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Mentoring as a Pathway to Addressing Chronic Absenteeism in Urban High School Academies

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Tyeshia Hilbert has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ed.D. during this **Summer Semester 2020**.

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Dedication

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

I have stood on this scripture as long as I can remember and it was certainly fitting through this dissertation process. When man thought it was impossible to finish in the desired time frame and even stated that "we were walking up an icy slope with metal shoes on," I remembered that with God all things are possible. In the midst of a global pandemic, I was able to accomplish my goal and I give all glory to God. I dedicate this dissertation to my Heavenly Father and am asking Him to pave the way and order my steps that this doctorate will be used for His honor and glory.

Abstract

Chronic absenteeism is a rising concern for schools across the country. There are a host of reasons why students miss school: internal factors that can push students out of school and external factors that can pull students out of school. Districts have been mandated to implement strategies and supports that will combat this issue by increasing student attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism.

The concept of mentoring has been around for centuries and recently has been associated with improvement in the attendance of chronically absent students. This dissertation intended to examine attendance and chronic absenteeism rates of students in two urban high school academies who participated in mentoring programs as compared to students who did not. This study aimed to reveal how impactful mentoring is on attendance and chronic absenteeism rates of high school students and whether or not gender and race has an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. This non-experimental study utilized quantitative methods to examine mentoring programs of 54 students at one academy and 96 students in the other. The study used a Difference-in-Difference statistical technique and regression analyses to compare the average daily attendance results from the treatment group (students being mentored) to the comparison group (students not being mentored) over two time periods: the months before and the months after each academy's program implementation. Results showed that participation in a mentoring program can predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism for high school students although results showed a decrease in student attendance after program implementation for both academies. Results also indicated statistical significance for males and Hispanic students at one academy, and statistical significance for males, females, Black, and Hispanic students at the other academy. Although there was statistical significance, the mentoring

programs were ineffective with showing an increase in students' attendance.

Key words: mentoring, chronic absenteeism, student attendance, success mentors

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Chapter I

Introduction

Context of the Study

The concept of mentoring has been widely cited as originating with the character of Mentor in Homer's Ancient Greek poem *Odyssey* (Smith & Open Learn University, 2018). In this literary work, the character Odysseus left to fight in the Trojan War and entrusted his son, Telemachus, to the care of his trusted companion, Mentor. Odysseus was away for decades, during which time Mentor continued to nurture and support Telemachus. Similar to the role that Mentor played in Telemachus' life, mentors serve to help counsel and support others at some point in their lives (Bozman, 2018). Mentoring is a positive, supportive relationship, encouraging young people to develop to their fullest potential (Mentoring Support Network, 2020). Mentoring is commonly defined as a relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person (Bozman, 2018). Mentoring can take on two forms: formal and informal.

Bozman (2018) defines formal mentoring as a relationship that is more structured and based on a specific objective. Mentors in a formal relationship are expertly trained to coach and guide their mentees. Informal mentoring is defined as having little structure and based upon the chemistry and relationship between two people. Informal mentoring is bound together by the social and emotional ties between two people and tends to branch into a long-term friendship. The Association for Talent Development (ATD), an organization recognized as the world's largest association dedicated to developing talent in organizations and known for helping others achieve their full potential by improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities, discussed the different techniques or models associated with both formal and informal mentoring, such as one-

on-one mentoring, group mentoring, and peer mentoring (Association for Talent Development, 2020).

ATD states that one-on-one mentoring is the most traditional of all types of mentoring where only the mentor and mentee are involved, and generally consists of a more-experienced individual paired with a less-experienced or much younger mentee. They describe group mentoring as when one or several mentors work with a group of mentees. They state that schools and youth programs are known to apply this model because there may not be enough time or resources to have one mentor for each participant. Lastly, they define peer mentoring as when participants are paired with someone from the same role and offer support to each other. They state that this can take the form of either a group or one-on-one mentoring relationship. Regardless of the type of mentoring implemented, this personal attention from someone who cares about their future can have an astronomical impact on youth. Studies have shown that youth who have mentors have higher academic achievement, better physical health, socioemotional competence, and improved decision-making skills and goal-setting-self-efficacy (Bozman, 2018).

There is a lack of mentoring resources for youth in the United States (Bozman 2018). Bozman states that "16 million youth were without a mentor or adult in their life they felt they could talk to." Of those 16 million youth, Bozman expounds that nine million were at risk, meaning they were considered to have a higher chance of dropping out of school. Statistics have shown that at-risk students are at a greater risk of not graduating from high school and these numbers vary by race and gender. Child Trends (2015), the nation's leading research organization focused exclusively on improving the lives of children and youth, reported that Black and Hispanic youth are more likely than non-Hispanic, White, or Asian youth to drop out

of high school; and male youth and young adults are more likely than their female counterparts to drop out of high school. Students who are chronically absent or who miss 10% or more days of school are more likely to stop attending school altogether.

Chronic absenteeism is a global crisis that has taken the educational lives of millions of children. According to the 2015–2016 data from the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (2018), more than eight million students across the country were chronically absent during the 2015–2016 school year, an increase of one million students from the 2013–2014 report. To combat this national trend, in 2014, President Barack Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper Success Mentors Initiative (Obama White House, 2016), in conjunction with the federal government's law Every Student, Every Day: A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism, also known as the Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These initiatives asked community leaders to partner with school districts and provide resources and mentoring to at-risk students. This initiative zoned in on Hispanic and African American males in sixth through ninth grades, supporting the data of this population being more at-risk than their peers. The specific framework and structure of mentoring implementation was up to the individual institutions. This meant that districts and their partners had carte blanche on whether or not the mentoring implementation was formal or informal.

The U.S. Department of Education's approval of ESSA in 2017 empowered local districts to identify their students' unique needs and to implement evidence-based interventions and supports to help students receive the education they deserve. The Community Schools model was another strategy that state and local districts implemented to meet the needs of the whole child:

> Title IV of ESSA acknowledges the need to attend to the whole child emotionally, socially, physically, and academically and provides formula grants for this purpose. Title IV also establishes incentives for local districts to target funding strategies based on student needs through two new programs: The Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Pilot and the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. The latter is a grant program to help school districts boost community engagement, and it incorporates community school practices. Title IV requires the engagement of community partners (Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam, 2017, p. 8).

Statement of the Problem

New Jersey identified chronic absenteeism as a major concern impacting student achievement. Although there was no requirement for a long-term goal or annual target for chronic absenteeism under ESSA, each school's chronic absenteeism rate was compared to the calculated state average according to the school's grade configuration, along with each student group also being compared to the state average (New Jersey Department of Education, 2017). Black and Hispanic students, as well as students with disabilities and English Learners had chronic absenteeism rates exceeding the state's average for the 2016–2019 school years. Table 1.1. provides statewide demographic information for chronically absent students for the 2016–2019 school years.

Table 1.1

Percentage of chronically absent students in grades K-12 in the state and each student group.

Student Group	% Chronically Absent		
	2016-2017	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**
Statewide	10.3%	10.9%	10.6%
White	8.4%	8.6%	8.0%
Hispanic	12.3%	13.4%	13.1%
Black or African American	16.2%	17.2%	17.6%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	4.5%	4.8%	4.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	14.2%	11.5%	12.4%
Two or More Races	9.6%	9.8%	9.7%
Female			10.4%
Male			10.7%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	15.2%	16.1%	16.0%
Students with Disabilities	16.2%	17.1%	16.5%
English Learners	11.2%	12.3%	12.2%

Note: From New Jersey Department of Education 2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019

New Jersey School Performance Reports on Chronic Absenteeism

For high school students, the chronic absenteeism rate continued to increase each year as students matriculated to another grade level. For example, students who were ninth graders during the 2016–2017 school year showed a chronic absenteeism rate of 11%. This percentage increased to 13% during the 2017–2018 school year for tenth graders, and increased again in the 2018–2019 school year with eleventh graders showing a chronic absenteeism rate of 14%. Table 1.2 and Figure 1.1 provide a statewide breakdown of the percentage of students who were chronically absent by grade level for the 2016–2019 school years.

Table 1.2

Percentage of chronically absent students in grades K–12 in the state by grade level

Grade Level	% Chronically Absent		
	2016-2017	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**
PK	31.0%	31.0%	31.0%
KG	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%
1	9.0%	9.0%	10.0%
2	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
3	7.0%	8.0%	7.0%
4	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%
5	7.0%	8.0%	8.0%
6	8.0%	9.0%	8.0%
7	9.0%	10.0%	9.0%
8	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
9	11.0%	11.0%	11.0%
10	12.0%	13.0%	12.0%
11	14.0%	15.0%	14.0%
12	20.0%	21.0%	19.0%

*Note***:** From New Jersey Department of Education (2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019)

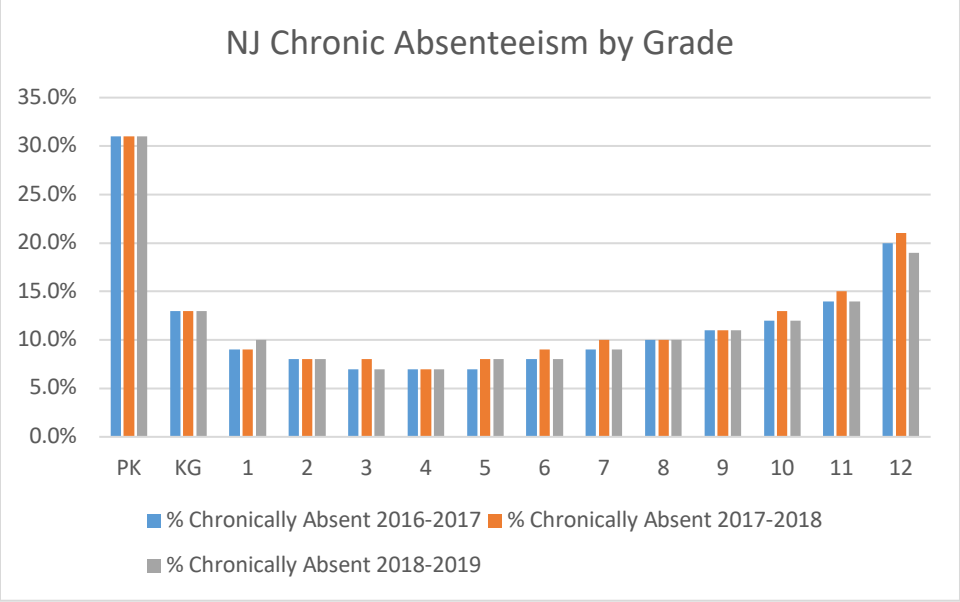


Figure 1.1 Percentage of chronically absent students in grades K–12 in the state by grade level.

Note: From New Jersey Department of Education (2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019)

Although there have been slight decreases in chronic absenteeism rates with some grade levels and student groups, this upward trend in chronic absenteeism rates as students progress from one grade level to the next is a concern. In an upward trend similar to the nation's, urban districts continued to struggle with chronic absenteeism with some schools showing more than 40% of its population categorized as chronically absent. Despite understanding how critical it was for high school students to attend school every day, districts continued to struggle with implementing strategies to increase student attendance and decrease chronic absenteeism rates.

There are many factors that influence why a child may not attend school. At the high school level, students are typically responsible for getting themselves to school. Is there some inherent need not being filled that causes students to be absent? Is there bullying or some other school factor pushing the child out of school? Is there a pressing family need that keeps the child from consistently being in their classes? Despite the reason, pairing a student with a mentor could allow students to develop that relationship where they could talk through any internal or external barrier they may be experiencing that may influence them to stay in school. The nation and state have gone to great lengths to provide resources they believe will address chronic absenteeism, but there still appears to be a deficiency. Existing research has shown that mentoring may be a key factor in improving student attendance (Railsback, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the influence mentoring has on the average daily attendance of chronically absent students at two thematic comprehensive high school academies in an urban district in northern New Jersey. This study examined this specific population of students since the two high school academies included in this research have some of the highest chronic absenteeism rates of the high schools in the state. Many factors contribute to this, such as

teenage pregnancy, students needing to work to support families at home, students being dissatisfied with school, and medical issues, to name a few. The state's compulsory attendance law requiring that students attend school through the age of 16 does not always result in compliance. This researcher was motivated to investigate the mentoring programs implemented at each academy, compare and analyze how they predict the average daily attendance of chronically absent students, and to discover the effect that gender and race had on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism of those high school students.

This study was conducted with staff serving as mentors for high school students at two high school academies. There were a total of 62 high school student participants in grades 9–12 at one academy, and 23 twelfth grade student participants at the other academy. This study will add to the existing research about school-based mentoring and the impact it has on chronically absent high school students.

Significance of the Study

The State of New Jersey's Department of Education (2019) has recognized that student absenteeism leads to low academic achievement, dropping out of school, delinquency, and gang involvement. State regulations require each district to develop, adopt, and implement policies and procedures regarding the attendance of students and to educate stakeholders on a definition of unexcused absence that counts towards truancy. School districts with systems and policies in place pertaining to student absenteeism typically experience fewer numbers of dropouts and a greater number of graduates. Districts are also required to report student attendance and ensure they have a student information system (SIS) that accurately reports student attendance. Proactive ideas and strategies have been developed and provided to school districts to engage educators, families, and the community in an effort to improve student attendance. President

Barack Obama implemented the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative in 2014 as an intervention for districts to combat chronic absenteeism.

There have been many initiatives presented and implemented for at-risk seniors and underclassmen by all high schools in this urban district that showed a history of chronic absenteeism, with mentoring initiatives being one of many. Attendance Works (2018), a project committed to advancing student success and helping to close equity gaps by reducing chronic absence, reported that mentoring has a positive impact on student attendance and student achievement and states that the most critical strategy is using data to trigger early caring outreach to families and students who are already missing too many days of school. Studies conducted on mentoring have almost always involved partnerships with outside agencies or volunteers, rarely including school-based mentors that would permit students to form relationships with adults and have access to them all school year long.

Attendance Works (2018) also showed that schools that engaged students and parents in positive ways and provided mentors for chronically absent students saw improvement in attendance. In addition, they stated that such outreach was essential for identifying the barriers to attendance—hunger, access to health care, homelessness, transportation or other challenges—as well as the supports or resources that would help improve attendance, which would also support the strategy of full-service community schools that help to combat many of the external barriers keeping children from attending school. This research focused solely on comparing the average daily attendance rates of chronically absent students at two urban high school academies that implemented mentoring programs, with no focus on the community school's implementation; because the implementation did not officially begin until 2019, there was insufficient data to make a comparison.

This research identified two academies that had a mentoring component designed to combat chronic absenteeism. Both academies had a chronic absenteeism rate of over 40% for the 2018–2019 school year, as measured by the NJ School Performance Summary Report (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2019). All high schools in the district were mandated district wide to implement strategies to combat chronic absenteeism.

Research Questions

The study was grounded by an overarching research question: What impact, if any, does the implementation of a mentoring program have on the attendance of chronically absent high school students?

The following sub-questions guided the research:

1. To what extent does participation in a mentoring program predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students?
2. If there is an impact with mentoring, does gender or race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism?

Research Design

This quantitative, non-experimental study looked at mentoring programs that were implemented in two academies. The study used a Difference-in-Difference (DID) statistical technique in a regression model to compare the average daily attendance results from the treatment group (students being mentored) to the comparison group (students not being mentored) over two time periods: the months before and the months after each academy's program implementation. Descriptive statistics were also used to provide a brief summary of the samples in the study. The research will inform educators, practitioners, and researchers of the

development of current practices of mentoring and interventions to combat chronic absenteeism in public education.

Limitations of the Study

The population and sample were limited to two comprehensive high school academies in one urban school district. The mentoring program structures varied from building to building and durations were different for each. Attendance data for students who transferred into the identified setting was not readily accessible if they transferred either in or out of the academy during the 2018–2019 school year. Therefore, results were reported only for students with available attendance data for the entire year of program implementation for both schools. The researcher only had access to cumulative average daily attendance data and it would have been ideal to have attendance data from month to month. Because of this limitation, the researcher worked on the assumption that there were an equal number of days in every month and used an algebraic function to calculate the monthly attendance percentages for each student. This data may also be generalized to other high schools.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations for the study were as follows: (a) data was only analyzed and collected during the 2018–2019 school year, (b) the study only focused on two schools in the same school district, (c) the research only focused on one academic school year.

Theoretical Framework

Researchers have referred to many theories to determine why students eventually stop attending school. Some of these theories were described by Battin-Pearson et al. (2000) as academic mediation theory, general deviance theory, deviant affiliation theory, poor family socialization theory, structural strains theory, and pull-out-push-out theory. The theoretical

framework presented in this study is referred to as the pull-out and push-out theories of why students stop attending high school. Bradley & Renzulli (2011) describe the 'pull-out' theory as being associated with a student's decision not to attend school because of factors that are essentially pulling them out of school, such as marriage, having a child, financial responsibilities at home, and other decisions. They further define the 'push-out' theory as any school-related variable that ultimately pushes a student to not attend school, such as bullying incidents, a sense of not belonging, not doing well academically, social and emotional challenges, and other variables.

Rice (2015) with Advocates for Children of New Jersey indicated that while the negative effects of chronic absenteeism hold true for all socio-economic groups, students from low-income families and children of color are more likely to become chronically absent. Their absences are often attributed to the challenges of everyday life, such as unreliable transportation to and from school, unstable housing, and inadequate access to health care. Research also indicated that community violence plays a role. Students from low-income families are also at a disadvantage because they lack the resources to help make up important class time missed while absent. Poor attendance is a contributing factor to the achievement gap of students living in poverty and/or communities of color. Children from economically disadvantaged families also make up a significant portion of New Jersey's absent students. Although children in low-income families comprised 38 percent of the state's pre K–12 populations, they reflected approximately 55 percent of the number of children missing school (Rice, 2015, p.3).

Regardless of whether a student stopped attending school because of factors that either pulled or pushed them out, assigning a 'success mentor' to all chronically absent students, particularly those in high school, can make a difference. The mentors' support includes

personalized welcomes to school and calls home when students are missing school, among other steps. Connecting students with caring adults has led to positive outcomes in urban areas (Rice, 2015). A disproportionate number of students who stop attending school are from low-income families and more than half of the students who drop out are students of color. Hence, the already poor get poorer and the historically disenfranchised become further disenfranchised (Burbach, 2018). This additional layer of support to groups of students who already have glaring odds against them can provide them with the additional push they need to stay in school and forge beyond their challenges. Bozman (2018) concluded that mentoring is a practice that has been around throughout the history of mankind. It can be used to benefit an organization or improve the life of someone who is less fortunate. According to the late Dr. Daniel R. Vasgird, who was recognized as a well-respected research conduct ethicist, "It is the mentor who draws the best from the junior person by acting as an adviser, teacher, role model, motivational friend, and supportive advocate" (2018).

Definition of Terms

Academy: For the purpose of this study, 'academy' is defined as a high school in which special subjects or skills are taught and is a smaller school within the same building as other academies.

Average daily attendance (ADA): For the purpose of this study, 'average daily attendance or ADA' is defined as the total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of days in the regular school year. The state uses a school district's ADA to determine its funding.

Chronic absenteeism: For the purpose of this study, 'chronic absenteeism' is defined in New Jersey's ESSA State Plan as the percentage of a school's students who are not present for

10 percent or more of the days that they were 'in membership' at a school (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Community schools: For the purpose of this study, 'community schools' represents a place-based strategy in which schools partner with community agencies and allocate resources to provide an "integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement" (Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam, 2017, p. 9).

Dropout rates: For the purpose of this study, 'dropout rates' refers to the percentage of students who voluntarily or involuntarily leave high school permanently and do not return or transfer to another school within a year of leaving.

Graduation rates: For the purpose of this study, 'graduation rates' refers to the percentage of students in New Jersey who complete their high school education.

High school completion: For the purpose of this study, 'high school completion' is referred to as high school students who successfully graduated with their four-year cohort.

Magnet school: For the purpose of this study, 'magnet school' is referred to as a public school with special programs and instruction that are not available elsewhere in a school district and that are specially designed to draw students from throughout a district and that has additional application requirements.

Mentoring: For the purpose of this study, 'mentoring' refers to an adult meeting with a student in the identified setting at least twice a week with the goal of discussing his or her attendance and grades for the purpose of improvement and achievement.

Secondary: For the purpose of this study, 'secondary' refers to Grades 9 through 12 in all high schools.

Student Attendance: For the purpose of this study, 'student attendance' refers to the number of days that a student is present at a given school in a given school year.

Success mentoring program: For the purpose of this study, 'success mentoring' is derived from the 'My Brother's Keeper Success Mentors Initiative' implemented by President Barack Obama in 2014.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The purpose for this quantitative non-experimental study was to describe two comprehensive high school academies that implemented mentoring programs to combat chronic absenteeism, and to compare and analyze average daily attendance data between students who participated in the mentoring programs and students who did not. This section examines the recent research and current body of literature on formal and informal mentoring programs as well as chronic absenteeism and its impact on student attendance. The literature reviewed supports the problem statement and research questions outlined in Chapter I of this study. The literature review begins with a background of secondary education from past to present. The literature review continues with a discussion of various studies on mentoring and their outcomes, chronic absenteeism and its impact on high school students' attendance. Next, the literature review looks at a theoretical framework associated with students not attending school and eventually dropping out. Finally, the literature review concludes with the existing gap in the literature in school-based mentoring as an effective intervention to combat chronic absenteeism.

Literature Search Procedures

The peer-reviewed literature selection process included the gathering of work that aligned to the researcher's theory of thought. The researcher accessed several virtual sources to find articles germane to the study. The researcher utilized databases such as SAGE, EBSCO, Google Scholar, the Seton Hall University Repository, Dissertation Abstracts, and the State of New Jersey Department of Education School Report Card. In order to find articles that aligned with the researcher's theory of thought, search terms included mentoring and attendance, chronic absenteeism at the high school, and interventions to combat student absenteeism in the high

schools. The researcher focused the search on peer-reviewed literature, but also reviewed non-peer-reviewed literature for key words and statements that assisted with expanding terminology of statistical analysis terms. This study also used quantitative, qualitative, quasi-experimental, and meta-analysis studies.

Overview of Secondary Education in America

The History of Secondary Education

Enrollment in a public American high school was a rarity for all children until the twentieth century. Prior to the nineteenth century, secondary schooling was handled primarily through private institutions reserved for wealthy boys and focused on teaching them about commerce. The *Encyclopedia of Education* (2002) described early private secondary education in this way:

> Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, private academies and tutors prepared wealthy boys for college. Academies, controlled by an independent board, required tuition and were distinguished from one another by regional and local needs. As a result, the curriculum and religious orientation were not the same at each school. The college preparatory curriculum was classical in nature, focusing on Greek and Latin (p. 2).

These private beginnings are thought to impact the debate that continues today. Independent academies had the autonomy to offer classes that benefitted the regional and local needs of their communities, so course offerings varied by city and school. For example, Boston Latin School was designed to give boys from elite families the education they needed in order to attend college and take their place in society (*Encyclopedia of Education*, 2002, p. 2). In order to service the rising needs of the merchant and craftsmen class, private academies began to cater to

the sons of the middle class in order to prepare these young men to succeed in commerce (*Encyclopedia of Education*, 2002, p.2). Questions began to arise: Should secondary schools expand elementary fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic while including academic courses in history, literature, the sciences, and foreign languages? Or should they take a more vocational approach to prepare students for the career they would soon enter? It seems that modern-day high schools are still very active in this debate with the rise of magnet schools and thematic academies within comprehensive high schools.

The first education law requiring that children be taught to read and write was passed in Massachusetts in 1642, followed by a 1647 law requiring all towns to establish and maintain public grammar schools (*Mass Humanities*, 2006). In 1789, Massachusetts once again led the pack by becoming the first state to pass a comprehensive education law. The first public high school opened in Boston, Massachusetts in 1821, although it was only open to male students and required the passing of an entrance exam. Selected students participated in a three-year program that focused on an English track with a college preparatory curriculum. In 1827, a law was passed in Massachusetts requiring each town or district in the state to provide a free public high school education. As more public high schools opened in Massachusetts, the trend began to take hold across the nation. Girls did not acquire the opportunity to attend high school until Boston opened a High School for Girls in 1826, which closed two years later. It was not until 1857 that young women once again were given the opportunity to attend public high school, and their curriculum focused on preparing them to become teachers at the elementary level.

The high school movement began to take flight after the Civil War. Prior to the Civil War, there were only 300 high schools, and by 1900 there were more than 6,000 high schools annually graduating six percent of American seventeen-year-olds (Encyclopedia of Education,

2002, p. 3). Many began to view high schools as a way to gain business interest by providing competent labor and increase the value of land (*Encyclopedia of Education*, 2002, p. 3). Others viewed the taxes that supported high schools as a burden to families. According to the *Encyclopedia of Education* (2002):

> In many cases, families could not afford to send their children to school. Family economic stability was needed for high school attendance, and some families did not have this luxury. In other cases, families might choose to send their children to private schools and not get the direct benefit of the public high school. The tax question was resolved in 1872 when the Michigan Supreme Court (in what became known as the Kalamazoo Case) heard arguments for and against using taxes for secondary schools. The ruling favored tax support of public high schools, which subsequently became common practice throughout the United States (p. 3).

Over time, it became apparent that there was a disconnect between the curriculum that local school boards offered and college entrance requirements, which were individualized based on college entrance exams. A Committee of Ten was established by the National Education Association in 1892, featuring ten influential educators, mostly from colleges and universities (*Encyclopedia of Education*, 2002, p. 3). They worked together to discuss the proper role of secondary education and recommended a rigorous academic curriculum for all students, regardless of their future plans, and elucidated the pursuit of knowledge and training of the intellect as the mission of secondary schools (*Encyclopedia of Education* & The Gale Group Inc., 2002, p. 3). High schools were then expected to design courses centered around nine core subjects inclusive of Latin, Greek, English, modern languages, mathematics, sciences, natural

history (including economics and government), and geography (*Encyclopedia of Education* & The Gale Group Inc, 2002, p. 3).

In the nineteenth century when secondary education was first developed, it was designed as having eight years of graded elementary school followed by four years of secondary education. In 1910, California and Ohio took the approach of implementing junior high schools, which encompassed seventh through ninth grades and allowed for a transition into secondary educational classes, subjects, and teaching styles. This pattern typically included six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, and three years of senior high school. Many liked this approach, and by the 1960s, there were upwards of 7,000 junior high schools. Still others branched out further and developed middle schools, which included advisors, team teaching and planning, and other nuances which focused on sixth through eighth grade students.

Although there were shifts in the makeup of post-elementary education, the political and social woes of the late 1800s and early 1900s, such as the education of African Americans, caused great debate. After the 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruled that blacks would attend separate but equal schools from their white counterparts, some educators like W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington had differing views about what African Americans should be educated on. Du Bois believed in an academic curriculum allowing talented students to excel, a curriculum promoting intellectual life, whereas Washington favored industrial and agricultural training, a curriculum promoting the worthiness of hard work (*Encyclopedia of Education*, 2002, p. 6). Although African Americans were not legally able to attend desegregated schools until after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ruling in 1954, which held that separation of children in public schools by race violates the Fourteenth Amendment (*Encyclopedia of Education*, 2002, p. 6), a few black public high schools managed

to exist, and discussion continued about whether schooling should prepare black students for college or work. At the height of the Great Depression, when the economy was unstable, the emphasis of coursework shifted from purely academic to consumer-oriented classes and life skills (*Encyclopedia of Education* & The Gale Group Inc, 2002, p. 7). In the 1940s and 1950s, this gave way to the comprehensive high school, which offered many different curriculum tracks to meet the immediate needs of the time. Comprehensive high schools are simply defined as a secondary school for children of all abilities from the same district (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.).

From the inception of secondary education, there were disparities in the education of females and young men of color. This undoubtedly has helped to create the notable achievement gaps and lack of skills that certain demographic groups continue to struggle to close. Throughout history a host of laws have been passed through the courts and initiatives implemented by the government to combat these imbalances. However, research shows that Black and Hispanic youth continue to perform lower academically than their White counterparts, with many becoming chronically absent and eventually dropping out of school.

Present-Day Efforts in Secondary Education

Secondary education takes many forms across the country, from comprehensive high schools, technical, and vocational schools to private academies with entrance requirements. With the inception of compulsory education laws requiring children to attend a public or state-accredited private school for a certain period of time (typically, children must start school by the age of six and remain enrolled until they are at least 16 (FindLaw, 2018), students are expected to be enrolled in and attend school as per the compulsory law in their state.

Over the years, high schools underwent many reforms including the enrollment of girls, implementation of standards, enhanced course work, and college preparatory focus. Two major events were the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) ending legal segregation, and the Education of all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 mandating full educational opportunities for all children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., p.3). America experienced many challenges in its economy and academic progress, and the once established world leader was no longer leading the pack as demonstrated by its global competitors' progress. Many efforts were made to ensure that all students received equal access to a rigorous academic curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., p.4) as a means to see improvement in reading, math, and science as evidenced in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). According to the U.S. Department of Education's *Digest of Education Statistics* (1998), only 29% of American high schoolers were graduating with the coursework necessary for four-year college preparation. The No Child Left Behind framework was thought by Congress to be the legislation that would help America's schools overcome the historical and academic challenges it faced (Klein, 2015).

In October 2003, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) launched the Preparing America's Future High School Initiative (PAF-HSI) designed to support state and local level leaders in creating educational opportunities that would fully prepare American youth for success in further education and training, as participants in a highly skilled U.S. workforce, and as productive and responsible citizens (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The three goals of Preparing America's Future was to equip state and local education leaders with current knowledge, to develop the expertise and structures within the Department of Education to provide effective technical assistance, and to facilitate a

national dialogue (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Four themes were used to guide these efforts: high expectations, student engagement and options, teaching and leadership, and accelerated transitions.

Many students were graduating from high school with low skill and achievement levels and were not prepared for a career or postsecondary education. The first theme of high expectations was implemented to challenge all students at high levels through a new curriculum with high-level academic courses and to hold students, teachers, and administrators accountable for achievement. The second theme was designed to provide students with personalized learning that engaged and challenged them to reach their individual potential. High schools were challenged to develop a range of creative learning options so parents and students could choose the alternative that best suited them. The third theme highlighted the need for high quality, caring, knowledgeable, and effective teachers in the classroom. They recognized that high-quality teaching was fostered by effective leadership both at the school and district level. It would take everyone working together with a sustained focus on student achievement. The fourth and final theme focused on preparing students for the transition into a good job or additional education. This opened up the opportunity for high schools to partner with higher education and businesses to define the necessary knowledge and skills for success after high school, to make sure students knew what the requirements were, and to give students every opportunity to acquire them. An example of this was high schools offering college credit to help increase postsecondary credential rates of underrepresented students. Research showed how minority and low-income students lacked access to and had difficulty staying in college and discussed a number of transition models to help these students move on to college or careers after high school (Jobs for the Future, 2003). These efforts were kicked off with a leadership

summit in Washington, D.C. on October 8, 2003, bringing education and policy leaders together to discuss innovative, effective methods for transforming high schools into top-quality learning institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). A series of regional high school summits were also held for state teams to meet and create short- and long-term plans to realize this initiative.

One of the major goals of Preparing America's Future was to transform high schools into top-quality learning institutions to strengthen outcomes for youth and help high schools meet the vision of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Goals were set, action plans were created, and legislation was written. Many high schools rose to the challenge and set out to establish high academic standards and expectations for all students; they engaged students in individualized instruction, provided teachers and leaders with training and resources to perfect their craft in providing high-quality and effective instruction and leadership, and partnered with the business community and higher learning institutions to help high school students with a smooth transition into the college or career of their choosing.

A growing body of evidence supported the notion that smaller, more personalized schools were better for both students and teachers (Jobs for the Future, 2003). Research suggested that when students were engaged and active and had a choice among learning environments, students learned best (N.J. Department of Education, 2017). Career academies that featured rigorous academics tied to a strong career focus were particularly effective in helping students at risk of failure to stay focused on school and achievement. Despite these efforts, American students showed extreme cases of absences and low graduation rates across the country (U.S Department of Education, 2017).

Mentoring

Students showing up at school is the first step to ensuring they receive an effective and quality education. Students are more likely to attend school when they feel connected to caring adults who notice whether they show up (Attendance Works, 2017). Attendance Works (2017) also stated that quality mentoring, especially as part of a school-wide effort, can be leveraged as a strategy to improve attendance and boost academic achievement. As an effort to combat chronic absenteeism, the U.S. Department of Education launched ESSA: A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) and also facilitated the My Brother's Keeper Success Mentors Initiative program to combat this problem (Obama White House, 2016). Chronic absenteeism in the earlier years led to high school dropouts and low academic achievement. The onset of antisocial behavior is found in children as early as preschool age (Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2008). Although these behaviors are noticed in younger children, research has shown that mentors are usually assigned once children are in elementary, middle, or high school. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten and even pre-K can predict lower test scores, repeated patterns of poor attendance, and retention in later grades, especially if the absences persist for more than a year (Attendance Works, 2018).

Many schools used community volunteers to serve as mentors. The My Brother's Keeper Success Mentors program was an example of one such program (Obama White House, 2016). This initiative partnered with the Department of Education and John Hopkins University (Obama White House, 2016) and began as a program in ten urban schools around the country to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people could reach their full potential (Obama White House, 2016). It solicited members from the communities to serve as mentors in urban school districts. They targeted sixth through ninth

grade African American and Hispanic boys. The program planned to service 250,000 young men across thirty communities to provide mentoring to chronically absent students around the nation. They formed partnerships with local agencies and offered training webinars, along with resources, supports, and a toolkit. This toolkit was designed to help school districts, particularly the administrators charged with establishing an elementary success mentor program, leverage ideas and resources available from national partner organizations as well as the pioneering work of a growing number of local efforts (Attendance Works, 2018). A program evaluation was conducted by John Hopkins University (Obama White House, 2016) and reported that students with a history of chronic absence who received success mentors attended nearly two more weeks of school each year. These same students had better academic outcomes when compared to peers who did not receive support from a caring adult.

A quantitative study was conducted by Murray State University doctoral student Melissa Judd (2017) on the impacts of mentoring on fourth and fifth grade students considered to be at risk in a rural school district. She measured the impact of mentoring on the outcome of school attendance, academics, and discipline referrals. The research was conducted over a four-month time period and compared students' growth from the pre-testing data to the post-testing data. A total of 27 fourth graders and 19 fifth graders participated in the study. Twenty-seven community mentors were selected consisting of university employees or students, a retired professor, and the chamber of commerce. All mentors were assigned mentees based upon their availability. Mentors who were assigned two students were required to meet on alternating weeks to spend equal time with both students. Each mentor met one-on-one with students for 30 minutes. Mentors who were assigned one student met every other week for 30 minutes as well. Students were given an iReady adaptive diagnostic assessment to assess students' levels in

reading and math in the Fall of 2015, Winter of 2016, Spring of 2016, and Fall of 2016. Students also took a pre-test for attendance in the Spring of 2016 and gave a post-test the following spring. Students' results were compared to a control group of 80 fourth and fifth grade students who met eligibility requirements of the mentoring program but did not participate. A Paired Samples T-Test was used on the iReady test scores, and the mean scores from the experimental group suggested that students' absences significantly decreased after implementation of the mentoring program (p. 45). A Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test compared experimental groups' attendance from the Spring 2016 and Spring 2017 semester, and the mean scores suggested that students' absences significantly decreased after implementation of the mentoring program (p. 50).

Other school districts opted to utilize school personnel to serve as mentors. One particular school decided to conduct a case study where they used their own staff to serve as mentors. The study was done at an urban junior high school which had a total of 1,148 students in Grades 7 to 9 with a student population of 66% White, 26% Hispanic, and 6% Pacific Islander; 43% of enrolled students received free or reduced lunch (Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2008). Sixty-two faculty and staff were chosen to mentor 45 at-risk 13–15-year-old students during the third and fourth marking periods of a school year, based upon a high number of disciplinary referrals and unexcused absences. Mentors and mentees were given a choice of whether or not they wanted to participate. After a 30-minute information session, only 13 faculty and staff agreed to serve as mentors along with 16 mentees. The study extended previous research by employing an experimental design with a qualitative analysis to evaluate a school-based mentoring program that used school personnel as mentors. Some qualitative elements included the conducting of interviews of mentors, the viewing of mentor logs, and the

completion of the School Connectedness Survey by students. The study also divided mentors into 'viewed positively' and 'questioned-impact' mentors based upon mentor interview responses and log entries. 'Viewed positively' mentors reported fewer office referrals, met more consistently with mentees, reported more relaxed mentoring sessions, and shared food and played games more often with their mentees than 'questioned-impact' mentors. The study was limited by the small number of participants as well as the short amount of time of implementation. Despite the limitations, the researcher reported that there was a significant reduction in office referrals and statistically significant improvements in school attitude. This particular study did not look at academic performance or dropout rates.

A retrospective quasi-experimental study was conducted by Texas A&M University doctoral student Bradley M. Schnautz (2014) at two junior high schools located in a suburban school district. He researched the effects of a school-based mentoring program on student achievement utilizing teachers from the school. He identified 72 junior high school students from two separate junior high schools in Grades 7 and 8. The students were either placed in a treatment group or on a waiting list. The dependent variables were attendance, discipline referrals, report card grade averages, as well as math and reading scores on a Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Any current certified teacher in the district could apply to serve as a mentor. Mentors who satisfactorily completed the required documentation and activities were awarded a $500 stipend, with an additional stipend being awarded for mentors who moved individual mentees math and/or science baseline to center on the TAKS. A total of 24 mentors participated in the mentoring program. The study was conducted over a two-year period. Analysis of data showed that there was no statistical significance on report card grades in any content area after a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted (p. 71). A two-

way ANOVA also showed that there was no statistical significance on attendance, although a decrease in absences was noted in the treatment group. There was a statistical significance in discipline referrals of students in the treatment group as compared to students in the control group after a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. The research also reported a statistical significance between TaKS math scale scores but not for reading scale scores.

A review and meta-analysis of databases was conducted of all reported studies that evaluated school-based mentoring for people aged 11–18 years from 1980 to 2011. The purpose was to describe the effects of school-based mentoring for adolescents on academic performance, attendance, attitudes, behavior, and self-esteem (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012, p. 258). A total of 12 databases were searched and from there eight studies were included with a total of 6,072 participants, with six studies being included in meta-analysis. Although many studies were looked into, they were all assessed using the Cochrane Collaboration Risk of Bias Tool and did not find any significant improvement on any of the measured outcomes in the school-based mentoring programs. The study concluded that well-designed programs implemented over a longer time might achieve positive results (p. 258).

The literature suggested that regardless of whether a mentoring program was implemented in an urban, suburban, or rural school district, it needed to be well designed and implemented for a longer period of time to show positive results. Each program consisted of formal one-on-one mentoring and paired at-risk students with a willing adult to serve as their mentors. Official documentation and logs were kept, and interviews were conducted with children in one of the studies. Elementary school children attending a rural school district utilized community-based mentors over a four-month time period and showed a statistically significant decrease in students' absences when compared with students who did not participate

in the program. Junior high school students in an urban school district were paired with school-based personnel on a voluntary basis and showed a reduction in office referrals and improvement in school attitudes. This study also shed light on the fact that study results can be based on whether a mentor is 'viewed positively' or viewed as 'questioned-impact' mentors. Junior high school students from a suburban district were paired with a certificated staff member who served as their mentor and was paid through a stipend from their school district. This study showed decreases in absences, although the quantitative study did not show any statistical significance.

Each program utilized data to track students' attendance and achievement before and after program implementation. Rice (2015) pointed out that chronic absences matter. To change the course for many students, schools, families, and communities need to think differently. Using data to drive decisions and practices is a critical part of addressing this important issue. This can help school leaders to identify chronically-absent students and those at risk of missing too much school. In addition to addressing the needs of individual students, school leaders can create a school environment that promotes regular attendance. Implementing preventive, supportive strategies—instead of punitive responses—can turn the curve in improving absentee rates and putting students on the right path to school success (p. 7). Moreover, targeted interventions specifically designed to improve attendance rates for students who are at risk for dropping out of school is a good strategy to combat chronic absenteeism; when done effectively, such an approach yields positive results (Railsback, 2004).

Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism is defined in New Jersey's ESSA State Plan as the percentage of a school's students who are not present for 10% or more of the days that they were "in membership" at a school (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, p. 2). A study was conducted to

measure the influence of chronic absenteeism on graduation rate and post-secondary participation of students in New Jersey high schools. The study was a "correlational, non-experimental design, meaning that it explains whether any relationship exists between chronic absenteeism and school dropout rates, graduation rate, and post-secondary acceptance" (Tash, 2018, p. 56). The study was done with a sample of 299 comprehensive high schools in New Jersey. The research and study showed that students missed about a month of school in excused and unexcused absences. The researchers wanted to out find how chronic absences impacted school dropout rates, four-year graduation rates, and post-secondary acceptance rates. The investigation showed that limited English proficiency was a statistically significant predictor with chronic absenteeism and dropping out of school. Based upon their findings, the researchers recommended a deployment of a multifaceted approach (Tash, 2018).

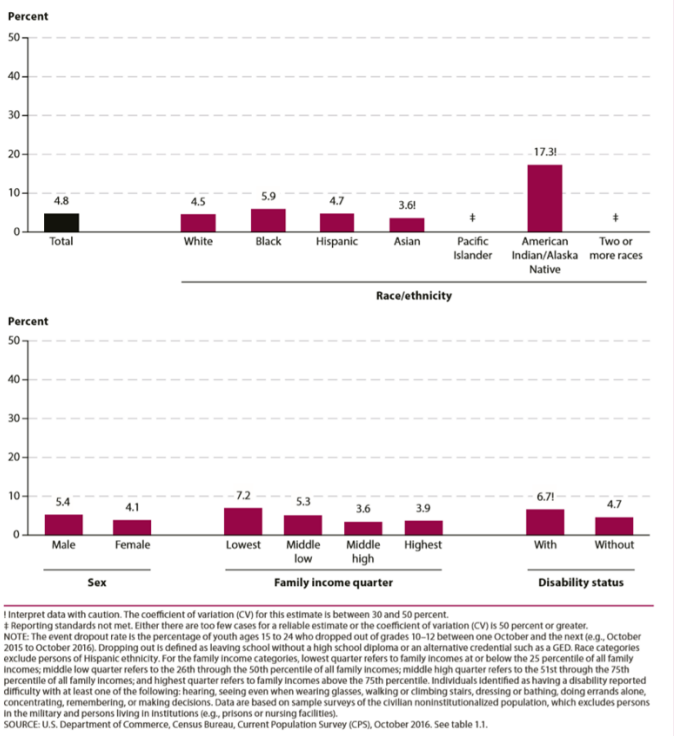
Research has shown that Black and Hispanic students and students with limited English proficiency are more at risk for chronic absenteeism than other students. According to the State of New Jersey Department of Education Performance Report Cards (2019), English Language Learners showed a higher chronic absenteeism rate than the state average over the past three years (p.53). White and Black student enrollment have decreased across the nation, while Hispanic enrollment has increased from 16% to 28% between the fall of 2000 and the fall of 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). With the influx of migrant children enrolling in schools across the nation, it would behoove leaders to implement targeted interventions early on to address the rising need of chronic absenteeism with this population.

Effects of Chronic Absenteeism

There are a number of negative outcomes associated with high school dropouts as compared to those who have either a high school diploma or some other high school credential,

like a General Education Development (GED) certificate. Some of these outcomes include a lower income over the course of a person's life, the propensity to be unemployed, a higher risk of being institutionalized or participating in some criminal activity, and being in worse health (McFarland, Cui, & Stark, 2018, p. 1). The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics published a report highlighting the trends of high school dropout and completion. The report defined different rates and indicators as provided by statistics relating to race/ethnicity, gender, household income, and disability status. For the purpose of this study, the event dropout rate (indicator 1) was compared between the 2014 and 2018 reports.

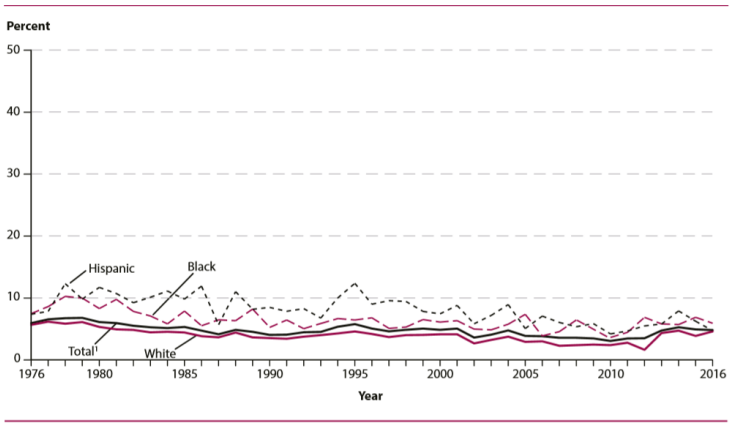
As reported in 2014, the event dropout rate or percentage of Grade 10–12 dropouts among persons 15 through 24 years old (McFarland, Cui, & Stark, 2018) was highest for American Indian/Alaska Native at 10.1%, followed by Hispanics at 7.9 %, Blacks at 5.7%, and Whites at 4.7%. Males were higher than females with 5.4% and 5.0% respectively, and low family income was highest at 9.4%, followed by middle at 5.4%, and high at 2.6%. The 2018 report showed a slightly different trend for race/ethnicity; American Indian/Alaska Native still outranked the other ethnicities with 17.3%, but in second place was Blacks with 5.9%, followed by Hispanics at 4.7%, then Whites at 4.5%, and Asians at 3.6%. Males still outranked females with 5.4% and 4.1% respectively. The lowest family income was still highest with 7.2%, followed by middle low at 5.3%, then highest at 3.9%, ending with middle high at 3.6% (McFarland, Cui, Rathbun, & Holmes, 2019, p. 9). Figure 2.1 depicts this report.



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.
NOTE: The event dropout rate is the percentage of youth ages 15 to 24 who dropped out of grades 10–12 between one October and the next (e.g., October 2015 to October 2016). Dropping out is defined as leaving school without a high school diploma or an alternative credential such as a GED. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For the family income categories, lowest quarter refers to family incomes at or below the 25 percentile of all family incomes; middle low quarter refers to the 26th through the 50th percentile of all family incomes; middle high quarter refers to the 51st through the 75th percentile of all family incomes; and highest quarter refers to family incomes above the 75th percentile. Individuals identified as having a disability reported difficulty with at least one of the following: hearing, seeing even when wearing glasses, walking or climbing stairs, dressing or bathing, doing errands alone, concentrating, remembering, or making decisions. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities).
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 2016. See table 1.1.

Figure 2.1. Percentage of Grade 10–12 dropouts among persons 15 through 24 years old (event dropout rate), by selected characteristics: October 2016

Note: From U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2019)



[1] Includes other racial/ethnic categories not separately shown.
NOTE: The event dropout rate is the percentage of youth ages 15 to 24 who dropped out of grades 10–12 between one October and the next (e.g., October 2015 to October 2016). Dropping out is defined as leaving school without a high school diploma or an alternative credential such as a GED. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. White and Black exclude persons of Two or more races after 2002. Because of changes in data collection procedures, data for 1992 and later years may not be comparable with figures for prior years. Some estimates differ from those in previously published reports because of data updates. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities).
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 1976 through 2016. See table 1.2.

Figure 2.2. Percentage of Grade 10–12 dropouts among persons 15 through 24 years old (event dropout rate), by race/ethnicity: October 1976 through 2016

Note: From U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2019)

The event dropout rate showed an upward trend of dropout percentages with Black and Hispanic students, a trend consistent with chronic absenteeism rates noted in the high school academies in this study. Males having a higher dropout percentage rate than female students were also consistent with the chronic absenteeism rates with the schools in this study. Figure 2.2 shows that this upward trend has been on the same trajectory from 1976 to 2016 as well. It is imperative that studies focusing on at-risk populations be conducted and existing programs be evaluated to analyze their effectiveness and whether or not there is an impact. If programs are not specifically targeted to address Black and Hispanic, and male students, then their chronic absenteeism will also lead to being high school dropouts.

Peer Mentoring

A three-year investigation in New Jersey by Sprague (2007) sought to measure the impact of peer mentoring on both the academic and nonacademic performance of high school students. After presenting a history on high school reform, the researcher highlighted the purpose of the study as measuring students' sense of belonging, improved transition from middle school to high school, and improved student achievement. The researcher observed two different peer mentoring programs, one entitled the Transition Project (TP), and the other entitled Peer Group Connection (PGC). Both programs enabled peers to work with other students based on the six core learning objectives for freshmen:

(a) Help them examine their own values and how their values affect relationships with others;

(b) Help them identify and appreciate the roles and responsibilities they have at school and home;

(c) Help them become aware of and sensitive to problems experienced by young people today and promote healthy emotional, physical, and social habits;

(d) Help them improve their communication skills, including the ability to express themselves clearly and listen attentively;

(e) Help them become more accepting of others and respectful of differences to decrease disrespect and stereotypes; and

(f) Help them increase self-confidence and self-worth

(Sprague, 2007, p. 12)

The sample consisted of 102 high schools in the state of New Jersey who either offered no peer mentoring program (traditional schools), offered the TP program (TP schools), or offered the PGC program. "The primary research goal was to determine the impact of peer mentoring on the academic and nonacademic performance of New Jersey high school students" (p.71). Some of the variables were graduation rate, dropout rate, and attendance rates. The quantitative study showed that student outcomes were more positive for those in the Transition Project than for those who participated in the Peer Group Connection. The researchers recommended that administration consider utilizing mentoring as a positive strategy to create safer schools and improve school climate; researchers also recommended completing a longer case study to see other effects.

Peer mentoring is a relationship between people who are at the same age, in which one person has more experience than the other in a particular domain and can provide support as well as knowledge and skills transfer (*Art of Mentoring*, 2020). This study showed positive outcomes in attendance as well as academic outcomes for ninth grade students who were paired with upperclassmen in a peer mentoring program. This further showed that partnering students with a

caring individual and providing one-on-one attention can have positive results (Bozman, 2018). The strongest effects for mentees appeared to be increases in school attitudes, relationships with adults (both teachers and parents) and peers, and improvements in internal affective states (Karcher & M. Berger, 2017). When students are motivated and have a good attitude about school, they are more inclined to attend. Children's school attendance is linked to how their environments—families, school and community—address their needs (Rice, 2015).

Teacher Advisement Programs

Research was conducted at the Handley High School in a rural county of Alabama, after it failed to meet the state's expectations. The researcher wanted to examine the effectiveness of teacher advisement on student academic achievement on the Alabama High School Graduation Exam and graduation rates. The researcher also used student and faculty surveys to obtain feedback on the programs and school. Two teacher advisement programs were implemented: The Teacher Advisors Program (TAP) and the Get On Track (GOT) program. The TAP portion of the program involved homeroom teachers serving as advisors and being assigned 18–25 freshmen based upon the beginning letters of the students' last names. Each advisor would meet with their groups of freshmen for 10 minutes every morning and then once a month for 30 minutes. Guidance counselors were also involved in this process and provided students with age and grade-appropriate lessons. "The freshmen are taught about their grade point average and learn about transcripts; sophomores focus on good study skills; juniors begin thinking about their career options, and seniors focus on graduation and immediate future prospects" (Hendon & Jenkins, 2012, 38–39). Advisors served the same group of students each year until they graduated. The GOT program took place over the summer and served as an opportunity for academically and/or socially and emotionally at-risk students to attend a summer program for

four weeks to ensure they received proper guidance and support to help them stay on the right track. Although there were some positive outcomes of the two programs, the researcher concluded that no direct correlation between the two programs and student achievement could be established (Hendon & Jenkins, 2012).

This study evaluated a teacher advisement program in rural Alabama that launched after the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act. For the school to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), their seniors had to pass the graduation exam and maintain an acceptable graduation rate (Hendon & Jenkins, 2012, p. 31). When administration realized their students were struggling, they decided to become creative and implemented a teacher advisory program in which one teacher (advisor) would work with 18–25 students over the summer and throughout the school year. Their tasks would include providing mentoring, guidance, lessons, graduation requirements, grade and transcript reviews (Hendon & Jenkins, 2012, p. 32). Mentorship usually involves building a relationship (Bozman, 2018). Advisor programs provide every student with a resource and offer an opportunity for students and advisors to build relationships (Hendon & Jenkins, 2012, p. 32), but their progress was not predicated on that. This advisement proved to show "evidence for high school success" (Hendon & Jenkins, 2012, p. 40). This was a relatively new program, so more time is needed to effectively evaluate its merit and worth. This is another example that when interventions are targeted and begin early, they will realize positive outcomes (Railsback, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

A study tested five theories to predict high school dropout before students entered the 10th grade (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000). "These theories include full mediation by academic achievement and direct effects related to general deviance, deviant affiliation, family

socialization, and structural strains" (p. 568). The study was a longitudinal study conducted in Seattle, Washington, beginning in 1985, when students entered the fifth grade. The sample of 808 students was taken from a population of 1,053 students from 18 elementary schools serving high-crime neighborhoods of Seattle, who consented to participate in the study. The sample included 412 boys and 396 girls consisting of 46% White, 24% Black, 21% Asian, 6% Native American, and 3% reporting as another ethnic group. Approximately half of the participants were from low-income households, and more than half participated in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast Program, which is congruent with families living in poverty (p. 571–572). The study concluded the following:

> Poor academic achievement "mediated the effect of all independent factors on school dropout, although general deviance, bonding on antisocial peers, and socioeconomic status also retained direct effects on dropping out. Therefore, none of the theories tested was fully adequate to explain the data, although partial support was obtained for each theory (p. 568)." See Figure 2.3 for the five theoretical models of dropout.

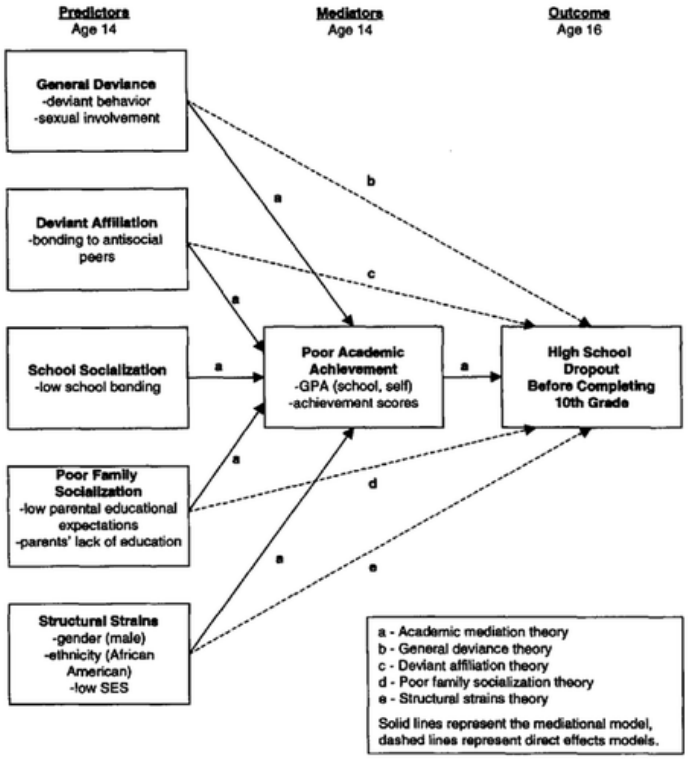


Figure 2.3. Five theoretical models of dropout.

GPA = grade point average; SES = socioeconomic status

Note: Battin-Pearson, S., Newcomb, M. D., Abbott, R. D., Hill, K. G., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. D. (2000)

Pull-Out/Push-Out Theory

The conceptualized perspective that guides the approach this study adopted is the Pull-Out/Push-Out Theory. Bradley & Renzulli (2011) conducted research on student dropout and offered a model with three outcomes—in school, pushed out, or pulled out—to highlight some of the complex reasons that students leave school. They state that "it is beneficial to conceive of dropout as occurring because of either 'push' factors that force a student out of school, or 'pull' factors that interfere with a student's commitment to his or her education" (p. 521). Using data from the Educational Longitudinal Survey, they found that for Black students, differences in socioeconomic status explain higher likelihoods of being pushed out or pulled out as compared

to their White peers, while Latino students remained more likely to be pulled out even after they controlled for socioeconomic status. They stated that regardless of the reason why students drop out, the end result is that they are no longer in school.

There are many negative factors associated with dropping out of school. These include but are not limited to a lower salary, higher risk of being unemployed, a greater chance of participating in criminal activity and/or becoming incarcerated, and a greater chance of being in worse health as compared to their peers with at least a high school diploma (McFarland, Cui, & Stark, 2018). This study sought to explore how the perception of mentoring addressed the concern of chronic absenteeism despite the elements that either pull or push students out of school.

In this theoretical model, one of the predictors for students not attending school and ultimately dropping out were structural strains such as gender (specifically male) and ethnicity (specifically African American). If students are already at risk because of their demographics and are being pulled out of school by parents' lack of educational expectations or lack of schooling (poor family socialization), familial responsibilities, or bonding with antisocial peers (deviant affiliation); or being pushed out of school by poor academic achievement, deviant behavior in school, or a host of other factors, they will become chronically absent and ultimately may drop out of school altogether.

The literature reviewed included empirical research on the evaluation of mentoring programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Studies were conducted in rural, suburban, and urban communities with a focus on academic outcomes as well as non-academic outcomes. Some studies implemented programs that included community volunteers, school personnel, or students who served as mentors on a voluntary basis. While some of the studies

included qualitative research, most included quantitative analyses varying in their findings of statistical significance. Almost all the studies showed some improvements either in academics, discipline, or attendance.

The literature reviewed influenced this study because of the many school-based mentoring programs that have been implemented around the nation, but none had a singular outcome of attendance for urban high school students. Some used attendance as one of their outcomes whereas this study was grounded solely on the attendance of chronically absent students. Most of the studies in the literature had a diverse student population that included three or more races. The majority of the students in this study's population were at-risk Black and Hispanic high school students, consistent with the research indicating that these students are most at risk for missing school and eventually dropping out (Child Trends, 2015).

This study will add to the current body of research by providing a non-experimental, quantitative analysis on a school-based mentoring program using school personnel and designed to address chronic absenteeism amongst at-risk high school students in an urban setting.

Summary

The research findings on mentoring programs and the impact they had on chronic absenteeism as well as other intended outcomes were evident. However, it was also apparent that there was no one-size-fits-all mentoring program framework. Studies have shown that successful mentoring programs require a formal structure, time, targeted and early interventions for at-risk students. The literature reviewed indicated that mentoring, whether peer, one-on-one, with school staff, or a community volunteer had a positive impact on student achievement and student attendance (Attendance Works, 2018). Chronic absenteeism may not discriminate, but the literature reviewed made clear that students from low-income families and children of color

were more likely to become chronically absent (Rice, 2015). The effects of chronic absenteeism go far beyond the classroom and can manifest in lower income, a higher risk of incarceration, participating in criminal activity, and worse health (McFarland, Cui, & Stark, 2018). Regardless of age, when students miss too much school, they are less likely to succeed academically (Rice, 2015) and can eventually be either pulled or pushed out of school. The research shows that when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and provide mentors for chronically absent students, student attendance rates improve (Attendance Works, 2018).

Chapter III

Methodology

Through a non-experimental research design, this study utilized quantitative methods to investigate the extent mentoring predicted student attendance outcomes of chronically absent high school students. Each high school academy in the study implemented mentoring programs during the 2018–2019 school year to combat chronic absenteeism. As discussed in chapter one, chronic absenteeism was an issue that the federal government identified as impacting millions of children nationwide. There have been many interventions and strategies used to combat chronic absenteeism. The federal government implemented a mentoring initiative to help mitigate this problem, with a coordinated federal effort to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential (Obama White House, 2016). Chapter II identified some quantitative studies that had been conducted to research the impact that mentoring has on academic outcomes, disciplinary referrals, as well as non-academic variables such as attendance. Qualitative and mixed-method studies were also reviewed, but most examined mentoring programs that used outside volunteers and captured notes and surveys from participants. Reports were issued on studies conducted with internal and external supports such as mentoring to show academic, behavioral, social, and emotional outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental study was to describe, compare, and analyze two comprehensive high school academies that implemented mentoring programs to combat chronic absenteeism, and to determine to what extent mentoring predicted student attendance based on the criteria of chronic absenteeism. For students to be considered

chronically absent they had to miss 10% or more of the days they were enrolled in their identified academy. A portion of the students categorized as chronically absent were assigned a mentor while others were not. Specific areas of interest in this study were whether mentoring increased attendance of high school students, and whether gender, race, LEP status, SPED services, or the eligibility of free and reduced priced meals had an impact on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Method and Design

The researcher used a quantitative non-experimental research design with secondary data. A non-experimental design is a research design that lacks the manipulation of an independent variable. It is appropriate when the research question can be about a causal relationship, but the independent variable cannot be manipulated and participants cannot be randomly assigned to conditions or order of conditions (Price, Jhangiani, & Chang, 2015, p. 125). This research was also considered ex post facto research, which is a form of comparative research because the intervention of mentoring was previously implemented and would be compared among groups of students who either received mentoring or did not receive mentoring (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 242). The researcher also chose to use secondary data. Secondary data are data that have already been collected. When a researcher analyzes data that have been collected by some other organization, group, or individual at some prior time, the work is called secondary data analysis. The use of secondary data saves time, is cost effective, and allows for a high degree of validity and reliability (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

This type of research design was selected because the independent variable of mentoring could not be manipulated and participants were selected based upon their identification of being chronically absent. Each academy in the study implemented mentoring programs during the

2018–2019 school year, and attendance and chronic absenteeism data were collected before and after program implementation. Secondary data was utilized from the New Jersey Department of Education's website as well as from the district's student information system, which feeds attendance and chronic absenteeism data to the New Jersey Department of Education.

The use of various quantitative methods was used to answer this study's research questions. The overarching question that guided the study was posed as such: *What impact, if any, does the implementation of internal interventions have on the attendance of chronically absent high school students?* To answer this question, the researcher used descriptive statistics, specifically, measures of central tendency to summarize and describe the student attendance and chronic absenteeism data in each setting. The researcher also used frequencies to describe the demographic details of the students in each school setting involved in the study.

The first research question was posed as such: *To what extent does participation in a mentoring program predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students?* To address this question, a difference-in-differences statistical technique along with regression analysis was used. The difference-in-differences (DiD) method is used primarily in the social sciences and econometrics and is sometimes called a 'controlled before-and-after' study (Statistics How To, 2019). Columbia University Population Health Methods (2013) described this technique as making use of longitudinal data from treatment and control groups to obtain an appropriate counterfactual to estimate a causal effect. DiD was typically used to estimate the effect of a specific intervention or treatment by comparing the changes in outcomes over time between a population that is enrolled in a program (the intervention group) and a population that is not (the control group). For this method to work, certain assumptions must be made. It is assumed that the groups being studied are stable over the time period of the study,

that there are no spillover effects, that the amount of intervention given is not determined by the outcome, and that both groups being studied have parallel trends in their outcome (Statistics How To, 2019). This study did not review whether parallel trends existed in the outcome of both groups. There were strengths and limitations associated with this analysis.

Some strengths were that the researcher could obtain causal effect using observational data if assumptions were met, individual or group data could be used, comparison groups could start at different levels of the outcome, and this method accounted for change because of factors other than intervention (Columbia University Population Health Methods, 2013). Some of the associated limitations with this analysis were that it required baseline data and a non-intervention group (both of which this study had) and that it cannot be used if intervention allocation is determined by the baseline outcome or if the composition of groups before and after the intervention are not stable (Columbia University Population Health Methods, 2013).

The DiD technique was appropriate for this study because it had baseline attendance data and a comparison group (students not enrolled in the mentoring program). One of the limitations with this analysis was that the data received was cumulative attendance data, and it would have been ideal to have attendance data specifically for each month. However, working on the assumption that there were equal amount of days in each month, the researcher used an algebraic equation to calculate the monthly average daily percentage by taking the cumulative month percentage and multiplying it by the numerical order of the month by school calendar year, then subtracting the previous months' specific attendance percentage from that. For example, to calculate the specific average daily attendance for the month of October, the researcher took the cumulative percentage of 94.74% and multiplied it by 2 (October is the second month in the academic calendar year) equaling a sum of 189.48%, and then subtracted the specific percentage

for September which was 100%, equaling a difference of 89.48%; this calculates as the specific percentage for October. To compute November, the researcher took the cumulative percentage of 92.45% and multiplied it by 3 (November is the third month in the academic calendar year) equaling a sum of 277.35%, and then subtracted the sum by the specific monthly percentages for both September and October, which were 100% and 89.48% respectively. This equaled a difference of 87.87% and computed as the specific average for November. The researcher continued this formula for each month, thereby obtaining a specific monthly attendance percentage for each month in the 2018–2019 school year for each student in the study. (See Appendix A1 for sample calculation chart.)

The researcher was also interested in determining if gender, race, LEP, or SPED status had an effect on student attendance of the high school academies in this study. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to look at the statistical relationship between the continuous dependent variable of average daily attendance and the categorical independent variables of mentoring, gender, race, LEP, SPED, and eligibility for free and reduced priced meals. The independent variables were recoded into a separate set of binary variables to allow for analysis of the following: gender, race, SPED status, LEP status, eligibility for free or reduced price meals, and participation in a mentoring program.

The second research question was posed as such: *If there is an impact with mentoring, does gender or race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism?* A multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer the second research question in understanding what factors had an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. The dependent variables of gender and race were analyzed with the independent variable of average daily attendance.

Hypotheses

For research question number one: *To what extent does participation in a mentoring program predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students?*

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive association between being in mentoring programs and student attendance.

For research question number two: *If there is an impact with mentoring, does gender or race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism?*

For the first variable in the research question, the researcher hypothesized that males would have a greater effect and females would have a lower effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

For the second variable in the research question, the researcher hypothesized that Hispanic students would have a greater effect and Black students would have a lower effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Setting

The setting was comprehensive high school academies in an urban school district in northern New Jersey. The district is one of the most diverse in the state with more than 40 languages spoken in classrooms. The annual enrollment is approximately 30,000 students. All students are eligible to receive free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Approximately 4,000 students receive special education services, with 5,000 students receiving bilingual/ESL services. The ethnic makeup of the district is approximately 70% Hispanic, 20% African American, 5 % Asian, and 5% Caucasian. Nearly 57% of all students speak a primary language other than English.

This urban district made the decision to restructure their comprehensive high schools in

2010 with the introduction of career-oriented academies. For students to enroll in one of the high school academies in this district, students had to participate in a selection process. Students attended a seminar course outlining the various fields of study for each academy, granting students the option to select their academy of choice based on their interests and strengths. Once students completed the application process and indicated their first, second, and third school preferences, they were placed in a lottery. Students not selected for their first choice were then placed in a second lottery of their second choice while also being placed on a waiting list for their first choice option. Students were placed on a waiting list for their first school choice in order of computer selection. The district was not always able to accommodate students' request to attend their first, second, or even third choice. If a student did not participate in the application process, placement would be based upon school availability once the lottery process concluded.

Research has shown that when students follow a specific path of interest they become more engaged in their learning and are more likely to stay in school (Kemple & Snipes, 2000). One of the academies selected for this study had a career theme focused on government and civics and offered a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Students who attended this academy were most likely to have an interest in serving their local community, city, state, or nation in politics, the military, law enforcement, public administration, and other pursuits. The second academy had a career theme focused on construction, design, and engineering. Possible career paths would include architecture, construction, carpentry, building, and auto mechanics. These academies followed the same enrollment criteria outlined above. Students were either placed in the academy as one of their top three choices, or they were randomly selected to attend based upon a computerized random lottery process if student demand exceeded program

availability for their academy of choice. Each academy in the study had an ongoing issue of chronic absenteeism with rates that exceeded the state's average of 10.6% (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2019, p. 53). Each of the participating academies had chronic absenteeism rates exceeding 40% for the 2018–2019 school year according to the New Jersey Department of Education Performance Summary Reports (2020).

This study sought to compare student attendance and chronic absenteeism rates between students enrolled in mentoring programs and students who were not. This study also compared the average daily attendance rates (ADA) of the chronically absent students in each high school academy prior to the implementation of their mentoring programs to identify trends and attendance patterns.

Participant Selection Process and Procedures

There were a total of 11 high school academies and three magnet high schools in this urban school district. For the purpose of this study, schools with limited enrollment or that were designed for a particular student group, such as students with disabilities or alternative education programs, were excluded from this study; this eliminated two of the eleven high school academies. Schools that met the criteria of a population inclusive of general education, special education, and English language learner ninth through twelfth grade students were invited to participate in this study. The researcher reached out to each building principal of schools meeting the above criteria to inquire whether or not they implemented a mentoring program to combat chronic absenteeism. Of the three magnet schools, two implemented a mentoring program but only one was able to provide the necessary data to conduct the research. The one magnet school with a mentoring program stated that it was not designed to combat chronic absenteeism; therefore, all magnet schools were excluded from this research. From the nine

remaining high school academies, two gave no response, two stated they did not have mentoring programs, one provided some information, but there had been a change in leadership and was unable to provide the detailed data needed for this study, and two implemented attendance review committees to look at students' attendance, which included a mentoring component. They were unable to provide the researcher with the necessary data, however, leaving two high school academies. For the purpose of this study, the two academies utilized in this research will be referred to as Scholar Academy and Dream Academy.

Each academy in this study was housed within a larger school building inclusive of two or three additional academies. One academy was located on the east side of the urban district while the other was located on the west side. Each academy had a building principal, vice principal, and their own cohort of students and staff. A principal of operations was appointed to oversee functions such as security, facilities, and discipline for the entire complex and collaborated with each academy principal when making decisions concerning each.

Sample

Scholar Academy. Scholar Academy was an academy with a government thematic focus. For the 2018–2019 school year, Scholar Academy had an enrollment of 698 students consisting of 51% males and 49% females. Of the 698 students enrolled, 13% were Black, approximately 86% were Hispanic, and less than 1% of the population were White. See Table 3.1 for the demographic breakdown of Scholar Academy.

Table 3.1

Demographics for Scholar Academy for the 2018–2019 school year

2018–2019				
Student Group	**# Enrolled**		**Total Number Enrolled**	**Percentage Enrolled**
	Male	Female		
White	3	2	5	0.7%
Hispanic	305	296	601	86.1%
Black	46	46	92	13.2%
Asian	0	0	0	0.0%
Multi-Race	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	**354**	**344**	**698**	100.0%

Note: Reported by the district as of June 30, 2019

This district reported the average daily attendance or ADA for the school year as 83.38% and the overall chronic absenteeism average as 64.04%. Hispanic females had the highest chronic absenteeism rate with 64.19%, followed by Hispanic males with 61.31%. Next were Black males and females with an equivalent chronic absenteeism rate of 71.74%, then White males with 100% and White females with 50%. See Table 3.2 for these figures.

Table 3.2

Chronic Absenteeism Percentage for Scholar Academy for the 2018-2019 school year

Demographic	% CA
Hispanic Females	64.19%
Hispanic Males	61.31%
Black Females	71.74%
Black Males	71.74%
White Females	50.00%
White Males	100.00%

Note: Reported by the district as of June 30, 2019

Dream Academy. Dream Academy was an academy with a construction thematic focus. For the 2018–2019 school year, Dream Academy had an enrollment of 549 students consisting of

74% males and 26% females. Of the 549 students enrolled, approximately 17% were Black, 76% were Hispanic, 5% were White, 1.6% were Asian, and less than 1% of the population identified as Multi-Race. See Table 3.3 for the demographic breakdown of Dream Academy.

Table 3.3

Demographics for Dream Academy for the 2018–2019 school year

2018–2019				
Student Group	**Number Enrolled**		**Total Number Enrolled**	**Percentage Enrolled**
	Male	Female		
White	22	6	28	5.1%
Hispanic	300	119	419	76.3%
Black	75	17	92	16.8%
Asian	8	1	9	1.6%
Multi-Race	1	0	1	0.2%
Total	**406**	**143**	**549**	100.0%

Note: Reported by the district as of June 30, 2019

This district reported the Average Daily Attendance or ADA for the school year as 86.58%, and the overall chronic absenteeism average as 55.74%. Chronic absenteeism rates were as follows: Hispanic males – 53.67%, Hispanic females – 57.98%, Black males – 60%, White males – 63.64%, Black females – 41.18%, Asian males – 62.50%, White females – 50%, and Asian females and Multi-Race males each 100%. See Table 3.4 for these figures.

Table 3.4

Chronic Absenteeism Percentage for Dream Academy for the 2018–2019 school year

Demographic	% CA
Hispanic Females	57.98%
Hispanic Males	53.67%
Black Females	41.18%
Black Males	60.00%
Asian Females	100.00%
Asian Males	62.50%
Multi-Race Males	100.00%
White Females	50.00%
White Males	63.64%

Note: Reported by the district as of June 30, 2019

The demographics for both Dream and Scholar Academies for the 2018–2019 school year showed a population comprised of a majority of Hispanic and Black students, with White, Asian, and multi-raced students making up the minority of each school's population. While both academies had a population of White students, Dream Academy had approximately 5%, while Scholar Academy had less than 1% of its population identifying as White. Dream also showed less than 2% of its students identifying as either Asian or multi-raced while Scholar Academy had none. Dream Academy had a population of mostly male students with females making up approximately 25% of the overall population. Scholar Academy's male and female population were about equal, with approximately 1% more male than female students. Research showed that Black and Hispanic students were more at risk for being chronically absent and eventually dropping out of school (Child Trends, 2015), and the chronic absenteeism rates of both of these schools were on trend with this research. Table 3.5 shows a depiction of each academy's chronic absenteeism rates as compared with the state of New Jersey.

Table 3.5

Chronic Absenteeism Percentage for Dream and Scholar Academy in Comparison with New Jersey for the 2018–2019 school year

Student Group	% Chronically Absent 2018–2019		
Demographics	Statewide	Dream Academy	Scholar Academy
Chronic Absenteeism Percentage	10.6%	55.7%	64.0%
White	8.0%	56.8%	75.0%
Hispanic	13.1%	55.8%	62.8%
Black	17.6%	50.6%	71.7%
Asian	4.8%	81.3%	N/A
American Indian or Alaska Native	12.4%	N/A	N/A
Two or More Races	9.7%	100.0%	N/A
Female	10.4%	62.7%	62.5%
Male	10.7%	67.1%	77.7%

Note: Reported on the New Jersey Performance Report Card and from the district's reports. Some numbers may differ between the district and the state because of reported dates and students who were enrolled during the reporting periods.

Data Collection

Scholar Academy. Building leadership monitored students' attendance from September through January. The vice principal of the academy spearheaded this mentoring effort and held a staff meeting at the beginning of January informing them of the program, soliciting interested faculty members to volunteer to mentor identified students. On January 22, 2019, the vice principal trained staff volunteers through a PowerPoint presentation which included the history of President Barack Obama's Success Mentoring program and showcased how this program had been utilized as a springboard for other mentoring programs in the district. Attendance and chronic absenteeism statistics were shared, and the process of what would be expected for each mentor was also detailed. Mentors knew this would be a formal mentoring program with one-

on-one mentoring and that they would need to meet with their assigned mentee(s) at least twice a week based upon the student's lunch period; they would also have to document their meetings.

A district report was released to the principal on January 23, 2019, providing student-level data identifying chronically absent students by grade level. This was the data the administrative team used to assign mentors to students. Table 3.6 shows the breakdown of this information for this academy.

Table 3.6

Chronically Absent Students Effective January 23, 2019 for Scholar Academy

Grade	Total Number CA by Grade	Percentage of CA Students
9	79	20%
10	104	27%
11	91	23%
12	115	30%
Total	**389**	**100%**

Note: Reported by the district as of June 23, 2019

A total of 58 staff members volunteered to be trained and served as mentors. These mentors consisted of teachers, personal assistants, instructional assistants, guidance counselors, and the vice principal and principal of that academy. There were more students in need of mentoring than they had the capacity to service, so the building administration made the decision to assign students who had a chronic absenteeism rate of 20% or less. This new criterion narrowed the number to 186 students, and after further analysis, the team chose 105 students to take part in the program.

The vice principal held a student meeting at the end of February and invited the 105 identified students to attend. A total of 57 students attended, and some who attended opted out

of participating in the program. However, follow-up communication was made with parents, and once they were notified of the training and informed of their children's chronic absenteeism status, a total of 67 students were eventually trained and assigned a mentor. Student and their parents had to sign a contract confirming their consent to participate in the program. Mentors were able to choose whom they wanted to mentor based upon accessibility and an already positive working relationship; some students were either currently in their homeroom at the onset of the program or were current or former students. In some cases, students requested their mentor for similar reasons mentioned above. A meet and greet was scheduled for early March for all mentors and mentees to officially "meet" and discuss when and where the mentoring meetings would take place. Mentees were required to sign in with their mentor, and mentors were asked to submit documentation to the vice principal each pay day detailing the nature of the meeting, goals, and outcomes. Distinct hallway passes were created so students could travel to their assigned mentor's classroom during lunch, which was approved by the complex' principal of operations. The mentoring program officially began March 13, 2019.

The researcher received secondary level student attendance data from the district's deputy director, who oversaw the Student Information Management System and retrieved information about the mentees who participated in the program directly from the vice principal of this academy. The monthly cumulative average daily attendance data was matched with each student from the treatment (received mentoring) and comparison (did not receive mentoring) groups; pseudonyms were assigned to ensure students' confidentiality. Some students did not maintain enrollment in the academy for the duration of the 2018–2019 school year, and therefore the researcher made the decision to exclude them from the study. After this exclusion, there were a total of 62 students in the treatment group and 34 students in the comparison group.

Next, the months were divided up into pre-program implementation and after-program implementation. For this academy, September through March were utilized as pre-program implementation or intervention, and the months of April through June were utilized as after-program implementation. Although the mentoring program officially began in the middle of March, the researcher made the decision to use April as the first month to recognize as after-program implementation.

Dream Academy. This mentoring program was designed for twelfth grade students. In August of 2019, the principal and vice principal identified incoming seniors in danger of not excelling because of trends and patterns from their junior year. The vice principal made phone calls to the parents of those students and invited them to meet, informing them of their options; the principal emailed staff members and asked them to volunteer to serve as mentors. The administrative team monitored students' attendance from September through October, and assigned mentors to students in November. Once mentors and mentees were identified, the administrative team paired students up with staff members of the academy. Mentors had the option of choosing whom they wanted to mentor based upon the positive rapport already built with students. Students not selected by a mentor were randomly assigned to work with a mentor. After the pairing was completed, mentors set their schedules and met with their mentees weekly and sometimes daily because many of the mentors taught senior classes daily. The mentors had to report back to the principal and vice principal during their monthly meetings, and if something took place prior to that designated time, the mentor informed building administration.

The researcher received secondary level student attendance data from the district's deputy director, who oversaw the Student Information Management System and retrieved information about the mentees who participated in the program directly from the vice principal

of this academy. There were a total of 25 seniors who were mentored during the 2018–2019 school year even though the district's records showed that 64 seniors were chronically absent in November of 2018. The vice principal explained that although chronic absenteeism was the initial criteria used for the mentoring program, only chronically absent students who also were at risk for not graduating because of the lack of credits were included in this program. The researcher assigned those participating in the mentoring program to the treatment (received mentoring) group, assigned the remaining students to the comparison (did not receive mentoring) groups, and then assigned pseudonyms to maintain student confidentiality.

Next, the monthly cumulative average daily attendance data was matched with each student from both groups. Some students did not maintain enrollment in the academy for the duration of the 2018–2019 school year, and therefore the researcher once again made the decision to exclude them from the study. After this exclusion, there was a total of 23 students in the treatment group and 31 students in the comparison group. Finally, the months were divided up into pre-program implementation and after-program implementation. For this academy, September and October were utilized as pre-program implementation or intervention, and the months of November through June were utilized as after-program implementation.

The vice principal shared reasons students relayed to her for not attending school, such as working long hours because they were assisting with family bills or were living on their own. Other reasons were noted as problems that plagued the community which affected students, as well as other external factors. The academy did its best to offer internal supports with the district's assignment of a chronic absenteeism specialist who called parents and arranged meetings, and an attendance review committee made up of staff members who sent letters home to chronically absent students' families every two months met with students and families and

also served in a mentoring capacity to students struggling academically. Despite these efforts, the academy continued to observe high chronic absenteeism rates and decided to implement the mentoring program.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe and compare the demographics of both the treatment and comparison groups for each academy for the months prior to program inception during the 2018–2019 school year. Regression analyses were conducted through a difference-in-difference estimation technique to estimate the effect of the mentoring program of each academy by comparing the changes in outcome over time between the treatment group (mentored) and the comparison (not-mentored) group.

The difference-in-difference (DiD) statistical technique was conducted to compare the average daily attendance data for students in the treatment and comparison groups, before and after their respective mentoring program implementations. To conduct this analysis, a few steps needed to be done in SPSS.

1. The data needed to be restructured from wide view to narrow view and the 'months' variables were transposed into cases that were renamed 'Attend.' Once this was done, the researcher was able to view all students from each academy and see all the variables associated with them as a group.
2. A new variable was created in SPSS named 'After' representing the months after each mentoring program was implemented. To accomplish this, the months of the academic school year were recoded into '0' to represent months prior to implementation and '1' to represent months after program implementation. For Dream Academy, the months of September and October were recoded as 0, while the

months of November through June were recoded to 1. For Scholar Academy, the months of September to March were recoded to 0, with April through June being recoded to 1.

3. Lastly, a variable was created to represent students who participated in a mentoring program after program implementation. This new variable was named 'In Program' and was the product of the 'treatment (M)' variable representing all students who participated in the mentoring program at a point in time, with the newly created 'After' variable to depict the months after program implementation.

Once these steps were completed, regression analyses were conducted to analyze student attendance data of the treatment and comparison groups before and after program implementation while controlling for gender, race, LEP, SPED, and eligibility for free and reduced priced meals.

The following independent variables were included in the regression models:

In program: students who participated in the mentoring program at a specific point in time (found by multiplying the *treatment* variable by the *after* variable)

Treatment: students who would eventually participate in the mentoring program

After: the months after mentoring program implementation (Dream Academy equals November through June, and Scholar Academy equals April through June)

Is female: whether a student was female

Is Black: whether a student identified as being Black

Is Hispanic: whether a student identified as being Hispanic

Is White: whether a student was identified as being White, also used as the reference group in the regression models

Limited English Proficient: whether a student was designated as Limited English Proficient

Special Education: whether a student received special education services

Free & Reduced Priced Lunch: whether a student was eligible for reduced price or free meals

Student attendance data was captured using Microsoft's spreadsheet software Excel, and then uploaded into the statistical software platform IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics and regression analyses were performed to answer each of the research questions as mentioned in the Method and Design portion of this chapter. The results and analysis are reported in Chapter IV and include tables.

Human Subjects Protection. The researcher obtained IRB approval to utilize identified student-level data, following permission from this urban district to conduct the study. The researcher contacted building principals from each high school in the district asking whether or not they had a mentoring program designed to combat chronic absenteeism. Once confirmation was received of which schools implemented a mentoring program specific to this study's purpose, a request was made to the district asking for identified student level attendance data from each of the participating schools. The researcher once again reached out to each high school academy principal and requested a list of students who received mentoring based upon the criteria of being chronically absent. Once the necessary data was received from each academy, a pseudonym was assigned for each school and student involved in the study. Some students who were enrolled at the academies did not have available attendance for the full academic school year because of transferring either in or out during the times that data was observed for this study; therefore, six students were excluded from Dream Academy and nine students from

Scholar Academy. Once students' attendance records were matched up with their assigned pseudonym, identified student-level data was destroyed.

Summary

The monthly average daily attendance data for 54 students from Dream Academy and 96 students from Scholar Academy from the 2018–2019 school year provided data for a quantitative analysis of how mentoring predicted student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students. This data will inform the development of current practices of mentoring and interventions to combat chronic absenteeism in public education. Specifically, the research design and quantitative methods provided an analysis of attendance trends pre- and post-mentoring intervention. Finally, this study investigated what effect gender and race had on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter presents findings based on the research questions mentioned in the previous chapters. The purpose of this research was to analyze to what extent participation in a mentoring program predicted attendance outcomes for chronically absent students in two comprehensive urban high school academies. This study sought to determine if mentoring (the independent variable) had an association with average daily attendance of chronically absent high school students (dependent variable). The study also looked at the effect that race or gender had on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. Students were placed into a treatment group if they participated in a mentoring program and a comparison group if they were eligible to participate in the program but did not.

The study looked at student attendance data from chronically absent students during the 2018–2019 school year, the year that the mentoring programs were implemented in both academies. Descriptive statistics were conducted to describe the demographics of data for students by race, gender, LEP, SPED and their eligibility to receive free and reduced priced meals, also referred to as Food in Schools (FNS). A multiple regression analysis was also conducted to look at the statistical relationship between the categorical independent variables of gender and race, and the dependent continuous variable of students' average daily attendance. The *p* value used to determine significance was .05. This chapter includes the statistical analysis findings for each research question as well as the results of this study.

Dream Academy

A total of 54 students participated in this study. Of the 54 participants, 23 were in the treatment group (received mentoring) and 31 were in the comparison group (did not receive

mentoring).

In the treatment group, 23 chronically absent twelfth grade students were identified to participate in the mentoring program. Of the 23 students, 21 were male and 2 were female, or 91% and 9% respectively. The demographic makeup of the 23 students was approximately 4% White, 74% Hispanic, 17% Black, and 4% Asian. The academy identified 26% as having Limited English Proficiency, 17% as receiving special education services, and approximately 70% as being eligible for FNS. Table 4.1 gives the distribution of the demographic variables of the treatment and comparison groups for gender and race at Dream Academy.

Table 4.1

Distribution of Chronically Absent Student Demographic Variables for Dream Academy

Dream Academy	Treatment		Comparison	
Demographic Characteristic	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Female	2	9	0	0
Male	21	91	31	100
Ethnicity				
White	1	4.3	1	3.2
Hispanic	17	74	24	77.4
Black	4	17.4	6	19.4
Asian	1	4.3	0	0

For the comparison group, 31 students who were chronically absent did not participate in the mentoring program. All of the students in the comparison group were males. The demographics of this group of males were approximately 3% White, 77% Hispanic, and 19% Black. The academy identified approximately 23% as having Limited English Proficiency, another 16% as receiving special education services, and approximately 48% as being eligible for FNS.

A total of 67 chronically absent students were identified in November of 2018, but

because of transfers in and out of the academy, this number continued to fluctuate during the 2018–2019 school year. As a result of these fluctuations, this study only included students who were consistently enrolled from September 2018 to June 2019. At one point, 25 students were identified to receive mentoring, but this researcher excluded two students from the study because of a break in their attendance; these students were both Hispanic (one male and one female). Initially 51 students identified as being chronically absent were not selected to participate in the mentoring initiative. Of the 51 students, nine transferred out of the academy, leaving 42 students in the comparison group. Of the 42 students, eight dropped out of school during the 2018–2019 school year for various reasons, which left only 34 students in the comparison group. Of the eight students who dropped out, all of them were male (five were Hispanic and three were Black). Of the 34 students, this researcher excluded three students because of a break in their attendance, leaving a total of 31 students in the comparison group. Of the three who were excluded, one was a Hispanic male, one was a Hispanic female, and the third was an Asian male.

For both the treatment and comparison groups of Dream Academy, the chronic absenteeism population was made up of mostly male and Hispanic and Black students, consistent with literature that this population of students was more at risk of becoming chronically absent and eventually dropping out of school altogether (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The percentages of students eligible for FNS was 70% for the treatment group and 48% for the comparison group.

Scholar Academy

A total of 96 students participated in this study. Of the 96 participants, 62 were in the treatment group (received mentoring) and 34 were in the comparison group (did not receive mentoring).

In the treatment group were 12 ninth graders, 20 tenth graders, 21 eleventh graders, and nine twelfth graders. Of the 62 total participants, 37 were male and 25 were female, or approximately 60 % and 40% respectively. The demographic makeup of the 62 students was 2% White, 77% Hispanic, and 21% Black. The academy identified approximately 34% as having Limited English Proficiency, approximately 13% as receiving special education services, approximately 3% identified as both LEP and SPED, and approximately 68% as being eligible for FNS. Table 4.2 gives the distribution of the demographic variables of the treatment and comparison groups by grade level at Scholar Academy.

Table 4.2

Distribution of Chronically Absent Student Demographic Variables for Scholar Academy

Scholar Academy	Treatment		Comparison	
Demographic Characteristic	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Female	25	40	18	53
Male	37	60	16	47
Ethnicity				
White	1	2	0	0
Hispanic	48	77	33	97
Black	13	21	1	3
Grade				
Ninth	12	19	8	24
Tenth	20	32	12	35
Eleventh	21	34	14	41
Twelfth	9	15	0	0

For the comparison group, 8 ninth graders, 12 tenth graders, and 14 eleventh graders were identified for the program but chose not to participate. There was no comparison group for the twelfth grade population, as all identified seniors participated in the mentoring program. Of the 34 students who opted not to participate in the program, 16 were male or roughly 47%, with 18 being female, or roughly 53%. The demographics of this group of students was 97%

Hispanic and 3% Black. The academy identified 53% of the comparison group's population as having Limited English Proficiency and 74% as being eligible for FNS. No students in the comparison group were identified as receiving special education services.

A total of 105 chronically absent students were eligible to participate in the program in March of 2019, but because of transfers in and out of the academy, this number continued to fluctuate during the 2018–2019 school year. As a result of these fluctuations, this study included only those students who were consistently enrolled from September to June of the 2018–2019 school year. At one point, 67 students were identified to receive mentoring but this researcher excluded five students from the study because of a break in their attendance; these students were all Hispanic (three males and two females). Initially 38 students identified as being chronically absent were not selected to participate in the mentoring initiative. Of the 38 students, this researcher excluded four students from the study because of their break in attendance (all Hispanic females). A total of 62 students and 34 students remained in the treatment and comparison groups respectively.

Similar to Dream Academy, the population of both the treatment and comparison groups were comprised of Hispanic and Black students, with approximately 70% of each group being eligible to receive FNS; a population that literature states were more at risk of becoming chronically absent and eventually dropping out of school altogether (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). However, the number of males and females in both groups were similar with approximately 60% male and 40% female in the treatment group and approximately 50% male and female participants in the control group.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research was guided by the overarching question: what impact, if any, does the implementation of mentoring have on the attendance of chronically absent high school students? Two primary research questions were further explored in this study. The first question investigated to what extent the participation in a mentoring program predicted student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer this. The control variables of gender, race, LEP, SPED, and FNS services were analyzed with the independent variable of average daily attendance. The study also controlled for the months of attendance prior to the month each academy implemented its mentoring program.

Analyses

To answer the research questions and determine the extent to which statistically significant differences were present between students in the school-based mentoring programs when compared with students not in the mentoring programs, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. This is the terminology that will be used to describe each variable, which also can be referred to in Chapter III. When the study indicates 'treatment,' it refers to students who would eventually participate in the mentoring program. When the term 'mentored' is used, it is the distinction between students who either received mentoring or did not receive mentoring. 'After program' refers to the months that the mentoring programs were implemented at each academy: Dream Academy's would be from November 2018 through June 2019, and Scholar Academy's would be from April through June of 2019. When the study refers to students being 'in the program,' it refers to students who participated in the mentoring program at a certain point in time.

Research Question #1

To what extent does participation in a mentoring program predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students?

Dream Academy. In regression analysis, the researcher first examined the relationship between participation in the mentoring program and student attendance. The dependent variable was the percent of a student's average daily attendance. The independent variables were the variables mentioned above. The R^2 was .127 indicating that approximately 13% of the variance in the percentage of a student's average daily attendance could be explained by the entered independent variables. Table 4.3 presents the analyses for students' average daily attendance with the independent variables for Dream Academy.

Table 4.3

Regression Model of Percent Attendance on In Program, Treatment, After October, and Demographics

Variable	*B*	*SE*	*p*
In Program	-7.166	6.357	.209
Treatment (M)	5.337	5.405	.324
After October	-9.027	3.76	.017
Is Asian	-43.889	8.152	.000
Is Black	-8.099	5.685	.155
Is Hispanic	-3.195	5.142	.535
Is Female	-11.948	4.988	.017
Food in Schools	3.321	1.966	.092
Limited English Proficiency	1.731	2.45	.480
Special Education	-0.841	2.595	.746

Note: N=540, R^2 = .127

This multiple regression model was statistically significant F (10, 476) =6.898, p=.000. The main predictors were whether or not a student was in the program at a particular time,

whether they were in the treatment group (received mentoring), and the months after the mentoring program was implemented, which in this case was November 2018 through June 2019. The predictors describing students who participated in the mentoring program at a particular point in time, and students who eventually participated in the mentoring program, were not statistically significant predictors of students' average daily attendance percentage, p=.209 and .324 respectively. Although not statically significant, the model showed that students who participated in mentoring at a particular point in time showed on average less attendance by 7%, but students who received mentoring on average had approximately 5% better attendance compared to students who were not mentored. The predictor representing students who received mentoring after program implementation was statistically significant (Beta=-9.027, t=-2.401, p=.017). On average students' daily attendance lessened by approximately 9% after program implementation in October, and this decrease was statistically significant.

Of the control variables, students receiving special education services, students identified as having limited English proficiency, and students eligible for FNS were not statistically significant predictors in the percentage that students attended school, p=.746, .480, .092 respectively. Of the race related variables, predictors representing students who were Hispanic and students who were Black, neither were statistically significant variables, p=.535, and .155 respectively. However, the variable representing students who were Asian was statistically significant (Beta=-43.889, t=-.283, p=.000). On average, Asian students' attendance lessened by approximately 44% when compared to White students. The model showed that on average, Black and Hispanic students' attendance also lessened by approximately 8% and 3% respectively when compared to White students.

The gender variable representing female students when compared to students who were

male was statistically significant (Beta=-11.948, t=-2.395, p=.017). On average, female students' daily attendance lessened by approximately 12% as compared to that of male students, and this decrease was statistically significant. On average, students eligible for FNS and students identified as having limited English proficiency showed better attendance by approximately 3% and 2% in their average daily attendance, although not statistically significant.

The model showed that for students participating in the program, the average daily student attendance lessened for all races and genders.

Scholar Academy. This academy implemented a mentoring program for its ninth through twelfth grade population. In regression analysis, the researcher examined the relationship between participation in the mentoring program and student attendance. The dependent variable was the percent of a student's average daily attendance. The independent variables were the variables mentioned above. The R^2 was .049, indicating that 4.9% of the variance in the percentage of a student's average daily attendance could be explained by the entered independent variables. Table 4.4 presents the analyses for students' average daily attendance with the independent variables for Scholar Academy.

Table 4.4

Regression Model of Percent Attendance on In Program, Treatment, After October, and Demographics

Variable	*B*	*SE*	*p*
In Program	-11.817	2.631	.000
Treatment (M)	0.18	1.519	0.906
After March	2.857	2.115	.177
Black	-0.112	6.031	.985
Hispanic	0.332	5.789	.954
Female	0.314	1.216	.796
Food in Schools	1.086	1.309	.407
Limited English Proficiency	2.352	1.283	.067
Special Education	2.484	1.989	.212

Note: N=960, R^2=.049

This multiple regression model was statistically significant F (9, 950) =5.459, p=.000. The main predictors were whether or not a student was in the program at a particular point in time, whether students eventually participated in the mentoring program, and the months after program implementation, which was March through June 2019. The predictor of students who participated in the mentoring program at a specific point in time was a significant predictor of the average daily attendance percentage (Beta=-11.817, t=-4.491, p=.000). On average students' daily attendance lessened by approximately 12% after implementation of the program, and this decrease was statistically significant. Although the predictors representing students who eventually participated in the mentoring program, and the months after program implementation were not significant predictors (p=.906 and .177 respectively), the model showed that on average students' average daily attendance improved by approximately 3%. Typically, a trend was that students' attendance rates tended to drop during the months of April through June because of testing, prom, graduation, and other school-related activities.

The control variables of gender, race, special education, limited English proficiency, and

eligibility for FNS were not statistically significant predictors in the percent that students attended school. However, the model showed that on average Black students' average daily attendance showed more of a decline than their Hispanic peers when compared to White students. There was also a slight improvement in female students' attendance when compared to their male counterparts. Students receiving services related to limited English proficiency and special education also showed improvement in attendance, as did students eligible for FNS.

The model showed that there were improvements in student attendance after the implementation of a mentoring program, and these differences varied by gender and race. Based upon the results of the analyses, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that a mentoring program had no effect on chronic absenteeism.

Research Question #2

If there is an impact with mentoring, does gender or race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism?

For this research question, four separate multiple regression models were estimated using gender and race. The analyses of students' attendance by gender and race are presented in Table 4.5.

Dream Academy. Regression analyses were conducted to determine if gender or race had an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. The continuous dependent variable of the percentage of students' average daily attendance remained constant in all models and was compared with the independent categorical variable of females when compared to male students, and race when compared with White students. Table 4.5 presents the analyses for students' average daily attendance of race and gender for Dream Academy. (See Appendix A2-A4 for regression models on gender and race.)

Table 4.5

Regression Model of Dream Academy's Percent Attendance for Race and Gender

Dependent Variable Percent Attended	**Independent Variable** In Program		
	Black	Hispanic	Male
B	-2.363	-5.196	-4.808
SE	4.67	2.049	1.927
p	.614	0.012	0.013
R^2	0.003	0.016	0.012

Note: Asian and White students were removed from the table as the sample only had one student from each race; female students were also removed from the table as there were only two female students in the treatment group and none in the comparison group.

The first model conducted was to analyze students' attendance after program implementation for male students who participated in the mentoring program at a particular time. This regression model was statistically significant (Beta=-4.808, t=-2.495, p= .013), with less than 1% of the variance in the percentage of a student's average daily attendance being explained by the entered independent variable. On average, male students' average daily attendance lessened by approximately 5%, and this decrease was statistically significant. Based upon the regression model, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that gender had no effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Further regression analyses were estimated to see if race had an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. In each model, the dependent variable was the percentage of students' average daily attendance, with the independent variable representing students who were either Black or Hispanic and in the mentoring program at a particular time.

The results showed a statistical significance for Hispanic students when compared to

White students (Beta=-5.196, t=2.049, p=.012). On average, Hispanic students' attendance lessened by approximately 5% and this decrease was significant. The analysis of the attendance of Black students was not statistically significant, p=.614. Although the attendance decreased for each student who was in the program during mentoring implementation regardless of their race, there was a statistical significance for Hispanic students who were in the program. On average, Hispanic students' attendance decreased by approximately 5%, but it is possible that their attendance would have been even less had they not been in this program. Based on these results, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that race had no effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Scholar Academy. Identical regression analyses were conducted with Scholar Academy to determine if gender and race had an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. The first model conducted was to analyze students' attendance after program implementation for male and female students who participated in the mentoring program at a particular time. Both regression models were statistically significant for males and females. Table 4.6 presents the analyses for students' average daily attendance of race and gender for Scholar Academy. (See Appendix A5–A8 for regression models on gender and race.)

Table 4.6

Regression Model of Scholar Academy's Percent Attendance for Race and Gender

Dependent Variable Percent Attended	**Independent Variable** In Program			
	Black	Hispanic	Female	Male
B	-7.350	-9.609	-9.446	-9.269
SE	2.756	1.696	2.169	1.977
p	.009	.000	.000	.000
R^2	.049	.038	.042	.040

Note: Only one White student was in this sample so the researcher removed this student from the table.

During program implementation male and female students' attendance lessened by approximately 9% on average, and this decrease was statistically significant. However, based on the statistical significance of the model, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that gender had no effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. It is possible that although there was a decline in the attendance percentage for the time students were in the program, these numbers could have been significantly higher had they not been enrolled in the program.

The researcher also wanted to discover if race had an effect on the relationship of mentoring and absenteeism at Scholar Academy, so regression analyses were once again estimated with a dependent variable representing the percentage of students' average daily attendance and the independent variable of gender. Based upon the regression analyses, there was statistical significance for both Black and Hispanic students who were in the mentoring program during program implementation when compared with White students.

Based on the statistical significance of Black and Hispanic students in the program, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that race had no effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Summary of Findings

Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the groups of students in the treatment and comparison groups for both academies. To answer the first research question, a difference-in-difference statistical technique was utilized to compare the attendance of students in both the treatment and comparison groups before and after program implementation. To answer the second research question, regression analyses were again conducted, using students' average attendance percentage as the dependent variable, with gender and race as independent variables.

Research Question #1. The main predictors were whether or not a student was in the program at a particular point in time, whether students eventually participated in the mentoring programs, and the months after each academy's respective mentoring programs were implemented.

Dream Academy showed a statistically significant model with students' average daily attendance for the months after the implementation of their mentoring program being statistically significant, even though students' average daily attendance decreased by approximately 9% after implementation of the mentoring program. The model also showed that gender (specifically, being female) was a significant predictor. Scholar Academy showed statistical significance with students who were in the mentoring program at a particular point in time. Both schools had significant models showing that participation in a mentoring program can predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism for high school students. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypotheses that a mentoring program had no effect on chronic absenteeism.

Research Question #2. The main predictors for this question were the variable representing students who participated in the mentoring program at a particular point in time as well as the respective gender and race variables for each academy. To determine if gender or

race had an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism, regression analyses were estimated. For Dream Academy, males and Hispanics showed statistical significance when compared to females and Whites respectively. Scholar Academy showed statistical significance with males and females, as well as Black and Hispanic students, when compared to White students. The statistical significance with these models is evidence that gender and race does have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism; therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypotheses that gender and race had no effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Chapter V

Conclusion

This final chapter summarizes the findings of this study, relates the findings to the literature reviewed, and offers suggestions for practice, policy, and future research. The purpose of this research was to analyze how participation in a mentoring program predicted attendance outcomes for chronically absent high school students and to explore if gender and race influenced that relationship. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent does participation in a mentoring program predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students?
2. If there is an impact with mentoring, does gender or race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism?

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive association between students who participated in the mentoring programs and their average daily attendance. The researcher also hypothesized that gender and race would have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

As indicated in the previous chapters, mentoring is an idea that has been around for centuries. Whatever form it takes, be it formal or informal, studies have shown that mentoring can have huge impacts on the life of a youth with positive academic and nonacademic outcomes (Bozman, 2018). As specified in the Methodology chapter of this dissertation, the study analyzed attendance data from 54 students at one high school academy and 96 students from another high school academy who participated in mentoring programs in one urban school district in New Jersey. Students from both academies were divided into treatment and comparison groups based upon their participation in the mentoring programs. Demographic

information relating to race, gender, LEP, SPED, and FNS was included for each student. Quantitative analyses were conducted to answer the research questions posed in this study.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question #1: To what extent does participation in a mentoring program predict student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for high school students?

The first research question focused on whether there was a significant difference in student attendance and chronic absenteeism as measured by students' participation in a mentoring program.

Dream Academy. The results showed that the participation in mentoring had an effect on the attendance for students who participated in the mentoring program. On average, attendance lessened by approximately 9% for students who participated in the mentoring program. There was a significant difference for female students who participated in the program when compared with their male peers. On average, participating female students' attendance lessened by approximately 12% Although there was a decrease in attendance for both groups of students, this decrease may have been higher had they not been enrolled in the program. These lessened numbers were surprising to the researcher because the expectation was that numbers would improve to a certain extent and not show declines across the board.

There was no statistical significance for the controlled variables in the study, except for Asian students, whose attendance lessened by approximately 44%. There was only one Asian student in this sample. A total of nine Asian students were in this academy, so the sample size in the study was comparable to the overall population. Of the nine enrolled students in the academy, attendance records indicated that five of them were identified as chronically absent in November of 2018, the month of program implementation. However, only one Asian student

was identified for this mentoring initiative. Across New Jersey, the rate of absenteeism among Asian students (4.8%) was typically below the state's 10.6% average chronic absenteeism rate (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2019, p. 53). This district may need to investigate why more than 50% of their Asian population was chronically absent, as contrasted with the state's trend.

There were decreases in attendance for all races involved in this study, with Black students showing a greater decline in their attendance than their Hispanic peers, when compared to their White counterparts, even after implementation of the mentoring program. However, results showed that there was improvement in the attendance of students identified as LEP and those eligible for FNS on average of 2–3%, although there was no statistical significance of these findings. Once again, the researcher believed there would be some improvement in the attendance of students after program implementation. The fact that there were some improved numbers suggests an impact.

Based upon the results, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that there was not a significant difference in student attendance and chronic absenteeism as measured by students' participation in a mentoring program.

Scholar Academy. There was an impact in the prediction of student attendance and chronic absenteeism outcomes for students who participated in a mentoring program. On average, students' attendance lessened by approximately 12% during the time of program implementation.

Both male and female students showed slight improvement in their attendance, with females showing slightly higher numbers. Students receiving LEP and SPED services, along with students eligible for FNS, all showed improvement in their attendance. Although not

statistically significant, Black students showed less attendance, while Hispanic students showed slight improvement, when compared with their White peers. These results were a bit disheartening to the researcher because even with the limited amount of time of program implementation, it was expected that some statistically significant improvement would be noted.

Scholar Academy did not implement their mentoring program until March, even though data showed that their students showed patterns of being chronically absent all year long. Perhaps this school should have considered implementing their mentoring program earlier in the school year to realize greater attendance results for all involved students.

Based upon the results, this researcher once again rejected the null hypothesis that there was not a significant difference in student attendance and chronic absenteeism as measured by students' participation in a mentoring program.

Research Question #2: If there is an impact with mentoring, does gender or race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism?

If there was a significant difference in student attendance and chronic absenteeism as measured by students' participation in a mentoring program, the second research question focused on whether gender or race had an effect on that relationship.

Dream Academy. There was a statistical significance for both gender and race. Male students who participated in the mentoring program on average showed approximately 5% less attendance during program implementation. Hispanic students showed a statistical significance with their attendance, on average, lessening by approximately 5% during program implementation. To be considered chronically absent, a student must miss 10% or more of the days they are enrolled in school. At the end of the 2017–2018 school year, Hispanic students had a chronic absenteeism rate of approximately 46%. At the end of the 2018–2019 school year,

Hispanic males had a chronic absenteeism rate of 61%, and Hispanic females had a chronic absenteeism rate of 64%. With chronic absenteeism being on the rise for Hispanic students, consistent with the trends of the state, this school needs to get ahead of this through early intervention.

Any decrease in attendance would not necessarily be looked at as rewarding with the upward trend of chronic absenteeism rates at this academy; however, single-digit declines in numbers were better than the glaring double-digit declines often observed with this school's attendance.

Based on these results, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that gender and race had no effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism.

Scholar Academy. The results showed statistical significance for both male and female students who participated in the program, with a lessening, on average, of approximately 9% attendance for both groups. Black and Hispanic students who participated in the mentoring program also had a statistical significance with both groups of students on average showing a lessening in attendance of 10% and 7% respectively. Although there was a decrease in the daily average attendance for both groups, this academy had a rising chronic absenteeism rate of approximately 44%, 52%, and 64% consecutively for the 2016–2019 school years. Hispanic students made up about half of this percentage each year, while Black students made up approximately 10% of this chronic absenteeism rate. The statistical significance is evidence that both gender and race have an effect on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism; the researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis.

This researcher found some interesting dynamics with mentoring based upon the research and the implementation of the mentoring programs. Most school-based mentoring programs

showed some improvement in attendance and other outcomes, which made this researcher believe there would be similar results in this study. However, the researcher did not expect a lessening of attendance for all students regardless of their race or gender when comparing attendance before and after program implementation. Literature showed that Black and Hispanic students (most of the academies' students) were more at risk for being chronically absent (Rice, 2015). However, research has also shown that when youth are connected to caring adults (Rice, 2015), they show improvement in a host of academic and non-academic outcomes (Bozman, 2018). Literature also indicates that quality mentoring has an impact on attendance when done as a school-wide effort (Attendance Works, 2017); such programs can motivate students to show up to school when they are connected to a caring adult who notices when they do not attend (Attendance Works, 2017). Whether or not a mentor is viewed positively can also have an impact on results (Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2008).

This study did not show better attendance for the groups studied; although numbers lessened, there is still the possibility that the numbers would have been even lower had the programs not been implemented. However, there is also the possibility that had the programs been implemented early and had the district taken certain steps early on, the outcomes in this study would have been positive.

Implications for Policy

As districts address issues of student attendance and chronic absenteeism, they need to adjust and enforce attendance policies accordingly. The New Jersey Department of Education's Title 18A:38-25 requires that children between the ages of six and 16 attend school or receive equivalent instruction elsewhere (Justia US Law, 2020). School districts with higher than average chronic absenteeism rates should not only enforce the statute created by the state but be

prepared to implement, adjust, and enforce their own attendance policies when it comes to students not attending school. This can include taking parents to court, but when students are well-abled, high school-aged children, accountability may need to be shifted onto the students. The statute states that students can "receive equivalent instruction elsewhere." For students who are chronically absent, home instruction by way of virtual means (such as the Edgenuity platform) may be considered in lieu of students physically attending school.

At one point this urban district had attendance officers who patrolled the city and visited homes of students who did not show up for school. Budget cuts forced the elimination of this approach to dealing with absenteeism, but the district may want to reconsider this option. There is a current position known as the chronic absenteeism specialist; the specialist works part-time at certain schools and ideally collaborates with building leadership on an assigned caseload of chronically absent students. In practice, however, this individual often works alone. This role should be redefined and made available as a full-time position in all schools to curtail the increase in chronic absenteeism rates.

The State of New Jersey launched its ESSA initiative to combat chronic absenteeism and even partnered with agencies around the nation to implement the My Brother's Keeper Success Mentoring program for at-risk Black and Hispanic youth around the country (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The implementation of mentoring programs by both academies with the goal of decreasing chronic absenteeism was aligned with literature stating that schools that engaged students and parents in positive ways and provided mentors for chronically absent students saw an improvement in attendance (Attendance Works, 2018). The researcher hoped to find improvements in the attendance of students who participated in the mentoring programs, but the results were inconsistent with what literature states about 'improvement in attendance.' The

average daily attendance of mentoring participants showed declines. However, compared to the high chronic absenteeism percentages and the low average daily attendance that each child began with, single digit decreases in attendance could be interpreted as an improvement.

The findings from this study do not support results from previous research. Most research shows that when early interventions are implemented with fidelity, appropriate matching of mentors and mentees, and quality mentoring as a school-wide effort, there are positive outcomes. For example, the study conducted by Judd (2017) researched the impacts (academic and attendance outcomes) of mentoring fourth and fifth grade students considered to be at risk in a rural school district. She used a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test to analyze the attendance between the experimental groups' attendance before and after mentoring program implementation, and the mean scores suggested that students' absences significantly decreased after implementation of the mentoring program (p. 50). Another study conducted at two junior high schools in a suburban district implemented a mentoring program using school personnel to serve as mentors. The study was conducted over the course of two years, and while the findings did not show statistical significance on attendance, the researchers noted a decrease in absences by those in the treatment group (Schnautz, 2014).

Dream Academy implemented an informal mentoring program over the course of eight months with only seniors, using no defined structure and no training for mentors (Bozman, 2018). Many of the mentors chose mentees based upon the chemistry and relationship that already existed. The mentors met with students on a weekly basis (and sometimes daily if the need warranted), but they did not document their meetings or what was discussed. Mentors followed up with building administration on a monthly basis and had the opportunity to speak informally whenever the need arose. Scholar Academy implemented a three-month long formal

mentoring program for students in grades nine through twelve, with well-designed protocols for both the mentor and mentee to follow, along with training to ensure the mentor knew how to properly guide the mentee.

Both academies had a need for mentoring, but they implemented them in different ways, with different populations, and for different durations of time. The prescription for successful mentoring is well documented in research and literature, and for this district to realize the same success, there are a few steps needed. First, the district is already aware of data indicating that Black and Hispanic students, as well as high-poverty children, are more at risk of not attending school. Using data, administrators need to identify students with a pattern of absenteeism and reach out to families early to offer support and intervention. This outreach needs to be at all grade levels with an emphasis on absenteeism. Second, if mentoring is the intervention of choice, this district needs to have a well-defined and well-structured mentoring program in place at all schools with an at-risk population, beginning at the start of the school year and concluding at the end of the school year. All staff members need to be properly trained on protocol, be provided with strategies on how to effectively guide students, and follow up with students and their families on an ongoing basis. This would include professional development from professionals well versed in implementing successful mentoring programs and outcomes, including executed procedures on how to document meetings for evidence outcomes being enforced. Third, the intervention should be ongoing, with students returning to the academy for the next academic year continuing their efforts with the same mentor; in this way there is no break in the intervention, except for the summer months when school is not in session. These efforts should be consistent across all high schools in the district, so if a student transfers from one academy to another, the mentoring can continue with a staff member who has already been

trained and is well versed on the expectations. Finally, the district may also want to revise its school choice lottery process. Research shows that when students are able to choose a specific path of interest, they become more engaged in their learning and more likely to stay in school (Kemple & Snipes, 2000). If students are being enrolled in schools that are not their first, second, or even third choice, they may be less inclined to attend school because of lack of interest in the program.

The results of this study might cause one to reexamine whether mentoring lessens absenteeism in high school students. This researcher has implemented mentoring programs for elementary and middle school students and has seen an increase in student attendance as well as a decline in the chronic absenteeism rates of participants. Although the mentoring program in this study failed to increase student attendance, this may be attributed to a host of factors, including but not limited to the potential incompatibility in mentor/mentee pairing, the duration of the program, and how the programs were communicated and implemented. Suggestions for strategies to address the challenges posed by these factors appear in the Implications for Practice section. Despite the research findings, this researcher still believes that when implemented properly, mentoring can and will have a tremendous impact on the attendance of willing participants.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study generated some implications for practice that district and school administration can utilize in the implementation of mentoring programs.

First, it is important that each school in the district identifies early intervention as a best practice using data to identify trends and patterns in student attendance. Prior to the implementation of the mentoring program, Dream Academy's building leadership examined

attendance data and reached out to the parents of students identified as having a pattern of chronic absenteeism, offering them the opportunity for mentoring. This was aligned with literature that suggested that the most critical strategy to combat chronic absenteeism was to use data to trigger early caring outreach to families and students who are already missing too many days of school (Attendance Works, 2018). Scholar Academy waited until March to implement a mentoring program even though their academy had a history of rising chronic absenteeism rates over the past three years.

The word 'early' can be ambiguous as it can be argued that reaching out to parents the summer prior to students' senior year may not be considered early enough, as was the case with Dream Academy, especially if these students had shown a history of chronic absenteeism in prior years. On the other hand, implementing the mentoring program closer to the start rather than the end of the year could be considered early. The district needs to provide school leadership with attendance data over the summer months, with an emphasis on students with chronic absenteeism, that can be used to define and prescribe a plan of action to address students from day one. Administrators can then inform parents of at-risk students of their child's prior history and set up a meeting to discuss the mentoring program and other supports and resources that are available.

Second, the reviewed research revealed that while negative effects of chronic absenteeism hold true for all groups, students from low-income families and children of color are more likely to become victims of chronic absenteeism (Rice, 2015). Moreover, the findings from this study accentuate the need for early and caring outreach to families and students already showing a trend of absenteeism (Attendance Works, 2018). Therefore, it is imperative that the families of these students be informed of their children's chronic absenteeism as well as the

potentiality serious consequences of missing school, such as a gap in achievement (Rice, 2015), worse health, and a higher risk of being institutionalized or participating in criminal activity (McFarland, Cui, & Stark, 2018, p.1).

Third, the research showed that males are more at risk of being pulled or pushed out of school because of structural strains (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011), which can eventually lead to their not attending school altogether. Districts may want to consider partnering with community agencies that offer support to young men. To support their female counterparts, a Big Brothers/Big Sisters program can be implemented that can offer participation for both young men and young women. Schools can partner with the Boys and Girls Club and other local agencies that can help foster self-awareness in the youth, while giving them another layer of support.

Finally, Black and Hispanic youth are more likely to stop attending high school at a more alarming rate than their White counterparts (Child Trends, 2015). Urban districts have a high population of Black and Hispanic children and need to connect with families to identify the barriers such as hunger, access to health care, homelessness, transportation, or other challenges that exist, which are external barriers associated with absenteeism (Attendance Works, 2018).

Recommendation for Future Research

Implications for future research emerged as a result of this study. These recommendations can assist districts and researchers in understanding chronic absenteeism as well as the role that well-established interventions can play in circumventing this problem from continuing its spread. First, it is important to understand the difference between formal and informal mentoring relationships. Some districts have implemented a mentoring program carte blanche with no established protocol—simply assigning an adult to a student in the hopes this

will yield a good outcome. A study delving into the strengths and weaknesses of formal and informal mentoring, as well as the different techniques associated with each (one-on-one, group, peer), would be beneficial for school districts and even the state.

Additionally, continuing the research in this study and adding a qualitative element may yield rich findings. It would be great to gather the perceptions of chronically absent students and get their view on why they miss so many days of school, inviting them to articulate and seek what they believe would assist them in attending school. It would also be good to hear from the mentors, the parents, the building administration, and district leadership on their perceptions on why chronic absenteeism is so prevalent despite the many interventions and programs that have been put in place.

The community schools model supported by Title IV of ESSA (Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam, 2017, p. 8) can serve as a rich source of information and data for those interested in further exploring this topic. States and local districts have put in place community schools to help meet the needs of the whole child. This particular district implemented the community schools model in some of its elementary schools, and there is data that can be analyzed to ascertain how it addresses the external barriers often associated with children not attending school (Attendance Works, 2018). A community school recently opened in one of the high schools, but there was not enough data to report on. This could be an area that can generate research in the future.

Conducting a panel analysis on a group of chronically absent students over the course of three or more years can be another angle of research to be explored. Performing a panel analysis on the data that was acquired in this study could have produced more information on the current topic. Acquiring student attendance data from all involved students and then running a regression analysis to compare results could generate information on trends and patterns in the

attendance that can be used as ammunition for a grounded mentoring program or used to provide more information to validate this research.

The last recommendation would be for more research to be conducted on interventions, such as mentoring programs, for chronically absent students in urban high schools. This study was conducted with two comprehensive academies in the same urban district, but it would be interesting to see what data could be distilled from a study focusing upon and analyzing the results of implemented interventions across multiple high schools in different urban school districts.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how the participation in a mentoring program predicted student attendance outcomes of high school students, and to discover the effect that gender and race had on the relationship between mentoring and absenteeism. The Department of Education coined chronic absenteeism as a "hidden education crisis" (Ordway, 2019). Mentoring has become equated with higher academic achievement, physical health, socioemotional competence, improved decision-making skills and goal-setting-self-efficacy for youth (Bozman, 2018). It has also become synonymous with improved student attendance (Railsback, 2004). When students are chronically absent, they are more at risk for dropping out of school, and statistics show that males, and Black and Hispanic youth, are more in danger of this occurrence (Child Trends, 2015).

There is limited research on an effective mentoring program model or a program deemed to work when combating chronic absenteeism for at-risk high school students. Many factors lead to students not attending school. However, existing research has shown that mentoring has been a key factor in improving student attendance (Railsback, 2004). Even though numbers decreased

in this study, other research seems to indicate that quality mentoring has an impact on attendance, especially when done as a school-wide effort (Attendance Works, 2017) and when implemented properly. There are also aspects not showing in the raw data such as the number of absences or anecdotal evidence of students' disposition or their relationship with their mentors. As with Telemachus when Odysseus was pulled away for many years, Mentor stepped up and became a great support and counselor. Our at-risk youth can benefit greatly from men and women who step up and become a positive, supportive force, helping to swing the pendulum in a direction of success for youth who may have fallen victim to the same plight that has impacted the lives of millions before them.

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Appendix A1

Sample ADA Table

SEPT 2018	OCT 2018	OCT_S 2018	NOV 2018	NOV_S 2018	DEC 2018	DEC_S 2018	JAN 2019	JAN_S 2019
100.00%	94.74%	89.48%	92.45%	87.87%	88.24%	75.61%	87.50%	84.54%

FEB 2019	FEB_S 2019	MARCH 2019	MARCH_S 2019	APRIL 2019	APRIL_S 2019
87.62%	88.22%	89.60%	101.48%	90.78%	99.04%

MAY 2019	MAY_S 2019	JUNE 2019	JUNE_S 2019
92.02%	101.94%	90.56%	77.42%

Note: S denotes the specific monthly average daily attendance

Appendix A2

Regression Model for Dream Academy When Variable is Being Male

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R^2***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.111	.012	.010	20.35591%	1	498	-4.808	1.927	-2.495	.013

Appendix A3

Regression Model for Dream Academy When Variable is Being Black

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R^2***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.052	.003	-.008	21.56962 %	1	94	-2.363	4.67	-.506	.614

Appendix A4

Regression Model for Dream Academy When Variable is Being Hispanic

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R^2***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.127	.016	.014	19.33186%	1	392	-5.196	2.049	-2.536	.012

Appendix A5

Regression Model for Scholar Academy When Variable is Being Male

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R^2***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.200	.040	.038	18.52263%	1	528	-9.269	1.977	-4.688	.000

Appendix A6

Regression Model for Scholar Academy When Variable is Being Female

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R²***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.206	.042	.040	17.06737%	1	428	-9.446	2.169	-4.355	.000

Appendix A7

Regression Model for Scholar Academy When Variable is Being Black

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R^2***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.221	.049	.042	14.61867%	1	138	-7.35	2.756	-2.667	.009

Appendix A8

Regression Model for Scholar Academy When Variable is Being Hispanic

Dependent Variable Percent Attended										
Independent Variables	***R***	***R^2***	**Adjusted R2**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**df**	**df**	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
In Program	.195	.038	.037	18.45859%	1	808	-9.609	1.696	-5.665	.000

Appendix B

SHU Institutional Review Board Approval of Amendment

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
1 8 5 6

April 23, 2020

Tyeshia Hilbert
[redacted]

Dear Ms. Hilbert,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the amendment to your research proposal entitled "Mentoring as a Pathway to Addressing Chronic Absenteeism in the High Schools". This memo serves as official notice of the aforementioned amendment's approval.

Approval of this amendment does not change the previous expiration date from your one-year approval period. You will receive a communication from the Institutional Review Board at least 1 month prior to the original expiration date requesting that you submit an Annual Progress Report to keep the study active, or a Final Review of Human Subjects Research to close the study.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mara Podvey

Mara C. Podvey, PhD, OTR
Associate Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

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