 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.


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 managers 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.
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.

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.

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  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
S513 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II  Summer 2007
S231 Generalist Social Work Practice I: 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
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

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)

Executive Director (2003) Primary School Examination Program Support YMCA of Greater St. Louis (2 yrs. - $54,000US)


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


II – Research


III – Professional Service


