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afterschool program should also allow for students to have a voice in programming development and in choosing activities they would like to engage in. In order to track accurate data, student attendance should not be tracked on attendance in the afterschool program only, but should also be tracked on activity participation. Some afterschool programs, such as Safe Haven Community Center, allow students to attend the afterschool program who can choose to not participate in the activities offered. Students who do this are still counted for attendance, but the student did not attend an activity in the afterschool program. The attendance data in this case is not accurate and should not be counted, or should be counted with activity attendance. This would paint a better picture to show if activities were having an impact on student's attendance or not.

and leadership opportunities had increased (though there was not much of a difference between those that helped design the activities and those that did not). Students were able to participate in activities in a safe and fun environment, which helped to deter them from deviant behavior and crime. This chapter was designed to analyze the data and identify the findings.

Recommendations

Afterschool programs, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, should be developed, structured, and planned with youth voice and choice, caring and passionate adults, and with leadership opportunities. According to much of the research provided in this paper, youth were able to engage and become involved when adults developed more of a relationship with the students, instead of a simple teacher and student relationship. Students also felt connected and a part of the program when allowed opportunities to engage, help design the structure of the afterschool program, and when the program allowed for youth to be leaders.

Public schools and the afterschool programs, should partner together to offer students opportunities to increase in academics, develop life and 21st century skills, impact attendance, behavior, engage parents in their children's lives and academics, and to expand on students interest through enriched activities. The

Conclusions

According to the data that was founded through surveys, research, and attendance, it's clear that middle and high school youth are effected greatly by the amount of activities provided and the number of opportunities to be leaders. The research shows that youth face many trials and pressures from school and the academic heavy material they need to learn. The afterschool programs that have mimicked the school day and/or that have provided activities that are not geared towards youth interest, have provided data that has shown high dropout rates, inconsistent attendance, lack of interest, and disengaged youth. Programs that have caring adults, youth interest based activities, and leadership opportunities for youth have shown increased attendance, participation, engagement, and academics. Other areas that youth have been impacted have been in social skills and 21st century skills. When afterschool programs provided quality structured activities, youth were able to grow and learn.

Though the hypothesis was rejected, ELO's do have an impact on youth. The survey that was provided at SHCC indicated that youth were happy to be at the Community Center because there were activities geared towards their interest and their age group. The attendance information also indicated that youth were consistent in attending the afterschool program during the period that activities

paper, the program was not as successful. The author contributed this to the lack of adult to student relationship (emotional relationship). Students felt that they could not connect with the adults in the program. Therefore, there was a lack of interest, attendance, and engagement. The author recommended that the program should hire adults who would care about the well-being of the students, and that adults in the program should develop more of a relationship with the students. This shows that caring staff (adults) in the program have an impact on the students being served in the program, which would help engage students and increase attendance.

Another contributing factor was the type of activities that were offered in the programs. Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) are opportunities for schools to expand on the school day by allowing students to continue to learn before or after school. When schools allow for such opportunities (GearUp, 21st CCLC, etc.) to have their own type of structure outside of the normal school day, students respond better and feel less pressure from the stress of learning. When activities are not academic heavy and are based on student interest, students are able to connect and engage more in the program.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topic: (a) introduction, (b) summary, (c) conclusions, (d) recommendations. The purpose and nature of the research Project and concern are paraphrased here.

Summary

The research project was conducted to determine policies, programs, and efforts that have been created and established to better the afterschool programs for middle and high school youth. Afterschool programs and schools face many challenges as they try to determine the best program design or structure that will captivate and engage youth in healthy habits, education, and life skills. Youth that are at risk suffer even greater challenges to connect with education and the afterschool program, because there are barriers that must be overcome by the student and program.

However, research has also shown that programs that had adults who tried to develop a relationship with the students, showed consistent attendance and an increase in positive behavior, academics, and engagement. One example of this is the 21st Century Community Learning Center. According to one research in this

Summary

This chapter was designed to analyze the data and identify the findings. From the data, the hypothesis was rejected and the Null Hypothesis was accepted. The SHCC afterschool program showed that students who helped in the design and creation of activities had the same amount of attendance as those who did not participate in the design and creation of activities. In addition, students felt that there were activities geared towards their interest and that they enjoyed spending their time at the SHCC (agree) according to the student survey.

in the youth. The conclusion from the research was that if staff (adults) could connect and develop more of a relationship with the youth in the program, the youth attendance would increase. Because youth did not feel there was a caring adult, or one that they could connect with, they did not feel the need to attend the afterschool program.

Based off this information, this research project was conducted to help find creative ideas, methodologies, and activities that would help increase the attendance of middle and high school youth in the afterschool program at Safe Haven Community Center. Youth have not been consistent in their attendance and have been lacking because of the lack of activities and leadership opportunities. Though the afterschool program had staff who cared and connected with youth, this was not enough to keep youth engaged and connected in the program, but was a stepping stone. Therefore, new activities geared towards youth interest and leadership opportunities were created to help youth become more involved and committed. Most of the research conducted in this paper has shown the need for ELO's, but most importantly the need to keep youth engaged and connected.

Discussion

Other research that has been conducted on expanded learning opportunities (ELO) and has shown the struggle that schools and programs face with obtaining and keeping youth in the programs. Another struggle that schools and programs have faced is the design and structure of the ELO. Some teachers and principals would like to have seen more academic focused activities in reading, math, and science. To have students read books, work on math sheets or problems, and/or study science vocabulary has been what they expected in these offerings. However, ELO's, such as 21st CCLC have designed their programs to be different from the school day and to be more youth interest focused. This does not mean that programs do not focus on education, instead programs have developed enriched activities that have reading, math, and science components incorporated into the lesson.

This has allowed youth of various ages in the ELO's to engage in the activities and participate. Yet, one study showed that after modeling a 21st CCLC program afterschool, there was a lack of attendance and commitment. Staff (adults) did not engage or develop a relationship with youth in the program. Instead, staff only conducted their jobs and were not as involved, connected, engaged, and/or vested

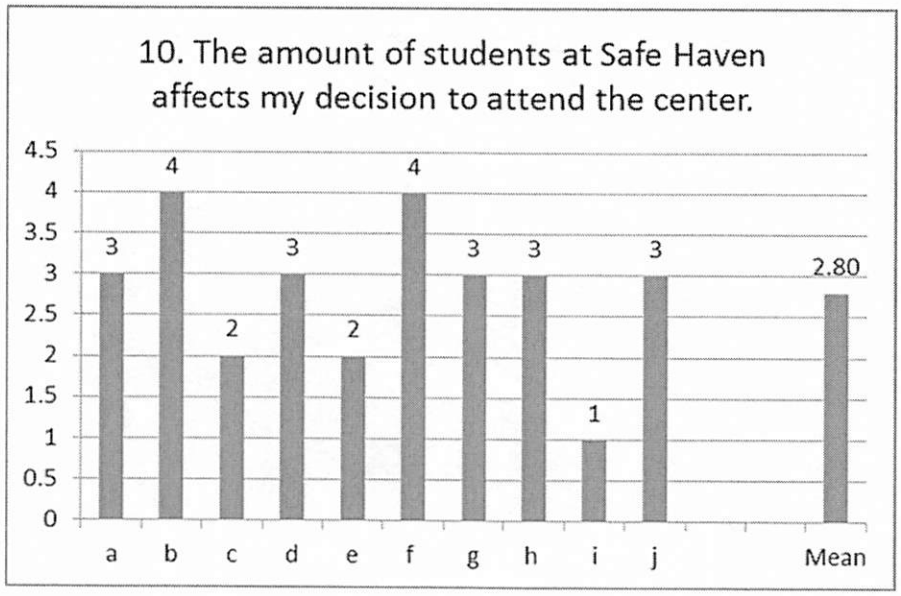


Figure 10

Findings

Given the analysis of the data and the testing of the null hypothesis or answering the research question, a limited number of findings become apparent. The null hypothesis, according to the statpak, was accepted, which means the hypothesis was rejected. Attendance data from the academic school year of 2014 – 2015 was utilized in the statpak that resulted in this finding. However, the hypothesis does have some truth to it as the student survey provided results that showed students believed there were more activities offered towards their age and interest. According the survey, students were able to identify and connect more with Safe Haven (afterschool program).

Figure 9

To the statement "The amount of students at Safe Haven affects my decision to attend the center", two students strongly agreed, five students agreed, two students disagreed and one students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 2.80, which indicated that more than half of the student's disagreed that the amount of students at Safe Haven does affect their decision to attend the center.

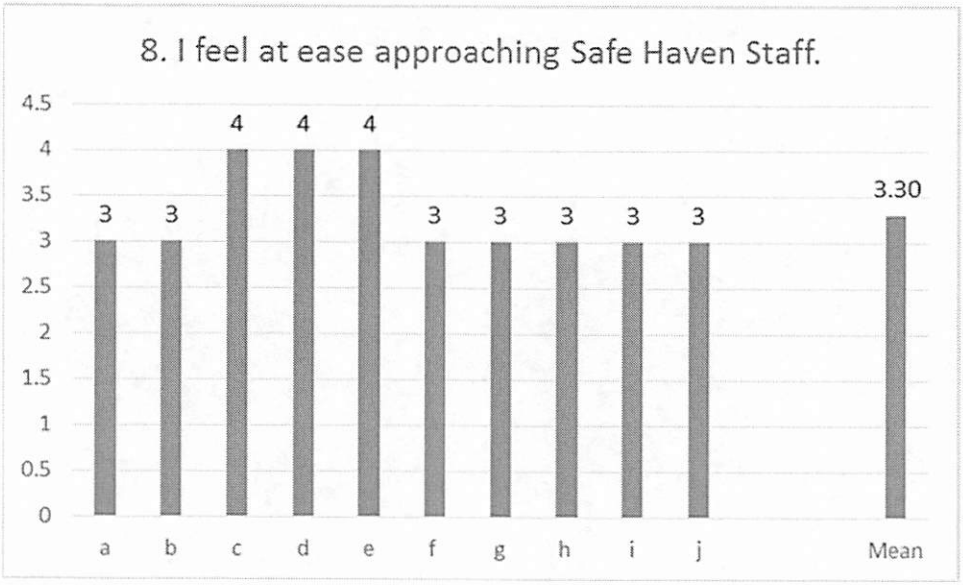


Figure 8

To the statement "I feel comfortable with the wide age group at Safe Haven", three students strongly agreed, seven students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.30, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that the amount of students at Safe Haven does affect their decision to attend the center.

Figure 7

To the statement "I feel at ease approaching Safe Haven Staff", three students strongly agreed, seven students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.30, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that they feel comfortable with the wide age group at Safe Haven.

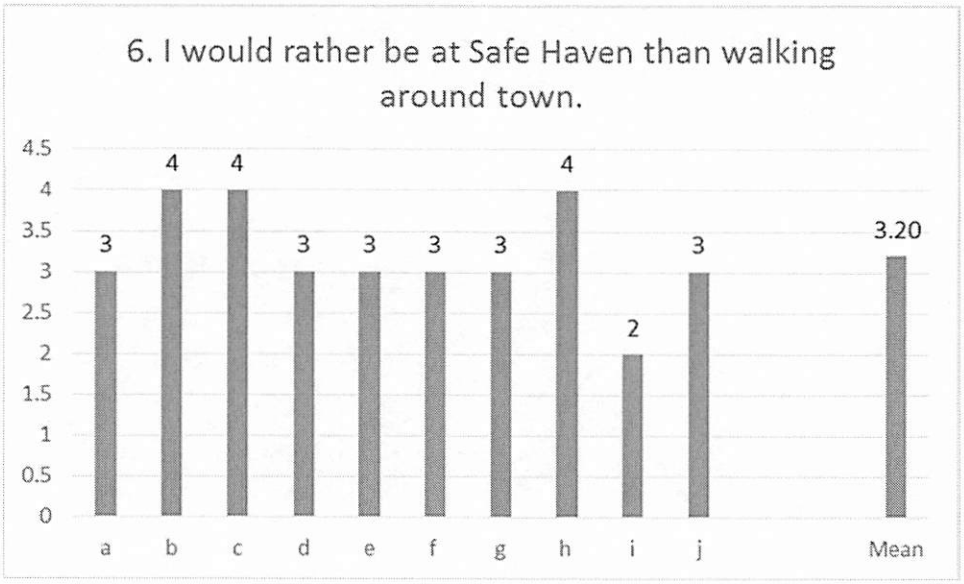


Figure 6

To the statement "I easily have access to Safe Haven Staff", five students strongly agreed, five students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.50, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that they feel at east approaching Safe Haven staff.

Figure 5

To the statement "I would rather be at Safe Haven than walking around town", three students strongly agreed, six students agreed, one students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.20, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that they have easy access to Safe Haven staff.

Figure 4

To the statement "Safe Haven is a place I can be myself", four students strongly agreed, six students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.40, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that they would rather be at Safe Haven then walking around town.

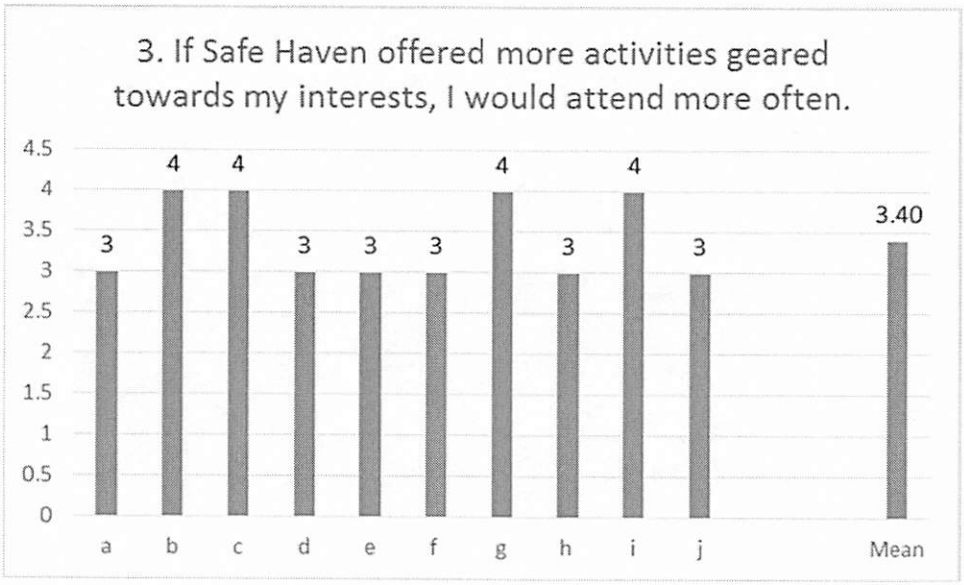


Figure 3

To the statement "I like to spend my time at Safe Haven", four students strongly agreed, six students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.40, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that Safe Haven is a place they can be themselves.

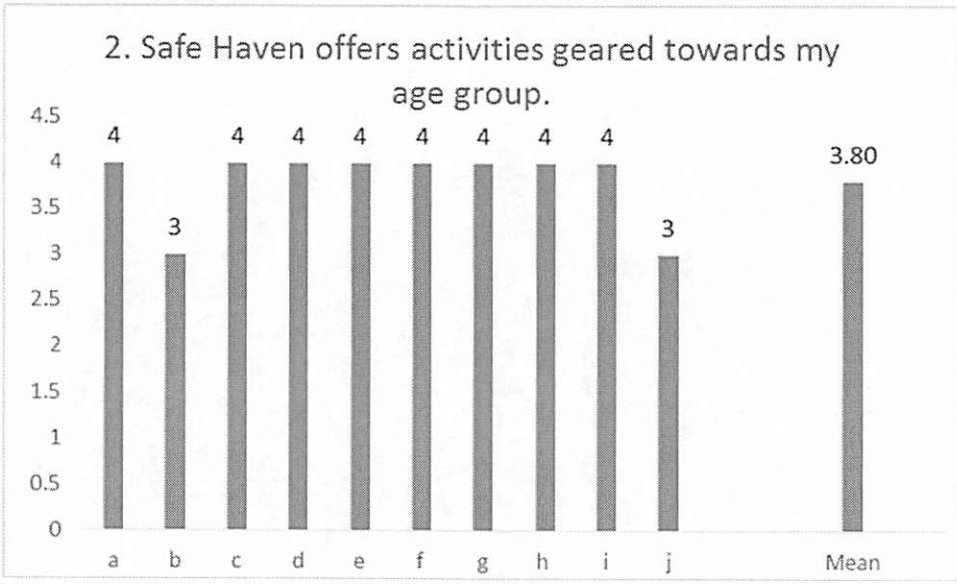
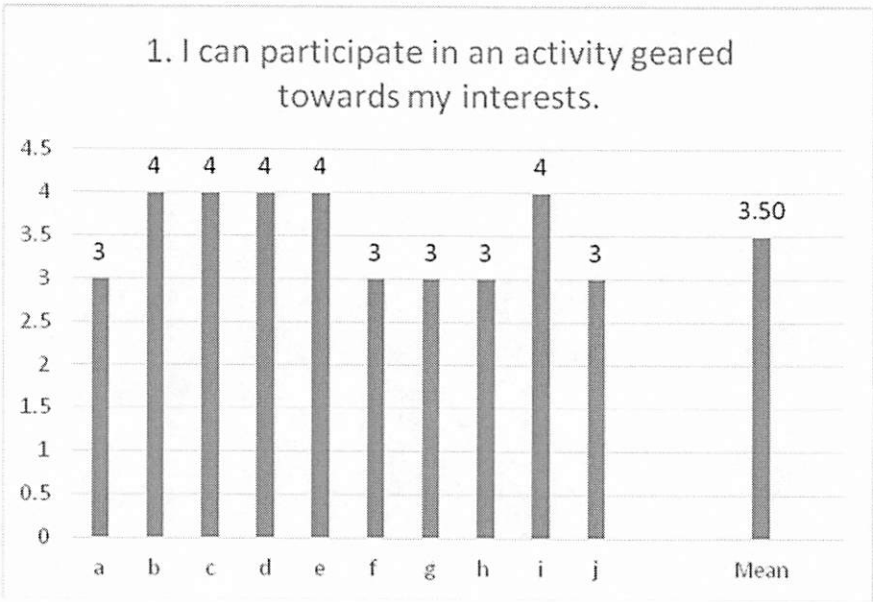


Figure 2

To the statement "If Safe Haven offered more activities geared towards my interests, I would attend more often", four students strongly agreed, six students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero student strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.40, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that they like to spend their time at Safe Haven.



To the statement "Safe Haven offers activities towards my age group", eight students strongly agreed, two students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly disagreed. The mean of the students was 3.80, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that Safe Haven offers activities for their age group.

showed a t-value of 1.68 with degrees of freedom of 17 which did not exceed the required t-value necessary to show significance. As a result the researcher was not able to reject the null hypothesis of "Middle and high school youth who participated in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles at Safe Haven Community Center will not significantly show higher attendance than students who did not participate in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles" and was therefore not able to support the hypothesis of "Middle and high school youth who participated in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles at Safe Haven Community Center will significantly show higher attendance than students who did not participate in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles".

The researcher gave a survey to students to determine how they thought increased activities had encouraged their participation. Students answered a 10 question survey.

To the statement "I can participate in an activity geared towards my interests", five students strongly agreed, five students agreed, zero students disagreed and zero students strongly agreed. The mean of the students was 3.50, which indicated that more than half of the students agreed that they could participate in an activity geared towards their interest.

Hypothesis

Middle and high school students who participated in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles at Safe Haven Community Center will significantly show higher attendance than students who did not participate in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles. Middle and high school students who participate in the Safe Haven Community Center's activities will report that there were more activities to keep them engaged.

Null Hypothesis

Middle and high school students who participated in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles at Safe Haven Community Center will not significantly show higher attendance than students who did not participate in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles. Middle and high school students who participated in the Safe Haven Community Center activities will not report that there were more activities and/or leadership opportunities to keep them engaged.

Results of the Study

The research utilized an independent t-Test to determine significance at p=.05. The t-Test value obtained was 1.68 with degrees of freedom of 17. To show significance at p=.05, a t-Value of 2.110 was required. The researcher's results

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

Chapter 4 has been organized around the following topics: (a) description of environment, (b) hypothesis, (c) results of the study, (d) findings, and (e) summary. This section provides a paraphrased statement of the research concern which the study has addressed.

Description of the Environment

This project was delimited to grades 6th – 12th in the 21st Century Community Learning Center Afterschool Program at the Safe Haven Community Center located in Toppenish, Washington. In the program, there were: thirteen 6th graders, seven 7th graders, six 8th graders, seven 9th graders, one 10th graders, zero 11th graders, and one 12th grader. In this group there were twenty three boys and fourteen girls. The attendance of each student was monitored through the EZ Reports Online Database. The program was offered Monday through Friday from 2:30pm – 5:30pm, except on holidays and "no school days". This project took place during the academic school year of September 2014 – June 2015.

were caring adults and activities geared towards their interest. This chapter was designed to review the methodology and treatment of data related. The analysis of data and findings from this study are reported in Chapter 4.

students felt that the activities provided were geared towards their interest, and it showed that students enjoy spending time at the center.

Treatment of Data

A t-test for independent samples was utilized for this study. A comparison of students who participated in the increased activities and their attendance was compared to students who did not participate in the increased activities to determine if there was significance to the project. A survey was given to students to determine their response to the increased activities.

Summary

The methodology used in this research project allowed the data from tracking student attendance and survey results to show what activities geared towards youth interest and leadership opportunities can have an effect towards afterschool programs. Research supports the results founded by the methodology as programs similar to 21st CCLC have attempted to provide quality and structured schedules with activities for youth. However, their youth were disconnected, disinterested and/or disengaged. After further studies, it was determined that there were no real relationship between the adults and youth in the program. There was no opportunities for youth to partner and work with adults to lead and become mentors. Through the survey that was given at SHCC, youth agreed that there

and high school program (no drop in's allowed at the Community Center). At the Community Center we hosted group meetings and some individual meetings to obtain information pertaining to youth interests in activities they would like to be offered and/or would participate in. Through brainstorming and voting, staff were able to develop activities and a schedule in partnership with seven youth leaders that would attract and increase the attendance of the middle and high school students in the afterschool program.

For the activities, the staff and students developed opportunities for students to be leaders. For example, the afterschool program offered Pokémon Club, which was of interest to a couple of the middle and high school students. A mutual agreement was established before the middle and high school students were able to join the activity. Students would need to help educate and mentor the elementary students about Pokémon, which would allow the leaders to also participate in the activity. The middle and high school students agreed and became leaders of the Pokémon Club. The Community Center was able to create a few activities and leadership opportunities. Attendance of the middle and high school students was tracked by the Community Center's receptionist. In June, 2015 a survey was provided to ten students to determine the overall impact the activities and leadership opportunities had towards them. Overall, the survey showed that

software for managing 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) and other after-school programs. This software also is in compliance with the federal Department of Education and state reporting requirements, which is being used by over 2000 schools and community based organizations nationwide. For the purpose of this research paper, only daily attendance data was utilized.

Design

This research project utilized the quasi-experimental design, utilizing EZ-Reports to track attendance of the students in the afterschool program. The data was obtained through this online database to monitor and measure student attendance to compare two groups: group A – students who helped with the development of new activities and students who participated in activities and/or leadership opportunities; group b – students who did not help with the development of new activities, but participated in participate in activities and/or leadership opportunities. Surveys were also distributed to students at the end of the 2014-2015 academic school year to obtain student input on the afterschool program – specifically on activities and student interest.

Procedure

The students at Safe Haven Community Center were registered students in the afterschool program. Students were in grades 6^{th} – 12^{th} and a part of the middle

groups attendance were monitored from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year.

Participants

All middle and high school students that were registered in the afterschool program at Safe Haven Community Center attended September 2014 – June 2015 school year, which they were observed and a part of this research. Students were in grades 6^{th} – 12^{th} and ages 11 – 17 years old. Students were of Native American and Mexican (Hispanic) background.

Instruments

The Excel spreadsheet was the software used to track and monitor student's attendance. Each day a student attended the afterschool program, the students were required to sign in at the front desk. Once students left the Community Center, students were required to sign out, which then the receptionist inserted the attendance on the Excel spreadsheet on the computer. Teachers also tracked which students were participating in their activity through attendance sheets. These sheets were turned into the receptionist to insert attendance towards activities offered for the day on EZ Reports. EZ Reports keeps tracks of daily attendance through activities offered daily in the afterschool program. The EZ Reports software is a powerful, affordable and comprehensive web-based

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of the Data

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics: (a) Methodology, (b) Participants, (c) Instruments, (d) Design, (e) Procedure, (f) Treatment of the Data, (g) Summary.

Methodology

In this project, the researcher utilized a quantitative method to determine if youth attendance was being affected by the increase in activities and leadership opportunities. This was a quasi-experimental study. Attendance for September 2015 – June 2015 have been taken and utilized in this research paper. This research project utilized the quasi-experimental design, which means that there was some control over threats to validity. All students in the afterschool program that were in middle and high school, were part of the quasi-experimental design. The youth were separated by two groups, in which one group were those who did not participate in the development of the activities, but did participate in activities and leadership opportunities; the other group was those who did participate in the development of new activities and leadership opportunities. Students from both

prevention and intervention to help at risk youth stay connected, positive, and provided support through graduation.

The materials provided great insight into policies, programs, and services that have been implemented and provided to help students succeed. Though not every policy, model, or service has been effective, it has provided a great deal of data that can help develop a system that works. With this information, the researcher could develop a method for youth to appreciate and become involved in the afterschool program at the Safe Haven Community Center.

provide quality education and share ideas. Under the CCSS, schools were teaching the same material and education, which meant if a student were to move from Washington to Oregon, the student would continue with the same material.

The 21st Century Community Learning Center programs have provided much needed resources and activities during before and/or afterschool. This afterschool program has been funded through the legislature to help increase student academics in reading and math. Studies have shown that there has been an increase in students overall learning, behavior, and attendance. Though 21st CCLC is a program offered before- or after- school, the after school time has become increasingly important. As discussed, models in the after school time were very important for students to become involved and engaged in. The afterschool time offered programming and/or activities that allowed students to continue expanding on the school day and on student interest.

Finally, at risk youth impacted more than just the school, they also had a social impact. At risk youth who dropped out of school had engaged in criminal activity, vandalism, joined a gang, and/or had exhibit deviant behavior. There were methods for engaging at risk youth back into school and society. Programs such as Reconnect, afterschool programs, and the schools themselves provided

work that the U.S. government has adopted and invested into the educational system, and program models that have impacted students in their academics.

Research on the topic Expanded Learning Opportunities showed that there were program structures that had been effective. These programs included adult mentors, structure, and quality. Youth had the opportunity to engage in relationships with the adults, which showed that students had become more involved with their education and performed at higher levels in their academics. State and Federal Laws have also been passed to increase student academics and proficiency in America. The government has poured funding into No Child Left Behind, Common Core State Standards, and programs such as 21st Century Community Learning Center grants.

The No Child Left Behind act was established to help schools keep all students on track to pass state standards. With the NCLB, teachers would have to align their instructions based on the state standards. This meant schools across the United States had varying standards and lessons being taught in their schools. The Common Core State Standards changed this on June 20, 2011 in the state of Washington, and for most other states in 2010. The CCSS provided quality education in all adopted states and territories, which prepares students with skills for the workforce and college readiness. States collaborated together to help

and caring environments studies have shown that students can be very resilient. According to Project ReConnect, a project that was developed by St. John's University's School of Education to address New York City's disconnected youth, students who engaged with caring adults, who had a sense of unity within their peers, and a sense of trust were able to "reconnect" and put their life back on track.

As stated above in the afterschool research section, programs that offered structured schedules, consistency, and that had caring adults who developed relationships with the students allowed at risk youth to engage and gain a new appreciation for school. If afterschool programs and programs like Project ReConnect could be replicated, the number of at risk youth would decrease as more and more connect back into academics and life.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to address the available evidence to the topics of (a) Expanded Learning Opportunities, (b) State and Federal Laws: 1. No Child Left Behind, 2. Common Core, 3. 21st Century Community Learning Center, (c) What Research Shows on Afterschool, and (d) At Risk Youth. The research provided valuable information pertaining to students and their academics, the

unemployment and underemployment, higher rates of criminal involvement, greater health problems, and greater dependence on welfare and other public benefit programs," (p. 19). According to Alison Anlezard, "at risk" youth means: disengaged youth, unemployed youth, and young people who do not complete their senior secondary education, (Anlezark, 2011). The researcher focused only on disengaged youth and youth who did not complete the 12th grade for this paper.

Youth that were "at risk" have been identified by certain factors, such as: indigenous, live outside metropolitan areas, low academic achievers, low levels of literacy and numeracy, low socioeconomic status, parents without university education, non-nuclear family (2011). However, there were other contributing factors such as: poor attitudes towards school, poor relationships with the teacher, a dislike towards school, lack of engagement and poor behavior. All of these were factors that contributed to a youth being "at risk", which could then lead to the youth dropping out of school and to deviant behavior.

Students who struggled with circumstances in school were at risk of dropping out. They may have struggled with relationships, truancy, learning challenges, or behavioral problems. If a student encountered negative school experiences, the student was more likely not to complete high school and would most likely engage in negative activities. By fostering at risk youth into positive, enriching,

contributed to lower incidences (deviance, violence, and unintended pregnancy), provided a safe place for students to continue expanding on the school day, and allowed students to develop life skills, socio-emotional and leadership skills.

With programs such as these, students could continue to advance in their education and close the achievement gap that exists between high- and low-income families. Afterschool programs also could partner with schools to provide summer programs that could keep youth busy and actively learning. During the summer hours, students lose valuable learning time because of the lack of resources available or lack of funding. The summer programs mimic the afterschool program structure, which does not follow an academic heavy curriculum. Instead, the summer program has allowed for creativity, has built on student interest, life skills, and has built on academics through enriched activities.

At Risk Youth

Dropout rates seem to plague communities where there were many minority students that had English as a second language and poverty stricken. According to a study that was conducted by the Gates Foundation (as cited in Malloy, Sundar, Hagner, Pierias, & Viet, 2010, p. 19) it showed that dropout rates were high amongst African American, Hispanic, or Native American. Because of this, it not only effected the students, but it also came with social cost, such as: "chronic

measured for: conduct problems, academic performance, school attendance, prosocial/antidrug attitudes, social competence, school bonding, or positive peer (Gotfredson, Cross, Wilson, & Rorie, 2010, p. 304).

However, this study was not to generalize afterschool programs beyond their models. It was conducted to show that alternative models should be developed and looked at to have a greater impact on high risk youth, academics, attendance, and reduction of problematic behavior. The researchers also believed that "middle school youths may respond better to after-school activities that focus on developing bonds with prosocial adults" (p. 305).

One particular model that seemed to work was the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC). There was current data from Afterschool Alliance that showed the success rates of 21st CCLC in the nation. Research showed from 2011 and 2012 that teachers reported 72% of their students improved in their homework and class participation; 68% improved in behavior; 38% improved in English grades; and 37% improved in math grades (Afterschool Alliance, 2014). These percentages were taken from 1,660,945 students that were served in 21st CCLC afterschool program. These quality programs offer student's academic, social and career-ready skills they need to succeed (2014). Because students were engaged in peer to peer relations and were developing their well-being, this had

programs, and employers. They also promoted equity because students are equipped to collaborate and compete with their fellow students in the United States and abroad. Through the establishment of CCSS, a new pathway was open for states would to collaborate together to achieve increased student learning, which was not possible with the old state standards.

What Research Shows on Afterschool Programs

Afterschool Programs have received much attention over the years. The effectiveness these programs have had on students in afterschool has been the topic many researchers have studied. A randomized trial was done on middle school students to determine how much of an impact the afterschool program was producing. After randomly selecting 447 middle school students, who participated in the afterschool program or activities from the after-school program, it was concluded that many of the students were not impacted.

The study explained that staff turnover and student dropout rates were high, attendance was low, and there was no real emotional/social bonds between staff and students. Though students participated in an afterschool activity, the afterschool program was not able to retain all students and not all students attended the full program duration. Another result from the study concluded that there was no difference between frequent attenders and infrequent attenders when

This differs from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which were released in June 2010 and aimed to align K-12 state education standards into one unified set. A number of prominent corporations, which included Dell, IBM, Microsoft, Verizon, and several state Chambers of Commerce, allowed their names to be placed on a "Business Sign-On Letter, which stated, "We are a nation with 50 sets of inconsistent standards, even though the expectations of colleges and employers in math and English are nearly universal" (as cited in Doyle, 2012, p. 9). The concern was that students will be left unprepared to enter college and to enter a career. Another concern was that students were falling behind academically compared to other countries. This is what led to the creation and adoption of the CCSS.

The District of Columbia, four territories and 45 states have adopted the CCSS, meaning that students in these states would receive equal and quality education. Students would also be college and career ready under the CCSS because the Common Core was a set of college and career ready standards for K-12. No matter which school the student attended within those that adopted the CCSS, the student could continue from where he/she had finished at their previous school. It should also be noted that the standards were very important because they were aligned with the expectations of colleges, workforce training

mandated by the state, students would perform higher academically in all grades and more in the tested grades.

Morgan S. Polikoff stated that surveys were distributed to teachers that asked directly "if they are aligning or have aligned their instruction" (p. 343). According to the results, Kentucky stated 87% of the teachers indicated that they had aligned their instructional lessons; 76% or more stated they did in a national sample; 86-90% in Colorado and 96% in California and Georgia stated they had also aligned their lesson plans with state standards and assessments. Polikoff believes that the teacher's interpretation of the word "alignment" provided a limitation, which does not provide an accurate summary. The reason he believed this to be true was because according to the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (practical and reliable set of data collection tools being used with teachers of math, ELA, Science, and social studies to collect and report consistent data on current instructional practices and content being taught in classrooms), students did not increase in all academic subjects. The research data showed that students did increase significantly in math compared to ELA. Students decreased in science, which could be because science was not used for accountability under the NCLB.

academic heavy activities, but activities that were fun and engaging that expanded on student's interest and core subjects (STEM).

State and Federal Laws

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was the start of a new ear for the education system. Schools across America were being held accountable to higher standards by the state and were required to ensure America they were meeting standards and objectives mandated by the Standard-Based Reform (SBR) policy. Aligned assessments and "test-based accountability" were mandated upon the schools to determine if instructional content teachers were providing were aligned with the standards and assessments under the SBR policy. Under this policy, the standards determined what students should know and what they should be able to do (as cited in Polikoff, 2012, p. 341).

Essentially, the act was adopted with the intentions that student learning would improve if teachers were to align their instructional lessons more with the SBR. This of course meant that each state would have its own set of standards for schools to meet, which teachers were to align their instructional lessons around the content and standards. The idea behind this act was if students were taught with instructional material that was aligned with the assessments and standards

(Hoxie, DeBellis, & Traill, 2011, pg. 81). TASC's strategy consisted of adding more time to the school day, which would allow them to meet student and family needs. During the hours of after-school, children have been left unsupervised and have been at risk for drugs, mischief, and other aggressive behaviors. Studies have shown a positive impact the TASC's after-school programs have had on students. When students participate in structured activities that are not part of the school day, students are more likely to stay out of criminal activity and engage in healthy relationships. The studies also showed that students who participated in high quality after-school programs "achieve more academically and are associated with decreased likelihood of high school dropout" (p. 81). Typically, what was reserved for the afterschool hours were now part of the school day. ELO's offer afterschool programming which not all students need to attend. An ELT can mimic an ELO, but an ELT would be school wide and all students would attend. This could be an 8:00am – 6:00pm schedule, which would have normal academic subjects in the morning and enriched activities in the afternoon. However, not all ELT's look the same. Because Teachers and Principals are focused on meeting goals, raising grades, and passing test some ELT's reflect the school day.

Some schools believed that if they extended the school day (ELT), academics would improve. Others believe that students do not need more time dedicated to

planning. If schools partnered with ELO and ELT, students would have access to community and organization resources, and learning and experiential opportunities that they otherwise would not have access to. This could also attract families, which could lead to more parental involvement in the schools. The last theme was commitment to data. It's important to keep track of data for evaluation purposes and to use indicators as guidepost for student learning and success. Though schools may use No Child Left Behind as a guideline, some principals were tracking attendance, grades, soft skills and classroom engagement. ELOs also tracked how they were impacting the student's learning and development. The After-School Corporation (TASC) had its own methodology for conducting evaluation on internal progress. The corporation used a "two-pronged strategy, conducting independent evaluations and monitoring internal progress over time" (p. 123). With new data being collected, information could be discovered to further improve methodology and development of ELO's, school offerings, and programming geared towards student development.

The After-School Corporation has developed a strategy for expanded learning Time (ELT), which they believe by "increasing the amount of time that students spend in school, students can participate in diverse activities that go beyond the structured school curricula that characterize many of our schools nationwide"

expand on the school day and to engage in enriched activities. Students who live "in privileged settings have more opportunities to explore nature and to engage in sports and arts" (p. 121). Because of the privilege setting, the students were able to experience summer programs that were full of enriching opportunities and they were able to travel more with their families. However, high-poverty communities lack these types of resources for students to enjoy, which was why ELO was important. With ELO's, students were able to expand on the school day and participate in enriching activities. The ELO was not academic heavy focused, rather the ELO linked the school day with enriching activities to keep students engaged, expand on the school day, and learn new concepts.

Quality use of time was a major component of ELO and ELT. Many schools have struggled with determining if the school day schedule should consist of half academics and half enriching activities. The challenge that schools have faced were designing "engaging schedules that balance the academic core with civic and community projects, hands-on learning, twenty-first century skill building, or programs that promote socio-emotional development" (p. 122). Schools were not able to do it alone, which was why it was important that ELO and ELT partnered with schools to offer these enriching activities. With their help, teachers would be flexible in their lesson plans to teach electives and have more time for lesson

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics: (a) Expanded Learning Opportunities, (b) State and Federal Laws: 1. No Child Left Behind, 2. Common Core, 3. 21st Century Community Learning Center, (c) What Research Shows on Afterschool, (d) At Risk Youth, and (e) summary.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

There have been many studies on expanded learning opportunities (ELO), which can also be correlated to out of school time (OST) that have indicated the need for continuing educational opportunities afterschool. One particular new idea that has gained interest is expanded learning time (ELT), which stands for adding more time to the school day or more days to the school year to combat summer learning loss. However, because it's new there has not been enough research that provided data and/or results. Therefore, it will it be touched upon lightly in this paper. The concept of expanded learning may vary from state to state, the focus has remained clear based on four themes: "on equity, quality use of time, relationship building, and commitment to data" (Malone & Noam, 2011, p. 120). Equity focused on providing high-poverty students with opportunities to

ACLU. American Civil Liberties Union.

AYP. Annual Yearly Progress.

ELL. English Language Learner.

ME. Multicultural Education.

OSPI. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

ELT. Extended Learning Time

ELO. Extended Learning Opportunities

ELTO. Extended Learning Time and Opportunities

the conclusion of the project. This section may also include, for example, reference letters giving permission to conduct the project. Parenthetically, letters and other documents that help frame the project should be included as exhibits in the appendixes. Must tell reader that the item is located in the appendixes, (see Appendix A). The author may also include information about the formation of Committees, the development and administration of the instruments to gather data, and descriptions of how the data were treated. The elements included in this section will vary with each project.

Definition of Terms

Youth Program Quality Assessment – Yearly Assessment of Quality Programming for After-School (21st Century After)

Northwest Community Action Center – A Work Source that houses various programs for the underserved population for the community of Toppenish, WA.

Acronym

YPQA. Youth Program Quality Assessment.

SHCC. Safe Haven Community Center

NCAC. Northwest Community Action Center

YVFWC. Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic

b. Provided Student Survey at the end of the school year

Middle and high school students who participated in the new activities and leadership roles, reported that there were more activities and/or leadership roles that kept them engaged (survey question). The results were positive, which has led to the increased attendance of students from Grade 6th – 12th overall, but there was no differentiation of attendance between those that helped design the activities and those that did not. This has contributed to the decrease in crime within the community, an increase in academic achievements (math, reading and writing), school attendance, and behavior.

Procedure

For the purpose of this project, the following procedures were implemented:

1. Permission to conduct research at Safe Haven Community Center by Education Manager (SEE APPENDIX A)
2. Review of selected literature was conducted at Safe Haven Community Center, Heritage University, and internet search engines.
3. Letters explaining the project were mailed to parents
4. One survey was completed by students
5. This section includes a series of statements that are descriptive of the steps the author followed in the conduct of the project. It may be completed at

will significantly show higher attendance than students who did not participate in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles. Middle and high school students who participate in the Safe Haven Community Center's activities will report that there were more activities to keep them engaged.

Null Hypothesis

Middle and high school students who participated in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles at Safe Haven Community Center will not significantly show higher attendance than students who did not participate in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles. Middle and high school students who participated in the Safe Haven Community Center activities will not report that there were more activities and/or leadership opportunities to keep them engaged.

Significance of the Project

The purpose of this project was to provide a factual base of information regarding middle and high school students who participated in the Safe Haven Community Center activities and/or leadership roles would significantly impact higher enrollment and attendance, than students who would not have had the opportunity to participate in the activities and/or leadership roles. Methods that were observed:

a. Kept track student attendance from Sept 2014 – June 2015

graders, zero 11th graders, and one 12th grader. In this group there were thirteen three boys and seven girls. From these nineteen students, fifteen of them have attended the center three or more years, and the remaining four have attended less than one year. The number of students that qualify for free and reduced lunch in the district is 88.4% (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction). In the 2014 – 2015 academic school year there were a total of 1,406 students enrolled in 6^{th} – 12th grade.

Assumptions

For this study it was assumed that students at Safe Haven Community Center participated in the design and development of new activities for middle and high school students. It was assumed that attendance increased due to the increase of youth leadership opportunities and the increase in activities. Another assumption is that the increased attendance at Safe Haven Community Center had a direct impact on academics, behavior, and attendance in the Toppenish School District. Lastly, it was assumed that students who are attending Safe Haven Community Center are engaged in educational/recreational activities.

Hypothesis

Middle and high school students who participated in the development of increased activity offerings in leadership roles at Safe Haven Community Center

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to determine if middle and high school students who participated in the design and development of activities and leadership opportunities would significantly impact higher attendance, than students who would not have had the opportunity to participate in the design and development of activities and leadership opportunities. Methods that were observed:

a. Kept track of enrollment and attendance from Nov 4, 2014 – June 5, 2015
b. Provided Student Survey at the end of the school year

Middle and high school students who participated in the SHCC activities, reported that there were more activities that kept them engaged (survey question). The results of the study were shared with Northwest Community Action Center (NCAC), Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (YVFWC), Toppenish School District (TSD), Safe Haven Advisory Committee, and Heritage University (HU).

Delimitations

This project was delimited to Toppenish Safe Haven Community Center students in grades 6th – 12th. The demographics within the center are 56% Hispanic, 2% Caucasian, and 41% Native American. The project was conducted during the academic school year of September 2014 – June 2015 with 19 students: seven 6th graders, three 7th graders, four 8th graders, four 9th graders, zero 10th

particular grades to activities, it had failed to increase the amount of attendance of this group. Staff at the center met with students to obtain feedback for reasons why they and their friends were not coming. Responses varied from: "Too many little kids", to "We're too old for that", and "there's nothing to do there". In response, staff spoke with students to motivate them to create clubs and activities geared towards their interest, which would also help attract their friends.

The problem seemed to also stem from lack of transportation, minimal space at the center, lack of venue (activities), student to teacher ratio, lack of leadership opportunities and the inability to serve specific age groups. Surveys have been distributed before to allow student voice, however, some students were not clear on their feelings or specific on reasons towards lack of participation. If these students were not at SHCC, they would be at home alone or with friends, participating in other activities, walking the streets, or causing mischief – which crime is big in the Toppenish community. Therefore, the focus of this study was to include a group of students in the design and development of activities and leadership opportunities that would increase their attendance compared to those who did not.

from school, family, friends and life. Those in the afterschool program at Safe Haven Community Center have shown a lack of commitment, attendance, leadership abilities, life skills, and academics. The goal of the Safe Haven Community Center has been to increase the attendance of the middle and high school students in the afterschool program. The objectives for accomplishing this goal are through increased activities geared towards student's interest, and increased leadership opportunities. Because most of the City of Toppenish is low-income, impoverished, and has been plagued by gang activity in the past, students who do attend the afterschool program are considered high risk youth. Therefore, it's critical to provide a prevention and intervention service that would engage youth in a positive environment and in enriched activities. Through this, students could develop life skills, 21st century skills, a sense of appreciation for education and the community, and increase in academics, attendance, and behavior. This research paper addresses many of these issues, with the focus on increasing the attendance of the middle and high school youth in the afterschool program.

Statement of the Problem

Toppenish Safe Haven Community Center (SHCC) found that many students from grades 6 – 12 enrollment and attendance in the afterschool program was very low. Though SHCC had offered a few opportunities for students in these

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted to help students achieve at higher academic levels and to bring equal educational opportunities. This act required teachers to align their instructions with the state standards as students would be required to take test provided by the state. Teachers and the school districts would be measured by the outcome of the test, which could result in the state taking over the school of scores, were very low. New standards were implemented, known as the Common Core State Standards, which changed the education system to date. Students who move from one state to another (within those who have adopted the standards), could continue with the same studies at the new school. Lesson planning, collaboration between schools, curriculum, and problem solving could now been shared and used by all the schools who had adopted the Common Core State Standards. Teachers have been teaching with Common Core, which has allowed education to become equal access and equal value.

In the afterschool programs the structure, quality, and enriched offerings were critical. Students in middle and high school have been bombarded with pressures

Page

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PERMISSION TO STORE

I, Adrian A Almanza, hereby irrevocably consent and authorize Heritage University Library to file the attached Special Project entitled, *Retaining Middle and High School Students in the Afterschool Program,* and make such Project and Compact Disk (CD) available for the use, circulation and/or reproduction by the Library. The Project and CD may be used at Heritage University Library and all site locations.

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Adrian A Almanza, Author

11/30/15, Date

ABSTRACT

Retaining Middle and High School Students in the Afterschool Program

Researcher: Adrian A Almanza, B.A. in Ed., Natural Science, EWU
M.Ed., Heritage University

Chair Advisory Committee: Robert P. Kraig, PhD.

The purpose of this research paper was to determine new methods to increase and maintain middle and high school students in the afterschool program. Safe Haven Community Center's Afterschool Program, allowed seven students to be a part of the development process of creating activities and leadership opportunities for their peers. The students in the development process had their attendance compared to those who did not participate in the development process. Their attendance was monitored through an Excel spreadsheet and EZ Reports over the course of the school year. The results showed that the hypothesis was rejected, however, a survey indicated that students did enjoy the activities offered at Community Center and that there were more activities geared towards their interest.

FACULTY APPROVAL

Retaining Middle and High School Students in the Afterschool Program

A Master's Special Project

by

Adrian A Almanza

Approved for the Faculty

Robert P Kraig, Faculty Advisor

Dr. Robert P. Kraig

12/2/2015, Date

Retaining Middle and High School Students in the Afterschool Program

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A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Robert P. Kraig

Heritage University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters in (Education – Administration – Organizational Leadership)

Adrian A Almanza

11/26/15