SPSSC
Student Programs and Services Steering Committee
Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators of California (JCCASAC)
CCSESA

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Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California

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JCCASAC 2018

Save the Date

We look forward to seeing you at our annual conference next year in Orange County, California!

SPSSC
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VISION

Under the direction of the County Superintendents, and as a sub-committee of the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee (SPSSC), JCCASAC is a professional educational organization dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are competent, caring, and academically prepared for their futures.

MISSION

The mission of JCCASAC is to support student success by creating a collegial network of County Office administrators who:

- Research and share best practices regarding new and innovative program options for at-risk students
- Provide training, support and assistance to new administrators
- Endorse and support legislation that advocates for the learning needs of all students
- Give input and guidance to the superintendents relative to the diverse needs of our student population

GOALS

- Improve student achievement through research and sharing best practices
- Support special projects that enhance instructional programs
- Provide regular training for new county office administrators
- Conduct successful conferences with statewide representation
- Publish the JCCASAC Journal that informs superintendents, administrators, teachers, and affiliated agencies of the latest research, effective teaching practices, methodologies, and thatshowcases successful programs
- Provide scholarships to eligible graduating seniors in order to encourage life long learning
- Represent JCCASAC through participation in statewide committees
- Monitor legislation affecting County Office alternative education programs
- Advocate for legislation and policies that support the unique needs of our student population

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I have had the privilege of serving within the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office for 16 years. During my tenure I have served as a Teacher, EL Resource Specialist, Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction, Principal, and currently as a Director for the Alternative Education Division. Prior to serving within the education field I worked in Commercial Lending, Healthcare Management, and served in the United States Marine Corps

CHRISITAN SHANNON - JCCASAC CHAIR, 2016-2017

On behalf of the JCCASAC Board, I thank our membership for the privilege of serving the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California during the 2016-17 school year. Our mission is to support student success by creating a collegial network of County Office Administrators who research and share best practices, provide training and support, advocate and endorse legislation, and give input and guidance to the superintendents relative to the diverse needs of Alternative Education students.

At a time when County Office programs are experiencing the challenge of declining enrollment while the complexity of student needs expand, the JCCASAC Board focused its attention on improving and expanding services to our membership. This was accomplished through listening and acting on the feedback of members requesting that localized support and collaboration opportunities be established throughout the state. In response, the traditional fall Mini Conference was put on hold, and a series of 6 Region Meetings were scheduled throughout the state so that members could participate with limited travel and time away from work. These localized Region Meetings utilized a common agenda and added region specific issues to the presentations and discussion. The Board was pleased to receive positive feedback from this effort and plans to offer the Region Meetings again in October of 2017.

The Board also initiated several improvements to the JCCASAC website so that members could access critical resources throughout the year. The JCCASAC Journal is an annual publication created to inform superintendents, administrators, teachers, and affiliated agencies of the latest research, effective teaching practices, and methodologies that showcase successful County Office programs and services statewide. The last twenty years of Journal publications have now been archived on the website providing members with a vast array of educational research and practice within the Court and Community setting. In addition, members can now access the annual schedule of JCCASAC events including Region and General Meetings, and Annual Conference participation and presentation opportunities. Student Scholarship applications and Teacher of the Year nominations can also be found on the website. Another Board priority for 2016-17 was to improve member access to current legislative activity specific to the Alternative Education setting. Members may now review the latest Legislative Update provided by CCSESA on the website to inform policy development and daily practice. Lastly, the Board wanted to increase the transparency of how the JCCASAC Board operates in support of membership. This was accomplished through revising the Operating Procedures to reflect current practice and posting those on the website for membership access.

Our volunteer JCCASAC Board cares deeply about our professional colleagues throughout the state. We share the privilege of serving students who desperately need for us to be at our best. The effectiveness of our leadership efforts is vastly improved when we take advantage of the opportunity to learn and grow professionally through meaningful collaboration. Thank you for investing in yourself and your students through participation in the 48th Annual JCCASAC Conference. We hope that you take advantage of the next three days to rest, relax, and rejuvenate in beautiful Lake Tahoe. Join us in embracing educational CHANGE in California and the world as a CHALLENGE and OPPORTUNITY for innovation and growth.

Thank you for your support of JCCASAC!

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

I currently serve as the Division Director for County Operated Schools and Programs with the San Joaquin County Office of Education. February 2017 marked my 23rd year with SJCOE where I began my teaching career. Since leaving the classroom I have served SJCOE teachers and students as Program Specialist, Court School Administrator as well as Director of several one. Program Community School sites. I truly believe in our Mission that we are a community of learners built on meaningful relationships and we ensure that each of us attains the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a dynamic world.

WENDY FRINK - JCCASAC CHAIR- ELECT, 2017-2018

Welcome to the 48th Annual JCCASAC Conference and the beautiful Ritz Carlton Lake Tahoe. On behalf of the JCCASAC Board I thank you for attending and hope you are excited about the next few days in this magnificent setting learning within the theme Change, Challenge, Opportunity! As alternative education educators in California, we can count on those three things being constant in our lives, often resulting in innovative and impactful programs for our students and families; as well as fueling JCCASAC conference sessions for the next year!

Our keynote speakers share your passion for our youth. Jeffrey Benson's article 100 Repetitions and book Teaching the Whole Teen reminds us of the continual effort which must be given to help a student make changes which will lead them to a positive future. Ashlie Bryant of 3Strands Global and her co-presenters Vanessa Russell and Kenneth Morris will demonstrate and empower us to be ever vigilant in our awareness and support for our youth. Finally, Josh Shipp, a former at-risk foster youth himself, applauds and energizes us as we return to our counties with the resolve to make a difference in the lives of all of our students.

Industry partnerships are essential for JCCASAC member schools meeting the needs of their students and other stakeholders. The Stanislaus County Office of Education has completely exceeded our expectations in coordinating our industry partners for the conference this year and we encourage you to visit them to hear about the many ways they assist all of us in our missions to serve and educate the state's most extraordinary students. Following our North/South Region Meetings Wednesday afternoon, our President's Reception will include refreshments and live music by one of our Kern County colleagues and JCCASAC Board Member Carlos Rojas. Thursday's Awards Luncheon not only highlights the JCCASAC Teacher of the Year winner Ron Kunnen from Stanislaus County and nominees from all over our state but also honors two influential leaders of JCCASAC, Sean Morrill from San Diego County and Michael Watkins of Santa Cruz County, who will be presented the John Peshkoff Memorial Award.

Thank you for attending the 48th annual conference and spending time with our network of professionals who provide inspiration, ideas, solace and invigoration. We have three full days in this majestic setting to make new friends and connections within the JCCASAC community. Please embrace the opportunity to, in the words of John Muir, "Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean."

48TH ANNUAL JCCASAC CONFERENCE WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to the 2017 JCCASAC Conference! The San Joaquin Office of Education (SJCOE) values the work of JCCASAC and its members and we are honored to coordinate this year's conference in beautiful Lake Tahoe.

This year's conference theme is "Change, Challenge, Opportunity" that reflects the realities of alternative education. Change: Educating the neediest student population in the state requires dedicated, passionate staff who believe in the potential of each and every young person. This requires adaptability and flexibility to meet the unique needs of every student amid an ever-changing public education landscape. Challenge: The challenges are enormous and significant, but our alternative education staff always believes that a positive outcome is attainable. The challenge is to forge meaningful relationships in an effort to connect with each and every individual. The challenge is to overcome obstacles and create new methods and programs that better meet the needs of our students. Opportunity: Our amazing alternative education teachers, administrators, counselors and staff have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of every student who comes through our programs. Their dedication, hard work and commitment positively impact disadvantaged youth and families throughout California, leaving a lasting impact on our communities.

At SJCOE we are excited to have partnered with the National Guard to open the Discovery ChalleNGe Academy (DCA) in January 2017. DCA is a quasi-military, 22-week residential program and the third of its kind in California. It is open to students in all of Northern California and will have a profound impact on the students and communities of the entire region. You will have a chance to see what an impact the program has already had on its first class of cadets during this conference, which includes a flag ceremony conducted by the Discovery ChalleNGe Academy Color Guard. Our DCA is the result of our incredible alternative education staff at SJCOE that I know is reflective of JCCASAC educators throughout California.

JCCASAC is an invaluable organization that brings together the leaders of alternative education in our state to ensure we are providing the best possible education, support and programs for our youth. This conference is an opportunity to network with colleagues, share best practices and continue on the path of life-long learning.

Congratulations on being a part of JCCASAC and participating in the 48th Annual Conference!

James Mousalimas
San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools

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PCOE
GOLD IN EDUCATION

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Welcome to Placer County!

Placer County is definitely one of the "gold nuggets" in the State of California. Located on 1,400 square miles of the most beautiful and diverse geography in Northern California, Placer County stretches for a hundred miles from urban South Placer, through Western Placer, to the High Sierras of North Lake Tahoe and the Nevada state line.

Within its borders, picturesque farm land and Gold-Rush era towns dot the oak-covered foothills. Craggy peaks, forests, tumbling rivers and clear alpine lakes create the natural beauty of the High Country. Known historically for the gold rush, Placer County is home to the beautiful and majestic Sierra mountains where world class outdoor sports such as mountain biking, skiing, and snowboarding provide rich all year round activities which is why it was ideal to hold the 1960 Winter Olympics here. The pristine, world renowned Lake Tahoe attracts hundreds of thousands of guests each year to its beautiful and clear fresh water lake.

The foothill communities of Auburn, Newcastle, Penryn, and Loomis have become a celebrated Wine and Beer trail with award winning boutique wineries and craft breweries. In the 1920's Placer County was the "Fruit Shipping Capitol of the World" shipping over 69 million tons of fruits and nuts from the county.

Educationally, Placer County has sixteen school districts that provide a high quality, relevant education to more than 70,000 students in more than 130 schools and 22 charter schools. Student success is a passion for our educators and as such, our children grow, learn, engage and graduate to become well rounded, articulate and civic focused adults. I cannot imagine another area in our state that has such a beauty of diverse geography that still provides a robust economic vitality, educated workforce, options for housing, open spaces, parks, and entertainment for all ages.

My family has made Placer County its home for more than 100 years and I know you will come to love what it offers as well.

Gayle Garbolino-Mojica
Placer County Superintendent of Schools

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LEADERSHIP PREPARATION FOR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL LEADERS EDUCATING AT-RISK STUDENTS

FONTAINE M. FEREBEE-JOHNS, ED.D. AND TED PRICE, PH.D.

"The stakes are too high – for our children, for our economy, for our country. It's time for all of us to come together – parents and students, principals and teachers, business leaders and elected officials – to end America's dropout crisis."

---B. Obama

Introduction

This article discusses secondary alternative school principals' leadership program preparation, district oriented professional development, and the impact of specialized training on leadership effectiveness. Professional development needs for school leaders who lead and manage programs educating students categorized as at-risk is also discussed.

Background

School improvement continues to be a focus in political arenas throughout most states within the United States (Gottfried, Stecher, Hoover, & Cross, 2011). Traditional and alternative school improvement is virtually impossible without the principal as the instructional leader (Price & Martin, 2011). To assist principals in alternative education schools with their role of leading the way in creating effective learning environments, it is necessary to examine the perceptions of principals regarding leadership roles and actions and the manner through which they are demonstrated daily in the principal's behavior (Price & Martin, 2011).

Alternative schools and programs are designed to address the needs of students that typically cannot be met in regular schools (Carver & Lewis, 2010). The students who attend alternative schools and programs are typically at risk of educational failure (as indicated by "poor grades, truancy, disruptive behavior, pregnancy, or similar factors associated with temporary or permanent withdrawal from school" (Carver & Lewis, 2010, p. 1). When students have not been successful in a traditional classroom setting, alternative means of acquiring educational success must be explored (Keystone, 2014). Alternative education is an essential yet often ignored and miscalculated component in public education localities throughout our nation (Price, Stoops, & Martin, 2012).

Data indicating that leadership is an acute element of school improvement has accrued (Bryk, Sebring, & Allensworth, 2010). Formative research, suggests that leadership qualities are developed over time and through professional development (PD) practices and performance evaluations (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2008). Principals, unlike teachers, are not specifically trained as general, alternative or special education principals, although principal responsibilities are to oversee general, alternative, and special education programs (Elliott & Clifford, 2014). School administrators are assigned to lead schools and therefore, have the responsibility for improving schools. Research throughout generations relating to school reform as early as the 1970's and leading up to today exhibit a constant link between effective principal leadership and school improvement and reform (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Preston, Goldring, Guthrie, & Ramsey, 2012). Successful school improvement models require "buy in" from teachers, making it imperative that principals involve teachers and staff with an opportunity to contribute and be empowered on all levels of decision-making (DuFour, 2008). This "buy in" exemplifies the fact that principals leadership effectiveness can make a difference in school improvement and student achievement even though their impact continues to fall second to the impact of teachers (Fullan, 2008). Principals of alternative schools exemplify leadership by including all stakeholders in the success of the school. However, principals are not

likely to become effective leaders, even those who know how to include all students and staff in school operations, who find themselves in alternative education programs without appropriate training and professional development (Price & Martin, 2011).

Historical Perspective

Historically, alternative education has been linked to social reform, aimed at the holistic development of youth (Miller, 2007).

Alternative Education a colorful story of social reformers and individualists, religious believers and romantics; despite their differences, however, they share an especially strong interest in young people's social, moral, emotional and intellectual development, and, more deliberately than most public school programs, they have practiced educational approaches that aim primarily to nourish these qualities (Miller, 2007, p. 1).

The educational system has increasingly used alternative schools to warehouse underperforming students considered disruptive to traditional schools (Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009). The most vulnerable students, the most disadvantaged students, and the students most in need of academic intervention can be found in alternative schools (Arcia, 2006; Brown, 2007; McNulty & Roseboro, 2009). Enrollment in alternative schools in many areas is increasing (Carver & Lewis, 2010), due in part to seemingly excessive use of zero tolerance policies (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force [APA], 2008; Martinez, 2009; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Traditionally underserved students are disproportionately suspended and expelled (APA, 2008; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008; Skiba & Rausch, 2006), which results in pushing them out of their traditional schools and into alternative programs. As students are pushed out of their traditional schools, alternative schools and programs must have leaders skilled in creating collaborative partnerships to provide effective support (Price & Doney, 2009). Collaborative partnerships are particularly important in California where formerly operated county office alternative education programs operated as a separate entity and are now in decline. Local control funding is affording districts an opportunity to attempt to serve needy students with additional funds and programs, specifically English Learners (EL), low income and Foster youth in district run programs (Martin, 2017).

Instructional leaders must possess the required governance skills in order to create or support school excellence and advance student achievement (NASSP, 2011). There is a need for university principal preparation programs to examine and review their current practices, according to Ballenger, Alford, McCune & McCune, (2009), "our conventional procedures for training and certifying school administrators are simply failing to produce a sufficiency of leaders whose vision, energy, and skill can successfully raise the educational standards of children" (p. 533). The literature indicates although policies and regulations are constantly revolving, school leaders are not being afforded the opportunity to experience on-going professional development training needed to continue to meet state and federal mandates (Keith, 2008). Traditionally, alternative school principals have not received the necessary course work and accompanying internship experiences needed to effectively lead schools with large populations of at risk youth (Price, Martin, Robertson, 2010).

Surveyed superintendents and principals believe that reforming or restructuring college and university principal leadership preparation programs would improve school leadership (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, & Foley, 2001). The research supports the contention that in order to provide effective leadership and improve student accomplishment, principals require specific, sufficient, and suitable professional development training (Lutz, 2008).

The Problem

University principal training programs in many states are mandated by state legislature to restructure leadership preparation programs with standards that have been determined to be significant to equip aspiring administrators for the role of instructional leader, yet there is no mention of the alternative school leader skill set (Miller, 2013). Moreover, there is a shortage of qualified individuals willing to assume the responsibilities of leading alternative education environments (Price et al., 2010).

Principal preparation programs have failed to plan for the next generation of school leaders and the changing

responsibilities. Given these underlying forces, there is a shortage of qualified principals (Murphy, 2005). Principals must deal with many complex issues such as: changes in organization structures, curriculum, instruction, pupil management, school community relationships, new technology, and knowledge of alternative paths for helping students reach graduation status, college and career readiness. Some of the prior issues for today's principal have expanded to the point that no one person alone can stand without some type of structured preparation in alternative education (Price et al., 2010).

The best alternative schools are those where the atmosphere is warm and both students and adults are able to develop positive relationships (Darling & Price, 2004; Washington, 2008). Virtually all aspects of alternative education need research, especially research concerning instructional leadership (Foley & Pang, 2006; Kim & Taylor, 2008). The data gathered in the Ferebee-Johns 2017 study is significant in exhibiting the perceptions of secondary alternative school leaders in the area of professional development, making district superintendents aware of secondary alternative school leadership perceptions and using these perceptions in the leader selection process and as a means of collaborating with universities offering educational leadership endorsements.

General education and special education disciplines both have specialized leadership professional development aimed at increasing educational achievement for students serviced. Despite the increase of research focusing on alternative education (Price, 2010), there is "little research however, on exactly what leaders of alternative education programs need in terms of skills, preparation, and training to be successful" (Price & Martin, 2010 p.3). To date there are very few studies that address the need for specialized leadership professional development for alternative program leaders (Foley & Pang, 2006, Hosley, 2009; Kim & Taylor, 2008).

Effective leadership preparation is essential on every level of education, "with little formalized research in the area of alternative education leadership, one way of establishing a baseline for its conceptualization is to compare the leaders of alternative education programs to their more traditional school administrative colleagues" (Stoops & Price, 2013). Teachers in traditional classrooms are normally trained to teach students that do not present behavioral or environmental challenges, thus participating in professional development designed to promote success at a pre-established rate. Due to this, educational leaders in alternative settings are challenged with designing professional development activities and training for classroom instructors that focus on academics, teaching strategies, alternative instruction methods, and discipline techniques to be successful in an alternative setting (Aron, 2006). "However, training and preparation for leaders of alternative education programs have not been afforded similar opportunities for development of skill sets required to successfully lead nontraditional programs" (Price, 2009).

Educational Leadership and Alternative Education

"Educational leadership requires heart, stomach, and skill to productively manage the multiparty conflicts that arise every day" (Heifetz, 2006). Evidence indicating that leadership is a critical element of school improvement has increased (Bryk et al., 2010). Educational leaders matter to school improvement, instructional excellence, and student learning. The collective message from progressively refined research studies is that principals have strong impact on teacher recruitment and retention (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2009). Current instructional leaders attempting to improve their schools often adopt current instructional models and apply those models to local needs (Ravitch, 2010).

According to J. M. Kauffman (2005), "Students who are most likely to drop out of high school are not necessarily failing due to low intellectual ability, other contributing factors such as behavior may outweigh academic ability" (Kauffman, 2005 as cited in Siegrist, Dawdy, Leech, Gidson, Stelzer, 2010, p. 134). "Because of the uniqueness of alternative schools, it is important that teaching professionals and administrators stay abreast of best practices applicable to the students they serve" (Menendez, 2007, p. 19). Alternative school program administrators are challenged with making their students believe that the assigned course curriculum is relevant and demanding (Cable, Plucker, & Spradlin, 2009).

"The exploration of new understandings, the synthesis of new information, and the integration of these insights throughout professional spheres can lead future educational leaders to a broader, more inclusive approach in addressing issues of student learning and equity" (Brown, 2006, p. 703). The need for specialized educational leadership is vital in environments where nontraditional high school students at risk of dropping out of high school are educated (Graczewski et al., 2009).

Educational/Instructional Support for Alternative Education Environments

In 2006, Laudan Aron compiled a list of primary attributes that are key to a promising or productive alternative education program and require further research. Aron's list included: academic instruction, instructional staff, professional development, size, facility, relationships/building a sense of community, leadership, governance, administration, oversights, and student supports. Additionally, Aron described professional development as ongoing activities that help maintain academic focus, enhance teaching strategies, and develop alternative instructional methods.

Leadership Preparation for Alternative Education Programs

"To prepare effective school leaders some new skills and likely some re-training is needed for effective leadership to reside in all schools, and this may be an especially critical component for leadership in alternative schools" (Price & Martin, 2011). Little research has been conducted on exactly what leaders of alternative education programs need in the terms of skills, preparation, and training to assist their instructional staff members with being successful in preparing nontraditional students for academic success. The challenge and goal is to prepare and train leaders who can lead in alternative schools while implementing proven alternative education principles and strategies in districts, counties, and states throughout the country that are facing their own alternative education and dropout crisis (Price et al., 2010).

Neither universities nor school districts are able to adequately prepare school leaders for alternative school leadership (Price et al., 2010). Preparing an individual to lead requires that the individual be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful. Yet, in contrast to special education, few universities offer courses directed at teachers or leaders of at-risk or delinquent youth (Price et al., 2010). Quality specialized professional development is a purposeful and intentional process that can bring about positive change and improvement to an educational environment. It is recommended that instructional leaders and staff be fully aware of professional development purpose and goals (Parker, 2007).

"Because the skills required of educators in alternative settings are not recognized as important or as priorities in the traditional higher education preparation curriculum few programs exist to meet this increasing need for trained administrators who can successfully lead in correctional education and alternative schools" (Price et al., 2010. p. 301).

As the needs of alternative/nontraditional education grow, so did the need for educational leaders with specialized skills to lead staff members in alternative settings. Krentz, Thurlow, Shyyan, and Scott (2005) conducted a study focusing on the educational program offerings of sixteen states. The study found that ten out of the sixteen states had alternative education routes for all students (including students with disabilities).

In 2008, The National Center for Educational Statistics reported in its Alternative Schools and Programs for Public School Students at Risk of Educational Failure, that in addition to regular requirements for teaching in alternative schools and programs, only 30 percent of school districts polled reported having specific requirements for teaching in alternative schools and programs, and 48 percent reported having professional development requirements. James Parker's 2007 study revealed that more work needs to completed to measure quality specialized professional development, ultimately, the use of quality leadership skills and positive attitude by instructional leaders could directly impact student achievement. The role of the principal is multidimensional and requires leadership that is linked to many scopes including but not limited to: instruction, mentorship, staff development, strategic planning, and being the motivator of change. To better prepare educators aspiring to serve as school leaders, professional development is essential and must in-

clude the skill of collaboration, along with a way to evaluate if the skills are being demonstrated in a manner that is readily understood by teaching staff (Price & Martin 2011). Training and preparation for leaders of alternative education programs require opportunities for development of skill sets required to successfully lead nontraditional programs (Price, 2009).

The Study

Ferebee-Johns' (2017) conducted a qualitative study utilizing semi-structured interviews to examine secondary alternative school principals perspectives of leadership preparation for leading alternative schools and programs. Additionally, the research outcomes were to provide school districts with avenues for increasing professional development trainings that would strengthen alternative school leaders leadership skills. Also the research findings were to stand as evidence for informing colleges and universities of what skills school leaders consider central in their quest to enhance the educational experiences of professionals assigned to lead in alternative school environments.

Research questions guide all studies. In understanding preparation programs and professional development needs as perceived by secondary alternative school principals (to prepare current and future alternative school leaders) a survey and interview questions were developed along with research questions to guide the Ferebee-Johns study. The study included a review of scholarly literature. The investigation specifically focused on the following research questions: What courses do secondary alternative school principals identify as most beneficial of the specialized training received during their principal preparation program? What previous leadership experiences do secondary alternative school principals perceive to be most beneficial for preparation to lead alternative schools? What leadership skills do secondary alternative school leaders indicate are necessary for individuals new to the position of secondary alternative school principal?

The results of this study were used to determine whether school leaders currently leading alternative secondary schools believed they were effectively prepared for alternative school leadership. The study participants also suggested what professional development was needed for more effective leadership preparation.

Secondary alternative principal perceptions of leadership and the impact of specialized training (coaching) on leadership in secondary alternative schools was the focus of the Ferebee-Johns study. A Survey of Alternative School Principals' Perceptions of Leadership Preparation was administered to secondary alternative school principals in Virginia. The principals surveyed were all current administrators in a secondary alternative school programs. After administering the survey, data were collected and analyzed. Several findings became apparent. Each finding is listed and summarized followed by implications for implementation.

First, secondary alternative education leaders university course work did not adequately prepare them for the work of leading programs for at-risk youth. Secondary alternative school principals participating in the study professed that their principal preparation programs did not prepare them to address the needs of "at-risk" students assigned to their alternative schools. Principals expressed that their programs could have better prepared them to lead alternative schools by offering courses which focused on discipline, juvenile law, court services, juvenile delinquency, and dysfunctional families. Additionally, secondary alternative school principals shared that counseling of at-risk children, building relationships, nontraditional educational environments, and restorative practices would be appropriate professional development or principal preparation course topics. This finding aligned with 2010 research conducted by Price et al. that found that neither universities nor school divisions are adequately preparing school leaders for alternative school leadership.

Secondly, secondary alternative school principals currently leading programs all had previous career experiences with students categorized as at-risk youth. The majority of study participants (67%) had previous career practices with students categorized as at-risk youth. Study participants background experiences were in general education high school settings and special education.

Although there were no constant previous career experience themes or patterns established by study participant perceptions, experiences with counseling, be-

havior intervention plans, 504 plans, behavior contracts, online academic recovery, summer school, attendance adjustments, course work reduction, special education strategies, and academically proficient non-judgmental staff members were found to be beneficial for stimulating alternative school student achievement. There were no common experiences mentioned by all participants.

This finding aligned with Elias (2013) research supporting that training and support are needed to prevent middle and high school children from being pushed out of the classroom for disciplinary infractions. Additionally, according to Price et al. (2010), alternative school being led by leaders who understand the population being educated will amass greater student achievement.

Finally, secondary alternative school principals believe it is most important for individuals new to the position of leading an alternative school to be skilled in building effective relationships with all program stakeholders, community building and providing student supports for at-risk youth. Twelve of the survey participants had comments related to necessary skills for the new alternative school principal. Ten of the participants specifically indicated relationship building, using words like "understanding" and "caring" as critical to effective school leadership.

These perceptions are supported in research conducted by Aron (2006) research supports that relationships/building a sense of community, and student supports are essential components of AE programs.

Summary of findings

The purpose of the Ferebee-Johns study was to identify secondary alternative school principals' perceptions on the impact of leadership program preparation, district-level professional development, and specialized training on alternative school leadership. The findings of the study indicated that secondary alternative school principals enter into their leadership roles not provided with adequate university course work or professional development within their school districts to lead alternative schools effectively and must learn to lead primarily by being in a leadership position. Additionally, the study found that alternative school principals are forced to rely on skills obtained through other disciplines (i.e. special education) to effectively provide support to at-risk students receiving academic services in alternative environments.

Implications

Implications for alternative school leaders and school division administrators seeking to improve leadership skills for alternative school principals who want to have a positive impact on at-risk youth in danger of dropping out of school include the following:

Principal preparation programs should consider including course and/or topics relevant to leadership in alternative education as part of their program. Principal preparation program adoption of curriculums that teach leadership candidates to use examine societal challenges prior to referring students with disruptive behaviors to law enforcement.

Secondary alternative school principals should participate in specialized professional development for alternative school leaders, both within and outside of their school divisions. Secondary alternative school principals perceive that specialized leadership training is necessary to better prepare individuals to lead alternative schools. Secondary alternative school principals are leading schools educating students that have been released from traditional secondary school environments. This factor alone supports the need for change in alternative school structure. Without specialized professional development, secondary alternative school principals are forced to lead their schools using traditional school models that have proven to be unsuccessful with students enrolled in alternative schools.

Superintendents and central office school administrators should work to provide professional development topics that address the leadership development needs of secondary alternative school principals. Secondary alternative education school principals believe that division-level alternative education professional development would assist leaders with helping students considered to be "at-risk" with transitioning back into their traditional home high schools more effectively. Including professional development topics that address the needs of secondary alternative school principals will afford school

divisions the opportunity to better prepare current and aspiring alternative school leaders for educating and leading programs for nontraditional students. This preparation could ultimately lead to higher graduation rates in school divisions. Secondary alternative school principals participating in the study shared that professional development topics such as trauma informed care, cultural diversity, and parent engagement would also be helpful in meeting the needs of at-risk students.

Summary

A review of literature reflects that there is a growing need for secondary schools to do a better job of preparing students for post-secondary education and career options (Bangser, 2008). Likewise, there is a call for at-risk students facing adverse environmental stimuli to be reconnected to educational experiences that prepare them for success in communities that are ever changing (Harris, 2005). Administrators preparing to lead traditional high schools are challenged with completing rigorous graduate preparation programs and post program assessments to be afforded the opportunity to serve as principals. Yet, as the population of school aged at-risk students increases, there are no formal preparation programs to prepare those set to lead alternative education schools (Price et al., 2010). As stated by Price et al., in 2012, "Alternative education is an integral yet fre¬quently overlooked and misunderstood component in many public school districts in the United States. Part of this situation is due to the lack of a clear, concise definition of alternative education." Nontraditional students and those at-risk of dropping out of school who choose to embrace an high school diploma in an alternative high school must be afforded the opportunity to be paired with instructional leaders and staff members who have received educational preparation and professional development structured to meet their needs.

This article discussed secondary alternative school principals' leadership program preparation, district oriented professional development, and the impact of specialized training on leadership. Professional development needs for effective management of programs educating students categorized as at-risk of dropping out of school was examined. Findings, implications and conclusions of a study designed to assess principal's perceptions of alternative schools leadership training and preparation was presented. In order for students to achieve academic success, it is vital that they receive proper nurturing from leaders that have been adequately prepared to accomplish the task (Samuels, 2008).

"New leaders are trained and become well versed in traditional school improvement and reform strategies, some through university programs and some in local district prepara tion programs. Training leaders who understand the unique characteristics and needs of at-risk and alternative learners can help en sure achievement and success for staff and stu dents in alternative schools, too" (Price, 2009).

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TEACHER AGENCY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING CAPACITY AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

GREG LUDWA
MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"Targeted and intensive professional development allows teachers to become proficient by bringing new, innovative, and creative ways of teaching and learning to the educator"

-Greg Ludwa

Teachers reflect on their teaching practice to support student learning. They establish professional goals and engage in continuous and purposeful professional growth and development. They collaborate with colleagues and engage in the broader professional community to support teacher and student learning. Teachers learn about and work with families to support student learning. They engage local communities in support of the instructional program. They manage professional responsibilities to maintain motivation and commitment to all students. Teachers demonstrate professional responsibility, integrity, and ethical conduct. (CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2009).

In an effective professional learning system, school leaders learn from experts, mentors, and their peers about how to become true instructional leaders. They work with staff members to create the culture, structures, and dispositions for continuous professional learning and create pressure and support to help teachers continuously improve by better understanding students' learning needs, making data-driven decisions regarding content and pedagogy, and assessing students' learning within a framework of high expectations. (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

Having worked with and mentored service learning students, as well as, interns from CSU Monterey Bay and UC Santa Cruz in my court/community school classrooms over the past twelve years, I have often told them that a teacher needs to commit to two things in order to have successful career in teaching. First, one must commit to make teaching his or her career. Personal experience and research show that a large percentage of teachers quit the profession within the first three years of teaching (Hargreaves & Fullan, p. 68, 2012; Marzano, 2010). "The main problem is an exodus of new teachers from the profession, with more than 30% leaving within five years. This, too, chiefly hurts low-income schools, which suffer from turnover rates as much as 50% higher than affluent schools." (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 516, as cited by Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). "The data suggest that after just five years, between 40 and 50 percent of all beginning teachers have left the profession. Why do beginning teachers leave at such high rates?" (Ingersoll & Smith, p. 31, 2003). Research, on the other hand, shows that if a teacher successfully teaches for five years, he or she will stay in the profession for life (Marzano, 2010).

Second, in order to have a successful career in the teaching profession, teachers must commit to becoming lifelong learners. As teachers, we commit to the path of learning. This path includes learning from fellow teachers, from our students, from mentors, through continuing education, and through professional development. Marzano in 2010 quoted Gladwell (2008) that to be proficient in any difficult profession, one must intensely practice it a minimum of ten thousand hours or, approximately, ten years. Quick calculations suggest that when a teacher has practiced for eight years, 180 days * 7.0 hours per day * 8 years, he or she has invested the ten thousand hours of intensive practice perfecting the craft, 10,080 hours to be exact. Hargreaves and Fullan, furthermore, state that the most productive and effective years for a teacher are years eight through twenty-three (Hargreaves et al, pp. 64-74, 2012). Consequently, teachers only become proficient if they stay and

grow in the profession. Targeted and intensive professional development allows teachers to become proficient by bringing new, innovative, and creative ways of teaching and learning to the educator. However, the question remains, "What type of teacher professional development provides the most bang for the buck?"

Noni Reis (2017), a professor in Educational Leadership at San Jose State University divides teacher professional development into two categories. Category I is the one-off, a professional development "done, made, or happening only once, not as part of a regular sequence" (One-off, 2017). Reis suggests that more than 80% of teacher professional development is category I. Furthermore, she states that this type of professional development has little power to change or improve teacher practice (Reis, 2017). The key here is that category I professional development is "not part of a regular sequence" (One-off, 2017).

Quality category II professional development, however, integrally connects two important concepts: retaining experienced, qualified teachers and developing as a professional educator. Reis (2017) characterizes category II professional development as sequential. It consists of multiple opportunities for practice, reflection, rethinking, revision, and personal development. One key concept for developing successful, purposeful professional development is teacher agency, "to construct teachers explicitly as agents of change" (Priestley, Biestra, & Robinson, p. 2, 2012). Priestley continues, "This [re]turn to teacher agency not only gives explicit permission to teachers to exert high[er] degrees of professional agency within the contexts in which they work, but actually sees agency as an important dimension of teachers' professionalism (Priestley, et al., p. 2, 2012).

Traditionally, educational administration pushes teachers towards category I professional development. Teachers must have workshops that the administrators choose and often, administration mandates attendance: be on time, no computers, pay attention, and participate, because bringing in professionals costs the department a lot of money. Category I professional development often wastes teachers' valuable time, and it is not available when teachers need it. However, it allows administrators to demonstrate to the superintendent and the board that the administration is working to improve the teaching and learning in the classroom. The one-off professional development, though, does not achieve the agreed upon purpose, to improve practice and increase teaching and learning in the classroom. "Let's face it: Professional development, as we have known it for years now, has yielded little or no positive effects on student learning" (Diaz-Maggioli, p. 1, 2004). Diaz-Maggioli (2004) continues that traditional (category I) professional development is "constricted by the following stumbling blocks:

1. Top-down decision making….
2. The idea that teachers need to be 'fixed. …'
3. Lack of ownership of the professional develop ment process and its results….
4. The technocratic nature of professional develop ment content….

5. Universal application of classroom practices re gardless of subject, student age, or level of cogni tive development….
6. Lack of variety in the delivery modes of profes sional development….
7. Inaccessibility of professional development op portunities….
8. Little or no support in transferring professional development ideas to the classroom….
9. Standardized approaches to professional devel opment that disregard the varied needs and expe riences of teachers….
10. Lack of systematic evaluation of professional de velopment….
11. Little or no acknowledgment of the learning char acteristics of teachers among professional devel opment planners….” (Diaz-Maggioli, p. 1, 2004)

Teacher agency, on the other hand, empowers teachers through Category II professional development. “Agency,… is not something that people can have; it is something that people do.” (Priestley et al, p.3.2012). Priestley continues, “agency should be understood as a configuration of influences from the past, orientations towards the future, and engagement with the present” (ibid. p.3). This concept of agency brings us full circle to the idea of category II professional development, a professional development plan. Category II is professional development that is based in experience, looks towards the future for development, and engages in the present through the needs of the educator and the students. The only way that professional development can transcend these time constraints is if the teacher has created, directed, developed, and delivered both the plan and the professional development. Inherent in category II professional development is the ability to exact change, develop teacher practice, and improve teaching and learning.

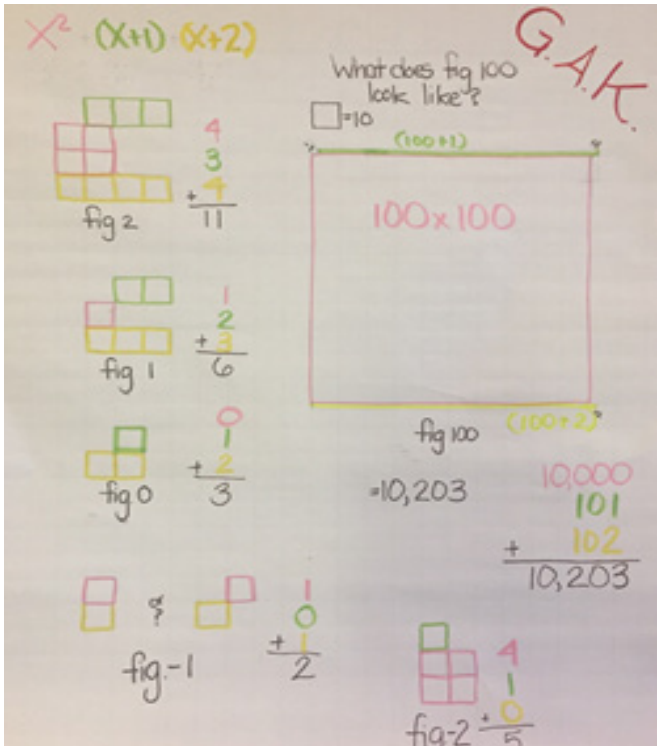
Formal learning for teachers does not end with the degree or credential. These are only the portals towards a life of engaged learning for the educator. As professional educators we must engage in a conversation with our communities, our schools, our institutions of higher education, and our colleagues to further our knowledge and understanding of both our profession and our content. Only through this process of life-long and ongoing learning are we able “to maintain motivation and commitment to all students.” (CSTP 6, CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2009).

While content area professional development is very important, as professional educators, we need to enrich our own body of knowledge in our content and practice areas. For the alternative education teachers and those who work with at-risk students, I posit that three areas of professional development, targeted to our specific populations, most benefit the teachers’ work as an educator and a life-long learner. These are:

- Professional development in the content areas,
- Technology and curriculum-technology integration,
- Classroom management and teaching practice.

This type of professional development proposal also supports the four domains of effective Common Core instruction: the students, the content, the pedagogy, and the SBAC claims. First, students must remain the focus of the teacher’s decisions on content; only the teacher knows the student, best. Second, the delivery of the content depends on the teacher continually improving pedagogy, and, finally, we, as teachers, need to base our authentic assessments on the three previous domains. The domains are interconnected and interwoven; none exists without the others. Each of the above professional development areas serves to deepen knowledge in the content area and to improve teaching practice. Such integrated professional development helps teachers to deliver lessons more equitably and to present knowledge more deeply to students regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or gender. The goal, then, of professional development is to improve practice so that each and every student receives the best possible education that teachers can deliver.

In order to provide professional development opportunities that encourage a growth mindset, administration needs to trust and empower teachers (Gerstein, 2013). The teacher needs to be in charge of his or her professional development.



Diaz-Maggioli (2004) states emphatically, "Effective professional development should be understood as a job-embedded commitment that teachers make in order to further the purposes of the profession while addressing their own particular needs" (p.2). By giving teachers agency through teacher centered, teacher developed, and teacher delivered professional development, schools can retain qualified, highly professional educators through the long-haul.

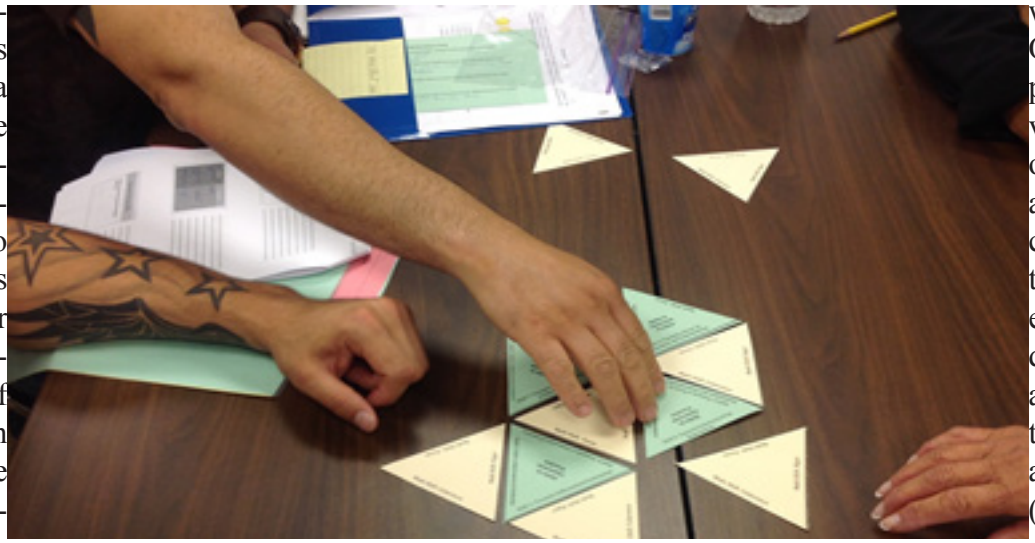
The goal, then, of administration must be to attract committed, qualified teachers and retain them through giving and strengthening agency. A number of opportunities exist to assist administration in building an empowering professional development program that achieves these goals. First, as mentioned above, high attrition rates for teachers in years one through five necessitate the need for mentoring and coaching of new teachers (Hargreaves et al, 2012; Marzano, 2010, Ingersoll, 2001, Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003, Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). However, these mentors need to be respected and experienced fellow teachers, who new teachers recognize as being knowledgeable and accessible. Additionally, these mentor teachers should not be only in the content areas. New teachers need mentors in more than just content; they need experienced counselors, supporters, advisors, confidantes, peer tutors, and problem-solvers, too. As stated above, data demonstrates that teachers in years eight through twenty-three are the most effective in the classrooms (Hargreaves et al, 2012). However, districts often have experienced teachers with 25 or more years experience. They should be targeted as mentors, coaches, and curriculum leads. Authentic experience matters. Unfortunately, administrators frequently make bad decisions by bringing in specialists from district departments, for example, Educator Services or Selpa, or outside professionals, who know nothing of and have no experience in alternative education schools. Funding for the mentor teacher coaches exists through the LCAP, LCFF, Title I, Educator Effectiveness Grants, PAR, and other grants to provide for such new teacher and struggling teacher support.

Second, a number of collaborative groups have formed in California and the country to support teachers in the classroom and to assist with the implementation of the Common Core and SBAC. For example, the Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC) is a grant-funded collaboration between the CA Teachers' Association, the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), and the National Board Resource Center at Stanford (NBRCS). The ILC is currently in its third year of funding, and according to data compiled by the ILC and SCOPE, ILC teachers and presenters have directly worked with, approximately, 48,000 teachers in California through June, 2016 (Gilbert, 2016). The ILC is an example of teachers teaching teachers. The ILC administration chooses members through an application process, and since nearly all ILC members are teachers in the classroom, mentor teachers, or coaches, they represent schools and districts throughout California. Additionally, the ILC is grant funded, and the cost of bringing in ILC presenters to the school or district is minimal.

Educational organizations, like Student Achievement Partners, have invited many ILC members and other partners to be Core Advocates, specialists in Common Core content. These teachers and education professionals work with teachers to build and deliver Common Core professional development for the schools and districts

throughout the state and nation. This, again, is another way teachers can build agency and take charge of their own professional development, working with other professional teachers.

Finally, Richard DuFour gave form to a way to fundamentally change how teachers can deliver professional development. He demonstrated that experienced teachers can mentor staff, and teachers will help each other by sharing ideas and tools (DuFour, 2009 and 2010). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can be a valuable resource for building teacher agency. However, in order to be effective, PLCs need to be teacher directed and teacher run. The goal of the administrator in a PLC is to provide material and organizational support, scheduling, and encouragement to the PLC leaders. The most ineffective PLCs are when administrators set the agenda, direct the discussions, and establish the goals.



For example, the Math PLC in Alternative Education has fundamentally changed the way that the Math teachers, as a department, teach Math. The PLC has also given staff an organized voice that allows teachers to support, coach, and mentor each other. Through the PLC teachers have found is that each member, no matter how new to teaching Math, has become a valued repository of resources and knowledge. Teachers, who participated in the PLC, have developed a cohesive and comprehensive curriculum and have learned to help solve each other's problems through his or her own knowledge and experience.

Recruiting and retaining professional teachers depends on giving agency to teachers and empowering them to develop as professional educators. Developing as a professional educator is a life-long journey. A teacher will never be the best at what he or she does; good teachers are always on the journey, striving to improve, to be the best. Teachers continue to learn and practice his or her techniques on a daily basis throughout this journey. In order to develop as a professional educator, teachers need to make the commitment to continue the journey to the end and need to make a commitment as a life-long learner. A commitment to an ongoing professional development plan is essential for balancing the daily stress of teaching with enrichment. Quality, directed professional development allows one to step back and to view the classroom, objectively. It enriches the teacher by demonstrating alternative ways to view, present, and teach content (Kanold, 2014). It allows one to see how minor changes in routine can positively affect the relationships in the classroom.

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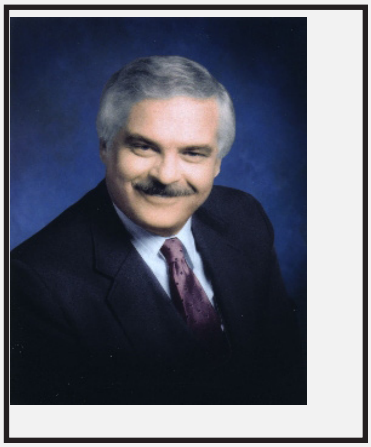
John Peshkoff Awards



John Peshkoff (1935-2006) was one of the founding fathers of JCCASAC (then known as Juvenile Court School Administrators of California or JCSAC). John served as the JCCASAC president in 1977-78 and again in 1990-91. He advocated for legislation and practices which support quality educational services for students in alternative education programs. He also served as a mentor, friend, and cheerleader to his peers and colleagues in the field.

The John Peshkoff Award is presented annually for memorable vision, service, leadership and commitment to JCCASAC students and programs.

Congratulations to the 2017 Co-Recipient

MICHAEL C. WATKINS
Santa Cruz County Office of Education

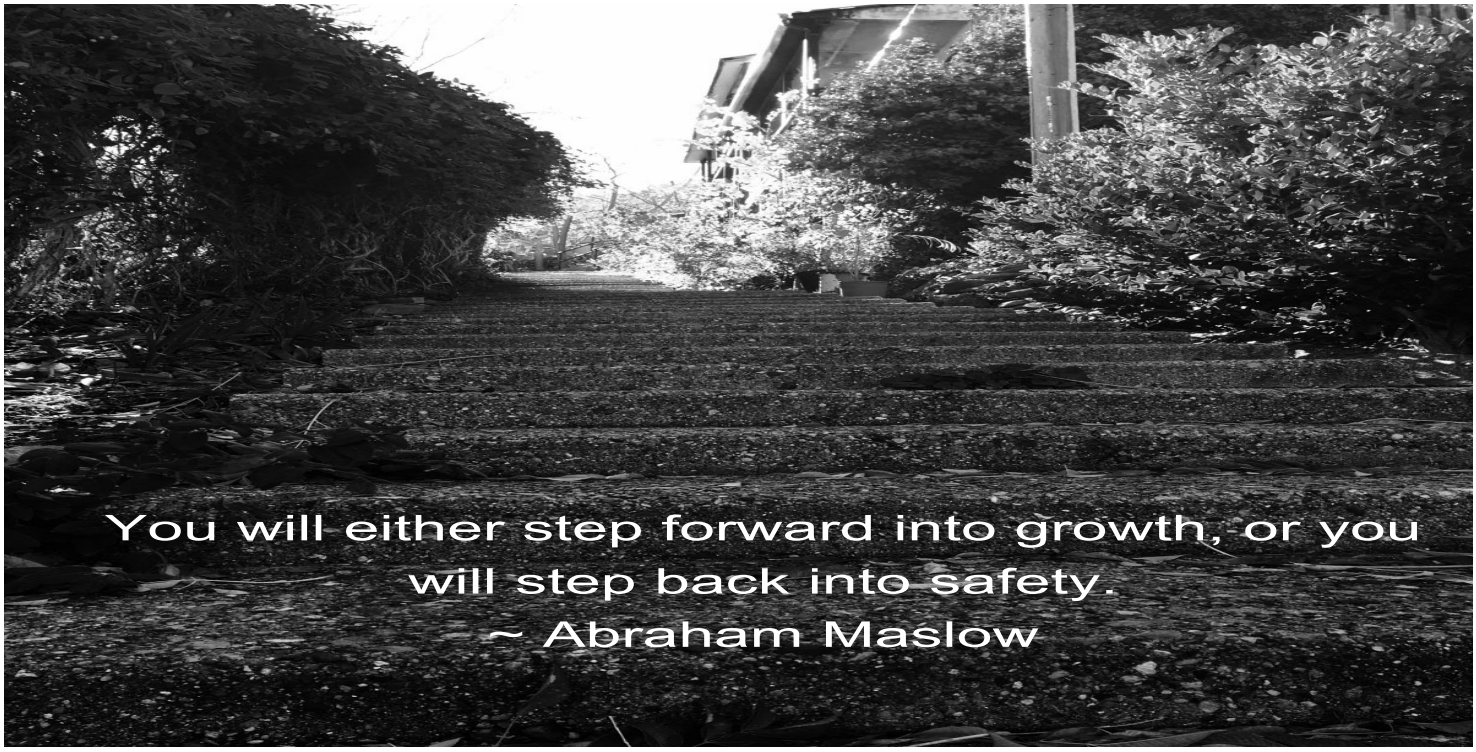
In reviewing the writings of previous Peshkoff Award honorees I saw that somewere written in the first person and some in the third, I'm opting for the former. First of all let me begin by saying that JCCASAC has played a significant role in shaping my educational career, so much so, that I think it would be fair for me to say, that in all probability, I would not have become a county superintendentf it were not for the mentoring, coaching and guidance that I received from the previous JCCASAC leaders. I looked at the list of the Peshkoff award winners and I am proud to say that I knew each and every one of them personally,even John Peshkoff himself, and I only have fond memories of their passion and heart for this work, and the path that they forged for me and you. I owe a debt of gratitude to Bob Michels, Chuck Lee, Bill Burns and Ken Taylor and others for their unwavering support when I served as JCCASAC President. However, one needs to look no further than

the most recent LAO's report on county alternative education programs to realize that we still have a great deal of work to do in educating our elected leaders, and the public, on the important role that court, communityand alternative schools play in educating our most vulnerable students in the State of California.

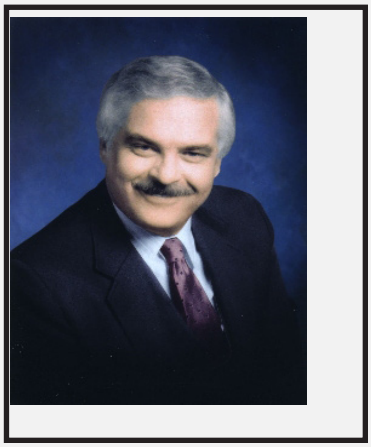
I began my teaching career with Oakland Public Schools as a Teacher Corps intern (a federalprogram that subsidized low income college graduate on their path to becoming a credentialedteacher). From there I taught for the Alameda County Office of Education in a Children's Shelterfor neglected and abused children-a most difficult job-for even though I had earned a B.A. inPsychology and a teaching credential nothing, and no one, had prepared me to deal with thetrauma that had been inflicted upon those young students. I am so grateful for how far we havecome in our craft in handling and educating these children today. The next five years were spentteaching in Ranch Camps and Juvenile Hall with the Alameda County Office of Education.

In 1990 with a daughter 3 months old and a son 3 years of age my wife and I decided to take a chance and move to Santa Cruz. I began my career in Santa Cruz as a Learning Handicapped Program Specialist. I held that position for a year before being promoted to Director of Special Education with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education. After nine years in that position I was asked by the Superintendent to return to my roots—Court and Community Schools-- and of course I obliged for that is surely a calling that runs in our blood. After establishing multiple alternative schools, and becoming one of the first counties in the State to have these programs WASC accredited, it was time to move on. So in 2005 I decided to run for the position of Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools and in 2006 I was sworn in as the first African American to be elected to the position of County Superintendent of Schools in California. A position I still hold today.

Along this journey I have been extremely fortunate for I have held the positions of President of CCSESA, President-Elect of the California Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators (CAAASA) and I currently sit on the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) after being appointed by the California State Assembly in 2015. I believe that every child deserves a shot at a great education irrespective of the cards that they have been dealt in life. I try to instill that philosophy in teachers and administrators every day. Actually there is no greater feeling than to run into a former graduate who may have struggled in high school and is now quite successful. When that happens you know that you have made a difference and made the world a better place.



John Peshkoff Awards



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The John Peshkoff Award is presented annually for memorable vision, service, leadership and commitment to JCCASAC students and programs.

Congratulations to the 2017 Co-Recipient

SEAN MORRILL
San Diego County Office of Education

My professional career began in 1992 as a teacher at the Homeless Outreach School in downtown San Diego. This program was run under the auspices of the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) and was the precursor to our Monarch School, which now serves over two hundred fifty students daily. It was during that first year of teaching that I began to understand the power of the human spirit and the incredible resilience of our students. I also learned of the importance of maintaining high expectations in the face of challenging experiences.

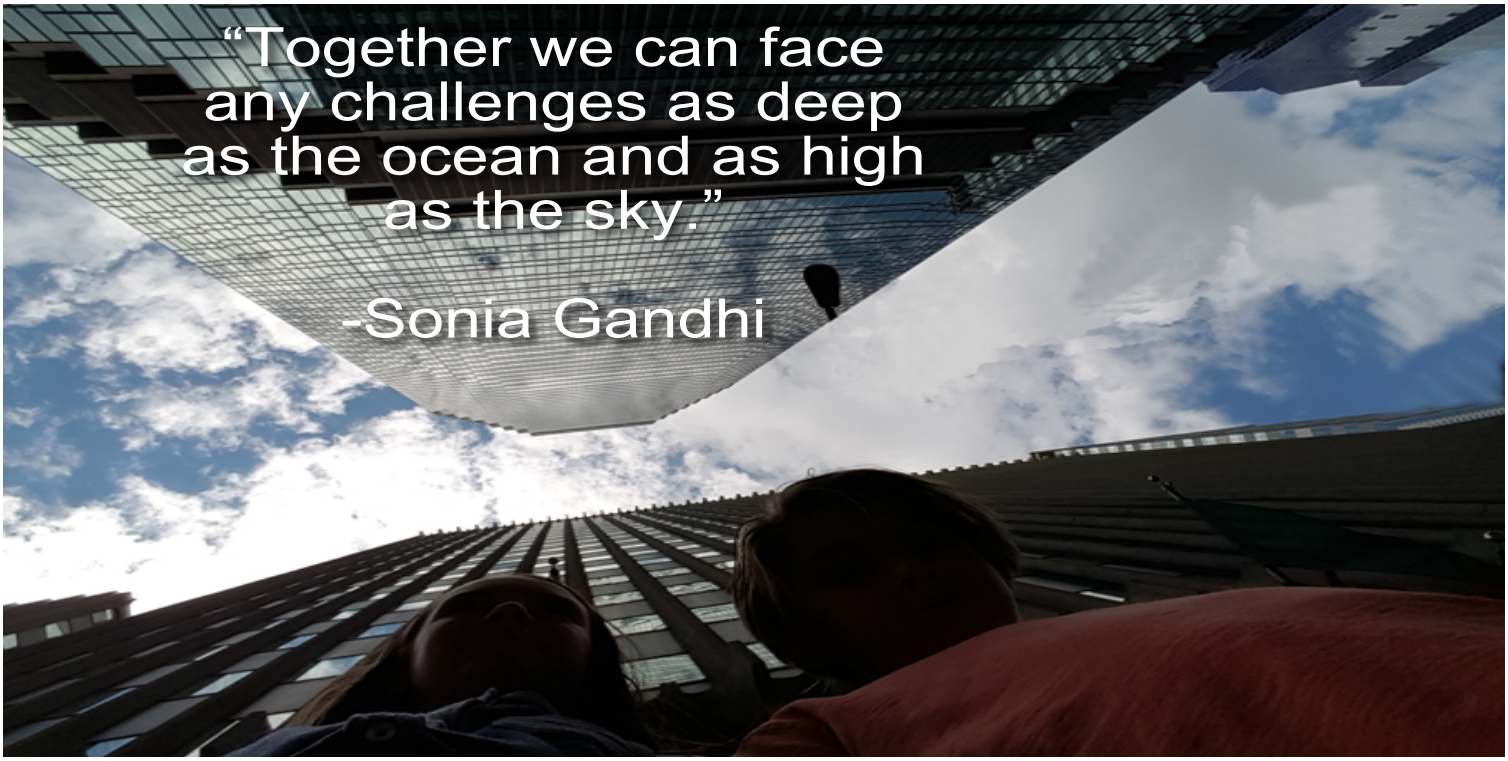
After teaching in a number of SDCOE schools I became the principal of twelve community schools in North San Diego County in 2002. I've been a Senior Director of our Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS, now know as Momentum Learning) since 2006, with a wide variety of responsibilities. I've been fortunate to learn from many

instructional leaders over the years. The one common thread I see in our teachers, support staff, and administrators is that everyone is committed to ensuring our students have equitable access to learning opportunities to ensure success.

In preparation for this JCCASAC Conference I was struck by how far we've come since 1992. Due in large part to the innovation and leadership of the JCCASAC Board and membership, educators have access to a broad base of support. As an active member of the JCCASAC Board I've been afforded the opportunity to visit many schools and programs throughout the state. JCCASAC truly is a collegial network of educators committed to researching and sharing best practices.

When I received word I was selected as a John Peshkoff Award recipient by the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California, I was honored and deeply humbled. It remains my personal and professional privilege to serve marginalized students, families, and our educational community.

Onward in service and leadership,



CCSESA

SPSSC
Student Programs and Services Steering Committee
Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators of California (JCCASAC)

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year

JCCASAC board members are excited to announce the fifth annual JCCASAC Teacher of the Year award recipinet and nominees. County operated school administrators from across California were encouraged to nominate one of their outstanding court, community or alternative school teachers for this extraordinary recognition. JCCASAC seeks to celebrate excellence and honor teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and inspire students of all backgrounds and learning abilities while carrying out the mission and vision of JCCASAC. These teachers are passionate, collaborative professionals dedicated to empowering students to become competent, creative thinking and caring adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are academically prepared for an ever changing and global economy

Congratulations to Ron Kunnen, Stanislaus County Office of Education

Mr. Ron Kunnen has worked in the field of education for the past 8 years. He currently works for the Stanislaus County Office of Education as a construction trades teacher at the Stanislaus Military Academy. Ron, 'Coach K', Kunnen truly embodies the character, heart and commitment the alternative education world must possess for student success. Quiet, humble, passionate, invested are just a few words used by students and colleagues when describing him. Ron uses his construction trades classes as a vehicle to ensure that each student leaves class a better person than when they entered. His never-ending compassion and empathetic attitude is testimony to his sincere belief that all of his student can learn. He has a gift for creating meaningful work experience in a constantly changing environment. Coach K takes a group of students to the local Habitat for Humanity worksite every Friday and Saturday to participate in building homes for community members who need good housing. His classes have built thirty four free "Little Libraries" for the community. They have also built tables and benches for the SCOE Outdoor Education program, Foothill Horizons which serves over 6500 sixth graders annually. He and his students have dedicated further time outside of class to maintain flower boxes around the campus, planting, weeding and installing drip irrigation! He is a consistent figure for youth who may not always find support where they should. He has a genuine desire to help inspire and direct youth to bettering themselves. Coach K holds high expectations of his students while encouraging and supporting them along their journey. He is such a positive role model for anybody who is lucky enough to work with or around him. His colleagues enjoy the same support and compassion, his mentoring style is evident and he is never afraid to jump in and roll up his sleeves to work to support student success, on site and county wide. The youth of today could really benefit from more people like Ron. In the words of one of his students, "I learned many valuable life lessons with Mr. Kunnen, he taught us to treat ourselves with the respect we deserved."

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to all of our Teacher of the Year nominees.

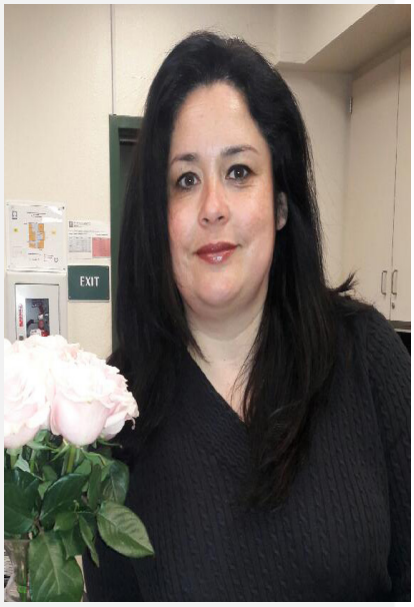
Suzanne Bunker-Kishimoto-Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Suzanne Bunker-Kishimoto has worked in public education at the middle school, high school and adult levels for 21 years, with the last 10 years focused on alternative education in court and community schools. Suzanne has a strong commitment to lifelong learning and is a dedicated competent educator that is committed to teaching and sharing in creative and innovative ways. She currently serves in an administrative capacity as Lead Teacher of the Kelly F. Blanton Student Education Center and has done so for the past few years. She has fulfilled innumerable special leadership projects for the greater Alternative Education department in Kern County including the coordination of Americorps mentors on campus, PBIS Leadership Team training, VPSS Science trainer for the district, C3 observations, and many others. She is a consummate professional with a genuine love for the youth she serves. Suzanne's commitment to the youth in our community is not limited to the classroom. She has volunteered to several community based organizations including leadership positions for both the Girl Scouts of America and the Boy Scouts of America. In the words of one of her students "Mrs. Kishimoto is an outstanding teacher; she is caring, sweet, and really loves what she does."

Dr. Caroline Fernandez-Los Angeles County Office of Education

Dr. Caroline Fernandez has worked in the field of education for the past 26 years. She currently works for the Los Angeles County Office of Education as a high school teacher in a self-contained classroom for expelled and probationary students. Dr. Fernandez demonstrates a professional attitude at all times, is a team player and is admired by staff and students. Her commitment to provide a positive experience for students is seen through her classroom management skills, pedagogy and detailed lesson plans that are differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, she goes the extra mile by engaging family and community members to improve the lives of students in any way possible. Dr. Fernandez is known as a woman of integrity and grace. In the words of a former student, "She engages students and works hard to ensure that they are receiving the best education possible. In addition, Dr. Fernandez works closely with community partners and agencies to provide her students an abundance of resources including school supplies, clothes, baby furniture, diapers, and books. Her dedication to her students in second to none."

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees



Maria Haro-Riverside County Office of Education

Ms. Maria Haro has worked in the field of education for the past 15 years. She currently works for the Riverside County Office of Education as a teacher for their alternative education program. Maria's passion is working with kids she feels everyone has given up on. She connects with her students and builds rapport with them every day. As such, she has been a key player in the implementation process of AVID at Betty Gibbel Regional Learning Center. Her ability to see the maximum potential in every student motivates her to think outside of the box. She is a risk taker and isn't afraid to try innovative ways of presenting the curriculum. One such example, bringing labs and science experiments into the classroom to support project based learning. Maria's passion is contagious and everyone that comes into contact with her while she is teaching wants to see what will happen next. In the words of one of her students, "She pushed me and pushed me even though I was down. She pushed me and I passed my classes. She helped me see that I can accomplish so many things. She pushes her students to work above and beyond."

Estela Hernandez-Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Estela Hernandez has worked as an educator for the past 21 years. She currently works for the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) as a teacher at the Alice Worsley Court School program located within the Juvenile Justice Campus. Estela's teaching career began at FCSS at the former Craycroft Center where she served elementary-aged students, kindergarten to grade six in a self-contained classroom. What stood out most about Estela during classroom visits was the caring and safe environment that she provided for her students who were temporarily placed at the on-site shelter for families in crisis. Regardless of circumstances, it was amazing to see Estela and her young students reading in literature circles and working at computer stations. Currently Estela works at the Alice Worsley School as an English and English Language Development Teacher where she continues to develop as an instructional leader. She was one of the first teachers to learn and incorporate a new interactive board and enhance teaching and learning in her classroom. In the words of one her students, "At times she might call me 'mi ijo' as we enter our classroom-I found out this means son or loving son."

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

Dinah Ismail-Orange County Department of Education

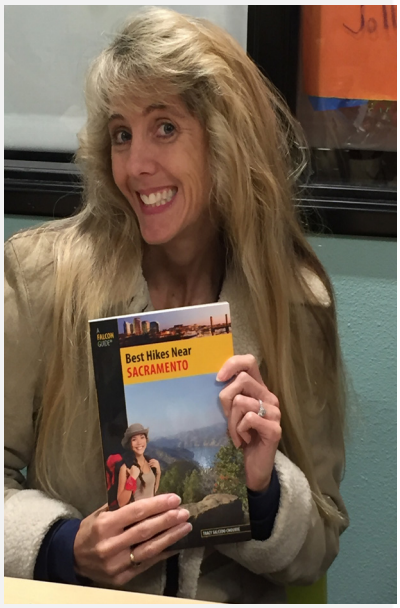
Ms. Dinah Ismail has worked in the field of education for the past 14 years. She currently works for the Orange County Department of Education as a teacher in the Alternative, Community, and Correctional Education Schools and Services (ACCESS). In her current role, Dinah serves as a special education teacher who collaborates with students to develop transition plans to identify current and future goals. Dinah supports students and staff to enable students to access rigorous content necessary for life success. Because of her, teachers are encouraged and supported as they strive to implement strategies to ensure all students can participate meaningfully in the educational program. Dinah is in a constant state of self-improvement and embodies the definition of a 'lifelong learner'. As a regular classroom teacher, she used her knowledge of a variety of curricula and instructional strategies to ensure course content was relevant and captured student interest. In the words of one of her students, "My first impression was that she was very friendly with such an outgoing spirit, it was contagious. We conversed and I knew right away she would be a great teacher and role model."

Scott McKee-Merced County Office of Education

Mr. Scott McKee has worked in education for the past 22.5 years. He has worked for the Merced County Office of Education for the past 12.5 years as court school teacher and school leader. Scott creates a safe classroom environment built on mutual respect. He is a positive role model, encouraging students and staff. He has a caring attitude that others respond well to and is always there to help. To all who observed, it was apparent, Ron McKee was called to teach at-risk youth. It was inspirational to feel the creative energy from the students in his classroom. One program he has been involved in from inception is an outside educational experience program in Yosemite National Park called Sacred Rok. This program has now been named the Bear Creek Academy Club, Mission I'mPossible which through creative projects allows kids to express their innermost feelings. Some of the creative tasks involve poetry, art projects, quotes, writing and recording music. In the words of one his students, "Mr. McKee is probably the only teacher I've ever had that makes me feel like he actually cares. He has his students involved in extracurricular activities such as; Sacred Rok, organized team sports, and Mission I'mPossible."

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

Alana Meister-Placer County Office of Education



Mrs. Alana Meister has worked in the field of education for the past 17 years. She has worked in her current position for Placer County Office of Education for the past 3 years. Alana creates an environment not only in her classroom, but the school as a whole of acceptance, positivity and support. Her classroom is open to any and all students for support with academics or just a conversation. She recognizes greatness in her students and their work. She displays their work and encourages them to share their learning with other students and staff. She engages her students in rigorous discussion and debate. Alana demonstrates genuine caring for students' academic and emotional development. She is able to meet the needs of 15-25 students over the course of four different classes. She has the ability to scaffold work for her students showing difficulty understanding the subject matter. She volunteers to remain in her classroom at lunch and breaks in order to help students who are behind. In the words of one of her students, "Mrs. Meister opens up her class to any student who needs it at breaks and lunches. She genuinely cares about us and treats us as if we were family."

Mr. Brandon Proctor-Santa Cruz County Office of Education

Mr. Proctor has worked in the field of education for the past 14 years. He has worked for the Santa Cruz County Office of Education for the past 10 years. Brandon's classroom is a truly special place. His calm demeanor, and his ability to relate to a wide range of students is perhaps his greatest strength. He has been able to foster an environment of respect in which students are drawn to emulate his calm, respectful, and accepting persona. Brandon provides many modes for students to work in. He is especially creative and talented in incorporating technology into the classroom. After teaching the fundamentals of Economics, Brandon has his students build virtual stock portfolios. They come in every day, excited to go online and check the NASDAQ and the DOW to see how their investments are doing. Brandon has also coached our intermural sports league and is always committed to providing innovative programs around physical education for his students. In the words of one of his students, "My teacher Brandon inspires and helps us by letting us be who we are, taking an interest in who we are as individuals and giving us assignments that allow us to study what appeals to us, and creating a fun classroom environment where we get to try out new things and everyone can be successful."

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

Mr. Rhuepell Stroud-Contra Costa County Office of Education

Mr. Rhuepell Stroud has worked in the field of education for 38.5 years. He has worked for the Contra Costa County Office of Education for the past 13.5 years. Mr. Stroud has worn many hats in the last 13 + years. He has been a teacher on the girls unit, the serious offenders unit, the in-custody treatment program, the residential girl's treatment center and on the general population classrooms. In every classroom where he has worked, he constantly creates a positive learning environment where students feel supported and respected and where they know they are able to achieve the high expectations Mr. Stroud has set for them. It is always a pleasure to walk in to Mr. Stroud's classroom. He holds his students to a high standard of behavior, but he makes it clear that this standard is set at this level because it is what the real world demands of them. He is a role model not only for the students, but to his colleagues and administrators alike. In the words of one of his students, "My English teacher, Mr. Stroud is my reason I decided to further my education. He not only helped me to graduation, but he treats me like one of his regular students. He helped me in a way no other teacher did."

Ms. Annie Ziesmer-San Joaquin County Office of Education

Ms. Annie Ziesmer has worked in the field of education for 9 years. She has worked for the San Joaquin County Office of Education for the past 5 years. Annie is known as an extremely compassionate and caring teacher, who is well organized, brings her A game every day and her students love her. Annie created a student leadership program with the City of Manteca where her students participate in local government activities including Fire, Police, Waste Management, Senior Care, and Chamber of Commerce. Students get hands on career experience as they visit the different departments and learn how they support the local community. Annie is able to engage her community school students in rigorous and engaging lessons in a wide range of curriculum areas. Whether teaching an Algebra lesson or a lesson in United States Government, Annie captures and holds her students attention. This engagement in learning leads to students who have traditionally struggled in school feeling success that may not have been felt before in their education. In the words of one of her students, "I could not think of anything that I would change about my teacher, she is the most supportive person in my life at this point in time and she even helps me with personal matters which are far from her responsibility."

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

We are looking forward to begining the process for our Seventh Annual Teacher of the Year Award for 2018. Details and the nomination forms will be sent out in early 2018. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to recognize the outstanding work your teachers do on a daily basis.

Thank you,
JCCASAC Board

CCSESA

SPSSC
Student Programs and Services Steering Committee
Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators of California (JCCASAC)

TEACHER PERSPECTIVES REGARDING SWPBIS: AN ANALYSIS OF SHARED VISION

BY
CAMERON GUINN, KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

"When students understand behavior expectations and are engaged in instruction, a more effective learning environment is created"

-Sugai & Horner, 2009

California schools are rethinking their approach to behavior modification due to an abundance of suspensions and expulsions. The most prevalent behavior modification methodology being used is known as School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS). As of 2014 over 20,000 U.S. schools reported using the SWPBIS model (Simonsen & Sugai, 2014). Like any new initiative, getting all staff members to maintain a shared vision can often be difficult. Without a strong staff commitment SWPBIS cannot make a positive impact on student behavior as is intended (Lampron et al., 2013). In an effort to analyze the relationship between teacher perspectives and fidelity of SWPBIS implementation, this research gathered data directly from Alternative Education staff members in the midst of the SWPBIS implementation process, gauging their thoughts and feelings related to the new initiative.

Research Questions

Two overarching research questions were developed to determine the level of staff buy-in and support of the SWPBIS system:

Question 1: How do staff members feel about school wide PBIS implementation?

Question 2: How have staff members changed their previous practices to align with Positive Behavior strategies?

Significance

This paper offers some insight into staff acceptance of the new SWPBIS initiative within Alternative Education setting. Sharing a long-term vision with all stakeholders, specifically teaching staff, for systemic change in the public school system is absolutely essential (Mathur & Nelson, 2013). A positive teacher reflection of SWPBIS may suggest deeper acceptance and potential progress toward implementation. However, a negative teacher outlook regarding SWPBIS may suggest a need to revisit fundamental aspects of implementation and would suggest an opportunity for growth. The efficient implementation of SWPBIS in Alternative Education settings is, in many ways, more of an imperative than in general education settings. Students in Alternative Education schools often have little reaction to punitive measures, as they have become desensitized to negative reinforcement (Simonsen & Sugai, 2014). With no other viable option, staff often escalate poor situations, up to and including abuse and unethical treatment (Simonsen & Sugai, 2014).

Data Collection

The Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) currently provides a quantitative look at SWPBIS implementation through the use of a prescribed scale scoring system (Algozzine et al., 2014). This study takes a qualitative approach, using the grounded theory as a basis for collection and analysis, data for this project were collected through the use of field notes and audio-recorded semi structured interviews (Schwandt, 2015).

Literature Review

School-Wide PBIS

School-Wide PBIS (SWPBIS) as a

system, lends itself to a constructivist approach, capturing students' attention by making learning more engaging and meaningful (Ersozlu & Cayci, 2016). When students understand behavior expectations and are engaged in instruction, a more effective learning environment is created (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Within this newly created positive environment, the need to remove students from class and the number of Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) dramatically decreases, even for students from a lower socioeconomic status (Freeman et at., 2016). The positive effects of building relationships, teaching expectations, and acknowledging expectations with general education students has been well documented, but these effects have far-reaching implications for Alternative Schools as well (Lampron et al., 2013; George et al., 2013).

PBIS in Alternative Settings

Alternative Education settings have a history of punitive structures of coercion and control (Lampron et al., 2013). Although pervasive, these punitive tactics have done little to lower recidivism rates for juvenile delinquents. In fact, the recurrent cycle of school suspensions and police contact can contribute to an increase in juvenile delinquency (Mathur & Nelson, 2013). Plainly stated, our current system of juvenile rehabilitation may actually be making things worse. Pilot studies of PBIS in Alternative settings have returned some promising data. A Texas Youth Facility implementing SWPBIS reported a 46% reduction in behavior incidents, as well as a 21% increase in average daily school attendance, which resulted in an increase of 131 industry certifications through the school's Ed Tech program in one year (Johnson et al., 2013). The common theme surrounding successful implementation of SWPBIS in both Alternative Education and General Education settings has been teacher and stakeholder buy-in, which translates to implementation fidelity.

Teacher Perspectives

A school-wide plan cannot be successful without support from teaching staff because teachers' perceptions of school culture and classroom rules have the greatest impact on student learning (Gencer & Cakiroglu, 2007). The teachers' point of view regarding classroom management is vital for successful instruction; for this reason, teachers must develop themselves before trying to change students (Ersozlu & Cayci, 2016). As educational leaders, we must continually assess teacher perspectives and provide appropriate professional development to change attitudes about youth behavior and potential (Mathur & Nelson, 2013). Without full staff support for PBIS, just a few dissenters can stifle momentum and sabotage progress. Skepticism of new broad-sweeping initiatives must be expected, but it is critical to guide teachers through their doubt, as skeptical teachers often dismiss viable teaching strategies, compounding previous student academic and behavioral issues (Todd et al., 1999).

Research Design

Data were collected via personal interviews as a qualitative indicator to bolster the primarily qualitative data gathered throughout the PBIS assessment process. The participants of these interviews are four Alternative Education staff members who had recently completed the first year of tier 1 SWPBIS implementation. The interview questions were focused on staff perspectives concerning the implementation process of SWPBIS in an Alternative Education setting. The following questions were the basis of the study. However, by virtue of using a semi-structured interviewing method, the conversation was allowed to adapt and change in reaction to participant responses.

1. Take me back to the beginning of your PBIS im plementation process. What types of profession al development did you receive, and what did you like about it?
2. What was the most useful information you were giving during your first experiences with PBIS, and how did you use that information?
3. How would you describe your initial change in approach after learning the basics of school-

wide PBIS?

4. Tell me a story about the best times that you've had using PBIS with a student or students the first year.
5. How is the experience you've described differ ent from previous experiences?
6. Was this experience similar to your expectations for PBIS?
7. Describe your previous knowledge of school-wide PBIS before beginning the implementation process at your site.
8. Can you walk me through the personal learning process you have gone through as a participant in school-wide PBIS?
9. Have your feelings about student learning and ex pectations changed?
10. How do you feel about the use of school-wide PBIS in alternative education settings?
11. Can you describe a specific incident that sparked significant growth or acceptance of school-wide PBIS for you during the implementation process?
12. How has your interactions with other staff mem bers affected your acceptance of school-wide PBIS?
13. In a perfect world with no limit to funding or re sources, how would school-wide PBIS look at your school site?

Data were collected through the use of audio recording and transcription. In addition to audio recording, field notes were taken directly onto the interview protocol sheet.

Data Analysis

All interviews were audio recorded in their entirety and sent out to the online service rev.com for transcription. In addition to audio recording, field notes were taken directly onto the interview protocol sheet. In the interest of confidentiality, transcribed interviews and field notes were labeled as Staff 1, Staff 2, Staff 3, and Staff 4.

Through repeated readings of each transcript and associated field notes, common emic codes, showing the underlying feelings and perspectives of staff throughout all four interviews were produced (Robertshaw, 2014). Based on grounded theory, this coding format presented five main themes from an analysis of the interview transcripts (Schwandt, 2015). These themes are: professional development, collaboration, data, student focus, and self-reflection.

Findings

The participants in this study provided fairly consistent, albeit multifaceted staff perspectives regarding the implementation of SWPBIS in Alternative Education. Findings were loosely grouped into five overarching themes, and as such, the review of findings will be split into five respective categories: professional development, collaboration, data, student focus, and self-reflection.

Professional Development

The need for professional development was a strong theme throughout the interview process. Three of the four participants made multiple references to the importance of quality training specifically tailored to an Alternative Education school site and contrasted previous training experiences showing a pattern of professional development optimized for a general education classroom, presented to Alternative Education teachers, with limited information on how to properly modify the program to meet the needs of a more diverse and transient population. For example, one staff member stated:

We've had other trainings where our campuses are not taken into consideration and if they do, there's very little they can offer for us to implement in our schools. With PBIS, it was completely geared towards alternative education. There were examples given to us in regards to other schools that have applied it […]

Further discussion affirmed the need for this training to come from a professional in the field rather than

from an internal group who had attended leadership team training with the idea that they would now be qualified to teach the content to other teaching staff in the same school district. One participant described this tactic as just a short-term solution:

We were in charge of coming back and teaching our other staff members. While that is a short-term solution for those staff members, everybody needs to be trained in PBIS, because I cannot teach to my staff members as Heather, who is a specialist, taught us.

Collaboration

Quality collaboration was a notable point pulled from the interviews. The initial trainings grouped staff into leadership teams, working together to complete tasks and review data. The positive nature of PBIS makes staff collaboration easier because most interactions are also positive. The PBIS framework assigns team members different roles and duties, making thoughtful collaboration a necessity. The support provided by the PBIS leadership team model as well as the involvement of site administration in the implementation process was seen as an asset and source of motivation for some, asserting:

[…] working with the leadership team, working with the administration, seeing how to implement it even without the full understanding, then I was constantly looking for ways to improve my style, improve the school, improve everything for both students and the PBIS program. I've even branched out to talking to other schools and talking about how they could improve in or what we could improve based on what they're doing.

Other participants reported a hesitance from other staff members to embrace the SWPBIS culture and agree to collaborate with the group. One staff member described the successful implementation of PBIS very frankly:

I feel that PBIS is successful if you implement it. I feel that PBIS could be more successful if everybody implements it. I think that some certain staff are stuck in their old ways of how they've been taught to teach, but I feel that sometimes staff members don't realize that times change, students change, our environments change.

Note the following attempt from one staff member to share their acceptance of SWPBIS with others who may have not yet been in full agreement:

I'm trying to get other staff members to accept it. I've accepted it, and unfortunately, mostly some of the older teachers, it's a little bit harder to get them to accept it, but now that everybody's on the same page seeing that this really does work, seeing that we really can work together to make it work for not just us, but for the students as well, because it actually gives us a better day also. I was already accepting of it. It's just trying to get everybody together on it.

Data

Three out of four participants made mention of using data for progress monitoring and site level decision making. An anecdotal reference to reported data was made by one staff member:

Our kids' completions, our kids' success rate, our kids' attendance, our kids' happiness, our kids' successfulness of one period versus being kicked out within the first five minutes but now they're in class the whole 45, 50 minutes, that in it alone is very, very successful.

Student Focus

Shifting focus toward students was an overwhelming theme with various examples provided in all four interviews. Participants made references to their changing perceptions of students from criminals to young individuals. Contrasting their previous focus on authority and compliance one staff member said, "[…] now with PBIS it's more like, 'Okay, what am I doing to make these kids successful?'". Direct attention to building relationships and having thoughtful conversations with students increased staff understanding of student problem behaviors and allowed them to better manage situations. There were descriptions of de-escalation techniques and discipline de-

cisions made based on the totality of information rather than the present infraction alone. Students are now seen as people with feelings that should to be acknowledged and needs that must be met. On the topic of changing focus, one participant contended:

Looking at the positive of our students was something that we've never really done, and so bringing that to our schools immediately after our initial training, you could see that as staff members we looked at the positives rather than the negative, which made it more enjoyable for us to be at work, because we're not, "Don't do this. Don't do that." It was more of, "Hey, great job. You're doing that correct. Way to go," as teachers should be, not just looking at negative but looking at positives.

They also added:

[…] focusing more on, "Hey, good morning. How are you? How was your day? Hope you have a great day," you can see the immediate change in the kids' expressions. You can see that they know that we care about them rather than, "You're just a criminal that has committed a crime and you're here because you've done something bad." They appreciate the fact that you're treating them like human beings.

Another participant referenced their changing focus with the following statement:

What I found with PBIS was that you're supposed to pay more attention to the kids that are doing well and acknowledging that good behavior. When the kid's doing well, acknowledging that behavior. It sounds simple out loud, but up until this point it was a lot of the training and interaction and stuff like that really seemed like, okay, how do we stop the bad behavior? That was a big change.

Changing perspectives can be described as a function of building relationships with students in an effort to better understand their situation and possible antecedents to problem behaviors. For example, one staff member illustrated:

Outside of just looking at the positive of the data change, I would say that just really catching myself focusing on the kids themselves. For instance, one of the big changes, or at least one of the big things talked about in the training was getting to know the kid outside just when you are scolding them. You're sitting there talking to a kid in the morning and you find out various things, like, oh, they were up all night because their little brother was sick and so they were taking care of him. I think that it was the idea that I was getting to know the kids more and developing that relationship versus a really positive experience. I would say that as far as that year goes, the initial memory I have is just I find myself developing better relationships with the students.

Implementation of SWPBIS, as described by most participants, not only suggested or encouraged changing perspectives, but actually forced the participant to see students differently and change. One participant said:

It has forced me to not just focus on those, quote, unquote, "good kids" that are quiet and never get in trouble in class, but it has forced me to look at those kids that might be more outspoken, more problematic, more quickly to react and explode. It has forced me to focus on their positive behavior. Those are the students that are typically lost in the classroom.

Similarly, another example of deeper student consideration was provided:

[…]it forces you to really look at those students and try to figure out what's going on at home. Is this child on medication? Does the child need extra services that we need to provide? We should not be so quickly to get rid of them, because we are alternative education. We should be looking at what services these kids need rather than, "You're misbehaving so I'm going to get you out of here," because if they leave us, how are we helping them? How are we servicing them?

Self Reflection

With the shift to a more student focused instruction

model, school staff members have become more self-reflective. One participant described this shift by remarking: *It has been a self-reflecting couple of years. Even though I would say that I'm very patient with the kids, I'm very understanding of their surroundings, I understand where they're coming from, I understand what they've been through, I understand what they're going to go through, PBIS has made me even more calm. It has forced me to look at more positives.*

Staff members analyze their practices in a more holistic approach, intending to ensure they have not triggered any negative reactions from students. Also, with clearly defined student expectations, staff give more thought to their own coherence to rules and expectations, adding to the atmosphere and culture of self-reflective introspection.

I've learned is when I see a student that's having a hard time I pay more attention to how I act with that student. I pay more attention to what I say and how I react to what the student's saying, and I find myself, and I try not to be judgmental but I also try and pay attention to how the interactions with the student with other staff. I try and pay attention to, okay, this kid is not doing well in this classroom but is doing really well in these two classrooms. Why is that? Is it an educational thing? Is it a social interaction thing? What is the reason that this kid's having a hard time?

Staff member participants described the metacognitive realization of caring about students' well-being and how that thought process changed their reactions to problem behaviors. Contrasting experiences prior to SWPBIS implementation and set a framework for comparison and reflection. Comments like,

[…] wait a minute. Is this steppable? Does this deserve the consequence that you're trying to give to this child? Is chewing gum the same thing as fighting, so is that both a behavior step? Is a write-up that a student got, is it something that we can discuss and try to work on rather than so quickly, "He's a problem. Let's get him out of here."

show staff members were reflecting on their current interactions with students in the SWPBIS model as opposed to their previous behavior management tactics, and noticed a positive change in students and themselves.

Discussion

The collection of staff member perspectives regarding the full implementation of SWPBIS is of vital importance and the nuanced responses and examples presented in this interview process shed light on an often overlooked aspect of fidelity; acceptance and commitment to the new initiative.

Implications of this study are far reaching. From a more localized view, immediate changes in professional development approaches for SWPBIS tier 1 implementation need to be adjusted to reflect a mastery model as apposed to the current trainer-of-trainers model. Additionally, full staff acceptance and adherence to new expectation must be a top priority; this perceived issue may be mitigated with alteration of the professional development model.

Application of SWPBIS systems in an Alternative Education setting received a resounding approval rating from all staff members interviewed. In fact, the malleability of using a positive approach seems to be appropriate in almost any setting. Further research in the area of staff perspectives for PBIS implementation is needed for tier 1 in residential court schools, as well as tier 2 and tier 3 PBIS in community day schools.

In summary, SWPBIS can be a source of positive systemic change in an Alternative Education setting if attention is paid to staff perspectives and careful implementation is conducted using a collaborative, data-driven decision making approach.

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THE HISTORY OF JCCASAC

By Bob Michels, Past President
With Thanks to Ken Taylor and Jeanne Hughes

Before we can discuss JCCASAC, it is importatnt to discuss the history of Court and Community Schools in California. Forty seven years ago the responsibility for operating court schools in county operated detention facilities was that of the California Youth Authority, today known as the California Division of Juvenile Justice, a division of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Generally, CYA, would assign the responsibility to the probation department, who generally contracted with the local district or districts. The educational services that would result were often fragmented, lacked a focus on the unique needs of the court school student population, and often became a simple extension of a nearby K-12 school program. A common result was an educational program that was generally substandard and often forgotten. At best, students received a satisfactory education. At worst, students received little or no education and the education they did receive was unsatisfactory.

There were a number of counties that had developed strong working relationships between the county probation department and county office of education relative the education of incarcerated youth. As early as 1971 and 1972, legislation was introduced to shift the educational responsibility of students housed in county operated detention facilities from the California Youth Authority to the County Board of Education. These early efforts by the Santa Clara County Office of Education failed. In 1976, a bill was introduced and passed that shifted the responsibility from CYA to the County Board of Education. Court schools were the first mandated instructional programs that was the responsibility of the County Board of Education.

County Offices of Education (COE) were now able to hire their own teachers for court schools and provide appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the students. The COE operated programs were in juvenile halls and ranches and group homes and day centers.

The creation of community schools was much easier. Forty seven years ago, the status offender (W&I Code 601) who was a runaway, a truant, or out of control was commonly locked up and served through the educational programs within the juvenile detention facilities. Assembly Bill 3121 (1975) decriminalized these status offenses for juveniles and changed the entire structure of the juvenile justice system. When the law was changed to eliminate the use of detention as a tool for dealing with the status offender, there was an immediate need to serve this population. One answer was the requirement that each county establish nonsecure crisis resolution centers for these students. Another answer appeared in the form of legislation that Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties were instrumental in getting introduced in 1976 that was known as the Community Schools Bill.

The organization that is now known as JCCASAC (Juvenile Court and Community Alternative School Administrators of California) was founded in 1969 as JCSAC (Juvenile Court School Administrators of California). The organization began as a group of professionals with a common interest that was instrumental in the development of the early court school programs. Its first major success as an organization was seen in 1976-1977 when it supported the efforts of key Northern and Southern California counties in the passage of legislation establishing court and community schools. With each passing year, the organization matured and took on new dimensions. It was not until the late 1980s that the organization changed its name to JCCSAC and included “Community” schools in its title.

What was once a stand alone organization operated by JCCASAC administrators now works as a sub-committee of the County County Superintendents Educational Services Organization.

> “Without passion you don't have energy, with out energy you have nothing.”
>
> -Donald Trump

HONORING OUR PAST JCCASAC PRESIDENTS

1970-71 Don Purdy Santa Clara	1982-83 Roy Savage Riverside	1994-95 Larry Springer Los Angeles	2006-2007 Maruta Gardner San Diego
1971-72 Chuck Lee San Diego	1983-84 Ken Kammuller Marin	1995-96 Claudette Inge Alameda	2007-2008 Peter Kostas Mendocino
1972-73 Doug Booth San Mateo	1984-85 Wayne Toscas Santa Barbara	1996-97 Ken Taylor Kern	2008-2009 Mary Lou Vachet Orange
1973-74 Joe De Mello Contra Costa	1985-86 Greg Almand Contra Costa	1997-98 Mick Founts San Joaquin	2009-2010 Mary Bell Sacramento
1974-75 Marshall Lomax Los Angeles	1986-87 Hedy Kirsh Orange	1998-99 Dolores Redwine San Diego	2010-2011 Sean Morrill San Diego
1975-76 John Hull Sacramento	1987-88 Shirl Schmidt Shasta	1999-00 Vic Trucco Sonoma	2011-2012 Janine Cuaresma San Joaquin
1976-77 Rocco Nobile San Diego	1988-89 Chuck Lee San Diego	2000-01 Janet Addo Los Angeles	2012-2013 Deni Baughn Orange
1977-78 John Peshkoff Santa Clara	1989-90 William Burns San Mateo	2001-02 Michael Watkins Santa Cruz	2013-2014 Gary Vincent Monterey
1978-79 Jerry Matney Orange	1990-91 John Peshkoff Orange	2002-03 Jeanne Hughes Kern	2014-2015 Monalisa Vitela Imperial
1979-80 Miltie Couteur Butte	1991-92 Orene Hopkins Contra Costa	2003-04 Jacqueline Flowers San Joaquin	2015-2016 Telka Walser Stanislaus
1980-81 Marty Familletti Riverside	1992-93 John Stankovich Kings	2004-05 Jeanne Dukes San Luis Obispo	2016-2017 Christian Shannon Kern
1981-82 Joe De Mello Contra Costa	1993-94 Bob Michels Santa Clara	2005-06 Paula Mitchell Santa Clara	

COLLABORATING FOR THE SUCCESS OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS

BY
KATHLEEN LOMEN, RIVERSIDE COUTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"Alternative education students want to feel safe, be filled and be taught by adults who are real with them."

-Kathleen Lomen

The two great advantages of working for county-wide alternative education programs is being among the most challenging youth in education and having access to the best ideas on educational leadership practices. With thirty plus years in secondary education, it hasd been a long-time goal to work for county schools and to take part in the miraculous turn around in student character, motivation and learning. This does not happen without collaboration of a committed, caring and emotionally intelligent team of adults. Although many of us have passion for alternative education work, we cannot neglect the rhetoric of accountability for all students in public education regardless of the gaps we encounter. Solutions to address the complex work exist. In addition to theory and research from renowned educational leaders from which we learn, I was fortunate to spend a day listening to Michael Fullan at the Moreno Valley Conference Center in winter of 2017. He rolled out a framework of solutions from his recent book, Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems (2016).

Middle and high school students in alternative programs often bring with them several life challenges; academic gaps, poverty, poor nutrition, unhealthy life decisions and traumatic family experiences. Math test scores for secondary students in alternative education are abysmally low. Another significant number of our students are English learners or have special needs. Meyers (2016) claims that 21 percent of Americans under the age of 18 live in poverty. Alternative education serves that population. Most students arrive late to school due to real transportation problems. Some days ensuring that students learn the Common Core curriculum and complete required assessments seems irrelevant, but we do what we are told anyway. As a team of committed professional leaders, we can attend to most of the needs alternative education students bring us each day by reading, listening and doing what research tells us is effective. This includes listening to students and openly collaborating with teachers and all support staff.

The idea of building trusted relationships with staff and students is not new. Research is emerging as to the benefits. Transformational leadership theory opened the door to the notion that true leaders seek and allow for participatory and democratic decision-making (Burns, 2003). Legitimizing follower or team-member unique contributions creates empowerment. Not only should we cultivate these practices in the classroom, but allow staff the same freedoms of innovation and voice just as we call our students to do for solutions to difficult situations. Nowhere is the idea of adults building trust more important than in alternative education where young people attend school marred by unstable and untrustworthy life experiences. If we as school leaders want to make an impact on the most vulnerable, we must practice these ideologies of building trusted, respected relationships among ourselves as we lead teachers and students in 21st century living and learning.

What does accountability mean beyond the painful display of test scores for alternative education students? Fullan & Quinn (2016) discuss accountability from two dimensions. The first must precede the second if an educational community is to reach the goal of sustainable academic improvements. Groups of educators must first attain internal accountability. That is integrity with oneself and reliability on each other.

Only then can they work towards gaining ground in the public external accountability realm; the demonstration of continuous academic improvements. Internal accountability comes from respectful cooperation and honest communication among the small group of adults collectively working together with unwavering focus on the goal of improved academic achievement. DuFour and Marzano (2011) explained it similarly by stating effective leaders create conditions of success for teachers by providing resources and eliminating distractions by leading from the heart.

Alternative education settings are no different. Let me paint a picture of a day in the life of one community school where the principal was called off sight for the day. Room 2 housed a veteran, excellent math teacher. She planned and structured each day for learning the new Integrated Math I curriculum. She corrected papers and rewarded students for completed assignments and improved attitudes. She allowed each student to begin a new day with unconditional positive regard. The central office provided support by means of a daily one-on one math tutor. In addition to a new smart board, new textbooks, a TOSA was available to help create lessons, point teachers to usable websites and provide several project-based learning activities tied to specific math standards. This classroom operated under the principles of team work with all adults to keep students focused on learning math.

This story continues as a small team of collaborative leaders address an added crisis to the instructional day. As math instruction continued in the classroom undeterred, a student had an emotional meltdown in the hallway. Emergency services were called and the support staff, counselor, probation officer, social worker, culinary arts teacher and office manager calmly acted for the health and safety of this thirteen year-old girl. The support and itinerant staff allowed each other to freely operate on their strengths. All the stakeholders in this scenario respected each other and thanked each other at the end of the day for their part in addressing the crisis. The team included women and men of diverse ethnicities and widely different backgrounds. None of these issues surface descriptors mattered as all went into action toward the common goal of keeping students safe and allowing instruction to go on without distractions. The team had these values in common; trust for each other and freedom to communicate without fear of negative push-back.

Collaborative leadership has positive impacts on student learning (Dewitt, 2017). Fullan and Quinn (2016) urgently call us to find the talented "kindred spirits" and to connect with them for the benefit of student learning and success. Alternative education students want to feel safe, be filled and be taught by adults who are real with them. They will tell you who the kindred spirits are and why they can learn from them. Leadership frameworks and theories that utilize competencies from a smart, small group of leaders that allow for innovative thought and new directions will make sustainable impacts on educational organizations. Our students deserve the best ideas in educational leadership that challenges traditional thought. Only then will student learning outcomes such as critical thinking and creativity aside from assessments improve as they maneuver 21st century career expectations.

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EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR INCARCERATED STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

BY
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SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OFEDUCAITON

Abstract

The concentration of incarcerated students with mental health concerns in California court schools presents at once a challenge and opportunity for innovative solutions to address the needs of this vulnerable student population. This paper discusses a new service delivery model for students receiving mental health counseling specified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The paper describes details of the staffing model, demographic characteristics of the students receiving services as well as staff perceptions of impact of these services. Considerations for future expansion of the services are also discussed.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been much discussion and effective action in both public schools and California juvenile courts to disrupt what is referred to commonly as the school to prison pipeline. Indeed, as schools have reduced their reliance on punitive Zero-Tolerance means of correction that criminalized school discipline code violations, juvenile courts have reduced the numbers of youth referred for detention by opting for diversion programs and returning youth to their communities with greater supervision and presumably enhanced levels of service.

Networks of government agencies, community-based organizations and interest groups have supported these shifts in practice. One of the most comprehensive endeavors to reform practices with juvenile offenders has been the work of the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). With a stated vision that youth contact with the juvenile justice system should be "….rare, fair, and beneficial to them." the OJJDP has implemented best practice dissemination projects such as the Model Programs Guide (OJJDP, 2017). The expressed purpose of the OJJDP Model Programs Guide is to disseminate information about evidence-based juvenile justice and youth prevention, intervention and reentry programs, and includes information about what works, what is promising, and what does not work in juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and child protection and safety.

In an examination of special education services for California's incarcerated youth, Sheldon-Sherman (2013) argued for continued focus on improvement and found progress toward better compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Sheldon-Sherman attributed this progress at least in part to the landmark Farrell v. Tilton judgement that mandated implementation and quarterly monitoring of Remedial Plans by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice in six areas related to the welfare, treatment and services for incarcerated youth. Education Services (ED), Wards with Disabilities Program (WDP) and Mental Health (MH) were included as three of the six Remedial Plans (California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2008). Sheldon-Sherman also identified the lack of autonomy of the educational program as a constraining factor in the implementation of effective and IDEA compliant educational services for incarcerated youth with disabilities. This point certainly supports the critical importance of establishing and maintaining effective collaborative relationships between school officials and probation officials in facilities serving incarcerated youth.

Geis (2014) made a similar plea for improved services for incarcerated youth with disabilities, and recommended an IEP for the juvenile justice system itself. While the irony of this recommendation is inten-

tional, there is to be sure a logical appeal for the implementation of an improvement plan for the juvenile justice system based on assessed needs that includes stakeholder input to develop attainable goals, periodic measurement of progress and annual review. Geis cited poignant case study examples from her experience representing juvenile clients with disabilities in the New Jersey juvenile justice system and argued for the incorporation of special education legal principles throughout the delinquency process: from referral, interrogation and arrest; to the construction of a competent defense for youth with disabilities; to the use of appropriate accommodations for the youth during court hearings; and finally to the adjudication, disposition and appropriate placement for youth with disabilities. Geis further asserts that from the point of the initial detention hearing, the judge should be made aware of the youths educational and mental health needs to ensure that those needs are addressed as the youth makes his or her way through the hearing and placement process.

Lambie and Randell (2013) discussed the often negative impact of the experience of incarceration on outcomes for detained youth. The researchers reviewed studies published since 2000 and found that incarceration fails to meet the developmental and criminogenic needs of youth offenders and is often implemented as a means of public protection rather than appropriate rehabilitation of youthful offenders. Indeed, Lambie and Randell cited research indicating that the act of incarceration typically results in negative behavioral and mental health consequences for offending youth. Lambie and Randell recommended effective treatment to address criminogenic needs through community-based, empirically supported intervention practices. Lambie and Randell also assert that such treatment options be implemented, to the greatest extent possible, as an alternative to incarceration.

In a sobering and recent article, Underwood and Washington (2016) reported that the reliance on the juvenile justice system to meet the needs of juvenile offenders with mental health concerns has increased. Underwood and Washington also reported that the prevalence of mental health problems in the juvenile offender population is consistently higher than the prevalence of mental health problems in the general adolescent population. Citing previous screening and epidemiological studies, Underwood and Washington found an estimated 50 to 75 percent of the 2 million youth encountering the juvenile justice system meet criteria for a mental health disorder. Additionally, the researchers reported that two-thirds of males and three-quarters of females in previous studies of incarcerated youth met criteria for at least one mental health disorder, with an additional one-tenth also having met criteria for a substance use disorder. Based on these findings, the Underwood and Washington argue for a dynamic system of care that incorporates treatment services within detention facilities as well as community-based follow-up care. Underwood and Washington also called for the redefinition of the roles of the juvenile justice, education, mental health, and child protection systems as "a systematic and collaborative unit of care" to be more effective in the rehabilitation of youthful offenders.

Our Setting: A High School Operating within Two Secure Facilities

Kearney Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (KMJDF) is San Diego County's main Juvenile Hall and is one of four secure facilities operated by the San Diego County Probation Department. KMJDF serves as the main intake center for male and female juveniles in San Diego County with a primary focus on the safety and security of youth awaiting court hearing for charged offenses or probation violations. Adjacent to KMJDF is the Girls Rehabilitation Facility (GRF), which is a medium-security rehabilitative female urban camp program. While GRF has a reha-

bilitative focus and KMJDF has a security/safety focus, both facilities emphasize educational programming and are served by faculty and staff from the SOAR Academy. SOAR Academy is a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited high school operated by the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE). The San Diego County Probation Department reported 2015 Annual Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of 157 for KMJDF and 24 for GRF. Average length of stay for 2015 was 16 days for KMJDF and 48 days for GRF (County of San Diego Probation Department, 2015).

Rationale

The evidence-based and intentional reforms in juvenile justice practice described above are undoubtedly long overdue and resonate with our moral sensibilities for nurturing and rehabilitating youth. One of the perhaps unintended consequences of these reforms is that the youth now referred for detention tend to exhibit a higher level of mental health need. This is certainly true of our students with disabilities in SOAR Academy. Our efforts to address their mental health needs by developing a coherent program to deliver educationally-related mental health services is the focus of this article.

Indeed, our purpose is to describe the development and impact of school-based mental health counseling services for the high-mobility population served in San Diego County's SOAR Academy. We seek to share our experience with other professionals in juvenile court schools as they seek to implement, improve and expand school-based mental health services for incarcerated youth.

The Evolution of a Model for School-based Mental Health Counseling Services

Prior to 2013, counseling services specified on an incarcerated student's Individual Education Plan were provided by graduate students in school psychology and supervised by the school psychologist assigned to what was then the Mesa Region Court School in Kearney Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility and the Girls Rehabilitation Facility. While this model ensured that students received the specified services on their IEP, the services were provided by trainees that began and completed their training usually within a school year. Moreover, there was no dominant theoretical model for the counseling services provided, as the trainees were enrolled in training programs at several different local universities.

At the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, a coordinator/lead school psychologist was assigned to the Juvenile Hall. The coordinator/school psychologist collaborated with the COE director of assessment and pupil services to re-think the delivery of counseling services for students with disabilities. Additionally, changes to the state-level policies for the delivery of Educationally-related Mental Health Services (ERMS) occurring at that time also prompted the re-design of local services. Our collaboration led to the development of a relationship and agreement with a single local university for placement and training of practicum students seeking a Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and California licensure as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). Advantages of this collaborative relationship included practicum students being placed in SOAR Academy for a full school year and the training program promoted a strengths-based approach to counseling and emphasized training in evidence-based counseling practices. Both of these aspects fit well within the developmental and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches of the special education program in SOAR Academy (see Karger & Currie-Rubin, 2013 for a discussion of how UDL is a natural fit for special education services for incarcerated

youth). Supervision of these services was also characterized by collaboration. Day to day, onsite supervision and program oversight was provided by the coordinator/lead school psychologist, while weekly clinical supervision was provided by the director of assessment and pupil services, who was also a school psychologist and California Licensed Educational Psychologist. The practicum students also received individual and group supervision with university-based counselor education faculty as part of their training program.

The recognition by supervisors as well as school administrators and school staff that the mental health counseling services provided by the practicum students were effective led to the development of a paid hourly position for a post-graduate registered as a California Professional Clinical Counseling Intern or PCCI. The continued effectiveness of services provided, as well as an increase in the number of incarcerated students with counseling services specific on their IEPs, led to the development of a full-time position known as a Mental Health Caseworker. The Mental Health Caseworker is a classified support position funded by the special education program. The position has the primary responsibility for delivering mental health counseling services to students with disabilities and is supervised directly by the coordinator/lead psychologist. Qualifications for the Mental Health Caseworker position include masters degree-level clinician status and California Board of Behavioral Sciences registration as a Professional Clinical Counseling Intern (PCCI), Marriage and Family Therapist Intern (IMF) or Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW). The model described in this paper is focused on the services delivered by the Mental Health Caseworker position and the system supporting this position.

The Current Service Model in SOAR Academy

As stated above, we sought to implement a model that emphasized a strengths-based approach to mental health counseling. Xie (2013), described strengths-based approaches to mental health as recognizing that the client (or in our case the incarcerated youth) has a unique set of strengths and abilities that may be accessed and used to resolve problems. Xie further states that attention is placed on the client's abilities rather than their shortcomings, symptoms or difficulties. Mental health issues are seen as a normal part of human life. In our context, the mental health counselor seeks to, as Xie recommends, enlist and cultivate the incarcerated youth's positive attributes, assets, aspirations, hopes and interests.

While this approach certainly has an intuitive appeal, Xie (2013) also reported empirical evidence of positive outcomes linked to strengths-based approaches. Citing a study especially relevant to inter-agency settings such as court schools, Xie reported that providing the multi-disciplinary team with strength-based data resulted in better academic, social and overall outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders as compared to traditional socio-emotive report that focused on the problems that students were facing. A study of children and adolescents living in group homes cited by Xie found that the youths' level of strengths significantly predicted success in the reduction of risk behaviors.

In our setting at SOAR Academy, the position of Mental Health Caseworker, which is defined as a masters level clinician qualified to provide educationally-related mental health services, is essential to our current service delivery model. This position remains under the supervision of the coordinator/lead school psychologist and participates in weekly clinical supervision with a university-based faculty member. The qualifications of the clinician as specified above are essential to the effectiveness of the services provided. Also, the bifurcation of supervision into day to day operational supervision and clinical supervision provides clear lines of responsibility and accountability for the role and function of the Mental Health

Function	Role	Responsible Position Title
Case management	Case manager	Mental Health Caseworker
Clinical supervision	Instructor	University-based faculty
Consultation and collaboration with teachers, probation staff, families and other clinicians	Consultant	Mental Health Caseworker School Psychologist
Crisis intervention	Interventionist	Mental Health Caseworker School Psychologist
Develop counseling goals and objectives	Mental Health Counselor	Mental Health Caseworker
Individual & Group Counseling	Mental Health Counselor	Mental Health Caseworker
Operational supervision and Staff Evaluation	Manager	Coordinator/Lead School Psychologist
Program evaluation	Evaluator Data-based decision-maker	Coordinator/Lead School Psychologist
Progress monitoring	Data-based decision-maker	Mental Health Caseworker

Casework in the delivery of services to students. Table 1 below presents the essential functions and key roles in the service delivery model.

Table 1.(left) Roles, functions and services in delivery of school-based mental health counseling services to incarcerated students with disabilities

Table 2. (below) Demographic data for currently enrolled students with disabilities receiving school-based mental health services (as of March 1, 2017)

Preliminary Outcomes and Impact

Tables 2 and 3 below present descriptive data that were collected from archival records compiled by the Mental Health Caseworker and Coordinator/Lead School Psychologist. Table 4 presents data collected as part of an After Action Review completed by the Mental Health Caseworker with the SOAR Academy principal and a Special Education Teacher. These data as well as other indicators (such as student progress toward IEP goals and objectives) are used by program staff in the ongoing formative evaluation and refinement of the service model. Note that per-

	n	percent
Active cases	22	100%
Students also receiving mental health services through county probation department	10	46%
Mean age in years	16.7	
Standard deviation	1.08	
Gender	n	percent
Male	9	41%
Female	12	55%
Transgender or Gender Non-conforming	1	4%
Federal Handicapping Condition	n	percent
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	17	77%
Autism (AUT)	2	1%
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	2	1%
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	1	<1%
Student re-entering facility after release (since September 1, 2015)	n	percent
Re-entered one time	7	32%
Re-entered two times	3	14%
Re-entered three times	2	1%
Re-entered four or more times	5	23%

centages reported in the tables below do not always sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 3. Demographic data for discharged students with disabilities receiving school-based mental health services (September 1, 2015 through March 1, 2017

Discussion and Next Steps

Perhaps the most significant positive impact that emerged from the data we reviewed and the responses from key personnel at the school site was the fact that at the time of this writing, 242 incarcerated students with disabilities had received school-based mental health counseling from a qualified mental health counselor since the beginning of the 2015-16 school year. Additionally, 22 students are currently receiving services from this counselor. The continuity of service from having the same clinician (as opposed to multiple short-term trainees as was past practice) working with these students is also remarkable. The demographic data demonstrated a clear need for mental health counseling services, with a large percentage of students coping with an Emotional Disturbance (ED) as their primary handicapping condition. Indeed, 40% of discharged students and 77% percent of currently enrolled students were classified with an Emotional Disturbance (ED).

	n	percent
Total number of students discharged and not re-enrolled as of March 1, 2017	242	100%
Students also receiving mental health services through Juvenile Probation Department	77	32%
Mean age in years	17.1	
Standard deviation	1.5	
Average length of stay (calendar days)	23.01	
Standard deviation	26.9	
Gender	n	percent
Male	191	79%
Female	51	21%
Transgender or Gender Non-conforming	0	0
Federal Handicapping Condition	n	percent
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	96	40%
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	80	33%
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	51	21%
Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	10	4%
Autism (AUT)	2	1%
Hard of Hearing (HH)	1	<1%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	1	<1%
Student re-entering facility after release (Sept 1, 2015 to March 1, 2017)	n	percent
No re-entry	123	51%
Re-entered one time	52	22%
Re-entered two times	33	14%
Re-entered three times	17	7%
Re-entered four times or more times	17	7%

Table 4. (below) Staff responses regarding impact of school-based mental health counseling for students with disabilities

PROMPT: Please respond to the following questions about the Educationally-Related Mental Health Services we are providing to students with disabilities in SOAR Academy:

What's working well?	*What are some of our biggest challenges?*	*What have we learned?*	*Source*
Efficiency in mental health service delivery Improved communication with probation regarding student services	Getting over probation staff's HIPPA concerns about sharing information More students with greater mental health needs being incarcerated	We have fewer students, but they have greater mental health needs Addressing these needs allow our students to better engage in learning	School Principal
Consistent provider that is a regular school employee (not a contractor or an intern) Weekly participation in facility's multidisciplinary team meeting (MDT) has improved communication between therapists, teachers and probation staff which benefits our students.	Establishing the same level of services at other facilities with which we share students to ensure consistency of service We need more collaboration between staff working with the same students at different facilities.	Communication between teachers, therapist and probation has improved and benefits our students.	Special Education Teacher (Ed Specialist)
Students are more receptive to services and responsive when the focus is rapport building and interventions are strength based and person centered Strong support from Special Education. Team and supervisors Weekly (clinical) supervision Weekly individual meetings with teachers to discuss each student Collaboration with IEP goals Scheduling to ensure students are seen regularly and can request services Youth are requesting to see the counselor. Youth are provided with stress balls, journals and other worksheets to practice skills independently Collaboration and communication with Probation, multidisciplinary team, clinic staff and correctional counselors and sharing information Inclusion in meetings and events that involve the Chief Probation Officer, judges and board members A dedicated meeting space in the Special Education office - allows for use of tools such as musical instruments, computers to do research and art supplies	Disruption in counseling services when a student transfers to another facility Ensuring specified levels of service as the number of incarcerated youth with counseling on their IEP's increases Increase in the number of youth that are coming in with mental health concerns Private meeting spaces are limited Access to medical records (i.e., psychiatric diagnosis) and special protocols is limited Limitations on activities and options for student based detention facility policies and procedures. E.g., I cannot meet with students outside on a sunny day because an officer would have to be present Scheduling challenges that impact students scheduled counseling appointment Lack of onsite clinical mental health supervision Access to other mental health providers I can consult with	Need for all adults working with our students to have a strengths-based and person-centered approach Continued need to work collaboratively with probation and others in order for youth to receive the best level of care Continued need for consistency with staffing so that youth are receptive to services Need more staff to provide mental health services to youth as they transition between sites Need for additional private meeting spaces	Mental Health Counselor

Staff responses support the notion that consistency of services is important for this student population. Staff also called out the improved communication with probation staff and other clinicians that has resulted from deploying a clinician who consults with probation staff on a regular basis as part of the delivery of school-based mental health services. Staff responses also validate the importance of supervisory support for this new activity as well as the importance of dedicated space in which to provide services. The value of a strengths-based approach to mental health counseling also surfaced and may contribute to the staff's perceptions of a positive student response to the counseling services. Indeed, the strengths-based approach is a good fit to the development approach of the special education program and this likely facilitates the collaborative relationships the counselor has established with other staff. Nevertheless clear challenges remain, including an apparent increase in the detention of students with mental health concerns and the problem of ensuring continuity of services for students who transfer to other detention facilities.

As far as next steps in the development of this service, improvement in the continuity of school-based mental health counseling services in other facilities serving the same student population is a logical area for expansion. Maintaining a focus and emphasis on strengths-based approaches also seems warranted. Additionally, comprehensive program evaluation including analysis of impact on indicators such as recidivism, return to regular public schools and parent perceptions of effectiveness of counseling services should inform any expansion of mental health counseling services. We believe that further development of these services should be guided by Underwood and Washington's (2016) recommendation for the redefinition of the roles of the juvenile justice, education, mental health, and child protection systems as "a systematic and collaborative unit of care" to be more effective in the rehabilitation of youthful offenders.

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OUR VALUED INDUSTRY PARTNERS

WORDS ALIVE ADOLESCENT BOOK GROUP

BY
PATRICK E. STEWART, CHRISSY G. CALIFF, AMANDA B. BONDS, THERESA B. TOLENTINO , SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

"When students do not or cannot read for comprehension, motivation to read and self-confidence as a reader stalls, which in turn deters students from the reading practice needed to strengthen their ability. Skills, motivation or interest to read, and reading confiden"

-Patrick Stewart et.al

Program Overview

Established in 1999, Words Alive was founded on the belief that if you value reading and understand its fundamental connection to all aspects of your life, you will thrive as a lifelong learner, ready to transform your community. With a mission to open opportunities for life success by inspiring a commitment to reading, and three primary programs — Read Aloud, Teen Services and Family Literacy — Words Alive provides life-changing services to 5,500 students and families monthly through the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) and the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE).

Adolescent Book Group (ABG) is an integrated, comprehensive language arts program delivering monthly book discussion groups in combination with a writing program, college and career readiness workshops and an annual arts component. Serving approximately 450 students each month, highly trained volunteers share their love of reading through interactive, directed discussion and writing groups. These sessions provide the students opportunity to develop their voice, express opinions about books, enhance their literacy skills and make connections between text and real life applications.

Primary partners in this effort include 22 Momentum Learning classrooms (formerly Juvenile Court and Community Schools), a fully accredited educational program of SDCOE for youth who are wards of the court or have been referred to alternative learning settings by social services, probation or one of the 42 school districts in San Diego County. As an alternative learning setting, Momentum Learning classrooms specifically serve some of San Diego County's teens most in need of support, many of whom are navigating considerable challenges, including transitioning in and out of the delinquency system, teen parenthood, living in foster-care, substance abuse and homelessness.

As a means to continually provide meaningful and evaluation-driven programming, Words Alive commenced the seven-month Dialogues in Action (DIA) project to analyze our ABG program using both a qualitative and quantitative evaluation model. Through this process, Words Alive had the opportunity to take a closer look at program impact – through the lens of our students. By interviewing both ABG student participants and our teachers, Words Alive was able to examine the intended impact made in the classroom.

Intended Impact

In order to measure not only the outputs (what we did), but also the outcomes (what changed because of what we did), Words Alive participated in a Dialogues in Action (DIA) Project Impact cohort, measuring the impact of programs along with crafting a meaningful narrative around both the quantitative as well as qualitative outcomes. Through this process, three specific areas of intended impact were identified:

Students develop an enduring commitment to reading. Students internalize the value of reading as a tool and remain engaged in reading habits during and following their participation in the program.

Youth become life-long learners. Youth experience positive attitudinal shifts about learning and recognize their own ability to seek out information to solve problems, acquire critical thinking skills and transition successfully into post-secondary education or career environments.

Youth become advocates for themselves. Youth find their voice and are empowered to invest in their futures.

Youth will increase self-confidence

as readers, writers and speakers; expressing themselves more clearly and strengthening their writing — make steps towards personal, educational and career goals. They gain competency in navigating post-secondary education and career systems, and pursue success through commitment to activities which lead to specific desired outcomes.

Method

Over the course of seven months, Words Alive developed and refined ideas of intended impact and indicators, designed and implemented both qualitative and quantitative means to collect and analyze data and identified findings and implications for program adjustments and renovations.

With a clear understanding of our program goals, a questionnaire was designed to collect data geared towards quantitative measurements for the entire Words Alive ABG population. In addition, a qualitative interview was conducted with 26 students and eight Momentum Learning teachers.

Protocol Design

A protocol consisting of nine sequences of questions (22 questions for our student population and 20 questions for our teacher population) was developed using the Heart Triangle method construction created by DIA (Patty, 2013). The protocol was the guide to collect data about the subjects' awareness and reflection of structural shifts and developments of growth and progress.

Sample

Subjects were identified using a purposeful stratified technique to select a representation of the population we serve. Our population size was 450 students and 22 teachers. From our population size, a focus was placed on schools with lower rates of student turnover in order to measure the long-term impact of students who participate in multiple program sessions. From those school sites, students who had participated in three or more sessions, or 50% of the total program sessions offered during the school year were selected. In addition to the number of sessions the students participated in, the following strata of the population was selected: 30% of students were female while 70% were male (mimicking student demographics according to the 2014-15 School Accountability Report Card, the most recent report available).

Of the 450 students served during the 2014–15 program year through the ABG, 111 or 25% of students attended three or more program sessions and, per the established protocol, were eligible for qualitative interviews. 26 students, or 23% of the total students who had participated in three or more sessions were interviewed. 9, or 41% of the 22 teachers participating in the program were also interviewed The teachers interviewed represented all classrooms of interviewed students.

Data Collection

One-on-one interviews lasting between 45 minutes and one-hour in length were conducted with students and teachers. Data were collected via notes during the interview, and then recorded immediately following the interview to provide a substantive rendering of the conversation.

Data Analysis

A four-step model of textual analysis was applied to each of the interviews. This process allows for interpretation of meaning and significance from the interview data. The questionnaire, composed of 10 questions regarding students' behavioral changes and their relationship to reading, was used to collect data on quantitative indicators of impact. The questionnaire was sent to all 22 teachers to administer to the entire program population of 450 students. Students were involved with standardized state testing at the same time we deployed the survey, which impacted the response return rate. Only 75 students total responded to the survey, or 17% of the 450 sample. This sample size of 75 included students who participated in less than three sessions as well as students who participated in three or more sessions. By comparing both groups, we were able to see the differences between students that have received more Words Alive intervention as opposed to students who are newer to our programming.

The survey results were analyzed using measures of central tendency, arithmetic mean and comparative analyses between groups. Our evaluation produced findings which captured the primary discoveries from the data. The most salient of the findings are described in the following narratives:

Finding 1: Youth Become Lifelong Learners

By the end of the program, 100% of teachers interviewed not only reported that their students were reading more, they stated specifically that their students were doing more with what they read – that students were, in effect, flexing skills sharpened through months spent habitually reading, writing about and discussing texts. This was the most fundamental change seen among students participating in the program. Students noticed this, too. As one student shared, "At first I didn't like reading because I didn't understand what I was reading, even though it was my level book. I would just go on and on to finish, and wouldn't know what I was reading."

When asked what changed, she replied, "I started paying attention. I learned how to get myself into a book, how to question what I'm reading to get into it. [Now] I get why readers are reading." On the other hand, teachers repeatedly identified this change as getting better at reading for comprehension. Reading for comprehension, or the ability to process what we have read and understand, is a complex process for learners and improvement in this area speaks to positive changes in the skills needed to process, interpret and place a text in context within the world outside the story. Teachers reported observing increased student vocabulary, fluency, ability to annotate and analyze text and use evidence to support their claims and ideas. One student provided a very specific example of building fluency, stating "I've overcome pronunciation, like 'acknowledgement' in Black and White. I knew what the word meant, but I'd never seen it written down. Then I saw it in Girl in Translation and I knew how to pronounce it really fast."

In general, students responding to the quantitative survey self-reported that participating in ABG improved their ability to express themselves as readers, writers and speakers. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of students who identify a skill as strengthened via participation in the program. It is important to note that, as anticipated and is shown below, students who attended at least half

Figure 1 (below)Results from the quantitative survey issued to students. The chart shows the comparison between results from those who had attended three or more sessions and those who had attended less than three sessions.

(3) of the offered program sessions during the school year positively identified sharpened skills more frequently than students attending the program fewer than three times.

Significance

When students do not or cannot read for comprehension, motivation to read and self-confidence as a reader stalls, which in turn deters students from the reading practice needed to strengthen their ability. Skills, motivation or interest to read, and reading confidence work in concert to propel student ability forward. ABG engages students through increased time spent reading and through methods that help them learn to pull meaning out of what they read. Through ABG, students are not only learning how to better comprehend what they read but they are gaining confidence in a variety of skills that can help them become life-long learners.

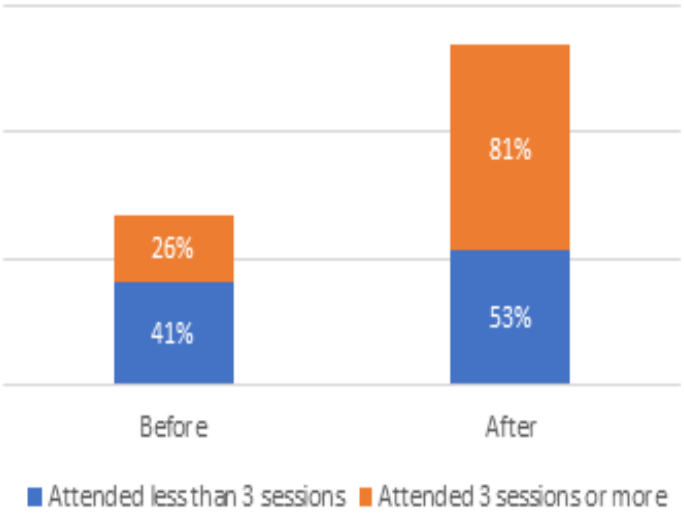
Finding 2: Youth Become Advocates for Themselves

By the end of the program, 100% of teachers interviewed reported growth in student confidence. Most immediately, students saw that they could, in fact, finish a book — for some, this was the first book they had ever finished in their lifetime — and student pride in getting through books reoccurred as a theme in student interviews. Students were recognizing that they could read with comprehension, and each month as the pages turned, pens scribbled and discussions continued, teachers witnessed students taking risks in front of one another as well. This is where Words Alive staff, volunteers and partner teachers saw that growing skills and confidence were changing the caliber of the discussion and the learning dynamic in class. Students were, in effect, showing up differently for the program: we heard new student voices chiming in during discussions, witnessed others volunteer to read aloud or share a piece of their writing and, in a move of classroom leadership, step up to help facilitate book club discussions alongside volunteers or fellow classmates. As one teacher described it, "students have come alive."

In addition to gains in student confidence observed by teachers, students viewed themselves as better readers after the program. Figure 2 depicts, on a Likert-type scale of 1–5, the percentage of students who rated themselves a good (4) or very good (5) reader before and after participating in the program. Again, the data showed that students who attended more program sessions were showing greater gains. In addition to students that rated themselves as either "good" or "very good" readers, students who participated in three or more sessions self-reported improved reading ability compared to 28% of students who attended less than three program session**Significance**

The lives of many students in the ABG program are scarred by crisis, failure, loss and missteps. These students are also bright, creative and remarkable survivors,

Figure 2. Before and after comparison of students rating themselves good or very good as a reader.



but the circumstances of their lives often undercut their confidence as learners and their engagement in their learning environment. Thus, taking risks, especially in the role of learner and in front of their peers, is not a comfortable one. However, with practice, engaging tasks and encouragement from consistent and caring adults, students develop the confidence to take a more active role in their own learning and support the learning environment of others.

Finding 5: Students Develop an Enduring Commitment to Reading

A different but related shift in attitudes was around the value students place on reading as an activity. In interviews, students shared the realization that reading can be anything from a magazine article, to a novel, to the

Spanish captions that scroll across the television screen. They recognize that reading is everywhere, intertwined in all aspects of life. One teacher noted the shift in attitude about reading from an assignment to a tool, stating:

"Since we've started encouraging the girls to relate and see themselves and their world in the text, making that the most important thing, we've gotten them to connect to reading. That psychological shift away from reading as something you have to do at school to reading as something that can help you overcome something, that reading can give you solutions to things in your life, reading has become a tool of liberation."

One student shared her perspective on reading and how it's changed:

"I feel like I'm getting better at reading. I'm not a pro. I hated reading, now I like books, especially if they're interesting. Knowing different things, other peoples' struggles, or like relating to other peoples' stories."

*Another student shared the impact reading has h*ad in his life:

"Reading gets you far, keeps you out of trouble, teaches you things you didn't know about life. I just think open, I don't think about myself, I think about my surroundings. I think about how to get further in life."

Significance

It is evident from discussions with students participating in ABG that they have a better understanding of the importance of literacy and what books and reading allows them to do. As a result of greater engagement with reading, they are able to better understand the world around them and become increasingly aware of their surroundings. The students better understand that reading matters and is an important aspect in life because it is ubiquitous.

Conclusion

During this process, Words Alive was able to gain a significantly deeper understanding of the value this program has in the classroom. Across the board, teachers and students alike expressed increases in reading skills, confidence in reading abilities, shifts to more positive attitudes towards reading, enhanced commitment to reading, improved communication, and enriched group learning. These findings have led us to broaden and diversify text selections, expand both creative and expository writing supplements, and increase opportunities for student-led classroom leadership.

Through the partnership with Momentum Learning and the SDCOE, Words Alive recognizes the interconnectedness literacy has in our everyday lives and the increased need to support the development of strong reading skills and habits in students and families. This type of collaboration provides the tools necessary for students to find a passion for reading – awakening a renewed sense of academic freedom and confidence in building an enriching future.

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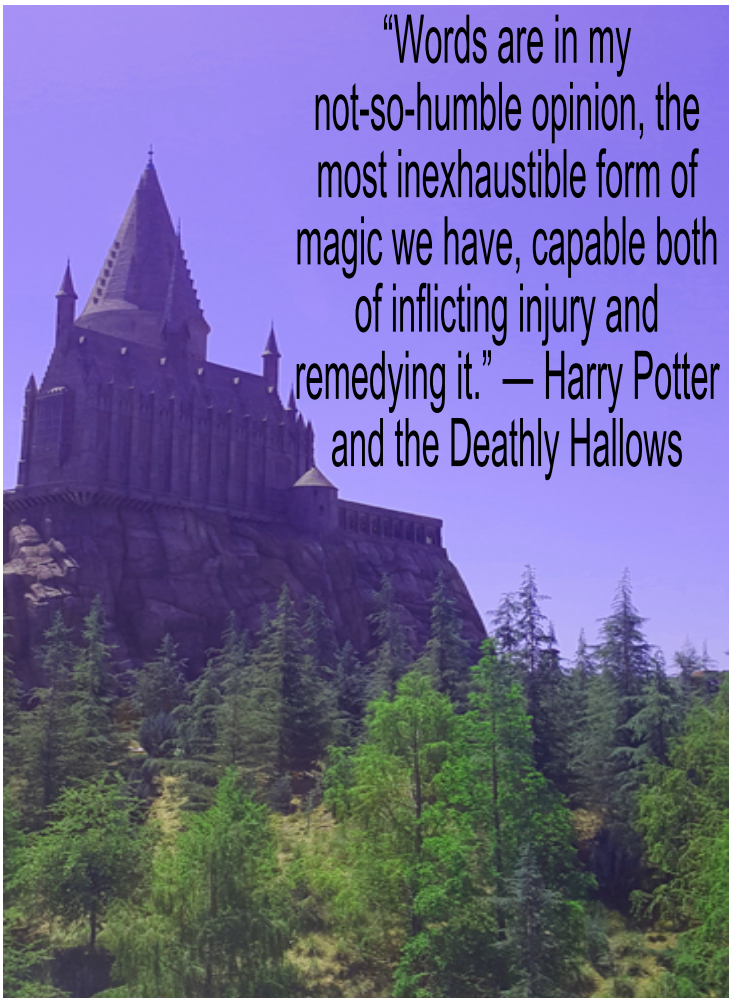

WHAT'S SPRINGING UP IN STANISLAUS?
BY
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"Eventual success, not only in school, but in the world of work, is largely dependent on the ability to read."

-Susan Rich

Eagle Scout Calvin Flores-Sullivan built, planted, and filled one for the Robertson Road neighborhood in Modesto.
Retired teacher Toby Ayres sponsored one in her front yard in Oakdale.

Students at the Stanislaus Military Academy have built over thirty for community agencies.

What is it? A Little Free Library.

Currently, all fifty states in the US and 40 countries have these new phenomena. They rather look like bird houses on steroids. Typically, the "house" is a wooden structure with shelves, affixed to a post that is buried into the ground or bolted to a cement walkway. A plexi-glass door allows those walking by to sneak a peek at all the alluring titles housed in the structure with instructions inscribed on a plaque that read: "Take a Book. Return a Book." There are two registered in Turlock, one in Patterson, and fifteen so far in Modesto, but there are more coming. Finally, something worthwhile is "all the rage."

In 2009, Todd Bol, a Wisconsin resident, decided to honor his mother, a book lover and former school teacher, with a container that looked like a school house stuffed with books for the taking. What began as a tribute was soon to take off worldwide. This November 4, 2016, Little Free Libraries registered its 50,000th library.

These mini-libraries have sprung up where natural disasters have landed. After a flood, after a fire, it is not unusual for someone to sponsor such a library to ensure that children and adults have access to books when their primary sources have suddenly disappeared. Little Free Libraries have been placed where neighborhoods are far away from public libraries, and transportation is not always affordable or accessible. Little Free Libraries have been placed in zoos, on playgrounds, on school campuses, and in parks. Some kind soul sponsors the library, putting it in place and keeping it filled with books. And hopefully, that sponsor also registers the Little Free Library via the instructions provided on www.littlefreelibrary.org.

The website is a treasure trove. You can buy a little free library. You can access plans and build one yourself. You can utilize the map and discover all the locations of registered libraries near you. There are beautiful pictures of incredibly designed, beautifully painted, and artistically rendered versions across the nation. My personal favorite is the one a colleague spotted in Hawaii, topped with a thatched roof and a gecko painted as if it were poised momentarily on the front door.

At the very core of their existence, the Little Free Libraries are about being

kind, giving back to your community, and encouraging literacy. Eventual success, not only in school, but in the world of work, is largely dependent on the ability to read. Once you google it, you had better be able to read what Wikipedia has to say about it. Sharing books builds community, and sponsoring the point of exchange is just a nice thing to do.

Stanislaus READS! (a local iteration of the National Grade Level Reading Campaign) has been hard at work planting little libraries. The Stanislaus Military Academy (SMA) landed a grant from the Stanislaus Community Foundation for $5,000 and, with those funds, constructed over 30, some for indoor placement and some for outdoor. Some of those were painted by Great Valley Academy students, some by teachers in the pilot schools of Stanislaus READS! Principal Steve Kuykendall got his unpainted library on a Friday, and by the next Monday he had adorned it in his school colors and was putting it up at the front of Moon School in Waterford.

It's a win-win for everyone. Ron Kunnen, who teaches the SMA Wood Construction class, shared that "This has been a journey. Students have learned to be precise and how to take it apart and redo it, if the parts don't fit. They have mastered the use of a variety of tools like the compound miter saw and heavy duty staplers. They have learned tricks of the trade, like drilling pilot holes before hammering. Their quality control has improved, and the end product is real quality."

BUILDING SAFE HAVENS FOR STUDENT LEARNING: INSTITUTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

BY:
MARTINE WATKINS AND DENISE "SONY" SANSON

"Our students are happier and kinder. They push back a lot less and the feeling on our campus is different. They want to be here."

- Denise "Sony" Sanson

The moment I walk into the sparkling new campus of Sequoia Schools, I can feel a difference. Some students sport sweatshirts with the school's logo of majestic Sequoia redwood trees. There are families in the front office. Like typical teenagers, students are clustered together around the campus, chatting and laughing. These are alternative education students: some have been expelled from comprehensive high schools. Others simply have not found success in previous school settings. Despite whatever challenges may have brought them to this school, their resilience is evident. I am here to interview the school's leaders to find out about the role of Restorative Justice in shaping this new culture.

While there is a foundational understanding of Restorative Justice amongst staff in Alternative Education, Sequoia Schools is translating the theory into practice. It is a profound shift, and although it will take time to fully implement, positive results are already evident.

So what is Restorative Justice or Restorative Practice?

As a Senior Community Organizer at the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, I've been involved in Restorative Justice for over a decade, overseeing our local Teen Peer Court juvenile diversion program. Bridging our Restorative Justice program and Alternative Education has been my aspiration. With the opening of Sequoia Schools, the opportunity arose to work alongside my colleagues to build capacity and make this aspiration a reality.

According to the February 2016 WestED, Restorative Justice in Schools: A Research Review publication, "Restorative Justice is a broad term that encompasses a growing social movement to institutionalize peaceful and non-punitive approaches for addressing harm, responding to violations of legal and human rights, and problem solving. RJ has been used extensively both as a means to divert people from official justice systems, and as a program for convicted offenders already supervised by the adult or juvenile justice system."

"In the school setting, it often serves as an alternative to traditional discipline, particularly exclusionary disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion. RJ proponents often turn to restorative practices out of concern that more exclusionary disciplinary actions tend to be associated with harmful consequences for children (e.g., Losen, 2014)."

Much of the academic literature on Restorative Practices validates this approach to school climate and discipline as effective and yielding positive results. While WestED researchers acknowledge the limitations of Restorative Justice data, their findings suggest that it works. Mainly through case studies, they illustrate what we might expect. Students feel a sense of belonging and respect. Instances of school violence go down. Suspensions and expulsions significantly diminish. Racial disparities are reduced. And a more positive school climate is created.

It is one thing to read about the benefits of Restorative Practices and Restorative Justice. For the students and staff at Sequoia Schools, who are living it, the shift has been sometimes challenging, yet transformational. The combination of the opening of the new Sequoia Schools site, strong leadership, and the staff's willingness to embrace these challenges, provided the catalyst for implementing Restorative Justice in Alternative Education.

From before the ribbon cutting of the new campus, Sequoia School administrators, Assistant Director of Alternative Education Denise "Sony" Sanson, and Lead Teacher Sarah Prescher, have been committed to making Restorative Justice a priority. It hasn't been completely smooth. It takes commitment on all parts, plus perseverance and practice for a school to become restorative. Sony and Sarah credit the entire school staff for having the willingness to actively participate in circles and to implement the tools that emphasize the foundational values of Alternative Education in Santa Cruz County: that the students innately want to do good, want to belong, and want to be valued.

While interviewing Sequoia Administrators, it immediately becomes apparent that RJ impassions them. Both Sarah and Sony visibly light up as they talk about playing an active role in changing lives, the importance of equity in education, and dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline.

"I was drawn to Restorative Justice because of the social justice element… thinking about the statistics of who is locked up and knowing it is up to us to change the trajectory of these young people's lives, and interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline. It feels good to know that I have a job that matters and is changing lives." - Sony

According to one student, "I feel like it's better to talk to us instead of being against us. You get to hear our side of the story and then you come to a conclusion about how to fix it. Suspending kids would make me feel upset and angry like I wasn't wanted here. I like this school and I wouldn't want to move. I really do feel wanted here. You guys have faith in me." (Carmen, 9th grader)

As I talk with Sarah and Sony, they encourage each other to share stories about the students. Sarah was excited to tell me that just that day a teacher had told her that two students had on their own, organically used Restorative Practices, defusing (or as described by the students "squashing it") a situation that came up during basketball after school. The students moved on with mutual respect.

Sony noted that at the old alternative education site in Watsonville, you'd see students with their hooded sweatshirts on, interacting with one another minimally. Now, they have full games going on during lunch, there is a basketball team, and students shed their sweatshirts feeling free to just be kids. Sony smiled as she reflected, "It's been so great to see our students, once so inhibited, physically and emotionally, coming out of their shells.

Both Sony and Sarah agreed that while they have a commitment to making this profound shift, it hasn't been easy. "Honestly, it's been tough, and there have been challenges. It was about letting go of how we've always done business, being vulnerable, supporting everyone though the transition, and trusting our students."

In the past, taking a hard-lined one-size fits all discipline policy approach to challenging situations may have seemed easier, but it didn't fix anything. The investment in Restorative Practices has completely changed the culture of the Sequoia School community.

One student had this to say about restorative circles: "I felt awkward and uncomfortable in the circle, but if I hadn't done it, I wouldn't still be at this school. I already know everybody here, and if I had left, I would have had to start all over. Now, I have a job, I'm earning my credits, and I'm doing better." (Franco, Grade 11)

"As a result, our school climate has changed. The feeling on the campus is different. We now have a feeling of community, trust, and respect. It was hard to shift at first, but we worked at it. Under the roof of our new school, we were determined to remove the institutional, deficit-based feel of a strict controlled environment in order to shift to a more open and accepting school. Students are happier and easier to work with as a result, and there isn't that hard push back and defiance from them. Students aren't feeling shut down or as if staff is trying to get them in trouble." – Sarah

When discussing the future of Restorative Practices at Sequoia Schools, Sony and Sarah both share a common commitment. According to Sarah, "My wish is for Restorative Practices to be embedded into everything we do here. Going forward, we will support our community fully as we embrace this vision together."

Restorative Justice is about honesty and communication. Circles provide a space for youth and adults to listen, to be heard, to right wrongs, and to resolve conflict peacefully. It is a genuine process that is greatly impacting our school in a positive way.

In the end, it is this shared commitment of respect and equity for students - staying true to the Sequoia Schools motto, and defined by the trees for which the school was named: "Stand Tall, Strengthen Your Roots, Always Keep Growing."

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COME BACK BUTTE CHARTER - FINISHING WHAT THEY STARTED

BY
JANIS DELGADO AND KAREN STILES, BUTTE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"Everyone faces stress from time to time in their life. Learning to deal with it in a productive way and move forward is what Come Back Butte Charter is all about."

-Janis Delgado and Karen Stiles

In 2014 Butte County reported that 265 students had dropped out of school and an additional 99 had not earned the required credits to earn a high school diploma after completing four years of school. Butte County Office of Education saw the need for increased opportunities for high school completion and in response to this ongoing issue, BCOE's Student Programs and Services Division wrote and received funding for charter school #1811, Come Back Butte Charter.

Come Back Butte Charter, also known fondly known simply as Come Back, is a charter school located in Oroville, California which serves and motivates students, ages 17 and older, who do not have a high school diploma. Our students are encouraged and supported to, "Come Back and finish what you started." Come Back students are provided with the opportunity to earn their high school diploma or equivalency and think about new ways to focus on their future goals and plans. Through an independent study program students meet with teachers once each week to track their progress toward graduation as they work at their own pace using an on-line curriculum at home, in community partner computer labs and/or at the school computer lab. The Come Back staff works with each individual student to set attainable goals and work toward finishing high school, developing skills to prepare for vocational programs, pursue higher education, and enter the workforce, or rethink their aspirations in the world of work.

Of course, Come Back students work on daily assignments, but Come Back also is a place to help students think about their future and how they can make it better. Recently students had the opportunity to participate in a class called "Becoming a Resilient Person: The Science of Stress Management." Students met one time per week for four weeks with BCOE behavior specialist Jen Garcia to learn the science behind stress and how it impacts our physical and emotional well-being. Students also explored different concepts related to building their own resiliency, the ability to bounce back from adverse situations. During the course, students learned about mindfulness practices, strategies to manage intense emotions and activities to promote positive emotions. Students also participated in activities which allowed them to clarify their personal values and learn strategies to stick to those values. During the four weeks, students were encouraged to teach others about what they were learning and practice some of the new strategies and skills they learned about in class.

Six Come Back students participated in the Resiliency class. They eagerly shared how the class content made them think about themselves as becoming more successful at handling the stresses of life. Our plan is to continue with this workshop approach to deliver classes on other life skills, job skills and academic skills.

Everyone faces stress from time to time in their life. Learning to deal with it in a productive way and move forward is what Come Back Butte Charter is all about. Who are Come Back students?

- "When I was in 10th grade my grandma got sick. There was no one to take care of her so I needed to stay home with her from time to time. Eventually, it was every day and I was no longer going to school. I tried to return during my junior year, but I was behind and it was hard to catch up so I just quit going. I felt like the school didn't care if I went so why should I care? Now I have two children and I want to be a good role model for them." – 21 year old female

- A recent text from a student, "Hi Matt. I'm so sorry I missed our appointment. There's been a lot of drama at the shelter we're living in. I have now moved to a better shelter where it's peaceful so I can focus. I didn't get much work done, but I do plan on finishing up my assignments before next week." - 27 year old female
- "Living with my mom was too hard, so I went to live with my aunt, uncle and her four children. I'm trying to find a job so that I can take care of myself. Attending a school like Come Back is perfect for me. I'm already earning credits!" -18 year old male
- "When I was in high school drugs became more important than anything, I got lazy and quit going to school. After my first daughter was born when I was 19 I continued to make bad choices. After spending time in prison I knew what I needed to do. I'm happy that I found Come Back because here I have an opportunity to get a high school diploma. I need to earn a diploma to get a good job; I need to have a career." 39 year old male
- "I chose the wrong path early in life. My polluted behavior led me to make so many wrong decisions. I had no dad at home and my mom had to work to take care of our family. I entered the system at 11 years old. I had no good role models. Eventually, I ended up in prison. While there I found myself looking up to people who were bigwigs in prison, but on the outside were just crooks. At one point I was facing 25 years to life in prison. I finally woke up and realized that you have to take it upon yourself to accept what you have done and turn things around. I have been given the opportunity to make something of my life and I am at the right place to accept it. I've decided to live by the mantra 'don't let a bad moment be a bad day' from now on I will no longer let my past define me. I am looking forward to a good future with my children. I'm glad I found Come Back!" – 36 year old male.
- When completing Student Referral forms for students who are interested in enrolling at Come Back, we ask them how they heard about our school. One young man said, "Word on the street!" He went on to say, "Word on the street is that this is the place to come if you really want to finish!"

The emphasis on teaching others in the community comes from one of the three foundational tenets of the school, Teach All, Commit to Finishing, Be Present (TCB). TCB is our Come Back approach to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) which promotes the idea of teaching and incentivizing behaviors we want our students to demonstrate, such as earning credits, attending all weekly appointments and arriving on time, as well as demonstrating positive behaviors in their daily lives like keeping appointments, making positive life choices, and participating in the academic lives of their children.

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DISCOVER A NEW CHALLENGE
BY
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"We now have an amazing program in San Joaquin County that will help hundreds of at-risk youth each year transform their lives so they can achieve success and be positive contributors to our community,"

-James Mousalimas

It took years of planning and preparation before Jan. 14, the day the inaugural class of the Discovery ChalleNGe Academy first arrived to line up in neat rows on a cold and foggy morning at the Army Depot in Lathrop.

Offered through a partnership of the California National Guard and the San Joaquin County Office of Education, the Discovery ChalleNGe Academy is a military-style residential program for teens who have either dropped out of high school or need help to keep from dropping out. It is only the third National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program in the state and the first in Northern California.

"We now have an amazing program in San Joaquin County that will help hundreds of at-risk youth each year transform their lives so they can achieve success and be positive contributors to our community," San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools James Mousalimas said.

On Feb. 24, the community came out to tour the campus and welcome the unique institution to San Joaquin County.

Mousalimas was joined at the ribbon-cutting ceremony by U.S. Rep. Jerry McNerney and California Assemblymember Susan Talamantes Eggman, two lawmakers whose efforts at the state and federal levels were able to secure the facilities and the funding that made the opening of Discovery possible.

The academy offers a highly structured environment that promotes leadership, cooperation, and academic skills, while building self-esteem, pride, and confidence. Staffed by National Guard cadre and SJCOE teachers, it is open to teens in all of Northern California.

The program consists of a 22-week residential phase followed by a 12-month post-residential phase. Once accepted into the program, cadets are introduced to the military structure, participate in team-building activities, practice making healthy choices, attend school daily, gain organizational and study skills, participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and receive the support they need to turn their lives around. The cadets improve the lives of others, too, by performing community service through the program.

SHOWING UP TO SUCCEED
ONE. PROGRAM STUDENTS MEET THE (ATTENDANCE) CHALLENGE
BY: SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"Having perfect attendance is a really big deal for them, and they need be recognized for that."

- Lonnie Cox

The message to the students dining on roast sirloin and chicken Marsala at a midday meal in a conference room at the San Joaquin County Office of Education on Jan. 6 was clear: Showing up matters.

The students were being rewarded and honored for having perfect attendance for the first half of the 2016-17 school year. In total, 38 students had perfect attendance. The gathering was just one part of a revamped attendance incentive program for students in the SJCOE's one.Program. Students who continue to have perfect attendance will be headed to a field trip to California's Great America in May.

Students Dawnie and Roxanne said they expect to make it to the amusement park trip. Both said they cut class – a lot – when they were younger. But good friends and "cool teachers" at one.Dream Academy keep them coming to school, they said.

They also realize why it's important to be there. "To succeed, you have to go to school," Roxanne said.

The one.Program Attendance Challenge also offers quarterly prizes for students with perfect attendance and monthly pizza parties for sites with the best attendance. Students who graduate leave school with a $250 scholarship for every perfect-attendance year they had.

And while attendance-incentive programs are not unusual, the students in the SJCOE's one.Program can be more difficult to reach. It is an alternative education program for some of the most at-risk students in San Joaquin County, including students who are homeless, foster youth, referred by probation and social services, along with students who have been expelled from other school districts for discipline, truancy, and other issues. Not showing up for school is a big reason why many of the students are in the program.

"Having perfect attendance is a really big deal for them, and they need be recognized for that," said Lonnie Cox, the one. Program administrator overhauling the attendance-incentive program. And promoting attendance is good for the wider community, too, he said.

"These kids here are our future," he said. "If students can go to school every day, that means they can go to a job every day."

Community support is behind the Attendance Challenge, too. The prizes are paid for through fundraisers, the fine dining at the luncheon was provided by Papapavlo's Bistro and Bar at a discounted price, and community volunteer Steve Fisher of Horace Mann Insurance picks up the tab for the pizza parties. Administration and staff at the California Health Care Facility also donated $1,500 in support in January.

Before lunch was served, County Superintendent of Schools James Mousalimas went from table to table to meet each student being recognized. "It's just amazing," he said in his opening remarks. "It just shows that you have what it takes to be successful." The students appreciated the reward as well as the recognition.

"I feel great, because this is my first and only award I've ever got," said Alonzo, a freshman in the one.Program.

In addition to the meal at the SJCOE, the students with perfect attendance were treated to a presentation from Matt Bellace, a comedian with a Ph.D. in clinical neuropsychology who specializes in helping youth.

Bellace's "How to Get High Naturally" program encourages over 100,000 kids a year worldwide to pursue natural highs and make healthy choices. Matt was a recurring comedian on truTV's hit show, "World's Dumbest."

On Jan. 6, he also spoke to students from one. John F. Cruikshank at Juvenile Hall and met with professionals in the county at a symposium hosted by the SJCOE's Foster Youth and Homeless Services.

For more information:

www.mattbellace.com.

Steve Fisher of Horace Mann insurance: https://agents.horacemann.com/

http://papapavlos.com/

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Facilities_Locator

SUPPORTING CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SUCCESS

BY

MICHELLE TREVINO

"Through the Art and Design program, students have the opportunity to explore art in all of its diverse forms and discover an outlet for positive expression."

-Michelle Trevino

Career Technical Education (CTE) offers students the opportunity to gain the technical and employability skills, along with gaining the mathematics and literacy needed for true career readiness. Students in CTE programs participate in authentic, meaningful experiences that improve the quality of their education and increase their engagement and achievement. CTE provides students with career exploration opportunities earlier in their educational experience, which enables them to make informed and beneficial decisions about their academic coursework and pursue established programs of study and career pathways. Leaders from business and industry nationwide report increasing challenges related to addressing the skills gap and connecting qualified professionals with available careers in critical and growing CTE-related fields, including healthcare, energy, advanced manufacturing and information technology. CTE prepares students for these and other fulfilling careers by offering integrated programs of study that link secondary and postsecondary education and lead to the attainment of industry-recognized credentials.

Alice M. Worsley School, the Court School
operated by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, offers career readiness programs, such as Regional Occupation Program (ROP) Art and Design and Welding courses, to prepare students for successful employment and access to higher education. These courses offer a high degree of student engagement in learning and the development of skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life.

The Art and Design ROP course supports the personal and artistic development of students by providing opportunities to be creative, imaginative, innovative, and critical thinkers. The Art and Design Instructor, Patty Hiebert, has extensive education and background in the Arts, having graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Art with an emphasis in Painting and Graphics Design, as well as working for nine years as a Graphic Artist for the Fresno County Public Library System prior to beginning her teaching career.

Students create original works of art by exploring and utilizing diverse techniques and materials, including fine arts, animation, illustration, computer-generated art, various painting disciplines, sculpture, and assorted drawing methods. Students engage in a variety of real world project-based learning activities to provide a practical application and hands-on learning approach, such as creating centerpieces, art auction items, and signage for the much anticipated annual Court Schools PTA Spaghetti Luncheon/Silent Auction fundraising event. Some students have competed in a countywide art competition sponsored by the Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, which provides the opportunity to showcase their creativity and talent.

Through the Art and Design program, students have the opportunity to explore art in all of its diverse forms and discover an outlet for positive expression. Additionally, students learn to create a resume, interview

preparation, and other job readiness skills to increase their potential employment opportunities and develop pathways to post- secondary and career success.

The Welding Course offers students a unique educational opportunity to receive instruction and introductory training needed to enter the welding profession. The welding instructor, Greg Barragan, has 15 years' experience as a welding instructor and 40 years of field experience.

Through instruction and hands-on learning, students develop entry-level employment skills and can earn a state welding certification in MIG, TIG, and ARC welding. Additionally, students acquire skills in safety, as well as career readiness and employability skills to prepare for success in the workplace. Welding students apply their knowledge and technical skills, and showcase their creative skills by creating works of art from metal.

Many of these metal art projects are displayed as centerpieces and auctioned at the annual Court Schools' fundraising event. Proceeds go directly to support the individualized needs of students, such as scholarships for post-secondary education, test fees for welding certification, specialized apparel, safety gear, and equipment needed for employment. Through Mr. Barragan's close connection with local employers in the welding industry, job placement opportunities have been provided for a number of students who have successfully completed the welding course and earned certification. Mr. Barragan maintains contact with former students who are employed in the welding industry and continues to serve as their mentor.

The ROP Art and Design and Welding Courses provide valuable academic and work experience as well as opportunities for students to explore career pathways and develop life skills. These courses have become an essential part of the program by fostering a hands-on learning environment that builds students' self-confidence and keeps them engaged and motivated to learn. The success story of one former welding student provides a glimpse of how these courses can touch and change lives. Through job placement, this former student was hired at a local welding company just three days after completing his sentence at the Fresno County Juvenile Justice Campus. Returning to deliver the keynote speech at the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools' annual All Staff Day, the Back to School rally for employees, he attributed his personal growth and career success to having the opportunity to learn welding skills and gain experience that translated into a career. "Know that you did something and know that that something has made me who I am today."

BUILDING BRIDGES - A PATH TO MEANINGFUL TRANSITIONS FROM RESIDENTIAL TO NON-RESIDENTIAL TO COLLEGE AND CAREERS

BY : PAMELA DOBRENEN, KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, KERN YOUTH @ WORK

"The vision of Kern Youth @ Work is to re-engage learners in education through career and technical offerings."

-Pamela Dobrenen

Bridges Career Development Academy is a structured and supervised school-based collaborative that is a partnership between Kern County Superintendent of Schools Alternative Education Court Schools, Kern County Probation Department, Mental Health, and various other agencies. Youth, ages 16-18+, transitioning from one of our county's residential juvenile justice facilities can enter Bridges Academy and receive vocational education, enrichment, career readiness skills, and post-secondary and career assistance while working to finish high school.

Bridges Academy was established with the hope of becoming a one-stop resource for justice-involved youth. Although most students are still on probation, the choice to attend the school is voluntary. The student agrees to be searched daily and drug-tested randomly as part of the enrollment agreement. In return, they are offered transportation by probation if needed to and from school each day, the opportunity to finish their high school requirements with a blended-learning model, career and technical courses, an art program, sewing classes, a running team, career readiness training and support, work-based learning opportunities, on-site mental health services, college and career-focused field trips, and both girls and boys life skills support groups.

The Career Development Academy has been running with the current educational model for the past two years and the word has spread to our clients. The school maintains a target of 40 students and generally runs at capacity or above. The youth served here recognize the benefits they are receiving and it has become a safe and supportive environment to come to each day. There is also an Alumni Club for students that have exited Bridges. These young adults know the door is always open long past graduation. Almost daily, former students return to update resumes, conduct job searches in the computer lab, receive support for upcoming job interviews, get help with FAFSA completion and college registration, and the list goes on. To cite an example, a young man recently returned who had participated in the YouthBuild program facilitated by Kern Youth @ Work in previous years. Kern Youth @ Work is the umbrella identity for all of the C.T.E. programs in the court and community schools in Kern County. By his own admission, he began the program unfocused and not caring much about the opportunity. However, after successfully completing the initial phases his confidence grew and he began to learn new construction skills and participated in work-based learning off-site. He continued to take courses toward his high school diploma as part of this program. Away from school, however, his poor choices led to an arrest, conviction, and three years in state prison. Because of

the relationships that had been built at the school, however, contact was continued with his family and they were assured the door would be open if he needed help upon release. Fast forward three years and this gentleman returned to Bridges, focused and determined to complete what he had started. This month, at the age of 23, he finished his requirements to graduate high school, received a forklift safety certificate, and is working on his resume and portfolio to begin a job search while he continues his training.

Students with Completed Little Library Project

At Bridges Academy it is understood when working with our students it is a marathon and not a sprint. There are successes and failures daily, but the constant is that no one ever gives up on the belief that every single student has the potential to succeed and to have hope for a bright future. The vision of Kern Youth @ Work is to re-engage learners in education through career and technical offerings. The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice described in a letter dated December 2014 to the nation's chief state officers and attorney generals what reforms were needed to insure high-quality education in juvenile justice settings. (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 2014) The recommendations included the following:

"Making a full continuum of educational opportunities available to youth to meet their individual goals, including pathways to achieve high school diplomas, GEDs, college preparation, and career and technical training." (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, "Guiding Principles," 17.)

Additionally, Schargel and Smink identified five potential benefits of Career and Technical Education (CTE) to at-risk students in their book titled Strategies to Help the School Dropout Problem. These benefits include enhancement of students' motivation and academic achievement; increased personal and social competence related to work in general; a broad understanding of an occupation or industry; career exploration and planning; and acquisition of knowledge and skills related to employment. (Schargel F. a., 2001)

Bridges Academy offers a block schedule that includes construction technology for all students. The instructor is certified by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (N.C.C.E.R.) to teach the Core Construction course which, upon completion, will leave the student with an international industry-recognized certification in basic construction knowledge and skills. Kern Youth @ Work also offers this same course from the same instructor at Redwood High School for our incarcerated youth at the Crossroads Juvenile Justice Facility. By modularizing the course, a student can begin the certification in the residential facility and, upon release, enroll in Bridges Academy and continue with the certification in the non-residential setting. Providing instruction by the same teacher in both settings has helped students to adjust more rapidly to the new educational environment at Bridges. Once all of the modules are completed, the Bridges students then are able to enroll in the Applied Construction course and participate in work-based learning through Habitat for Humanity off-site during the construction block periods each week. The opportunity to get work experience has been a strong motivator to complete the certification. Even if a student does not remain with us to finish the entire course, the modules earned are tracked through the N.C.C.E.R. database and he/she could pick up right where they left off at another training facility in the future. This seems to help solve the problem of students moving in and out of programs and never staying long enough to obtain a

meaningful C.T.E. experience. Since Kern Youth @ Work began the N.C.C.E.R. construction program in September of 2016, nine students have completed certifications.

Work-based Learning with Habitat for Humanity

To further support the connectivity between the residential and non-residential programs, career specialists have been placed at each of the three residential sites and also at Bridges Academy. The career specialists assign and monitor Odysseyware coursework for the students. All students complete their economics and government coursework through this online program. Elective credits can also be obtained through the Odysseyware career exploration courses. Additionally, the career specialists coordinate on-site entrance testing and enrollment for the local community college, secure career pathway speakers each month representing one of the state-recognized pathways, conduct FAFSA workshops for parents, organize tours of college campuses and field trips to career days, track data for each participant noting career exploration and transitioning activities completed, and follow-up with former students. By having these C.T.E.-focused specialists at each site, it allows students to begin online coursework and transitioning activities in the residential facility and continue with them seamlessly as they move to Bridges Academy.

To address career readiness and soft skills attainment, a multi-week Senior Intensive course was developed. Students apply to participate in this on-going offering. The Senior Intensive Career Readiness course is funded through a W.I.O.A. (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act) grant from Employers Training Resource (E.T.R.). During the course students take classes in leadership, team-building, financial management, business communication, resumé writing, portfolio development, interviewing techniques, and etiquette skills. The class takes multiple field trips to expose the students to different career pathway sectors. The students earn either a forklift

Mayor Surprises Senior Intensive Students Practicing Their Etiquette Skills at a Local Restaurant

safety certification or a CPR/First Aid certificate.

The students participate in a business lunch at a local restaurant where they practice their newly-acquired etiquette skills and listen to a community speaker. Upon successful completion of the course the students are placed with an industry partner for a 10-week paid internship in an area of interest to the participant.

The newest addition to the Kern Youth @ Work program offerings is a Medical Pathway program that began in January of this year. Students were offered the opportunity to enroll in a Medical Terminology course that was approved for dual-enrollment with the local community college. The course takes place for three hours at one of the community schools two days per week and transportation is offered to and from the class to participants.

In conclusion, it seems the best indicator of the success of Kern Youth @ Work is to ask the students themselves. Here is a sampling of what students have to say about their experience:

Student Profile: Kamil Dixon

Kamil has used every minute at Bridges Academy to further her skills and add to her resumé. She has earned

the full N.C.C.E.R. Core Construction certification. She participated in the Senior Intensive course and is currently working in a paid internship with a daycare center. Kamil also completed a 10-week job readiness course sponsored by Starbucks where 2/3 of the participants will be offered employment. Additionally, Kamil was the catalyst for a service learning project over the holidays to collect and distribute care packages for the homeless in the community.

Here's what Kamil said about her experience with Kern Youth @Work:

"In the Senior Intensive class I learned how to budget my money, how to create an impressive resume, and how to use proper etiquette. In the construction class I discovered that there are many different careers within construction and that the trades offer high-paying jobs. Before I thought that college was the only path to a profitable career."

Student Profile: Francisco Reyes

Francisco has taken full advantage of all the services and opportunities offered to him at Bridges Academy. He has earned his full N.C.C.E.R. Core Construction certification and is working with Habitat for Humanity on a construction project two-days per week. Francisco participated in the Senior Intensive course and is currently working in a paid internship at Nick Rail Music store. Francisco also

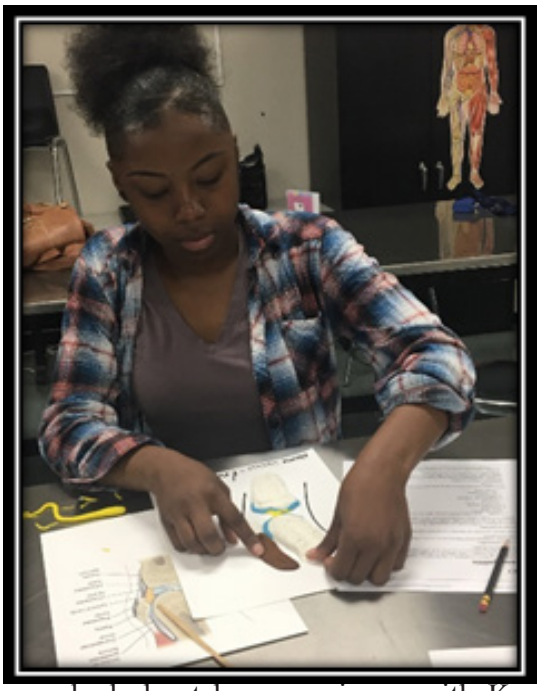
recently participated in the Leaders in Life Conference in Bakersfield. When asked about his experience since coming to Bridges Career Readiness Academy, Francisco responded…

"In the internship I am currently working in I am there to gain experience and to apply the skills I learned in the Senior Intensive course. I really want to be a businessman one day and this course has given me the skills I need to be
successful."

"I really want to thank the staff at Bridges Academy and Kern Youth @ Work for giving me the opportunity to gain all of this knowledge. Over the course of my time here I have learned so much. I give thanks because I came out (of residential) not thinking straight and not wanting to go to this school and be under probation. However, the probation and education staff at this school have changed my life. I'm enrolled in college and I plan to move forward with all of this knowledge that has been given to me."

Student Profile: Dajonique Hunter

Dajonique is currently enrolled in the Medical Terminology class where she will earn both high school and college credits upon completion. She also participated in the Senior Intensive course and is currently working in a paid internship with Habitat for Humanity's ReStore.



When asked about her experience with Kern Youth @ Work Dajonique said…

"In the Senior Intensive course I learned how to set goals and work towards them. Before this class I didn't have any goals. I just thought I'd graduate from high school and everything would be okay. No, that's not how it works. The class helped me set my goals and now I'm enrolled in the medical terminology class and looking forward to college."

kern youth@work

Making the Connection between Education and Employment

Congratulations to the 2016- 2017 JCCASAC Scholarship Recipients

ABOUT THE JCCASAC SCHOLARSHIP:

Twice a year, the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative Schools Administrators of California (JCCASAC) offers scholarships to Court and Community School graduates who will be attending college or have passed the GED within the 2016-17 school year. The scholarship is intended to pay for tuition and/or books up to $500. Two scholarships will be awarded in the southern section and two in the northern section this January. Each county may submit two applications per semester (for a total of four in a year).

Congratulations to Our Scholarship Winners!

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Jacob Straughen
Stanislaus

Jocelyn
Nicolette -Burr
Nevada

Michael
Montgomery
Mono

Jacqueline
Romero
San Diego

Dominic
Lopez
Los Angeles

Jesus
Padilla
Kern

Martin
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Los Angeles

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-Unknown

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