The goal of this study is to identify policy strategies to improve the nutritional quality of Durham Public School lunches as part of the Duke School Research Partnership and in collaboration with the Durham Public School Board.

For more information, contact:
Amy Czaja
Duke University 2010
amy.czaja@gmail.com
Public Policy Studies
Children in Contemporary Society Certificate
Thanks to the Jacqueline Anne Morris Memorial Fellowship and my faculty advisor, Joel Rosch, for their support.
Impacts of Mobility and School Transition on Spanish-Speaking Immigrant Youth in Durham

Faculty Advisor: Clara G. Muschkin, Ph.D., Assistant Research Professor of Public Policy
Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University

Specific Challenges Regarding Mobility and School Transition

- **Mobility**
  -- Difficulties associated with school transition further widen gaps in academic achievement due to transitional difficulties that accompany moving
  -- The impacts of mobility are compounded for immigrant students. Not only do they experience the normal challenges associated with school change, but they must simultaneously adjust to a new lifestyle, culture, and school system in the United States

- **Risk of dropout**
  -- Severe educational attainment disparities exist within the student population in DPS
  -- Hispanic and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students have alarmingly low graduation rates, especially in comparison to other students in the district

- **School involvement**
  -- Less attachment to a school results in lower rates of extracurricular participation
  -- Failure to form connections with a school proliferates feelings of social disconnectedness

- **Stress and isolation**
  -- Physical shift due to mobility risks damaging an adolescent’s self-confidence as their former self-understanding is tested in the midst of a new geographic home and a different set of peers with whom to interact
  -- Mobility tends to have a negative effect on the psychological wellbeing of students due to general anxiety that accompanies significant life changes

- **Development of stable student-adult relationships**
  -- Positive teacher attitudes towards students and the ability of a teacher-student relationship to develop serve as stable and dependable support through student development. Fewer opportunities for these connections to be made due to mobility can hinder the formation of genuine in-school relationships

- **Social network formation**
  -- For newcomer immigrants, lack of a secure peer network leads to lower academic performance
  -- The level of a student's value as perceived within the school's hierarchy correlates with the value they place on educational success

The East Durham Children’s Initiative

Vision of the East Durham Children’s Initiative:
“To develop the support and resources for children and families to provide a pathway or pipeline from birth through high school graduation ready for college or career.”

Programs and Methods to Target Needs of Immigrant Youth

- **Targeted parental outreach helps parents overcome specific barriers**
  -- Logistics – financial pressures as a result of recent immigration, lack of social network support
  -- Attitudes – dissatisfaction with personal school abilities, view of the school as an impenetrable bureaucracy
  -- Misunderstood expectations – uncertainty about level of involvement necessary in students’ school life, parents feel judged by occupation, economic status, or personal education levels

- **Newcomer-oriented programming helps students attain basic English comprehension and begin the process of acculturation**
  -- Middle and high school students require more focused intervention in order to transition most effectively into mainstream education
  -- Models currently exist in states with large populations of immigrants: California, New York, New Jersey, and Texas
  -- Either through part-time or full-day instruction, immigrant students’ learning is accelerated in order to prepare them for life in the United States and succeed in the U.S. school system

Percentage of Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Passing End-of-Grade Tests

<table>
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<td>31.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern High</td>
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<td>30.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>30.1</td>
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</table>
Overcoming Barriers: Parental Involvement in Schools
Naomi Gabrielle Harris

Background:

- Parental involvement in their child’s school has been shown to improve students’ academic performance and their overall school adjustment.
- Minority families and families of low socioeconomic status (SES) have been shown to be less involved with their children’s school than their White counterparts.
- Specific barriers have been found to hinder these populations from being more involved in their student’s school activities.
- Due to low involvement, these populations may be underrepresented in regards to decisions about the school and their children may be at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers with more involved parents.
- The goal of this project was to examine factors that may impede involvement of low income families and minority families in activities at E.K. Powe.

Results:

- ~56% response rate
- Respondents reported strong positive feelings towards E.K. Powe and the faculty.
- Low SES was not significantly linked to any barrier listed.
- 23% of Hispanic parents reported that language barrier hindered their involvement.
- 36% of White parents stated that late notice about events hindered their involvement.
- African American parents were more likely to report that work conflicts limited their involvement.

Methods:

- Participants: Parents/Guardians of E.K. Powe Elementary School students located in Durham, NC
- Procedure: Surveys were distributed to parents/guardians. Questions assessed their attitudes towards the school, their current involvement at Powe, and obstacles that may hinder them from attending more events, etc. were included.
- Data Analysis: Surveys were analyzed using SAS.

Discussion:

- Using multiple and diverse methods to communicate with parents and learning about their concerns may encourage greater parental involvement.
- Certain barriers are experienced by all racial groups.
- Language barrier is a concern that should be reevaluated for effectiveness.
- Having a broader range of events or responsibilities that parents can be involved in may increase parental participation.

References:


Acknowledgements:

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Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
Center for Child and Family Policy
Corrective Reading Program Efficacy and Fidelity in the Durham Public School System

Chelsea Koglmeier
Advisor: Ann Skinner

Research Information and Plan

Question:
• Is there a significant difference in the efficacy of the Corrective Reading Program (CRP) in classrooms which receive additional interventionist support versus classrooms that do not receive additional support?

Hypothesis:
• Additional support in classrooms will lead to a significant increase in student performance

3-tiered Data Analysis:
• Peer-reviewed journals – to give background information on CRP and find historical documentation of it’s effectiveness on the reading development of exceptional children. Also, to cite evidence about the correlation between fidelity adherence and program efficacy.
• Observations – to give perspective on the everyday implications of CRP when teachers receive additional support versus not receiving support
• Benchmark exam statistics – to give statistical evidence about the effectiveness of CRP on the exceptional children population given support level

Corrective Reading Program Components

• CRP is a direct instruction program that focuses on:
  1) increasing reading accuracy
  2) reading fluency
  3) reading comprehension.

• There are 2 major intervention strands and 4 instructional levels
  1. Intervention Strands: Decoding (vocabulary expansion, logical sentence structure/textual organization) and Comprehension (clarity in thought, words, and speech)
  2. Instructional Levels: A, B1, B2, and C (based on original reading level)
  3. Small group or one-on-one lessons
  4. Lessons are 45 minutes and are taught 4-5 times a week
  5. Each lesson has 30-45 minutes of teacher-directed work and 10-15 minutes of independent student work.
  6. Lessons are further broken down into four parts:
     1) Word attack skills
     2) Group reading
     3) Workbook exercises
     4) Individual reading Checkouts

Research on Corrective Reading Program

• CRP has been shown to be more effective than other reading programs (specific programs not specified) when used with learning disabled populations (Polloway et al., 1986).
• CRP has been shown to be more effective than general remedial instruction (i.e. pull-out methods) on students reading below their grade level (Gregory, 1982).
• CRP saw additionally significant results when there was additional teacher support and systems in place for monitoring program implementation (Gregory, 1982).
• CRP has had mixed results for student improvement in reading fluency, two studies claiming student fluency was increased (Slavon et al., 2006 and Toregson et al., 2006) and another claiming CRP had no effect on reading fluency, but strong gains in word skill development (Bradford et al., 2006).

Research on Fidelity adherence

• Fidelity has been shown to be “central to the validity of any intervention study and is closely related to the statistical power of outcome analysis” (Dumas et al., 2001).
• Without maintaining the fidelity of an intervention program, the internal validity of the program can be lost and the program may be less effective (Dumas et al., 2001).
• Teachers seem to maintain higher rates of fidelity in activity related tasks versus instructional processes – both of which are CRP components (Pence et al., 2008).
• Teachers seem to maintain higher rates of fidelity in activity related tasks versus instructional processes – both of which are CRP components (Pence et al., 2008).
• Teachers’ background characteristics (i.e. professional/programmatic experience), can effect their attention to fidelity in practice (Zvoch, 2009).
• Teachers seem to maintain higher rates of fidelity in activity related tasks versus instructional processes – both of which are CRP components (Pence et al., 2008).
• Fidelity differs with the passage of time and consistent monitoring is necessary to ensure program efficacy (Pence et al., 2008).

Research on General Reading Intervention Programs

• In order to effectively institute and utilize certain teaching programs, there needs to be a significant investment of time, funds, and resources that many school districts are unable to provide without additional support (Douglas M., 1995).

Benchmarks Score Analysis:

Nine elementary schools from DPS (with similar demographics and sizes) were chosen for comparing the results of student’s benchmark scores.

• 4 Intervention Schools (receiving additional support) with 6 participating teachers and 48 students
• 5 Control Schools with a currently undefined number of teachers and students

*The statistical analysis and final data compilation needs to be completed for this information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Percentage Control School on Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
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Conclusions and Recommendations

• Based on research, there seems to be a correlation between fidelity monitoring/teacher support and the efficacy of reading programs.
• Taking into consideration that the school district is running on limited funds, there should be some steps taken to try and increase support for those teachers receiving none. Suggestions:
  • Use volunteers to conduct fidelity checks (parents, university students, community volunteers, etc.) given necessary training
  • Have teachers using CRP do peer evaluations and fidelity checks of one another (benefit: increased community amongst teachers, cost: money to cover classrooms while teacher is not present)
  • Create a secure chat group/forum for teachers to exchange ideas
  • Apply for additional grant money
# Effective Alternatives to Suspension and Behavior Management for Durham Public Secondary Schools

**Graham C. Sharpe**  
**Advisor: Dr. Anne-Marie Iselin**

## Suspension in Durham Public Schools

- The number of suspensions has decreased over the last two years, but there has been an increase in violent acts among students in DPS secondary schools.
- This raises many questions that have significant policy implications:  
  - What are the problems with current suspension policy?  
  - What are the evidence-based alternatives to suspension?  
  - Can they resolve the needs of Durham Public Schools (DPS)? What roadblocks might DPS face when implementing these alternatives to suspension?
- This paper examined answers to these questions through evidence gathered from interviews with experts (i.e., an attorney, a law professor, and superintendent and director of student services), reports from the Department of Public Instruction, and research literatures.

## What are the problems with current suspension policy?

- Suspensions are not effective in reducing the behavior problems they are intended to address.
- They are ineffective deterrents of disruptive or violent behavior.
- For the most part, suspensions are overused and are unhelpful for the student involved.
- Suspensions place the student in an out-of-school environment where they are more likely to be exposed to violence and drugs.
- Suspensions are related to increased risks of dropping out of school and being involved in the justice system.
- Oftentimes, suspensions do not recognize the context of a situation.
- For example, some schools still suspend students for truancy.
- Current policy focuses too much on addressing behaviors as a singular issue and not enough on addressing the student and his/her complex needs.

## What are the needs of secondary schools in Durham with regards to suspension policy?

- Durham’s secondary schools need a program that:  
  - Maintains a safe and orderly school environment  
  - Prevents future suspensions  
  - Does not deny the students’ right to an education  
  - Contains preventative and proactive features  
  - Deals with the unique context of situations and matches the method of discipline to the specific misbehavior

## What are the evidence-based alternatives to suspension?

- Positive Behavior Support (PBS) seems to be the most effective, evidence-based alternative to suspension.

### Policy Recommendations:

- Fully-implement Positive Behavior Support (PBS) System with an additional post-misbehavior component  
- PBS is a multifaceted, evidence-based approach that emphasizes teaching and encouraging desired social behaviors, maximizing academic success, and removing factors that promote and sustain problem behavior.
- In the case of a problem behavior still occurring, there must be some sort of reactive discipline strategy.
  - Options include community service, peer mediation/counseling, and behavior contracts.

## Can evidence-based policies resolve the needs of DPS? What roadblocks might DPS face?

- Specific discipline is approved by each principal, so fidelity to the district’s policy may be an obstacle.
- Funding may be the most difficult issue.
- PBS is currently being implemented, but full-implementation (extra staff and training) is more costly.

## What additional research is needed?

- More in-depth look into the needs and expectations of all stakeholders in DPS suspension policy (students, parents, teachers, administration, other staff, etc.)
- Avenues for funding a full-implementation of Positive Behavior Support in Durham Public Schools
- Continue evaluating other alternatives to suspension

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## For more information, contact:

Graham C. Sharpe  
graham.sharpe@duke.edu  
919-801-8787