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Retaining Nevada's High Risk Youth in High School

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RETAINING NEVADA'S HIGH-RISK YOUTH

IN HIGH SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

Retaining Nevada's High Risk Youth in High School

The primary goal of dropout prevention programs is to prevent as many students from leaving school as possible. The percentage of individuals leaving Nevada schools without obtaining a regular diploma is among the highest in the nation (Schmidt & Barr, 2004, p. 9).

The primary methodology employed in this project was Content Analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In Content Analysis, the researcher identifies specific examples of selected characteristics in similar documents defining the characteristics more clearly. Each item is then broken down into smaller manageable segments to be analyzed separately (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 142). This research reviewed documents from the five largest school districts in this country including, New York City Public Schools (n = 1.063,609), Los Angeles Unified School District (n = 746,610), City of Chicago Public Schools (n = 438,589), Miami-Dade County Florida Public Schools (n = 362,319), and the Broward County Florida Public Schools (n = 271,339).

This research project reviewed documents from the five largest school districts in the United States to identify common themes and strategies inherent in successful dropout prevention programs. Recommendations to encourage potential dropouts in Clark County Schools to stay in high school and graduate are provided.

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I would first like to thank God for all the infinite wisdom and patience given to me, while doing this project I would also like to thank my advisor, Dr. Parks, and my son Barrie for all the advice given to me while writing this project. Also, I would like to thank my sister-in-law Joanne Spadaro, for helping me get through the "rough spots", when I would otherwise be stuck for days.

Last, but not least, I want to thank the love of my life, my wonderful husband, Harry and my wonderful children for putting up with the time taken away from them, for me to do this project. Thanks guys for all the times I had to ignore things, and put them aside until later.   Thanks for believing in me, and giving me lots of strength, hope and courage during these stressful times.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Nevada's high school graduation rate is among the worst in the country according to a study released by the Manhattan Institute, a New York group that advocates school choice (Richmond, 2003). Many educators attribute Nevada's persistently high dropout rate to a combination of factors including transient families, increasing volumes of Hispanic-speaking migrants and supposedly insufficient funding for education (Schmidt & Barr, 2004).

Student retention is the number one focus in Clark County schools, and all schools across Nevada (Henderson, Mumford & Tanori, 2002). Due to the reality of finite resources, a focused approach must be taken in order to combat the problems of dropping out of high school successfully. In particular, this approach involves the prominent social indicators that are correlated with Nevada's dropout problem and need to be identified (Henderson, et.al., 2002). Deciding what programs are most effective in retaining high school students could make a significant contribution to dropout prevention efforts in Clark County schools.

Background of the Problem

Over the last decade, between 347,000 and 544,000 10th through 12th grade students dropped out of school in the United States each year without successfully completing a high school program (United States General Accounting Office, 2002). "In October 2000, about 11% of 16-24 year olds who were not enrolled in a high school

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program had neither a high school diploma nor an equivalent credential. These dropouts earn lower incomes, are more frequently unemployed, and have more limited job opportunities than high school graduates" (p. 1).

According to Nevada Women's Lobby (2005), Nevada has one of the highest dropout rates in the country. This report concludes, "As states and districts mandate higher standards and increased numbers of credits for graduation, many students are falling behind, giving up, and opting out" (p. 1).

Today's workplace requires skilled and better educated workers, yet the most prevalent and fastest growing job category in the state is "cashier" (a position which rarely pays a living wage). When students drop out of school they may find work, but without additional education or training they find it difficult to be economically self sufficient (Nevada's Women's Lobby, 2005, p. 1).

Statement of the Problem

According to Fadali and Harris (2003), 16% of Nevadans aged 16 to 19 were not enrolled in school in 2000 and were not high school graduates. This statistic was used by the census bureau to measure high school "dropouts" and confirms that as it had in 1990, Nevada had the highest proportion of dropouts when compared to other state dropout rates.

As noted by Curran (2004), Nevada's high-school dropout rate increased by more than 25% in the 2001-02 school year. The increased dropout rate was one of three categories that worsened when compared with results of the previous year's survey (which used 2000-2001 school year numbers and reported a 5% statewide dropout rate).

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The dropout rate jumped the next year from 1.3% to 6.3%, one of the criteria the nonprofit Annie E. Casey Foundation uses to gauge children's well-being (Curran, 2004). There is a need to find out why so many students in Clark County drop out of school, and what measures should be taken to prevent this from increasing.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to (a) investigate the reasons why so many Nevadans in high school drop out of school, and (b) to recommend strategies and/or programs to Clark County School District to prevent additional students from dropping out of school.

Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed in this project are as follows:

1. Why do so many Nevada high school students drop out of school?
2. What common themes exist in successful dropout prevention programs?
3. What dropout prevention strategies would benefit Clark County School District?

Proposed Methods

The primary methodology to be employed in this project is Content Analysis which, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), "is a detailed and systematic examination of content of a particular body of material" (p. 142). In Content Analysis, the researcher identifies the body of material to be analyzed and then defines the similar characteristics or qualities inherent in each to be examined. The researcher identifies specific examples of each characteristic and/or quality in order to define it more clearly. The researcher

then breaks down each example into small, manageable segments that are analyzed

separately (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 142).

The particular body of material to be reviewed and analyzed in this study includes

online reports and documents related to school dropout prevention programs from the

largest urban school districts in the United States. These five urban school districts

include, New York City Public Schools in New York, New York (n= 1,063,609), Los

Angeles Unified School District in Los Angeles, California (n=746,610), City of Chicago

School District in Chicago, Illinois (n= 438,589), Miami-Dade County School District in

Miami, Florida (n=362,319) and Broward County School District in Fort Lauderdale,

Florida (n=271,339).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Nevada's high school graduation rate is among the worst in the country. Many

educators attribute Nevada's persistently high dropout rate to a combination of factors

including transient families, increasing volumes of Hispanic-speaking migrants and

supposedly insufficient funding for education. Today's workplace requires skilled and

better educated workers, yet the most prevalent and fastest growing job categories in the

state include entry-level positions in the service industry which rarely pay a living wage.

As students drop out, they may find work, but without additional education or training,

they find it difficult to be economically self-sufficient. Due to personal and social costs

associated with high school dropouts, it is important for society and communities as a

whole to familiarize themselves with the issue and to strategize about dropout prevention

efforts. This chapter has introduced (a) the problem of high school dropouts in Clark

County, Nevada and (b) a Content Analysis research project to identify dropout

prevention strategies.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Nevada has one of the highest dropout rates in the country. Many educators

attribute Nevada's persistently high dropout rate to a combination of factors, including

transient families, increasing volumes of Hispanic-speaking migrants and supposedly

insufficient funding for education (Schmidt & Barr, 2004). According to a report by the

Alliance for Excellent Education (2006), Nevada ranked 37th in the nation in graduation

rates. Students who fail to graduate from high school face a bleak future. Because the

basic skills conveyed in high school and higher education are essential for success in

today's economy, students who do not receive these skills are likely to suffer with

significantly reduced earnings and employment prospects (Greene, 2001, p. 5).

Every year, across the country, a high percentage of students (disproportionately

poor and minority) disappear from the educational pipeline before graduating from high

school. Nationally, only about 68% of all students who enter 9th grade will graduate "on

time" with a regular diploma in the 12th grade (Orfield, Losen, & Wald, 2004, p. 4).

This chapter provides a review of the literature and research related to the study.

The review of literature will focus on the following areas: (a) the school dropout

phenomenon, (b) problems leading to dropping out, and (c) dropout prevention strategies.

The School Dropout Phenomenon

Students drop out of school for a variety of reasons. Hood (2004) provides the

following description: "You've dropped out of school, maybe you've been pushed out,

more than likely you're black, Hispanic and poor, maybe you're also a single parent or

you struggle with the English language, or you take care of your younger siblings while

both parents work. Or, maybe you ended up largely in the street, hanging out with the

wrong crowd" (p. 1).

Hood (2004) concludes that dropping out is a disastrous decision. Dropouts are

among the first to lose their jobs during an economic downturn and during economic

prosperity, they are still destined to failure. In a study by Mary Reiner and Jay Smink

(2005), students offered the following reasons for dropping out of school:

1. Classes were viewed as boring, irrelevant, and a waste of time.
2. Students did not have positive relationships with teachers.
3. Teachers did not have positive relationships with students.
4. Students were suspended too often.
5. Students did not feel safe at school.
6. Students could not keep up with schoolwork or were failing.
7. Classes were not challenging enough, and students could miss class days and
   still receive credit.
8. Students couldn't work and go to school at the same time (p. 5).

The Nevada's Women's Lobby (High School Dropout Rates, 2005), stated

"Historically, students at the highest risk for not completing an education are those who

have fallen behind in achieving the necessary credits for graduation, who are faced with

unwanted pregnancy, are from lower-socioeconomic families, are learning disabled, or

who are employed out of school" (p. 1).

Nevada has a serous problem with student dropouts. But who drops out?

According to Roderick (as cited in Brown & Chavez, 1999), the type of students who

drop out of school are usually learning disabled, lower academic achievers, Hispanic or African-American, class repeaters, employed in entry-level jobs, from the lower socioeconomic levels and from single parent families. Several studies, (Hood, 2004, Montecel, Cortez & Cortez, 2004: Orfield, Losen & Wald, 2004) indicate that teachers should become aware of the warning signs in order to intervene and help to prevent students from dropping out of school.

In a report by Focus Adolescent Services (2000), the following reasons were given as to why students drop out of school: (a) didn't like school in general or the school they were attending; (b) were failing, getting poor grades, or couldn't keep up with school work, (c) didn't get along with teachers and/or students, (d) had disciplinary problems, were suspended, or expelled, (e) didn't feel safe in school, (f) got a job, had a family to support, or had trouble managing both school and work, (g) got married, got pregnant or became a parent, (h) and/or had a drug or alcohol problem (p. 1).

According to a study by the California State University Northridge (n.d.), gangs also contribute to the school dropout problem. Gang membership is something that once a youngster joins a gang, dropping out of school almost always naturally follows (p. 1). The study also states that "in the upside down value system of the gang domain, being a 'school boy' refers not only to a style of clothing, but to a lifestyle considered weak, powerless, and cowardly--certainly one that is incompatible with the gang doctrine… the 'school boy' look, of course, is a clean-cut look and a simple one -- jeans, shirts, tees-preferably tucked in, normal hair, etc. Another derisive is the term 'school-girl' which parallels the male term and is the antithesis of the cholo/a fashion" (p. 1).

Gang members also get into trouble and end up in prison. The same study by the California State University Northridge (n.d.), states that "one of the most frequently cited reasons for dropping out of school was incarceration and the ensuing loss of time from school…for example, Alfred was in the middle of the 11th grade when he dropped out. When asked why he dropped out so close to the diploma, he responded, 'I got busted.' Here is where the impact of gangs is devastating not only to the members, but to those in any way associated with them" (p. 2). The study also mentions that many gang members perceived classrooms as a form of incarceration (p. 2).

Historically, students with disabilities also drop out of school at an alarming rate. According to Hood (2004), the graduation and dropout rates for students with disabilities vary widely based on the type of disability, and/or ethnicity/race (p. 3). Hood (2004) also lists several specific disabilities and the dropout percentage rates related to each as follows: (a) speech or language impairments, 39.7%, (b) mental retardation, 34.3%, (c) emotional disturbance, 65.1%, (d) hearing impairments, 24.5%, (e) visual impairments, 21.1%, (f) orthopedic impairments, 27.0%, and (g) other health impairments, 36.2% (p. 3).

Another factor highly correlated with the dropout phenomenon is poverty. According to California State University Northridge (n.d.), "In cities throughout the country, the impact of poverty on the school system has been overwhelming… certainly in Los Angeles, 'white-flight' as the movement was called, is now the phenomenon of not only whites, but middle class Americans of all colors who have fled the inner cities (p. 3). Only lower socio-economic minority students attend public schools while everyone else attends private schools, or has moved far away from the vicinity to the

middle and upper middle class public school suburbs (p. 3). Students from the lowest

socio-economic levels (a) do not have their own personal computers in their rooms, (b)

do not have a room of their own and live in overcrowded conditions, (c) often experience

a free-floating anxiety and anger about life, (often directed toward their parents, police,

teachers, and anyone else in authority), and (d) many experience feelings of frustration,

further limiting their engagement in school (p. 3).

<div align="center">Problems Leading to Dropping Out</div>

Problems leading to dropping out should try to be pinpointed before the student

actually drops out of school (Focus Adolescent Services, 2000). In this same report, it

states: "the following information shows certain groups of young people whose members

are more likely than others to leave school before graduating… while not everyone in

these categories drops out, paying special attention to the needs of students from these

groups can keep some of them in school" (p. 1).

This report also gave the following warning signs that lead to dropping out of

school: (a) students in large cities are twice more likely to leave school before graduating

than non-urban youth, (b) more than one in four Hispanic youth drop out, and nearly

half leave by the eighth grade, (c) Hispanics are twice as likely as African Americans to

drop out, White and Asian American students are least likely to drop out, (d) more than

half the students who drop out leave by the tenth grade (20% by the eighth grade, and 3%

drop out by the fourth grade), (e) nearly 25% changed schools two or more times, (with

some changing for disciplinary reasons), (f) almost 20% were held back a grade, and

almost half failed a course, (g) almost one-half missed at least 10 days of school, (one-

third cut class at least 10 times, and one-quarter were late at least 10 times), (h) 8% spent

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time in a juvenile home or shelter, (i) one-third were put on in-school suspension, suspended, or put on probation, more than 15% were either expelled or told they couldn't return, and (j) 12% of dropouts ran away from home (p. 1).

<div align="center">Dropout Prevention Strategies</div>

According to Destination Graduation Evaluation News (2002), in order to have a successful dropout prevention strategy, the following components must be included: (a) the quality of the instructional program, (b) support for student learning, (c) school climate/environment for learning, (d) school/parent community relations, (e) school organization and administration, and (f) student activities/involvement in school (p. 3).

The dropout prevention programs outlined below are employed by the five most populated school districts in the country: New York City Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, City of Chicago Public Schools, Miami-Dade County (FL) School District, and Broward County (FL) School District. New York City Public Schools enrolls 1,063,609 students, Los Angeles Unified School District enrolls 746,610 students, The City of Chicago Public Schools enrolls 438,589 students, Miami-Dade County (FL) School District enrolls 362,319 and Broward County (FL) School District enrolls 271,339 students. By comparison, Clark County School District enrolls 267,894 students (American School & University, 2004).

New York City Public Schools employs several dropout prevention programs with Community Achievement Project in the Schools (CAPS) and the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program being the most prevalent.

Community Achievement Project in the Schools (CAPS)

In collaboration with the New York City Public Schools, the United Way funds CAPS to provide attendance improvement and dropout prevention services to at-risk students. CAPS engage neighborhood organizations in working with schools, parents and students to help youth succeed in school. Youth development specialists from neighborhood agencies (reflective of the diversity and needs of specific communities) are placed in the schools to work with teachers to identify and work one-on-one with students who are not attending school, failing classes or struggling with personal problems. The program provides (a) one-on-one and group counseling, (b) family involvement, (c) youth development and leadership, (d) attendance monitoring and outreach, and (e) linking students and their families to needed services (United Way of New York City, n.d., p. 1).

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

Also in the New York Public City Schools, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has (a) classes for their tutors, to enable them to become excellent student tutors, (b) students have economic and cultural opportunities in field trips at least twice a year, (c) mentor and role-models with adults who are considered successful in their fields, (d) student recognition in which students are acknowledged for the efforts and contributions they make while fulfilling their responsibilities, and (e) parent involvement in which families communicate with the school and take their children's education seriously (Big Ideas, Dropout Prevention Strategies, n.d. p. 2)

The City of Chicago Public Schools employs several successful dropout prevention strategies as well. According to a report by the Chicago Public Schools'

Office of Communications (2005), Chicago's dropout prevention programs have added:

(a) 840 new slots in alternative programs for students at risk of dropping out, (b)

increased the number of high schools offering evening classes from 30 to 40 and dropped

the 10-credit requirement so any student can enroll in evening school with the permission

of his or her parents or guardians, (c) expanded from four to 20 high schools the Jobs for

Illinois Graduates (JILG) program (which offers job skills and mentoring to high school

students at risk of dropping out), (d) created "re-enrollment centers," where students who

have already dropped out can re-enroll to finish their high school education, (e)

established Project Bridge in conjunction with the National Center for Violence

Intervention for students returning from the juvenile justice system who wish to re-enroll,

(f) amended the dropout policy to require principals to undertake a series of direct

interventions with at-risk students before they drop out, and (g) created a "Consent to

Withdraw" form which dropouts and their parents must sign, detailing consequences of

dropping out, such as lower earning potential and likelihood of prison (p. 30).

Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program

The City of Chicago Public Schools has initiated a program called the Truant

Alternative and Optimal Education Program (TAOEP). The services offered by the

TAOEP program include supplementary prevention/intervention services, and optional

education programs.   Supplementary prevention/intervention services provide support

services to students who are enrolled in regular school programs These supports include

tutoring, mentoring, health services, home visits and counseling. Optional education

incorporates state academic standards, and is based on students' needs. This instruction

includes work-based learning and career development, and is established by school board

policy to serve as a full-time or part-time option in lieu of regular school attendance

(Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program FY 05 Statistical Report, 2006, p. 5).

There is also a program in the City of Chicago Public Schools called the Jobs for Illinois

Graduates Program (JIGP) which was designed to address, in part, the increasing

numbers of drop-out students.

Jobs for Illinois Graduates Program (JILG)

The Jobs for Illinois Graduates Program (JILG) provides job skills and mentoring

to high school students at risk of dropping out of school. Established in 1996, Jobs for

Illinois Graduates (JILG) helps selected high school seniors graduate and prepares them

for the workplace. JILG is modeled after a successful national program, Jobs for

America's Graduates (JAG), launched to meet the critical challenge of employment for

our country's youth. JILG helps Illinois high school seniors (a) graduate, (b) obtain a job

and seek post secondary education, (c) hold a job and complete post secondary education,

and (d) start on a solid career path (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville East St.

Louis Center, n.d. p. 1).   The university also indicates that:

> JILG students participate in a comprehensive program, with 37 established
> competencies, promoting personal and employability skills that meet the needs of
> today's employers. JILG graduates have realistic expectations for the workplace,
> develop good work habits, and know how to learn and perform on the job. JILG
> graduates understand the importance of (a) punctuality, (b) attendance, (c)
> teamwork, (d) courtesy, (e) proper attire, (f) commitment, (g) customer service,
> (h) responsibility; (i) decision making, and (j) lifelong learning (p. 1).

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest school district in the

nation, also employs several successful dropout prevention programs. Two specific

programs are detailed below.

Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success (ALAS)

ALAS provides counseling, training in social and task-related problem solving

skills, and recognition for academic excellence. According to Posner (2005), "successful

dropout prevention efforts must simultaneously engage and strengthen student supports

across school, family and community" (p. 1). The ALAS program is a success because it

provides those supports with school, family and community. The program's school

component involves recognition and bonding activities, frequent teacher feedback to

parents and students and intensive attendance monitoring. The family component

engages parents in training to increase their participation in school activities and to

support their student's academic improvement, and encourages more frequent contact

with teachers and school administrators (Posner, 2005, p. 1). ALAS is also involved with

the community.Through a community component, ALAS provides a bridge between

school and home needs and community services, including mental health, social services,

drug and alcohol treatment programs, job training, and sports and recreation programs (p.

 4).

Project GRAD

Los Angeles also hosts a "Project GRAD" (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams)

program that "helps to ensure a quality public education for all students in economically

disadvantaged communities" (Project GRAD, n.d.). Project GRAD's instructional

model focuses on implementing the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing

components in all of the schools in a specific feeder system: (a) mathematics, (b)

literacy, (c) classroom management, (d) social services/parent involvement and (e) the

high school program (p. 1). The goal of Project GRAD is to see at least 80% of students

graduate from high school and 50% of these graduates enter and graduate from college. Project GRAD makes a long-term commitment to each public school district and works across all grades from K through 16 to achieve sustainable and systemic change. (Project GRAD, n.d., p. 1).

Miami-Dade and Broward County School Districts are from the same geographic region of Florida, so many of their dropout prevention strategies are intertwined. There is an Academy for Community Education program (ACE) in both school districts, which was established in 1981, and is a "return to the small school concept" (Academy for Education, n.d.).

Academy for Community Education (ACE)

This academic program emphasizes critical thinking, a full service program that includes moral education, parenting, mentoring, reverse peer pressure, a special GED and "catch up" early exit program, a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, and a behavior modification program featuring rewards and privileges for improved performance (Academy for Education, n.d., p. 1). ACE's mission is, "We believe that most students who meet the criteria for alternative school placement can measurably improve their chances of graduating from high school a result of attending the Academy. The mission of this school is to educate potential dropouts and students who have already dropped out and returned to school. Our goals are to provide a stimulating, nurturing environment where educational excellence and the highest possible level of student learning constitute the norm and to prepare the students to become contributing citizens in a democratic society" (Academy for Community Education, n.d., p. 2).

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Bilingual Career Instructional Program

Miami-Dade and Broward County School Districts also employ another program called the Bilingual Career Instructional Program (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2006). This program provides a comprehensive intervention model designed to prevent elementary students from dropping out of school during their secondary school years. It provides at-risk elementary students with linguistic assistance and career awareness to achieve present and future academic success through exploration of the real world of work (p. 1).

This program is an in-school alternative program, and some selected schools in the district also are integrating a new program called "MicroVillage." MicroVillage is a program where teachers, students, parents and the community partner work together to build a functioning miniature society. Following the example and guidance of adults, young people discover how to run businesses, apply technology, develop government and social agencies, and create cultural and arts organizations (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2006, p. 1).

Summary

Due to personal and social costs associated with high school dropouts, it is important for society and communities as a whole to familiarize themselves with the issue and to strategize about dropout prevention efforts. This chapter has reviewed related literature focused on the following areas: (a) the school dropout phenomenon, which explains the reasons students drop out of school (b) problems leading to dropping out, explaining the warning signs of a high-risk student, and (c) dropout prevention strategies, describing different successful dropout prevention programs

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Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The overall purpose of this project and the research strategy to be employed is to (a) investigate the reasons why so many Nevadans in high school drop out of school, and (b) recommend strategies and/or programs to Clark County School District to prevent these students from dropping out.

According to Fadali and Harris (2002), 16% of Nevadans aged 16 to 19 were not enrolled in school in 2000 and were not high school graduates. This statistic was used by the census bureau to measure high school "dropouts" and confirms that, as it had in 1990, Nevada had the highest proportion of dropouts when compared to other state dropout rates.

As noted by Curran (2004), Nevada's high-school dropout rate increased by more than 25% in the 2001-02 school year. The increased dropout rate was one of three categories that worsened when compared with results of the previous year's survey (which used 2000-2001 school year numbers and reported a 5% statewide dropout rate). The dropout rate jumped the next year from 1.3% to 6.3%, one of the criteria the nonprofit Annie E. Casey Foundation uses to gauge children's well-being (*Las Vegas Sun*, August 24, 2004). There is a need to find out why so many students in Clark County drop out of school, and what measures should be taken to prevent this from increasing.

Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed in this project are as follows:

1. Why do so many Nevada high school students drop out of school?

2. What common themes exist in successful dropout prevention plans?

3. What dropout prevention strategies would benefit Clark County School District?

Research Design and Procedures

The primary methodology employed in this project is Content Analysis which according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) is "a detailed and systematic examination of content of a particular body of material to be studied" (p. 142). In Content Analysis, the researcher (a) identifies the body of material to be analyzed and then defines the similar characteristics or qualities inherent in each to be examined; (b) identifies specific examples of each characteristic, defining it more clearly; and (c) breaks down each item into small, manageable segments that are analyzed separately (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 142).

The particular body of material reviewed and analyzed in this study includes online reports and documents related to school dropout prevention programs in the largest five urban school districts in the United States. The largest five urban public school districts include, New York City Public Schools (n= 1,063,609), Los Angeles Unified School District (n= 746,610), City of Chicago Public Schools (n= 438,589), Miami-Dade County Florida Public Schools (n= 362,319), and the Broward County Florida Public Schools (n= 271,339).

Data Analysis

Content Analysis research is qualitative and quanitive (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The data in the form of common characteristics of successful dropout prevention

programs were analyzed using the following steps: (a) tabulation and the frequency of

each characteristic; (b) examination and comparison of the success rate of each program;

and (c) identification of the characteristics of each successful program.

Two documents from each school district involved in this research project were

selected as follows:

1.   New York Public School District
       a.   United Way of New York City Report (n.d.)
       b.   New York City Department of Education Division of Youth
              Development Report (n.d.)
2.   Los Angeles Unified School District
       a.   Project GRAD Los Angeles Report (n.d.)
       b.   National Dropout Prevention Center Report (n.d.).
3.   The City of Chicago Public Schools
       a.   Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program FY 05
              statistical document (2006)
       b.   Illinois Association Regional Superintendents of Schools Report
              (n.d.)
4.   Miami-Dade and Broward County School Districts
       a.   Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Bureau of Adult/Vocational,
              Alternative Education and Dropout Prevention Report (n.d.)
       b.   Broward County School District Media Source Report (n.d.)

Summary

Nevada has one of the highest dropout rates in the nation. Reducing the number of

dropouts has become a national concern. This project has reviewed the dropout

phenomenon, investigated why students drop out of school, and recommended strategies

and/or programs to Clark County School District to help effected students stay in school

and graduate.

Selected online materials related to school dropout prevention programs from the largest urban public school districts in the United States were analyzed to determine common characteristics and qualities of successful dropout prevention programs to form the basis for recommendations to the Clark County School District to help identify strategies or dropout prevention programs of value to the students of Southern Nevada.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate dropout prevention documents from the five largest school districts in the United States to identify common themes and strategies inherent in successful dropout prevention programs. Recommendations to encourage potential dropouts in Clark County, Nevada schools to stay in school and graduate are included.

Successful programs are a result of the following characteristics: good organization/ administration, positive school climate, adequate services, effective curriculum and a positive staff/teacher culture (Woods, 1995, p. 2). The dropout prevention programs included in this project were selected as a result of the extent to which they met these criteria (See Table 1).

Material Reviewed

The overall body of material investigated was taken from the five largest school districts in the United States. The districts included New York Public Schools, City of Chicago Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, Miami-Dade County Florida School District and the Broward County Florida School District.   Documents reviewed included 30 specific documents in which two were selected from each school district: New York Public School District, (United Way of New York City Report, and the New York City Department of Education Division of Youth Development Report);

The Los Angeles Unified School District (Project GRAD Los Angeles, and

National Dropout Prevention Center Report); City of Chicago Public Schools (Truant

Alternative and Optimal Education Program FY 05 Statistical Report, and Illinois

Association Regional Superintendents of Schools Report); Miami-Dade and Broward

County School Districts in Florida (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Bureau of

Adult/Vocational, Alternative Education and Dropout Prevention Report, and Broward

County School District Media Source Report.

Table 1

*Characteristics of Successful Dropout Prevention Programs by Woods (1995) Frequency
of Each Characteristic in 30 Documents:*

Characteristics	Frequency (percentage)	Definitions and Examples of Each Characteristic
Good Organization/Administration	0.53	Good Organization/Administration includes: Positive staff selection, administration's common support for student learning. A commitment to program success.
Positive School Climate	0.30	Positive School Climate includes: Small program size and low student/teacher ratio. Community involved with school programs.
Adequate Services	0.46	Adequate Services includes: Supportive services, such as daycare and student assistance, tutoring and mentoring programs, and counseling.
Excellent Instructional Content/ Curriculum	0.63	Excellent Instructional Content/Curriculum includes: Goal setting, vocational skills, work attitudes and instruction with concentrated activities.
Positive Staff/Teacher Culture	0.50	Positive Staff/Teacher Culture includes: A climate of collegiality exists among staff members. A sense of belonging in children and their families. A commitment to program success.

Characteristics of Successful Dropout Prevention Programs

Each of the dropout prevention programs detailed below was reviewed to determine the extent to which of the programs met the characteristics of successful dropout prevention programs identified by Woods (1995) as being valuable to the design of new dropout prevention programs for Clark County Public Schools.

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

The New York Public Schools' Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program offers a philosophy that (a) all students can learn, (b) the school values all students, (c) all students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others, (d) all students, parents and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools (e) excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement, (f) commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, and (g) students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach, and parents to be involved (Big Ideas, Dropout Prevention Strategies, n.d., p. 1).

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program met the following criteria for successful dropout prevention programs (Woods, 1995): (a) positive school climate in which students are acknowledged for the efforts and contributions they make while fulfilling their responsibilities, (b) good instructional content/curriculum, by committing to educational excellence created by students, parents and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, and (c) positive staff/teacher

culture in which the school values all students and have them actively contribute to their

own education and to the education of others with assistance of staff.

Community Achievement Project in Schools (CAPS)

New York Public Schools' CAPS program takes the grassroots approach to

serving at-risk students. They encourage community organizations to work with schools,

parents, and students to help youth succeed in school. They provide (a) one-on-one and

group counseling, (b) family involvement, (c) youth leadership, (d) attendance

monitoring and outreach, (e) linking students and their families to needed services

(United Way of New York City, n.d. p.1). The CAPS program met the following criteria

for a successful dropout prevention program (Woods, 1995): (a) good organization and

administration that encourages community organizations to work with schools, parents,

and students to help youth succeed in school, and (b) adequate services that offers one-

on-one and group counseling linking students and their families to needed services.

Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success

The Los Angeles Unified School District's ALAS program is a success because it

provides those supports with school, family and community.   The program's school

component involves recognition and bonding activities, frequent teacher feedback to

parents and students and intensive attendance monitoring. The family component

engages parents in training to increase their participation in school activities and to

support their student's academic improvement, and encourages more frequent contact

with teachers and school administrators (Posner 2005, p. 1). Through a community

component, ALAS provides a bridge between school and home needs and community

services, including mental health, social services, drug and alcohol treatment programs,

job training, and sports and recreation programs (p. 4). The ALAS program met the following criteria for successful dropout prevention (Woods, 1995): (a) adequate services, which provides a bridge between school and home needs and community services, including mental health, social services, drug and alcohol treatment programs and (b) positive staff/teacher culture, which involves recognition and bonding activities, frequent teacher feedback to parents and students and intensive attendance monitoring.

Project GRAD

Los Angeles Unified School District's Project GRAD's program has an instructional model which focuses on implementing the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing components in all of the schools in a specific feeder system: (a) mathematics, (b) literacy, (c) classroom management, (d) social services/parent involvement and (e) the high school program (p. 1). The goal of Project GRAD is to see at least 80% of students graduate from high school and 50% of these graduates enter and graduate from college. Project GRAD makes a long-term commitment to each public school district and works across all grades from K through 16 to achieve sustainable and systemic change (Project GRAD, n.d., p. 1). The Project GRAD program met the following criteria for successful dropout prevention (Woods, 1995): (a) good organization/administration, reinforcing components in all of the schools in a specific feeder system including mathematics, literacy, and classroom management, and (b) adequate services, which includes social services and parent involvement.

Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program

The City of Chicago Public Schools' Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program includes: (a) tutoring, (b) mentoring, (c) health services, (d) home visits, and (e)

counseling. Optional education incorporates state academic standards, and is based on students' needs. This instruction includes work-based learning and career development, and is established by school board policy to serve as a full-time or part-time option in lieu of regular school attendance (Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program FY 05 Statistical Report, 2005, p. 5). The TAOEP program met the following criteria for successful dropout prevention (Woods, 1995): (a) adequate services, including health services, home visits and counseling, and (b) excellent instructional content/curriculum, which includes work-based learning and career development, tutoring, mentoring, and is established by school board policy to serve as a full-time or part-time option in lieu of regular school attendance.

Jobs for Illinois Graduates Program (JILG)

The City of Chicago Public Schools' Jobs for Illinois Graduates Program provides job skills and mentoring to high school students at risk of dropping out of school. According to Southern Illinois University (n.d.), JILG is modeled after a successful national program, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), launched to meet the critical challenge of employment for our country's youth. JILG helps Illinois high school seniors: (a) graduate, (b) obtain a job and seek post secondary education, (c) hold a job and complete post secondary education, (d) start on a solid career path (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville East St. Louis Center, n.d. pg. 1). JILG graduates have realistic expectations for the workplace, develop good work habits, and know how to learn and perform on the job. JILG graduates understand the importance of (a) punctuality, (b) attendance, (c) teamwork, (d) courtesy, (e) proper attire, (f) commitment, (g) customer service, (h) responsibility, (i) decision making, and (j) lifelong learning (p. 1).

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The JILG program met the following criteria for a successful dropout prevention program (Woods, 1995): (a) good organization and administration which is key in the success of any dropout prevention program, this program has staff members who are committed to program success and hold high expectations for student academic achievement and behavior, (b) positive school climate which deals with the "whole child" showing interest and concern, and (c) excellent instructional content and curriculum which prepares its graduates for realistic expectations in the workplace, develops good work habits, and provides instruction on how to learn and perform on the job.

Academy for Community Education

Miami-Dade County and Broward County Public Schools have the same dropout prevention programs funded by the state of Florida. The ACE program emphasizes critical thinking with a full service program that includes moral education, parenting, mentoring, reverse peer pressure, a special GED and "catch up" early exit program, a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, and a behavior modification program featuring rewards and privileges for improved performance. The program also offers a challenging academic program, athletic programs, and a safe place to learn and develop healthy relationships with caring adults (Academy for Community Education, n.d., p. 1). The ACE program met the following criteria for a successful dropout prevention program (Woods, 1995): (a) positive school climate, which includes a challenging academic program, athletic programs, and a safe place to learn and develop healthy relationships with caring adults, (b) adequate services which include comprehensive guidance and counseling program, and a behavior modification program featuring rewards and privileges for improved performance, and (c) excellent instructional content/curriculum,

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which includes moral education, parenting, mentoring, reverse peer pressure, a special GED and "catch up" early exit program.

Bilingual Career Instructional Program

The Miami-Dade and Broward County School Districts also provide the Bilingual Career Instructional Program that includes providing comprehensive interventions designed for elementary students at risk from dropping out of school during their secondary school years. It provides at-risk elementary students with linguistic assistance and career awareness to achieve present and future academic success through exploration of the real world of work (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2006, p. 1).This program also integrates a new program called "MicroVillage." MicroVillage is a program where teachers, students, parents and community partner together to build a functioning miniature society. Following the example and guidance of adults, young people discover how to run businesses, apply technology, develop government and social agencies, and create cultural and arts organizations (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2006, p. 1).

The Bilingual Career Instructional Program met the following criteria for successful dropout prevention (Woods, 1995): (a) good organization/administration, which integrates a new program called "MicroVillage," where teachers, students, parents and community partner together to build a functioning miniature society, and (b) an excellent instructional content/curriculum that provides at-risk elementary students with linguistic assistance and career awareness to achieve present and future academic success through exploration of the real world of work

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Rating Procedures

Schools must have an effective plan in order for their dropout prevention program to become a success. Each identified dropout prevention program was rated as to how it met the criteria by Woods (1995): good organization/administration, positive school climate, adequate services, excellent instructional content/curriculum and positive staff/teacher culture. Each program was also rated according to their services and successes. The ratings are as follows: 5 = outstanding criteria and positive results and outcomes, 4 = good criteria and positive results and outcomes, 3 = adequate criteria and adequate results and outcomes, 2 = fair, criteria and fair results and outcomes, 1 = poor criteria and poor results and outcomes. (See Appendix A)

Coca Cola Valued Youth Program

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was given a rating of 5 (outstanding) because this program met most if not all of the criteria of Woods (1995): (a) positive school climate in which students are acknowledged for the efforts and contributions they make while fulfilling their responsibilities, (b) good instructional content/curriculum, by committing to educational excellence created by students, parents and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, and (c) positive staff/teacher culture in which the school values all students and have them actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others with assistance of staff.

This program also has the following positive outcomes and results: (a) the school values all students, (b) all students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others, (c) all students, parents and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools, (d) excellence in schools contributes

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to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement, (e) commitment

to educational excellence is created by including students, parents and teachers in setting

goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, and (f) students,

parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow

students to learn, teachers to teach, and parents to be involved. (Big Ideas, Dropout

Prevention Strategies (n.d., p. 1).

Community Achievement Project in the Schools

Community Achievement Project in the Schools was given a rating of 4 (good)

because this program met some of the criteria of Woods (1995): (a) good organization

and administration that encourages community organizations to work with schools,

parents, and students to help youth succeed in school, and (b) adequate services that

offers one-on-one and group counseling linking students and their families to needed

services.   This program also had the following positive outcomes and results: In 2003-

04, CAPS provided vital attendance improvement and dropout prevention services to

24,077 at-risk students and 3,051 families, this year the program involves 120

partnerships between 60 community-based organizations and 117 NYC public schools.

Forty-one schools are benefiting from after-school programming provided by

28 agencies; Sixty-four schools that have participated in CAPS are no longer eligible due

to their dramatically-increased attendance rates and $1 million of United Way funding

leveraged $14.5 million in AIDP funding. (United Way of New York, n.d. p. 1).

Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program

The Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program was given a rating of 5

(outstanding) because this program met some of the criteria of Woods (1995): (a)

adequate services, including health services, home visits and counseling, and (b)

excellent instructional content/curriculum, which includes work-based learning and

career development, tutoring, mentoring, and is established by school board policy to

serve as a full-time or part-time option in lieu of regular school attendance. This program

also has very positive results and outcomes. It helps schools establish projects that offer

modified instructional and other services to prevent students from being truant and/or

from dropping out of school. They also offer prevention services such as counseling,

mentoring, tutoring, child care and home visits.   In addition, the program provides

optional education programs for students beyond the age of compulsory attendance who

have dropped out of school.

The current TAOEP evaluation program concluded that more than 88% of

TAOEP students experienced successful outcomes including remaining in school, high

school completion, improved attendance and improved academic achievement. (Illinois

Association Regional Superintendents of Schools, n.d. p. 1). The Illinois Association

Regional Superintendents of Schools, also state that TAOEP's performance measures are

to: maintain overall positive outcomes at 88%; increase the number of programs

providing career preparation and education programs in conjunction with ETC, CTE

and/or workforce Investment (WIA); and align curriculum of existing instructional

programs with State Learning Standards (p. 1).

Jobs for Illinois Graduates Program

The Jobs for Illinois Graduates Program was rated 5 (outstanding) not only

because it met most of the criteria of Woods (1995), (good organization and

administration which is key in the success of any dropout prevention program, this

program has staff members who are committed to program success and hold high expectations for student academic achievement and behavior, positive school climate which deals with the "whole child" showing interest and concern, and excellent instructional content and curriculum which prepares its graduates for realistic expectations in the workplace, develops good work habits, and provides instruction on how to learn and perform on the job), but because of the vast support of the program by school administrators throughout the state.

JILG had evolved into a statewide organization directly serving more than 5,000 students annually in more than 80 schools throughout Illinois. The highly successful and cost-effective program has been recognized by Illinois high school administrators as the most effective program in dealing with student drop out rates and exceeding the national standards for programs working with high school youths. The success of JILG's program is evidenced not only by its graduation rate but also by the success of its students after graduation. Across the nation, only 71% of high school students graduate. The JILG program consistently graduates over 90% of its students; and 95% of all JILG students are working full-time and are enrolled full-time in post secondary education, or have a full time combination of the two (Jobs for Illinois Graduates, n.d., p. 1).

Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success

The ALAS program was given a rating of 3 (adequate) because it met two of the criteria by Woods (1995): (a) adequate services, which provides a bridge between school and home needs and community services, including mental health, social services, drug and alcohol treatment programs and (b) positive staff/teacher culture, which involves recognition and bonding activities, frequent teacher feedback to parents and students and

intensive attendance monitoring. This program also demonstrates an effective dropout

prevention and re-entry/recovery strategy that strengthens student supports in each

context and builds stronger linkages among them. Their case management is very

effective, because staff needed to negotiate with faculty and school administrators, to

change disciplinary actions from suspension to additional tutoring and support.

Respecting parents, students, agency personnel and faculty is critical to program success

and facilitated openness to ALAS staff recommendations. Having a respectful

atmosphere helps in building stronger intercultural relationships and student supports

(Posner, 2005 p. 2)

Project GRAD

Project GRAD was given a rating of 5 as an outstanding program because it met

some of the criteria of Woods (1995): (a) good organization/administration, reinforcing

components in all of the schools in a specific feeder system including mathematics,

literacy, and classroom management, and (b) adequate services, which includes social

services and parent involvement. This program also had positive outcomes and results

because it commits to working with existing students, teachers, and administrators in

each school. Even though it received only two criteria from Woods (1995), the Coca Cola

Valued Youth program has a lot of potential and excels in its schools.   Project GRAD

(n.d.) also boasts, "Project GRAD does not attempt to select students or 'push out'

teachers or administrators. Instead, Project GRAD provides training and support to staff

to equip them to succeed in their work with students.

By implementing common approaches to the curriculum and the way it is taught

within a feeder, Project GRAD provides academic consistency in two important ways: (a)

It makes vertical consistency possible as children advance from grade to grade within a feeder and (b) provides horizontal consistency across grades within a feeder, minimizing the disruption experienced by children whose families change homes within the same neighborhood during the school year" (p. 1) Project GRAD (n.d.) concludes, "Working within feeders also makes it possible to provide a comprehensive educational experience to children in that there is an aggregated effect to offering all the program components, at all grade levels, in all the schools in which students are likely to enroll" (p. 1).

Academy for Community Education

The ACE program was given a rating of 4 (good) because it met three of the criteria of Woods (1995): (a) positive school climate, which includes a challenging academic program, athletic programs, and a safe place to learn and develop healthy relationships with caring adults, (b) adequate services which include comprehensive guidance and counseling program, and a behavior modification program featuring rewards and privileges for improved performance, and (c) excellent instructional content/curriculum, which includes moral education, parenting, mentoring, reverse peer pressure, a special GED and "catch up" early exit program. ACE also has an excellent academic program that emphasizes critical thinking, a full-service program that includes moral education, parenting education, mentoring, a year-round athletic program, a small "family-like" atmosphere, a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, and a behavior modification program featuring rewards and privileges for improved performance (Academy for Community Education, n.d., p. 2)

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Bilingual Career Instructional Program

The Bilingual Career Instructional Program was given a rating of 3 (adequate) because it met two of the criteria by Woods (1995): (a) good organization and administration, which integrates a new program called "MicroVillage," where teachers, students, parents and community partner together to build a functioning miniature society, and (b) an excellent instructional content/curriculum that provides at-risk elementary students with linguistic assistance and career awareness to achieve present and future academic success through exploration of the real world of work.

This program also has a comprehensive intervention model designed to prevent elementary students from dropping out of school during their secondary school years. The "Micro Village" program is still in its infancy stage, and should be researched for a while before it is rated. Each dropout prevention program was rated according to their characteristics, services and successes that include: good organization, administration, positive school climate, adequate services, excellent instructional content/curriculum and positive staff/teacher culture.

Summary

The particular body of materials reviewed and analyzed in this study included online reports and documents related to school dropout prevention programs in the largest five urban school districts in the United States. The largest five urban public school districts include, New York City Public Schools in New York, New York (n= 1,063,609), Los Angeles Unified School District in Los Angeles, California (n=746,610), The City of Chicago School District in Chicago, Illinois (n= 438,589), Miami-Dade County School

District in Miami, Florida (n=362,319) and Broward County School District in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (n=271,339).

Schools must have an effective plan in order for their dropout prevention program to become a success. Each identified dropout prevention program was rated as to how it met the criteria by Woods (1995): good organization/administration, positive school climate, adequate services, excellent instructional content/curriculum and positive staff/teacher culture. The most successful dropout prevention programs in the five largest school districts in the U.S. incorporated some, if not all, of the characteristics identified by Woods (1995) as evidence of successful programs.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Nevada's high school graduation rate is among the worst in the country. Many educators attribute Nevada's persistently high dropout rate to a combination of factors including transient families, increasing volumes of Hispanic-speaking migrants and supposedly insufficient funding for education. Today's workplace requires skilled and better educated workers, yet the most prevalent and fastest growing job categories in the state include entry-level positions in the service industry which rarely pays a living wage. As students drop out they may find work, but without additional education or training, they find it difficult to be economically self sufficient.

Due to personal and social costs associated with high school dropouts, it is important for society and communities as a whole to familiarize themselves with the issue and to strategize about dropout prevention efforts. The purpose of this project was to (a) investigate the reasons why so many Nevadans in high school drop out of school, and (b) to recommend strategies and/or programs to Clark County School District to prevent additional students from dropping out.

This study has introduced (a) the problem of high school dropouts in Clark County, Nevada and (b) a Content Analysis research project to identify dropout prevention strategies. The particular body of material reviewed and analyzed in this study included online reports and documents related to school dropout prevention programs from the largest urban school districts in the United States. These five top

urban school districts included   New York City Public Schools in New York, New York

(n= 1,063,609), Los Angeles Unified School District in Los Angeles, California (n=

746,610), City of Chicago School District in Chicago, Illinois (n= 438,589), Miami-Dade

County School District in Miami, Florida (n= 362,319) and Broward County School

District in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (n= 271,339).

Summary of the Study

The overall purpose of this project and the research strategy to be employed were

to (a) investigate the reasons why so many Nevadans in high school drop out of school,

and (b) recommend strategies and/or programs to Clark County School District to prevent

these students from dropping out. The primary methodology employed in this project

was Content Analysis which is a detailed and systematic examination of content of a

particular body of material to be studied. In Content Analysis, the researcher (a)

identifies the body of material to be analyzed and then defines the similar characteristics

or qualities inherent in each to be examined; (b) identifies specific examples of each

characteristic, defining it more clearly; and (c) breaks down each item into small,

manageable segments that are analyzed separately.

Each identified dropout prevention program was rated as to how it met the

following criteria: good organization/administration, positive school climate, adequate

services, excellent instructional content/curriculum and positive staff/teacher culture.

The dropout prevention programs chosen for this research project in each of the five

largest school districts in the U.S. incorporated some, if not all, of these characteristics.

Discussion

Why do so Many Nevada Students Drop out of School?

The first research question posed in this study, explored the reasons so many

Nevada high school students drop out of school. The research suggested that students

drop out of school for a lot of reasons: the student can be minority, poor, or struggling

with the English language. Some students did not get along with their teacher or peers,

did not complete their schoolwork, and skipped a lot of days of school. There is a

problem with teenage pregnancy, students joining gangs, and single parent families.

What Common Themes Exist in Successful Dropout Prevention Plans?

The second research question posed in this study investigated the common

characteristics that existed in the five largest urban school districts' successful dropout

prevention programs. The five common characteristics that were identified as being

successful for dropout prevention programs mentioned in this research by (Woods, 1995),

are as followed: good organization/administration, positive school climate, adequate

services, excellent instructional content/curriculum and positive staff/teacher culture.

What Dropout Prevention Strategies Would Benefit Clark County School District?

The third research question posed in this study explored the most successful

dropout prevention strategies that would benefit Clark County Schools. The following

dropout prevention strategies would benefit Clark County School District: (a) early

interventions, such as, family involvement, early childhood education and early reading

and writing programs, (b) basic core strategies, such as, mentoring and tutoring,

community services, and alternative schools, (c) individualized instruction, and (d)

community involvement, such as career education and workforce readiness (National

Dropout Prevention Center Network, n.d. p. 2). The results of this study recommend that

the following programs be implemented in the Clark County School District:

Community Achievement Project in the Schools (CAPS), the Coca-Cola Valued Youth

Program, Jobs for Illinois Graduates (JILG) program, Truant Alternative and Optimal

Education Program (TAOEP), Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success

(ALAS), Project GRAD program, Academy for Community Education (ACE) program

and the Bilingual Career Instructional Program. Elements from these programs could

help provide Clark County Nevada students, new strategies and alternatives for remaining

in high school and becoming a graduate.

Limitations

The following are limitations for this research project:

1. Findings would have been more generalized if there was more time for
    research project.

2. Time was limited, greater depth in research was not feasible.

3. Limited resources and unavailability to contact staff, or administration.

Implications

The following implications are suggested for new dropout prevention programs in the

Clark County School District:

1. All Students must be valued.

2. Educators must be totally committed to the success of the students.

3. Families must be valued as partner with the school.

4. Schools must embrace the strengths and contributions of student and their
    families.

5. School staff, teachers must be equipped with tools to ensure their students' success including technology, and mentoring programs.

6. Schools must change and innovate to match the characteristics of their students.

Recommendations

1. Further research could be conducted to identify other current dropout prevention programs that are being offered through other corporations and educational institutions throughout the United States.

2. Continue to explore the demographic changes in our school districts and tie them more closely to cultural changes.

3. Identify which strategies are particularly effective in lowering the dropout rate, for diversity efforts.

4. Determine how successful and effective mentoring and tutoring programs in other school districts of various populations are being evaluated.

5. It is recommended that the following programs be implemented in the Clark County School District:

   (a) Community Achievement Project in the Schools (CAPS)

   (b) Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

   (c) Jobs for Illinois Graduates (JILG) Program

   (d) Truant Alternative and Optimal Education Program (TAOEP)

   (e) Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success (ALAS)

   (f) Project GRAD Program

   (g) Academy for Community Education (ACE) Program

(h)   Bilingual Career Instructional Program

Summary

The overall purpose of this project and the research strategy to be employed was to (a) investigate the reasons why so many Nevadans in high school drop out of school, and (b) recommend strategies and/or programs to Clark County School District to prevent these students from dropping out. The primary methodology employed in this project was Content Analysis which is a detailed and systematic examination of content of a particular body of material to be studied.

Each identified dropout prevention program was rated as to how it met the following criteria by Woods (1995): good organization/administration, positive school climate, adequate services, excellent instructional content/curriculum and positive staff/teacher culture. The most successful dropout prevention programs in the five largest school districts in the U.S. incorporated some, if not all, of these characteristics. The following implications emerged for dropout prevention programs in the Clark County School District: (a) all students must be valued, (b) educators must be totally committed to the success of the students, (c) families must be valued as partners with the school, (d) schools must embrace the strengths and contributions of students and their families, (e) school staff and teachers must be equipped with tools to ensure their students' success, including technology, and mentoring programs, and (f) schools must change and innovate to match the characteristics of their students.

Recommendations for further research included (a) identifying other current dropout prevention programs that are being offered through other corporations and educational institutions throughout the United States: (b) exploring the demographic

changes in Clark County School District and tying them more closely to cultural changes:

(c) identify which strategies are particularly effective in lowering the dropout rate; and

(d) determine how successful and effective mentoring and tutoring programs in other

school districts of various populations, are being evaluated.

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Appendix A

Rating Scale

Ratings:	Results:
5 = Outstanding	All or most criteria was met; outstanding results and outcomes in program
4 = Good	Most criteria met, good results and program outcomes
3 = Adequate	Some criteria met, adequate results and adequate program outcomes
2 = Fair	One criteria met, fair program results and outcomes
1 = Poor	None of criteria met, poor program results and outcomes