A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS THE CHARACTER, ADVOCACY, REMEDIATION, ENRICHMENT, & SCHOOL SPIRIT (CARES) PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Liberty University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Nathan J. Buhl

Liberty University

July 2010

A Phenomenological Study of the Attitudes and Perceptions of Middle School Students Towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) Program

by Nathan J. Buhl

APPROVED:

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Angela Smith, Ed. D.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Andrea Beam, Ed. D.

Chris LeMieux, Ed. D.

CHAIR, GRADUATE STUDIES

Scott B. Watson, Ph. D.

Abstract

Nathan J. Buhl. A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS THE CHARACTER, ADVOCACY, REMEDIATION, ENRICHMENT, AND SCHOOL SPIRIT PROGRAM (CARES). (Under the direction of Dr. Angela Smith). School of Education, July, 2010.

This phenomenological research study, using three tiers of interview and focus group data, described the attitudes and perceptions of middle students towards the Character, Advisory, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program implemented at Kingsford County Middle School in north Georgia. The CARES program is a middle school advisement program designed to better meet the needs of the adolescent learner with the intent of creating a caring learning community which supports the social, emotional, and academic needs of middle school students. Results of the study showed that the students perceived the CARES program positively. Specifically, students communicated high levels of listening, advisory, and academic support from their teachers during the CARES program. Furthermore, students felt as if the program allowed them to socialize with their peers as well as assist them in the development of good character. The students expressed a desire for higher levels of autonomy and independence, and also welcomed more opportunities to know their teachers and increase levels of trust within the teacher-student relationship. There were no significant differences in attitudes and perceptions between grade level and academic eligibility (general, special, and gifted education).

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my awesome wife, Kelly, for the countless hours sacrificed in making this dream a reality. Without the overwhelming support and unselfishness displayed over the past three years, I would have never made it to this point. You gave me strength and peace during a great time of personal, intellectual, and spiritual growth, and for that, I am ever grateful. I would also like to thank my two wonderful children, Amelia and Landon for always letting Daddy go to the school and do his work. I love you both dearly. Finally, I would like to thank my personal Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for his unconditional love, his abundant grace, and His strength throughout this process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the chair of my committee, Dr. Angela Smith, for her unwavering support and encouragement throughout the process. From the beginning, she provided me with the confidence, wisdom, and guidance to help me each step of the way. I would also like to thank Dr. Chris LeMieux for providing exceptional leadership during the greatest time of need in my professional career. He was helpful in providing me with the necessary support to manage graduate studies, family, and an assistant principalship during this busy season of my life. Dr. Andrea Beam, I owe my gratitude for initially volunteering her time to assist in this dissertation and for providing me feedback when needed. And finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Jill Jones for her assistance with this research project. The leadership and support provided to me throughout this entire process was a gift from the Lord.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION …….. 1

Background of the Problem …….. 1

Statement of the Problem …….. 5

The Purpose of the Study & Research Questions ……. 6

Definitions……. 7

Overview of Study……. 9

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE…… 11

Introduction……11

Theoretical Framework…… 13

General Systems Theory……13

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs……... 14

Attachment Theory…… 16

Social Development Theory……. 17

Self-Determination Theory……18

Belongingness and Engagement…… 19

Caring in Schools…….. 20

Teacher-Student Relationships…….. 23

Reaching the Whole Child…… 25

Social Support in Schools……. 27

Social Emotional Learning…… 29

Character Education……...30

Advisory Teachers…….33

Successful School Programs…….....35

Positive Youth Development…….36

First Things First…… ...36

Child Development Project...…….37

Summary……38

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY……...39

Introduction……....39

Qualitative Research…….....40

Phenomenological Research…….....42

Participants & School Setting……44

District Profile……....44

School Profile…….....45

Participants of Study…….....47

Data Collection……..47

First Tier-Individual Student Interviews…….....48

Second Tier-Student Focus Groups……...50

Third Tier-Follow-up Individual Student Interviews……..... 52

Data Analysis……... 52

Constant Comparative Method……..52

Provisions of Trustworthiness…….. .53

Individual & Focus Group Interview Design…….....53

Audit Trail……54

Reflective Journal…….55

Peer Review Feedback…….....55

Summary……..56

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA….....57

Overview…….....57

Participants…….....57

Question Data Analysis…….....61

Warm-up Questions (1-4)…….....62

Character Education…….....68

Question 5……69

Question 6……76

Question 7……82

Question 8……89

Question 9……95

Question 10…….....100

Advocacy……105

Question 11…….....106

Question 12…….....111

Question 13…….....117

Question 14……..123

Question 15……..128

Remediation……130

Question 16…….130

Question 17…….137

Question 18…….143

Enrichment……..148

Question 19…….148

Question 20…….155

Question 21…….161

School Spirit……....168

Question 22…….168

Question 23…….179

Question 24…….185

Closing Questions……...192

Question 25…….192

Questions 26-27……..197

Summary…….206

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION…….207

Overview…….207

Research Questions…….208

Primary Research Question…….209

Themes……....209

Character Formation……....209

Teacher Support……..... 213

Listening Support……... 214

Advisory Support……... 218

Academic Support……..225

Student Autonomy……..231

Socialization with Peers……..235

Secondary Research Question 1……..241

Secondary Research Question 2……..244

Secondary Research Question 3……..247

Secondary Research Question 4……..251

Character Education…….252

Advocacy…….....255

Remediation…….257

Enrichment…….. 258

School Spirit…….....260

Implications from Study……...261

Recommendations and Limitations……..266

Conclusion……....267

References……....269

APPENDICES…….....276

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Educational leaders continuously search for ways to improve their schools, especially in the age of accountability and high stakes testing. Administrators and teachers are well aware of the importance of creating school improvement initiatives that bring about successful outcomes for students. This study focused on hearing the voice of middle school students, specifically regarding their attitudes and perceptions towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program, a program implemented at a north Georgia middle school with the intent of reaching the social, emotional, and academic needs of students.

The first chapter of this dissertation will examine the background of the study, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. Specific research questions will be shared along with a list of terms that will be used throughout the study. Interwoven throughout the chapter will be a justification for the type of research taking place and the significance the research will have on improving educational practice in middle grades education.

Background to the Problem

Middle school students face the challenge of meeting increasingly rigorous academic standards and acing high stakes tests while working through the day to day struggles of being an adolescent. The physical, social, and emotional changes taking place during this time of transition for teenagers can be stressful for both children and adults. The middle school concept was originated for the purpose of helping

adolescents transition successfully from elementary school to secondary school. Instead of helping students during the transition, middle schools have often contributed to the alienation and disengagement of youth, especially students identified as at-risk (Juvonen, 2007).

Middle school students have reported feeling less supported by their teachers, less capable of being successful, less autonomous in their learning endeavors, and have been "more likely to endorse less adaptive learning goals" (Davis, 2006, p.194). Unfortunately, this negative perception of lack of teacher support comes at a time when adolescents are in dire need of role models and sources of support outside the family (Goodenow, 1993).

What factors lead to these feelings of alienation and lack of support that middle school students experience during this time? Students are forced to quickly adapt to a new learning environment consisting of new class organizations, teachers, friends, and curricula at the same time they are undergoing significant developmental changes both physically and socially (McIntosh, Flannery, & Braun, 2008). Consequently, students and teachers naturally have a more difficult time building strong interpersonal relationships that lead to high levels of trust because of the very structure of schools themselves (Juvonen, 2007).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has indirectly led to several negative outcomes for middle school leaders focused on meeting the needs of the whole child, that is, the social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of the students. Despite NCLB's costly demands and unrealistic expectation that 100 percent of students are to be proficient in math and reading by 2014, an even greater problem lurks beneath the surface (Noddings, 2005). Administrators and teachers have the natural tendency of

focusing solely on what they are being held accountable for—proficiency in reading and math (Greenburg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, & Resnik, 2003). Kohn (2005) writes, "It is difficult to teach the whole child when you are held accountable only for raising reading and math scores" (p. 20). As a result, middle school educators have the tendency to neglect the social and emotional needs of students at the expense of improving test scores. Low-performing students are viewed more by teachers as a liability rather than as opportunities for success. The teacher-student relationship becomes conditional; it becomes based upon how successfully they perform on standardized tests, how consistently they attend school, and how frequently they comply with school and classroom rules (Kohn, 2005). The tendency to place such a high value on standardized test scores while not equally attending to the social and emotional aspects of learning becomes counterproductive. Especially during a time when students need increasing levels of trust and a sense of belonging within the school environment to develop appropriate bonds to school (Goodenow, 1993). According to Goodenow, trust and sense of belonging is needed in schools in order to counter the "heightened sense of exposure and interpersonal risk" (p. 24) that middle school students feel as they go through school.

The 21st century has brought forth great societal shifts in the family structure that have forced schools to reevaluate the way they teach middle grades students as different levels of support and resources are now required. In what once was a culture whose values and backgrounds were less diverse, public educators are now facing unprecedented challenges as they seek ways to meet the unique social, emotional, and academic challenges of all their students. Greenburg et al. (2003) noted that children

have more access to negative influences from the media, face increasing economic and social pressures outside of school, and live during a time when there are less nurturing environments for students in their homes. Lickona (1993), speaking on the negative effects of American culture wrote:

> The disheartening signs are everywhere: the breakdown of the family; the deterioration of civility in everyday life; rampant greed at a time when one in five children is poor; an omnipresent sexual culture that fills our television and movie screens with sleaze, beckoning the young towards sexual activities at ever earlier ages; the enormous betrayal of children through sexual abuse; and the 1992 report of the National Research Council that says the United States is now the most violent of all industrialized nations (p. 6).

The fundamental changes that have occurred in the American family and community have led to more and more children lacking close, stable relationships with adults (Schaps & Solomon, 1990). These changes take place during a time when adolescents are in need of stable relationships with peers and adults inside and outside of school (Juvonen, 2007). Since many students are raised in toxic home environments where little support is offered, "teachers are called upon to offer a counterweight to the malformative elements permeating children's lives, a responsibility that calls for a more intentional and deliberate approach" (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008, p.158).

While policy, society, and the organization of a middle school all have an impact on the development of students, recognizing how powerful and influential peer relationships are during the teenage years is critical. Goodenow (1993) reported that students are influenced by their peers during early adolescence more than any other time

in their development. Relationships students have with their peers, therefore, can have positive or negative affects on student behavior and achievement, depending upon the selection of friends throughout the middle school years. A study conducted by Wetzel, Barry, and Caldwell (2004) showed that students who established friendships with other students at the beginning of middle school yielded more positive reports of social and academic adjustment than those who did not. The value of strong peer relationships cannot be underestimated, especially when considering the high levels of support needed for students as they transition through middle school.

According to Greenburg et al. (2003), today's schools are faced with the challenge of educating a student population that has become more diverse both culturally and linguistically, having to address the social and economic gaps found within their communities. All of this is happening at a time where the growing emphasis on high stakes testing and accountability has constrained teachers' time and limited their opportunities to bond with middle school students desperately in need of social, emotional, and academic support (Fredrickson & Rhodes, 2004). Moreover, the rigid organizational structure of schools, "does little to support the pursuit of cognitive surprise, the creation of intrinsic forms of motivation, the development of imagination, or the ability to define and resolve one's problems" (Eisner, 2005, p. 17). Middle schools across the nation, therefore, search for practical ways in which they can meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of all of their students.

Statement of the Problem

While test scores, attendance rates, discipline referral data, and student surveys provide quantitative evidence that middle school reform policies are impacting the

development of middle grades student for the better, what evidence do researchers have from the perspectives of the students? School policy makers should be taking the time to conduct qualitative research that explores the attitudes and perceptions of the students towards programs such as the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School. By doing so, educational leaders can work towards creating more appropriate and engaging activities using both quantitative and qualitative data to guide their decisions. Taking the time to hear the voice of the students through the use of interviews and focus group sessions allows educators to capture a glimpse of the world as they see it from their own unique perspectives.

The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to use qualitative phenomenological research methods to hear the voice of students in an effort to understand the unique attitudes and perceptions they have towards the CARES program. Using individual student interviews, focus group interviews, and follow-up interviews in grades six through eight, the primary research question was asked: What are the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the CARES program implemented at Kingsford County Middle School? Furthermore, the study sought to answer the following secondary research questions:

1) How do the students in different grades (six through eight), differ in their attitudes and perceptions?
2) Does the CARES program create a caring learning community that meets the needs of the whole child as anticipated by school leaders?
3) What affects if any does the program have on creating positive teacher-student relationships that result in higher levels of trust and support?

4) Are certain aspects of the program more effective than others (Ex: Character education may be viewed more positively than Remediation)?

Definitions

Before discussing the study in-depth, it is important to provide an overview of frequent terms used throughout the various chapters.

Advisory Programs-Programs catered towards personalizing the learning environment by assigning middle school students an advisory teacher who offers advice, both academically and socially, with the intent of providing additional support for students during this time.

At-Risk Students-Students identified as at-risk of failing academically or who have behavioral, social, and/or emotional deficits that negatively affect their ability to function successfully in school.

Autonomy-A developed sense of independence through decision-making, academic work, and peer relationships while in school.

Caring-The perception that one is valued and worthy of love and respect, the belief that others are equally worthy of dignity, respect, and esteem, and the manifestation of these in behavioral interactions (Baker & Bridger 2007, p. 7).

Belonging-a students' sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others (teachers and peers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class (Goodenow, 1993, p. 25).

Competency-The idea that a student is equipped and feels empowered to be successful while in school.

Enrichment-Opportunities embedded in the school day that provides students with fun and engaging activities that add to, or enrich their experiences while in school.

Intrinsic Motivation-Completing tasks out of genuine enjoyment and pleasure rather than obligation or the expectancy of an external reward.

Relatedness-A particular manner of connectedness to individuals or to a group.

Remediation-Academic support in school through the provision of tutoring and individualized teacher instruction.

Phenomenology-A qualitative research method "designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by the people who have participated in it" (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2007, p. 461).

Teacher Advocate-Also known as a teacher advisor. A teacher assigned to a student for the purpose of providing them social, emotional, and academic support through various activities including goal setting, communication with parents, and counseling.

Self-Actualization-An episode, or spurt in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intensely enjoyable way, and in which he is more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more perfectly expressive or spontaneous, or fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending, more independent of his lower needs, etc. He becomes more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities, closer to the core of his being, more fully human" (Maslow 1968, p. 97).

School Engagement-The idea that students are actively engaged and connected to their experiences in school.

Social Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL)-Learning that emphasizes meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of children through the creation of personalized learning communities that are caring, challenging, and supportive to students.

Teaching the Whole Child- encompasses the idea that students are to be recognized for the unique talents they posses, that the social and emotional life of the child is given equal priority to their cognitive development, and that assessment of the child should entail the complete picture of the social, emotional, and academic needs of the child (Eisner, 2005).

Overview of Study

Chapter I of the dissertation provided a brief background of the challenges educators face in meeting the various needs of the adolescent learner in middle schools. The purpose of the study, identifying the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the CARES program, was also explained, along with additional questions to direct the research study. Definitions of common terms used throughout the study were also provided in an effort to bring clarification to the research being conducted. Chapter II, the Review of Literature, will examine the related literature concerning the social, emotional, and academic learner, the concept of caring learning communities, and each of the components found in the CARES program (character education, advocacy, remediation, enrichment, and school spirit). The chapter also will provide examples of programs that have been successfully implemented as well as research based strategies that have positively impacted the middle school learner. A theoretical framework will be provided, shedding light on the theoretical foundations in which the study was designed. Chapter III, the Methodology will describe the research

design being used, the justification of which data sources and collection methods are being utilized, and a description of how trustworthiness and research bias are considered. District and school demographics will be mentioned, along with a description of the participants in the study. Chapter IV will be used to analyze the data which reveals the attitudes and perceptions of the students towards the various components of the CARES program. Chapter V will follow with a discussion over four themes identified from the data, answers to the primary and secondary research questions, as well as implications and recommendations that can be used to guide educational leaders and encourage future research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

According to the National Middle School Association (2009), 88 % of public school students make the transition from elementary to middle school each year. While the middle school experience was designed for the purpose of offering a more developmentally appropriate education for young adolescents, "this intermediate phase has been identified as contributing to the disengagement and increasing sense of alienation of youth" (Juvonen, 2007, p. 197). Students enter middle school experiencing new learning environments, academic standards, classroom organizations, peers, and teachers at the same time they are experiencing dynamic changes in their physical, social, and emotional development (McIntosh, Flannery, & Braun, 2008). The traditional departmentalized structure of middle schools and the typically larger sizes of middle schools make the transition increasingly difficult for students to bond with their teachers (Juvonen, 2007).

The No Child Left Behind legislation has indirectly created climates in schools that emphasize academics alone while negating the equal importance of providing programming designed to meet the social and emotional needs of children (Greenburg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, & Resnik, 2003). Kohn (2005) noted that the strong emphasis on accountability and high stakes testing has resulted in student boredom and anxiety, quality teachers leaving the profession, and standardized test preparation activities replacing student designed projects. Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004) wrote, "A growing emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing has given rise to dense curricular

demands that have constrained teachers and left little room for the sorts of conversations and activities that typically draw them closer to students" (p. 51). Pianta (1999) noted that the relationships students have with their teachers are foundational to their classroom experience and can improve developmental outcomes over time. Therefore, while there is evidence supporting the need for high quality relationships with students, little time is provided in the school day to facilitate these types of interactions.

Using 1997-1998 survey data from the World Health Organization on the Health and Behavior of School-Aged Children (HBSC), Juvonen (2007) compared United States adolescents with 12 other nations on their perceptions about school and their sense of belonging. Results of the study showed that United States students faired worst on the School Climate Factor which indicates:

> A students' global evaluation of their fit with and liking of school or to the degree to which they view their school as a nice place, like school, do not consider school boring, feel that they belong, view school rules as fair, and feel that they are able to take part in setting rules (p.199).

Furthermore, United States students felt more socially isolated than eight of the 12 nations, ranked sixth in their perceptions of teacher support, and were ranked 10th in Peer Culture, which "accounts for their enjoyment of being together with schoolmates as well as perceptions of peers as accepting, kind, and helpful" (p. 199). Data from the Juvonen study call for the need to provide programming and implement policies that will increase the levels of attachment in U.S. middle schools. A theoretical background which provides a basis for the need of more caring and supportive learning environments for middle school students is noted below.

Theoretical Framework

The organization known as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2003) wrote, "Classroom and school interventions that make learning environments safer, more caring, better managed, more participatory, and that enhance students' social competence, have been shown to increase student attachment in school (p. 2). Most educators and parents would agree that schools should be safe and supportive with attention given not only to the intellectual capacities of children, but to their affective needs as well. A theoretical basis is provided below noting specifically the importance of recognizing the impact that the social context has on the adolescent learner.

General Systems Theory

General Systems Theory provides educators with a perspective towards understanding how the social interactions between teachers, students, and other stakeholders have on the effectiveness of an organization. General Systems Theory (GST) expects one to view an organization or system holistically, and to analyze the various components that make up the system in order to understand how the individual parts of the system impact the behaviors observed. Pianta (1999) clarified by saying, "Relationships between children and adults are systems and are, in turn, part of larger systems (classrooms). This perspective is helpful in understanding how relationships between children and teachers form, how they are maintained, and how they are important for development" (p. 43).

According to the Board of Trustees of Indiana University (2005), using a General Systems Theory framework in school is beneficial for three reasons:

1) Successfully meeting the needs of all students requires a collaborative effort from all adults.
2) Accountability rests upon the entire faculty rather than on an individual.
3) The use of a systems perspective allows educators to identify barriers and supports to good learning. (p. 1)

Furthermore, the provision of a systems approach ensures that the voices of all stakeholders within the school are being heard, which in effect results in a democratic approach to school improvement and a common consensus among values. When investigating students' level of engagement in the educational process, one must recognize that "attention, problem solving, literacy, emotion, social behavior, social recognition, peer relations, and self-control are distributed across the child, the situation or situations in which the challenge occurs, and the relation of the child to the challenge and the situation or situations" (Pianta, 1999, p. 49).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The psychologist Abraham Maslow, widely known for his theory of personality, developed a hierarchy of five basic needs that are crucial in the development of an individual (Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987). The theory consists of lower level needs that need to be met before children can progress to higher order needs, with the ultimate goal being for the individual to reach what Maslow defines as *self-actualization*. Maslow (1968) defined *self-actualization* as

> an episode, or a spurt in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intensely enjoyable way, and in which he is more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more

> perfectly expressive or spontaneous, or fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending, more independent of his lower needs, etc. He becomes in these episodes more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities, closer to the core of his being, more fully human (p. 97).

The lower level needs in the hierarchy need to be met before individuals develop the capacity for self-actualization. The first and most basic needs involve the physiological (food, water, and oxygen), followed by needs of safety, love, affection, and belongingness. Maslow (1968) further claimed that "No psychological health is possible unless this essential core of a person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by himself" (p. 196). Since children are in pursuit of overcoming feelings of loneliness and isolation, an environment that facilitates a sense of belongingness and acceptance is necessary for healthy development (Simons et al., 1987).

Once these basic needs are met, children can then develop the self-esteem that is accompanied by, "a firmly based, high level of self-respect, and respect from others" (Simons et al., 1987, p. 2). Therefore, "The single holistic principle that binds together the multiplicity of human motives is the tendency for a new and higher need to emerge as the lower need fulfills itself by being sufficiently gratified" (Maslow, 1968, p. 55). This process towards self-actualization is a fundamental step in the maturation and development of children.

Taking into consideration Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is critical when considering ways in which the school environment can meet the developmental needs of children. Maslow (1968) described the environment as significant for two primary

reasons. First, it can gratify the basic needs of belonging, safety, love, and respect so that students can feel, “unthreatened, autonomous, interested, and spontaneous, and thus dare to choose the unknown” (p. 59). Second, it makes the choice to progress through the various levels attractive and less obtrusive by, “making the regressive choice less attractive and more costly” (p. 59). While the choice to progress is ultimately up to the child, creating and sustaining learning environments that promote progression through the levels of needs are necessary for self-actualization to occur.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is “a psychological theory that provides a descriptive and explanatory framework for discussion of affectionate relationships between human beings” (Farlex, 2009, p. 2). Children can attach to people in similar ways that they attached to their primary caregivers throughout childhood. John Bowlby is responsible for deriving this theory through extensive research on the interactions between young children and their mothers. Bowlby (1969) described attachment behavior as “seeking and maintaining proximity to another individual” (p. 194). While the majority of Bowlby’s research noted the correlation between poor attachments with primary caregivers and the negative social and emotional relationships that follow, attachment theory can be applied to the social context in schools. Bowlby noted that attachment theory is applicable to the school setting as other care givers, such as teachers, greatly impact an adolescent’s ability to establish healthy bonds with adults. Therefore, schools have the responsibility of providing environments that offer healthy opportunities for children to connect with educators

in positive ways. Failure to attach with adults in the organization can have negative social and emotional affects.

Social Development Theory

Social Development Theory originated from the work of Vygotsky and states that, "social interaction precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialization and social behavior" (Learning Theories, 2008, p. 1). Moll (1990), when discussing Social Development Theory reported that "Vygotsky argued that a child's development cannot be understood by a study of the individual. We must also examine the social world in which that individual life has developed" (p. 176). In Vygotsky's theory, students play an active role in the learning process, and the experience is considered a reciprocal one between the teachers and the students. Teaching, according to Social Development Theory, "implies a developmental progress, an unfolding of potential through the reciprocal influence of child and social environment" (p. 184).

Three major themes are prevalent in Vygotsky's social development theory (Learning Theories, 2008). Social interaction is a fundamental aspect of child development. Vygotsky (1978) said, "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (p. 28). In learning environments, there will always be the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), a teacher, coach, or even peers who are capable of leading the individual towards learning. Learning occurs through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which can be defined as "the distance between a

student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability to solve the problem independently" (Learning Theories, 2009, p. 1).

Learning, therefore, is embedded in the context of social relationships. A school environment that is caring helps to facilitate positive teacher-student interactions that promote effective development (Noll, 1990). Vygotsky would argue that child development cannot be studied individually, but instead should also "examine the social world in which that individual life has developed" (p. 176). The implications this theory has for school leaders are that the social environment of schools should be carefully evaluated to identify barriers to student learning and to identify best practices that promote the effective development of children.

Self Determination Theory: Autonomy, Competency, Relatedness

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), Self Determination Theory (SDT), "is an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods while employing an organismic metatheory that highlights the importance of humans' evolved inner sources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation" (p. 68). The three psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness are essential components that facilitate the positive social development and personal well-being of students. When these three needs are met, students' levels of intrinsic motivation are enhanced. Ryan and Deci define intrinsic motivation as, "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (p. 70).

The social environments found within schools have the ability to either support the intrinsic motivation of students or to thwart it, depending upon the structures that are in place (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The failure to create social supports for competence, autonomy, and relatedness at schools contributes to the "alienation and ill-being" (p. 74) of students. The implications of this theory tell of the need for schools to create social environments for students that provide opportunities for students to work in more autonomous ways, to receive effective instruction that enhances student competencies, and to establish a school climate that students can connect with, rather than disengage.

Belongingness and Engagement

In order for middle school students to be successful, providing environments that foster high levels of student belongingness and engagement in the learning process are necessary. Goodenow (1993) defined belongingness as a, "student's sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others (peers and teachers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class" (p. 25). School engagement refers to, "a broad set of participatory behaviors that capture interest, willingness to put forth effort, and commitment to doing well in school" (Juvonen, 2007, p. 198).

Research conducted by Davis (2006) revealed that educators can impact student success both socially and academically by providing programming that increases students' sense of belonging and by implementing instructional practices that motivate students through engaging activities. Baker and Bridger (2007) encouraged middle schools to take on a community oriented approach by structuring programs

that foster a sense of belonging and a common purpose for all stakeholders. Research showed that bonding to school and to other positive adults leads to more positive experiences and counters the negative aspects found in at-risk students (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004). Research conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2003) revealed that increasing student bonding has a direct impact on the academic and social growth of middle school students.

Belongingness and engagement in school has the potential of improving the climate of the organization. Narvaez and Lapsley (2008) found that schools identified as having a strong sense of community had fewer discipline problems, fewer reports of drug use, and less bullying incidents. Higher levels of school attendance and increased academic performance were also reported. A study by Chambers (2008) found that students view school more positively, engage in less disruptive behavior, and have higher levels of achievement when school is experienced as a community. Baker and Bridger (2007) noted that the reason students demonstrate higher levels of success academically in caring communities is because the relationships enable them to "develop both the security and competencies required for success in any social setting, including school" (p. 10).

Caring in Schools

Most educators would agree that offering students strong, supportive, caring relationships from school personnel is a fundamental principle. Noddings (1984) argued that teachers have the moral obligation to provide care for their students. Noddings wrote:

> Everything we do, then, as teachers, has moral overtones. Through dialogue, modeling, the provision of practice, and the attribution of best motive, the one-caring as teacher nurtures the ethical ideal. She cannot nurture the student intellectually without regard for the ethical ideal (p. 179).

When education takes place from this moral perspective, a sense of moral understanding is disseminated directly to the students.

Genuinely caring for students requires an approach that is intentional and sincere. Noddings (1984) described caring as "stepping out of one's own personal frame of reference and into the others" (p. 24). Caring interactions are an integral part of forming a caring learning community. Caring is reciprocal in nature as teachers and students interact with each other in positive ways. Baker and Bridger (1997) defined caring as, "the perception that one is valued and worthy of love and respect, the belief that others are equally worthy of dignity, respect, and esteem, and the manifestation of these in behavioral interactions" (p. 7). Therefore, when students' perceive their teachers as caring individuals, they develop stronger feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy, both of which are influential in meeting the developmental needs of adolescent children. Caring is a deliberate set of actions made by teachers. Goldstein (1999) noted that a teacher cares for students under the conviction that it is simply "what ought to be done" (p. 659).

Research conducted by Ryan and Patrick (2001) revealed that when students perceived their teachers as supportive and caring, there was an increase in student confidence and self-regulated learning. Lumpkin (2007) reported that students are able to sense when teachers truly care and, as a result, put forth greater efforts when

they feel supported by their teachers. Goldstein (1999) found that caring relationships directly benefit the developmental outcomes of students both intellectually and socially. Since the research revealed such strong connections between caring relationships and student success, educational leaders should proactively plan ways to personalize the learning environment for teachers and students.

Noddings (1984), commenting on the caring relationship between a teacher and a student said, “The special gift of the teacher, then, is to receive the student, to look at the subject matter within him. Her commitment is to him, the cared-for, and he is—through that commitment—set free to pursue his legitimate projects” (p. 177). Taking the time to get to know the students and learn to understand their areas of need is something that must be done in order to facilitate a caring environment for students. Caring for students is a multi-faceted approached where students see caring actions from their teachers in various ways. Lumpkin (2007) stated that teachers demonstrate care for their students by using the following practices:

1) Establishes nurturing relationships and affirms student efforts
2) Uses multiple instructional methods
3) Sets clear and realistic expectations
4) Structures classrooms and activities that facilitate engagement
5) Reflects upon practices and changes them when necessary to better serve the students (p. 159)

Teacher-Student Relationships

Pianta (1999) reported that relationships with teachers are a fundamental part of the classroom experience and have the ability to improve the outcomes of students. Klem and Connell (2004) found that students reported higher levels of engagement in school when they perceived their teachers as caring and fair. Middle school students were three times more likely to experience high levels of engagement if they experienced highly supportive teachers. Research by McCombs (2003) found a positive relationship between increased motivation and achievement when students perceived their teachers as encouraging and positive. Research has also shown that at-risk students surrounded by supportive and caring adults lead to higher levels of engagement in school (Woolley & Brown, 2007).

Brown (2005) described the significance of congruent communication when seeking to establish positive teacher-student relationships. Brown argued that the more congruent the communication between the teachers and the students, the more likely the teacher can maintain a comfortable, manageable environment. Teachers can communicate congruently by:

1) Using active listening techniques

2) Having body language and facial expressions match verbal responses

3) Responding with empathy to students with anxiety and frustration (p. 13)

Research conducted by Lee (2007) found that the trust relationship between student and teacher serves as a motivational function when students go through difficult situations in school. Furthermore, trust relationships, “help adolescents develop positive psychological and emotional perceptions of themselves” (p. 210). Gable, Hester, Hester,

Hendrickson, and Size (2005) found that positive teacher-student relationships have strong influences on academic performance and behavior. Because many middle school students have difficulty negotiating day-to-day situations, especially under strenuous conditions, the quality of the teacher-student relationship is a critical piece in ensuring that these students find their way through this challenging transition (Gable et al., 2005).

According to Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004), good teacher-student relationships enhance student motivation and are "characterized by low levels of conflict and high levels of closeness" (p. 48). The challenge for school leaders is to provide programming within the instructional day that provides teachers and students with opportunities to interact positively in conversations and activities that encourage stronger, more positive bonds with each other. Suldo, Mihalas, Powell, and French (2008) suggested that educational leaders train school faculty to do the following:

1) Effectively provide students with appropriate information and advice
2) Offer evaluative feedback on behavior and academic performance
3) Allocate time and resources during the school day for relationship building
4) Be intentional with actions and words in conveying high levels of care and trust (p. 379)

Research by Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004) found that students had fewer problems adjusting to middle school when the schools focused on improving the quality of relationships between teachers and students. The effects of investing time and resources into building positive teacher-student relationships are worth noting. Fredriksen and Rhodes reported that "teacher awareness of the importance of fostering positive student-teacher relations may serve to not only decrease the frequency of alcohol

and drug use, but indirectly influence academic problems associated with substance use, such as diminished school attendance, interest in school, and academic achievement" (p. 384). The potential influence teachers can have on their students is worth noting considering the depth of research supporting the impact that positive teacher-student relationships can have on student outcomes.

Davis (2006) reported that, "Supportive relationships with teachers may play an important developmental role during the transition to and through middle school" (p. 194). Furthermore, students reported that middle school teachers were described as less friendly, less supportive, and less caring than their elementary teachers. Students who perceived their relationship with teachers as supportive were found more motivated to learn and achieved higher grades than those that did not. Davis' research affirmed the importance of having middle school administrators plan programming designed to improve teacher-student relationships during this critical transition period for students.

Reaching the Whole Child

Schools serve students best when the mission of the school "reflects a holistic orientation to education" (Kohn, 2005, p. 18). Eisner (2005) said, "Children respond to educational situations not only intellectually, but emotionally and socially as well" (p. 16). The challenge for educators is to provide a more holistic environment for children when society and policy undervalue such an approach. Noddings (2005) wrote:

> We will not find the solution to problems of violence, alienation, ignorance, and unhappiness in increasing our security apparatus, imposing more tests, punishing schools for their failure to produce 100 percent proficiency, or demanding that teachers be knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. Instead, we must allow

teachers and students to interact as whole persons, and we must develop policies that treat the school as a whole community (p. 13).

What do educators mean when talking about teaching the whole child? Teaching the whole child involves meeting the intellectual needs of the child while giving equal importance to their physical, social, and emotional needs. According to Goldstein (1999), "Cognition and affect are integrated and independent of each other" (p. 652). When affective needs are fulfilled, they support and compliment the development of students' intellectual capacities. Teaching students encompasses a much broader perspective than academics alone. Goldstein wrote, "We must not overlook affect and ethics, or we run the risk of an incomplete understanding of the teaching-learning process" (p. 669).

Kohn (2005) identified the following elements as contributing to the teaching of the whole child:

1) Recognize the talents of individual students and create environments that maximize their potential.
2) Consider how students respond to school activities emotionally, socially, and cognitively.
3) Use assessment as a tool to provide a complete picture of the whole child.
4) Value the social and emotional life of children equally, if not greater than academic achievement.
5) Emphasize the teaching of the fine arts in an effort to bring forth both cognition and emotion in the child (p. 24)

Additional strategies school officials can use to enhance whole child instruction includes increasing student participation, informal conversations, and fun and humor in learning (Noddings, 2005). Kohn stated that "accepting students for who they are, rather than for what they do, is integrally related to the idea of teaching the whole child" (p. 24). The unconditional acceptance of students despite their various backgrounds is a critical piece in the effective provision of reaching the whole child.

Social Support in Schools

Schools can provide the social support needed for adolescents by "designing new kinds of systems that connect, rather than isolate individuals" (McCombs, 2003, p. 100). Providing social support for adolescents contributes to the students' ability to adjust and develop, and also serves as a buffer against stress (Richman, Rosenfeld, and Bowen, 1998). Woolley and Brown (2007) reported that "establishing initiatives to promote attentive and supportive adults in the lives of at-risk youth" would protect them from negative outcomes (p. 101). Creating positive social environments is a vital component that improves the sense of connectedness and engagement of middle school students (Juvonen, 2007).

Baker and Bridger (1997) believed schools should consider taking a relational approach towards reform. A relational approach, "attempts to improve schooling by attending to the broader social context in which academic learning transpires" (p. 3). The relational approach focuses on the principles of developing community and creating a culture of care. This approach stresses the importance of developing "civic-minded, competent, and ethical citizens" through the use of "overt and covert school practices" (p.

9). Academic and social goals are equally prioritized and are integrated into the school's curriculum.

A research study by Richman et al. (1998) found that at-risk adolescents benefit positively by the ways teachers use different modes of communication to provide social support. Middle school students who received high levels of listening support reported having a greater sense of self-efficacy and higher grades than those that did not. Furthermore, at-risk students receiving higher levels of emotional support had a greater satisfaction with school and also engaged in more prosocial behaviors. The study also revealed that middle school students perceived their parents and teachers as the primary sources for support affirming the notion that, "social support may be used as an intervention strategy to positively influence middle school students who are at risk of school failure" (p. 321).

Social support in schools can be provided in various ways. Woolley and Brown (2007) suggested the implementation of strong mentor programs, tutoring, extracurricular activities, and enrichment activities to enhance the level of social support for students. Juvonen (2007) established three broad goals that should be considered when seeking to bolster social support in schools:

1) Capitalize on the affiliative needs to engage students (cooperative learning, peer collaboration, improving the classroom social climate)
2) Foster a caring peer culture and improve the emotional safety of students (bullying prevention programs, character education, teacher advisors, mentor programs)

3) Enhance continuity (alternative organizational structures such as K-8 schools and looping) (p. 200).

Research from Lipsitz and West (2006) found that high performing middle schools are academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable. Middle schools identified as high performing shared similar characteristics. The schools had clearly established academic standards that were challenging for all students. The schools set aside time to recognize students for their accomplishments by conducting celebrations and assemblies. Various school stakeholders worked collaboratively with the administration in providing resources designated to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the students. Students were treated fairly as educators in these schools created support structures designated to assist at-risk students, special needs students, and those coming from economically disadvantaged homes.

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) addresses the affective needs of students and has been found to impact student learning in several positive ways (CASEL, 2003). A 1994 meeting sponsored by the Fetzer Institute revealed that "Social and emotional programming could address underlying causes of problem behaviors while supporting academic achievement" (Greenburg et al., 2003, p. 467). Schools that create safe and caring learning environments while providing developmentally appropriate instruction in self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making result in less risky behaviors of students, greater attachments to school, and improved academic performance (CASEL, 2003).

Learner Centered Principles (LCPs) were developed by the American Psychological Association's Presidential Task Force for Psychology in Education in 1993 in an effort to provide research that could assist in the provision of learning environments that could raise student achievement (McCombs, 2003). The document consisted of 14 principles organized into the following domains: cognitive and metacognitive, motivational and affective, developmental and social, and individual difference. The purpose behind the LCPs was to reflect "the holistic nature of factors influencing learners and learning" (p. 94). The LCPs were created upon the premise that safe, nurturing learning environments that meet the social emotional needs of students are necessary for effective learning to occur. Research by Klem and Connell (2004) found that schools with high academic and behavior standards, engaging learning activities, professional learning activities, and personalized learning environments are more likely to have success than those that do not. Consequently, emphasizing the affective needs of students through social and emotional learning can have positive effects on the development of middle school students.

Character Education

Teaching students moral character in schools has always been a part of American education. Furthermore, "A well-designed character education program allows for the transmission of culture, which is at the core of schooling in America" (McCaffrey, 2008, p. 22). According to Narvaez and Lapsley (2008), "Given the tight connection between best practice instruction for academic expertise and for moral development, teachers are unwittingly engaged in character education when they structure lessons and organize classrooms in ways that optimally support student learning" (p. 162). This statement

affirms the notion that teachers teach values regardless of whether it comes from school-wide character education programs or if they are naturally integrated into the general curriculum. Middle schools nation-wide are creatively finding ways to implement character education into the school day despite the intense accountability and pressure placed on student test scores. Juvonen (2007) said that successful character education instruction "supports and enhances the academic goals of schools" (p. 206). Under this conviction, middle school reformers are making this connection and are encouraging a more intentional approach towards the use of character education in schools.

The Aspen Declaration on Character Education, created in 1992, argued that a moral decline of the family, troubling trends in the eroding of youth character, and a lack of common values as reasons to consider character education instruction for students in public schools (Lickona, 1993). According to Chambers (2008), "Character education initiatives recognize that all students have needs for safety, belonging, and the experience of meaningfully contributing; furthermore, they are more likely to internalize the values and expectations of groups that meet these needs" (p. 34). While the idea of character education had its roots in early American schools through discipline, the Bible as a sourcebook, and biblically integrated principles found in the McGuffey Readers, the philosophy of positivism and humanistic personalism emphasizing human rights and freedom over responsibility led to an eroding of common moral ethics once prevalent in the United States. Furthermore, since, "the United States is a multiracial, multiethnic nation, many educators despair of coming up with a shared vision of the good person to guide curriculum builders" (Ryan, 1993, p.16). Ryan further suggested using character values that are supported by various religious, ethnic, and cultural groups. By doing so,

public educators could find the common ground necessary to successfully implement into public schools. Values such as honesty, respect, compassion, and kindness are religiously neutral yet are powerful principles for students to learn.

Teaching students character is an integral part of reaching the whole child. Ryan (1993) wrote, “Nothing is better for the human soul than to discuss excellence everyday” (p. 18). Schools that, “wish to maximize their moral clout, make a lasting difference in students’ character, and engage and develop all three parts of character (knowing, feeling, and behavior), they need a comprehensive, holistic approach” (Lickona, 1993, p. 10). Integrating character education into all aspects of the curriculum rather than “empty preaching” and “crude didacticism” is a critical aspect of developing moral character in children (Ryan, 1993, p. 18).

McCaffrey (2008) reported that when, “designing learning strategies for a character education program, it is important to engage students in moral and ethical decision making, if we are going to get the responses and interactions desired” (p. 22). At the middle school level, the use of Hollywood movie clips during classroom advisory time can provide opportunities for students to discuss values in applicable ways with their peers. Lickona (1993) suggested that in order for character education to be holistically integrated into the school, teachers should

1) Model, mentor, and genuinely care for students
2) Create a moral community
3) Practice moral discipline
4) Teach values through the curriculum
5) Use cooperative learning

6) Teach conflict resolution
7) Encourage moral reflection
8) Recruit all stakeholders to partner in teaching character education (p. 10).

Advisory Teachers

Middle schools have used homeroom advisory classes to promote positive experiences for students in transition (Akos, 2006). Advisory programs have been created under the belief that all students should have an adult in the schools that serves as their advocate (National Middle School Association, 2009). A research summary provided by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) reported that middle school advisory programs implemented appropriately have been known to reduce student drop out rates, enhance teacher student relationships, help students adjust to the middle school setting, assist students academically, and foster more positive learning environments for students. While middle schools expect students to interact with various teachers within the building, the exemplary middle school ensures that every student is in close contact with one special teacher who understands the unique social, emotional, and academic needs of the students that are assigned in the advisory class (Alexander & George, 1981).

In an advisor-advisee relationship, the teacher serves as the student's academic expert, is considered the student's advocate, and is most directly responsible for the provision of social and emotional education to the child (Alexander & George, 1981). Successful advisory programs require careful, organized planning, support from all educational stakeholders, professional development for teachers, and teacher "buy-in"

(NMSA, 2009). The class should consist of 10-20 students with 20-40 minutes of instructional time available for each class.

Strong middle school advisory programs are designed to meet the unique needs of teachers and students within their own context. Educational leaders that have identified fighting in school as a problem may use the advisory time to teach conflict resolution strategies and focus on bullying prevention whereas others may be working on goal setting and academic progress monitoring as a means to make the academic achievement gains needed for improvement. The National Middle School Association (NMSA) reported that strong advisory programs include the promotion of school spirit, academic progress monitoring, study skills instruction, self-esteem activities, career education, intramurals, enrichment activities, and adolescent issues such as bullying and substance abuse.

Advisory programs have been a part of the middle school concept for years; however, all too often, the class time has resulted in unstructured free time rather than the provision of social and emotional learning and academic support (Balkus, 2006). Balkus identified several reasons as to why advisory programs have been unsuccessful:

1) Teachers are uncomfortable and lack the necessary training to assist students.
2) The program was a top-bottom mandate with little to no teacher input.
3) Secondary teachers are highly competent in their content areas but lack professional development in the understanding of adolescent development.
4) High stakes testing and accountability have caused teachers to resent academic class time being used for social emotional learning (p. 5).

The NMSA (2009) reported that advisory programs frequently have little to no positive effects on students because school leaders have implemented programs casually and hastily, failing to take the necessary time to plan systematically. In addition, the NMSA noted that while there has been an enormous amount of literature on advisory programs, little research has taken place that "probes the subjective experiences" of students in order to understand the perceptions they have about advisor/advisee programs (p. 2).

Successful Programming

Schools that set high academic and behavior standards, provide engaging learning activities for students, and focus on creating learning environments that are safe and personalized for students are more likely to have success than those that do not (Klem & Connell, 2004). Moreover, when schools introduce school improvement initiatives that give careful consideration as to how the programming will affect the school holistically rather than individually, they will have greater levels of success (Greenburg et al., 2003). Effective school-based intervention programs include the teaching of ethical values through classroom instruction, the provision of student participation in the process, the fostering of supportive teacher-student relationships, and the supporting and rewarding of positive social and academic behaviors of students.

Although there have been many school based intervention programs implemented that include character education, advisory programs, substance abuse prevention, bullying prevention, and civics instruction, many of these programs become disruptive and unsuccessful in schools (Greenburg et al., 2003). The failure results from a lack of administrative support, lack of appropriate professional development, and short-term initiatives that do not align with the overall mission of the school. The programs

provided below are examples of effectively implemented prevention models that have demonstrated successful social and academic gains for students.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) was a program designed to help adolescents develop positive social behavior, character, and the competencies necessary for contributing to society (Gomez & Ang, 2007). Research by Gomez and Ang revealed that schools guided by a PYD framework effectively support the social, academic, and personal development of youth. Schools that take the time to create environments that give students healthy boundaries, a caring atmosphere, and a support for school personnel facilitate opportunities for adolescents to develop positively.

Gomez and Ang reported that schools are appropriate environments for PYD since so much of an adolescent's time is spent in school. In addition, most schools already have sufficient human and capital resources necessary for PYD implementation. Identity formation, cognitive and social development, and peer relations are also highly influenced within the context of school; therefore, the implementation of PYD can result in positive outcomes for students. The PYD program involves meeting the six "Cs" in children: competence, confidence, connections, character, caring, and contributing to society. These components are met through clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, and social and emotional education.

First Things First

First Things First, a framework for school reform, was designed by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education and is committed to strengthening the relationships between students and teachers, increasing the levels of student engagement

in the classrooms, and allocating resources effectively in ways that will lead to achieving these goals (Klem & Connell, 2004). The reform initiative used the creation of small learning communities, a family advocate system, and standards-based instruction to improve teacher-student relationships and engagement in school.

According to Klem and Connell (2004), schools using the First Things First program reported higher levels of teacher support, improved graduation rates, and increased school attendance. Academic gains were also documented by First Things First schools after the initial two years of implementation. Researchers and policy makers agree that comprehensive models such as First Things First that view school reform from a holistic perspective have the greatest, positive impact on student learning.

The Child Development Project

The Child Development Project (CDP) began in the 1980s as a school reform program designed for the purpose of creating supportive and caring learning environments that foster students' sense of belonging in school (Schaps & Solomon, 1990). The CDP used the following principles to guide them:

1) The incorporation of cooperative learning activities

2) Developmental discipline practices and community building activities

3) A literacy based approach to reading instruction (p. 40).

Questionnaires were administered to students involved in the CDP in order to identify student perceptions of being cared for in school as well as to determine to what degree they felt a part of the decision making process in the classroom. The feedback received from the students showed that students involved in a CDP school had higher levels of perceived caring than non-CDP schools (Schaps & Solomon, 1990). There was

also evidence that students in CDP schools were less lonely and socially anxious, demonstrated more appropriate classroom behavior, were more socially competent, and had higher levels of reading comprehension when compared to schools not utilizing CDP initiatives.

Summary

The amounts of perceived support adolescents receive from their teachers play an important role in motivation and academic achievement (Goodenow, 1993). Schools that care about students focus on their social, emotional, and academic needs. Educational leaders who emphasize caring communities and create classroom environments that enhance the ability for students to connect with their peers and teachers will yield positive gains in student achievement. Furthermore, students will feel more connected to the school environment as school personnel teach children holistically, taking into consideration both their affective and cognitive needs. Consequently, these developmentally appropriate strategies used in middle school education will decrease levels of stress, anxiety, and isolation, and instead will increase levels of engagement, connectedness, and success for adolescent learners.

Chapters I, Introduction, and II, Review of Literature provided a background of the study, focused on the premise for the research study being conducted, and gave an overview of the theoretical framework and previous literature justifying the need for social and emotional programming in middle schools. Chapter III, methodology will note the design of the study and will also discuss various ways in which the trustworthiness of the research project has been addressed.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program at Kingsford County Middle School. The CARES program, in its second year of implementation, was developed in an effort to increase the students' sense of belonging and connectedness in school, improve the quality of teacher-student relationships, provide social, emotional, and academic support for the students, and provide fun, engaging activities for students.

The qualitative research design of the study was chosen in order to gain a better understanding of the unique attitudes and perceptions that students at Kingsford County Middle School have towards the various components of the CARES program. The program takes place each morning during the first 25 minutes of instructional time. Each day, students check-in with their advisory teacher where attendance is taken, paperwork is collected, and students listen to morning announcements. On Mondays, students stay with their advisory teacher for CARES time where character education is provided. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, students go to assigned classes based upon individual needs. Students receive tutoring, remediation, and are given the opportunity to make up missed assignments with support from their teachers. Special content area workshops take place periodically throughout the year in an effort to provide students with extra support as they prepare for standardized exaMs. Each grade level is assigned an enrichment day. During enrichment time, students who are on target with their

academic work are given the opportunity to sign up for various enrichment classes that include physical education, art, music, band, academic games, and other enrichment activities. Fridays are designated for school clubs, pep rallies, and assemblies. Students consistently meet with their club sponsors in various locations throughout the building, pep rallies are periodically held to recognize and celebrate the student athletes, and school wide assemblies take place each grading period.

In order to capture the essence of the students' attitudes and perceptions, a phenomenological research design was used. Individual student interviews, focus groups, and follow-up interviews were used to gather data. Chapter III, Methodology, will provide an overview of the district and school demographics, participants of the study, data sources, collection methods, and the rationale for the qualitative phenomenological research design. In addition, concerns over the credibility and dependability of the research design and methods will be addressed, along with potential research bias and study limitations.

Qualitative Research

A qualitative research design is used in this study to explore the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students. The researcher attempted to capture the voice of the students, to understand how they feel and think, and to provide a clear description that comes from their unique points of view. Contrary to quantitative research, where variables are identified and measured, a hypothesis is tested, and statistics provide evidence of findings, qualitative research is descriptive in its approach, using the rich details of the contextual setting to shed light on the phenomenon being investigated (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2007) reported that,

"qualitative inquiry seeks to understand human and social behavior not from the etic or outsider's perspective, but from the emic or insider's perspective, that is, as it is lived by the participants in a particular social setting" (p. 449). The data collected in a qualitative study are termed soft, using rich detail to describe the setting being investigated (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The gathering of qualitative data in educational research has several positive outcomes. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) shared six advantages of using qualitative research in schools:

1) It provides natural occurring information that furthers the understanding of a phenomenon.
2) The contextual setting is taken into consideration since the data collection methods are personal and up close (example: interviews, direct observations).
3) It reveals the complexity of the environment and addresses the phenomenon holistically.
4) Data collection occurs over a long duration of time allowing for longitudinal analysis of processes.
5) It is often based upon the live experiences of people allowing researchers to interpret data with respect to the meanings people bring to them.
6) It takes into consideration the intercultural negotiating that occurs between individuals and groups as they seek solutions to problems. (p. 560)

Each of these characteristics of qualitative research compliment quantitative research in the sense that they are able to interpret the social context of schools in ways that quantitative research cannot.

The purpose of qualitative research is to "gain an in-depth, holistic perspective of groups of people, environments, programs, events, or any phenomenon one wishes to study by interacting closely with the people it is studying" (Farber, 2006, p. 3). According to Ary et al. (2007), "While qualitative researchers broadly specify aspects of a design before beginning the study, the design continues to emerge as the study unfolds" (p. 454). This emergent design is necessary because it gives the researcher the flexibility to dig deeper into the setting where needed, in order to better understand what is taking place. Bogdan and Biklen claimed that, "the qualitative research approach demands that the world be examined with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied" (p. 5). Consequently, a qualitative phenomenological approach is utilized in this research design in order to best investigate student attitudes and perceptions.

Phenomenological Research

According to Ary et al. (2007), "A phenomenological study is designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by the people who have participated in it" (p. 461). The CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School is designed to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of middle school students. But is the program meeting the students' needs effectively? How do the middle school students feel about the program? While school leaders can analyze standardized test scores, attendance rates, discipline data, and report cards, a phenomenological approach is needed to understand the attitudes and perceptions of the students towards the various components of the program. The researcher,

therefore, is focused on the subjective experience of the students as the voice of the students are attempted to be heard through the research design. Conducting research with the intent of "capturing the voice" of students is what Van Manen (1990) described as obtaining a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (p. 177). The researcher collects data directly from the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, and Morales, 2007). In this case, the attitudes and perceptions of middle students towards the CARES program is the phenomenon being investigated.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) defined bracketing as "an idea that informants take for granted as true" (p. 25). Has an assumption been made that the CARES program and other similar forms of programming meets the needs of the students being served? In this phenomenological study, the focus was on using the data gathered through student interviews and focus groups to paint a picture of what these students think and feel about the CARES program. The analysis of data derived from the study allowed educators to see through the eyes of the participants. Ary et al. (2006) stated that, "from an analysis of the interview data, the researcher writes descriptions of the participants' experiences and how those experiences were perceived" (p. 462).

The procedures used in this phenomenological study mimicked those suggested by Moustakas (2004). First, a phenomenon to study was identified, in this case, the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the CARES program. Second, the researcher had to "bracket out" one's own experiences assuming that nothing was known about what the students are experiencing, specifically regarding their attitudes and perceptions. Third, data was collected from numerous participants using in-depth interviewing and student focus groups. Fourth, data was analyzed utilizing specific

quotes or statements made by the participants involved. Common themes were then categorized and shared using rich and descriptive detail. The phenomenological approach, using qualitative research methods, therefore, was the premise for the research design.

Participants & School Setting

Noted below is an overview of the district and school demographics. Furthermore, a descriptive background of the school's history, achievements, and programming are included. The participants' ethnic and socio-economic status along with their ability levels are provided in an effort to provide a clear understanding of the unique context that the research project is taking place.

District Profile

The Kingsford County School District is a mid-sized rural school system serving a total of 4,500 students located approximately 60 miles north of Atlanta, Georgia (Georgia Department of Education, 2008). A total of seven schools make up the district, one high school, two middle schools, and four elementary schools. The system is limited in its ethnic diversity as 93 % of the student population is Caucasian, 3 % is Hispanic, 1 % is African American, and the remaining population is other. The district's diversity, however, is found within the students' socio-economic status as approximately 50% of the students are economically disadvantaged and qualify for free and reduced lunches. A total of 11 % of students receive special educational services and 1 % of the population are English language learners.

The Kingsford County School District has shown recent signs of population growth, however the increase in numbers are a result of the influx of retirees wanting to

move out of the Atlanta suburbs and into a more low profile rural surrounding. As a result, there is little growth shown in the student population. Despite the fact that 50 % of the students are economically disadvantaged, the county ranks among the top quartile of wealthier per capita counties in the state, ranking a 12 % poverty rate according to census data (United States Census Bureau, 2008). The school district is the largest single employer within the county as the remaining tax base comes primarily from the small cottage industry, sales/service operations, and private residences.

School Profile

Kingsford County Middle School, one of two middle schools in the district had a 2008-2009 enrollment of 482 students. Enrollment numbers for the 2009-2010 school year consist of 512 students. The school is representative of the district demographics as 45 % of the students are economically disadvantaged, 95 % of the students are Caucasian, 1 % are Hispanic, 1 % are African American, and the remaining school population are labeled other at 3 %. The school consists of a 12 % special education population while 15 % of the students are in the gifted program.

Kingsford County Middle School has experienced increasing levels of academic success over the past five years. During the 2002-2003 school year, when the Georgia Department of Education began posting Academic Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) data, only 77 % of the student body met or exceeded standards in reading and language arts and only 65 % of the students met or exceeded standards in math. For the 2008-2009 school year students improved their math and language arts performance by having 92 % of the students meet or exceed in language arts and 90 % meet or exceed in math. Kingsford County Middle school is a Title I school, and has been recognized by the state

as being a Distinguished Title I school having made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for five consecutive years (2002-2007). During the 2007-2008 school year, the Kingsford County Middle School faculty applied for the prestigious Lighthouse School to Watch Award, which recognizes high performing middle schools in the state of Georgia. Kingsford County Middle School became one of fifteen Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch during the 2008-2009 school year.

Classes at the school consist of four academic periods seventy-five minutes in length along with two connections classes (art, band, P.E., music, etc.) per day. A twenty-five minute remediation and enrichment period, known as the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program is embedded into the instructional day. The students are heterogeneously grouped in all content areas and connections classes with the exception of an advanced content class for gifted students which are offered in reading and math. Students are placed on teams at each grade level consisting of two to four teachers who work with the same students throughout the day.

The students at Kingsford County Middle School receive Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) as part of the school wide discipline plan and are able to earn Dragon Scales to purchase items at the school store and win big ticket items such as IPODS and Shopping Sprees. The students also participate in Good Behavior and Attendance Celebrations that take place each quarter where students who demonstrate positive behavior and consistent school attendance are rewarded a fun activity with their classmates. Quarterly academic celebrations take place where students are recognized by the administration for their academic achievements. The middle school offers a variety

of extracurricular activities for students to participate in which includes 4H club, Junior Beta Club, Youth Act, Art Club, Leo Club, Future Farmers of America, and Robotics. Athletic teams at the school include softball, football, cross country, basketball, wrestling, dance team, cheerleading, golf, tennis, soccer, baseball, and track and field.

Participants of the Study

Kingsford County Middle School students in grades six, seven, and eighth were used in the study with the exception of seven severely intellectually disabled students who were unable to participate in interviews and focus group discussions. Assent to participate forms were disseminated to all students at the start of the study. All students with permission to participate were selected for individual interviews, follow-up interviews, and focus group interviews using stratified sampling procedures. Using students from each grade level and various ability levels was critical in obtaining a true representation of the attitudes and perceptions students have towards the CARES program. The personalities and teaching styles of teachers, the students' varying social, emotional, and intellectual levels, and the unique experiences in each of the grades were considered.

Data Collection

When conducting qualitative research, it is imperative that multiple data sources are utilized in order to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Credibility and trustworthiness in a qualitative research study are needed to provide confidence that the researcher's observations, interpretations, and conclusions are believable. Data triangulation is a necessary component of qualitative research because it "increases the likelihood that the phenomenon under study is being understood from various points of

view (Ary et al., p. 505). Consequently, the combined use of individual student interviews (Tier 1), focus groups (Tier 2), and additional follow up interviews (Tier 3) were provided in order to obtain the triangulation of data necessary to ensure that the findings from the various sources support each other. Since the focus of the study was on understanding student perception, it was more appropriate to use interviews and focus groups extensively rather than using additional data sources that are limited in their ability to hear the voice of students. Shenton (2004) stated that, "while focus groups and individual interviews suffer from some common methodological shortcomings since both are interviews of a kind, their distinct characteristics also result in individual strengths" (p. 65). Consequently, the broadness and depth of the three data sources being used increased the credibility of the findings. A description of each data source and the means by which the data will be collected are provided below.

First Tier-Individual Student Interviews

Individual student interviews were utilized in order to capture the essence of what the students are thinking and feeling about the CARES program. An interview is defined by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) as, "a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other" (p. 103). According to Seidman (1998), interviewing:

> provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experiences affects the way they carry out that experience. Interviewing allows

> us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action (p. 4).

Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated that "qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds. Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate" (p. 1). Qualitative interviewing can serve the purpose of being solely used for data collection purposes or they can be used in coordination with participant observation or other modes of document analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study, the primary justification for the individual student interviews was to collect data that hears the voice of middle school students regarding their attitudes and perceptions of the CARES program.

The individual interviews were conducted by a neutral, non-certified staff member throughout the entire study in an effort to ensure that the transferability of the study is strong. Transferability is "the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied or generalized to other contexts or to other groups" (Ary et al., p. 507). Assigning an interviewee who was not the researcher eliminated the potential for research bias to occur. The staff member, the school's In-School-Suspension coordinator, gave a standard structured interview with questions that were geared towards understanding the unique attitudes and perceptions of the students. The staff member met with the researcher prior to the process and was given specific instructions that were standard for all interviews. A set of directions were provided and the interviewee was asked to follow the directions consistently throughout the interview process.

During the student interviews, the interviewee transcribed the responses of the students into a Microsoft Word document. Upon completion of each interview, the staff

member used member checks by showing the recorded interview to the student and asking the student to review the information and confirm that the recorded data accurately reflects what was discussed. According to Ary et al. (2006), member checks ask the question, “Do the people that were studied agree with what you have said about them?” (p. 506). Each student interview was labeled and filed for future analysis. Multiple copies were printed and saved electronically in multiple areas to ensure the security and safety of the gathered data.

Following the initial set of interviews derived from the stratified sample, further interviews continued using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, also termed network sampling, is used when future participants are chosen on the basis of information gathered while the study is taken place. The utilization of snowball sampling methods were appropriate for this study since the researcher used the information gleaned from the initial set of interviews to determine the quantity and selection of additional interviews. Interviews took place until data saturation had occurred. According to Bogden and Biklen (2007), data saturation is defined as, “the point of data collection where the information you get becomes redundant” (p. 69).

Second Tier-Focus Group Interviews

In addition to the individual student interviews, three focus group interviews were conducted, one in each grade level. Cheng (2007) noted that the use of focus group interviews has become one of the most common methods used in collected data in education. A focus group is defined as, “a special group with a specific intention, in a specific composition, and required to complete a certain process” (p. 194). Bogden and Biklen (2007) wrote that for qualitative researchers, “focus groups are group interviews

that are structured to foster talk among the participants about particular issues" (p. 109). Focus group interviews compliment the use of individual student interviews because they stimulate conversation from various points of view and they facilitate more open conversations about a topic that otherwise would not occur if they were given individually. A limitation of focus group interviews however, are that participants may be reluctant to share thoughts with others due to embarrassment or fear of harassment. Consequently, a combination of both individual interviews and focus groups allowed the researcher to pull from the advantages each data source provided.

There is no definitive consensus among researchers as to the number of participants to use in a focus group, but the range usually falls between 5-12 individuals. According to Cheng (2007), there is a relationship between the number of individuals used in a focus group with the amount and quality of the data collected. As a result, eight students were used in each focus group in an effort to provide a forum that offers a wealth of data without compromising the ability of the researcher to hear from all of the participants involved. Stratified sampling methods were used in order to have the focus groups equally represent the diverse group of students at the school.

Another advantage of using focus groups is that they provided structural corroboration to the study. Structural corroboration is defined by Eisner (1998) as a "means through which multiple types of data are related to each other to support or contradict the interpretation of a state of affairs" (p. 110). The structural corroboration used in this research design played an integral part in increasing the credibility of this study. The rich, descriptive details gleaned from both the interviews and focus groups painted a picture for the researcher revealing the attitudes and perceptions that middle

school students have towards the CARES program. Student focus groups were video taped, viewed, transcribed, and later analyzed by the researcher.

Third Tier-Follow-up Interviews

Additional follow-up interviews were conducted once the focus groups interviews and the first set of individual interviews were complete. Specific students were chosen based upon the data collected from the focus group discussions and first tier interviews. This third tier of interviews were a critical aspect of the study as it allowed the researcher the ability to dig deeper into the thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions of the students in regards to the CARES program. Similar to the previous two data sources, these interviews continued until data saturation had occurred.

Data Analysis

Analyzing data from a qualitative research study is clearly one of the most critical steps of the research process (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The process of data analysis in qualitative research involves the attempt to interpret the phenomenon being studied and to grasp an understanding of the relationships between all of the information gleaned from the various sources of data (Ary et al., 2007). Bogden and Biklen (2007) described data analysis as, “working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns” (p. 159).

Constant Comparative Method

Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method is defined by Ary et al. (2006) as, “a method of analyzing qualitative data that combines inductive category coding and simultaneous comparison of such units of meaning” (p. 630). The researcher began by reading each interview and focus group

transcript in its entirety. Once the documents had been carefully reviewed, the researcher began the coding process by taking a preliminary look at the words and phrases that had the potential of being organized into categories. Effectively coding data into categories is a critical step in analyzing data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

After an initial coding of the documents, the code-recode strategy was used to increase the dependability of the findings. The researcher put the initial analysis to the side and began the coding process from scratch. This process of coding then recoding gives the researcher confidence that if the same categories are found twice, the data analyzed is more trustworthy than if this process had not been completed. Qualitative researchers define this type of agreement as intrarater agreement and its implementation increases the dependability of a study.

Provisions of Trustworthiness

Ensuring the trustworthiness of a qualitative research design is fundamental in its applicability and practicability for future research. A qualitative researcher therefore, is obligated to "demonstrate that the methods used are reproducible and consistent, that the approach and procedures used were appropriate for the context and can be documented, and that external evidence can be used to test conclusions" (Ary et al., 2006, p. 509). The information discussed has provided a rationale for the qualitative phenomenological research design, the data sources being used, as well as the process for collecting and analyzing data. The purpose of the following section is to highlight other aspects of the methodology that strengthened the credibility of the study conducted.

Individual and Focus Group Interview Design

Kline (2008) wrote, “The development of appropriate interview questions is crucial to obtaining credible data, especially during interviews” (p. 214). Furthermore, Kline contends that a researcher’s assumptions, biases, and limitations should be clarified in the methodology. Therefore, the design of the interview and focus group questions along with an explanation of the processes involved in creating the questions were critical for this study. Appropriate measures were taken to ensure that the interview questions measured what they were supposed to measure. A set of questions for the student interviews and the focus groups were initially developed by the researcher. Each question was designed to understand what the students are thinking and feeling about the CARES program. The creation of each initial question was justified in writing with a brief rationale as to why the question was important. The interview questions were then presented to the school leadership team for them to review and offer feedback. Once the interview questions were modified based on the leadership team’s suggestions, a pilot study was conducted. Two students in each grade level were interviewed using the designed questions to ensure that the designed interview was a reliable instrument that could be used for the study. The pilot study confirmed that the standard interview design would successfully gather the desired data from the students.

Audit Trail

When conducting qualitative research, variability is expected since it lacks the ability to provide a rigid structure as permitted in quantitative studies (Ary et al., 2006). The researcher must keep a close record of the data in order to provide an explanation as to why variance occurred. Furthermore, an audit trail increases the neutrality of the

study, “or the extent to which the research is free of bias in the procedures and the interpretation of results” (p. 511). An audit trail was used to provide documentation of all data collection methods and records. Individual student interviews, focus group transcripts, and video tape, along with coded data was systematically filed for review. The dates, locations of interviews, and the researcher’s log noting the time line and rationale for data collection was documented. A third party auditor reviewed the audit trail throughout the study and suggestions were made to the researcher as to what additional documentation was needed.

Reflective Journal

In an effort to provide transparency towards any kind of research bias, a reflective journal was utilized. Reflexivity, according to Ary et al. (2006) is defined as, “the use of self-reflection to recognize one’s own biases and to actively seek them out (p. 507). The documentation of reflexivity is an important aspect in the research study in order to take into account the researcher’s limitations. The researcher serves as the assistant principal at the school in which the research is being conducted. Therefore, the content included in the reflective journal considered the following recommendations made by Krefting (1991):

1) A daily schedule with logistics of the study
2) A methods log where decisions and rationale are discussed
3) Reflections of researcher’s thoughts, feeling, ideas, and frustrations (p. 218)

Peer Review Feedback

The check of findings resulting from the data collection and analysis needed to be reviewed by others to provide credibility to the research findings. This process is widely

known in qualitative research as peer review, or peer debriefing (Ary et al., 2006). According to Shenton (2004), meetings with others in regards to the research, "provide a sounding board for the investigator to test his or her developing ideas interpretations, and probing from others may help the researcher to recognize his or her own biases and preferences" (p. 67). Peer review feedback was used throughout the research process and adjustments were made following the recommendations by other school leaders.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program at Kingsford County Middle School. The participants in this study included sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students at the school. Using individual student interviews, student focus groups, and follow-up interviews, data was collected, coded, and categorized using the constant comparative method. Issues of trustworthiness and research bias were discussed, along with a description of the data sources and methods that were used. In addition, an explanation and justification for the research design was described.

The following section, Chapter IV: Data Analysis will show the student responses from the 27 standard interview questions used throughout the study. The data has been organized into categories identified from the researcher's analysis of the data using all three data sources (individual student interviews, focus groups, follow-up interviews) discussed in this chapter. The data reveal the various attitudes and perceptions students have toward the various components of the CARES program.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Overview

The purpose of this study was to understand the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program at Kingsford County Middle School. Using individual student interviews, focus group sessions in each grade (6-8), and follow-up interviews, data was analyzed and coded using the constant comparative method. Data was then organized into categories and themes that captured the general consistencies students expressed throughout the study. Since the purpose of the study was to capture the general attitudes and perceptions representative of the entire student population, a three tiered approached was used. This approach allowed the researcher to provide data from three separate data sources in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings.

This chapter begins by presenting an overview of the participants used in the study. Next, a detailed analysis of the data using the 27 standard interview questions (see appendix C) used in the study is discussed. The data collected through individual student interviews (Tier 1), Focus Groups (Tier 2), and Follow-up Interviews (Tier 3) have been organized into categories that depict the attitudes and perceptions of the students towards the various components of the CARES program.

Participants

Consent to participate forms were distributed to all students at Kingsford County Middle School as 35% (173 out of 500 students) of the student population agreed to participate in the study. Using stratified sampling methods, the students were separated

by grade level and academic eligibility (special education, general education, gifted education). Individual student interviews (Tier 1) were selected by randomly selecting students from each of the stratified samples in each grade level. Participants for the focus groups (Tier 2) were chosen by selecting two students from special education, two students from gifted education, and four students from the general education samples in each grade. On the scheduled day of the focus group interviews, some of the previously selected students were absent from school. As a result, convenience sampling was used as additional students were selected in a way that best matched the predesigned stratified sample.

Network sampling, also known as snowball sampling, was used to conduct follow-up interviews (Tier 3). The researcher selected students for Tier 3 interviews based upon the initial responses from their focus group session or from the initial individual student interview. An explanation describing the rationale behind each Tier 3 interview was recorded by the researcher (See Appendix E). Of the 173 student volunteers, 86 of the students were selected for interviews or participation in one of the focus group sessions. Interviews were conducted until data saturation had occurred.

Table 1 presents a general breakdown of the selected student participants in the study. Table 2 displays the students participating in the individual student interviews (Tier 1). Table 3 reveals the students participating in the three focus group sessions, and Table 4 reveals the background of students that received follow-up interviews (Tier 3). The follow-up interviews (Tier 3) involved a combination of 18 Tier 1 and Tier 2 interviews. Of the 18 students, nine students were interviewed after their focus group session and nine had follow-up interviews. A prompt (see appendix D) was read to them

by the interviewee encouraging them to elaborate more on the questions they initially answered.

Table 1

CARES Research Study: Total Participants

Grade Level	**Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Special Education**	**General Education**	**Gifted Education**
Sixth Grade	29	17	12	3	18	8
Seventh Grade	28	10	18	0	18	10
Eighth Grade	29	16	13	5	16	8
Sixth-Eight Total	86	43	43	8	52	28

Table 2

CARES Research Study Participants: Individual Student Interviews

Grade Level	**Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Special Education**	**General Education**	**Gifted Education**
Sixth Grade	21	11	10	2	13	6
Seventh Grade	20	7	13	0	13	7

Eighth Grade	21	12	9	4	11	6
Sixth-Eight Total	62	30	32	6	37	19

Table 3

CARES Research Study Participants: Focus Group Interviews

Grade Level	**Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Special Education**	**General Education**	**Gifted Education**
Sixth Grade	8	6	2	1	5	2
Seventh Grade	8	3	5	1	4	3
Eighth Grade	8	4	4	1	5	2
Sixth-Eight Total	24	13	11	3	14	7

Table 4

CARES Research Study Participants: Follow-Up Interviews

Grade Level	**Students**	**Male**	**Female**	**Special Education**	**General Education**	**Gifted Education**
Sixth Grade	6	3	3	1	3	2

Seventh Grade	6	4	2	1	3	2
Eighth Grade	6	4	2	0	2	4
Sixth-Eight Total	18	11	7	2	8	8

Question Data Analysis

For each of the three data sources, a standard interview was used by the interviewee. Initial prompts were also used consistently throughout the study. The standard interview was piloted prior to the study to ensure that the interview questions were valid. The interview was created by the researcher then given to the Kingsford County Middle School Leadership Team for feedback. Adjustments were made and the final standard interview was utilized during the pilot study. The interview was divided into three parts: (1) warm-up questions (1-4), (2) research Questions (5-24), and (3) closing questions (25-27). Establishing a positive rapport with the student, ensuring that the information shared is confidential, and clarifying the purpose of the interview are critical steps used in the process of interviewing (Farber, 2006). The initial prompt followed by the warm-up questions allowed for a smooth transition into the rest of the questions.

The research questions (5-24) were also divided into sections which included the various components found within the CARES program. These sections included Character Education, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit. The three

closing questions were designed to encourage students to share any additional information about the unique attitudes and perceptions they may have about the program.

The remainder of Chapter IV: Analysis of Data involves a detailed analysis of the responses gathered throughout the project. The level of repetition found in the student responses as well as the various tiers in which the data was found brings validity to the data provided. The purpose of the study was to identify general attitudes and perceptions of the middle school students, therefore the responses noted reveal the consistent responses of all the students that participated in the study. Further analyses along with the identification of common themes coming from all 27 questions are discussed in Chapter V.

In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, student names have been removed. The grade level, gender, and educational service (special education, general education, and gifted education) are provided. In addition, the data source in which the responses came from is also labeled (Tier 1/T1, Tier 2/T2, Tier 3/T3) to justify how the various data sources bring validation to the results. While not all of the findings show consistencies in all three tiers, the quantity of the responses add to the trustworthiness of the identified attitudes and perceptions.

Warm-up (Questions 1-4)

Questions one and two of the standard interview asked for the students' names and age, as well as to define what "caring" means to them. Question three asked the students if they knew what each letter in the acronym "CARES" means. Since these questions were warm-up questions and the responses were not intended to elicit data pertinent to the study, the questions will not be analyzed in this Chapter. Question four

of the warm-up question will begin the question data analysis revealing the attitudes and perceptions of the students towards the CARES program.

Question Four

Suppose a new student at Kingsford County Middle School approached you and asked you what the CARES program is all about. How would you describe it to the student?

The student responses found in question four revealed that students perceived the CARES program as a place where character formation occurred. Teachers were perceived as advisors or counselors who helped the students problem solve and work through the day-to-day struggles of being in middle school. Furthermore, the students indicated that the CARES program was an opportunity for them to develop stronger relationships with their friends and their teachers with a strong emphasis being placed on respectful and caring behavior towards others. Question four responses also revealed that the students viewed the CARES program as an environment where they could complete missed assignments, retake tests, and receive extra academic support from their teachers. For the most part, the students reflected a positive attitude about CARES as they described what the CARES program is all about. The student responses supporting these conclusions are provided below.

Character Formation

Andy.6.gen: I would say that we talk about different things about how you should steer your life in the right direction (T1)

Beth.6.gen: It's when on Mondays we watch videos with different characters. They represent a thought and we talk about it in the classroom. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: We talk about ways of honesty and ways to help people. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I would tell them that the CARES program was to basically help you with being honest and caring about someone. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Well, I guess I would describe it as character education and learning to get along with others. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I guess I would say it's for activities that you can do to figure out how to become a better person. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: It's a time on Mondays that you learn about being courteous and nice and helpful. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: It is something that was created to try and help students be more academically successful and to make them a better person. (T1)

Courtney.8.sped: It teaches us self-control. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: You usually talk about honesty and respect and things that they want you to do and how to act in school. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: I would describe it as a time to go over manners and respect, things like that. (T1)

George.8.sped: To help you with behavior and to teach you life lessons. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: You just stay in homeroom for 20 minutes and listen to someone talk about being respectful.

Mark.6.gif: It is a group of kids and our teacher teaches about just character traits like honesty and being nice and things like that. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: Like on Mondays they do character education things for people who have problems with their character I guess. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I think that it is because when you are in their learning about character education and problems that you may have with bullying or school or life in general then you are able to speak up about it. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: We learn about honesty too. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I would say it is the program that we do on Mondays and we talk about character education, bullying, and what you can do to prevent it and little talks like that. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I would say something along the lines that we sit in a room and on Mondays we talk about being a good person. (T3)

Teachers as Advisors

Andy.6.gen: I would say that we talk about different things about how to steer your life in the right direction. People will share their experiences and tell the consequences they had. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I would say that is where we get together and talk about things, like bullying and stuff like that. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: I would probably say you are in homeroom and you talk about problems you have. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: You get to spend time in your homeroom and talk to your teacher about problems that you may have. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I would tell them that it is our homeroom where we go in the morning and we talk to our teacher about anything and discuss what we did in the past or just talk to our teacher. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I would tell them that the CARES program is talking about what not to do and what right things to do. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: We learn about different types of bullying and what to do if you see them. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: It is learning something different or new that is supposed to help you in your life after you get out of school. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I think I would probably say, it's like homeroom where you sit and talk about goals you set and problems you might have. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I would describe it as a program to try to like help kids out with things that we have to go through like peer-pressure that may involve drugs and alcohol. It is a way that kids can express their feelings and feel comfortable with it. (T1)

Hannah.7.gif: When you are learning about character education and problems that you may have with bullying or school or life in general then you are able to speak up about it. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I would more so say it is like an advisory thing where you go there and hang out and talk about stuff and important issues. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I would tell them it is a place where if you have any problems, you can tell them and you know you can trust your CARES teacher and you wouldn't have to worry about it. (T3)

Richard.6.sped: I would say that the CARES group is where you go to your homeroom and talk about what you do in class or outside of school. (T3)

Lloyd.7.gen: I would tell him or her that that it is like a program where you stay in a class like your homeroom. If you have any problems, you can talk to your teacher. On Monday, we watch a video that discusses everyday problems like bullying. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I would tell them that on Mondays, it is basically a way they get you to open up and tell your problems. The teacher helps you deal with it. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: It is a time in the morning set aside for you to talk about any problems you may have. (T3)

Relationship Building and Caring for Others

John.6.gen: They talk to you about how the school year is going and if you are making any friends or not. (T1)

Joseph.6.gen: Well, it is about homeroom and your teacher telling you stuff that is going on today and talking about what is going to happen next week…making sure you are alright. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I would tell them that it is our homeroom where we go in the morning and we talk to our teacher about anything and discuss what we did in the past or just talk to the teacher. (T1)

Peyton.6.gen: You go to your homeroom and you have fun talking to your teacher. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: The teacher takes attendance and you talk to your friends. (T1)

Ray.6.gen: To care about other people to make sure that you are all ready for school. (T1)

Christine.7.gif: I would tell them that it is a time to sit with people and learn about caring and bullying. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I would tell them that the CARES program was to basically help you with being honest and caring about someone. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: Maybe helping one another or each other. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Learning to get along with others. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: You learn about different kinds of things and talk to our friends about friendships and things like that. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: I would tell them it is about being friendly and taking up for people. (T1)

Courtney.8.sped: I would tell them that it is showing us how to act and treat other people. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: It is basically just a place in the mornings to meet people while bonding with your teacher. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: The CARES program is about where you get to learn about how you are supposed to act to other students and how you are supposed to be towards them. (T1)

Carla.7.gif: I would say it is kind of like a homeroom which what it is and that it is based on gender and that the reason that you are in there is so that you can get to know people better. (T2)

Richard.6.sped: I would say that the CARES group is where you go to your homeroom and talk about what you do in class or outside of the school. You just talk. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I would tell them on Mondays, it is basically a way they get you to open up and tell your problems. The teacher helps you deal with it. You work on projects about bullies and friendships and stuff like that. (T3)

Academic Support

Gary.6.gif: It is kind of like homeroom class. Sometimes you catch up on your work. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: It is just different activities that we do in the morning to get work assignments done. (T1)

Richard.6.sped: I would describe it as the first thing is homeroom and then you go to remediation if you have to. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: It is like a homeroom thing. We go to clubs and remediation and some things if you need some work completed. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I would tell them it is about when you participate in science and maybe read a book. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would tell them that it is the first thing you come into in the morning. You have time to read and do extra things that you need to do. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would say that it is extra time in the morning for you to catch up with academics and one day of the week you can have free time or you can choose to stay back and work on academics like the other days. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: It is a chance to make up your work. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would tell them that it is something that is part of your homeroom. It is CARES. After you go to CARES, you can go to remediation or enrichment. You try to catch up on any work that you haven't done. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Well, it is the program that we do every week to help us keep up with our work and get it done. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: I would describe it as time to make-up or get help on work. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: It is something that was created to try and help the students be more academically successful. (T1)

Macy.7.gif: It always gives you a chance to catch up on your homework when we go to the different classes. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: Like, I would say they help you in your classes and yeah. It helps you study and helps you pass your classes. (T2)

Destin.8.gif: We sit there and talk or do work you owe or do homework or something. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: On Tuesdays, we go to remediation and it is a place where you can catch up on your work. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: On some days we do homeroom and other days we go to first, second, third, or fourth block and some days we have enrichment. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: It is just more work and it is really boring. All you do is work. (T3)

C-Character Education (Questions 5-10)

The next set of questions from the standardized interview explored the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the character education part of the CARES program. Character education is taught on Monday mornings each week. Each grade level plans activities that include various topics such as bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and study skills. At times, the students watch Hollywood movie clips which are followed by questions that encourage students to share their stories and provide

input. The student responses found in questions five through ten shed light on how the students perceive this component of the CARES program.

Question Five

Monday morning CARES time is set aside for character education. What do you like/dislike about the character education time?

Question five asks the students specifically to share what they like and dislike about the character education component of the CARES program. As a result, the student responses have been separated into two categories: (1) what the students like about character education, and (2) what the students dislike about character education.

What the Students Like About Character Education

In many cases, the students expressed positive attitudes and perceptions about the character education time set aside on Monday mornings. Many of the students reported that they liked having the opportunity to express their feelings with each other and to the teacher. These students felt as if their classmates and teacher listened and valued their own personal feelings and opinions on various topics. In addition, several of the students claimed that the character education class gave them time to socialize with their peers. Students were happy to see that bullying prevention was being addressed as well as lessons on treating others with respect. Many felt empowered by the level of support they received from their CARES teacher. The character education instruction was an enjoyable part of the CARES program and was practical for middle school students. The student responses from question four supporting these findings are found below.

Listening Support

Christine.6.gen: I like it. You get to tell your teacher what you have done or what someone else has done. Your teacher is supportive of it. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I like the part where we get to talk about our feelings about school. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I like how we talk about different things. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I like how we have the open discussion and then how we each get to tell about what happens sometimes. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I like it because I have friends in there and we talk about things. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I like it because you get to talk about real world stuff and you do not have to worry about what your opinion is. We just discuss it. (T1)

Courtney.8.sped: I like that our teachers let us talk about our problems and lets us know how to handle them. (T1)

Candance.8.gen: I like that we get to communicate about different things and topics. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: We get to watch a little clip or video and we get to discuss what happens on the video with your teacher and classmates. You also have time to tell people if that happened to you or not. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I really enjoy the skits you see on TV and how we discuss them in class. I have a really good CARES teacher and we get really deep about it. It makes you think. (T1)

Abby.6.gen: I like that you get to like tell your feelings when you are thinking about honesty. (T2)

William.6.gen: You can tell your opinion. That is what I like about it. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: I like it because everybody kind of opens up and talks. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I like it because if you have a problem in school, you get to tell your CARES teacher about it. (T3)

William.6.gen: I like it because you get to tell your opinions. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I like it because everyone just opens up and can talk to everybody about it. Otherwise, they would not be able to say anything and they would keep it closed inside. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I like that time because the CARES group talks about different topics. (T3)

Peer Socialization

Brett.6.gen: I like that we have it with our homeroom because I like to talk to our friends. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: I like it because we get sometime to read our books or talk to our friends that are normally not in our classes. (T1)

Bo.6.gen: I like being awake in the morning and talking to friends to relax. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I do not dislike anything about it. I like getting a chance to talk with my friends before we begin the day. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I like that I am with some of my friends. We get to talk if we are allowed. I have no dislikes. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: I like being able to spend more time with some of my friends during CARES group. I like being with my teachers and friends. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I like it because I have friends in there and we talk about things. Homeroom should be a time to chill out and talk with your friends. (T1)

Ann.8.gen: I like it because you get to talk and be with friends. All we do is talk and be with friends. (T1)

Abigail.8.gif: Well, it is nice because you can talk with your friends. (T3)

Character Formation

Amanda.6.gen: Sometimes we get to watch video clips on character education. I like the videos and that we set aside time for that and learning how to treat others. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I like how we watch videos and then we talk about them afterwards. There is not anything I do not like. It is really fun. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: I like how it is put into video form and you watch it and tell us about it. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I like that sometimes it tells you what you should do in a situation where someone is being mean to you or something like that. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I like that it is teaching kids not to be bullies and be nice and if you see someone being bullied, you should tell and let someone know. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I like it just because it teaches us things like not to bully and be friends with them. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I like the fact that we can help to stop bullying. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: Sometimes we get to work in groups and I like that. Sometimes we make posters about bullying and things like that. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: We learn new stuff and Ms. Jones tells us stuff about bullying. I like it. It is a really good program. (T1)

Christine.7.gif: I like that we learn how to stop bullying and also the difference in respect and what disrespect is. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I like it because it teaches about how to be a good friend. (T1)

Leah.7.gen: We watch the videos and I like it because it explains to us what is good and what is bad. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: Well, I like it better when we watch the clips and see the things that happen. You can actually see the examples of what is going on in the school program. (T1)

Penny.7.gif: I like how they tell you what you should not do. They teach you what is bad about drugs. I like how they actually talk to us about what is wrong. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I like that they try to teach you to be a good student and community leader. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I like it because if a kid does not know about character stuff, he can learn about what he is supposed to do. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I like it because we get to learn how to act. I remember July 4th. We talked about our nation and the army and how that played out. I think it helps you remember your countries losses. It helps you be a better person. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: We get to watch a little clip or video and we get to discuss what happens on the video with your teacher and classmates. You also have time to tell people if it happened to you or not. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I like how it is supposed to help you later in life. It teaches you about things that may happen later on in life and what to do about it. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: What I like about it is that it teaches lessons to us, like the different lessons on honesty and stuff. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: I like how I get out of some of 1st period and learn about generosity and things like that. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I really enjoy the skits you see on TV and how we discuss them in class. (T1)

George.8.gen: I like how we learn new stuff about people and how to act better. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I like that it helps students out with talking about things that most schools do not go into that much detail with. (T1)

Ron.6.gen: I like it because you can watch the video about it. (T2)

Albert.7.gen: I like watching the TV shows. (T2)

Lloyd.7.gen: I like the videos they play. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: Well, I like how they sometimes play those movie clips. I like those. (T2)

Richard.6.sped: Last year, we talked about drugs, like amphetamines and stuff like that. I like that we talk about things like that. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I like some of the movies that they play. That is basically all we do is watch the movie. There is not anything I do not like about character education. (T3)

What the Students Dislike about Character Education

Although the responses previously stated expressed positive perceptions and attitudes towards the character education time, there were several students who responded negatively. Students expressed a disinterest in the character education instruction and felt that, in many ways, the program was childish and impractical for middle grades students. Some of the students perceived the teachers as being disorganized and as teaching character education out of obligation rather than sincerity. Others stated that they would prefer doing something else such as reading a book or completing their homework. The data provided below are from students who responded negatively towards the character education portion of the CARES program.

Tabitha.6.gif: I dislike that we do not really do much. We just sit there until the next class. (T1)

Richard.6.sped: I dislike people getting up and yelling and talking out loud while Ms. Smith is talking. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I dislike it because it takes away from time to read and work that needs to get done out of the workbook. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I do not like it just because we have to do the video thing and bully exercises. It seems like my time to read and get caught up. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I do not like it because I do not see any purpose to it, to sum it up. Yes, they teach good things like bullying or friendship, but I do not see any purpose in it. I just do not. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: My dislikes are that the video is sometimes not sensible. (T1)

Ann.8.gen: I think it is kind of pointless in a way. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: It is sort of like sitting in there listening to something that you have already heard, probably from your parents. If you have not heard it, it is great. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: My dislikes are that sometimes I would rather read. It is nothing big. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I dislike when sometimes my friends and I get on the computer and we have to automatically get off on Monday mornings. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: The talks are a waste of time. It kind of just goes in one ear and out the other for most of us. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: Sometimes it can be boring. That is what I dislike about it. Each week we talk about the same thing. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: What I do not like, I think when we are learning about honesty and stuff, I think it is a little below our grade, the way it is presented to us. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I do not like it because, about teamwork, it is like what Mark said. It is kind of below our grade. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: Well, half the time we really do not even get to see it because it just comes on at the randomness of times and that happens with DNN (Dragon News Network) time. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I think we should be more aware of it even though we know that every Monday it comes on. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: Yeah, we need like a scheduled time that it is going to be on. (T2)

Joey.7.gen: Some of the teachers' overheads do not work. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: Yeah, some teachers do not, not my teacher, she does it every Monday but some other teachers they do not bother to just turn it on. They just let their class sit there and do not even talk about it. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Cause my teacher makes me be quiet. No, I am being for real. She will not let you look, talk, or say nothing. When she is sitting there trying to read that paper, cause he is in my homeroom too! Like, well, she makes us mad because she will not let us do nothing. We will just have to look at her. She will not let you talk. She will say, "My turn to talk!" (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: No, well she like stops you from doing what you are going to talk about. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I think that people already know not to bully other people. I mean, we are eighth graders for one. I just think we would have more respect for each other. But the discussions what we have kind of assimilates to other things as well. Sometimes that can be ok but sometimes it just gets, I feel like it is over irrelevant I guess. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: Our teacher does not really give a rip about how it gets done. Because she does not really get why we are doing it. So she is just doing what the principal tells her to do. We will kind of talk for a few minutes and then she will say, "I really do not get this" and then she will let us talk for the rest of the period. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: I mean, like Holly said, I do not think. I think we are mature enough to know what not to do and what to do but we really do not care so we do it anyways and even a teacher telling us not… (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: We usually just sit and talk to our friends. I like talking to my friends, but doing the same thing over and over every week is really boring. We have had discussions but then we talk to our friends. It is like the same routine every week. (T3)

Gwen.6.gif: Sometimes I cannot really relate to the situation that is going on in the movie clips that we watch. It is not something that has ever happened to me. (T3)

William.6.gen: The only reason why I do not like is because of the videos. They are a waste of time. You just need to talk about it. That is really all you need to do. You really do not understand the videos. They talk really fast. (T3)

Thomas.7.gif: I do not see a purpose for Monday mornings and I have never used the things we talk about in any way. Middle schoolers would not use it and I do not think I ever will see them use it. (T3)

Lloyd.7.gen: In Mrs. Guide's room, sometimes we watch videos that talk about people's problems, but the video does not work. Since it does not work, all we do is talk. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: We do not really do anything in there. (T3)

Steven.7.gen: All we do is sit there. I think it is boring. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I do not like it because we do not have a lot of time. Someone may be in the middle of a major breakthrough and the bell stops them from getting it all the way out. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: We only have about twenty minutes in there and you really can't get much accomplished. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I do not like it because my homeroom teacher does not understand the whole concept of the CARES program itself. I do not think that the principal explained it to her like she would have liked it to be explained to her. She does not get why we do it, especially in the eighth grade. Most in eighth grade already know about it or do not care. They either follow it or they do not care. They already know about the different topics discussed. (T3)

Phil.8.gif: A lot of time, people do not pay attention to the teacher and zone out. Other times, they will listen but they do not care and will not follow through on what they say they are going to do. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: Usually, parents teach you how to be a good person and about honesty and good character. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: There are not that many people that pay attention. Some things you already learn from your parents. Some are common sense. It is not very effective. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I do not like it that much because I would rather be studying or doing homework or reading. (T3)

Question Six

What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she really cares about teaching you good character?

The student responses from Question six demonstrate the students' satisfaction over having opportunities to share their feelings with their classmates and teachers. The listening support received during the CARES program was viewed positively by the students. Several of the students enjoyed being able to tell of their own personal stories

and liked when the teachers told their own stories about their own experiences in school and in life.

Several of the students revealed that their CARES teacher cares for them because they offer advice and teach them about what it means to have good character. They also explained that teachers are caring because they find ways to connect with them at their own level. The students noticed when the teachers were sincere and genuine in offering advice and teaching them good character. Many of them perceived their teachers as caring by the time and effort spent through follow up discussions and activities during CARES class.

Some of the students answered question six by expressing their perception that some of their CARES teachers were disinterested in teaching them character education. These students expressed that the teachers implemented character education out of obligation rather than sincerity. Their perceptions were that the teachers were not prepared to teach character education and that even though character education instruction took place, the teachers were not enthusiastic and genuine in their instruction. The student responses revealing these conclusions are provided below.

Listening Support

Christine.6.gen: She talks about it and talks about things that she has done. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: She listens and tells you what you should do about that situation. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: She asks us questions and lets each of us tell what relates to it. (T1)

Melanie.6.gen: When we do the CARES program, she asks us questions and our opinion about things. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: She also tells her story sometimes about things. She explains in greater depth about what it means. She also tells her story sometimes about things that have happened in the past. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: She cares because she tells her personal experiences to us. She really lets us talk a lot about answering the questions. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: We talk about stuff, like if someone was bullying you. We can get it off our backs. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: She lets us express our feelings about how we feel about others and we can actually sit down and tell her if we are getting bullied or picked on. She really understands us. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: She asks us questions and she listens to our response. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: She explains to us what it means and lets us talk about our opinions. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: When we are in CARES time, she will write what we say on the board. She talks to us about it and gives her life examples. (T1)

Candace.8.gen: She tells us stories about what she has been through on the topic of the day. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: She tries to get everybody involved. You can tell she likes it. She writes everything down on the board. She has great emotion about it. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: She gives us examples about what has happened to her children. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: Well, she asks us to write down a lot and she does not tell anybody. She gives us real life examples. (T1)

Nadia.6.gen: Well, my teacher asks us questions about it like if we watch the videos she asks us questions which shows she cares about us. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: Well, my teacher, she will tell about stories that happened in her life and she will open up about problems that she had that we are facing today and she just shares with us a lot. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: Like when we state our problems she really, you know helps us to resolve it I guess. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: She always tells us that if we need anything to come talk to her and not be afraid. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: My CARES teacher is more open. If there is anything you want to talk about she is here but she understands that you do not have to talk if you do not feel like talking. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I think she cares. If you have something you really want to say but not in front of anyone, she will take you somewhere where she will only know about it. She encourages you to express your feelings about school. (T3)

Lloyd.7.gen: She cares about our character because she talks about our problems and anything that bothers us. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: She really tells us her point of view on it and a story that relates. (T3)

Teachers as Advisors

Brett.6.gen: She talks with us and she tells funny jokes to us. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: She brings us things like a snack. She shows that she really does like teaching us. She lets us listen to music sometimes. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: She sometimes makes these little slips where we pick a partner and we have to read it and try to act out that scene. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: She tells us that it is not right to lie. If you lie, there are consequences. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: She does show us videos and after we watch them, she talks about what the video was about, like honesty or whatever she talks about with us. (T1)

John.6.gen: She will make us be quiet and take the time to talk to us. She does not hurry through just to get done quickly. (T1)

Richard.6.sped: She explains things to me very good and she mostly explains it and talks to me about it. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: She tells you what you should do about that situation. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: She keeps telling us to concentrate and is very strict about getting us to answer the questions. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: She makes us put our things away and watch and pay attention to the videos. She talks to us about it after we watch it. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: She always has us watch the movies that show character. She tries to make sure that everyone is being nice so they will not be mean to each other all the time. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: Mrs. James pulls up the information on the computer and pulls up a website and we talk about bullying and how it is a major issue. She makes sure that we are not doing that. I can definitely tell that she cares. She does not act like she does not care. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: She does, because of the way we do our activities. It teaches us how to stay away from things like drugs and alcohol. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: When we watch the videos and things, she explains in greater depth about what it means. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: She tries to give real life situations and what she sees happening some days and how to fix it and try to help others fix it. (T1)

Christine.7.gif: She always makes sure we are paying attention so we know what to do. She helps us make posters and do activities so we know what we are talking about. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: She usually goes a little more in-depth about what we have watched or talked about that Monday. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: She explains to us what it means. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: We did a bullying poster and she seemed interested in it to help us get it done. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: Mrs. Nutting is really cool and explains it at a level like she is just talking to her friends and explaining it. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: My teacher shows that she cares by doing activities with us and if we do not understand it, she explains it. Kind of like class, but with character education. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: She really cares because she talks about it every morning and she talks about how she would like to help people out and she says she will always help us if we need it. (T1)

Courtney.8.sped: She shows us how to handle things in a good way and not to be mean and how to work out problems without using violence. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: Mrs. Williams cares about each and every one of us that is in the school. She wants us to do our best and pass to the next grade. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: She makes us watch the movie and makes sure we talk about it afterwards. Sometimes we make jokes or different stories about the lessons learned. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: She spends a lot of time with us talking about it in class. It is not like we just watch the video and then turn it off. She actually discusses what we just watched for the whole class time. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: She lets us take notes on the video or article that was just read. We discuss over the notes and we ask questions. She asks if we understand. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: She puts up with my behavior in class. She knows what it is like to be a kid, so she is just really nice. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: She shows us different activities about what we are supposed to do and she pulls one of us from the seat and acts out to the student, like in bullying. If you slap a book out of a student's hand, you will not have any respect. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: She wants us to succeed and she cares whether we do our homework and sometimes helps us out. She cares. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: When she asks us what we would do in some situation, she gives an answer as to what would be best to do. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: She keeps it so that we feel comfortable talking about it. (T1)

Libby.7.gen: Like when we state our problems, she really you know helps us to resolve it. (T2)

Macy.7.gif: Our teacher she makes a list on the board about the good things and the bad things like being nice is a good thing and bullying is a bad thing and we talk about the different stuff. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: Like with the stuff writing on the board sometimes there will be a topic like one time it was friendship and the good things and the bad things and they are talking about fake friends and friends that really care about you. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: She will talk to us about the videos after we are finished. (T3)

Gwen.6.gif: She will tell us what we should and should not do during school. If someone has gotten in trouble, she will not talk about that in class. She will not tell us who it was, but she will tell us what happened and what we should do in that situation. (T3)

Steven.7.gen: I think she does because she tells us about bullying and things like that. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: She always tells us that she is there for us. We are like her children. (T3)

Teacher Disinterest

Amanda.6.gen: Sometimes the teachers will just leave the monitor off. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: Well, it is right in between with my CARES teacher. Yes, she puts out the effort because it is mandatory because of the school. But it looks like she just has to do it, just because it is mandatory that she does it, not that she really wants to. (T1)

Jordan.8.sped: Like mine and Leo's teacher, she is retiring this year and she really

does not do nothing more like last year and she really does not teach you basically nothing else. We just basically sit there until the bell rings. She just makes us shut up. (T2)

William.6.gen: He does not show any likeness about it. He just turns on the video that we watch and walks away. He probably does not even want to watch it. (T3)

Thomas.7.gif: My CARES teacher will hand out the assignment and not say anything else about it, unless she is just giving directions. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: Well, we do not really do anything and she does not really do anything but stay on her computer. She has only gone over one or two of the character movies that we watch. Some students will say something bad, and she will get on to them and she will ask why he did that. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: Most of the time when we are in there, she will talk to us for a few minutes. The rest of the time, she lets us talk. I think she does not really care. We do not go into detail. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: She used to have us talk and say one good thing that we did over the weekend. Something that was nice or respectful. But now she really does not do that much anymore. (T3)

Question Seven

Character education time gives you the opportunity to discuss issues with your classmates and teacher. Do you think these discussions help you deal with middle school problems? Why or why not?

Many of the students responded to question seven by commenting on how much they appreciated the practical advice they received from their CARES teachers. They also revealed that in many ways, the discussions related to everyday problems in middle school. On the contrary, some of the students perceived character education as impractical and boring, reporting high levels of disinterest and alienation from the character education instruction being taught. Consistent with questions five and six, students perceived character education class as an opportunity to voice their opinions and express their feelings to their classmates and teachers affirming listening support as a

common theme found in the student responses regarding character education. The student responses using all three data sources are provided below.

Practical for Middle School Students

Sarah.6.gif: Yes, because most of them deal with your peers and stuff around you that you have deal with. (T1)

Richard.6.sped: Yes, it does help me by giving me ideas about the school. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: Yes, they do help a little bit. I have been in a lot of trouble over fighting. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: Yes, because it helps with problems in school. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: Yes, because it teaches you to be responsible and not tell lies about things. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: Yes I do because some kids in our class do or do not have bullies. They can talk openly and be hones and not be shy about it if they are having those problems. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: Yes I do because if a situation like that ever came up, we would know what to do. (T1)

John.6.gen: Yes, because some of them can actually help you. Some people may not like you and you can get picked on. We are taught not to get back at them. The teacher will help you learn how to sort out the issues with the one who is picking on you. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I think they do. We talk about things like name-calling. I have actually cut back on the name-calling. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: Yes, I think so. I have had a few problems with people before. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: I think it does, because you can get examples or advice on how to deal with things such as bullying. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I think yes, because my teacher teaches us how to deal with bullies and how to deal with pressure and I think that everybody should know if you have a great amount of pressure on you, you may fall mainly into the bully's trap. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: Well, I think they do. If you ever get in a fight with a friend, you remember that you can talk it out with them and be friends again. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: In some situations, yes. There are similar activities that do take place in the middle school but not all do. I have seen a few people be teased about having an overbite, or being skinny, or being too big. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: Yes I do, because the one where we had bullying helped to stop it more. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I think so. As far as bullying, it helps teach you how to handle those things better when you are around those situations. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: Yes, because it gives you an idea of what to do if it happens to you. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: Yes it does. By learning not to bully and to have the courage to stand up for yourself. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: Yes they do because say like bullying, people will say that their friend is being bullied. It keeps you up on what is going on. (T1)

Courtney.8.sped: Yes, because it shows us how to handle certain situations. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: Yes, because I remember last year we talked about bullying and this year too. It helps you know what to do and how to act in certain situations. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: They do because some things we discuss actually happen to some people. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: Yes sometimes, if they are talking about bullying, how you are to tell adults and out the pink slips. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I do. I think that if I am ever having a problem and need help, I will remember the video and how the character in the video solved the problem. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: Yes, they help me because if something goes wrong and we have discussed the topic, we can take what we have learned from CARES time, and put it into that situation. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: Yes it does because it helps me get over some problems I have with work and other students. And it shows me how to act towards them so I do not do the wrong thing to upset a student or my teacher. (T1)

George.8.gen: Yes because it teaches you how to handle problems a lot better and how you should behave. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I do think it helps because it does not help me. A lot of other girls too. (T1)

Hannah.7.gif: I think they do because I have had students in the past go up to teachers and say, “I have a problem with bullying. Can you help me out?” and we do not discuss

their problem as a class but we discuss bullying in general and how it is affecting others. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: I think they do, because they really tell us how we should deal with it and people get a better perspective of the problem. (T2)

Impractical for Middle School Students

Andy.6.gen: Some people will try and be funny. They do not take it seriously. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: No, because I do not really discuss my problems. It really does not help me that much. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: Yes and no. Because some of them like bullying; we did one on that. We do not really need it. We might need it but for most people in middle school, it is not that bad. I have never been bullied and I do not see kids being bullied. I would not do it if I were the principal or the assistant principal. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I do not really think they help anyone. No one would be bold enough to say anything. When a kid does say something, it could help. Most students do not want to talk about it. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: They could, but some people already know what and how to deal with these types of situations. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: Sometimes they do, but other times I just do not see any point in it. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: Not really. Most of the time, they are just awkward. It does not really help us. No one is really going to come out and talk about that to a teacher, not that I know of. We will talk, but we will not actually talk about middle school problems. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: No, well it is kind of hard to describe what I am trying to say. It does not really, like they do not give us examples of things that really happen in middle school. They are just like this might happen somewhere sometime maybe. (T2)

Jerry.6.gif: They never help me because none of those things happen to me. (T2)

Craig.6.gif: Well, to me no because they do not seem like middle school problems. They feel more like elementary school problems. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: No because if that ever really happens to somebody they probably will forget it and not do it anyway. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: On that one video, on the honesty one, I do not really think it applies to middle schoolers because the kid wished his Dad would not lie anymore. And I do not get that. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: I think yes and no because the teachers know half the stuff of what really goes on but like them not being in middle school now, they really do not know what we are going through and with them being in middle school for how ever long it was, it is definitely different now because they really do not know. (T2)

Joey.7.gen: We do not really talk about it in our class. We do not watch anything or talk about it. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: No, because it does not deal with your problems in school like if you break down and cry. It does not help you deal with your emotions at all. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Well, like last year I had Ms. Harp. Like Ms. Harp wants you to think like her kind of. I would come to her and she would lie. We really do not have discussions. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: Our teacher is always telling us that if we have problems we can come talk to her but then like if someone does have a problem they either do not want to tell her about it or they do not want to talk about it because they feel that she will say something but they really will not understand why she said it so I really do not think that it really helps anyone. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I agree with what Braden said. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I guess it just depends on the discussion because sometime it is really relevant to what is happening but most of the time I just do not feel like it is helping me but I am just speaking for myself. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gen: I do not feel like I have any problems with middle school or with the problems that happen at our school. (T3)

Gwen.6.gif: Sometimes they do not. Because sometimes I do not really think that could happen in middle school. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: If it is an out of school problem, I do not think it helps. I do not think there is anything you can do about it. (T3)

William.6.gen: No, I do not think they do. The stuff they talk about is more like elementary school than middle school. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: No, because they feel more like elementary school problems. We usually do not really go through stuff like physical bullying. We do not really mind too much the mental bullying. (T3)

Harry.7.gen: I would not have Monday morning CARES; that is what I would change if I were the principal or assistant principal. I do not see any point in the discussions and

we do not use them. We are middle schoolers and some of us are going to high school next year. I really do not see the point. (T3)

Lloyd.7.gen: They really do not help because they do not happen much. For example, bullying does not really happen at our school. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: Not really. All of the problems that we see on the movie clips are staged and they go over problems that we would never really go through in our middle school. On some of them, kids are being pressured to do drugs and I have not known of that to actually happen at our school. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: Even though we are working on the bullying thing a lot, I have never been bullied and all my friends have never been bullied so it does not really help as much. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I do not think so. Because most of the eighth graders know about these things. If they do have a problem, they are not going to start thinking about what topic it is related to. Most of the ones I know, do not really listen and they do not care. I have noticed they will participate in CARES time and then they just forget it. (T3)

Phil.8.gif: We will talk about other people's problems, but not our own personal stuff. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: No one wants to tell everyone else about what is really going on with them and their personal problems. Because of this, the discussions really do not help. If they want to talk, that would be great. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: Not really because most of this is like "being respectful" and "do not bully". Most people know how to deal with that already. It does not really help with anything. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I think the discussions are more juvenile, so not necessarily. They may say be nice to others and we all know that. (T3)

Listening Support

Gwen.6.gif: Sometimes because when you talk to your friends they tell you what you should do. Other times they say just say they do not know what you should do. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: Yes, because if you tell your teacher something that is happening, she can sort it out. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: Yes, I think that your teacher will not go on and tell a bunch of people about it. She is just as supportive as your parents are. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: Yes it does, because you can help with that problem. Like if someone is bullying you, you can tell the teacher and make them stop it. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: They can talk openly and be honest and not be shy about it if they are having those problems. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: Yes, because when you come to the teacher, she will help you with problems that you have and you do not have to be scared of bullies. (T1)

Karl.7.gen: I do, because others may think differently than me. We can express our feelings and maybe others would think the way we do. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I think they do because if you go to a teacher that knows you, they can help you out. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: Yes, because we can talk about it so you do not have it in your head all day. You do not have anyone to tell it to. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: They do because if you have something wrong and want to tell somebody and you know they ill not tell anyone else, your friends can maybe help fix it. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: Yes I do because some kids are going through things that maybe their friends did not know about. Their friends could help them now that they have told. It helps getting it off your chest when you have been holding it in for a while. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I think it does because if you have any questions, you are able to ask whatever you need to ask. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I think they do, because we can tell the situation that we have and she can help us see both sides of the issue. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I think they do because people are more open about it and are able to talk to people about them and it helps to solve the problems. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: Yes, because you can actually talk to the people in your room. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I feel like they do because of the way Mrs. Nutting describes them With Mrs. Nutting, she can take something and make it funny to a point where everybody understand it. We have shy kids and the kind that would be called nasty things. She makes us laugh and talk and we are all just friends. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I think they could possibly, because some kids need the help and some do not. This could help them get it off their minds and discussing it could help. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: They discuss with their friends and they tell the teachers as well. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: Yes, because you can hear what is happening to other people and they might have a suggestion about what is happening to you and what could help you. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: Maybe what we are talking about is happening to you and it gives you advice as to what you can and cannot do. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: In my homeroom, a lot of girls have problems with a lot of things. Being able to talk about it with other peers helps them feel more comfortable and makes them want to do better. (T1)

Question Eight

If you could give the character education program a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?

The purpose of this question was to obtain a general consensus of the overall attitudes and perceptions the students had towards the Character Education component of the CARES program. In addition, the question was open ended allowing the students to express any further feelings about character education on Monday mornings. Since the previous questions found in this section revealed the attitudes and perceptions students had towards character education, the student responses to this question have been divided into two sections: (1) students who responded positively towards character education and, (2) students who responded negatively towards character education. While some of the students may have given a high grade (A or B) or a low grade (C, D, or F), the responses are divided based upon whether or not they provided a positive or negative response.

The responses from this question support the findings previously mentioned. Generally speaking, the students perceived character education as a way of developing their personal character in practical ways. The character education class time was an interactive environment where they received strong levels of listening support from their classmates and teachers. In addition, the class time was perceived as a place where they could socialize with their friends and relax before starting the day. Negative attitudes and perceptions were that the character education instruction was boring and impractical as

some teachers displayed a lack of interest in teaching them character education. An additional perception revealed by eighth graders during their focus group session was that they did not like the CARES classes separated by gender. The student responses from question eight are provided below.

Students who Responded Positively

Christine.6.gen: I would give it a B+ because it does help you. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I would give it an A. She sits down and talks to us about stuff and helps us realize what bullying and all topics that we discuss are. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I would give it an A because it helps us discuss our problems and lets the teacher discuss them with us and it helps us. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: I would give it an A+ because it is extremely helpful and really teaches kids to be safe and helping them with school and a lot of other things like making sure you are at school and are being safe. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: Probably an A because it is fun. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: I would give it an A, because of the movie clips that you watch. It teaches you things that are helpful. You can tell what you do and do not like about it. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I would probably give it an A. It is just a good program for kids that are bullied and having a rough time in school. They can talk about what they need and how they are treated and everything. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I would give it an A because it helps us realize about other things that you can do in school, other than academic work. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: An A because it will help you with your future. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: An A because it is very helpful and straight to the point and not complicated. It can help kids that need help. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I would give it an A. They really explain the topic and I like how they show the clips from different movies. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: Probably an A, because she does teach us a lot of things. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I would probably give it a B because it teaches us to be a better person.

Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A because we learn about the bullying and respect and disrespect and character traits. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: Probably an A. I just think they explain problems that we do have a lot of times. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I think it would be an A. It just explains how you can be a better person when you get out of school and how you can be a better student in school. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I would give it an A because what we do in the mornings is talk about being respectful, nice, and helpful to each other. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I would give it an A, you know, it is something that we can all relate to and the teachers help us through it. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I would give it a B maybe because as I said before, it helps your work and things. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would give it an A because it does help us out and teach us about different things. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: An A, because it helps people. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: An A because I feel it is a good program. It teaches you more. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would give it a B because it helps kids out and talks about how we should be and it is a really good program for us to use. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I would give it an A just because it teaches the students how to act and try to do better in life. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would give it an A because it is teaching you not to bully or be abusive and it shows you that your parents lie and some people do not tell the truth. (T1)

Valierie.8.gen: I would give it an A because helps with problems and you can talk to people about what is happening to you and in your life. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I would give it an A. It does help me in middle school and I can see that it helps my peers in middle school too. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I would give it an A because like I said, it helps you feel more comfortable in talking about your problems and what is happening. (T1)

Nadia.6.gen: I would give it a B because it can help you. It just depends upon your problem and it is good to be there. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I think I would give it a B because it helps you with school problems. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I guess a B because everyone just opens us. (T3)

Students who Responded Negatively

Richard.6.sped: I would probably give it a C because everybody's yelling and jumping around and playing most of the time. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: A B because you do not really do much. You just talk for a second or two, but you do still learn things. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: A B, because sometimes I cannot relate to the situations. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: A B because we really do not learn much about character education. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: I would give it a B+ because sometimes you do not want to say something really personal. (T1)

John.6.gen: Probably a B. Sometimes we already know what to do. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I would probably give it a B, because sometimes we have to sit there and if we did not have an AR book or if we have finished it, we sit there and have nothing to do an we cannot talk. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: I guess a B because it is kind of funny but it can be boring too. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I would give it a C. We barely do anything. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I would give it a B because some mornings we really do not do as much. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I would give it a B because I feel like some people do not really have to watch it, so they do not. It is not really getting through to everybody. Not everyone watches it. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I think I would give it a C because some of the things we learn about, I see that as something I would do in fourth grade. Some of us are going to high school. I do not see any purpose in some of it. That is my main reason for the C. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I would give it a B because I know that they are trying to help people not do bad things in life but if you are addicted, it is really not going to stop them from doing it. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Probably a B- because we are in there for short amounts of time. Maybe it would be better if it was both boys and girls. I think we could get more accomplished if it were both. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I would give it a C because it is so boring. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: Probably a C or D because again, the problems are not middle school problems and they are more like little kids stuff, like be nice and share. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I would give it a B because you do not really need an A. By now if you are in the eighth grade, you should already know how to be a good student. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: I guess a B. It is not an A because sometimes I would rather be doing something else.

Arnold.8.gen: Maybe a B. It does not give the whole life experience. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: Probably a B. It is helpful in some ways, but sometimes you want to talk to your friends and connect with them from over the weekend. But then we have to go to CARES. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: Probably a C- because though it is helpful, a lot of times a big portion of it is not. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I would give it a C because some of the times when we are trying to have fun, we have to do work like stuff out of the book or read out of the book. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: A C. I mean honestly, I just think it is a waste of time. We are just talking about respect. Talking about something is not going to make you do it more. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: Probably a B or C because it does not really happen to us as Craig said. They are more like elementary problems. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I would give it an F because it just talks about elementary problems. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: I would give it a D because well, those sorts of problems do not really happen to us. (T2)

Albert.7.gen: A C because we really do not watch the videos and she really does not talk about bullying. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I would probably give it a B because I do not know. I wish that we could act out problems and stuff. I think that would be fun and it would help us grasp the lesson and like the TV show, I do not really thing that helps me because it is a movie and it is not real so it makes me…I do not know. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: Probably a C or D because it is not completely bad but it is not really that good either. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: Yeah, I am going to have to agree with Devin on that because sometimes it can actually be kind of fun but sometimes you wish you could be in other classes to where it was not all your same gender I guess. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Yeah, I do not like that (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: Neither do I. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: Yeah, I have to go with Danni or Devin because it would be a lot better if we could go to talk to not just girls. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Yes, because we have all the classes with them (girls). Why can't we just have CARES with them (girls)? (T2)

Danni.8.gen: At times, you can tell that a lot of females do not get along because of drama and all that stuff. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: It would go a lot smoother because you would not have as much fights. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: Because if it is just guys or just girls someone in the class is going to try to dominate but if they mixed the class together it is not just going to be some group trying to dominate everyone. It will kind of be mixed in. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Yeah, that way you can hear both sides, both male and female. (T2)

Abigail.8.gif: Yeah, I agree with everybody else. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: I think I gave it a B because it is also really boring. The videos are boring. Some of them are cheesy and old. It is hard to explain. They talk about things that do not really happen that often, like people calling other people to tell them their hair is ugly.(T3)

William.6.gen: I would give it a C because like I said, you can still talk about it but everything else is a waste of time. (T3)

Richard.6.sped: When Ms. Saxon (media specialist) is not there, I would give it an F. Ms. Tomer (Paraprofessional) yells at people to keep them quiet and sit them down. If they do not be quiet, they get silent lunch. When Ms. Saxon is there, they still yell, but then they whisper too. Most of the time, no one pays attention. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I would give it a C. Some of the problems do help, like honesty. But they really do not help middle school problems. (T3)

Lloyd.7.gen: I would give it a C because the teacher talks about our problems really well, but the problems do not really happen at our school. There is not anything that happens in our school that the teacher has talked about. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: Probably a C because like I said, we really do not do anything with it. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I guess a B but the movies do not really relate to us that much. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I think about a D or F because we do not discuss much. We will go over the topic but not in much detail. It does not help eighth graders. Our parents have probably already talked to us about it. My parents and I am sure most eighth graders' parents have already gone over the topics like bullying with me. I do not think it helps much. (T3)

Phil.8.gif: A C. I think the time would be better spent if we worked on assignments that were due or make-up work. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I think a D or F because most people know these things and they do not really help. Some people do not even pay attention. There is not really a point to it because even if it could help you, most people do not listen. Most already know this stuff. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: A C. I do not like the videos because we have to pay attention and answer questions that follow. I think that is just too much work. I do not think we should have to do anything in homeroom. We should be able to talk or do homework and that is it. (T3)

Question Nine

Question Nine: Can you give me an example of something you learned during character education time? How have you been able to use what you learned in school or at home?

The students responded to question nine by reporting that character education class taught them about positive character qualities. Furthermore, they shared about how they learned about different topics such as drug prevention, bullying, and conflict resolution. Many of the students were able to speak of how they were able to apply what they learned to real life situations occurring at school and at home. The student responses supporting these findings are provided below.

Character Formation

Sarah.6.gif: Probably when we watched the video about lying. It has helped me because if you keep lying, it just builds up and it is not good. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: Well, since your parents are not at school with you, you can discuss with your teacher about what has happened. I have learned about honesty. You can be honest with your teacher if you are having trouble with your friends or learning about something. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I have learned about not cheating. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: There was a time we were doing the thing with the Army people; it really taught us how people are going into war to help their family and country. It really told me that people will sacrifice their self and their time to save what is important to them. When she told us that, I said to myself that I should sacrifice some of my time and things that I can do to help my friends and family. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: In the movie clips, it teaches you not to lie and it teaches you the consequences of lying. I have learned about that and I have used it at home when I tell my brother he can or cannot do something. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: about lying and stuff…that is the main thing I have focused on. I used to lie to my mom a lot and get into trouble. Now that we have started CARES, I have not been so bad about it. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I have learned about being helpful. I have been able to help other kids when something happened, like dropping their books. (T1)

John.6.gen: I have learned that you need to always tell the truth and be honest. At home I have lied about things. If you lie once, you just have to get your way out of it. You get caught eventually. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I have learned a little bit more about when you do something wrong, there are worse consequences than you thought there were. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I learned about how to help someone when they are being bullied or made fun of and how to stand up for that person. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: To be more self-confident. I have tried to speak out more in class and in other things. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I have learned that it is better not to lie about things. Telling the truth is much better than lying. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I have learned about being respectful. My mom and dad say that if you are not respectful at home, you will not be respectful at school. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: To treat others the way you want to be treated. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I have learned to be more responsible. I have used it at school and at home, to remember I have got to do homework or some chores. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: One of the key things was honesty and how you are not supposed to lie to people. That also ties in with trust and you would not trust someone who was dishonest most of the time. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: One of the first things that we learned was to be respectful, not rude. It kind of taught me to be more respectful and nicer to people. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: Maybe how to be responsible. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: Well, if I do not finish my homework completely, I know from the video that it is better to be completely honest. Teachers can tell if you are lying and they will eventually know that you are lying. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: In character education on morning, we talked about how we could help others by giving of our time. We figure out that helping with food or something simple like that, you can help people out tremendously. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: One time she talked about setting goals. Now I set goals all the time. I use my agenda more now. It helps me remember stuff. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: It taught me to be more respectful. (T1)

George.8.gen: I have learned to treat people a lot better and not to judge them. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: When we were studying goals, one of my goals was to get accepted to UGA. Sometimes I try my best and sometimes I do not feel good. But it is important to keep trying and do your best and do not give up. (T1)

Jordan.8.sped: You learn to respect others more than you used to. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: One time at home, I was about to get in real big trouble. I was honest about it and I did not get into as much trouble as I could have. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: We have learned how to have more self-confidence and it definitely helps all of us. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: We are talking about leadership right now. We are discussing leadership qualities. I am in Boy Scouts and in Boy Scouts, we also do leadership training and different things that help us build and use leadership skills. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: We will talk about organizing things more and how to handle school problems, like work ethics and things like that. It has helped me at school and at home. I feel that having them say what is better to do helps me understand more. (T3)

Drug Prevention

Richard.6.sped: Yes. Sometimes this month we learned about methamphetamines and drugs and I learned not to do drugs. I never will and never have. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I have also learned about drugs and alcohol and how not to deal with them. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: In a pressure situation, when I was walking with my mom one time, this guy walked up to us, a stranger. He was handing out cigarettes, and my mom does not smoke. My mom told him to leave. He asked me if I wanted one and I told him no and to please leave me alone and grabbed my mom's hand and we walked off. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: We have had discussions about not to do drugs and be helpful to people. I leaner that drugs, smoking, and things like that can give you lung cancer. It kills you a lot faster.

Bullying Prevention

Amanda.6.gen: I have learned that bullying does have an impact on different kid's lives. It can really hurt them, no matter what their situation is at home. I can use that to not hurt other kids. We all have disabilities. It does not mean you should make fun of them. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: There was a clip about bullying. It said just walk away. I did that once after I saw the video. It can help. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I have learned about bullying and being nice. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I have learned not to bully people. I have used it at home and school. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: Well, during character education, I have learned when you are around a bullying situation, not to just stand there or walk by. Go tell a teacher about what is going on. That student could be you and you would want help if you were in that situation. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I have learned not to be abusive to anyone and not to be a bully and to help people out if they are in a situation where they are being bullied so they do not get hurt. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I have learned about bullying and things like that. (T3)

Conflict Resolution

Gwen.6.gif: Be careful what you say to other people. When you are kidding around, make sure they know you are kidding around. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I have learned to be nice to new people that come to school, even ones who are mean to us. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: I have learned how to deal with my friendships. Like when someone gets mad at each other, I can help them deal with how to get over being mad. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: Well, I did learn about how to confront a friend if they are doing something wrong. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I have learned that everyone is a little different and you cannot help what they look like, or how they talk. Just overlook it and judge them for their personality. (T1)

Ronnie.8.sped: I have learned how to take my problems to a teacher or an adult and they will help me out with them. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I have learned about peer-pressure. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I have learned about peer-pressure and about how it can affect you in high school. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: Well, there are girls in my homeroom that I usually do not hang out with. I have learned more about their life and what is going on with them. It makes me cautious of how I act toward them…Not just girls, but boys too. (T1)

Carla.7.gif: In character education, you have to talk to each other and we kind of click off like different people who hang out with different friends outside the classroom you know they kind of go off with each other but in character education you know we have to all kind of get in and we end up talking to each other and making new friends. Just because you hang out with people outside of school doesn't mean you can't have other friends who don't act the way you do.(T2)

Hannah.7.gif: This year in particular, I am not afraid to get out there I guess you could say and that is just the kind of person I am and if somebody for example says something about me or hurts my feelings in any way, I like to confront them myself and sometimes I come on a little strong instead of saying ok I have just heard this and I do not know if it is true. I am not accusing you of anything so I have learned not to be or come across as so aggressive. (T2)

Betty.7.gen: I think that even if you are hanging out with all the people in your CARES group, you can still be friends with the people you don't hang out with if you don't really like them you can still be friends with them. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: I kind of had a problem with some friends outside of my character education class and Ms. Hoss like talked to me and we just kind of worked it out. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I think I have learned not to judge people. She has taught me not to do that and just to get to know people so we can make friends with people in our group that we normally don't hang out with. (T2)

Gwen.6.gif: When you say something to your friends or people you don't really hang out with, make sure it is not offensive to them. We have talked about that before and I do feel like I have learned about that. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: I learned that if someone won't leave you alone and they keep on getting on your nerves, you can just ignore them. There was this person and he wouldn't stop calling me names and I ignored him and he sort of like stopped. It took about a week probably. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: Well, I have learned that we can open up to each other, no matter what group we hang out with. I have found that I have been hanging out with different group s of people, other than just my usual friends. (T3)

Question Ten

Question Ten: Describe what takes place on a typical day of character education. Be as detailed as possible.

Question ten was designed for the purpose of viewing character education through the eyes of the students. Students spoke of how character education taught them about ways they could develop their character. In addition, they described character education on Monday mornings as opportunities for discussion and instruction, group projects and activities, along with time to socialize with their friends before the start of the school day. Some of the responses from question ten supporting these findings are provided below.

Character Formation

Gwen.6.gif: Our teachers tell us when it is about to start. When the video clip is over,

our teacher talks to us about what it means. Then we talk to each other about what it means. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: Usually every Monday, we watch a different video. We will all talk the whole class. We will just express our opinions to the class. That is about it. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: Mrs. Couch turns on the projector and the movie clip comes on. We watch it and then talk about it, like if we have done something that relates to the movie clip or if someone else has done it. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: The video clip will start. We watch it and the teacher will talk about the clip and what happened. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: We watch the character education video clip on the projector. Sometimes we talk about the clips or other times we just talk to our friends. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: We watch little clips of movies and stuff. They will tell you or do something to help you find a way to resolve that problem. We go around and ask questions about our past and what we have done and what the consequences were. (T1)

Nadia.6.gen: Well, from the gym we got to the class and me and my friends we usually just sit down and talk but if the video comes on we watch them and we kind of just hang out there. (T2)

William.6.gen: First we go to Coach Wilson's and then he goes somewhere and we all just talk and then before announcements we go to the computer lab and watch a video and talk about it and then we go to first period. (T2)

Jerry.6.gif: We watch videos and talk about it. And call roll. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: We watch a clip like *Cool Runnings* or something and then we talk about it. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: A typical day of character education for me is I am in class with girls obviously and when we get in the class after announcements and say the pledge our teacher gets a piece of paper and tells us what the video is going to be for the day and the subject of it like bullying or teasing or whatever. Then she reads the question from the lesson or the questions about the video and then we watch the video and we answer the questions and we go around the room and let everybody have a chance to speak and talk about it. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: The teacher will start talking about whatever the topic might be and then she will ask us a question and whoever wants to answer will raise their hand and it just goes like that until the bell rings. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: If it is a Monday we will start talking about whatever the principal told her to and then like after that, we will just kind of sit there and talk for the rest of the class. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: On Mondays she has a discussion and the rest of the week we don't really have one. (T2)

Gwen.6.gif: After everyone gets in there, she lets the students take attendance. We ask what we are doing that day and the teacher says that we are going to watch the character clips. We talk about it and sometimes if we need help with homework, she will help us. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: We go in the classroom and then we just sit there. We watch the video clip and after we watch it, the CARES teacher asks us what we thought about it and what ways encourage it. We talk about how it can be helpful to you. (T3)

William.6.gen: After the announcements we head to the computer lab and watch the video. Then we talk about it and wait for the bell to ring. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: We go in and watch the movie clip. The teacher will ask us questions about what we have learned. The questions could be about honesty, bravery, and self-respect. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: We start out with the movie and watch the clip. We will talk about it and she will open up the topic for people to talk about if they are dealing with the same thing. That is pretty much it. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: She starts talking about the given topic for that week. The she will ask a few questions. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: She will check her computer and see what the discussion is or we will watch the movie. We will discuss whatever is needed. The discussion usually takes a good portion of the time. (T3)

Projects and Activities

Tanner.6.gen: She also lets us do little activities, like at Christmas we wrote letters to our family. I thought that was nice. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: Some mornings she will have us get out paper and a pencil and ask us what our favorite food is and different things like that to get to know each other better. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: If it is a project, we do it or watch something and talk about it and what issues we have had in life that pertains to the topic. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I go and sit down with the students I am doing my project with. It is about bullying where you come up with a slogan and make a poster on it and how you should be nice to people. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: We are working on a poster right now about bullying. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: We work on our poster on bullying. We talk about bullying. We wait until the bell rings. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: If we need help on our group projects, the teacher will help us. It helps working with friends. We can learn from each other. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Most recently, we started a project to make posters with slogans to stop bullying. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: Well, sometimes whenever we have a chance, we work on posters related to bullying and trying to prevent it. (T1)

Thomas.7.gen: We do an activity until the bell rings at 8:20. Right now, the activity is bullying, making a poster and a catch phrase for the poster. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: We sit down and sometimes we work on a bullying project in which we make a poster about bullying. We show what bullying is and how we can help stop it. (T3)

Rick.7.gen: We have been working on this topic about bullying and making a poster about bullying. (T3)

Peer Socialization

Sarah.6.gif: We usually get back from our lockers and sit down and we are just talking. We don't really do anything. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: Sometimes we talk about the clips or other times we just talk to our friends. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: I normally talk to the person that is sitting next to me. Occasionally I read. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: We go into Ms. Moore's room and we listen to music. She lets us sit in our seats and talk to our friends. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: She takes roll and then we sit around and talk. We haven't recently watched any clips on bullying. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: Some days I just talk to my friends. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: Most of the time, we just talk with friends. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: We talk. That is all, pretty much. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: We go into class and talk to friends a little. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: For about five minutes we will talk with our friends. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: We just talk and hang out. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Sometimes, we will have a little extra time and we read or just talk. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: We get in the classroom. A lot of times we play cards for ten minutes. Then she will tell us we have something to do for that day. She will ask us questions and a lot of times we end up laughing. Someone will say something funny or totally random. We talk to her and get off track and talk to each other. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: We come in and take attendance. We have a minute to talk to our friends. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: We get to our CARES class and we usually…Coach Williams is usually in his office and what we mostly do is just talk to each other and then Coach Williams comes in and takes attendance. We usually talk the whole time and then we leave for our next class. Coach Williams is usually in his office so we really just talk. (T1)

William.6.gen: First we go to Coach William's and then he goes somewhere and we all just talk. (T1)

Joey.7.gen: We go into the classroom. We sit down. We say the pledge and then listen to the announcements then we get done with that and just sit. Our teacher makes us be quiet sometimes and that is it. (T1)

Braden.8.gen: For our class, we like walk in and we'll sit there for a good fifteen-twenty minutes and then we'll take roll and if it is a Monday we will start talking about whatever the principal told her to do and then like after that, we'll just kind of sit there and talk the rest of class. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: Whenever we go in some people do get on the computer and then after everybody gets in there she just takes role and then she lets us talk but on Mondays she has a discussion and the rest of the week we do not really have one. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: This is what we do. I go in there and sit down and talk. Well, last Monday we had a sub and we were making fun of the sub. (T2)

Abigail.8.gif: We really just go in there, sit down and talk for a while. If we get too loud, she will tell us to be quiet but other than that we really do not do much. (T2)

Richard.6.sped: We walk in and it is quiet. The next thing you know, the other students come in yelling. We listen to Ms. Gerald sometimes or we talk quietly. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: We get out of the gym and walk to class. She normally is not there yet. Some kids are on the computer. I talk until she gets in there. Some kids sit in the back and talk to each other. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: For the last five minutes or so, we are allowed to do something like read or talk amongst ourselves. (T3)

A-Advocacy (Questions 11-15)

An emphasis on teacher advocacy is a main component of the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School. In lieu of the traditional homeroom class, students are assigned a teacher advocate at the beginning of the school year. The classes are assigned according to gender with the intent of providing students with an opportunity to connect with their advocate teacher in positive ways. The teacher advocate is primarily responsible for teaching character education on Mondays. In addition, the students are encouraged to report to their advocate teacher any academic or social issues they have throughout the school year.

The advocate teacher, often referred to as the CARES teacher is responsible for monitoring the students' academic progress and working in collaboration with other teachers and parents in ensuring that their students are successful at school. The interview questions designed in this section were created with the purpose of identifying the attitudes and perceptions the students have towards their advocate teacher. In addition, question fifteen asks the students their opinion as to what can be done to improve the relationship they have with their CARES teacher. An analysis of the student responses regarding teacher advocacy are provided below.

Question Eleven

Each student in the school has been assigned a CARES teacher. In what ways does your CARES teacher help you?

The responses to question eleven expressed the students' appreciation of the high levels of academic support they received from their CARES teachers. They also expressed how good it feels for them to have a caring adult who offers them sound advice and counsel for both their academic and social needs. Knowing that their CARES teacher listens to them and values their opinion and feelings about different issues was also an overriding theme throughout question eleven. The student responses supporting these conclusions are provided below.

Academic Support

Gwen.6.gif: When I need help with homework or something like that, she helps me. (T1)

Christina.6.gen: I love Ms. Kull and she helps you with your problems with friends and with school work. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: If we need anything, we can always go to her and ask about it. He helps us by going over it with us. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: If we need help with a question, she will help us. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: She helps us remember if we forgot that we had homework. She will remind us. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: She just helps you, if you are stuck on a problem with homework, she will help you. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: She talks about stuff that we learn. She teaches us new things that we did not know. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: She will help me find a book or she will help with a problem or question. If you are doing a report for a teacher, she will help me find answers for it. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: Sometimes she helps me with my homework when I forget to do it. When I do not have a pencil, she gives me one. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: She helps me with homework and problems I might have. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: She helps me out with my grades and gives me advice on how to get my grades up and deal with friendships better. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: If I am failing an assignment, she lets me do it over to get a higher grade. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: She helps me with math problems that I have. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: She helps us get our grades up and helps us figure out what we can do to work on our grades. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: Sometimes if I have homework in some classes, if I do not understand the question, she will help me understand it more. If we are reading books and do not understand a word, she will tell us what it means. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: She helps explain things and it makes more sense. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: She also helps with any homework problems you might have. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: She helps with most of my work, like science, math, and social studies, basically all of it. She is a wonderful teacher and I am glad to have her as my CARES teacher. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: When she sees our grades falling, she helps us pull them back up. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: If I have homework or something that I need help with, she will help me on that. She has a huge amount of books and recommends books to me and helps me find them. (T1)

Kyle.6.sped: Finding my agenda in my book bag. She also lets us work on our homework sometimes. (T2)

Jerry.6.gif: I forgot my homework in there one time and she gave it to my teacher. (T2)

Joey.7.gen: She shows us our grades and stuff. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Well, she might give me a pencil. She comes in to try to help in my class or something. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: Whenever I need something or I need help on some kind of problem or a subject problem, she will break it down and help me with it. (T2)

Richard.6.sped: When I need help with work, she helps me. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: During the mornings, she will let me do the homework that I forgot about. (T2)

Rick.7.gen: She helps us with our work, like science. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: Our teacher is encouraging if you are having trouble with your homework. She will give you tips to raise your grades. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: She really enforces me in getting my missing work done. I have a lot of that. She won't let me do much other than that. That is helpful to me. (T2)

Teachers as Advisors

Richard.6.sped: She helps me tell me which direction to go if I don't know where a classroom is or something like that. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: She tells me what she thinks I should do in a certain situation. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gen: If I have a problem, I can talk to her about it and discuss it. If something happens with a friend, she will talk to us about it. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: She is very funny and very nice to us. I love Ms. Kull and she helps you with your problems with friends. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: She will ask questions about things like bullying, like if we have ever bullied someone. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: She helps me a lot. She is very sincere and always knows the right thing to say. If I have a question to ask, she always knows the answer. She is really nice and cares for us all. I think that is very nice. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: She helps me remember to bring back the white folders that have our report cards on them. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: She does talk to us and gets involved with us. If we have problems, she will ask more about it. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: If I am having trouble with something, she will give me advice on how to fix it. She just helps you. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: By talking with us and figuring out our problems and talking with us about whatever we need to talk about. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: She talks to us about different things we have seen and maybe stuff she has seen. We go over how we would handle the situation. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I think that she helps us by saying that she is there for us at all times with any help we may need. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: She makes sure that we are not being rude and we are being kind to other students and teachers. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: She goes really in-depth about the problems we talk about on the video. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: he talks about when she was a child and how her life affected her and how we can do better. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: She gives me advice on how to deal with friendships better. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: My CARES teacher helps me by stopping what she is doing and helping with a question. She will talk to us if we are down and ask us what is wrong. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: She explains what the video or whatever activity we are doing is, and what we are supposed to take from it. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: She helps us to be nice and respectful and not bully. She teaches us about being nice to new students at the school. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: She helps me by teaching me the simple way of handling problems, friendships, and bullying. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: Like I said, she helps us with any work that we are doing and if we talk to her, she tries and helps us out about bullying situation and any problems that we have. She is definitely an understanding teacher. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: She helps me with questions I need to ask about how to control my life. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: She is fun and we can relax when we are with her. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: She helps us in a way that we can understand her more than some other teachers. She tells personal experiences of her and her daughter who has already gone to high school. That really helps us. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: She teaches me to believe in myself. She helps me understand a lot of stuff. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: She just makes the morning fun and gets you motivated for the day. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: If we are sad, she will help us by encouraging us. She will sometimes bring us breakfast when we have perfect attendance for two weeks. She will talk to us. She is kind of like a counselor that gives advice. She is a motherly teacher. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: She helps us because she really understands how things in the real world work. That is how she helps us. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: If someone did have a problem and they asked her, she will help. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: She will help out if you have a problem. She will tell you what to do or help you out herself. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: She teaches us about these character things. We know they are assigned to teach them, but she teaches it with meaning. They explain things we don't get. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: She helps with friend problems and sometimes, boyfriend problems. She tells us how to get along with people we may not like or have gotten in a fight with. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: She helps with something that you don't understand or doesn't make sense about what's happening to you. She waits until you understand it. She stops what she is doing and helps you with that. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: She teaches us the lesson and brings up funny stuff about it and interesting things too. (T1)

George.8.gen: She helps us by teaching good lessons. (T1)

Ron.6.gen: He will let us go to our locker or something if we need to. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: She really opens up to us and she is not afraid to tell us stories with problems we have today. If we ever need help she is always telling us you know don't be afraid to come to me. I am here to help you and we have a counselor and she tells us we can schedule an appointment and go talk to her. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: My CARES teacher, I like her because she is the younger type and I think she knows more of what younger people go through. Like I'm not calling teachers old or anything. I think she knows more experienced things whenever you talk about it. Like she can help you. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: Yeah, I like my CARES teacher. I and she have the same one. I think she knows more about what is going on than the older teachers. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: She is really sweet, like a mother type person. She is more like a best friend. She has a reason to talk to everybody, even if you're like from a different group. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: She really helps us if we are having trouble with someone else. She will tell us why it is not a good idea to bully and she gives us little talks, even if they are not required for CARES. One day we were talking about why it is bad to get into a fight. Two kids in our grade had gotten into a fight and had to be in ISS. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: Just by being there and telling us she wants to help us. (T3)

Listening Support

Tabitha.6.gif: If I have a problem, I can talk to her about it and discuss it. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: She is very open and lets us talk about things. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: She explains the CARES program and shows she really cares by making sure that all voices are heard when we are talking during class. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: She is someone that we actually can talk to and if we have any problems, we can go to her. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: You can always talk to her about anything. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: She has been there a lot for me. It's been a really good fit. I can ask her a question, either school or non-school related. That is very helpful to me. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: Well, I know that if I have a problem that I don't feel comfortable talking about in front of everyone that I can talk to her about it. (T1)

Abby.6.gen: Like sometimes she…if we have something we want to talk about and we don't want anybody to know she won't tell anybody else. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: I think we all relate to our CARES teacher in some way and actually we can get on the subject and you know what you are talking about. You are not in an unknown zone I guess you could say. You are more comfortable with what you are talking about. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: She really listens to our problems and sits down and talks to us. That really helps a lot. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: She will listen to you no matter who you are. (T3)

Question Twelve

Why do you trust or not trust your CARES teacher?

Overall, the students reported strong levels of trust with their CARES teachers. Students trust their teachers because of the credibility they display through their interactions with students. Many of the students trust their teachers simply because of their positions as educators. The students expect teachers to be honest and reliable

individuals. Many of the responses indicated that their CARES teachers were caring and willing to help. They trust their teachers because they have fun and are likable. The students felt connected to their teachers by the relationships developed over time.

Students who responded negatively did not trust their teachers because they felt that they were not sincere with them. In addition, these students felt as if they were treated with disrespect. Some of the students claimed that since they do not know their teacher very well, and since they do not interact with them often, developing strong levels of trust was difficult. The student responses from question twelve are provided below and are separated into two categories: (1) those who reported strong levels of trust, and (2) those who claimed they did not trust their CARES teacher.

Strong Levels of Trust

Christine.6.gen: I feel like I trust Ms. Koop because I don't feel that she has told anyone about what we have talked about. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: I trust her because she would never tell us what would be wrong to do to someone else. She tells us things that we should and shouldn't do. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I do trust her because she has told us she keeps everything confidential and won't tell anything about what we have told her. If we talk to her, we know we can trust her that she won't talk to other teachers. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I trust her because she is nice and explains everything in the morning that she is going to do. She isn't telling a lie. What she says is the truth. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I trust her because she is a teacher. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I trust her because she hasn't done anything wrong and has tried to helps us as best she can. (T1)

John.6.gen: I trust her for one because she is a teacher. Most teachers you can trust because they are here to help you learn. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I trust her because she is honest. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: I trust her because I have known her since the beginning of the year and she hasn't done anything bad. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I trust her because she is a teacher. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: I have been here since the beginning of the school year and I feel like I know her pretty well. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I trust her because I think she won't ever do anything wrong. She hasn't so far. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: She hasn't given me a reason not to trust her and seems like a very reliable person. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I trust my CARES teacher because everything that she says is straightforward with us. If we are talking about bullying, she will tell us the facts instead of saying that bullying is bad. She gives us reasons. If we are talking about grades, she will not let anyone know what our grades are. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I guess I trust her because she always seems to be honest about everything she says. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I trust her because she believes in us and to have faith that we can do anything we want to. We can tell her something and she will keep it and not say anything about it. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I trust Ms. Jones because I had her in sixth grade and she was always very modest. She explains what we are doing right and wrong. She is very nice. On the other side, she is also very serious in class. If someone isn't paying attention, she helps them get focused. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I guess I would trust Ms. Noll because I am around her daily. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I trust her because I have seen other people go and ask her about things and she has helped them. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I trust her because I've had her for a couple of years and I've gotten to know her. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I trust my CARES teacher because I know she won't do anything that would embarrass you or make you feel bad. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I trust her because she tells us that she won't tell anyone our problems. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I trust her because she has been at this school a really long time. Last year, I had some friends in the 8th grade and they said good things about her so I felt comfortable coming to her class. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I trust Ms. Warp because I know I can rely on her and she is the one I can talk to if anything goes wrong here at school. I feel very comfortable talking to her. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: I have known her since sixth grade and she is also the mom of some of my friends. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: I trust her because if I ask her any questions, it is just between me and her. She won't say anything to anyone else. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I trust her. She is honest. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I trust her because I don't think she will tell anybody what I tell her if I don't want her to tell anybody. She has daughters that are teenagers that go through the same things and I can trust her to give good advice. (T1)

Richard.6.sped: I trust her because she is really nice and she does a lot of cool things with us. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: I trust her because she is nice to us and she will take time to understand us. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I trust her because she is very sweet and she is very trusting. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I trust her because she is really nice. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I trust her because she always helps us. So I feel like I can trust her. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: I trust her a lot because she is always by my side and she is like a friend to me and is always there if I need help. When I need someone to talk to, she is right there. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I trust her because she is nice to us and explains everything in the morning that she is going to do. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I trust her because she has tried to help us as best she can. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I trust her because she has been helping us through the school year. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I trust her because she wants to help us by going over questions and telling things we should do to fix a problem. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I do trust my CARES teacher. She is nice and she treats me with respect and I treat her with respect. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I trust her because she helps. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I trust her because I feel like she understands us and she knows what we have been through. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I trust her because she is always nice and understanding about everything. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I trust her because she is very kind and caring and she seems to understand a lot of the problems that we go through. She seems open-minded to what we say and gives us tips to help us out. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I trust my CARES teacher because she is one of the nicest teachers in the school and I know that she will always give a positive answer. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I trust her because she looks nice and acts nice. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I trust her because she seems to care. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I trust Ms. Store because she is a really caring person. You can tell by her personality. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: Same reason as before, she bonds with us by telling us her situation on a subject. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: She is one of the nicest teachers in the school. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I trust her. She actually cares about a problem at school or home and tries to help. (T1)

William.6.gen: He has worked here for a long time so I trust him. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I trust her because she has been working there for a long, long time. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: I trust my teacher because she doesn't seem like the person that would do any harm to anyone. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: She opens up to us and she is not afraid to let us know about her opinion even if it is not what we feel about it and she just…Yes, I trust her very much. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: She doesn't really, she really cares. Like she'll talk to you no matter who you are. She will help you take care of the problem. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: She treats us like, well. Like we are her kids. She's like, if you need anything don't' be afraid to ask. I am here for you. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I trust her I guess. Well, it's like I said, she knows more of what we do and all that stuff and she's not like our friend but like you know kind of close. You can pretty much get along with her and she's pretty much helpful. (T2)

Abigail.8.gif: I feel like I can trust my teacher. If I had a problem, I could go to her about it. (T2)

Tabatha.6.gif: I feel I can trust her because she is a teacher. (T3)

Gwen.6.gif: She doesn't tell other people what our situations are. (T3)

William.6.gen: I trust him because he has been working here for a very long time probably. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I trust her. If you have an embarrassing problem, she won't scream it out. She won't tell the whole class about that problem. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I feel like I can trust her. I guess because she is a teacher and I've never had a teacher that I haven't been able to trust. T3)

Libby.7.gen: I trust her because she wouldn't tell anybody something that I wanted to keep secret. She gives her open opinion about the problem. She wouldn't tell me anything that I don't feel wouldn't help me. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: I trust her because when I try what she has suggested to me, it usually helps. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I trust her. I think she really cares. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: I trust her because she is just really cool. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I trust her because she partly understands me and for the most part, she wants to be here teaching. (T3)

Low Levels of Trust

Thomas.7.gif: I'm kind of in the middle. She is a great teacher and all, but she is not the one I would trust the most. She puts in an effort to do things, but because it is mandatory to do it. (T1)

Craig.6.gen: I don't really think I can trust him because I don't really see him too long. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: I don't trust her at all. Because she doesn't trust me back. Because she never trusted me so I never trusted her. She gets on my nerves. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: I don't trust any of my teachers. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I don't trust mine but I don't distrust her…it is kind of a gray area there. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: My teacher, she is kind of a blab mouth so if you tell her something and expect her to keep a secret she'll probably wind up telling one of her sixth or seventh grade classes or just tells your class and people will be like wow, I didn't think she'd tell anyone that. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: I don't trust her because I don't see her too much and I don't really know her too well. I only have her for CARES and not any academic subject. (T3)

Thomas.7.gif: I would trust Ms. Huck. She puts in the effort to do everything. She says that it's not her job to make us fail but to succeed. My CARES teacher doesn't really care. It's just all mandatory to her. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I don't really trust her that much. She is the kind of person that if you tell her a problem and expect her not t announce it to the whole world, she will probably tell the whole class that period or the next class after that. She actually did that to a kid that was worried about his grades. He asked for advice and in the next class, she was telling that class how it was kind of funny that he was embarrassed about it. She thought it was nothing to be embarrassed about. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I don't completely trust her it is a neutral thing. I don't really know her well. I have a problem trusting someone unless I really know them well. It's really not her fault as far as that goes. (T3)

Question Thirteen

What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she respects you?

Students felt respected by their teachers when they took the time to listen to what they had to say. When teachers made an effort to get to know the students personally, the students reported high levels of respect from their teachers. The students positively viewed their CARES teachers as being respectful when they were recognized for their accomplishments in the classroom. When students perceived that their teachers were treating them like young adults using good manners and a calm voice, they positively

viewed them as respectful. When teachers provided them with opportunities to choose and have high levels of autonomy, the students felt respected. The participants described fairness as another characteristic of respect and communicated through the interviews a lack of respect when they felt as if they were not being treated equally with their peers. The following student responses using all three data sources provide support for these conclusions and are provided below.

Richard.6.sped: She always lets me buy a pencil when I need one. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: She sits there and makes sure we understand and talk to us about our problems sometimes. She doesn't take anything the wrong way. She is really nice. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: She listens to you when you are talking and when you are done. She responds to you instead of ignoring you. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: She always asks for your opinion. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: She brings us things like cookies and tells us happy birthday if it's our birthday. If she didn't respect us, I don't think she would talk to us about our problems. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: She will give us time to answer a question if we need to. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: She always gives us honest answers to our questions. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: When I talk to her, she always listens and doesn't interrupt. If there is someone who is being mean to me, I can tell her and she will talk to that person. I think she respects us all in CARES. She is really nice and extremely smart. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: She lets us talk if we raise our hands. When we were talking about the lying clip, she lets us talk if we raise our hands and explains why people would lie. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: She shows me that she respects me by treating me the way I want to be treated. She hasn't done anything that shows me that she doesn't respect me. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: If we have our hands raised, she will call on us and acknowledge us. She makes sure everyone has a chance to speak. She won't interrupt us. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: She does, because everything I do for her, she will always say thank you and things like that. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: She is always saying what good students we are. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: She doesn't talk bad about people. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: She listens to what we have to say. (T1)

John.6.gen: She will look you in the eyes when she talks to you and she isn't disrespectful. She doesn't show bodily actions that show she doesn't care. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: She helps us and we go over the question. She doesn't get mad at us if we don't have a response. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: Well, she shows kindness and she listens to what I say. That's about it. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: She gives everybody a chance to answer a question and doesn't cut anyone off. She gives us a chance to finish. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: She doesn't yell at us a lot. She can keep her temper in control and gives us a lot of freedom. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: She doesn't talk when we talk. We don't talk when she is talking. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: She helps us. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: She pays attention to each one of us and asks if we have any problems. She will try and find a way to fix it. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: She will always listen to what we have to say. I talk to her about my problems, if I don't fill out a blue slip. She always helps me find a solution. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: When she asks us a question, she clearly listens to the response. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: When I'm talking, she doesn't interrupt me. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: Well, I think a sign of respect would be that she asks if we understand and if we know what's going on with the question. If we have to give our opinion, she asks if that is ok. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: When we are talking, she doesn't interrupt us. She waits until we are finished. She tells other students to be quiet, if they are talking while we are talking but not in a mean way. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: Sometimes when she asks us a question, she will thank us for sharing our opinion. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: She gives us her undivided attention when we are talking. If we have a question, she will answer to the best of her ability. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: She is nice to me. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: She doesn't yell. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: She always listens to what we have to say. She says that if we ask her something, she will answer truthfully and not cover it up with lies. She's just always been respectful toward me. She uses a calm voice and never really raises it. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: She talks me through things that I have problems with. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: She listens to us if we have something to say to her. When we are allowed to talk, she doesn't blurt into the conversation, she waits for us to get done. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: When we are talking in CARES, she says that she will wait until we're finished talking, instead of yelling to talk to us. She is nice to us all the time and never raises her voice. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I guess she always tries to help us and tries to make us feel better about ourselves too. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: She respects us by listening very closely to our stories and giving a well thought response. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: She lets us talk to her and gives us time to talk. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: She treats us nice and how she would like to be treated. She cares about us and treats us with respect. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: She gives us time to talk and she doesn't really listen in on our conversations and respects our personal problems. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: If we respect her and are kind to her, she shows the same gratitude to us. I few are really good with perfect attendance; she will bring us in breakfast. When students don't bring in their required forms when they're due, Mrs. Johnson will give them an extra day because she understands. She gives the parents a friendly phone call if they don't turn in their form. She will call my mom if I misbehave in class because I have that signed agreement between my teachers and the assistant principal and my parents and myself. That shows that she wants me to pass. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: She treats us all the same and no different than other kids. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: Well, she doesn't yell at us. She talks nice and normal to us and doesn't act like we're stupid. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: She will let me sit wherever I want. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: She stops talking when someone else is answering or discussing a question. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: Usually, if we do a good job, she will pat us on the back and hug us. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: She listens. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: She wants you to strive to do your best. She is strict but she is very supportive at the same time. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: She doesn't tell us to shut-up or anything like that. She asks us nicely to calm down a little bit or be quiet while we are doing our work. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: She will explain it and she doesn't get angry if she doesn't understand what you said. She doesn't get mad. She takes time with you for however long it takes for you to understand it. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Some teachers call you names like honey or sweetie. She calls most everyone by one of those names, obviously showing that she is nice and respects everybody. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: If I'm raising my hand, she will call on me. If someone is yelling the same answer but I'm raising my hand, she will call on me. That show she respects me. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: When I'm talking, she makes sure no one else is talking. She always looks at me in the eyes when I am talking. She respects what I have to say. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: She isn't mean to us. She is respectful by saying no sir and yes sir…even if she is older than us. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: She listens to my questions and has answers. And I guess that is really it. She just listens to me. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: When we are joking around with her, she laughs. We get have free time in CARES time. (T1)

George.8.gen: She always gives good manners and she always greets me every time she sees me in the hallway. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: If we are talking, she will let us finish and if we want to have a discussion, she will respect that and let us talk about that for a little while before we get back on track. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: She doesn't treat me any different than anyone else. She is really nice. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: She gives me her full attention. (T1)

Jerry.6.gif: They listen to me if I talk and they tell people to be quiet when I'm talking. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: Kind of like what Jerry said. She lets me finish what I'm saying even if sometimes I interrupt her. She is polite to me and teaches me to be polite to others. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: She is really open about her feelings and she lets us talk about anything we need to talk about. This is kind of a silly example but she shows that she respect me. Instead of the principal seeing me one time when I wore jeans not with holes but they had scratches on it and so she was like, "I just want to tell you this before the principal sees you so just go down to the office and ask the secretary if this is ok. That way you won't get embarrassed by your friends or the principal telling you there is a problem". (T2)

Danni.8.gen: She is like really nice. Like she'll show respect you just by being nice to you. She won't chew you out for something. If you forget something she'll be like, well you can have one more day. She won't like pester you or something. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I guess because she listens more than I think she would being a teacher. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: Our teacher she like respects you but if you do something disrespectful, then she might snap at you or something but most of the time she won't like do anything to you that is unrespectful or whatever cause like she'll if you don't want to talk about something or you just don't want to do something she won't really make you. Unless it's something like really simple that you don't want to do because you are lazy. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: When I talk to her, I know that she is really listening to me. She really takes the time to help me and listen. (T3)

William.6.gen: He listens to us when we give our opinions on Monday mornings. (T3)

Richard.6.sped: In the beginning of the school year, we made smores. I asked her why we were making smores and she said it's because we are alive. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: She lets me talk with my friends. During most mornings, she lets us do what we want except get on the computer and talk too loud. (T3)

Thomas.7.gif: I don't really know how she respects me. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: She shows respect by watching over us and making sure we are doing the right things. She makes sure we aren't getting into trouble. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: Well, when I say something, she listens to me. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: She gives me her opinion. She will actually let us talk about what's going on and she can relate to it. (T3)

Braden.8.gif: She does treat us with respect. She wont' really try to do anything that is disrespectful. Most teachers will just say your name. She will sometimes call us Mr. or Mrs. so and so. She has that air about her to treat people with respect. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: Well, I don't really talk to her much. She does talk to me like she respects me. She doesn't talk down to me. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: She gives us our own time to talk and she really listens. (T3)

Question Fourteen

What do you like most about having a teacher advocate?

The students spoke strongly about the support they received from their CARES teachers both academically and socially. Knowing they have an adult in the building that is advocating for them individually created a sense of comfort and security amongst the students. The participants enjoyed having the opportunity to voice their feelings and opinions about school with their CARES teachers. In addition, the students expressed high levels of satisfaction with having a place each day where they could relax before starting the school day. Getting to know their teachers at a more personal level was also communicated through several of the students' responses. The supporting data using all three sources are provided below.

Richard.6.sped: I like my CARES teacher because she helps us get out of trouble. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: That you don't really have to go to every teacher and spread it to everybody. You have one person to go to and you get to know them. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: When you need help in a certain situation, she will help you and she helps you no matter what she is doing. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: Being able to express myself. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: Because we really don't have to work in the CARES class—we just talk about our problems. I really like Monday mornings. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: That she is there to help us if we need help. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I like that we can just ask her about anything. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: Well, it's not like other teachers like with science or math. She is a teacher that you can chill out with and with not a lot of work and you can know what is going on. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: She lets us talk to our friends and lets us take AR tests, if we ask. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: Just that we can talk to her anytime. She knows how we feel and she will keep it quiet. It's like having a friend instead of a teacher. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: If I come up to her and ask her things, she will help in everything. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: We get to spend more time with that teacher. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: That you can always come to them for advice. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: That they are always there for us. (T1)

John.6.gen: That we can talk about things that need to be addressed and be able to have fun with them and not be one of those students who hate coming to school just to have to deal with teachers. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: That sometimes she gives us some things to think about after we are done watching the clip. If we don't have a response, she helps us with that. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I like having a teacher to be there for us. If we didn't have someone to know what to do, someone might not follow the rules and could get hurt. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: When I forget things, she is always there to help me. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: To help us on our work and that is all, I guess. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: That they always help out when you need them. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: You know that teacher more than any other of the teachers. They become your favorite. It has become my favorite class. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: So I can have someone to talk to. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: It's good to know that I have someone to talk to if I need it. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: Well, I like the fact that we are getting help on things that she helps us with. I like the fact that she is actually caring about us and helping us do other things. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I think that a lot of kids do not get supported by their parents, and it's good to come to school and be supported by your teacher. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I like that she shows that she cares about us and that she does respect us. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: It gives us a time just to breathe a sigh of relief. I'm at school now and can watch this video and talk to Mrs. Jackson. It's like I don't have to worry about the day now. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I can't really think of anything. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: She is nice. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: Well, it's good to have a teacher that understands what we need to learn. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: If you have a question, she won't push you away and can't help you. She will help you with your problems. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I guess being able to complete the work that she helps me with. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: If we have questions, we can ask that teacher. You can come to them if you have anything you need to tell them or if anything is going on. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: You can go to the teacher if you have any problems and they will try to make it better and explain it. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I like having her because we can always relate to her thoughts and the stories she tells about her daughter who has already gone through middle school and is now in high school. (T1)

Kaitlyn.7.gen: Having someone to go to on Monday mornings and having someone to talk about things. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: It makes me feel safe and she teaches me things I don't know and helps me believe in myself. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I guess that she makes it easier to want to come to school in the morning. You know you are going to see her and she makes you laugh and things like that. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I like that they are nice to you and not mean like some of the other teachers. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: That you can always have somebody to rely on. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I feel like if I ever did need help, she would be there. She is just nice and I like her. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: It's someone to talk to if you have a problem. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: You can tell them what you think about something and they take it to a higher level. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I like that we can go to her anytime just like a counselor and she will tell us how to deal with things. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I like the fact that we get to talk about situations that you face at school. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I like it because you can't do everything yourself as a student. You have someone to share. They can't do it all their self. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: You can talk to them about things that you don't feel you can talk to with other people. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: The interesting and funny stories that we tell after we talk about the lesson. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: I can always talk to her. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: Well, if I ever just need help and I can't really ask my other teachers, I can always tell her, and she can talk to my teachers about it. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: I like that we go to the same teacher every morning every day. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: She is like a friend and easy to talk to whereas other teachers may not be as easy to talk to. (T1)

George.8.gen: It's someone that will always be there for me and one that I can talk to. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: That she cares about us and gets to know us well and will help us. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I don't really know. She is someone who is willing to help you. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I think that even though there is a counselor I can go to, she is more convenient to go to. It is easier to talk to her about things. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: He lets us shoot hoops sometime. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: You can talk to somebody and you know that you can trust them. (T2)

William.6.gen: I agree with Maverick. He lets us go and shoot hoops sometime. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: She lets us get on the computers and play. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: That you can have someone to rely on I guess you could say and that if things are getting a little out of hand she will always be there to help you straighten your problems out. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I think that what I like about having a teacher is that they are obviously older than us and they have already been through the problems we have been through so they know the situation that we are in. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: I like my CARES teacher because she is quiet. She doesn't bother me. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I guess it makes you feel better knowing that someone is there for you. (T2)

Gwen.6.gif: Some days she will bring a snack for us and it is really good. She has brought us cookies and doughnuts before. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: That you have somebody that you can talk to and you know you can trust. (T3)

William.6.gen: That he lets us play in the gym sometimes for the last couple of minutes. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like that it is someone who is there for you and listens to you and takes care of you. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I like that she actually talks to us and not just listens. She turns it into a whole conversation. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I think it is the advice that she gives us. Some of it is kind of old, but she does try to give us helpful advice. Some of the advice does help and I like that. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: If you tell them something that is wrong or you don't like something that has to do with the school, they can mention it to the administration, not in a complaining way. I have never had to say anything, but I think that if someone did want to, then they could. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: It is good to know that someone is there to help me with things. She has me do all my missing work and that helps me keep up. That is a good thing. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I guess because you know that someone is there for you. (T3)

Question Fifteen

What needs to be done to improve the relationship with your advocate teacher?

The students expressed a desire to get to know their advocate teachers at a more personal level. Students reported the need to know their teachers and for the teachers to know them. More one on one time away from their peers was mentioned by some of the students as well as extending the amount of time they have during CARES class. The students also spoke of having the opportunity to choose their teacher advocate rather than have one automatically assigned to them. The student responses supporting these findings are displayed using all three data sources below.

Sarah.6.gif: Probably to talk more in general because we don't really talk much. We talk to friends but we don't talk to her a lot. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I think we should be in CARES in the morning and the afternoon to get to know them better. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: Talking more. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I think more time in CARES group. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I think more CARES time is needed. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I could probably get to know her a little better and talk to her more. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: There could be 2 days that we watch clips. Like Monday and another day. (T1)

John.6.gen: Maybe we could talk a little more than usual. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I think there needs to be more one on one, instead of just everybody talking at once. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: Maybe if there was a day that we could get some alone time, she could be a secondary counselor to us. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I think we should have more time in CARES. (T1)
I'm not really sure. Maybe if she stepped up and tried to enjoy the class. She doesn't seem to enjoy it at all, it's just mandatory to her. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Maybe have the character education more than once a week. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I think we could possibly talk a little more, one on one. It's pretty much class talk. Maybe more individual topics would be better. (T1)

George.8.sped: Just talk to her. That's about all I know. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I think we need to be able to see our CARES teacher more during the day, like having a class with that teacher that is not a CARES class. Last year, I had no idea who my CARES teacher was. She didn't know my name until the end of the year. (T1)

Craig.6.gen: We need to be there a little longer sometimes. (T2)

Mark.6.gen: I agree with that. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I don't like having. Like we only have 20 minutes a day basically. And we have 20 minutes to discuss character education, announcements, and the pledge and we are working on a new project right now on bullying and I think we need more time with our advocate teacher because sometimes we don't not everybody gets to say what they feel about the subject or topic. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: Sometimes people will be talking and the bell will just go off and they might really be in trouble or something and then they just don't want to be in class and get into more trouble. (T2)

Carla.7.gen: I think that maybe like once a week your teacher should take individual students aside and talk about things you are too embarrassed to talk about with your friends. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Let you choose your CARES teacher. If I could choose my CARES I would choose Ms. Sort or Ms. Moon. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: I don't really talk to my CARES teacher that much so if we talked more about things that have happened to me and other students that would be an improvement. (T3)

Gwen.6.gif: I think it would help us get to know the teachers better and maybe trust them more. It may make them trust us more also. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: I think maybe we could get to pick our CARES teacher sometimes. If you switch them around, and when you talk to them, you could gain more trust. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: It would help to be in there longer. That way I would be able to build on trusting her. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: If she would talk to us about things that may have happened in her life, or what's going on in our school, that would help. (T3)

Rick.7.gen: We could talk more. (T3)

R-Remediation (Questions 16-18)

The remediation component of the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School takes place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Students who have missed assignments or who need extra support from their teachers receive opportunities to stay with their teachers and get the help needed. Periodically, the school creates content specific workshops or clinics designed for the purpose of boosting student achievement in identified areas of weakness. The school has conducted math clinics and writing clinics for targeted students while other students have a study hall session in the cafeteria.

Questions sixteen-eighteen were designed to identify the unique attitudes and perceptions the students have about the remediation component of CARES. The student data from these questions are provided below.

Question Sixteen

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, you have the opportunity to get extra tutoring in a particular area. Or, at times, you get to use CARES time to catch up on your work. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why.

The students at Kingsford County Middle School were very positive about the remediation component of the CARES program. The students appreciated the

opportunity during the school day to catch up on homework assignments and to complete projects. In addition, the students expressed their satisfaction with the tutoring and instructional support offered from their teachers during this time. The supporting data revealing these conclusions are provided below.

Sarah.6.gif: I like it because if you do need help or need to make up something, you have the time. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I like it because sometimes when you get homework you don't understand, you can get on of your teachers to explain it to you. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: I think it's really good if you don't have your work done or don't understand. You need to go so you can figure it out and then you should be able to do it in class, so your teacher doesn't get on to you. If you don't, you won't learn and have bad grades. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I like it because we get time to get caught up on work if we've been out. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I like it because if we don't understand a subject, we can go to that teacher to help us with it. Then we can understand it. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: I like it because since my mom is a teacher, she expects me to have good grades. When my grades are going down, I can ask my teachers for help. They are extremely helpful with this. I can learn new things in remediation. It's really fun. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: I kind of like it because if you're absent one day, remediation lets you catch up on all the work you missed the days you were out. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: I like it because it gives you the opportunity to get the teachers to help you with a subject. And it gives you the time to catch up on things and that gives you more time at home. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I do like it because it's just more time to catch up on work or projects. Sometimes we watch channel one. It's a good place to do homework. I don't always have my homework done. The teachers will let us work on projects early. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I like it because if we don't have enough time to do work at home, we can do it in CARES. We won't get in trouble. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I like it because if we are doing badly in a subject, like math, you can go and improve o it during that time. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I like it because if you are behind on your homework, you can catch up and do it. (T1)

John.6.gen: I like it because sometimes I won't finish my work in class. It helps me catch up with that and I will be able to pass to the seventh grade. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I like it because you might have been busy one night at home when homework was due. During those times in the morning, you can finish homework or study for a test. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I like that part because we go to places where we need help. If you need to take a test, you can go to that teacher's classroom. They have started the clinics where if you have a lower score and needed help, they would teach you more about it. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I like it because maybe you had something happen that you couldn't get your homework done. It gives you the chance to finish it. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: I like it because it helps us catch up with the other students in our class. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I like it because sometimes you don't have time to do your homework or you're lazy. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: like it because if you don't understand any of my homework, I can go to my teacher and she helps. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I like it because if you are behind on you work, you can finish it in those classes. We get special treatment if we are caught up on our work. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I like it because if I haven't finished my homework or I don't know how to do it, I can ask my teacher. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: I actually like it because in some part of the school year, I had to bring up some of my grades and it gave me time to do that. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I like it because sometimes I'm not able to get my work done at home. I'm so busy with other stuff. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I like it because you can study for a class, or read or just do homework. I can't think of anything that I don't like. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I like it that if we forget to do homework or get caught up in class, I have the time to do that. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I like it because if you didn't do your homework, you have a chance to do it. The extra tutoring in there helps you get caught up and it can change your grade. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I like it because it does give you a chance to catch up on work, like a test or homework. I like that very much about CARES. You can finish up on things before class gets started. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I like it because we can study for any tests that are later in the day. If we forgot homework, we can work on it too. We have time to read our AR's and get them in. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I like it more than anything because it always gives you that extra time to do your work and you don't have to worry about getting in trouble. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I like part of it because I like how we can catch up on our work. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: I like it because I could be behind on something and it gives me the chance to do it then. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I like it because you get to work on stuff that you need to achieve in school. They give you extra time to learn and it helps you a lot. You can catch up with your work. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I don't like it because the teacher I used to have to go to, she only lets us sit in the classroom and we can either read a book or sit quietly. We go to remediation and I complete all of my work. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I like it because you get to have the time to study and work on your homework if you haven't finished. It really gives you that extra time and helps you out. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I like it because if you had a lot of work to do the night before and you didn't finish your homework, it gives you the time to get caught up. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I like it because you get to catch up on things you may not have gotten to the other days or you get to do homework. Also, since you get to go to the teacher that actually teaches you, you can ask them if you have a question about that work. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I like it because if we miss days, we can go and re-take a test or ask for help. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I like it a lot because if you don't understand something you can go to that teacher and have extra time for help in understanding the topic. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I love it because if you had a test that day, you can study. If you couldn't get to your homework, you have that chance. You can catch up to where you need to be. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I like it because you get caught up and you won't get an F and get sent to the office for not doing your work. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I like it because if you missed work or don't understand it, you can go back and talk to the teacher about it. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: I like it because it gives me more time to catch up on my work, especially make-up work and homework if you didn't do it. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: I like it because if I didn't get my homework done at home for some reason, I can finish it. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I like this time, because if I need to go to an extra class I can do it. Sometimes I need that. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: I like it because if you don't get to finish work or do great on a test, you can get to make it up. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I like it because it gives students a chance to make up work and not fail a class. It gives them the chance to bring it up to a better grade. (T1)

George.8.gen: I like it because you get more work assignments that you can do and it helps with your grades. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I like it. It gives us a chance to catch up on homework and ask a teacher about that certain subject. During class, the teacher may not have enough time to work one on one. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I like it because a lot of kids have a project to do, like a current event. They will forget or don't have computer access at home…You can do it during that time. (T1)

Nadia.6.gen: I like it because it is just good if you need to finish your work before class and it gives you time to study for your test. (T2)

Jerry.6.gif: I like it. Same as the person who went before me. (T2)

Mark.6.gif: I like it because it gives you time to read if you want to or study for a test or finish your homework. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I like it because like if you need help on a subject of if you don't understand, you get help understanding better. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I like it cause they help you with your work and stuff. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I like it actually. I think that it helps me as far as we have remediation 2 days and it helps you because if you have questions about your homework at night at

least you can go to your teachers and get help and say hey I didn't understand this last night so it give you 20 minutes to get help. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I actually like it because you can catch up on your work. Like she doesn't really help you with anything, I just like it because she let's you do make up work or do something ahead of time. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: Um, I guess that it's ok, I guess I like the extra time to make up anything or read or just to have the time to yourself. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I like it because if there is a subject that you really need help on, you can go to that teacher that teaches it and they can help you break it down and understand it better. (T3)

William.6.gen: I kind of like it because they help you learn or if you need help with your homework, the teacher helps you a lot. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like remediation because you can catch up on your work and you can read books for AR if you need to. There's nothing really that I don't like about it. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I like it because I play sports and sometimes I don't have time to do my homework. It gives me the opportunity to catch up on it. I don't have homework as often and sometimes I may get in trouble if I don't have a book to read during remediation time. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I like it because it gives me a chance to catch up on work that I didn't finish the night before. I'm usually busy babysitting at night and don't get a chance to finish homework assignments that I might have. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: It can help if you are behind in your work. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I do like it. It helps us catch up on work that we didn't have time to do for homework or its work that we need to do for class or to get ahead. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I really like the remediation part. You are allowed to walk to the teachers and ask about it. It is your time to do what you need to do. (T3)

While the majority of the students had positive attitudes towards remediation, there were several negative comments worth noting. Some of the students described the remediation class as boring and unproductive. Other students shared their dissatisfaction with the lack of choices they had in what they could work on while in remediation. The students' negative attitudes and perceptions are provided below.

Richard.6.sped: I don't like it. I really don't get to hang out that much in band or gym. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: I don't like it because if you don't have anything to do, you have to watch channel one news. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I dislike it because some people don't have to do any work and we just have to sit there. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I don't really like it or dislike it. I don't normally have extra work to do. Everybody just usually sits there and does nothing. Maybe we read sometimes. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I don't like how we are assigned the places we have to go. Sometimes we don't need any help in that subject where we are going to. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I don't like it because most of the time, teachers are just focused on one student. It's not good for the rest of us. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I'm not really sure where to go. I go where all the students in my block go. It's confusing. (T1)

Libby.7.gen: Some teachers only let you work on specific things or they will just let you read and not do your homework and most nights I get home late and I need that time in the morning to finish up and they won't let me they will make me read a book. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: I dislike it because when you have remediation, like this past time they did teach me it, but this time I'm going to have math remediation. I know I don't need it because I pass the CRCT every time in math and I never failed it. I don't know why I need math remediation. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: I agree. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: I don't really like it because in our classroom we don't have desks. We just have chairs and so we can't really do our work unless it's in our lap like with a binder. Most people just kind of sit there and talk and wait to do it later. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I don't really like it because most people go to their 1st period teacher once the bell rings. My teacher makes me stay in there because she doesn't trust me. She doesn't trust me to work. She thinks I'll sit in there and talk, which sometimes I do I admit that but if I actually have to do something I'll do it. I don't like that aspect of it. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: I don't like it because we always watch Channel One news and it is really boring. I don't like watching videos at all. When students go make-up their work and they finish, we just have to sit there or read and not look at the news. I'd rather get on the computer and play games, be we have never been told we can do that. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: It is just boring. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I sit there bored. For the most part, Ms.Williams keeps me in her room so I can't really talk if I have everything done. I just sit there bored. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: The teachers are strict and mean. We don't have much social time at all, even if we are finished with our homework. (T3)

Question Seventeen

If you could give the remediation part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?

Question seventeen asked the students to give an overall grade of the remediation part of the CARES program. The purpose of this question was to identify a general overview of the students' perceptions towards remediation class. The majority of the student responses expressed their satisfaction with the remediation part of the CARES program. The students were glad to have a place to catch-up on homework and receive more individualized instruction from their teachers. Evidence supporting these conclusions are provided in the student responses noted below.

Richard.6.sped: I would probably give it a B because most of the time it helps people with grades. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I would give it an A because if you don't understand a project or have homework you don't' understand, you can go to that teacher to ask for help. (T1)

Christina.6.gen: I'd give it an A because you can go in there and finish work or if you have been out, you can do it and not make bad grades on it. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I'd give it an A because you get to catch up on work and get help with it. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: Well, an A because it helps kids get grades or assignments done and helps them get their grades up if they are doing poorly. It really helps kids because if some people who aren't really good at a subject or are having problems, they can ask their teacher to help them with that problem. (T1)

Sarah.6.gen: I would give it an A because some people really need to catch up and they have the opportunity to do it. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I'd give it an A because when you are out, they give you the opportunity to make-up work in remediation. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: An A, because I think I have typing class and it's helping me learn typing without looking. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: An A, because they give you a chance to catch up on your work. If you are failing, you can go there and ask for help. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I would give it a B, because it does help you catch up. But there is tutoring after school also. (T1)

John.6.gen: An A because I like to catch up on work, get good grades and sometimes you get to talk to your friends. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I would give it an A. They let us do our work when we might not have time to do it during the day. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: Probably an A because the teachers help us if we need it. They don't just look away. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I would probably give it a B. It gives you time to catch up and helps with your work. You can figure out why a problem works like it does. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: An A because it helps us catch up with other students and catch up on our work. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I would give it a B. It helps us on our work. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A because the teachers help you out if you need it. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: Probably an A, because sometimes we watch channel 1 and we get to work on some work for that day. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I would give it an A because it helps us learn more and be caught up. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: An A because I get to finish any work I haven't finished.

Harry.7.gen: I definitely give it an A. It helps other students other than me to improve and exceed in school. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I would give it an A because the teachers are taking time from their resting to help you more than they do in class time. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I think maybe a B…I just like the fact that it gives us time to catch up if we are behind. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: An A because it gives everyone that is willing to use the time appropriately, to read an AR book or catch up on homework or just do any kind of work assignments that will help you get farther along in their classes. You can even take test during that time. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: An A because it helps kids get caught up on doing work and if they need help with something, all they have to do is ask and teacher will explain it to them. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I would give it an A because personally, if I had something incomplete, I would go back to the room and finish it up, like homework. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I'd give it an A because if you ever had a test to take, it gives you the chance to go ahead and start on it. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would give it an A. It helps us like I said, when we don't have certain times for things or if we have questions on homework, we can ask that teacher and it gives us time to be able to do that and catch up on things. (T1)

Kaitlyn.7.gen: A B because I like going to the other classes instead of just going to the one all the time. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I would give it an A because you are able to learn and achieve more. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would give it an A. It really helps kids and gives them time to get their work done or study. It's really useful. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: An A because again, it gives you the time to get caught up. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I would give it an A because it helps you get caught up and stuff like that. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: An A, because we get to make-up any test or homework that we have missed or need to make-up. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I'd give it an A because you improve your learning with it. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I would give it an A. it's always quiet in those classes. You can study or talk with your teacher. It's nice to have somewhere to go to for extra help. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would give it an A because the teachers help you on work you miss when you were out or didn't do it at home. They explain it to you. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: An A because it helps you with your grades and helps you improve your grades and work. You can do better. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: An A because of how it lets me catch up on my work, like make up work. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: Maybe an A, because I think it's really good. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I'd give it an A…because maybe if I've had a rough night before, I can go to remediation time and catch up or if I have homework I can do some of it in there. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: An A because it's helpful. I few need help in that class or if we are out, we can make up work. If you need help, you can ask for it. Until the bell rings, that's it. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: An A because you get to catch up on work (T1)

George.8.gen: I would give it an A. It helps you catch up on work that you haven't finished. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: An A-. I think it's a good system that lets kids get help if they want or they can go elsewhere and have fun. (T1)

Ron.6.gen: I'd give it a B because we get to study and stuff. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: An A because if you go somewhere for you last block like if you have a cross country meet you can go to remediation to work on your homework and all the stuff you need to do. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: I'd give it an A because it helps you catch up with your work and its an extra class that helps you. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I would give it an A, I mean it's kind of going against what Jason said but it if I ever have homework and this happens a lot and I have to ask the teacher a question that gives me that time to do so…I like it. (T2)

Betty.7.gen: I would give it a B because say there is some math homework you don't get and it's due, your homeroom teacher can help you. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I give it a B because it helps me get caught up on my work. (T2)

Albert.7.gen: C. Because I finish my homework in class. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: I'd give it a B because some of the teachers let us keep talking and they won't let us do anything like they'll talk about something that will happen later in the day and they will just keep talking and talking about it and I can't focus on it. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: I'd give it about a C. Because there is only like one teacher that actually will come and gets you that you have remediation for and that is Ms. Nutting. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I'd say like A or B. I find it very productive. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I'd give it a D because Ms. Williams will she'll like keep me in there and make me do stuff. If I have something started at home she'll make me completely restart and she won't let me bring books to school or anything cause of the missing work and like the next time she sees me reading or something I'll instead get written up which, I really don't like that so it's just stuff like that I don't really like. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I would give it a B because you get to have time for your make up work and sometimes they let you just sit and talk. Well, my remediation teacher does. (T2)

Abigail.8.gif: I would give it an A because well if you're having trouble with something you can go to that teacher for help or something instead of going in front of the whole class which might be a little embarrassing if you're having trouble with it so you can just go in the morning and do that. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I'd give it an A. Most of the time, I think that kids need help on subjects that they really don't understand. If they need to get caught up on homework or study for a test, then they can do it during that time. (T3)

William.6.gen: I'd give it an A because they help you. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I'd give it a B because like I said, you can catch up on your work. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I'd give it a B because it gives us time to do our homework if we don't have time to do it that night. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I think about a B or an A because it really is helpful. Sometimes if I forgot to do my homework, or couldn't do it for some reason, during remediation it really helps to catch up or get started on work that I know we're going to be doing in class. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: Remediation helps you get caught up on your class work. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: It's a good time to get caught up on your work. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: An A because if you have work problems or questions about the work you have done, you are allowed to walk to the teachers and ask about it. It's your time to do what you need to do. (T3)

The students who responded negatively about remediation had various responses. Some of the students felt that the remediation time was boring and impractical. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of autonomy provided during that time as well as some negative perceptions towards some of the teachers. The student responses expressing their dislikes about remediation are provided below.

Rachel.6.gen: Probably a B, it is good that you get to go in and make-up your work, but after you're done, you don't really do anything. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I would probably give it a B because we usually just sit there and there's not much to do. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: Probably a B because when we do go there, we miss out on enrichment. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I'd probably give it a B. Sometimes the teachers are not always there to help us because there are so many students in our class. If we could break it up into smaller classes, it would be good. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I would probably give it a C, because I know you need the help. But you could go to one of your classes and have fun. I guess you have it that way in order to get caught up on your work and not have to be in there. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I'd give it a C because it's more school work. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: A C because I don't see that we are being that productive. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: Probably a B again because sometimes we have great classes where we need the help, but other times we don't need help in that subject. We just have to do the assignment that the teachers give us. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I would give it a D because it's not helpful for everyone. It's only for those who didn't do their homework. It doesn't really apply to me. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: A B because I think it's only because I'm with the wrong class. I don't know where my remediation class is. I don't really know the teachers. I go where my 1st period class goes. But I still get my work done. It's good. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I would give it a B, because when you are walking to your different classes and figuring out which one you are supposed to be in, some of the teachers get on to you for wandering. I have gotten written up for not being where I was supposed to. It's kind of confusing. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I would give it a B because we can't talk in the cafeteria. We should be able to talk a little bit, for instance, if we are studying as long as it doesn't get too loud. (T1)

Joey.7.gen: I would say a C because well like I say I really don't do anything there because I don't have much homework cause they give us enough time in class because the teachers don't really talk that much. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: There really is not a lot of time to read a book or finish your work and things like that. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: Most teachers won't let you work on what you need to get done on homework assignments. You may not have done math homework the night before and want to get it done. They won't let you do that and the teacher will make you work on something else, like a packet that you will be working on later that day. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: There's not really much of a point to it. We are always in one of our academic classes. It depends on what teacher also. Some will discuss a book we're reading or something like that, whereas another teacher sits at her desk and the whole class has to be silent or whatever. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: There isn't much social time at all. (T3)

Question Eighteen

Describe what takes place on a typical day of remediation class. Be as detailed as possible.

The purpose of interview question eighteen was to attempt to picture remediation class through the eyes of the students. The responses supported questions sixteen and seventeen as the students described remediation as a place to complete assignments, work on projects, and receive tutoring from their teachers. The student responses from all three data sources are detailed below.

Gwen.6.gif: You go to different classes that you need help with. Your teacher helps with things you don't understand. If you do understand it at that time, she allows you to work on it by yourself. You finish what you are working on and you can go to another class if you need help with that one. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: Sometimes I go to Ms. King for help with math. Sometimes, I go to Ms. Munson's class if I need a test or have been out. I may need to do a bookmark for language. I may go to Ms. Munson to read. She will ask why you are in there. You may

not be on her list. You tell her that you are in there to read. She is fine with that. I read my book until the bell rings. And then I go to 1st block. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: When we go remediation, we usually go to any teacher that we need help with. We go in and sit down. Then we raise our hand and the teacher comes over to us and helps us. I went in there today, because I need to re-take a test. We usually do a couple of problems to make sure we understand it. If we understand it and after we do the problems, we usually read. The teacher can then help other students. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: In remediation, if we had homework and didn't know how to do it, the teacher will help. She may show it on the board and tell us how to do it or how to improve our grades. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I think I've been in social studies once. I was having trouble and need her to explain something to me. It helped out a good bit. I asked her a few questions about one of the battles. I think it was World War II. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I go to where I sit down and ask the teacher if she could help me with my math. She said yes. I did a couple of problems with her and then she encouraged me to do some on my own and I did. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: You can get the teacher's help. They will tell you how to figure out the answer for a problem. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: We sit down in whichever class you needed help in. The teacher asks what you need help with, whether it is homework or a test. Then she helps you with it. (T1)

Beth.7.gen: We go in and if we haven't finished our homework, we ask our teacher for help. We may get to go on the computer or read a book. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: I walked in Ms. Hanger's room for remediation. If she had anything for us to do, she would give us the assignment. She would ask if we needed help. If we do, she helps us out and shows us how to do it. If we get the hang of it, we complete it ourselves. If we do a good job, she tells us what we have accomplished. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: We come in and she asks us if we have any work. If we don't have any work, we can read a book, or finish some homework. When we are asking for help, she comes straight to us and she doesn't skip over anything just to be done to sit down. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: One time I went to my math class because I needed to catch up on some work. She helped me by going back over the lesson we had learned the previous day to help me understand it. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: We leave our homeroom and go to our first, second, third, and fourth academic class. The teacher will tell us if you have to red an AR book or if she has

something for you to do. She tells you which one you can do, if you have other kind of work to do. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: When we go in there if she hasn't given us anything to do the day before, we will get out homework or something. If you have a question, you can just go to the teacher and ask her. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: Sometimes I've had work when I'm absent. I do work I need to make-up and that's all. (T1)

Thomas.7.gen: The kids who stay for remediation will stay where they are seated and wait for anyone else to come in. Mrs. Card is the science teacher, so its students who are coming in for science. The she will tell us what we are missing or maybe we just want to do homework. We will stay and do that until the bell rings. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: After we leave homeroom, we go to whichever class we have and take a seat. We listen to the teachers instructions. We follow any assignments that they give us or if possible, work on any missed assignments. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: We go to our remediation class and she gives us the work we have to do. We have to sit there and be quiet and do the work. She will help us if we need it. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: When we walk in, Ms. Handy will tell us to sit in our seat. If we have any work we have to do, or read a book, we are allowed to do that. If we have any questions about anything, we can ask her. She will give us a study guide if we are having a test in her class. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: It depends on what class we go to. We come in and sit there until the teacher tells somebody to do something. Everybody reads or talks. I don't think anybody goes anywhere to do work. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: We walk in and take a seat. She goes over stuff and if we have anything

to make-up or is missing, she tells us and we can do it then. Sometimes we study if we have a test. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I stay in Ms. May's room with my friend Katie. We do whatever work we need to make-up. Sometimes we do science, language, or math. We work on projects on the computer. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: We get into the class and sit down and get quiet. We read or go to the library or get on the computer for Study Island. We also get time to work on our homework if needed. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: Well, we go into the classroom and sit down. Usually the teachers are working with one student. If we don't have any work to do, we just read. Or if you

didn't do your homework, you can do your homework. People who have questions can ask.

Joshua.8.gif: Mrs. Lee just usually tells us to go to remediation or wherever else we need to go. You complete the work that you have for class and that is about it. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: If we don't have tests to make-up, our teachers will let us play games that involve the subject. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: We go from homeroom to remediation class. We sit down and either do homework or catch-up work and then the teacher can help you with the things that you wouldn't normally have time in the classroom to do. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: Right now we are doing the writing clinic. We are trying to persuade people on reading our stories and sticking to our side. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: You go into your class and if you have any work to catch up on or missed, you ask for it. If you don't understand you can ask for help. If there is something that doesn't make sense, she will answer your question. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Well, I walk into class and sit down in my seat. I will look through my agenda and things to see if I have anything to do. I will take care of that and if I didn't get to finish it, I will work on it throughout the day. If I don't have anything to do, I will just read. And then class will start. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: After we go to the CARES class in the morning, we go in and the teacher tells us what to make-up. If you need help, you can ask for it. Until the bell rings, that is it. (T1)

George.8.gen: We usually just get our work done and read. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: You go into class. If you have homework, you start on it. If you have a

problem, you can ask the teacher. She will sometimes give you a few problems to work on your own. When you get done, you typically sit down and read. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: Well, we walk into class and sit down. Usually the teacher will tell us to get out a book or homework that we have to do. I do what I need for that period. (T1)

Hannah.7.gif: For instance, yesterday, each week we have a different period we are supposed to go to, 1st block, 2nd block, 3rd block, 4th block, and when we go to those blocks the teachers will give you time to talk about that subject and then they will give you time to work on your homework or other projects that you might need to work on. (T2)

Macy.7.gif: Some teachers they make us work on some sort of stuff right when we get in there as yesterday I went to my fourth period and my teacher gave us a packet that we could work on that we were going to do in that class later on and it let's us get a head start on it but at the same time we couldn't work on other stuff that we needed to do. (T2)

Danni.7.gen: Well, we just walk in and sit down and then people in classes like yours they sit down and you go and ask your remediation teacher like if do you need makeup or do I need makeup work for you or can I go onto the computer to do an assignment for another teacher so you kind of do whatever she tells you to do. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: Us, we kind of just walk in and the teacher will write down who's there. We will like do work if we have any work that's late or like due that day that we didn't do. Mostly people just sit there and talk even if they have their work. Our teacher will just send us somewhere else if we don't do work. We'll get work and act like we're doing work. We will get work done most of the time but mostly we just kind of talk. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: For mine the bell rings for us to ring to go to remediation and Ms. Williams tells me to just stay there and do work. I'm always expected to do like three paragraphs in like two minutes and I don't know about some people but I just can't pick up and write. I have to think about it for normally a long time. I like to have the whole thing planned out. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: We pretty much just sit down and work on whatever. If we want to read then we can read or get on the computer…just whatever. (T2)

Gwen.6.gif: In language one time, I didn't understand how to do a particular problem that I had. I went to Ms. Cone and I understand it now. She just explained it more than she did in class. I think she had more time then. (T3)

William.6.gen: First we go to homeroom and then they dismiss you to go to Math or Reading if you need help. You wait for the bell to ring and then you go to 1st period. One time, I went to Mrs. Snyder and asked her to help me with my homework. She went over all the questions and helped me. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: After I leave homeroom and I'm called into there, I do all my work. Then I go to Study Island or just read. I will do that until the bell rings. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: We go to our CARES class and do the pledge. Then we go to our remediation, which is either first, second, third, or fourth block. The teacher will give us options to do any work for other teachers or for her or read your AR book. We do that for twenty minutes and then we go to connections. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: We go into one of our academic classes. If we need to do homework, we do that and if we don't have homework, we read a book. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: We go to one of our academic classes. We will sit down and the teacher will tell you to be silent and we work on whatever we have to do. But sometimes they will make you work on a certain thing for that class. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: We will walk into class and we will sit down and get out whatever work we have. We start working on it and if we get finished before the bell, we will talk quietly or read a book. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: We usually go to one of the academic classes that we have. We do work that we may have for that class. I always just go to remediation just to read a book or something. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I will sit down and get out a book or do homework or projects that are due or are close to being due. If you have any problems, you can ask the teachers. If not, you just sit there and read and get caught up until the bell rings. (T3)

E-Enrichment (Questions 19-21)

Question Nineteen

One day each week, students who are caught up with their work and do not need extra tutoring are allowed to go to enrichment class during CARES time. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why.

The enrichment component of CARES takes place one day each week per grade. Sixth grade enrichment is on Tuesdays, seventh grade enrichment is on Wednesdays, and the eighth grade enrichment is on Thursdays. Students who are on target academically (not needing any form of tutoring or time to make-up work) are assigned an enrichment class for the CARES period. Enrichment classes at the school include art, physical education, technology, band, keyboarding, chorus, and academic games. The purpose of the enrichment class is to provide students with the opportunity to interact with their peers in positive ways while providing additional instruction in an informal and engaging way.

Likes

The students liked the free time they got to spend with their friends during their enrichment classes. The enrichment classes provided them with opportunities to participate in a variety of activities. Several of the students indicated that the enrichment class served as a motivator for the kids since participation was contingent upon the students' successful academic performance. The student responses supporting these findings are provided below.

Richard.6.sped: I like it. You can do more things and catch up on work. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: I like it. You get to have some free time. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I like it because in Mrs. Gray's class you get to talk to your friends and do computer games. It's all educational. In PE, you play basketball and walk around and talk to your friends. In Band, those who play Band play their instruments. The students who don't, sit in the back and work on stuff or talk quietly to their friends. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I like it because it gives the students who don't have any makeup work, a chance to play and talk to each other. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: I like enrichment, but I have Gym and all we do is walk and shoot basketballs. That's not really fun to me. I think we should do something else in Gym enrichment. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I like it because it gives us time to talk to our friends and play. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I like it because we get to do fun stuff with our enrichment teachers. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: I like it. It's very fun. I go to Band and we get to learn new notes and get help if we have problems with our instrument or do pass-offs.(T1)

Jacob.6.gen: I like it a lot, because sometimes you don't have a class that you can go to for connections. You will probably get it for enrichment. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: I do like it because if you don't catch up with your work, you have a chance to and you can go back to the class. It encourages you to get all of your work done so you can go to enrichment. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: Enrichment is fun and I do like it. We can catch up on AR, read a book or relax and watch anything on the monitor. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I like it because it just gives us time to talk to our other friends who aren't in our homeroom class. (T1)

Andy.6.gif: I do like it because you deserve to have some free time. It's a good time to catch up with your friends. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I like it because you get to do fun things. (T1)

John.6.gen: I like it. Usually you get to have fun and talk to your friends. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I like it because we get to do fun stuff instead of work assignments. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I like it. We do mostly fun things. We do work here and there but it is also fun. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I like that part because you can go and have fun with your friends if they are in that class. You can shoot baskets if you are in PE. It's better than doing work in Remediation. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I like it. You can talk to friends. You have something to do instead of just sit around. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I like it because you get to play before classes start. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I like it because you are in enrichment class with your friends. But you are learning at the same time. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: I like it a lot. I think its fun because we get to go in there with some of our friends. We get to work on an assignment and not get a grade for it. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I like it because we get caught up on our work and get to have fun time. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I like it because we get to hang out and do fun stuff. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: I like it because it's not like a punishment, but extra time. You are doing something that will help you in life. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I like it because if you are doing PE, you are getting exercise. They are helping you with exercise and having fun. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I like it because sometimes you get to go to a class you've never went to. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I like it because it gives you a time to either learn something new or have fun before your school day starts. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I like it because it gives you a chance to talk with friends before you go to real class. You get to real class. You get to play around until you go to connections. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I like it. She lets us do games sometimes. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I like that because it gives you a chance to get started in the mornings with something like Lifetime Sports to help you get going. It gives you a chance to do a little something different. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I like it because it's good to go to a different class if you've done well. You may get to go to Gym and let out your energy in a class like that. You can relax and draw in Art or play games in Academic Games. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I like it a lot because it gives you the chance to relax from all the work and it gives you a kind of a feeling that makes you want to do your work more. That way you can go and have fun. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I like it because it's like where we get to go to fun things like gym and stuff. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I like it. That way, if we don't have anything else that we have to go to another class for, we get to do something else. That way we don't have to sit in a class, because we got a little bit farther on our work. (T1)

Caitly.7.gen: I like it because we get to go off from work in class time and just have fun. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I like it because you can go and do fun stuff. You can hang out with your friends. You learn stuff but in some classes you don't. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: Depending on what class I have, I like it. You don't have to work and you can socialize. You're not sitting at a desk, reading or whatever. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I like it! They're fun because we can either do technology, PE or computers or the library. We get to do new things and hang out with our friends. The teacher interacts with us, like sports or a guessing game. It's a lot of fun. That's why I try to get all my work done so I can go to enrichment. (T1)

George.8.gen: I like it because it gives kids free time to go and have fun in the morning. It gets pressure off your mind. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I like it. It's fun and it gives you a time to not worry about work and get ready for the day. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I like it because if you are caught up on your work, you have earned enrichment. It's a good time to have fun and talk to your friends. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I like it because if you are caught up and you don't want to sit in class for 20 minutes and do nothing, you can go to enrichment and have fun instead of doing nothing. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I like it because it gives us a break from our usual day. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I like it because I get to go to different places I don't have in connections. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I like it. It gives students a fun thing to go to. It's still learning. You come to school and can do something fun. It makes students want to do well, so they can go to Enrichment. It gives students an extra boost to want to do things. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I like it because if you don't have a connection, you can go to it for enrichment. You get to see your friends if you don't have them in your classes. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: I like it because my enrichment is gym. Of course, I love to play basketball. It's my favorite sport. You can talk to your friends if you have friends in that class. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: I like it because most of the time it's a really fun class, like Gym. You get to play with friends. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I really like this time. It's like a little break from school work and its fun. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: I like it because we kind of have a break from everyday school work. We learn new things in enrichment class and we get to hang out with our friends. (T1)

George.8.gen: I like it because it lets you go to classes that you are not normally able to go to. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I like it. It gives us a chance to go and have fun during the day, besides connection time. It gives us a break from the usual work in school. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I like it because it gives kids a break sometimes and it gives them something to look forward to when they get all their work done. They can take a break. (T1)

Kyle.6.sped: I like it because I'm in the 7th grade computer room and you get to play on the computer. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: I like it because you get to shoot hoops and stuff. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: Yes, I like it because it feels like an extra connections class for me. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I like enrichment because for the kids that do get their homework done and do get good grades it lets them it gives them like a reward and it gives them 20 minutes of time, its kind of like a recess I guess in the morning just do fun stuff. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like it because I have gym. (T2)

Abigail.8.gif: Um, I think I like it because you get to hang out with your friends and stuff in the morning. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like it because you get a reward for catching up on your work. It is really fun. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I like it because it gives people a reward for doing a good job all week in catching up on your work. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: You get to do something out of the normal and have fun. There are not any problems with enrichment. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I like it. It is fun to get out and do something in the morning before classes. (T3)

Dislikes

Some of the students were frustrated with not having the ability to choose their enrichment classes. Other students perceived the enrichment classes as repetitive as the same activities are repeated in several of the classes. The supporting data from all three sources are provided below.

Christina.6.gen: I like enrichment, but I have Gym and all we do is walk and shoot basketballs. That's not really fun to me. I think we should do something else in Gym enrichment. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I think that we should switch more than once a month. It gets boring after awhile. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I don't really like it, because we don't choose where we are going. Life if we get Band, some people don't play instruments so they just sit there and listen to the others practice songs. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I like it a lot. But I can see how it could be bad, if you didn't get the enrichment class you wanted. I got the class I wanted. If you didn't, you can still learn to do something new. It's a win-win situation. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I don't like it because it's kind of like another Reading and Language Art class. And I get a headache from reading. Reading upsets my head easily. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: Also, sometimes for most kids, if they are not caught up on their work, they will still go. There is no system to tell if they are really caught up or not. (T1)

William.6.gen: I dislike it because we do keyboarding stuff and you just type. (T2)

Joey.7.gen: Well, I don't like it because I have band and I don't have band and the teachers don't really like me because I'm in band. But anyway, they just don't let us do anything we just sit in the back and they don't let us do anything. (T2)

Kirsten.7.gif: I think we should be able to choose what enrichment to go to. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: I have had the same enrichment for like 3 months and it is getting so repetitive and I'm just tired of it. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: They should have certain slots sort of like first come first serve. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: Kind of like clubs, we get to pick our clubs here and we should be able to do the same for enrichment. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: I dislike it because I have had the same one the whole year. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I would say its fine but it depends upon what class you get for enrichment.

Mindy.8.gen: It really just depends upon which one I get and if my friends are in their so yeah. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I like if you were able to choose that and also your clubs and do like the same thing and if there is not enough you'd have a list that'd be good cause then you and your friends could see about getting into the same ones or maybe you'd get in someone with people who like the same one instead of random people in a random class. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I like it but I sort of don't like it. You have the same enrichment class. I think that we should get to change them every once in awhile to experience classes that we don't usually have. (T3)

William.6.gen: I dislike it because you don't get to choose where you want to go. If you want to go to PE or the computer lab or band, you should be able to choose for yourself. A lot of students don't like the class they have to go to. Most of it is boring to them. I think we should change enrichment to recess. My mom said when she went to school that every morning instead of homeroom; you would get to go outside and just talk for a little bit and play with your friends. Then you went inside to start learning. I think it should be like that instead of enrichment. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I wish you could choose the class you were going to. Sometimes we get stuck with something that we don't like. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I dislike the fact that we don't get to choose what you want to be in. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I don't really like it. Some people have classes that they've never been to, like band. The band teachers don't like it and don't treat those students the same as those in band. They get in trouble when they do something. One time I raised my hand to go get water and Ms. Smith got upset because I interrupted class. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: Some people don't enjoy the enrichment class they are in. They should get to choose since it is their reward. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: We should switch enrichment classes. Right now I have academic games. At first, it was fun. Now it is just kind of getting old. We are playing the same games over and over again. The boys are obnoxious now. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I dislike it because the whole year, I have had the same enrichment class. In some 1st period classes, like Ms. New, they will ask what you want. But my first period doesn't. If you have band as a connections class, you have to go to band. Otherwise, if you're not in band, you just get picked for a random class. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I don't like that you don't get to choose and you will get put in something totally random. Sometimes you get random people in there and a lot of times you may only get one friend in there with you. It could be a lot better if we could choose like we do clubs, first come, first serve. Or, list what you like. You would be with those who like to do the same thing. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I like it, depending upon what enrichment I get. This month, I have computers. I already know hot to type fairly quickly so I don't like it that much. (T3)

Question Twenty

If you could give the enrichment part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?

Students perceived the enrichment part of CARES as a place where they can have fun with their friends while having the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. Many reported that enrichment classes served as a motivation for students to keep up with their homework assignments and to stay academically on target since enrichment

classes are only offered to students who are not behind. The data supporting these conclusions are provided below using all three data sources.

Richard.6.sped: I would give it an A. I like it because you can play and hang out. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I would give it an A. I really like enrichment because you get to do something and play games. (T1) .

Christina.6.gen: I would give it a B. For one, you get to do something else besides your connection class. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: It gives us time to have fun and talk to our friends. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I would give it an A because it gives us time to break from the school work. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: Well, an A because it's kind of like connections. Every nine weeks we get to change it and it shows us how to do stuff. In Art enrichments, we get to learn how to draw pictures. It's really fun for me because I'm an artist and I like to draw. Enrichment is very fun. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: Probably an A, because it's really fun. You get to play things. In Band, you get to get ahead on your songs. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I'd probably give enrichment an A because it's like an award that says to kids, if I get my work done, I can go to this class. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: An A because if we get finished with all our work and are good –behaved, we are allowed to go and do something fun. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: Probably an A. It's a good time to get to know people better. If there is a new kid, you can get to know him if you don't have any classes with him. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I would give it an A because its fun and we don't have to do, like work-work. (T1)

John.6.gen: I would give it an A. I like it because I get time to spend with friends. It gives you more time to have fun and do work that you actually like. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: An A because instead of doing work we are doing something fun for awhile.

Karl.6.gen: I would give it an A because you can have fun with your friends and talk and not have to do much work. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I would give it an A because you get to do things instead of just sit around the classroom. You can talk with friends and organize your work. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I would give it an A. We get to hang out with our friends and play. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A. It's a time to have fun with your friends in the morning. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: Probably an A, because we don't have to get a grade for what we work on. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I would give it an A because it gives us more free time. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I would give it an A because it's fun. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I would give it an A because you are having fun. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I would give it an A because I think it's really fun that you can actually go to a choice of connections class and get to experience how that class goes. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I would give it an A. It gives everyone a chance to relax and just play around and not have to worry about the upcoming day. It kind of gives you a recess before academic classes. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I would give it an A, because like I said, it gives us a chance to get started in the morning if we don't have that class for a connection. It gives students a chance to try it out. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I guess an A because it's normally fun and it helps us calm down for our classes, so that we're not disruptive. I guess you can hang out with your friends and talk to them then instead of in regular classes. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I would give it an A. For one, it is fun and it's also just a time to get your mind off of what you've been doing for a couple of days and it helps you relax. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I would give it an A because most of the classes are fun and you get to socialize with friends. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: Definitely an A. Instead of having to work all the time, it gives us time to do something we want to do, but it's still educational. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Probably an A – Because we do have fun in there. It's interesting. We can relax and not worry about the rest of our work at the time. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I would give it an A+ because it's awesome.

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would give that an A because it gives us time to go to somewhere like computers and have fun before class starts. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I do like it because it's kind of a free time to relax. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I'd give it an A because if you earned it and you don't have any work to do, it's a good time to go wherever you are going to relieve stress from school. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I'd give it an A because you get to do something different than the normal standard. (T1)

Courtney.8.sped: I would give it an A because it lets us go have fun. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I would give it an A because you can go to the enrichment class and if you have work to catch up on, you can go back to your homeroom class and work on that. It also gives you the choice to come back and catch up on things you need to catch up on. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: A B because at school, you get to hang out with your friends and go to different classes. If you don't have a connection, you can go to that class. That is really cool. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: An A, because of course, you get to go to a connection class. That's always fun, especially Gym. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: Probably an A, because of the break you get from school and learning new things form that class that you are interested in. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I would give it an A because I really enjoy it. It's just a day to look forward to. (T1)

George.8.gen: An A because it lets you do a lot of things you haven't done during the school year. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I would give it an A because it gives kids something to look forward to. It's kind of like an award. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: A, because I love to play my instrument. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: A, because we get to walk around and shoot hoops. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: A, because it is fun. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I'd give it an A because you get more free time. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I would give it a B because I go to the gym and I like basketball it's really fun there. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: I give it an A because you get to hit people with ping-pong balls. (T2)

Harry.7.gif: In connections, I have technology and art. I get to go to life time sports for enrichment. If I was a new student and I wanted gym, remediation would give me a chance to see what it is all about. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like how you get an award for catching up on your work. (T2)

Joshua.8.gif: You don't just do class work. You do something fun. (T2)

The inability for students to choose which enrichment class they could go to was highly communicated in all three data sources. Students complained of the repetitiveness and boredom of having to go to the same class and do the same activities over and over again. Some of the students felt frustrated that some students ended up at enrichment class when they were supposed to be held back in remediation. They perceived this as unfair, and felt that the teachers should have a better way of ensuring that students are not out of area. The negative student responses regarding the enrichment component of CARES are provided below.

Gwen.6.gif: I would give it a B. Sometimes in Band, those who don't play Band just sit in the back of the room. You don't really do anything but talk to your friends. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: But for Gym, I really think we need to do something else besides only walking or shooting basketballs. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: A B because I don't like the whole thing where we have to change enrichments each semester. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: I guess a B because you don't have to do it all the time. It can get boring. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I'd say a B because it takes away some time from my first connection class, which is Math. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: Probably a C because some students can't participate in some of them. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I'd have to say an F, because I'm not really good at Reading classes. They give me a bad headache. I can't stand reading at all. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I would give it a B. If you don't have your work done, there is no way to tell if you really have it done. (T1)

William.6.gen: F, it's boring because we just type all the time. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: A B probably. It's fun to go there but it is so repetitive and when we play basketball people tend to go to different people's team and not even want to associate with different people. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I think I would give it a C because there is enrichments that are fun to certain people like I play basketball so me going to PE would be fun but if that is what you do every time it might not be as fun for them because they don't enjoy that game. (T2)

Joey.7.gen: I'd give it like a D- because we don't really get to choose where we go for that and like I said I have band and yeah. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: Personally I don't like band either so I can see where he is coming from. (T2)

Betty.7.gen: I would give it a C because it all depends upon where you go to and I have computers in the library and it's not really fun. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: Like I said, enrichment is supposed to be a reward and for people that don't get to choose where they go its not really a punishment but it doesn't feel like a reward. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: About a B. You might get something you don't like. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: I think I'd pick a D because I've had the same one all year. And Ms. Nutting, she just, if you are in band you have to have it the whole year. And then like, if you're not, she just puts you in some class. But Ms. Jones and other teachers, they'll ask you what you want rather you are in band or not. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I would say it depends upon what class the student has to give them a grade. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I would agree with that. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: Yeah, I would have to agree with that. (T2)

Gwen.6.gif: I went to band and Mrs. Lowry told us to sit in the back of the room so the band people could sit closer to hear her. I'm not in band and I don't have band as a

connection class. She told us that we could work on something or draw or read. When she told all the band people to stand up, she got mad because the rest of us didn't stand up. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: I'd give it a C because it is fun to talk to your friends. But I think we should be able to change our enrichment classes every once in awhile. I think there needs to be more variety in PE besides just shooting hoops and walking around. (T3)

William.6.gen: I would give it an F. You don't get to choose where you get to go. The only fun place is PE. Everything else is boring. Some students don't like the enrichment class they have to go to. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I would give it a B again because I wish you could choose where you go. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I'd give it a B-. The fact that you can't choose it doesn't make any sense. If you catch up on your work, shouldn't you be able to choose what you want to be in? (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I would give it a C. We don't get to choose it and some students are put in band. They don't have anything to do in there except sit. They don't' have band as a regular class. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I guess a B+ because we don't get to choose what enrichment we have. Other than that, it is pretty good. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I think about a C or D. I've had the same one all year. I'd like to have something like gym or art. (T3)

Phil.8.gif: If you need to do some make-up work for a teacher, there is no way to make sure they don't just go to academic games or something like that. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: As good as it is, it does have some faults. Like choosing and not being with people you want to be with. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I would give it a C depending on what you get. Sometimes you get an enrichment class that isn't fun or what you wanted. (T3)

Question Twenty-One

Describe what takes place on a typical day of enrichment. Be as detailed as possible.

Question twenty-one was designed for the purpose of gaining further insight on the attitudes and perceptions students have about enrichment class in the CARES

program. The student responses detailed the various activities that take place during the enrichment classes. Students participated in band, academic clubs, lifetime sports (gym), art, keyboarding, computers, and chorus. The descriptions provided by the students provided further support about the likes and dislikes the students had about enrichment and it also paints a picture of what students' experience during enrichment. The student responses supporting these findings from all three tiers are provided below.

Richard.6.sped: We play songs in Band and warm-up and we just play the instruments most of the time. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: When we go in we sit down and we wait for the bell to ring. Then we go to the enrichment that has been assigned which is Computer Lab. After we get there, she takes attendance. We play games that are educational, like Poptropica. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I'm in PE and we just play games and run laps and exercise. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: After homeroom, I walk to Gym and we sit in the floor and they call roll. If any other teachers need you, they will call your name out for remediation. They say you can either get a basketball or walk laps. I usually walk. We do this and then sit on the bleachers for a couple of minutes until the bell rings. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I leave my classroom and I look on the wall at the paper where everyone's name is to tell us where to go. I go to that place and usually sit with my friends and do whatever we are supposed to do in that class. I went to Academic Games a lot and Band and also Art. In Academic Games, we played games like pool or ping-pong or board games. I talk to my friends for the last few minutes of class. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: When we go to enrichment, whatever class we have, we go in and have fun. I like the Academic Games enrichment class because we get to play and talk with our friends. We can go get a game and play, something like Ping-Pong. We play until the bell rings. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: Well, at 7:55 I leave CARES to go to the Band room. I get my trombone and my band book and I go to the next room. We line up in pass-off order. We play notes. We do call and response with our instruments. I like that because I like playing my trombone. We pass-off songs and then the bell rings and we go to our first period class. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: Well, it kind of depends on which enrichment class you're talking about. In Gym we play basketball or walk around the gym. In boys and girls club, we play pool or ping-pong or foosball. In Band, you normally get to pass-off songs. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I use my enrichment class time for planning with FCA. We plan activities and whether we want to have a guest speaker. We discuss whose going to open up with prayer and reading scriptures, things like that. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: When we walk in the door, we find a seat. One the board, it will say Art class or whatever. We can get ahead start before we go to connections if you go to the same enrichment class as the connections. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I usually go to Art and I talk to my friend. We just draw and stuff. Sometimes we read a book. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: In keyboarding, we went into the library and Ms. Garrett would talk to us for about 5 minutes. Then we went into the computer lab and we would sit down and get on "Nimble Fingers" keyboarding. We would do that for the rest of class. Then we go to first period. (T1)

John.6.gen: We walk in the room and sit down. I go to Art. She will give us paper for free drawing. Sometimes she makes us turn it in before we leave to see how we have done. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: In computers, we play Math related games. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: In enrichment, after the bell, you go to the class that you were assigned. If you have Art, you can draw. In PE, you can run around and have fun like that and be able to talk to your friends. When the bell rings, you go to your 1st period class. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: It depends on where you go. In Band, you get to practice. In Boys & Girls Club, you get to play games. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I went to Academic Games and we play games like ping-pong. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: When we walk into the enrichment class, they call the roll. Depending on which enrichment you have, like in gym, you would play with the basketballs. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I go to the Gym. They call roll. We can either play basketball or walk around the gym until the bell rings. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: After we are done with homeroom, we look to see what enrichment we are to go to. We go and do what is there for us to do. I usually go on the computer on Cool Math.com. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: Well, in enrichment you don't have to have a certain thing to do. It's like free day, but we have to clean up. If you are in Art, you could help that teacher clean up. She will give you a dragon scale. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I actually have Band as my enrichment. I get to go and play my clarinet and get more practice. We usually just play the music that we normally have in Band class. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I have computer for enrichment. We go in there and wait for the teacher to call roll. Then we get on the computer and play games. One of the games is Cool Math and other times we do Study Island. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I usually go to the computer lab. Sometimes Mrs. Gault lets us play games or do Study Island. We sit there until the bell rings and then we go to connections. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: When the bell rings, we go straight to our enrichment class. In lifetime sports, we go to the center of the gym and sit down. Mrs. Evans will call our names to go to the side. We either shoot freely at the basketball goal or we walk around until the bell rings. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: We meet in the library and Ms. Garrett asks us a question about the computer and if we get it right, we go to the lab. In the computer class with Ms. Garrett you learn about different types of hardware and stuff and practice typing. You learn about Microsoft and Firefox. She has something written on the whiteboard, like a question that we'll need to look up. She may want us to practice our typing. If we have any questions, she will answer them. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: We will go to whatever enrichment class you have. I went to Gym and coach took roll. He lets us play basketball for a little while and we can socialize while we are playing. When the bell rings, we go to our regular classes. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: We go into our enrichment class. Mine is computers with Mrs. Gault right now. She tells us to sit at any computer and we can sit by our friends. We get to play math games, like Cool Math and things we like to do on the computer. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: You go to your enrichment class and do whatever you are supposed to be doing. I'm in Academic Games right now and we play ping-pong against the boys. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: When we go to Gym, we usually play basketball and have fun for a little while before we have to go back to class. We get to hang out with friends. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: You will walk in and sit down and if you are in the Media Center for example, she will call the roll and ask a question about what we have been studying and if we get it right, we can get on the computer. If we get it wrong, we have to stay there until we get one right. Then when the bell rings, we leave. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: It really depends on where you go. I've been to computers for enrichment and you sit down and log onto the computer. You go to a site that's been approved by

Mrs. Stanley or Mr. Dibbles. An example is Freerice.com. You stay on the website until its time to go. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: We go into Art enrichment and we write our names down on a board to take attendance. Then we sit down and draw whatever we want to, unless she has a specific assignment. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: After we leave homeroom, we will walk to our enrichment class. The teacher will take roll and make sure we are where we are supposed to be. I went to the gym most recently and Mrs. Elder took roll and while she was doing that, Coach Williams got out the basketballs and we shot baskets until its time to go to our first academic class. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I usually will go to Mrs. Bell's office and I participate in recycling. I go to other classrooms and pick up paper from the recycling bins. We take it to the janitor's office. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: We go from homeroom to the enrichment class. Whatever the teacher has set up for us, we do until we go to first period. Like in Technology, she teaches us about keyboarding and how to look up search engines on the internet. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: Usually we go to homeroom. Then the first bell rings. We see what enrichment class we go to. It's listed in the hallway. We go to whatever class we have. Enrichment classes change every month. I've had gym one time. In gym, we have about 15 minutes to play with friends. It's definitely fun. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: You go to enrichment class, sit down and they will explain what's going on that day. You usually go and do that particular assignment for that day. They usually give you about 5 minutes to talk to your friends. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Well, lately I've had Gym. We wait and Mrs. Evans checks to see if we are supposed to be in there. If we are, she will tell us to line up against the rail. When everybody is accounted for, she lets us play basketball. (T1)
Tucker.8.gif: I went to Band and started playing my instrument. There's not much to do in Band, other than play and instrument. I went to the library one time and we studied over the Technology test that we are having in 8th grade. Ms. Garrett helped us out with that and made sure we knew the answers. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: After we leave our class, we go to whatever enrichment we are assigned. If it's Academic Games, we sit down and she tells us something about respect, etc. After that, we play a game that has to do with that topic. (T1)

George.8.gen: We get there and see whatever teacher we have. Like Gym, you get to play basketball or if it's Band, you'll get to learn new stuff about music. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: Last week, I went to Academic Games. I went in and some people just laze around on the couch, or played foosball. Some were sword fighting with pool sticks. It can be wild. But it can also be fun, depending on what teacher you have. Sometimes it gets out of hand. Usually it's fine. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: When you walk in, you see people socializing and having fun. I was in one of my classes, and a lot of kids were running around and some were reading. Some will not leave you alone. It can be very annoying. It's loud sometimes. (T1)

Mark.6.gen: I usually just walk across from the gym into the band room and warm. When everybody gets in there she usually tells those who are not in band to be quiet because we are trying to learn. We do some pass offs and play some songs. Those not in band go to the other room and I'm not sure what they do there. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: The people who are in chorus go and practice singing. (T2)

Jerry.6.gif: In the back where you are not doing band you have to do work. You learn about a composer. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: I used to be in band and then I'd quit and now I have to do those worksheets but now what I do is go into the art room and free draw. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: I like it because when we are in gym we get to go and shoot hoops. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: We'll come in and do the pledge and then we'll sit down and talk a little bit. Today we talked to Mr. Harris for a little bit asking about what we are going to do for the day. The bell will ring and we will go. We had a fire drill for the day and it was kind of short. They just try to schedule different things so it is not interfering. (T2)

Albert.7.gen: We go in and listen to the announcements and then ask what we are doing the next day and then go to the gym and play basketball. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: We go to homeroom, do the announcements, and then go to enrichment and I have Ms. Glenn and she doesn't really care what we do as long as it is educational. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: I usually walk down the hall, talk to my friends, usually go the bathroom. I usually sit down and play ping-pong or play pool. Last time I was in enrichment class we were playing ping-pong, playing with metal spoons and we had a bouncy ball. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: Well, I have computers so whenever I walk in you kind of just sit down and then that computer teacher will come in and she'll let you, well you have to go onto an educational website. Mostly it's just a website called "Cool Math" that has math games on it. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I have academic games so I just go in there and sit on the couch and talk. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: I'm in band, but we get in there and get our instruments and Ms. Lowry will make us play our music but some students are in there but don't have band and have enrichment so they just kind of sit there and Ms. Lowry will just start talking about something and then she'll make us play for the rest of the class. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: We usually just play games and run laps and exercise. That is what we have done every time so far. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: We go to wherever class we have for enrichment. I have PE. They call roll when I get there. It is sort of boring. All we really do is either walk around the gym or shoot hoops. We do get to talk to our friends. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I usually go to my homeroom. The bell rings and I go to the art room. We draw and talk to our friends. That is really about it. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: We go to our CARES class and do the pledge and stuff. We wait until the bell rings to go to enrichment. We do whatever activities for that enrichment class that we have. I went to PE and all we did was play basketball for twenty minutes. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: Right now is the first time I have something other than band. I have computers now. We go in and sit down and log on the computer. We usually play some kind of math game, such as "Cool Math". That is all we do until the bell rings. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: Right now, I have art. I go in there after homeroom. She will tell us to work on a project we have if we have art as a connection class. Otherwise, she will let us free draw or work on assignments or talk to our friends. That is all that happens until the bell rings. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: Since I am in band, we will walk in and pull our instruments out and go to the bigger room. We play whatever song or what Ms. Lowry tells us to play. We will do pass-offs or we will practice songs that we need to practice. We do this until the bell rings. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: The bell rings and we get out of homeroom. We walk down the halls, talking to people. I have technology and I find an open computer and see what other people are doing. The first day we did typing and today we went to "Cool Math". That was fun. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I will usually walk by a door to another homeroom. My friend and I will walk to the library and go to the computer lab together. We sit down and pull out the website that she wants us to go to. We will just sit down and type for the remainder of the time. The teacher will walk up and down the aisles, checking on us to see how we are doing. (T3)

S-School Spirit (Questions 22-24)

Questions twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty four focused on the attitudes and perceptions middle school students had towards the school spirit component of CARES. The school spirit portion of the CARES program takes place on Fridays. The purpose of the school spirit component is to foster a strong sense of pride and community within the school. In addition, every student in the building has the opportunity to participate in a school club or activity since the school clubs are embedded into the regular school day. Pep rallies are held at various points throughout the year to recognize athletic teams, band, chorus, and various student clubs for their success or to get ready for a big event. Guest speakers occasionally come in and speak to the students on topics such as bullying and drug prevention, goal setting, and others.

The students can participate in two clubs. Club days rotate every other week and the students report to their clubs immediately after the morning announcements. At the beginning of the school year, the students are given a survey sheet which allows them to pick in order of preference, the top five clubs in which they would like to participate. The students are then assigned clubs according to their interests.

Question Twenty-Two

Friday mornings are designated for pep rallies and school clubs. What do you like/dislike about the pep rallies? What do you like/dislike about morning clubs?

The student responses from question twenty-two revealed what students like and dislike about clubs and pep rallies. Students communicated that they enjoy pep rallies and clubs because they are fun and relaxing and the activities gave them a chance to come together as a school and visit with students from other grades. Many students

reported that they liked the communication they received from the school administration during the pep rallies. Others spoke about how fun it is to be able to get excited and cheer on their friends. Those recognized for their athletic or extracurricular achievements spoke highly of being able to be recognized in front of their classmates and teachers. The data supporting these conclusions are provided below using all three data sources.

Richard.6.sped: I like clubs because FFA is where you take place in animal shows and buy animals like cows and pigs. Pep rallies are cool too. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: I like how we get to go to clubs and can choose our clubs. I like pep rallies. It's fun watching the cheerleaders. The principal talks a lot and we get to know what's going on. He talks about our sports and how we are doing. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I like that they recognize the teams and the cheerleaders get to cheer for the players and get the students excited. With clubs, I like that everyone is usually in at least one club. If they are not in a 2nd club, they can go to study hall if they can't find a club. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I like the pep rallies because it gives us a chance to be loud and I like school clubs because we get to choose our clubs and do stuff that we like. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: I like the pep rallies because we get to watch other people do their activity, like sports or chorus or band. It's fun. I don't like the fact that we've never won the spirit stick. I like clubs. They are fun and we get to learn different activities. I'm in Band and get to practice. I think that part of clubs is helpful. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I do like them because we get to hear things about the school that we didn't know, like visitors that come in and teach us about certain things. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I like pep rallies because it's about school spirit. I like clubs. It gives us another break from the school work on Fridays. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: Pep rallies are fun. We get to see the new teams and I like to be in there, because on spirit day I like to cheer for 6th grade and the team and try to get the spirit stick. I like clubs because they are really fun. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: I like pep rallies. One time when they were trying to get us loud and cheer, my throat started hurting. It was kind of a mild hurt. I like clubs. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: I like the pep rallies because you have extra time to listen to Dr. Lance or Mr. Brown talk to you and give reminders of what's coming up. You get to see people

you haven't seen before. I like the clubs because it gives you more free time to do activities and meet new people and learn about new things. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: The pep rallies are really fun. The spirit stick gets everyone pumped up about school spirit and makes sure everyone feels good about our school and making it a good influence. Clubs are fun too. We get to pick at the beginning of the year and most of the time the clubs are actually fun. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I like pep rallies just because we don't have to go and sit in CARES class and have to talk. The only thing I don't like is that we have to sit in the bleachers for a long time. I like clubs because we sometimes get to hang out with friends that are not in our grade level. We get to chat and have fun. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I like them both. At a pep rally, you can show your school spirit. In clubs, it's kind of like another connection. A lot of people like connections. (T1)

John.6.gen: The thing that I like about pep rallies is that you get to catch up on events. In clubs, you get to learn about things. For example, in FCA you get to learn about a religious subject besides the other academic things that you really already know, but you don't really need to know now. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I like pep rallies. We get to see our teams and who is on the team. I like the clubs because they are fun and we get to choose them. They didn't choose the clubs for us. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I like both of them. I like pep rallies because we get to talk for a little bit and then Mr. Brown or Dr. Lance talks to us about things we are doing to do during the week. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I like the pep rallies and the clubs. I clubs, you can go into something you like to do and when you do that, you can come up with ideas on upcoming events with that club. With pep rallies for a team, if you have a friend on that team, you can cheer them on with school spirit. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I think clubs are fun because we get to play basketball with our friends. I am in Lifetime Sports. (T1)

Christina.6.gif: I like the pep rallies because they are fun. It's fun to see what sports are going on during that season and who's on the teaMs. The clubs are fun. If you get assigned to a club with a friend, you get to hang out with them. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: I like the pep rallies because we are allowed to get really loud and talk a lot. We get to sit with our homeroom teachers and friends. I like clubs a lot too. I'm in TSA club and we do a lot of fun activities in there. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I like the clubs because you get to hang out with your friends and learn and have fun. I like pep rallies because they cheer on our teams and get them all pepped up for the games. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I don't like having to sit in the bleachers all the time, but I do like the energy that you feel. I like clubs because we get to do something fun. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: I like pep rallies because it's a chance to hang out and have fun with friends. I like clubs because some clubs help out with the school. An example of helping out with the school would be Peer Helpers. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: The morning clubs I like because you can hang out with your friends and have fun. I like the pep rallies because if you are in the pap rallies, it's kind of like CARES. They teach you and you get hyped up and you are having fun. In CARES you have a lot of fun too. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I like the pep rallies because it gives us a chance to show our school spirit and the fact that we love our school. I like the clubs. I like that we get to choose the club that we would like to go to. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I typically like pep rallies. They get you pumped up and it shows school spirit. It gets everybody together to reinforce the school. It gives everybody a chance to get loud, since you normally can't be loud in the classroom. It gives everyone a chance to yell and scream at school. It recognizes athletics and clubs. I like clubs because I have Yearbook. It gives me a chance to get caught up on pages and take pictures. I have that for both clubs. It's a good time for people to buy a yearbook. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I like pep rallies because if there is a game on that day, you can get ready for it and get excited. What I like about clubs is that we get to have fun. I have Lifetime Sports and I think it's really fun. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I like pep rallies because I get to see the cheerleaders cheer. I like clubs too. I'm in Academic Games for clubs. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I like pep rallies because it gives us a chance to get pumped up for a team, like basketball or a championship game. I like the clubs because there are certain clubs that you enjoy. People, who like to dance, can go to dance. That's a good thing with clubs. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I like the pep rallies because it lets us let off steam. They usually see what grade is more supportive of the teams and gives out the spirit stick. We learn about what events are coming up. I like clubs, because they are fun and interesting. You learn about interesting things like TSA and Lifetime Sports where you get to run around and play basketball. You can learn about different subjects. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I like pep rallies because it gets the school spirit up on everything. I like clubs because, again they are fun and you get to socialize. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I love pep rallies. If we are on a team, it gives us our moment in front of the school. It gives other students a chance to be excited and pumped up before a game. I like clubs too. It's an extra time for us to do fun things. I'm in Yearbook. We find fun backgrounds and things like that for our pages. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: Pep rallies are good because we get pumped up. That's bad for class though. As far as clubs, it depends on what club you have. I have Future Cities. It's not very much fun. It's not what I thought it would be and it's for both clubs. So I don't have another club to go to. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I like the pep rallies because we always get our school spirit and we have fun. On Clubs, we get to choose where we are going, so I really like it. We don't have to do much work. It is relaxing. We don't have to do as much as in class. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: I like the pep rallies because it gets the school pumped up for a basketball game or some other game. I like the clubs. I think they are fun. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I like them all. With the pep rallies, you get to watch our cheerleaders express themselves. It's fun to watch it. We get to see what they have been working on for us. I like clubs because you get to do fun activities. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I like it all. I like pep rallies because we get excited about anything that we're there for. We can scream when we are allowed. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I like the pep rallies. Everybody gets to go to the gym and scream. There are times you have to be quiet. Clubs are fun because we get to go to the gym or computers and have fun and do activities that are approved. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I like clubs because they are fun and they just give us a chance to have fun. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I like the pep rallies because it's a chance to see who the student athletes are and gives them the recognition they deserve. I like the clubs. It's a good time to learn what is going on in the community. My clubs have a lot of community service involvement. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I love the clubs because you get to be a part of something. You don't have just one, you get two. If you like two different things, you can be a part of both. I like pep rallies because they wake you up and you get to cheer on your teams or chorus or a group like that. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I like all of it because it lets us have free time and hang out with our friends. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I like the pep rallies because the whole school gets to participate. It gets you excited about things coming up and things going on right now. With clubs, I like that we get to choose what we go to. We don't get to do that a lot. (T1)

George.8.sped: At pep rallies, you get out of class for a little while. You get to watch the cheerleaders and team members. In clubs, you get out of class for a while. They make you feel like you are welcome there. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I like the pep rallies because you show school spirit and have fun. You get to watch students perform and get ready for what they have to do. You can wish the teams' good luck and have fun. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Pep rallies are fun to watch but I'd rather stay with my friends instead of sitting with my homeroom. Life Time Sports is one of my clubs. I'd rather go to Lifetime Sports than the pep rallies. I also have Beta Club and that is a fun club. I have lots of friends there. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: I like the pep rallies because we get out of classes. We get to cheer for the spirit stick and that's fun. I can't really think of anything I don't like about it. I like clubs because you can hang out with your friends. My club is Academic Games and Activities. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I like pep rallies because you can celebrate a victory that we've had or team work and it will wake you up in the morning if you're tired. Clubs are fun. I like clubs because you can choose your club. That makes it interesting to go and do something that you like. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: The pep rallies I like. If we have a big basketball game, people will get interested in supporting them. As far as clubs, you get another break from school work and don't have as much. You can learn new things and hang out with your friends. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I love clubs because if you are doing something you like to do, it's a ton of fun. Assemblies are fun most of the time. They can be really boring, but I like the whole speech thing when Dr. Lance will come and talk to us. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: Pep rallies are cool because it gives a chance for the sports teams to show their effort and gives a chance to win the spirit stick. They get a chance for all the grades to cheer them on. I like my club, the Youth Act. I like my club because I get to help out with what the school does, like a dance. Last time, we had some shirts made and we got to choose what type of shirts we wanted. (T1)

Stanley.8.gen: I like pep rallies because you get to express yourself and have school spirit. Clubs are good. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I like the fact that we miss class for a pep rally. We sit with our CARES group. Most of the time we just talk. Most of it is boring though. I think it's good we

recognize the sports teams. I like clubs. I have TSA and that's a really fun extra-curricular activity. It gives us a chance to learn about any new technology that's out there. It helps us learn how to use technology in every day life. I don't really have any dislikes about clubs. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I think the pep rallies are fun. It makes whoever the pep rally is for, feel appreciated. I like the clubs because it lets you try something different. Maybe you didn't have dance or chorus for a class. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I like the pep rallies. It gets the students pumped up for the day. Sometimes that's not good because they want to talk a lot. Everyone is excited and it doesn't help the teachers out. I like the idea of clubs. The only thing is the variety of clubs. Some could be changed. (T1)

Nadia.6.gen: I like pep rallies because I sometimes have to do them because I'm a cheerleader. They are fun because you get to show spirit and you get be loud. (T2)

Albert.7.gen: I like it because the cheerleaders are down there I guess. I have computers so I like it. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I have this club called FCA and it stands for fellowship of Christian athletes and at school you are aloud to talk about religion and stuff but you don't get to discuss it on a daily basis. I am a Christian and I believe in God and everything and I think I should be able to express my beliefs and I like that at FCA I do get to discuss that stuff and we do talk about life and how precious it is and how we talk about the bible. I like pep rallies because I do play sports and it does give me a chance to be recognized and the sports that I play. It does sometimes get us fired up but the last pep rally we had it wasn't so great. I like it when Dr. Lance or Mr. Brown will talk about some announcements and what we are going to do that day and they will recognize teams. The cheerleaders will perform and we do this thing when they pick two people from each grade level and we do this thing called the spirit stick and it did get us fired up. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: I kind of like clubs a little bit because we got to pick clubs and I got what I wanted and we do TSA which is pretty fun and open band. And pep rallies like I don't know why but they wake me up because I scream and I don't get to do that. (T2)

Jordan.8.sped: I like my first club because I get to dance. Yeah, it's fun. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I like pep rallies because you get to watch the band play and the cheerleaders and what they've been working on. I like clubs because you get to do different subjects. (T3)

William.6.gen: I like clubs because I get to do Reading Bowl every Friday. I get to read the whole time. I like to read. (T3)

Richard.6.sped: In FFA, they tell you about different types of animals. The shows you go to are neat. For pep rallies, you get out of class a lot and get to see people talk and cheerleaders do their thing. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I like clubs because you get to choose your clubs. (T3)

Lloyd.7.gen: I like pep rallies because you get to be loud and you get to have a lot of school spirit. I like clubs because you get to choose what clubs you want to be in. I got the clubs that I chose. (T3)

Rick.7.gen: I like it because you get to sit next to your friends. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I like it because everyone is really loud and happy. It gives us a chance to start the day on a good note. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: After a pep rally, we are all bouncing off the walls when we get to class. We got second in the state with Future Cities. That was really cool. (T3).

Devin.8.gif: Clubs are probably my favorite part of the CARES program. You get to pick where you are. A lot of your friends are in the same one. You get to have fun doing what you want to do. It's a good thing to do that before your classes. You can have fun and then go to class. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I like the fact that we do have pep rallies and that we can show support. I really like clubs. In the beginning of the school year, you get to choose which club you go into. You choose it by what you really like. You have that time to do what you really like. (T3)

The students reported their dissatisfaction with clubs in not having the opportunity to choose or change the clubs they were assigned. Others stated that the pep rallies took up valuable class time and felt that they are a waste of time. Several students felt that the pep rallies would be more fun if they did not have to sit with their CARES classes in the bleachers but instead sit where they want with their friends. The dislikes students expressed about Friday morning school spirit days are detailed in all three data sources provided below.

Sam.6.gen: The only reason that I don't like pep rallies is that they are really, really long. We have to sit a very long time and it causes my back to hurt. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: The only thing I don't like is that we have to sit in the bleachers for a long time. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I like clubs but I want to switch mine. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I don't like pep rallies. You are very crowded in the gym. A lot of times it's boring. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: What I dislike about pep rallies is that the cheerleaders are there all the time. It is kind of getting boring watching them do the same thing. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I don't like having to sit in the bleachers all the time. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: The one thing I don't like about pep rallies is that sometimes they're not the funniest things ever. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: As far as clubs, it depends on what club you have. I have Future Cities. It's not very much fun. It's not what I thought it would be and it's for both clubs. So I don't have another club to go to. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I dislike them because sometimes we run over time and miss part of our first class. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I don't like pep rallies because we have to sit in classes and it takes away from our club time. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: Pep rallies….I like them but I don't like the fact that we have to sit with our CARES group. I think that we should be able to find our homeroom teacher, check-in and then go sit where we want. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: We always have pep rallies on first club week. It's not fair time for each club. It should be spread out more so both clubs get equal time. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I kind of don't like the clubs because you have the same one each week. You might not get the club you really wanted because it might be full. You might get stuck with a club you don't like. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Pep rallies are fun to watch but I'd rather stay with my friends instead of sitting with my homeroom.

Julie.8.gen: But it can be chaotic. Some kids can't find where they're supposed to be sitting. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I like the idea of clubs. The only thing is the variety of clubs. Some could be changed. (T1)

Kyle.6.sped: I hate the pep rallies because you have to just sit there and watch people do stuff that is boring. (T2)

Mark.6.gif: Pep rallies they are ok. I don't really like them and it kind of wastes class time. The clubs, I like the clubs but I wish we could change the clubs every quarter because you don't want to be in the same club all year. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: I don't like the pep rallies because every time I leave I end up with hurting ears. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: I don't like the pep rallies because you end up missing clubs. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: I like clubs but the only thing I don't like about it is because you don't get to change them. It's good to experience different clubs, but I like clubs. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I agree with Carrie. (T2)

Jerry.6.gif: I think it's kind of stupid that you can't have lifetime fitness if you already have PE. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: I also agree. You should be able change clubs because I picked one I thought would be good but I don't like it. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: It is stupid how like you first choose your club once you do you have to stay there because what if you get it mixed up. (T2)

Mark.6.gif: What Jerry said. You aren't aloud to have Lifetime sports if you have PE. If we were aloud to change our clubs, for one I wouldn't pick lifetime sports again but I couldn't because I'm in PE now because our clubs change every semester. Like right now, I'm in lifetime sports and PE. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: Clubs should be like connections where they change every semester. (T2)

Joey.7.gen: Pep rallies, I don't really like because there is not really a point in them. I mean, we don't really do anything. Like for wrestling, all they did was announce us and said we had a good season but we didn't even win a match. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Well, in the morning when we always have the pep rallies and stuff I always wind up missing my first club which is youth act and yeah, I don't like that. I've only been to youth act 3 times. We always miss it. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: One thing I don't like about pep rallies is that they make you sit in your homeroom which is with the same gender so I don't like that. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: My teacher if you lean back, she gets mad and makes you sit up and it hurts your back. (T2)

Abigal.8.gif: I kind of wish we didn't have to sit with our homerooms during pep rallies. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: See I actually like Pep Rallies if it would take the place of 2nd clubs because I have dance. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: Yeah, I'd like pep rallies a lot more if we could sit with our friends instead of with our CARES homeroom. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: I also don't like pep rallies because everybody is squeezed together. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: I don't like that we just sit there in the stands. That gets kind of boring. I think we need to change clubs every once in a while though. (T3)

William.6.gen: I don't like pep rallies. You have to just sit and watch them and you don't participate. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I don't like that after awhile you don't' get to change your clubs. I don't like pep rallies. To me, they are just boring and I get headaches and earaches. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: During the pep rallies, I don't think it's fair because they only recognize the sports teams and not any academic teams. (T3)

Rick.7.gen: I think the pep rallies are boring. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: They don't really recognize the academic clubs. The math team may have won an award and they don't get recognized at the pep rally. This school year, I didn't get to choose what clubs I wanted. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I dislike the pep rallies. I don't see the whole point of the spirit stick. Through the rest of it, students don't listen unless they are concerned with whatever team or group they're talking about. Most people just sit there and talk amongst themselves. I don't like the fact that sometimes, we skip the first club because of a pep rally. I think it would be better if it were first club, second club, then pep rally. Then go back to first club instead of completely skipping one of the clubs. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: We have to sit in the pep rally and listen to them talk and talk and talk about things we really don't care about, like discipline and our behavior and being quiet. We have to listen to the chorus sing and the band play. I don't like having to do that. It would be more social time if we didn't have to listen to all of that. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: We don't usually show support at all. I guess most people don't want to be there. It's not that we aren't happy for the teams; it's more that we don't want to be there right then. It's too early in the morning…that type of thing. It's kind of like we are just stuck in the gym in a little tiny space. (T3)

Question Twenty-Three

If you could give the school spirit part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?

The explanation for the positive and negative grades given by the students from question twenty-three reflect the responses given in question twenty-two. Students liked the pep rallies because they were fun and relaxing. The students were able to cheer on their peers, be recognized in front of their peers, and receive important information from administrators and teachers. Students enjoyed school clubs because of the autonomy they receive in choosing their clubs. The clubs time was engaging and gave them time to informally interact with their classmates before starting the day. The positive feedback received from the responses from question twenty-three are provided below.

Tier 1: Individual Student Interviews

Sarah.6.gif: An A because we have school spirit and have fun on Fridays. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: I would give it an A because on Fridays, it helps you end the week and know what's going on during the week with games and activities that are coming up. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: I'd give it a B. Because everyone stands up and shouts for other people and tries to get the spirit stick. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: An A because clubs are where we get to have fun and talk to our friends. (T1)

Sarah.6.gen: An A because it lets you get involved in other things. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I would give it an A. Most of the time students are pumped up about school spirit and how good our school is and the teams and the athletes. They really care about their friends that are athletes. They care about Big Green! (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I would give it a B, because the clubs are fun. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: An A because you get to see every team and whose on that team. It's fun being in the gym with the whole school. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I would give it an A because you get to cheer on your friends and anyone else you may not know. It shows a lot of school spirit. In the pep rallies, you don't have to sit quiet the whole time. You can yell for your friends. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I guess an A because you can show that you like the school and you can show school spirit. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A because the pep rallies are fun and they get you pumped up for school. The clubs are fun too. (T1)

Diane.7.gen: An A. I think it's really fun to stand up and cheer and go for the spirit stick. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I think I would give it an A. It really peps us up for the rest of the day. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: I would give it an A because there is a lot of energy and happiness going on. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: Definitely an A because we have students that help us show school spirit, such as the cheerleaders. It is fun to watch them cheer. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I would give it an A because a lot of kids here are so excited to come to this school. This school teaches you right from wrong. The teachers are always there to help. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I would give it an A. I think that Friday's are always so much fun. We get to talk with our friends and participate in clubs and cheer for the teams. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: I would give it an A because it gives you time to get pumped up about your school and come together and unite as a school student body and that doesn't happen a lot. (T1)

Henry.7.gif: I would give it an A because it gives us a chance to recognize the players for the sports, and shows our school spirit by going to a home or away game. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: I would give it an A because if you're in any kind of sport, it lets you know that you're helping out the school and you have school spirit. You're helping out the school and lets you know to keep up the good work and keep school spirit. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: An A because the school spirit gets up and sometimes the pep rallies are fun. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would give it an A again; because it kind of helps our teams get pumped up fro their games and lets them know their school supports them in whatever activity they are doing. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I would give it an A because it's fun—especially if you play basketball or whatever. You get recognized and its fun to be able to cheer on the athletes. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I would give it an A because usually the cheerleaders perform and we have spirit contests to see which grade is the most is fired up. (T1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: An A because I think our school should be excited about our games and have school spirit. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I would give it an A because they show a lot of school spirit for the school. They cheer for our school. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I would give it an A+ because its fun and we get to interact and scream and yell. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would give it an A because we get to have free time to sit down and relax and not have to go to class. We get to cheer for whatever is going on. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I would give it an A because well, I guess during the pep rallies they definitely try to get you pumped up. I think it would be better if we could sit where we wanted to. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: I'd give it an A because it gives the athletes who participate in school sports the time and recognition they deserve. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I would give it an A+ because it gives you time to be proud of your schoolmates and accomplishments they've received. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: An A because it is exciting and everyone gets into it. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I would give it an A. Pep rallies are just fun. With the clubs, you get to experience different things and choose what you want to go to. That is pretty cool. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I would definitely give it an A because it's really fun for everybody. Friday morning you get to have a little fun before the weekend. It definitely wakes you up in the morning. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would give it an A because everybody supports school spirit. They want to help out. I guess that's why we have a party for the staff. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I would probably give it an A because it is fun and you get to hang out with your friends. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: Probably an A, because I love to be loud and yell. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: Probably an A, because of the fun we have. It gets competitive with the other classes. We joke around and have fun with it. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I would give it an A. We get to play games in our class and we get to have fun and have a break from work. (T1)

George.8.gen: I would give it an A. Everybody participates and everybody likes it a lot. (T1)

Jerry.6.gif: I would give it an A because I like it. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: For the pep rallies I give it an A because you can be loud and clubs. (T2)

William.6.gen: I gave clubs an A. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I like watching the cheerleaders because they do cool stuff like flips and stuff. (T2)

Betty.7.gen: I would give it an A because Friday's are just the funnest day of the week for me. (T2)

William.6.gen: I would give clubs an A because I get to read during clubs. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I would give it an A+ because clubs are really and I like how you get to be loud in the pep rallies. Everyone is having fun. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I would probably give it a B because I like the pep rallies and clubs. (T3)

Rick.7.gen: Clubs are fun. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I would probably give it an A. It is just a lot of fun. I enjoy that aspect of CARES. (T3)

The negative responses from students, similar to question twenty-two include their frustration over not being able to change or choose clubs, that pep rallies take away from class time, and that they have to sit with their CARES class in the bleachers for long periods of time. The data supporting these conclusions are provided below using all three tiers.

Richard.6.sped: I would give it a C because they could give us more time to learn about FFA and stuff like that. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I would give it a B because not many people have school spirit. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I would probably give it a B because sometimes you might want to sit with some of your other friends. You have to sit with the same people every day. Sometimes you might want to talk to some other friends. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: The pep rallies aren't that fun. It's just seeing the teams and we don't really do anything. (T1)

John.6.gen: Probably a C; I'm not really a spirited type of guy. I'm not in sports. I come to school to learn and catch up on what's going on in the world. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I would probably give it a B. Pep Rallies take away our class time. I don't know anything else. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: I guess a B, because sometimes the pep rallies and clubs are boring. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I would give it a C because kids don't want to cheer if no one else is cheering. They are kind of embarrassed. That part of CARES is not appropriate. If everyone actually had school spirit, it would be a lot of fun. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I would give it a B. It's a good effort to try and get kids to like school, but it doesn't work that well. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I would give it a B because its fun to yell and scream and get pumped up for a game, but sometimes they have to talk to us. Although I understand speeches, they can be long sometimes though.(T1)

Kyle.6.sped: I'd give clubs a B because you can't change. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: I'd give it a C because in the pep rallies you have to sit there the whole time and you are not doing anything really you are just watching people do stuff and the clubs. (T2)

Mark.6.gif: Probably a D or a C because the pep rallies I don't really like them that much but the reason…it's not like an F because it just wastes class time. You just its fun but you can't switch them a lot. (T2)

William.6.gen: I'd give pep rallies an F. Pep Rallies is always the same thing every time. They don't do something new and it's boring because we never get to go down there it is only the football players. (T2)

Carla.7.gen: I would say a D because when I go in on Friday morning I'm not really awake and you go in and here a bunch of yelling and screaming and I get headaches really easy so. (T2)

Albert.7.gen: A C because really we just sit there and listen to other people. We get to play games and stuff on the computer. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: I would probably say a B for the pep rallies because they only recognize the sports and not the academic teams. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Probably a B or a C. It just makes us scream our brains out about spirit. We are louder than the 7th graders and they win. They're squeaky voices make them win. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: I would have to agree with Lee because I don't think that many people in 8th grade really care about winning a stick that is colored brightly. I would give it a B or C. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I agree with those two. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I agree with them. (T2)

Abigail.8.gif: I agree. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: I agree. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I agree with Jeremy because of the stick thing. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Yeah we don't even see the stick thing. We don't. I don't even know where it is at. (T2)

Tabitha.6.gif: We are just sitting up there and watching. It can get boring. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: I think that the activities we do are fun, but they should be changed sometimes. We shouldn't stay in the same club all year long. (T3)

Richard.6.sped: We need more time in clubs to talk about the different kinds of animals and what kinds of shows they have. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I just don't like pep rallies. They are boring. (T3)

Rick.7.gen: Pep Rallies are boring. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: Some people see the pep rallies as pointless and we don't recognize certain people who may have gotten a reward or something. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I think about a B or a C because some of it is fun and part of it is boring when we just talk. I think it would be better for everyone if we talk about something other than the next basketball or soccer game. (T3)

Phil.8.gif: Most kids just think it's kind of stupid. There is no real point to it. They make a lot of effort to be peppy, I guess. But it doesn't really work. Most of the students think it is just lame. (T3)

Question Twenty-Four

Describe what takes place on a typical Friday during CARES. Be as detailed as possible.

The purpose of question twenty-four was to capture a glimpse of the way middle school students' perceived CARES class on Friday mornings. The data provided below supports the previous responses noted in questions twenty two and twenty-three. The data revealed the variety of student experiences depending upon the types of clubs they have as well as the various extracurricular activities they may or may not be involved in.

Richard.6.sped: In FFA, we sign up for animal shows and buy animals like cows and pigs. We talk about shows for FFA. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: We will go into CARES and listen to announcements. We wait for the bell. You can take your books and things to Clubs. My clubs are 4-H and Computers. We go in and play games in Computer Club. In 4-H, we discuss what's going on in 4-H and the events that are coming up. Sometimes we do activities. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: In Dance club, they teach you dance moves like the Cupid Shuffle or the Thriller too. We just learn the dances and then when it's almost over we have to put the tables back. There are so many kids in Dance club that we have to move the tables around. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: First, I go to homeroom and get our stuff. The bell rings and we go to either first or second club. My second club is Dance. We put our things away and the teachers come in. We dance and right now we are learning to dance the Thriller. After the bell rings, we put the tables back and leave. On pep rally day, we go into the gym. We sit on the bleachers and the teacher takes roll. Then the pep rally beings. The cheerleaders will do their tricks and flips. The sports players are recognized to show what they do. In chorus or band, you play and sing for them. They will tell us what door to go out of by grades when its time to leave. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: Well, we leave CARES and go to our first or second club. I'm in FCA and computer games. I like FCA because I'm a Christian and we get to talk about God. We get new visitors. It's fun to hear about their life as a Christian and how God has helped them. It's really nice what they went through. In computer games we play games like Cool math. It helps me with my Math. It's very exciting. I can talk to my friends. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: Sometimes we watch DNN. We talk and read. I have Band and Safety Patrol for clubs. In Band it's just like connection class. In Safety Patrol, we talk about different things. We talked about vandalism and the penalties if you get caught. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: On a normal club day, we either have an activity or have a speaker. When we have an activity, we pick out volunteers and let them participate in the activity. If we have a guest speaker, we will open up with prayer and the guest speaker will talk to us. They tell a story or read scripture and read out of the Bible. We will let him close with prayer. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: Usually, one of my clubs is Computers. We go on the internet and play games. Me and my friend will talk and stuff while we are playing on the computer. At a pep rally, we try and earn the spirit stick for our grade. We haven't earned it yet. I've tried the best I could. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: In clubs, I and some other kids go to FCA. Since I'm a leader, we will either get a guest speaker or have an activity for the group to do. In pep rallies, we would stay in the gym and go to our assigned sports on the bleachers. Dr. Lance would introduce whatever team he has. He gives out the spirit stick and then we would go back to our first period. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: In Chess Club, you are pretty much independent in there. We set up the chess boards and find a partner and play until the bell rings. The beginners get help from the teacher. (T1)

Tonya.6.gen: We just sit there and talk to our friends and do our homework. If our friends are in there, they can help us. She takes attendance and we leave. I go to Mr. Lively for Chorus. The people who don't want to sing can just sit there, but you can't talk. It's rude while someone is singing. Those who do sing can go into the bathroom and warm-up. You don't have to be prepared. You can just sing any song that you are thinking of. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: When we have our clubs, our teacher usually takes the roll and we talk before we leave. We go to our individual clubs. I have dance for 1st club. At the moment, we are learning a dance to Thriller. In the pep rallies, teachers take the roll. We sit down and cheer for all the teams. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: When we go to clubs, we walk there. During TSA, all the officers decide what to do that day. Mrs. Sam usually has an activity for the whole group. I am in Band club also. We go in and help the 6th graders learn scales and some other music. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: Well, I go into my club which is FCA. Roll is called. Sometimes there is a guest speaker and they tell us about their life and how it has affected them. We can ask questions. And then we pray at the end. On pep rally day, we go into the Gym. The teachers call roll. We do the pledge and sometimes somebody sings The Star Spangled Banner. We have the moment of silence. They introduce all the team players that are on

a specific team. Sometimes the cheerleaders do a little routine. Sometimes the band plays songs. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: During my Peer Helpers club, we will come in and work on assignments that would help the school, such as recycling. During pep rallies, we come in and they have some type of music playing. I like that and I like showing school spirit. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: Well, on Fridays, we usually get to sit anywhere we want and talk to our friends until club time. One of my clubs is Youth Act. We talk about the problems in school and how we can fix them. We talk about dances and how we can make things better, like the agendas. We could make them smaller and pocket-sized. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: We leave homeroom and go to Yearbook which is in Mrs. Game's room. Then we sit down and she will tell us deadlines and we will be able to plan out pages and solve problems with our pages. We allow students to buy yearbooks during our club time. On a pep rally day, everyone goes to the right side of the gym and Dr. Lance or Mr. Brown will come out and speak to the student body. The cheerleaders will usually perform at the pep rallies. Mr. Brown usually asks you to get loud and he will go over the Dragon Bees. They introduce a sport or club, sometimes it's a fundraiser. They give out the spirit stick, which for the 3rd consecutive quarter, 7th grade has won. That's pretty much it. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I go to Academic Games for clubs and I usually play games. My other club is FFA. We learn about animals and sometimes we go to the High School or JMS to look at the animals. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: On a club day, we come in and do our usual routine and call roll. When the bell rings we go to our club. If its 2nd club, I stay in the room for Peer Helpers. We brainstorm about dances or recycling. Computers are my 1st club. We find a computer, long on and go to school approved sites. We play games like Cool Math and stuff like that. If its pep rally day, you stay in the gym and we find where we sit with our CARES group. It will have your CARES teachers name on the bleachers. We sit down and our CARES teacher will call roll. The pep rally will get started. We watch the pep rally where we recognize the sports players and get ready for a tournament, such as football or basketball. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: We get into our CARES class and we either watch DNN sometimes if they have it. She tells us where to go for our clubs. I went to the computer lab and we go in there and we get to either play games or work on any work assignment. We get to do anything on the computers, pretty much. We can listen to music on the computer if we want to. The bell rings and then we go to connections. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: Right after CARES, we go to our clubs. Mine is Yearbook for both. Mrs. Grey tells us to sit down wherever we are at. She will give us the books and find backgrounds. We will modify the pages as far as names and pictures that go with the names. Sometimes we look at pictures for the yearbook. (T1)

Kaitlyn.7.gen: One of my clubs is study hall. If we have a test, we study for it, maybe with a small group of friends. We can read also. In pep rallies, we sit with our CARES group. If there is a game, we get pumped up and go for the spirit stick. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: You go in and take roll, do the pledge and talk about the stuff and talk about the teachers day. I go to our computer club, where we do some kind of scavenger hunt on the computer. Ten minutes before we go, we get off the computer and show everybody what we have done and discuss it with the class. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: In dance club, we go in and there are a lot of my friends in that class. We sign in on the sign in sheet and we practice the Thriller dance. We will dance and make complete goof balls of ourselves and have fun. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: After homeroom, if it's a pep rally we are in the gym. I sit with my friends before we go to sit with our homeroom. Sometimes we get to sit with our friends. Then we wait for one of the principals to start talking. We get excited when the cheerleaders cheer or any of the sports teams come out. We get to be a part of it. I got to sing one times with the football players to pep up our side. On club days, I have Leo Club and we basically talk about what activities we are going to do with service work or any prayer request that anybody has. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I has PASS club so I find my friend, Cindy and my other friends. We will go into the warm-up room and after we warm-up, my friend will sing for the class. By that time, the class is done or if we have extra time, someone else will sing. If its pep rally day, I will go and find my homeroom in the gym. Usually I have to climb over people to get to it. We sit and listen to whatever is going on. Each pep rally is different. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: After going to normal CARES teacher and taking attendance, you listen to the announcements and go to you club, depending on which club it is. I have Lifetime Sports, which is pretty much PE. We play basketball for 20 minutes again. That's still pretty awesome. If it's a pep rally day, you are either being announced as a sports group, chorus member or band member or another group. If you're not in those, you can cheer on your team. Then we go back to class. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: Mrs. Garner usually takes roll and asks if we need to talk about anything. Then we either go to clubs or a pep rally. I have Peer Helpers for my club. We make posters and we may talk about either planning a dance or recycling. If we go to a pep rally, we would stay in the gym and the teacher takes attendance. If the band plays, we go get our instruments ready and play. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: This morning I went to the Art room because Art is one of my clubs and we did a project that we've been working on since I've been going to that club. We go to describe six things about us and make it all colorful. I'm a cheerleader and I'm usually in the pep rallies. We get to stretch before the pep rally and warm up our stunts. We get the crowd all fired up and excited. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I have FFA. We talk about animals. We talk about having fundraisers. In FCA, we talk about religion and stuff. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: We go to our club and wait for everyone to get there. We take roll. My club is Chorus. Mr. Lively picks someone or volunteers go up and sing. We sing a song all together at the end. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: During a pep rally, we are already there in the Gym. I wait for the teacher to check me in. We stand up and cheer for the spirit stick. For clubs, they announce that clubs are starting. When I get to Academic Games, I try to get to the computer first. If I don't, I play a regular game or watch someone else on the computer. We play Cool Math games. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: When we have pep rallies, we go to the CARES homeroom class and take roll. We usually have fun in the gym during pep rallies. The team usually does something, like the boy's basketball team may have a chant or the cheerleading squad has a chant. Then we go to 1st block. After we pick clubs, they tell us what we do in the club and talk about different stuff. I have Gym and Academic Games. Sometimes we play games or talk about different topics. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: We go to the gym and if we are having a pep rally, we stay in the gym. Then we head to our 1st block. If it's a club, we go from homeroom to club. I used to have Leo Club, which is where we talk about our future meetings. In Reading Bowl, we meet in the library or some other room that is open and talk about reading bowl and answer questions. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I'm not really an officer in Youth Act. I would just sit there and listen to what they say. On pep rally day, I just listen to the principal. I watch the activities that are in the Pep Rally. (T1).

Phil.8.gif: We usually get in Mrs. Sam's room and then students will filter in for about 10 minutes. We try to get everyone organized to do a team-building exercise or a project.

Julie.8.gen: My club is chorus. When I walk in students are sitting and talking. We take attendance. We let kids sing to get used to singing in front of other people. We have fun in there. (T1)

Mark.6.gif: We walk in, coach is in the office usually and then he takes attendance and then he goes back into the office and then when the bell rings we go to our club. My clubs have changed. I'm in reading bowl so I haven't been to 1st clubs in a while but last time I was in lifetime fitness we just shot hoops. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: For both of my clubs I have FCA. We sit down and take attendance once everybody gets there. We read stuff out of the bible and do different activities. It's pretty fun. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I have that computer thing. Because I thought it was going to be the FFA thing where you get to go places and do things and my 2nd is safety patrol. When I go to 1st club we take attendance and then go on the computer and play games like cool math. In 2nd clubs we talk about safety and sometimes we do activities. (T2)

William.6.gen: For both of my clubs I do the reading bowl. We walk in and take attendance and read books. We use the buzzers sometimes and answer question. (T2)

Ron.6.gen: My 1st club is TSA and that and computers. The 1st one we just sign in and then we do a little activity and then we can play games on the computer. And my 2nd club we take roll and just play games. (T2)

Nadia.6.gen: For me, since I'm usually down on the court performing its kind of fun but it can be embarrassing if you mess up something. For me, since I'm not in the stands its different but it's kind of fun. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: Like first when the bell rings we go in the gym and we sit in our classes and I think its fun because like you get to watch the cheerleaders and its cool to see what they are doing and sometimes you get to hear the band. And if the chorus sings, I'm in chorus and its fun to be in it. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: Pep rallies, I usually get there when we are about to go and I sit down in the 5th row and then my ears start to hear because my ears start to hurt and I go to the nurse. I usually talk and then it starts. That's about it we usually just watch…we listen to the principal talk and we watch people talk and um we don't really cheer when we are supposed and then that's about it. Um, Dr. Lance will talk about whatever the pep rally is about. (T2)

Macy.7.gif: Well, we go to our homeroom and we do announcements and say the pledge. The bell rings and we go to our clubs and we get to do say if you go to band you play and if you have PE you play basketball and then you go back to class. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: Well, I sit in my homeroom, we do the pledge and announcements and then we go to 1st or 2nd clubs. For 1st clubs I go to band and play my instruments and for the 2nd club I play basketball. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: On Friday morning if it's a pep rally I usually just sit where my class is and I don't really move and I end up just talking to my friends throughout the entire thing. And if it's a club me and my friend we walk and since we really don't dance we usually just sit there and talk. More or less, they do want us to dance, but we don't because me and my friend would probably just be making a fool of myself so I don't go there. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: We go to homeroom and get my stuff. I go to Safety Patrol or Computers for my club. In safety patrol, we talk about things that happen and what we shouldn't do, like character education. In computers, we just get on Cool Math. On pep rally day, we

go to the gym and move over to the 8th grade side. Then we just watch the pep rally. We watch somebody perform. They call out the band or a sports team. They have cheering for the spirit stick. Then we get our stuff and go to class. (T3)

Tabitha.6.gen: On pep rally day, I will go into the gym and talk with my friends. Then we get moved to the other side and listen to the pep rally. Usually the cheerleaders perform and sometimes it's the Band. That's about all that happens. (T3)
.
Richard.6.sped: We go in and sign in on the sign-in sheet. Mrs. Pettigrew will ask us if we bought a cow and animal shows. We talk about the animal shows. (T3)

Abby.6.gen: If we have a pep rally, we just stay in the gym and we watch the cheerleaders or band or sometimes the chorus. Mr. Brown or the principal will talk a little bit. Sometimes we yell and scream for our grade level to show how much school spirit we have to get the spirit stick. During clubs, my 1st club is Art. Last time, we got to paint whatever we wanted. That was fun. In Dance, I think the dance we're doing is fun. (T3)

William.6.gen: During pep rallies, you just sit in the gym until Mr. Brown starts telling you to go get with your CARES class on the other side of the gym. We watch them do cheers. Sometimes the basketball players and band go down there. You don't go to your 1st period until the whole pep rally is over. On Club day, you go to your homeroom class until the bell. Then you head to your club. I go to Reading Bowl for 1st and 2nd club. We meet in the library and practice on the buzzers and read. That's all we do. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I guess for the pep rally, we will be sitting in the gym and they will announce on the speaker that we are going to start the pep rally soon. We all move to our assigned CARES group area. They start recognizing all the tournaments won and just good things that happen for the school. On club day, we will go to homeroom and the bell will ring after the pledge and the announcements. I go to Mrs. Stairs for TSA club. She will start telling us what we're going to work on. We have been doing leadership games. We haven't really gotten to start anything because we haven't been to 1st club in weeks. We had a sub last week. I don't think the club schedule is balanced out. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: We sit down in the CARES class and do the pledge. Then Mrs. Gains will tell us which club we go to. We go to that club. I go to Band for 1st club, and for 2nd I go to Lifetime Sports. In band, the teacher takes attendance and each grade level gets to play a song. It's really fun. In lifetime sports, when we get there, Coach tells us to go to the center of the court and he takes attendance. Most of the time we play basketball. Sometimes we play volleyball if the nets are set up. (T3)

Joshua.7.gen: We leave homeroom and go to our clubs. My club is Lifetime Sports. Mrs. Elder usually checks the list to make sure who is supposed to be in there. Then we play basketball until the bell rings to go to class. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: If its pep rally day, we normally just stay in the gym and the CARES teacher will take attendance. We sit through the pep rally. The principal will talk and introduce certain people, like the coaches or sponsors. Then they will recognize the students who are given that time to be recognized. As a school, we are supposed to show support, we sort of do. It's kind of like we don't want to be there right then. If it's a club day, we leave CARES and go to our clubs. I have Reading Bowl for both of my clubs. We practice with the buzzers and ask questions. (T3)

Closing (Questions 25-27)

The closing questions used in the individual student interviews, follow-up interviews, and focus group sessions were designed to investigate whether or not the CARES program made middle school students feel more connected to school. The questions also asked the students to provide feedback and ask what changes if any they would make that would improve the CARES program for middle school students. The analyses of each of the three questions are provided below.

Question Twenty-Five

In what ways does the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School make you feel supported and connected at school?

The students responding to question twenty-five claimed that the CARES program does make them feel more supported and connected to middle school. Several students spoke of how supportive their CARES teacher was by offering support both academically and socially. Several of the students viewed their CARES teachers as advisors and counselors who gave opportunities for them to express how they feel and who taught them ways to resolve conflict with their peers and other teachers. They believed that the interaction with their CARES teacher created stronger and more positive relationships with their teachers and classmates. The combination of character education, enrichment, remediation, school clubs, and pep rallies offered students a variety of new experiences that help students develop stronger bonds towards middle school. The

communication of school events and activities to students during the CARES time was perceived positively by students according to several of the responses in question twenty-five. The responses from the students supporting these conclusions are provided below using all three data sources.

Richard.6.sped: It does make me feel connected and supported because I don't feel left out. (T1)

Sarah.6.gif: It does because we talk about stuff that we need to know. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: Different classes get to help and be involved. Like the White Christmas; I felt like I was a part of the school. (T1)

Christine.6.gen: I feel like we are supported because our teachers help us with our school problems. Your teachers and principal support you and friends too. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: It does. We get to learn about different things that we didn't know. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: It does make me feel that way, but I don't know how to explain it. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: It gets me connected because it tells us what is happening at school, like a dance or if I need to do something. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: It makes me feel connected. It helps you understand what's going on in the school. (T1)

Rachel.6.gen: It makes me feel that way because it lets you know about other people getting involved in sports. It shows them and how they have done in the season. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: It does make me feel that way. We can be more open about how we feel about school. We can open up and talk if we need to. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: It makes me feel supported because the CARES teachers want us to be good for school and I like it like that. They don't make you feel down. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I think it does. We get to spend time with our friends and teacher. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: It does make me feel more connected to school. You get to know people better by sharing their past experiences. You get to know the teachers better because they will tell you the best thing to do if you're stuck in a situation. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: It makes me feel connected because the CARES teachers listen to you and help you. The clubs are really fun. You get a chance to know some other people. (T1)

John.6.gen: It does because it tells me how to work things out at school. Some things I don't like and it helps me learn to try and like them and work on it. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: It does make me feel supported. Some of things they talk about actually happens. For example, with bullying they can show you ways that it can be stopped. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: It makes me feel connected to school because we can get help. Some people think that if they get a bad grade, because they didn't understand. If they explain something to us, we might get better grades. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I do feel supported and connected because we can learn stuff. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: It makes me feel connected to school because the teachers are helping you out with things that happen at school. They help you out and try taking care of it, if they can. With a personal problem, they tell you what to do. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: The videos explain problems that you have with friends or someone you don't know or how to become friends with them. I think it's good to talk about with your CARES teacher. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: It does. It tells us about what to do at school and how to behave. (T1)

Bella.7.gen: Mrs. Wheeler likes to talk to us and doesn't like to leave early. That makes me feel supported. (T1)

Harry.7.gen: It makes me feel supported because I know I have someone that cares about me and about getting my school work done. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: It makes me feel supported because I know someone is there to help me if I need it. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I think it is keeping me connected with the school because it gives me a chance to go to something I've never done before and learn about that or like on Friday, I get to go to clubs. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: It does. It shows that the administration cares if we care about our school. It shows that they want us to have fun and learn. They try to make learning and coming to school as fun as possible. I enjoy going to that whole thing just because it does make you feel that you are united as a school. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I do because it helps us out and if we have any problems, all we have to do is go to our teacher and ask. They will help us. (T1)

Valerie.7.gen: In CARES, they give us the rules to follow and updates, like who won against JMS and things like that. I guess, mainly the updates keep me connected to the school. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: It helps me feel connected, because it makes you feel like you're helping the school out. It helps you know that you shouldn't do drugs or alcohol. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: It does because they help us on our work and that is being close to your school classes and helps me feel connected to it. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: CARES helps me feel connected to school because when we are in there, we talk about different things that are going on at the school or will be taking place. If we went to participate, we can find out about future activities like the Dragon Dash. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I think it connects me to school because we always get to see every teacher and everyone at school and we get to participate in games. It really helps with teamwork. (T1)

Kaitlyn.7.gen: I think it makes me feel supported that I have people and friends that I can actually talk to. Like Ms. Williams and other students about problems that I might have. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: It does because I know that I am safe. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: It does because it doesn't make school as bad as you would think it would be. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: It makes me feel like the whole school is by your side all the time because we are always interacting with each other. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: It does because we talk about how we can help out our future and help others. It helps us learn how to stay out of trouble. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: It makes me feel supported and connected because the teacher will give past experiences. It lets me know also what is happening at the school…stuff like that. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: It makes you be able to do something different everyday, instead of just going to class. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: It does because it gives us time to talk about our problems. If we need tutoring we can ask for it. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: It makes you feel supported because you get to talk about all your problems and be open about everything. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: It does, because if you ever have a problem at school, I can always come back in CARES and talk to the teacher about if I need help with something. (T1)

Kristy.8.gen: I think it does because you can talk to people about what's happening and how you feel about something that you can't talk to a friend or your parents about. (T1)

Jackson.8.gen: It does make me feel supported and connected. Well, school is all about learning. We learn different lessons like people skills, honesty, and that kind of stuff. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: It makes me feel supported and connected because it's just a time when we can talk about important subjects and it's a time that we benefit from. (T1)

Bart.8.sped: It keeps me connected with school because it combines outside life and school life. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: It does because the person that's helping you is a teacher. You really think of teachers helping you in class and not with personal problems. (T1)

George.8.gen: It makes me feel like I'm part of the school and everyone wants to help me. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: Supportive-wise, the teachers care and support us. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: It does because it's kind of like I already said. It makes you feel like someone is always there ready to help you. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: It makes me feel like the school cares and they want us to not only get an education, but gain more than just an education. Maybe like leadership and people skills, being able to talk in front of other people without being too shy about it. (T1)

Hannah.7.gif: Well, I think it helps you feel connected to school because you may be having bullying problems and you may be in class focusing on what the teachers are saying but if you have stuff on your mind, like, "Oh my goodness what is he going to say or do?", I mean, you can't sit there and focus on academics. (T2)

Lloyd.7.sped: Well, it makes me feel supported because on Friday there is a lot of school spirit and if you have a problem you can just talk to your teacher about it. (T2)

Libby.7.gen: It makes me feel supported just because the teachers are there for me. (T2)

Megan: I think that all of these teachers they don't want you to fail; they want you to succeed in everything you do so in that sense yes. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: Yeah, with the support I know they are doing this to help you and make school fun so as far as support yes. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: Well, they make me want to see the football team win. I mean, I don't like the school very much but I do want to see the team win so yeah. (T2)

Abby.6.gen: I do because the teachers can help you out with a subject you need help with. I think that on Fridays, the clubs that we get to do are fun and the pep rallies are also fun. (T3)

William.6.gen: On Fridays we get to do fun stuff. It makes me feel supported because the teachers and your CARES teacher help you when you need help. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: It makes me feel supported but not connected. All of my life I've never been a big fan of school. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: It makes me feel more connected to the teachers. It's like they will understand more. It makes me feel more supported. I can't really explain why. (T3)

Diane.7.gif: I guess it makes you realize that they care. (T3)

Joshua.8.gif: If we didn't have the CARES program, we would just be like a normal school. They don't have enrichment or remediation, which helps students who need it. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: As far as being supported, it's good to know they are looking out for us. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: I think that a lot of support and effort goes into it so that you can see that people do care. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: It's just that start of the day. I do feel connected to the school. It's just the fact that we are involved in it with other people at the school, like the teachers and students. (T3)

Question Twenty-Six and Question Twenty-Seven

If you could be the principal of the school, would you continue to have CARES or would you rather go back to just homeroom time? Explain why you would or would not. What changes, if any would you make? What other comments do you have about the CARES program?

The majority of the students reported that if they were the principal of the school, they would continue the CARES program. According to the responses, the students

believed that the CARES program is good for middle school students because it provided students with academic and social support, fostered positive relationships with their teachers and classmates, and provided them with opportunities to express their feelings and opinions during school. In addition, the CARES program allowed students to participate in a variety of fun activities that improved their connectedness to school. The responses from all three data sources supporting these findings are provided below.

Christina.6.gen: I think I'd do CARES. It gives you a lot of things to do. Homeroom time wouldn't let you do a lot of stuff. You would probably sit there and just read. CARES is a lot of fun. I wouldn't make any changes. (T1)

Sam.6.gen: I would keep CARES. It teaches everybody about bullying and lying. It just teaches everybody what to do and what not to do. I would make the enrichment time longer. That is about it. (T1)

Brett.6.gen: I would keep the CARES program. It gives everybody an opportunity to talk with their teachers and have fun. (T1)

Tanner.6.gen: If I was principal, I would totally keep CARES. It helps kids keep in touch with their school and to know what's going on. It's very fun. (T1)

Jacob.6.gen: I probably wouldn't change anything. I would continue to have CARES. (T1)

Sarah.6.gen: You get to do more things with the teacher and it lets you talk about what you do and don't like about the school and how it could improve. (T1)

Amanda.6.gen: I would keep CARES. It's a very good time for kids who are having it rough at home or anywhere. They can be themselves and open up and be themselves and get encouragement from teachers and friends. (T1)

Jake.6.gen: I would keep CARES. Homeroom time wouldn't help teach you the safety rules and things like that. It doesn't explain that kind of stuff. (T1)

Sally.6.gen: I would have CARES because I like that you get to spend time with just girls. I would not make any changes. (T1)

Andy.6.gen: I wouldn't make any changes. I would keep CARES going. I would try and do the best to improve it if anything ever comes up. (T1)

Lynn.6.gif: I would keep CARES because it helps kids that need help and its pretty fun. (T1)

John.6.gen: I would continue to have CARES. It teaches the lower grade level kids how to deal with middle school issues. The 8th grade can continue to deal with the issues they might have had from the past, if they didn't work them out. (T1)

Beth.6.gif: I would still do CARES because it can sometimes help the students. Instead of someone talking to you, you get to watch a video. That is sometimes more interesting than someone talking to you. (T1)

Bill.6.sped: I probably wouldn't make any changes and keep CARES. (T1)

Karl.6.gen: I would have CARES because with CARES you have a chance for character education in class some days. You can get more help with things. You may have the same amount of time, you would just read books and some teachers wouldn't let you do homework, but in CARES the teachers allow you to do that. (T1)

Gary.6.gif: I would stay with the CARES program. It's a good time for kids to get help with their work. I would not make any changes to it. (T1)

Rick.7.gen: I would continue to have CARES, so the students can learn and talk to their friends. (T1)

Christina.7.gif: I would keep CARES because people need to have time with their friends. I wouldn't really make any changes. (T1)

Kelly.7.gen: I would definitely keep the CARES time. I like the teachers talking about what happens on the video. They help you solve problems you might have with someone. (T1)

Paula.7.gif: I would continue CARES because it's teaching us how to become more responsible and how to learn to be a better friend and not to use drugs or alcohol. (T1)

Bethany.7.gen: I would keep CARES so the students can keep on feeling happy with their teachers. I wouldn't make any changes. (T1)

Emma.7.gif: I would keep CARES because in homeroom we really don't talk about things. But in CARES time, we talk about what's happening in the world, like drugs. In homeroom, we would just sit there and wait for the bell to ring. (T1)

Melanie.7.gen: I would keep it the same. It helps students, like when we are doing character education, be able to maybe deal with a problem they may be having at school. If you go to clubs on Friday or even remediation or enrichment, it gives you a chance to just have fun. I don't think I would change anything. (T1)

Oscar.7.gen: I would keep the CARES program. Most of the time we talk about being respectful. If there's a new student coming in and they don't know where to go, we can be respectful to them and show them where to go. (T1)

Amelia.7.gen: I would probably do CARES because it's a fun class and I wouldn't make any changes. (T1)

Kristy.7.gen: I would keep the CARES program because I think it's important to have and explain to the kids problems like bullying, drugs, and things like that. (T1)

Jeb.7.gen: If I was the principal, I wouldn't change the CARES program. It lets me know the kids are having fun and it helps them out for the rest of the day. (T1)

Clay.7.gen: I wouldn't really make any changes. I would keep it as CARES. It helps with pretty much everything at school for the students. (T1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would definitely continue on with CARES because it does keep the students connected to their school and able to learn about new things and different things. I would not change it at all. (T1)

Diane.7.gif: I guess I would keep CARES, I think there probably are some students that need remediation. If you had a school full of perfect students, I would just have homeroom. (T1)

Carrie.7.gif: I would probably keep CARES because I think it really helps people and helps us connect to our school and school spirit. (T1)

Kaitlyn.7.gen: I wouldn't make any changes. I think its fine the way it is. I would keep it because there might be some problems in the school that no one knows about. The students might be keeping it to their selves and not tell anyone. (T1)

Rebecca.7.gen: I would keep CARES because it's a good way to express your feelings. Some CARES classes have certain teachers that will talk to you and tell you another way to feel good about yourself. I would not make any changes. (T1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would keep CARES here because it really helps out the kids with free time. They also get their enrichment to go and have fun in the mornings before class. (T1)

Joshua.8.gif: I would just keep with CARES the way it is. It's not hurting anything and it's helping with academics for those kids who need it. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: I would have CARES. It gives us more time to talk about problems. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I would continue to keep the CARES program. I think it's a great

program. You actually do get to talk about problems and the things you face going to school. (T1)

Holden.8.gif: I would keep the CARES program. It gives students the opportunity to learn and become a better person. (T1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would keep the CARES program if I was the principal, because I think it's good for the students. They get more learning time. About 10-15 minutes with their teachers helping them. (T1)

Valerie.8.gen: I think that I would keep CARES. It helps with your grades and what's going on because you can talk to people and tell your feelings and what's happening in your life right now. (T1)

Arnold.8.gen: I would rather have CARES. In my old school, homeroom was boring. With Friday clubs and the Monday character education time, it's different. (T1)

Tucker.8.gif: I wouldn't make any changes. I think the way its set up right now is fun and it makes you feel like you're important to the school and it helps people. (T1)

Kirt.8.sped: I would keep CARES because if a new student came here, he may not know how to act or what to do. If he was being bullied, and didn't know what to do, the CARES classes would teach him what to do the next time that happened. (T1)

Julie.8.gen: I would keep it because on the days that kids have to stay back and do some work, it helps you make new friends and talk to students you haven't talked to before. (T1)

Callie.8.gif: I would definitely continue CARES because like I said before, it makes me and others feel more connected and comfortable with the school. (T1)

Nadia.6.gen: For CARES, I would keep it because you get to do different things sometimes. It gives you a break sometimes. It's good the way it is. (T2)

Macy.7.gif: I would keep it because it gives you the chance to do something else other than just sitting and working on homework or reading a book. (T2)

William.6.gen: I would keep the CARES program. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, your teachers help you and Fridays are good because of clubs. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I would stay with CARES. It is a really good program for students and teachers. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I would keep it because many see it as a good thing. (T3)

While the majority of the students favored keeping the CARES program at the school, some of the students made suggestions for improving CARES. Many students felt that the character education portion of CARES was impractical and childish for middle school students. Other students expressed their desire to see CARES time extended. The opportunity for students to have choices when being assigned clubs and enrichment classes was another area where students believe change was necessary. In addition, several of the students wanted to see the CARES classes mixed with both boys and girls, rather than the current arrangement of gender based CARES classes. The student responses supporting these findings are provided below.

Brett.6.gen: I would make CARES class a little longer though. (T1)

Gwen.6.gif: If we stayed in CARES instead of going back to homeroom, I would like to stay in CARES longer. You should be able to go back to the teacher and that teaches you that particular subject. (T1)

John.6.gen: Yes. One of them is that you need girls in your CARES class. We need to mix them up. The girls would be able to tell what some boys are doing to them and that bugs them. The teacher could address it and help tell the boy not to do that anymore and try to hold off on it. (T1)

Tabitha.6.gen: I would go back to homeroom time. I would try to get the students to see who their best friends are so they can be in the same class. We used to have boys in our homeroom and it was more fun. Boys are kind of funny. (T1)

Belle.7.gen: If I were the principal of the school, I would probably get rid of the character education part and put that as homeroom time. A lot of students do not pay attention during that part and goof off. The goofing off distracts. The teachers probably don't recognize it because it would distract a lot of other students. I like the rest of CARES. But I would change the character education part back to homeroom. (T1)

Thomas.7.gif: I would keep it, but I would change Monday mornings. I would change it by completely taking out the topics like friendship and bullying to a subject that we would use. I would have the bell ring and we would go to the class that the students could use the most. I would check the grades and whichever wasn't the best is where I would send them to. Like if it was math, they would go to Mrs. Lion's. I would keep all the other parts of CARES. (T1)

Emma.7.gen: I would make some changes. I would match the kids with the teachers that they would mostly get along with and be able to express how they feel. Some teachers are kind of loud and others are more calm and quiet. That helps kids sometimes, if a teacher stops and listens to what you are saying and doesn't interrupt you. (T1)

Ruth.8.gen: I would continue to have CARES but I wouldn't make students watch the videos and answer questions and take surveys. (T1)

Bethany.8.gen: I would continue to have CARES but I would put the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls together in their homeroom and the same with the boys. I would like to have all the grade levels together sometimes. Maybe like on a Tuesday. (T1)

Anne.8.gen: I would continue with CARES but I would make some changes. During the pep rallies, we would be able to sit where we want. We would only go to remediation if we didn't do our homework or needed help. I wish we could choose the students we wanted in our CARES group. (T1)

Mike.8.gen: Yes, I would continue to have the CARES program. But on Monday mornings, I wouldn't do the character education part for 8th graders. I would give them more time to work. They should already know how to be a good and well behaved student. (T1)

Tara.8.sped: If I could make any changes, I would extend the time for CARES. (T1)

Courtney.8.gen: I think that we should have more time in a day for CARES. (T1)

Angel.8.gif: I would still have CARES but I would make sure every child in that class had that teacher at some other time during the day. And I would have smaller classes instead of bigger ones. (T1)

George.8.gen: I would keep the CARES program. I might make a change to the clubs, but that's about it. I would add new clubs and more things to do. (T1)

Phil.8.gif: I would keep CARES, but take out the stuff we do on Mondays. They are a waste of time. I would put in enrichment or remediation on Mondays. (T1)

Kyle.6.sped: I would get rid of CARES (Character Education) but still keep remediation and enrichment and clubs and pep rallies. (T2)

Mark.6.gif: I would take CARES (Character Education) out but keep the remediation and enrichment and clubs. I would make it more exciting too so it's not the same thing every time. I don't want it to be really repetitive. I just don't really like the CARES part, the character education. I just don't like it. The topics and stuff. (T2)

William.6.gen: I would just keep the clubs and then throw everything else out because it's boring. (T2)

Craig.6.gen: I would keep clubs and get rid of everything because with remediation and everything you can get the work, you just get the work. I would say I don't like when they do the movies like Good Runnings. The little movie. (T2)

Kyle.6.sped: I would also make sure you switch clubs but extend CARES time to maybe 35 minutes. (T2)

Carla.7.gif: I would go back to homeroom because just because you are a girl doesn't mean you have all girl friends and there are different people that have a lot of guy friends and it would give them an opportunity to talk to them. (T2)

Hannah.7.gif: I do like having the gender as far as the character education part goes but I think that maybe half the week on Mondays and Tuesdays you could be with girls and then on Wednesdays and Thursdays you could be with the guys and like mix it up and then on Fridays still do pep rallies but if I was the principal I would change when we do CARES. We talked at the beginning of the year about doing CARES at the end of the day that way I mean for in some cases as far as homework goes it could help you get homework done like if you get home you have more family time or go to church and then if you had problems that same day you could discuss problems that you had instead of having to sleep on instead of coming in the next day feeling guilty about it or scared. (T2)

Leo.8.gen: I would go back to homeroom like last year. See when you are in CARES you have a bunch of mixed people that are in different classes then you. Like if you were in a homeroom, you could get help with homeroom with other kids or copy of them. And the Thursday thing where you get to go computers, make that like Tuesdays and Thursdays that would make school more fun. (T2)

Mindy.8.gen: I think that the Monday morning thing I probably wouldn't keep but I like the remediation and the clubs. (T2)

Danni.8.gen: I would keep the remediation and clubs but I would rather switch back to homeroom and make it more fun by mixing the genders. I would say either take character education away or give us something to talk about more our age instead of for 2nd graders. (T2)

Braden.8.gen: I think I'd probably switch the Monday thing back to homerooms and then like I'd either for my homeroom teacher I'd probably inform her of what is happening instead of she is not like I really don't know or care what is going on or I would probably fire her and hire someone else that actually knows what is going on. (T2)

Devin.8.gif: I'd probably take the Monday mornings, pretty much what everybody else has been saying change it back to homeroom, but I would show a video maybe at the beginning of the year so that they know what not to do so they can't say I didn't know I wasn't supposed to do that so that if they are disrespectful or something they'll understand if they get punished or anything. (T2)

Holly.8.gif: I think that we are exposed too much to the character education because it just ends up getting old and boring. (T2)

Abby.7.gen: I would try to have different varieties of what we do during enrichment. (T3)

William.6.gen: Instead of enrichment days, you should go outside for the first twenty minutes. I would take out pep rallies and just have clubs. (T3)

Richard.6.sped: I would have the CARES classes mixed with boys and girls. I don't think they would yell as much. (T3)

Craig.6.gen: I would get rid of some of the stuff we do in character education. I would get rid of the video part because the discussion seems more important. (T3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I would make the CARES classes a bit longer for remediation if you want to catch up on your work or read books. (T3)

Joey.7.gen: I would rather go back to homeroom because all you really have time to do is homework. Instead of playing games, you would have time to do homework. I just think that would be better so students wouldn't get in trouble. If they need to talk about something, we do have a school counselor we can go to. (T3)

Libby.7.gen: I would change the remediation time to be longer. I would give the students more choices in the clubs and remediation. (T3)

Braden.8.gen: I would change the Mondays (character education) back to homeroom. It doesn't make all that much sense for 8th graders to be talked to about bullying and they either don't bully someone ore they don't care about that. I would change Mondays back to homeroom. (T3)

Phil.8.gif: The character education part doesn't affect the students in any way. (T3)

Devin.8.gif: I would probably keep everything except for the Monday morning thing (character education). I would let us choose our enrichment. Other than that, I would leave the rest. It is a pretty good program. (T3)

Ruth.8.gen: I would replace the character education time with social time because some kids don't have a lot of time to communicate and talk with other students. (T3)

Holly.8.gif: I would keep part of CARES. But I liked how when we had homeroom (before CARES), we had both genders in class. I would make the discussions less juvenile and more in-depth. I would keep the remediation time, enrichment time, and clubs. I wouldn't make any changes to the clubs but I would have a sign-up sheet for enrichment classes so students can sign-up for whatever they want. (T3)

Summary

The twenty-seven questions analyzed in Chapter IV revealed the attitudes and perceptions middle school students had towards the various components of the CARES program. The analysis revealed that the students at Kingsford County Middle School were overwhelmingly supportive of the CARES program. Character Education was viewed as an opportunity for students to develop their character and communicate feelings and opinions with others. Teachers were viewed as supportive, as they listened to their needs, offered advice in dealing with middle school issues, and assisted them with their academics. Enrichment classes, pep rallies, and clubs were perceived as a time to relax and socialize with their friends. In addition, they gave them opportunities to participate in a variety of activities that were engaging and fun. The final chapter, Chapter V, will identify four common themes found consistently throughout the data. Furthermore, the initial research questions mentioned in Chapter II will be discussed. Implications of the study along with recommendations for further research will be explored. Each of these sections in the final chapter will discuss the positive and negative attitudes and perceptions students had towards CARES.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program at Kingsford County Middle School. The program was designed to better meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of adolescents as they transition from elementary school and then into high school. Using individual student interviews, focus group sessions in each grade level, and additional follow-up interviews, a standard 27 question interview was used to elicit responses from student participants. This phenomenological inquiry revealed the attitudes and perceptions middle school students have towards the various components of CARES.

Chapter IV: Analysis of Data provided a detailed analysis of the various responses received from the students. Outcomes from the analysis of the data identified four common themes that represent the attitudes and perceptions of the middle school students: (1) character formation, (2) teacher support, (3) student autonomy, and (4) socialization with peers. In this final chapter, discussions over each of the identified themes along with examples of supporting student data are provided. Current literature on effective research practices and the theoretical implications in middle grades education will be interwoven throughout the discussions. Furthermore, answers to the initial research questions along with an overview of the attitudes and perceptions student have towards each of the components of the CARES program will be discussed. The

chapter will conclude by commenting on the implications and limitations of the study along with recommendations for further research.

Research Questions

The primary research question asked at the start of this study was to identify the attitudes and perceptions middle school students have towards the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School. Middle schools nationwide are implementing school advisory programs designed to provide the academic, social, and emotional support needed for students in the middle grades. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) produced a list of nine cornerstone strategies with the intent of improving middle grades education. In a book published by the NASSP (2006) titled *Breaking Ranks in the Middle: Strategies for Leading Middle Level Reform*, cornerstone strategy four calls for school leaders to, "implement a comprehensive advisory or other program that ensures that each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to meet with an adult to plan and assess the student's academic, personal, and social development" (p. 8). While several middle schools have created and implemented advisory programs, how many leaders have studied the attitudes and perceptions students have towards them? A research summary on middle school advisory programs published by the National Association of Middle Schools claimed that, "few researchers have systematically probed the subjective experiences of participants in advisory programs, as disclosed by both students and teachers" (Anfara, 2006, p.1). This phenomenological inquiry has attempted to probe the subjective experiences of the students at Kingsford County Middle School.

The primary research question along with the remaining secondary research questions mentioned in Chapter I will be discussed in this section. Furthermore, pieces of the student data from Chapter IV will be interwoven in the discussion in an effort to support the conclusions mentioned.

Primary Research Question: ***What are the attitudes and perceptions middle school students have towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program at Kingsford County Middle School?***

The overall attitudes and perceptions of the students towards the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School were positive. The majority of the students seemed to have favored the CARES program as they responded to the standard interview questions. After carefully analyzing the student responses from all three data sources, four overriding themes were developed. These themes were discovered in all 27 interview questions and provide an overview of their attitudes and perceptions towards the program. Despite the majority of positive perceptions, some of the students voiced their concerns and frustrations over certain aspects of the program which will be discussed later in this chapter. The four themes are discussed below with examples of some of the student responses supporting each of the four themes.

Theme 1: Character Formation

Beyond question, the students perceived the CARES program as a time for them to develop their character. This perception was not a surprise since every Monday during CARES class, character education instruction takes place. For the most part, the students welcomed the idea of being taught good character and were able to give specific examples of how they were able to apply what was taught in their classrooms. Noted

below, are several of the student responses from the individual student interviews, focus group interviews, and follow-up interviews which support this conclusion.

Question 4: Suppose a new student at Kingsford County Middle School approached you and asked you what the CARES program is all about. How would you describe it to the student?

Lynn.6.gif: We talk about ways of honesty and ways to help people. (Tier 1)

Jeb.7.gen: I guess I would say it's for activities that you can do to figure out how to become a better person. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: It's a time on Mondays that you learn about being courteous and nice and helpful. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: You usually talk about honesty and respect and things that they want you to do and how to act in school. (Tier 1)

Mark.6.gif: It is a group of kids and our teacher teaches about character traits like honesty and being nice and things like that. (Tier 2)

Libby.7.gen: Like on Mondays they do character education things for people who have problems with their character I guess. (Tier 2)

Tabitha.6.gif: We learn about honesty. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: I would say it is the program that we do on Mondays and we talk about character education, bullying, and what you can do to prevent it and little talks like that. (Tier 3)

Devin.8.gif: I would say something along the lines that we sit in a room and on Mondays we talk about being a good person. (Tier 3)

Question 5: Monday morning CARES time is set aside for character education. What do you like/dislike about the character education time?

Amanda.6.gen: Sometimes we get to watch video clips on character education. I like the videos and that we set aside time for that and learning how to treat others. (Tier 1)

Christine.7.gif: I like that we can learn how to stop bullying and also the difference in respect and disrespect. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: I like that they teach you to be a good student and leader. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: I like it because we get to learn how to act. I remember July 4th. We talked about our nation and the armed forces and how that played out. I think it helps you remember your countries losses. It helps you be a better person. (Tier 1)

Richard.6.sped: Last year, we talked about amphetamines and stuff like that. I like that we talk about things like that. (Tier 3)

Question 6: What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she really cares about teaching you good character?

Andy.6.gen: She tells us that it is not right to lie. If you lie, there are consequences. (Tier 1)

Jeb.7.gen: She does, because of the way we do our activities. It teaches us how to stay away from things like drugs and alcohol. (Tier 1)

Kirt.8.sped: She shows us different activities about what we are supposed to do and she pulls one of us from the seat and acts out to the student, like in bullying. If you slap a book out of the student's hand, you will not have any respect. (Tier 1)

Macy.7.gif: Like with the stuff writing on the board about the good things and the bad things like being nice is a good thing and bullying is a bad thing. We talk about the different stuff. (Tier 2)

Gwen.6.gif: She will tell us what we should and should not do during school. (Tier 3)

Question 7: Character education time gives you the opportunity to discuss issues with your classmates and teacher. Do you think these discussions help you deal with middle school problems? Why or why not?

Rachel.6.gen: Yes, because it teaches you to be responsible and not tell lies about things. (Tier 1)

Bethany.8.gen: Yes it does. By learning not to bully and to have the courage to stand up for yourself. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: I do. I think that if I'm ever having a problem and need help, I will remember the video and how the character in the video solved the problem. (Tier 1)

Hannah.7.gif: I think they do because I have had students in the past go up to teachers and say, "I have a problem. Can you help me out?" We then discuss bullying and how it affects others. (Tier 2)

Question 8: If you could give the character education program a grade (A, B, C, D, or F) what grade would you give it and why?

Gary.6.gif: I would probably give it a B because it teaches us to be a better person. (Tier 1)
Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A because we learn about the bullying and respect and disrespect and character traits. (Tier 1)

Oscar.7.gen: I would give it an A because what we do in the mornings is talk about being respectful, nice, and helpful to each other. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: I would give it an A just because it teaches the students how to act and try to do better in life. (Tier 1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would give it an A because it is teaching you not to bully or be abusive and it shows you that your parents lie and some people do not tell the truth. (Tier 1)

Question 9: Can you give me an example of something you learned during character

education time? How have you been able to use what you learned at school or at home?

Paula.7.gif: I have also learned about drugs and alcohol and how not to deal with them. (Tier 1)

Sarah.6.gif: Probably when we watched the video about lying. It has helped me because if you keep lying, it just builds up and it is not good. (Tier 1)

Brett.6.gen: I have learned about not cheating. (Tier 1)

Oscar.7.gen: I have learned about being respectful. My mom and dad say that if you are not respectful at home, you will not be respectful at school. (Tier 1)

Bart.8.sped: In character education one morning, we talked about how we could help others by giving of our time. We figure out that helping with food or something simple like that, you can help people out tremendously. (Tier 1)

George.8.gen: I have learned to treat people a lot better and not to judge them. (Tier 1)

Jordan.8.sped: You learn to respect others more than you used to. (Tier 2)

Craig.6.gen: One time at home, I was about to get in real big trouble. I was honest about it and I did not get into as much trouble as I could have. (Tier 3)

Diane.7.gif: We have learned how to have more self-confidence and it definitely helps all of us. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: We are talking about leadership right now. We are discussing leadership qualities. (Tier 3)

The provision of character education instruction in middle schools has increased in popularity as educational leaders seek ways to address the affective needs of children along with the intellectual. What is interesting to note is that the majority of the students welcomed the teaching of character education despite the awkwardness and alienation that teachers sometimes feel in trying to teach students character qualities in addition to academics. Many educators also argue that teaching character education takes the place of valuable instructional time and that students are disengaged in the topic of character education, especially at the middle school level. The student responses discovered in this project do report a degree of disinterest from some of the students and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. This finding affirms the need for school leaders to consider ways to develop and sustain quality character education in the middle grades in ways that are engaging and developmentally appropriate for students.

The perceptions from the students that the CARES program is focused on improving the character of students are clear. There is also evidence that the students are learning, and in some cases, applying what they learn to their experiences both inside and outside of school. This overriding theme identified throughout the interviews is important to consider when deciding how character education should be taught to adolescents.

Theme 2: Teacher Support

Bonding to teachers in school plays a fundamental role in the successful developmental experiences of adolescents and also can limit the effects of risk so prevalent during this time of life for students (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, &

Hawkins, 2004). Woolley and Bowen (2007) reported that caring and supportive teachers aid in the engagement and bonding of students to school. One of the main functions of the CARES program was to create opportunities for students to receive social, emotional, and academic support from their teachers. This process was implemented through the 25 minutes of character education instruction, advisory class, remediation, enrichment, and school spirit days that occurred in the mornings.

The student participants spoke of the high levels of support they received from their teachers. Student response data supporting this claim are found throughout the various interview questions. Three common threads were revealed in the student data: (1) listening support, (2) advisory support, and, (3) academic support. The students perceived the CARES program as a place where they could receive the support they need to be successful in school. Many of the students reported that the choice was up to them to take advantage of the resources available to them and several of them commented in specific ways how empowered they felt because of CARES. A discussion on each of the three noted forms of support is provided below.

Listening Support

Students overwhelmingly expressed their satisfaction of having a teacher or group of teachers in the building that listened to what they have to say. Research by Osterman (2000) found that school programming designed to facilitate positive interpersonal communications between students and teachers assists in the creation of positive school communities which in effect, increases the students' sense of belonging with the school. The students felt that the CARES classroom gave them the opportunity to share their concerns with their teachers and other students. They were given the opportunity to

voice their opinions and were free to express themselves in ways they typically could not during class.

Lipsitz and West (2006), when identifying high performing middle schools reported the significance of creating school environments that are developmentally responsive to the social and emotional needs of adolescents. The conversations and positive interactions that occurred during CARES class with their teachers and peers fostered a caring learning community necessary for meeting the unique needs of middle grades students. Provided below are the student responses indicating strong levels of listening support from several of the standard interview questions.

Question 13: What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she respects you?

Gwen.6.gif: She listens to you when you are talking and when you are done. She responds to you instead of ignoring you. (Tier 1)

Tabitha.6.gif: She always asks your opinion. (Tier 1)

Tanner.6.gen: When I talk to her, she always listens and doesn't interrupt. If there's someone who is being mean to me, I can tell her and she will talk to that person. I think she respects us all in CARES. She is really nice and really smart. (Tier 1)

Amanda.6.gen: If we have our hands raised, she will call on us and acknowledge us. She makes sure everyone has a chance to speak. She won't interrupt us. (Tier 1)

Bill.6.sped: Well, she shows kindness and she listens to what I say. (Tier 1)

Kelly.7.gen: She will always listen to what we have to say. I talk to her about my problems. She always helps me find a solution. (Tier 1)

Emma.7.gif: When we are talking, she doesn't interrupt us. She waits until we are finished. She tells other students to be quiet if they are talking while we are talking but not in a mean way. (Tier 1)

Carrie.7.gif: She respects us by listening very closely to our stories and giving a well thought response. (Tier 1)

Joshua.8.gif: She stops talking when someone else is answering or discussing a question. (Tier 1)

Courtney.8.gen: She listens. (Tier 1)

Arnold.8.gen: If I'm raising my hand, she will call on me. If someone is yelling the same answer but I'm raising my hand, she will call on me. That shows she respects me. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: When I'm talking, she makes sure no one else is talking. She always looks at me in the eyes when I am talking. She respects what I have to say. (Tier 1)

Angel.8.gif: She listens to my questions and has answers. She just listens to me. (Tier 1)

Jerry.6.gif: They listen to me if I talk and they tell people to be quiet when I'm talking. (Tier 2)

Nadia.6.gen: Kind of like what Jerry said. She lets me finish what I'm saying even if sometimes I interrupt her. She is polite to me and teaches me to be polite to others. (Tier 2)

Holly.8.gif: I guess because she listens more than I think she would being a teacher. (Tier 2) She gives us our own time to talk and she really listens. (Tier 3)

Abby.6.gen: When I talk to her, I know that she is really listening to me. She really takes the time to help me and listen. (Tier 3)

William.6.gen: He listens to us when we give our opinions on Monday mornings. (Tier 3)

Joey.7.gen: Well, when I say something, she listens to me. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: She gives me her opinion. She will actually let us talk about what's going on and she can relate to it. (Tier 3)

Question 14: What do you like the most about having a teacher advocate?

Tabitha.6.gif: Being able to express myself. (Tier 1)

Amanda.6.gen: Just that we can talk to her anytime. She knows how we feel and she will keep it quiet. It's like having a friend instead of a teacher. (Tier 1)

John.6.gen: That we can talk about things that need to be addressed and be able to have fun with them and not be one of those students who hate coming to school just to have to deal with teachers. (Tier 1)

Paula.7.gif: So I can have someone to talk to. (Tier 1)

Bella.7.gen: It's good to know that I have someone to talk to if I need it. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: It's someone to talk to if you have a problem. (Tier 1)

Joshua.8.gif: You can tell them what you think about something and they take it to a higher level. (Tier 1) If you tell them something that is wrong or you don't like something that has to do with the school, they can mention it to the administration, not in a complaining way. I have never had to say anything, but I think that if someone did want to, then they could. (Tier 3)

Valerie.8.gen: You can talk to them about things that you don't feel you can talk to with other people. (Tier 1)

Arnold.8.gen: I can always talk to her. (Tier 1)

Angel.8.gif: She is like a friend and easy to talk to whereas other teachers may not be as easy to talk to. (Tier 1)

Abby.6.gen: You can talk to somebody and you know that you can trust them. (Tier 1) That you have somebody that you can talk to and you know you can trust. (Tier 3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like that it is someone who is there for you and listens to you and takes care of you. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: I like that she actually talks to us and not just listens. She turns it into a whole conversation. (Tier 3)

Question 25: In what ways does the CARES program make you feel supported and connected to school? Or, if it doesn't at all, explain why.

Amanda.6.gen: It does make me feel that way. We can be more open about how we feel about school. We can open up and talk if we need to. (Tier 1)

Lynn.6.gif: It makes me feel connected because the CARES teachers listen to you. (Tier 1)

Kaitlyn.7.gen: I think it makes me feel supported that I have people and friends that I can actually talk to like Ms. Williams and other students about problems I might have. (Tier 1)

Bethany.8.gen: It makes me feel like the whole school is by your side all the time because we are always interacting with each other. (Tier 1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: It does because we talk about how we can help out our future and help others. (Tier 1)

Tara.8.sped: It does because it gives us time to talk about our problems. (Tier 1)

Courtney.8.gen: It makes you feel supported because you get to talk about all your problems and be open about everything. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: It does, because if you ever have a problem at school, I can always come back in CARES and talk to the teacher about it if I need help with something. (Tier 1)

Kristy.8.gen: I think it does because you can talk to people about what's happening and how you feel about something that you can't talk to a friend or your parents about. (Tier 1)

Advisory Support

According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006), school advisory programs, when implemented correctly, have improved student achievement, strengthened teacher student relationships, improved student attitudes towards school, and eased the transition of middle school students to high school. The CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School assigned each student to a teacher advisor whose purpose is to teach character education, set goals with the students, and offer academic and social support to their students. Students are told by the administration to go to their assigned advocate teacher for counsel.

The student responses spoke of receiving high levels of support from their advocate teachers. Many of them reported that simply knowing someone was there for them, if needed, served as a calming assurance for them when at school. Students gave examples of how their CARES teacher provided helpful and practical advice in dealing with middle school problems. Examples of some of the student responses found in Chapter IV supporting this theme are provided below.

Question 4: Suppose a new student at Kingsford County Middle School approached you and asked you what the CARES program is all about. How would you describe it to the student?

Sarah.6.gif: I would probably say you are in homeroom and you talk about problems you have. (Tier 1)

Christine.6.gen: You get to spend time in your homeroom and you talk about problems you may have. (Tier 1)

Julie.8.gen: I think I would probably say it is like homeroom where you sit and talk about goals you set and problems you have. (Tier 1)

Callie.8.gif: I would describe it as a program to try to help kids out with things that we have to go through like peer pressure that may involve drugs or alcohol. (Tier 1)

Holly.8.gif: I would say it is more like an advisory thing where you go there and hang out and talk about stuff and important issues. (Tier 2)

Abby.6.gen: I would tell them it is a place where if you have any problems, you can tell them and you know you can trust your CARES teacher and you wouldn't have to worry about it. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: I would tell them that on Mondays, it is basically a way they get you to open up and tell your problems. The teacher helps you with it. (Tier 3)

Question 7: Character education time gives you the opportunity to discuss issues with your classmates and teacher. Do you think these discussions help you deal with middle school problems? Why or why not?

Brett.6.gen: Yes, because it helps with problems at school. (Tier 1)

Amanda.6.gen: Yes I do because some kids in our class do or do not have bullies. They can talk openly and be honest and not be shy about it if they are having those problems. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: I think it does, because you can get examples or advice on how to deal with things such as bullying. (Tier 1)

Melanie.7.gen: Well, I think they do. If you ever get in a fight with a friend, you remember that you can talk it out with them and be friends again. (Tier 1)

Christina.7.gif: I think they do because if you go to a teacher that knows you, they can help you out. (Tier 1)

Paula.7.gif: Yes I do. Because if you are having struggles in your school, they will teach you how to deal with them. (Tier 1)

Courtney.8.sped: Yes, because it shows us how to handle certain situations. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: I do. I think that if I am ever having a problem and need help, I will remember the video and how the character in the video solved the problem. (Tier 1)

Bart.8.sped: Yes, they help me because if something goes wrong and we have discussed the topic, we can take what we have learned from CARES time and put it into that situation. (Tier 1)

Julie.8.gen: Maybe what we are talking about is happening to you and it gives you advice as to what you can and cannot do. (Tier 1)

Libby.7.gen: I think they do, because they really tell us how we should deal with it and people get a better perspective of the problem. (Tier 3)

Question 8: If you could give the character education program a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?

Tanner.6.gen: I would give it an A+ because it is extremely helpful and really teaches kids to be safe and helping them with school and a lot of other things. (Tier 1)

Lynn.6.gif: An A because it is very helpful and straight to the point and not complicated. It can help kids that need help. (Tier 1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would give it an A because it does help us out and teach us about different things. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: I would give it an A. It does help me in middle school and I can see that it helps my peers in middle school too. (Tier 1)

Nadia.6.gen: I would give it a B because it can help you. It just depends upon your problem and it is good to be there. (Tier 2)

Abby.6.gen: I would give it a B because it helps you with school problems. (Tier 3)

Question 9: Can you give me an example of something you learned during character education time? How have you been able to use what you learned in school or at home?

Christine.6.gen: Well, since your parents are not at school with you, you can discuss with your teacher about what has happened. You can be honest with your teacher if you are having trouble with your friends or learning or something. (Tier 1)

Angel.8.gif: One time she talked about setting goals. Now I set goals all the time. I use my agenda more now. It helps me remember stuff. (Tier 1)

Julie.8.gen: When we were studying goals, one of my goals was to get accepted to the University of Georgia. Sometimes I try my best and sometimes I do not feel good. But it is important to keep trying and do your best and do not give up. (Tier 1)

Ronnie.8.sped: I have learned how to take my problems to a teacher or an adult and they will help me out with them. (Tier 1)

Holly.8.gif: We will talk about organizing things more and how to handle school problems, like work ethics and things like that. It has helped me at school and at home. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: I kind of had a problem with some friends outside of my character education class and Ms. Hoss like talked to me and we just kind of worked it out. (Tier 2)

Question 10: Describe what takes place on a typical day of character education. Be as detailed as possible.

Andy.6.gen: We watch little clips of movies and stuff. They will tell you or do something to help you find a way to resolve the problem. We go around and ask questions about our past and what we have done and what the consequences are. (Tier 1)

Abby.6.gen: We go in the classroom and then we just sit there. We watch the video clip and after we watch it, the CARES teacher asks us what we thought about it and what ways to encourage it. We talk about how it can be helpful to you. (Tier 1)

Libby.7.gen: We start out with the movie and watch the clip. We will talk about it and she will open up the topic for people to talk about if they are dealing with the same thing. That is pretty much it. (Tier 1)

Question 11: Each student in the school has been assigned a CARES teacher. In what ways does your CARES teacher help you?

Richard.6.sped: She helps me tell me which direction to go if I don't know where a class is or something like that. (Tier 1)

Tanner.6.gen: She helps me a lot. She is very sincere and always knows the right thing to say. If I have a question to ask, she always knows the answer. She is really nice and cares for us all. I think that is very nice. (Tier 1)

Andy.6.gen: If I am having trouble with something, she will give me advice on how to fix it. She just helps you. (Tier 1)

Karl.6.gen: I think that she helps us by saying that she is there for us at all times with any help that we may need. (Tier 1)

Beth.6.gif: She talks to us about different things we have seen and maybe stuff she has seen. We go over how we would handle the situation. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: She gives me advice on how to deal with friendships better. (Tier 1)

Emma.7.gif: My CARES teacher helps me by stopping what she is doing and helping with a question. She will talk to us if we are down and ask us what is wrong. (Tier 1)

Thomas.7.gif: She helps me by teaching me the simple way of handling problems, friendships, and bullying. (Tier 1)

Bethany.8.gen: If we are sad, she will help us by encouraging us. She will sometimes bring us breakfast when we have perfect attendance for two weeks. She will talk to us. She is kind of like a counselor that gives advice. She is a motherly teacher. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: She will help you out if you have a problem. She will tell you what to do or help you out herself. (Tier 1)

Valerie.8.gen: She helps with something that you don't understand or doesn't make sense about what's happening to you. She waits until you understand it. She stops what she is doing and helps you with that. (Tier 1)

Hannah.7.gif: If we ever need help, she is always telling us you know, don't be afraid to come to me. I am here to help you and we have a counselor and she tells us to schedule an appointment and go talk to her. (Tier 2)

Danni.8.gen: My CARES teacher, I like her because she is the younger type and I think she knows more of what younger people go through. I think she knows more experienced things whenever you talk about it. Like she can help you. (Tier 2)

Libby.7.gen: She is really sweet, like a mother type person. She is more like a best friend. She has a reason to talk to everybody, even if you're like from a different group. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: She really helps us if we are having trouble with someone else. She will tell us why it is not a good idea to bully and she gives us little talks, even if they are not required for CARES. One day we were talking about why it is bad to get into a fight. (Tier 3)

Question 13: What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she respects you?

Sarah.6.gif: She sits there and makes sure we understand and talks to us about our problems sometimes. She doesn't take anything the wrong way. She is really nice (Tier 1)

Jeb.7.gen: She talks me through things I have a problem with. (Tier 1)

Diane.7.gif: I guess she always tries to help us and tries to make us feel better about ourselves too. (Tier 1)

Bethany.8.gen: She will call my mom if I misbehave in class because I have that signed agreement between my teachers and the assistant principal and my parents and myself. That shows that she wants me to pass. (Tier 1)

Lloyd.7.sped: She shows respect by watching over us and making sure we are doing the right things. She makes sure we aren't getting into trouble. (Tier 3)

Question 14: What do you like most about having a teacher advocate?

Sarah.6.gif: That you don't really have to go to every teacher and spread it to everybody. You have one person to go to and you get to know them. (Tier 1)

Gwen.6.gif: When you need help in a certain situation, she will help you and she helps you no matter what she is doing. (Tier 1)

Sam.6.gen: That she is there to help us if we need help. (Tier 1)

Andy.6.gen: That you can always come to her for advice. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: Well, I like the fact that we are getting help on things that she helps us with. I like the fact that she is actually caring about us and helping us do other things. (Tier 1)

Emma.7.gif: I think that a lot of kids do not get supported by their parents, and it's good to come to school and be supported by your teacher. (Tier 1)

Diane.7.gif: You can go to the teacher if you have any problems and they will try to make it better and explain it. (Tier 1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: That you can always have someone to rely on. (Tier 1)

Anne.8.gen: I feel like if I ever did need help, she would be there. She is just nice and I like her. (Tier 1)

Tara.8.sped: I like that we can go to her anytime just like a counselor and she will tell us how to deal with things. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: I like it because you can't do everything yourself as a student. You have someone to share. They can't do it all by their self. (Tier 1)

Callie.8.gif: I think that even though there is a counselor I can go to, she is more convenient to go to. It is easier to talk to her about things. (Tier 1)

Carla.7.gif: That you can have someone to rely on I guess you could say and that if things are getting a little out of hand she will always be there to help you straighten your problems out. (Tier 2)

Hannah.7.gif: I think that what I like about having a teacher is that they are obviously older than us and they have already been through the problems we have been through so they know the situation that we are in. (Tier 2)

Holly.8.gif: I guess it makes you feel better knowing that someone is there for you. (Tier 2)

Braden.8.gen: I think it is the advice that she gives us. Some of it is kind of old, but she does try to give us helpful advice. Some of the advice does help and I like that. (Tier 3)

Devin.8.gif: It is good to know that someone is there to help me with things. (Tier 3)

Question 25: In what ways does the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School make you feel supported and connected at school?

Christine.6.gen: I feel like we are supported because our teachers help us with our school problems. Your teachers and principal support you and friends too. (Tier 1)

Christina.7.gif: It makes you feel connected to school because teachers are helping you out with things that happen at school. They help you out and try taking care of it, if they can. With a personal problem, they tell you what to do. (Tier 1)

Angel.8.gif: It does because the person that's helping you is the teacher. You really think of teachers helping you in class and not with personal problems. (Tier 1)

Phil.8.gif: Supportive wise, the teachers care and support us. (Tier 1)

Julie.8.gif: It does because, like I said, it makes you feel like someone is always there ready to help you. (Tier 1)

Libby.7.gen: It makes me feel supported just because the teachers are there for me. (Tier 2)

Devin.8.gif: As far as being supported, it's good to know they are looking out for us. (Tier 3)

The data supporting the notion that the students at Kingsford County Middle School perceived their teachers as advisors who provided for their social and emotional needs are very clear. When taking into consideration the intense physical, social, and

emotional transitions adolescents experience during their middle school years, the students' perceptions of their teachers as caring and supportive was encouraging. Research by the National Middle School Association (2009) reported that despite the challenges adolescents' face, middle school students can increase their self-efficacy as well as improve both cognitive and interpersonal skills when given appropriate support structures in school.

Academic Support

In addition to listening and advisory support, the students reported high levels of academic support from their CARES teachers. Embedded into the CARES program are opportunities for students to receive remediation up to three days a week. During this remediation time, students are given the opportunity to make-up incomplete work, receive one on one tutoring from their teachers, and also attend content area workshops throughout the year to prepare them for standardized testing in reading, writing, and math. Furthermore, the CARES teachers periodically reviewed their students' academic performance and offered encouragement and support when needed. Examples of some of the student responses from the interviews are provided below.

Question 4: Suppose a new student at Kingsford County Middle School approached you and asked you what the CARES program is all about. How would you describe it to the student?

Amanda.6.gen: It is just different activities that we do in the morning to get work assignments done. (Tier 1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would tell them that it is the first thing you come to in the morning. You have time to read and do extra things you need to do. (Tier 1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I would say that it is extra time in the morning for you to catch up with academics and one day of the week you can have free time or you can choose to stay back and work on academics like the other days. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: It is a chance to make-up your work.

Stanley.8.sped: I would tell them that it is something that is part of your homeroom. It is CARES. You try to catch up on any work you haven't done.

Joshua.8.gif: It is something that was created to try and help the students be more academically successful. (Tier 1)

Macy.7.gif: It always gives you a chance to catch up on your homework when we go to different classes. (Tier 2)

Jordan.8.sped: Like, I would say they help you in your classes and yeah. It helps you study and it helps you pass your classes. (Tier 2)

Lloyd.7.sped: On Tuesdays, we go to remediation and it is a place where you can catch up on your work. (Tier 3)

Question 11: Each student in the school has been assigned a CARES teacher. In what ways does your CARES teacher help you?

Sally.6.gen: She helps us remember if we forgot that we had homework. She will help you. (Tier 1)

Andy.6.gen: She just helps you. If you are stuck on a problem with homework, she will help you. (Tier 1)

Tonya.6.gen: Sometimes she helps me with homework and problems I may have. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: She helps me out with my grades and gives me advice on how to get my grades up and deal with friendships better. (Tier 1)

Amelia.7.gen: If I am failing an assignment, she lets me do it over to get a high grade. (Tier 1)

Clay.7.gen: She helps us get our grades up and helps us figure out what we can do to work on our grades. (Tier 1)

Lisa.7.gif: Sometimes if I have homework in some classes, if I do not understand the question, she will help me understand it more. If we are reading books and do not understand a word, she will tell us what it means. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: When she sees are grades falling, she helps me pull them back up (Tier 1)

Phil.8.gif: If I have homework or something that I need help with, she will help me with that. She has a huge amount of books and recommends books to me and helps me find them. (Tier 1)

Jerry.6.gif: I forgot my homework in there one time and she gave it to my teacher. (Tier 2)

Leo.8.gen: Well, she might give me a pencil. She comes in to try to help in my class. (Tier 2)

Abby.6.gen: Whenever I need something or I need help on some kind of problem or a subject problem, she will break it down and help me with it. (Tier 3)

Craig.6.gen: During the mornings, she will let me do the homework that I forgot about. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: Our teacher is encouraging. If you are having trouble with your homework, she will give you tips to raise your grades. (Tier 3)

Devin.8.gif: She really enforces me in getting my missing work done. I have a lot of that. She won't let me do much other than that. That is helpful to me. (Tier 3)

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, you have the opportunity to get extra tutoring in a particular subject area. Or, at times, you get to use CARES time to catch up on your work. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why?

Gwen.6.gif: I like it because sometimes when you get homework you don't understand, you can get one of your teachers to explain it to you. (Tier 1)

Christine.6.gen: I think it's really good, if you don't have your work done or don't understand. You need to go so you can figure it out and then you should be able to do it in class, so your teacher doesn't get on to you. If you don't, you won't learn and have bad grades. (Tier 1)

Brett.6.gen: I like it because if we don't understand a subject, we can go to that teacher to help us with it. Then we can understand it. (Tier 1)

Belle.7.gen: I like it because if I haven't finished my homework or I don't know how to do it, I can ask my teacher. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: I actually like it because in some part of the school year, I had to bring up some of my grades and I had time to do that. (Tier 1)

Oscar.7.gen: I like it because if you didn't do your homework, you have a chance to do it. The extra tutoring in there helps you get caught up and it can change your grade. (Tier1)

Joshua.8.gif: I like it because you get to catch up on things you may not have gotten to the other days or you get to do your homework. Also, since you get to go to the teacher that actually teaches you, you can ask them if you have a question about that work. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: I love it because if you had a test that day, you can study. If you couldn't get to your homework, you have that chance. You can catch up to where you need to be. (Tier 1)

Stanley.8.sped: I like it because you get caught up and you won't get an F and get sent to the office for not doing your work. (Tier 1)

Nadia.6.gen: I like it because it is just good if you need to finish your work before class and it give you time to study for a test. (Tier 2)

Mark.6.gif: I like it because it gives you time to read if you want to study for a test or finish your homework. (Tier 2)

Abby.6.gen: I like it because like if you need help on a subject or if you don't understand, you get help understanding it better. (Tier 2)

Danni.8.gen: I actually like it because you can catch up on your work. I just like it because she lets you do make up work or do something ahead of time. (Tier 2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I like remediation because you can catch up on your work and you can read books for accelerated reader if you need to. There's nothing really that I don't like about it. (Tier 3)

Joey.7.gen: I like it because I play sports and sometimes I don't have time to do my homework. It gives me the opportunity to catch up on it. I don't have homework as often and sometimes I may get in trouble if I don't have a book to read during remediation time. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: I do like it. It helps us catch up on work that we didn't have time to do for homework or its work that we need to do for class or to get ahead. (Tier 3)

Question 17: If you could give the remediation part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F),

what grade would you give it and why?

Tanner.6.gen: Well, an A because it helps kids get grades or assignments done and helps them get their grades up if they are doing poorly. It really helps kids because if some

people who aren't really good at a subject or are having problems, they can ask their teacher to help them with that problem. (Tier 1)

Bill.6.sped: Probably an A because the teachers help us if we need it. They don't just look away. (Tier 1)

Emma.7.gif: I would give it an A because the teachers were taking time from their resting to help you more than they do in class time. (Tier 1)

Lisa.7.gif: I would give it an A. It helps us like I said, when we don't have certain times for things or if we have questions on homework, we can ask that teacher and it give su time to be able to do that and catch up on things. (Tier 1)

Stanley.8.sped: I would give it an A because the teachers help you on work you miss when you were out or didn't do it a home. They explain it to you. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: I'd give it an A. Maybe if I've had a rough night before, I can go to remediation time and catch up or if I have homework I can do some of it in there. (Tier 1)

Kyle.6.sped: An A because if you go somewhere for your last block like if you have a cross country meet you can go to remediation to work on your homework and all the stuff you need to do. (Tier 2)

Hannah.7.gif: I would give it an A. If I ever have homework and this happens a lot and I have to ask the teacher a question that gives that time to do so. I like it. (Tier 2)

Betty.7.gen: I would give it a B because say there is some math homework you don't get and it's due, your homeroom teacher can help you. (Tier 2)

Abby.7.gen: I'd give it an A. Most of the time, I think that kids need help on subjects that they really don't understand. If they need to get caught up on homework or study for a test, then they can do it during that time. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: I think about a B or an A because it really is helpful. Sometimes if I forgot to do my homework or couldn't do it for some reason, during remediation it really helps to catch up on or get started on work that I know we're going to be doing in class. (Tier 3)

Holly.8.gif: An A because if you have work problems or questions about the work you have done, you are allowed to walk to the teachers and ask about it. It's your time to do what you need to do. (Tier 3)

Question 18: Describe what takes place on a typical day of remediation. Be as detailed as possible.

Christine.6.gen: Sometimes I go to Ms. King for help with math. Sometimes I go to Ms. Munson's class if I need a test or have been out. I may need to do a bookmark for language. I may go to Ms. Munson to read. (Tier 1)

Brett.6.gen: When we go to remediation, we usually go to any teacher that we need help with. We go in and sit down. Then we raise our hand and the teacher comes over to us and helps us. I went in there today, because I needed to re-take a test. We usually do a couple of problems to make sure we understand it. If we understand it and after we do the problems, we usually read. The teacher can then help other students. (Tier 1)

Melanie.7.gen: One time I went to my math class because I needed to catch up on some work. She helped me by going back over the lesson we had learned the previous day to help me understand it. (Tier 1)

Caitlyn.7.gen: We walk in and take a seat. She goes over stuff and if we have anything to make up or is missing, she tells us and we do it then. Sometimes we study if we have a test. (Tier 1)

Courtney.8.gen: We go from homeroom to remediation class. We sit down and either do homework or catch-up work and then the teacher can help you with the things you wouldn't normally have time in the classroom to do. (Tier 1)

Stanley.8.sped: Right now we are doing the writing clinic. We are trying to persuade people into reading our stories and sticking to our side. (Tier 1)

Gwen.6.gif: In language one time, I didn't understand how to do a particular problem that I had. I went to Ms. Cone and I understand it now. She just explained it more than she did in class. I think she had more time then. (Tier 3)

Joey.7.gen: We go into one of our academic classes. If we need to do homework, we do that and if we don't have homework, we read a book. (Tier 3)

Holly.8.gif: I will sit down and get out a book or do homework or projects that are due or are close to being due. If you have any problems, you can ask the teachers. If not, you just sit there and read and get caught up until the bell rings. (Tier 3)

With the growing emphasis on the proficiency of all students in their achievement on standardized tests along with the high expectations for academic success, it is imperative that middle grades students receive high levels of academic support and opportunities for success. According to the student responses from the study, the CARES program is offering an outlet for students to receive extra assistance with their academics.

Simply having time during the school day to make-up missing work and to complete some of their homework in and of itself was perceived positively by the students. Beyond making up work however, the students welcomed the one on one instructional support and attention received from their teachers.

Theme 3: Student Autonomy

Providing adolescents with opportunities to make their own choices has been linked to improving the intrinsic motivation of students (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, offering choices to students provides them with a sense of empowerment and self-directed behavior not always available to them during the instructional school day. The National Middle School Association (2009) reported that, "During early adolescence, emotional and psychological development is characterized by the quest for independence and identity formation" (p.1). Students desire opportunities to be more independent and to make choices on their own. The student responses from the interviews revealed that students wanted the ability to choose their own teacher advocates, enrichment classes, and clubs. They positively viewed their teachers when they gave them opportunities to participate in things that were enjoyable and meaningful to them. This theme was a common thread throughout the various interview questions. Examples of some of the student responses supporting this theme are provided below.

Question 13: What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she respects you?

Mike.8.gen: She will let me sit wherever I want. (Tier 1)

Kirt.8.sped: We get to have free time in CARES time. (Tier 1)

Braden.8.gen: If you don't want to talk about something or you just don't want to do something, she won't really make you. (Tier 2)

Craig.6.gen: During most mornings, she lets us do what we want. (Tier 3)

Question 14: What do you like most about having a teacher advocate?

Mark.6.gif: He lets us shoot hoops sometimes. (Tier 2)

Kyle.6.sped: She lets us get on the computers and play. (Tier 2)

Jordan.8.sped: I like my CARES teacher because she is quiet. She doesn't bother me. (Tier 2)

William.6.gen: That he lets me play in the gym sometimes for the last couple of minutes. (Tier 3)

Question 15: What needs to be done to improve your relationship with your advocate teacher?

Leo.8.gen: Let you choose your CARES teacher. If I could choose my CARES teacher, I would choose Ms. Sort or Ms. Moon. (Tier 2)

Abby.6.gen: I think maybe we could get to pick our CARES teacher sometimes. If you could switch them around, and when you talk to them, you would gain more trust. (Tier 3)

Question 16: On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, you have the opportunity to get extra tutoring in a particular subject area. Or, at times, you get to use CARES time to catch up on your work. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why.

Carrie.7.gif: I don't like how we are assigned the places we have to go. Sometimes we don't need any help in that subject we are going to. (Tier 1)

Libby.7.gen: Some teachers only let you work on specific things or they will just let you read and not do your homework and most nights I get home late and I need that time in the morning to finish up and they won't let me. They make me read a book. (Tier 2)

Jordan.8.sped: This time I'm going to have math remediation. I know I don't need it because I passed the CRCT every time in math and I never failed it. I don't know why I need math remediation. (Tier 2)

One day each week, students who are caught up with their work and do not need extra tutoring are allowed to go to enrichment class during CARES time. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Explain why.

Carrie.7.gif: I don't really like it, because we don't choose where we are going. (Tier 1)

Kirsten.7.gen: I think we should be able to choose which enrichment to go to. (Tier 2)

Hannah.7.gif: Kind of like clubs, we get to pick our clubs here and we should be able to do the same for enrichment. (Tier 2)

Devin.8.gif: I think if you were able to choose that and also your clubs and do like the same thing and if there is not enough you'd have a list. That would be good cause then you and your friends could see about getting into the same ones or maybe you'd get in someone with people who like the same one instead of random people in a random class. (Tier 2) I don't like that you don't get to choose and you will get put into something totally random. (Tier 3)

William.6.gen: I dislike it because you don't get to choose where you want to go. If you want to go to PE or the computer lab or band, you should be able to choose for yourself. (Tier 3)

Craig.6.gen: I wish you could choose the class you were going to. Sometimes we get stuck with something that we don't like. (Tier 3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I dislike the fact that we don't get to choose what you want to be in. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: Some people don't enjoy the enrichment class they are in. They should get to choose since it is their reward. (Tier 3)

Question 20: If you could give the enrichment part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?

Joey.7.gen: I'd give it like a D- because we don't really get to choose where we go for that and like I said, I have band and yeah. (Tier 2) We don't get to choose it and some students are put in band. (Tier 3)

Hannah.7.gif: Like I said, enrichment is supposed to be a reward and for people that don't get to choose where they go, it's not really a punishment, but it doesn't feel like a reward. (Tier 2)

William.6.gen: I would give it an F. You don't get to choose where you go. (Tier 3)

Craig.6.gen: I would give it a B again because I wish you could choose where you go. (Tier 3)

Lloyd.7.sped: I'd give it a B-. The fact that you can't choose, it doesn't make any sense. If you catch up on your work, shouldn't you be able to choose what you want to be in? (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: I guess a B+ because we don't get to choose which enrichment we have. (Tier 3)

Devin.8.gif: As good as it is, it does have some faults. Like choosing and not being with people you want to be with. (Tier 3)

Question 22: Friday mornings are designated for pep rallies and school clubs. What do

You like/dislike about the pep rallies? What do you like/dislike about morning clubs?

Sarah.6.gif: I like how we get to go to clubs and choose our clubs. (Tier 1)

Melanie.7.gen: I like the clubs. I like that we get to choose the club that we would like to go to. (Tier 1)

Carrie.7.gif: On clubs, we get to choose where we are going, so I really like it. (Tier 1)

Courtney.8.gen: With clubs, I like that we get to choose what we go to. We don't get to do that a lot. (Tier 1)

Tucker.8.gif: Clubs are fun. I like clubs because you can choose your club. That makes it interesting to go and do something you like. (Tier 1)

Libby.7.gen: I kind of like clubs a little bit because we got to pick clubs and I got what I wanted. (Tier 2)

Craig.6.gen: I like clubs because you get to choose your clubs. (Tier 3)

Braden.8.gen: I do like clubs a bit because it is fun. We get to choose what club we get. (Tier 3)

Devin.8.gif: Clubs are probably my favorite part of the CARES program. You get to pick where you are. (Tier 3)

Holly.8.gif: I really like clubs. In the beginning of the school year, you get to choose which club you go into. You choose it by what you really like. (Tier 3)

Anne.8.gen: Pep rallies, I like them but I don't like the fact that we have to sit with our CARES group. I think that we should be able to find our homeroom teacher, check-in, and then go sit where we want. (Tier 1)

Theme 4: Socialization with Peers

According to Caskey and Anfara (2007), young adolescents need opportunities to create healthy bonds with their peers. In addition, Manning (2002) claimed that, "friendships, positive peer relationships, and social interactions can boost young adolescents' self-esteem" (p. 32). According to Wentzel, Barry, and Caldwell (2004), adolescents who establish positive relationships with their peers tend to display more positive social behaviors more often than those that do not. Schools can provide experiences for adolescents that foster opportunities for freedom and independence with their classmates through student led clubs, pep rallies, and advisory programs.

The CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School has Fridays set aside for student clubs and school spirit assemblies. In addition, students on target academically were given the opportunity to participate in enrichment class during the week which gave them the opportunity to participate in activities that encourage social interactions with their peers. The advisory time spent with their CARES teachers on a daily basis also gave students the opportunity to socialize with their classmates.

The responses derived from the data revealed that the students enjoyed the social time spent with their peers during CARES time. Students claimed that it was nice to have a place they could just relax and hang out with their friends. They also spoke of the positive experiences they had participating in pep rallies as they were able to shout, cheer, and support their friends. In addition, many of the students felt great about being able to perform and be recognized in front of their peers. Attending clubs in the

mornings gave them the opportunity to do something they enjoyed before the start of the instructional day. Examples of student data supporting this theme are provided below.

Question 5: Monday morning CARES time is set aside for character education. What do you like/dislike about the character education time?

Bill.6.sped: I like getting the chance to talk to with my friends before we start the day. (Tier 1)

Kelly.7.gen: I like being able to spend more time with some of my friends during CARES group. I like being with my teachers and friends. (Tier 1)

Ruth.8.gen: I like it because I have friends in there and we talk about things. Homeroom should be a time to chill out and talk with your friends. (Tier 1)

Abigail.8.gif: Well, it is nice because you can talk with your friends. (Tier 2)

Question 10: Describe what takes place on a typical day of Character Education time. Be as detailed as possible.

Rachel.6.gen: We go into Ms. Moore's room and we listen to music. She lets us sit in our seats and talk to our friends. (Tier 1)

Clay.7.gen: We go into class and talk to our friends a little. (Tier 1)

Ruth.8.gen: For about 5 minutes, we will talk to our friends. (Tier 1)

Phil.8.gif: We get into the classroom. A lot of times we play cards for ten minutes. (Tier 1)

Julie.8.gen: We come in and take attendance. We have a minute to talk to our friends. (Tier 1)

Question 19: One day each week, students who are caught up with their work and do not need extra tutoring are allowed to go to an enrichment class during CARES time. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why?

Gwen.6.gif: I like it because in Ms. Gray's class you get to talk to your friends and do computer games. (Tier 1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I like it because it gives the students who don't have any make-up work a chance to play and talk to each other. (Tier 1)

Sam.6.gen: I like it because it gives us time to talk to our friends and play. (Tier 1)

Jake.6.gen: I like it because it just gives us time to talk to our other friends who aren't in our homeroom class. (Tier 1)

Rick.7.gen: I like it because you get to play before classes start. (Tier 1)

Kelly.7.gen: I like it a lot. I think its fun because we get to go in there with some of our friends. (Tier 1)

Oscar.7.gen: I like it because it gives you a chance to talk with friends before you go to real class. You get to play around until you go to connections. (Tier 1)

Ruth.8.gen: I like it. You don't have to work and you get to socialize. (Tier 1)

George.8.gen: I like it because it gives kids free time to go and have fun in the morning. It gets pressure of your mind. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: I like it because if you are caught up on your work, you have earned enrichment. It's a good time to have fun and talk to your friends. (Tier 1)

Hannah.7.gif: It gives them like a reward and it gives them 20 minutes of time. It's kind of like recess I guess in the morning just to do fun stuff. (Tier 2)

Abigail.8.gif: Um, I think I like it because you get to hang out with your friends and stuff in the morning. (Tier 2)

Joshua.8.gif: You get to do something out of the normal and have fun. There are not any problems with enrichment. (Tier 3)

Devin.8.gif: I like it. It is fun to get out and do something in the morning before classes. (Tier 3)

Question 20: If you could give the Enrichment part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F),

what would you give it and why?

Richard.6.sped: I would give it an A. I like it because you can play and hang out.(Tier1)

Jake.6.gen: An A because if we get finished with all our work and are good, we are allowed to go and do something fun. (Tier 1)

Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A. It's a time to have fun with your friends in the morning. (Tier 1)

Jeb.7.gen: I would give it an A. For one, it is fun and it's also just a time to get your mind off of what you've been doing for a couple of days and it helps you relax. (Tier 1)

Ron.6.gen: An A because we get to walk around and shoot hoops. (Tier 2)

Abby.6.gen: An A because you get more free time. (Tier 2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I would give it a B because I go to the gym and I like basketball and it is really fun. (Tier 2)

Joshua.8.gif: You don't just do work. You do something fun. (Tier 3)

Question 21: Describe what takes place on a typical day of enrichment. Be as detailed as possible.

Brett.6.gen: When we go to enrichment, whatever class we have, we go in and have fun. I like the academic games enrichment class because we get to play and talk with our friends. We can go get a game and play something like ping-pong. We play until the bell rings. (Tier 1)

Clay.7.gen: We will go to whatever enrichment class you have. I went to gym and coach took roll. He lets us play basketball for a little while and we can socialize while we are playing. When the bell rings, we go to our regular classes. (Tier 1)

Julie.8.gen: When you walk in, you see people socializing and having fun. I was in one of my classes, and a lot of kids were running around and some were reading. (Tier 1)

Jordan.8.sped: I usually walk down the hall, talk to my friends, usually go to the bathroom. I usually sit down and play ping-pong or pool. Last time I was in enrichment class we were playing ping-pong, playing with metal spoons and we had a bouncy ball. (Tier 2)

Holly.8.gif: I have academic games so I just go in there and sit on the couch and talk. (Tier 2)

Craig.6.gen: I usually go to my homeroom. The bell rings and I go to the art room. We draw and talk to our friends. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: Right now, I have art. I go in there after homeroom. She will tell us to work on a project we have if we have art as a connection class. Otherwise, she will let us free draw or work on assignments or talk to our friends. That is all that happens until the bell rings. (Tier 3)

Question 22: Friday mornings during CARES time are designated for Pep Rallies and School Clubs. What do you like/dislike about the pep rallies? What do you like/dislike about morning clubs?

Tanner.6.gen: Pep rallies are fun. WE get to see the new teams and I like to be in there because on spirit day I like to cheer for 6th grade and the team and try to get the spirit stick. I like clubs because they are really fun. (Tier 1)

Karl.6.gen: I like the pep rallies and the clubs. In clubs, you can go into something you like to do and when you do that, you can come up with ideas on upcoming events with that club. With pep rallies, for a team, if you have a friend on that team, you can cheer them on with school spirit. (Tier 1)

Paula.7.gif: I like the clubs because you get to hang out with your friends and learn and have fun. I like pep rallies because they cheer on our teams and get them all pepped up for the games. (Tier 1)

Emma.7.gif: The morning clubs I like because you can hang out with your friends and have fun. I like the pep rallies because if you are in the pep rallies, it's kind of like CARES. They teach you and you get hyped up and you are having fun. In CARES you have a lot of fun too. (Tier 1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: I like the pep rallies. Everybody gets to go to the gym and scream. There are times you have to be quiet. Clubs are fun because we get to go to the gym or computers and have fun and do activities that are approved. (Tier 1)

Anne.8.gen: I like clubs because they are fun and they just give us a chance to have fun. (Tier 1)

Nadia.6.gen: I like pep rallies because I sometimes have to do them because I'm a cheerleader. They are fun because you get to show spirit and you get to be loud. (Tier 2)

Jordan.8.sped: I like my 1st club because I get to dance. Yeah, it's fun. (Tier 2)

Rick.7.gen: I like it because you get to sit next to your friends. (Tier 3)

Diane.7.gif: After a pep rally, we are all bouncing off the walls when we get to class. We got second in the state with Future Cities. That was really cool. (Tier 3)

If you could give the School Spirit part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what would you give it and why?

Sam.6.gen: An A because clubs are where we get to have fun and talk to our friends. (Tier 1)

Karl.6.gen: I would give it an A because you get to cheer on your friends and anyone else you may not know. It shows a lot of school spirit. In the pep rallies, you don't have to sit quiet the whole time. You can yell for your friends. (Tier 1)

Christina.7.gif: I would give it an A because the pep rallies are fun and they get you pumped up for school. The clubs are fun too. (Tier 1)

Bella.7.gen: I would give it an A because there is a lot of energy and happiness going on. (Tier 1)

Bethany.8.gen: I would give it an A+ because it's fun and we get to interact and scream and yell. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: I would definitely give it an A because it's really fun for everybody. Friday morning you get to have a little fun before the weekend. (Tier 1)

Betty.7.gen: I would give it an A because Friday's are just the funnest day of the week for me. (Tier 2)

Lloyd.7.sped: I would give it an A+ because clubs are really fun and I like how you get to be loud in the pep rallies. Everyone is having fun. (Tier 3)

Question 24: Describe takes place on a typical Friday during CARES. Be as detailed as possible.

Tanner.6.gen: Well, we leave CARES and go to our first or second club. I'm in FCA and computer games. I like FCA because I'm a Christian and we get to talk about God. WE get new visitors. It's fun to hear about their life as a Christian and how God has helped them. It's really nice what they went through. In computer games, we play games like Cool Math. It's very exciting. I can talk to my friends. (Tier 1)

Ruth.8.gen: In dance club, we go in and there are a lot of my friends in that class. We sign-in on the sign-in sheet and we practice the Thriller dance. We will dance and make complete goof balls of ourselves and have fun. (Tier 1)

Bart.8.sped: When we have pep rallies, we go to the CARES homeroom class and take roll. We usually have fun in the gym during pep rallies. The tam usually does something, like the boys basketball team may have a chant or the cheerleading squad has a chant. Then we go to first block. After we pick clubs, they tell us what we do in the club and talk about different stuff. I have gym and academic games. Sometimes we play games or talk about different topics. (Tier 1)

Abby.6.gen: Like first when the bell rings we go into the gym and we sit in our classes and I think its fund because like you get to watch the cheerleaders and its cool to see what they are doing and sometimes you get to hear the band. And if the chorus sings, I'm in chorus and its fun to be in it. (Tier 2)

Secondary Research Question 1: ***How does each grade differ in their attitudes and perceptions of the CARES program?***

One of the decisions made at the beginning of the research design was to determine the population group used in this study. Initially, the plan was to limit the study to a specific grade of students. Also brought into consideration was to focus on a particular group of students such as at-risk students, gifted students, students of low socio-economic status, or just a specific gender. The rationale for including all students in grades sixth-eight was to capture a general overview from all students involved in order to determine what/if any differences in their attitudes and perceptions surfaced. This general overview could be considered a limitation to the study since it is based upon the unique demographics prevalent at Kingsford County Middle School. Regardless, the data gathered through this phenomenological inquiry provides school leaders with a snap shot picture of the perceptions middle grades students had towards an advisory program such as CARES.

When coding the data into categories and then four themes, what was surprising to note was that little to no differences were found between grade levels, gender, or academic eligibility (special education, general education, gifted education). There was a consistency of both positive and negative attitudes and perceptions from all three grade levels as revealed through the question analysis in Chapter IV.

There were, however, some differences in the student responses from Tier 2: focus group interviews. The student participants in Tier 2 were more likely to express

negative aspects of the CARES program than in Tiers 1 and 2 (individual student interviews and follow-up interviews). As expected, the students in the focus group interviews used more sarcasm and humor compared with the others, which raises the question as to how sincere the students were being throughout the interviews. One assumption that can be made is that the students sensed a degree of pressure and anxiety when speaking openly in front of their peers. Nevertheless, using the focus group interviews as an additional data source provided the additional supporting data necessary to validate the findings. In addition, several of the students participating in the focus groups were asked to participate in Tier 3 (follow-up interviews) in order to pull more reliable information from them.

Another key point in identifying differences in the attitudes and perceptions expressed through all three grades was that the sixth and seventh grade classes had always had the CARES program while in middle school. The CARES program was currently in its second year of implementation so the eighth graders had experienced middle school without an advisory program. Despite this fact, the eight grade responses were very similar to grades seven and eight.

The initial presumption going into the study was that students in sixth grade would provide more positive attitudes and perceptions than those in seventh and eight. This assumption was founded upon the premise that the older students would be more inclined to brush the CARES program off as being childish and impractical for students their age. This presumption was found to be false. On the contrary, negative attitudes found in the eighth grade were consistently found in grades six and seven.

For example, while the majority of the students positively viewed character education as a time where character formation was taught through Hollywood movie clips, bullying prevention activities, and discussions with their teacher advocates, some students in all three grades expressed dissatisfaction over the way character education was taught. These students felt that character education was childish and that the topics were impractical for middle school students. Some of them spoke of a disinterest in character education from their classmates. Notice the consistency in the example of responses from all three grade levels.

Mark.6.gif: What I do not like, I think when we are learning about honesty and stuff, I think it is a little below our grade, the way it is presented to us. (Tier 2)

Gwen.6.gif: Sometimes I cannot really relate to the situation that is going on in the movie clips that we watch. It is not something that has happened to me. (Tier 3)

Craig.6.gif: Well, to me, no because they do not seem like middle school problems. They feel more like elementary problems. (Tier 2)

Thomas.7.gif: I think I would give it a C because some of the things we learn about, I see that as something I would do in fourth grade. Some of us are going to high school. I do not see any purpose in some of it. That is my main reason for the C. (Tier 1)

Carla.7.gif: I think yes and no because the teachers know half the stuff of what really goes on but like them not being in middle school now, they really do not know what we are going through and with them being in middle school for however long it was, it is definitely different now because they really don't know. (Tier 2)

Joshua.8.gif: It is sort of like sitting in there listening to something that you have already heard, probably from your parents. (Tier 1)

Phil.8.gif: The talks are a waste of time. It kind of just goes in one ear and out the other for most of us. (Tier 1)

Mindy.8.gen: I think we are mature enough to know what not to do and what to do but we really don't care so we do it anyways. (Tier 2)

This illustration exemplifies the general consistencies found in the student responses from six, seventh, and eighth grade students. Consequently, there is a lack of

substantial data from the study supporting any significant difference in student attitudes and perceptions from grade level to grade level. Based upon the research findings of this particular study, school leaders can find assurance in designing an advisory program that can be relatively uniform in structure while differentiating character education topics, remediation, enrichment, and club activities to meet the unique needs of each grade level.

Secondary Research Question 2: ***Does the CARES program create a caring learning community that meets the needs of the whole child as anticipated by school leaders?***

Creating a caring learning community has become a consistent topic in middle school reform. Middle School leaders have been charged with the duty of creating programming designed to create strong, caring learning environments that support the needs of the whole child. This requires administrators to not simply focus on the academic needs of children, but their social and emotional needs as well. Baker and Bridger (1997) claimed that the older a child gets, the more likely they are to experience senses of alienation, disenfranchisement, and a lack of belonging in school. Furthermore, "there is startling evidence that many children, especially children at-risk, do not have nurturing relationships to support their academic work or personal development" (Baker & Bridger, p. 2).

The CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School was designed for the purpose of personalizing the learning environment for the students. Following the recommendations made by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006) to provide each student in the building with a personal adult advocate and to "convey a sense of caring" (p. 145), the school implemented CARES at the start of the 2008-2009 school year. The student responses from the standard interview questions

using the three data sources (individual student interviews, focus group interviews, and follow-up interviews) revealed that in fact, the CARES program does provide a caring learning community for its students. Consistently portrayed throughout the data are strong levels of teacher support that address both the academic and affective needs of the students. Students perceived their teachers as caring and supportive adults, providing them with listening support, advisory support, and academic support. Many of the students claimed that the CARES program made them feel more connected to middle school. Notice examples of what some of the students had to say about how the CARES program made them feel supported and connected at school.

Richard.6.sped: It does make me feel connected and supported because I don't feel left out. (Tier 1)

Christine.6.gen: I feel like we are supported because our teachers help us with our school problems. Your teachers and your principal support you and your friends too. (Tier 1)

Andy.6.gen: It does make you feel more connected to school. You get to know people better by sharing their past experiences. You get to know the teachers better because they will tell you the best thing to do if you're stuck in a situation. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: It makes me feel supported at school because I know I have someone that cares about me and about getting my school work done. (Tier 1)

Belle.7.gen: It does. It shows that the administration cares if we care about our school. It shows that they want us to have fun and learn. They try to make learning and coming to school as fun as possible. I enjoy going to that whole thing just because it does make you feel that you are united at school. (Tier 1)

Rebecca.7.gen: It does because I know that I am safe. (Tier 1)

Bethany.8.gen: It makes me feel like the whole school is by your side all the time because we are always interacting with each other. (Tier 1)

Bart.8.sped: It keeps me connected with school because it combines outside life and school life. (Tier 1)

Angel.8.gif: It does because the person that's helping you is a teacher. You really think of teachers helping you in class and not with personal problems. (Tier 1)

Hannah.7.gif: Well, I think it helps you feel connected to school because you may be having bullying problems and you may be in class focusing on what the teachers are saying but if you have stuff on your mind like, "Oh my goodness, what is he going to say or do?", I mean, you can't sit there and focus on academics. (Tier 2)

Libby.7.gen: It makes me feel supported just because the teachers are there for me. (Tier 2)

Devin.8.gif: Yeah, with the support, I know they are doing this to help you and make school fun, so as far as support, yes. (Tier 2)

Diane.7.gif: I guess it makes you realize that they care. (Tier 3)

Joshua.8.gif: If we didn't have the CARES program, we would be just like a normal school. (Tier 3)

Ruth.8.gen: I think that a lot of support and effort goes into it so that you can see that people do care. (Tier 3)

Recognizing that the CARES program was a multi-faceted program that addresses the combination of the social, emotional, and academic needs of adolescents is important to consider. While the CARES program can be considered an advisory program, it also provided students with experiences that fostered and encouraged positive relationships with peers and adults along with their academic success. The combination of character education, remediation, enrichment, clubs, and school spirit days offered students a holistic experience in the mornings that met the varied levels of needs of the students. With the diverse needs of students entering a public middle school setting, it is imperative that school leaders consider this issue, finding ways to meet the unique needs of students with multiple strategies and programming. Considering the ever changing diverse and pluralistic cultures found throughout the country, creating a caring learning community should not be considered a one size fits all. Instead, school administrators

should implement social, emotional, and academic programming that meets the unique demographics that they serve. McCombs (2003) writes,

> The recommended solution is to deal directly with feelings of alienation and disconnection by designing new kinds of systems that connect, rather than isolate, individuals, give voice to concerns of all people in the system, and promote positive growth, development of personal and social responsibility for all (p. 100).

A caring community therefore, requires the collaboration of all stakeholders in ensuring that students feel welcomed and supported in school. The CARES program, as evidenced by the student data, had managed to provide an environment that offered a fun and supportive environment for students.

Secondary Research Question 3: ***What affects if any does the CARES program have in creating positive teacher-student relationships that result in higher levels of trust and support?***

Strong teacher-student relationships offer the emotional security students need to be successful in school (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008). Furthermore, research by Lee (2007) found that trust plays an important role in the adolescents' adjustment, motivation, and performance in school. A fundamental premise behind a successful school advisory program is to personalize the learning environment by providing opportunities for students to build positive relationships with their teachers and peers (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2006).

Students in the study were asked to share their feelings about their relationship with their CARES teachers. The majority of the student responses indicated that they perceived their teachers as highly credible and trustworthy adults. The positive attitudes

students expressed about their CARES teacher was a promising sign that provided evidence that the use of a teacher advocate in middle school can be successful. An interesting finding in the study was that teacher credibility was assumed by title alone. Teachers were described as credible because they are supposed to be; however, high levels of trust only occurred through positive personal experiences with the teacher over time. In fact, several of the students expressed a desire to get to know their teachers more and reported this issue as a suggested area needed to improve their relationship with their advocate teacher. Notice a few of the student responses perceiving their teachers as credible by title below.

Sally.6.gen: I trust her because she is a teacher. (Tier 1)

John.6.gen: I trust her for one because she is a teacher. (Tier 1)

Tabitha.6.gif: I feel I can trust her because she is a teacher. (Tier 1)

Joey.7.gen: I feel like I can trust her. I guess because she is a teacher and I've never had a teacher that I haven't been able to trust. (Tier 3)

Other students reported that they trusted their teacher because he or she has proven themselves to be trustworthy over time. The teachers impacted them relationally in some way placing a sense of confidence in that they could be counted on in the future. Notice some of the student responses below.

Amanda.6.gen: I do trust her because she has told us she keeps everything confidential and won't tell anything about what we have told her. If we talk to her, we know we can trust her that she won't talk to other teachers. (Tier 1)

Lisa.7.gif: I trust my CARES teacher because everything that she says is straightforward with us. If we are talking about bullying, she will tell us the facts instead of saying that bullying is bad. She gives us reasons. If we are talking about grades, she will not let anyone know what our grades are. (Tier 1)

Rebecca.7.gen: We can tell her something and she will keep it and not say anything about it. (Tier 1)

Mike.8.gen: I trust her because I've had her for a couple of years and I've gotten to know her. (Tier 1)

Bart.8.sped: I trust her because if I ask her any questions, it is just between me and her. She won't say anything to anybody else. (Tier 1)

Gwen.6.gif: She doesn't tell other people what our situations are. (Tier 3)

Libby.7.gen: I trust her because she wouldn't tell anybody something that I wanted to keep secret. She gives her open opinion about the problem. She wouldn't tell me anything that I don't feel wouldn't help me. (Tier 3)

While students reported strong levels of trust in their relationships with their teachers, the student responses below revealed their desire to get to know their teachers at a more personal level, to be known by their teachers, and to have more one on one time with them. The students claimed they enjoyed when the teachers opened up to them by sharing personal stories. They also responded positively when they felt that they can have fun with them using humor and laughter.

Tanner.6.gen: She is a teacher that you can chill out with and with not a lot of work and you can know what's going on. (Tier 1)

Sally.6.gen: We get to spend more time with that teacher. (Tier 1)

Kelly.7.gen: You know that teacher more than any other of the teachers. They become your favorite. (Tier 1)

Carrie.7.gif: I like having her because we can always relate to her thoughts and the stories she tells about her daughter who has already gone through middle school and is now in high school. (Tier 1)

Ruth.8.gen: I guess that she makes it easier to want to come to school in the morning. You know you are going to see her and she makes you laugh and things like that. (Tier 1)

The following student responses indicate what they feel needs to be done to improve their relationship with their advocate teacher.

Sarah.6.gif: Probably to talk more in general because we don't really talk much. We talk to friends but we don't talk to her a lot. (Tier 1)

Gwen.6.gif: I think we should be in CARES in the morning and the afternoon to get to know them better. (Tier 1)

Andy.6.gen: I could probably get to know her a little better and talk to her more. (Tier 1)

Paula.7.gif: I think there needs to be more one on one, instead of just everybody talking at once. (Tier 1)

Harry.7.gen: Maybe if there was a day that we could get some alone time, she could be a secondary counselor to us. (Tier 1)

Holden.8.gif: I think we could possibly talk a little more, one on one. It's pretty much class talk. Maybe more individual topics would be better. (Tier 1)

Carla.7.gen: I think that maybe like once a week your teacher should take individual students aside and talk about things you are too embarrassed to talk about with your friends. (Tier 2)

Tabitha.6.gif: I don't really talk to my CARES teacher that much so if we talked more about things that have happened to me and other students that would be an improvement. (Tier 3)

Craig.6.gen: It would help to be in there longer. That way I would be able to build on trusting her. (Tier 3)

An additional focus on providing more individual student attention to the students in the advisory group could assist in furthering the positive relationships established with the students. Perhaps a more intentional process embedded into the advocacy time that works one on one with students in establishing a Personal Plan for Progress (PPP) as recommended by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006) on ways middle schools can personalize the learning environment would provide opportunities to strengthen their relationship with the students. Kingsford County Middle School does use academic achievement plans located in the student agendas as a means for teacher advocates to monitor the academic and behavioral performance of their students. A greater emphasis on utilizing the academic achievement plans while in CARES may be needed. In addition, further training and monitoring from the

administration would equip teachers with the skills and accountability needed to ensure its successful and consistent implementation.

Secondary Research Question 4: ***Are certain aspects of the program more effective than others?***

The investigation of the students' overall attitudes and perceptions towards the CARES program revealed significant findings that are applicable for middle school leaders. The study provides educators with the ability to view a middle school advisory program through the eyes of the students, to hear their opinions, and to capture a glimpse of their world as they see it. To students, truth be told, perception is reality. Teachers, generally speaking, care genuinely for their students, establish high expectations for student success, and entered the profession with the desire of making a difference in the lives of students. With that being said, a gap often exists between what a student perceives as being true and reality. The findings from this study can provide educators with the additional knowledge that can bridge the gap between what educators think they are doing to impact student connectedness with the reality of how the students are perceiving programming such as CARES. By reconsidering the traditional approaches of middle grades teaching and learning, and by viewing the education of a child from a more holistic perspective, that is the social, emotional, and academic learner, recognizing that the three parts are inseparable, schools can improve levels of student engagement and belongingness. You cannot simply teach academics without addressing the affective needs of emotion and social connectedness to others.

As previously noted, the CARES program is simply one approach towards addressing the social emotional, and academic learner. Schools must consider their own

unique contextual settings and plan programming that accordingly meets their needs. In the following section of the chapter, a brief discussion of each component of CARES will be presented, sharing a summary of the voice of the students', as revealed through the individual interviews, focus group sessions, and follow-up interviews. By doing so, both positive and negative attitudes and perceptions will be identified allowing school leaders to better determine effective advisory programming.

Character Education

According to the students, character education on Monday mornings was an intentional time for teachers to provide instruction on the formation and building of the students' character. Teachers used Hollywood movie clips, bullying prevention projects, and group discussions to facilitate the learning and application of character qualities such as honesty, respect, and kindness. During character education class, opportunities were given that promote the communication of feelings, opinions, and stories from the teachers and the students in the class. In addition, the class discussions allowed students to problem solve middle school issues with their teacher and classmates as the teacher served as a guide who provided them with the knowledge of how to resolve conflict with others.

The majority of the students perceived their CARES teacher as a caring and supportive adult who guided and instructed character formation. They welcomed opportunities to communicate their feelings to their teachers and classmates while getting to know their teacher on a more personal level. Most of the student participants reported that the character education class was fun and practical for middle school students.

On the other hand, some of the students viewed character education class as impractical. Students communicated attitudes of disinterest and a lack of connection with the method of instruction being presented. Character education was perceived as childish, communicating that the topics being discussed are items students already know and that they should not have to be taught what has already been known to them. Some students perceived that some of the teachers were teaching character education out of obligation rather than sincerity, claiming that some of their teachers were disorganized and disinterested in genuinely providing character education. The following student responses reveal this attitude.

William.6.gen: He does not show any likeness about it. He just turns on the video that we watch and just walks away. He probably doesn't even watch it. (Tier 3)

Amanda.6.gen: Sometimes the teachers will just leave the monitor off. (Tier 1)

Thomas.7.gif: Well, it is right in between with my CARES teacher. Yes, she puts forth the effort because it is mandatory because of the school. But it looks like she just has to do it, just because it is mandatory that she does it, not that she really wants to. (Tier 1)

Jordan.8.sped: Like mine and Leo's teacher, she is retiring this year and she really does not do nothing more like last year and she really does not teach you basically nothing else. We just basically sit there until the bell rings. She just makes us shut up. (Tier 2)

It is important to note that a small group of the student participants felt this way; however, even if some of the students' perceived their teachers as disinterested, school leaders should recognize the significance of ensuring teacher buy-in when providing character education. One suggestion would be for school leaders to provide teachers with the necessary training and support needed to eliminate these types of perceptions. Furthermore, a better understanding of the adolescent learner along with the supporting evidence that the provision of affective forms of instruction can boost student academic

performance and directly impact teaching and learning in the regular classroom would encourage teachers to be more accepting of advisory programming for students.

Another interesting finding was a comment made by one of the female students during the seventh grade focus group session. As male students in the group were discussing the lack of interest from their male teacher, Hannah made an interesting comment during the discussion:

Lloyd.7.sped: All we do is sit down, say the pledge, and listen to announcements. Then the whole class just talks during CARES.

Alber.7.gen: We usually read after the announcements and stuff.

Hannah.7.gif: I think that might have to do with the fact that there teachers are women. I mean, I am not saying that to be mean or sexist.

Are male teachers less likely to lead and facilitate discussions directly related to the social, emotional side of learning? While there is not enough supporting data to claim that this assumption as true, it is another student perception that supports the idea that additional professional development in social emotional learning is needed.

In addressing the finding that some of the students felt that the character education was childish and impractical, school leaders can use student surveys, focus groups, and other informal inventories to gage the interests of the students while providing them with choices. Especially after results of the study revealed that students seek opportunities for more autonomy and choice in the CARES program. This issue further speaks of the need for school leaders to avoid using a “one size fits all” approach towards advisory programs and that the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision making process may limit poor attitudes and perceptions as discussed.

A common perception coming from the student responses during character education was the emphasis placed on bullying prevention, conflict resolution strategies, and respecting others. This finding is no surprise since Kingsford County Middle School implemented a school wide bullying prevention program at the same time the CARES program was implemented into the school. Other schools may find the need to focus more on other topics during character education class such as goal setting, study skills, organization skills, and responsibility. Regardless of the values being taught, it is imperative that school leaders get a pulse on student attitudes and perceptions when considering the provision of effective character education instruction.

Advocacy

As previously mentioned, the students at Kingsford County Middle School reported high levels of listening, advisory, and academic support from their teachers. The advocate teachers were perceived as caring and likeable adults who could be trusted at all times. This finding is powerful in the sense that it reveals the influence that teachers have on impacting the students they teach. Teachers in middle schools can easily get caught into assuming that their actions and words carry little weight as students do not typically express their true feelings and perceptions towards adults as they continuously struggle with identify formation and peer pressure. However, the results of this study revealed that the majority of students viewed their teachers positively and listened carefully to what they said. Furthermore, students were able to perceive teacher attitudes towards them, reaffirming the notion that teachers have the tremendous obligation of displaying an “ethic of care” towards their students that is genuine in nature (Noddings, 1984). The idea of being sincere with students coincides with the student responses

found under advocacy. Students reported a lack of teacher student interaction and a lack of sincerity as reasons for not trusting their teachers. In addition, several of the students reported getting to know the teacher as what they liked the most about having a teacher advocate while others expressed more one on one time as a way of improving their relationship with their advocate. With that being said, the results of the study show that students sought more personal relationships with their teachers wanting to know their teachers and be known by their teachers in more intimate ways. This conclusion furthers the need for middle grades educators to focus on personalizing the learning environment through various research based practices.

Students reported high levels of respect from their teachers when they perceived them as treating them fairly and by offering them opportunities to work autonomously during class. They also reported high levels of respect from their advocate teachers when they did not yell or degrade them in front of their peers. The teachers treated them like adults, rather than kids, through the display of good manners. Notice the responses from some of the students that support perceptions of fairness, autonomy, and respect through manners.

Gary.6.gif: She doesn't yell at us a lot. She can keep her temper in control and gives us a lot of freedom. (Tier 1)

Bella.7.gen: When I'm talking, she doesn't interrupt me. (Tier 1)

Jeffrey.8.gen: She treats us all the same and no different than other kids. (Tier 1)

Stanley.8.gen: She doesn't tell us to shut-up or anything like that. She asks us nicely to calm down a little bit or be quiet while we are doing our work. (Tier 1)

George.8.gen: She always gives good manners and she always greets me every time she sees me in the hallways. (Tier 1)

Bart.8.sped: She isn't mean to us. She is respectful by saying yes sir and no sir. Even though she is older than us. (Tier 1)

Assigning every student a teacher advisor in middle school to personalize the learning environment, facilitating more positive teacher-student relationships, and offering additional social, emotional, and academic support for the adolescent learner was effective according to the results of this study. The student data provided in this research revealed the need for schools to find ways to foster more personal interactions with the teachers. Students expressed a desire to know their teachers more and felt respected when teachers displayed an interest in them personally in addition to their academic performance. This issue remains a challenge for middle school educators as the pressures of high stakes testing, teacher accountability, and limited school resources and funding place such an imbalanced view of educating adolescents. Simply focusing on academics can be counterproductive to the overall development of middle school students. When high academic expectations are combined with opportunities to promote the social and emotional growth of adolescents, healthy adolescent development and improved student achievement can occur.

Remediation

The remediation component of CARES was implemented with the intent of offering students additional academic support to better prepare them for standardized tests and achievement in their core classes. One of the main concerns of the school administration was the increase in the amount of incomplete assignments and initial poor performances on formative and summative assessments. Almost half of the student population at Kingsford County Middle School includes students identified as economically disadvantaged. Consequently, the assumed support structures outside of

school are not always available to many of the students. The idea of establishing a “zero tolerance on zeroes” was brought forth by the administration in an effort to improve the successful completion of homework and mastery of student assessments.

The student perceptions towards the remediation component of CARES were positive. Students reported high levels of teacher support claiming that they appreciated the one on one instructional support they received in the mornings. In addition, they liked having a chance to complete their homework, work on large projects, and make-up or re-take exams when needed.

Some of the students expressed a desire for more autonomy and choice during their remediation classes as teachers at times will assign students to focus on a particular subject. Students identified as at-risk on their performance for future standardized exams may at times be assigned to workshops or clinics designed to address deficit skills. Regardless of some of the student concerns for more choice, the remediation part of CARES was overwhelmingly positive through the eyes of the students. Teachers should focus their attention on finding appropriate ways to offer students more choice and autonomy during this part of CARES.

Enrichment

Enrichment class during CARES provided students with the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities during the week. Students identified as on target academically by their teachers report to an enrichment class one day each week. Enrichment classes included lifetime fitness (physical education), band, academic games, art, keyboarding, computers, and chorus. The student responses revealed positive perceptions and attitudes claiming that they enjoyed participating in different activities

and that it was a reward for their academic success. Many reported that the enrichment class served as a motivator to make sure that they had completed all of their assignments and were successful in the classroom. In addition, they reported enrichment time as a time to hang out with their friends and socialize in a relaxed atmosphere before starting the school day.

Several of the students reported their frustration over not having the ability to choose their enrichment class and felt that, since it was a reward for success in class, they should be able to go where they want. This finding, noted previously in this chapter, tells of the need to increase levels of autonomy and choice throughout the CARES program. The administration faces the challenge of offering choices to students without compromising safety and security when supervising large groups of students. Other students believed that the enrichment classes were too repetitive, that the same activities took place throughout the school year. One suggestion would be for school leaders to collaborate with various stakeholders in assisting with the provision of fun, engaging enrichment activities for middle grades students. Outside community resources could be utilized and perhaps offer more choices to students during the enrichment period. Teachers and staff members can focus their efforts on creating more diverse experiences for these students. Again, the dissemination of interest surveys and student questionnaires can be used to identify student interests and offer them choices for enrichment.

The enrichment component of CARES provided students with an important outlet to socialize with their peers in a fun and relaxing atmosphere. Schools should consider similar ways that allow students to interact with each other outside of the context of

classroom instruction. By doing so, students are given the important social interactions necessary for their successful development in school.

School Spirit

School Spirit days at Kingsford County Middle School occurred on Friday mornings and consisted of student led clubs and pep rallies. At the start of the school year, students were provided with the opportunity to choose clubs of their choice by completing a form indicating their top five club choices. Students were assigned two clubs which rotate every other week. Pep rallies occurred periodically throughout the school year to recognize fall, winter, and spring sports teams. In addition, pep rallies took place to celebrate other successes that occurred throughout the school year.

School Clubs

The students expressed their satisfaction over participation in student clubs. The detailed student responses when asked to describe a typical day of clubs revealed a variety of engaging activities that catered to the unique interests of the individual students. The students reported high levels of competency and satisfaction in pursuing their interests during the school day. Several of the students reported that they liked having the opportunity to choose their club rather than being assigned one. At the same time, some of the students spoke of their frustration with not being able to change their club after it was initially assigned. One recommendation would be for the administration to consider more proactive ways of communicating what each club has to offer. Perhaps a club manual detailing the specific goals and missions of each of the clubs along with descriptions of the activities taking place in the clubs would alleviate misunderstanding or misconceptions before students commit to them at the start of the year.

Overall, the clubs were viewed positively by the students. Students found the clubs to be fun and relaxing, a time to socialize with their peers, and to participate in activities that meet their interests. Embedding school clubs into the regular school day was a great advantage rather than having clubs take place after school. Having the clubs during the school day gave every student the opportunity to participate in a club rather than being hindered by other after school activities and transportation issues. Based upon the positive perceptions of clubs by the students in this study, middle school leaders should consider opportunities to integrate clubs during the school day.

Pep Rallies

According to the students, the pep rallies that took place throughout the year gave students the opportunity to cheer for their classmates, to get excited about the school, and to have fun in a more informal environment at school. Students spoke of how much they enjoyed being recognized in front of their peers, and also found the pep rallies as an opportunity to listen to the school administrators communicate what is going on in the school. Like the clubs, the students perceived this time as an enjoyable time to interact and socialize with their peers. Many of the students liked that they could talk to students from other grades and welcomed the opportunity of having the whole school come together for one event.

Implications from Study

This phenomenological inquiry revealed the CARES program through the eyes of the students. Hearing their voice, as communicated through the individual student interviews, focus group sessions, and follow-up interviews allowed educators to capture a glimpse of the unique attitudes and perceptions middle school students have towards a

middle school advisory program. The results of the study brought forth several practical applications for middle grades educators when considering meeting the needs of the whole child through comprehensive advisory programming such as CARES.

Point 1

When considering character education instruction, school administrators should focus their attention on the needs of the students prevalent to their school setting. In the case of Kingsford County Middle School, the character education program had a strong emphasis on bullying prevention and conflict resolution strategies with the intent of limiting the amount of bullying behaviors in school. As a result, topics such as respectful behavior towards others, kindness to others, and resolving conflict with peers was a common theme found in the student data. Furthermore, when providing instruction catered towards character formation, educators should seek ways to provide instruction that is relevant to the students. Direct whole group instruction where information is verbally disseminated from the teacher to the students may create a disconnect with middle school learners. Educators should consider creative methods of instruction to better engage students in the process of character formation. The experimentation of various methods and a more collaborative and intentional effort with the teachers and staff will aid in the development of higher quality character education programming.

Point 2

With higher levels of accountability, increasingly rigorous curricular demands, and the instructional and assessment practices needed to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, it is imperative that school administrators provide teachers with the necessary support and resources to better meet the social and

emotional needs of students. Professional development in the area of the adolescent learner and social emotional learning is required. Furthermore, involving teachers and other stakeholders in the decision making process is an integral part of making a program such as CARES a successful one. Teachers need sufficient time allocated for planning and collaborating on effective practices in this area.

Point 3

The results of the study revealed the need for middle school leaders to continue to seek practical ways that foster positive teacher-student relationships with their students. Environments that facilitate opportunities for teachers to get to know students and for students to get to know teachers are critical in improving middle school students' connectedness to school. This reciprocity in the interactions exchanged between students and teachers is supported by Vygostky (1978) and his theory on social development. In addition, Bowlby (1969) claimed that strong attachments to adults can result in more prosocial outcomes. An imbalanced focus on academic achievement alone can negatively impact the overall performance of students in school.

Point 4

Educators should strongly consider finding ways to offer students more choices and higher levels of autonomy while in school. Results of the study found that students expressed the desire to have more choices during CARES time, therefore a more intentional effort by administrators in the provision of choices can increase the level of motivation students have in different school activities. According to Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory, providing students with higher levels of autonomy, competency, and relatedness can result in more intrinsically motivated students.

Programs designed to personalize the learning environment are appropriate times to implement student choice, especially since these environments are primarily focused on increasing a student's sense of belonging to school.

Point 5

The combination of character formation and peer socialization can enhance the level of positive peer relationships within the middle school setting. In a time of escalating reports of bullying, harassment, and violence in schools, the one-two punch of character education instruction coupled with opportunities for students to interact with each other in non-academic settings during the school day can greatly aid in the development of healthy student interactions. In addition, the stress and anxiety that coincides with the high curricular demands place on 21st century learners can be countered by opportunities embedded in the school day that allow students to relax and have fun with their friends and teachers.

Point 6

In Maslow's (1968) Hierarchy of Needs, the needs of safety and belonging must take place before the higher order needs leading to self-actualization can occur. Therefore, middle grades leaders must make an effort in creating and sustaining school environments that represent a caring learning community. The four identified themes from the study: character formation, teacher support, student autonomy, and peer socialization, when applied to the school setting, can foster environments that are supportive of the social, emotional, and academic needs of students. School administrators are obligated to provide appropriate leadership by ensuring that the emphasis is not strictly on creating high levels of achievement reflective only on test

scores, but should communicate to all stakeholders the importance of teaching the whole child. Furthermore, when school administrators make whole child instruction a priority, teachers will respond more positively when initiatives such as CARES are implemented.

Point 7

The creation of the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School involved the collaboration of general education teachers, connections teachers, administrators, and support staff. The five components of CARES consisting of character education, advocacy, remediation, enrichment, and school spirit required all parts of the school organization to serve in fulfilling the mission of the program in providing a supportive caring learning community for students. Consequently, planning a comprehensive school advisory program requires the use of a General Systems Theory Framework.

Specifically, when focused on school improvement planning, particularly when it comes to increasing student connectedness and belonging in schools, educational leaders must consider student attitudes and perceptions when formulating school prograMs. The students, being the main stakeholders of interest, can assist school leaders in answering the most important question of all, “Is the program doing what it is supposed to do?” While quantifiable data can provide administrators with some verifiable evidence of growth, the identification of attitudes and perceptions cannot be as easily calculated. This research project provided leaders with a picture of how students perceived CARES, which should be considered when creating and modifying programs similar in nature. By doing so, school leaders can adjust social and emotional programming to better serve students.

Recommendations and Limitations

The qualitative research study exploring the attitudes and perceptions of the middle school students at Kingsford County Middle School has its limitations. For one, the primary researcher conducting the study was the assistant principal at the school who had a collaborative responsibility in ensuring its successful implementation. While the methodology design discussed in Chapter III detailed ways in which bias was reduced, this aspect of the study is still a limitation worth noting. The research findings are specifically relevant to the unique demographics of Kingsford County Middle School as well as to the CARES program itself. Additional phenomenological inquiries replicating the study in similar social emotional or school advisory programs are strongly recommended. A broader context in which the data can be further supported would improve the trustworthiness of the findings of this study.

The research project's intent was to provide a general overview of the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the CARES program. Therefore, further research focusing on more specific student populations may provide more detail on the attitudes of perceptions of specific groups. Studies exploring one grade level at a time can potentially identify the different variances of attitudes and perceptions expressed. Exploring at-risk students, special needs students, gifted students, economically disadvantaged students, minority students, or a specific gender are recommended.

While three data sources were used, two of the three data sources had a designated interviewee transcribe the response onto a Microsoft Word document which was then presented to the interviewer and member checked. The focus group sessions

were the only data source video taped which allowed the researcher to discern body language and tone of voice to better understand what the students were saying. While the depth of responses greatly increased the credibility of the findings, it is still a possible limitation.

Further research that explores the attitudes and perspectives of the teachers towards programming such as CARES is also highly recommended. Understanding the perceptions of the teachers can provide educational leaders with just as much meaningful data to assist in the appropriate implementation of whole child programming. Additional qualitative research designs such as a case study would offer an additional insight that could identify strengths and weaknesses in these types of programs.

Quantitative research investigating the success of programs such as CARES would also be beneficial to educational leaders. Researchers could explore the impact these programs have on school discipline and academic performance. With the growing research justifying the need for middle school educators to provide for the social and emotional needs of students, further qualitative and quantitative inquiries are needed to equip school leaders in implementing affective school programming that can improve student achievement and belongingness in schools.

Conclusion

The truth about the adolescent learner is very clear; middle school students have an increased value in their standing with their peers, are more self-conscious about their perception towards others, and are limited by the very structure of middle schools to have strong personal relationships with the adults in the building (Goodenow, 1993). The need for students' at the middle school level to feel like they belong is paramount for success.

Baker and Bridger (1997) noted that, “When asked to describe the teacher qualities most influential to their classroom experiences, students and teachers in various studies during the past 30 years consistently focus on the perceived quality of teacher caring and support, not on teacher competency and proficiency” (p. 12). The message is very clear; strong caring learning environments that focus on meeting the needs of the whole child is vital to the success of students in middle schools. When authentic acts of support are given to students, students will rise to the challenge and reach the levels of success necessary to function in American society.

References

Alexander, W., & George, P. (1981). *The exemplary middle school.* New York, NY: CBS College Publishing.

Anfara, V.A. (2006). *Research Summary: Advisory Programs.* Retrieved from http:// www.nmsa.org/ResearchSummaries/AdvisoryPrograms/tabid/812/Default.aspx.

Akos, P. (2006). Extracurricular participation and the transition to middle school. *Research in Middle Level Education Online, 29*(9), 1-9. Retrieved November 29, 2008 from Education Research Complete Database.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., Razavieh, A., & Sorenson, C. (2006). *Introduction to research in education (7th ed.).* Belmont, CA: Thompson & Wadsworth.

Baker, J., & Bridger, R. (1997). Schools as caring communities: a relational approach to school reform. *School Psychology Review 26*(4), 586-614.

Baker, J., Grant, S., & Morlock, L. (2008). The teacher-student relationship as a developmental context for children with internalizing or externalizing behavior problems. *School Psychology Quarterly, 23*(1), 3-15.

Balkus, B. (2006). An advocate for every student at Millard Central Middle School. *Middle School Journal, 38*(2), 4-12.

Board of Trustees of Indiana University (N.D.). *systems theory in education.* Retrieved from http://www.inparaeducators.org/workingasateam/systems_educ.html.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theories and methods (5th ed.).* Pearson Education, Inc.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss (Vol. 1).* New York, NY: Basic Books Publishing.

Brown, D. (2005). The significance of congruent communication in effective classroom management. *A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 79*(1).

Caskey, M.M., & Anfara, V.A. (2007). *Research summary: Young adolescents' developmental characteristics.* Retrieved from http://www.nmsa.org/Research/ ResearchSummaries/DevelopmentalCharacteristics/tabid/1414/Default.aspx.

Catalano, R.F., Haggerty, K.P., Oesterle, S., Fleming, C.B., & Hawkins, S.D. (2004). The importance of bonding to school for healthy development: Findings from the Social Development Research Group. *Journal of School Health, 74*(7), 252-261.

Chambers, E., Hylen, M., & Schreiber, J. (2006). Achievement and at-risk middle school students' perspectives of academic support. *Journal of Research in Character Education, 4*(1/2), 33-46.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2003). Safe and sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning programs. Retrieved from http://www.casel.org.

Cheng, K. (2007). A study on applying focus group interviews on education. *Reading Improvement, 44*(4), 194-198.

Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Clark, V.L., Plano, C., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist, 35*(2), 236-264.

Davis, H. (2006). Exploring the contexts of relationship quality between middle school students and teachers. *Elementary School Journal, 106*(3).

Eisner, E.W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the enhancement of Educational practice.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merril-Prentice Hall.

Eisner, E. (2005). Back to whole. *Educational Leadership, 63*(1), 14-18.

Farber, N. (2006). Conducting qualitative research: A practical guide. *Professional School Counseling, 9*(5), 367-375.

Farlex Inc. (2009). Attachment theory. Retrieved from http://encyclopedia.theFreedictionary.com/p/Attachment%20theory.

Fredriksen, K., & Rhodes, J. (2004). The role of teacher relationships in the lives of students. *New Directions of Youth Development, 2004*(103), 45-54.

Gable, R., Hester, P., Hester, L., Hendrickson, J., & Size, S. (2005). Cognitive, affective, and relational dimensions of middle school students: Implications for improving discipline and instruction. *A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 79*(1).

Georgia Department of Education. (2008). *Pickens County School District Profile.* Retrieved from http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=111&PID=628&PID=213&T=0&FY=2008.

Goldstein, L.S. (1999). The relational zone: the role of caring relationships in the construction of the mind. *American Educational Research Journal, 36*(3), 647-673.

Goodenow, C. (1993). Classroom belonging among early adolescent students: Relationships to motivation and achievement. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 13*, 21-43.

Gomez, B., & Ang, P. (2007). Promoting positive youth development in schools. *Theory Into Practice, 46*(2), 97-104.

Greenburg, M., Weissberg, R., O'Brien, M., Zins, J., & Resnik, H. (2003). Enhancing

school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist, 58*(6), 466-474.

Juvonen, J. (2007). Reforming middle schools: Focus on continuity, social connectedness, and engagement. *Educational Psychologist, 42*(4), 197-208.

Kohn, A. (2005). Unconditional teaching. *Educational Leadership, 63*(1), 20-24.

Klem, A., & Connell, J. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student Engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health, 74*(7), 262-273.

Kline, W. (2008). Developing and submitting credible qualitative manuscripts. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 47*(4), 210-247.

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45*(3), 214-222.

Learning Theories Knowledgebase (2009). Social Development Theory (Vygotsky). Retrieved from http://www.learning-theories.com/vygotskys-social-learning-theory.html.

Lee, S. (2007). The relations between the student-teacher trust relationship and school success in the case of Korean middle schools. *Educational Studies, 33*(2), 209-216.

Leech, N., & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2007). An array of qualitative analysis tools: A call for data analysis triangulation. *School Psychology Quarterly, 22*(4), 557-584.

Lickona, T. (1993). The return of character education. *Educational Leadership, 51*(3), 6-11.

Lipsitz, J., & West, T. (2006). What makes a good school? Identifying excellent middle schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 88*(1), 57-66.

Lumpkin, A. (2007). Caring teachers: The key to student learning. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 43*(4), 158-160.

Manning, M.L. (2002). Developmentally appropriate middle level schools (2nd ed.). Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Maslow, A. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being.* Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

McCaffrey, K. (2008). Creating an advisory program using Hollywood film clips to promote character development. *Middle School Journal, 40*(2), 21-25.

McCombs, B.L. (2003). Providing a framework for the redesign of K-12 education in the context of current educational reform issues. *Theory into Practice, 42*, 93-101.

McIntosh, K., Flannery, K., Sugai, G., Braun, D., & Cochrane, K. (2008). Relationships between academics and problem behavior in the transition from middle school to high school. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 10*(4), 243-255.

Moll, L. (1990). *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of socio-historical psychology.* Cambridge University Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Narvaez, D., & Lapsley, D. (2008). Teaching moral character: Two alternatives for teacher education. *Teacher Educator, 43*(2), 156-172.

National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006). *Breaking Ranks in the Middle: Strategies for leading middle level reform.* Providence, RI: The Education Alliance at Brown University.

National Middle School Association (2009). *Advisory Programs.* Retrieved from http:// www.nmsa.org.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring, a feminine approach to ethics and moral education.*

Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Noddings, N. (2005). What does it mean to educate the whole child? *Educational Leadership, 63*(1).

Osterman, K. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(3), 323-367.

Pianta, R. (1999*). Enhancing relationships between children and teachers*. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Richman, J., Rosenfeld, L., & Bowen, G. (1998). Social Support for adolescents at risk of school failure. *Social Work, 43*(4), 309-323.

Rubin, H.J., and Ruben, I.S. (1995). Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ryan, H.J., & Patrick, H. (2001). The classroom social environment and changes in Adolescents' motivation and engagement during school. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(2), 437-460.

Ryan, K. (1993). Mining the values in the curriculum. *Educational Leadership, 51*(3), 16-18.

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 66-78.

Schaps, E., & Solomon, D. (1990). Schools and classrooms as caring communities. *Educational Leadership, 48*(3), 38-42.

Siedman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Simons, J.A., Irwin, D.B., & Drinnien, B.A. (1987). *Psychology-the search for understanding.* New York: West Publishing Company.

Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*(2), 63-75.

Suldo, S., Mihalas, S., Powell, H., & French, R. (2008). Ecological predictors of substance use in middle school students. *School Psychology Quarterly, 23*(3), 373-388.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wentzel, K. (1997). Student motivation in middle school: The role of perceived Pedagogical caring. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*, 411-419.

Woolley, M. & Bowen, G. (2007). In the context of risk: Supportive adults and the school engagement of middle school students. *Family Relations, 56*(1), 92-104.

United States Census Bureau (2008). *2008 State and County Quick Facts: Pickens, Georgia.* Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13227html.

Van Manen (1990). *Researching the lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Canada: University of Western Ontario.

Appendix A: Liberty University Institutional Review Board Approval

IRB Approval 746.100209: A Phenomenological Study of the Attitudes/Perceptions of Middle School Students Towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, & School Spirit (CARES) Program

Institution Review Board
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2009 1:30 PM
To: Buhl, Nathan John; Smith, Angela Marguerite; Garzon, Fernando L.
Cc: Milacci, Ellen Elizabeth

Dear Nathan,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project. We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair, Liberty University
Center for Counseling and Family Studies Liberty University
1971 University Boulevard
Lynchburg, VA 24502-2269
(434) 592-4054
Fax: (434) 522-0477

Appendix B: Parent/Student Consent Letter

CONSENT FORM

The Attitudes & Perceptions of Middle School Students towards the Character, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) Program

Nathan J. Buhl, Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University: College of Education

You are invited to be in a research study designed to explore the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the Character Education, Advocacy, Remediation, Enrichment, and School Spirit (CARES) program at Kingsford County Middle School. Please read this form in its entirety and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Nathan J. Buhl, Doctoral Candidate at Liberty University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to understand the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School. The CARES program, in its second year of implementation is designed to support the social, emotional, and academic needs of middle school students. Understanding the unique attitudes and perceptions that students have about the different aspects of the CARES program will help school leaders design programming that will increase the students' sense of belonging and connectedness in school.

Procedures:

If you agree to be a part of this study, your participation may involve a confidential interview with a designated Kingsford County Middle School staff member. You also may be asked to participate in a focus group interview, where you sit in a group with your classmates and answer questions about what you think about the CARES program. Each of these interviews will be geared towards hearing your feelings and thoughts about the CARES program at PCMS.

If chosen for an individual interview or a focus group interview, you will be pulled from one of your connections classes so that you do not miss any of your core academic classes. The individual interview will last approximately a half hour and the focus group interview will last about an hour. You may be asked by the researcher to participate in a follow up interview in order to clarify your thoughts and/or to better understand your feelings about CARES.

The designated staff member will record your responses directly onto a computer, and you will be given a chance to review the answers after the interview to make sure they

are what you meant to say. The interview will be audio recorded as well so that the researcher can go back and listen to what you have to say if necessary. If you are chosen to participate in a focus group interview, the interview will be video recorded and the conversation will be transcribed for further review.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The risks involved in this study are no more than the participant would encounter during a normal day at school. If chosen for an individual or focus group interview, you will miss a small portion of your connections class time. Although you will be given the opportunity to make-up any missed work without penalty, it may require you to complete missed work at home or in a study hall.

The benefits of this study include the opportunity for your voice to be heard regarding your feelings about the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School. You also will be a part of a project designed to improve your school, and to make it a more positive experience for yourself and for others.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The names of all students involved in the study will not be used. Fake names (pseudonyms) will be used in the summary of findings to protect the privacy of the students involved. If chosen to participate in a focus group interview, the researcher cannot assure that other participants in the group will maintain the same privacy and confidentiality noted above. Upon completion of this study, the researcher will make available the results of this study if requested.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Liberty University or with Kingsford County Middle School. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

Provided below are the names of the committee members overseeing this project:

Dr. Angela Smith/Committee Chair amsmith11@liberty.edu
Assistant Professor, Liberty University

Dr. Andrea Beam/Committee Member abeam@liberty.edu
Assistant Professor, Liberty University

Dr. Chris LeMieux/Committee Member chrislemieux@pickens.k12.ga.us
Principal, Kingsford County Middle School

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding your participation by calling Nathan Buhl at 706-253-1830 or by email at nathanbuhl@pickens.k12.ga.us. If you have any questions regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of parent (guardian):_____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Standard Interview Questions for CARES Research Study

Interview Questions:

Warm-up Questions:

1. What grade are you in? How old are you?
2. When I say the word "care" what actions or words come to mind?
3. Do you know what each letter in CARES stands for?
4. Suppose a new student at PCMS approached you and asked you what the CARES program is all about. How would you describe it to the student?

Research Questions:

Character

5. Monday morning CARES time is set aside for character education. What do you like/dislike about the character education time?
6. What does your CARES teacher do that shows that he/she really cares or does not care about teaching you good character?
7. Character education time gives you the opportunity to discuss issues with your classmates and teacher. Do you think these discussions help you deal with middle school problems? Why or why not?
8. If you could give the character education program a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what grade would you give it and why?
9. Can you give me an example of something you learned during Character education time? How have you been able to use what you learned in school or at home?
10. Describe what takes place on a typical day of Character Education time. Be as detailed as possible.

Advocacy

11. Each student in the school has been assigned a CARES teacher. In what ways does your CARES teacher help you?
12. Why do you trust or not trust your CARES teacher?
13. What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she respects you?
14. What do you like the most about having a teacher advocate?
15. What needs to be done to improve the relationship with your advocate teacher?

Remediation

16. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays, you have the opportunity to get extra tutoring in a particular subject area. Or, at times, you get to use CARES time to catch up on your work. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why.

17. If you could give the Remediation part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what would you give it and why?

18. Describe what takes place on a typical day in remediation class. Be as detailed as possible.

Enrichment

19. One day each week, students who are caught up with their work and do not need extra tutoring are allowed to go to an enrichment class during CARES time. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why?

20. Describe what takes place on a typical day of enrichment. Be as detailed as possible.

21. If you could give the Enrichment part of CARES a grade (A,B,C,D, or F), what would you give it and why?

School Spirit & Clubs

22. Friday mornings during CARES time are designated for Pep Rallies and School Clubs. What do you like/dislike about the pep rallies? What do you like/dislike about morning clubs?

23. Describe what takes place on a typical Friday during CARES. Be as detailed as possible.

24. If you could give the School Spirit part of CARES a grade (A, B, C, D, or F), what would you give it and why?

Closing Questions

25. In what ways does the CARES program at PCMS make you feel supported and connected to school? Or, if it doesn't at all, explain why.

26. If you could be the principal of the school, would you continue to have CARES or would you rather go back to just homeroom time. Explain why you would or would not. What changes, if any would you make?

27. What other comments do you have about the CARES program?

Appendix D: Prompts (Interviews, Focus Group Sessions)

Individual Student Interviews & Follow-up Interviews

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. It is very important that you are completely honest and sincere when you answer these questions. There is no wrong answer. The purpose of this interview is to understand how you feel about the different parts of CARES. This is your opportunity to be heard.

Focus Group Sessions

Dear Students,

Thank you for volunteering your time to participate in this focus group interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand your attitudes and feelings about the CARES program at Kingsford County Middle School. As you all know, the CARES program takes place each morning and includes character education, advisory time with your CARES teacher, remediation, enrichment, and school spirit days where there are pep rallies and clubs.

Please understand that the information you discuss will be kept confidential. Also, out of respect to each other, it is important that you do not discuss the opinions of your classmates with others outside of this interview. It is important that you give honest responses about the questions so that the researcher can best understand how you feel.

The information gathered will be used to make the CARES program and other similar programs at other schools more fun and effective for middle school students.

Appendix E: Justification for Follow-up Interviews

Grade 8

1. Student A (Ind): Stated that Character education is boring. Gives lots of opinions but does not elaborate on them during the initial interview. I think she may share a lot more information on a 2nd interview. (8th grade)

2. Student B (Ind): Made some strong comments stating that 8th grade students aren't "bold" enough to open up and talk. He also gave some short responses that could be explored further. (8th grade)

3. Student C (Ind): He had a lot to say in the initial interview. He gave a lot of details about the various aspects of CARES and how he feels. I would like to follow up with him because I think I could a lot more out of him especially since he is being encouraged to share more.

4. Student D (FG): I think he would open up a lot more during a one on one interview. I am curious to see what else he would share without others around. He made some interesting comments about the CARES program and would like to see what else he has to say.

5. Student E (FG): He did not say much during the focus group, but when he did speak, he was very clear about his opinions, and gave a good rationale as to why he and others feel the way they do. I believe a one on one interview will be shed additional light on what 8th graders think about CARES.

6. Student F (FG): She had some interesting things to say during the Focus Group that were both positive and negative about CARES. I am curious to see what she might say with out her peers around her. Joe and Lee tended to take over the focus group and I think she would tell more if she was one on one with Eileen.

Grade 6

1. Student G (FG): He open up during the focus group interview but was overshadowed by student's comments who sort of took over the interview. curious to see what insight Wesley has about CARES outside of him talking in front of his peers.

2. Student H (FG): Student and Student had 6 boys in their focus group. She didn't say much throughout the interview but when she did, she did a great job articulating her feelings. I would like to see how she opens up in a one on one interview away from her peers (especially the boys!).

3. Student I (FG): He, like student did not speak often during the focus group. His personality seems kind of introverted and quiet, but there were times that he

opened up and spoke. I am interested to see what additional information he can share with Eileen that might provide additional insight on how he and other 6th graders feel about CARES.

4. Student J (Ind.): He had some varied responses to the questions. I would like to go through the interview with him again and ask him to clarify or explain further his responses. He gave a lot of C marks which I'm noticing shows there's lots to share.

5. Student K (Ind.): She shared a lot during the interview and had some strong opinions about various parts of CARES. I would like to see her clarify further so that I can better understand her feelings.

6. Student L (Ind.): She is in the same boat as student. I'm looking for her to explain/clarify her responses as I think it will bring clarity to the study.

Grade 7

1. Student M (FG): He was very quiet during the interview and appeared to be overpowered by some of the conversations that the girls were having. I would like to see if he will open up more in a one on one interview with Ms. Jones.

2. Student N: She spoke occasionally during the interview but sat next to student, who took over the interview. I am interested to see what additional information I can glean from her in a one on one format.

3. Student O: This student is an interesting situation. He was very very quiet during the focus group interview but I just sense that if you can get him one on one, you can get a lot more information from him. In addition, because he is a minority (black), I would be interested in following up and seeing what/if any unique perspectives he can give on CARES.

4. Student P: He had some very strong opinions about CARES and actually did a good job of explaining them. I just really want to dig a little deeper with him because I think that he may even tell more. I also would like to see what/if any variance he has in his second interview.

5. Student Q: She opened up and gave some details about CARES. She has some strong opinions but did not elaborate on them as much as I would like for her to.

6. Student R: He had very strong opinions but did not elaborate at all. I am very interested in pulling more information from him.

Appendix F: Data Analysis/Coding of Questions

Data Analysis

Question 2: When I say the word "care", what actions or words come to mind?

Question 4: Suppose a new student at PCMS approached you and asked you what the CARES program is all about. How would you describe it to the student?

Perceptions	
Building Character:	Teal Star
Guidance/Problem Solving:	Light Green Star
Relationship Building/Caring:	Purple Star
Academic Support:	Brown Star

Attitudes	
Fun:	+ (pencil)
Boring:	- (pencil)

Character Education

Question 5: Monday morning CARES time is set aside for character education. What do you like/dislike about the character education time?

Likes	
Communicate feelings	Teal +
Socialize	Light Green +
Character Ed. Video Clips	Purple +
Bullying Prevention/respecting others	Brown +
Gender Split	Black +
Trusting/Supportive Teachers	Orange +

Dislikes	
Down Time/Don't do anything	Teal -
Takes Away from Academic Support	Light Green -
Childish/Impractical/Student Disinterest	Purple -
Lack of Teacher Buy-In/Disorganization	Brown -
Class is too short	Black –

Question 6: What does your CARES teacher do that shows that she/he really cares or does not care about teaching you good character?

Shares personal stories/opinions	6A
Genuine & Understanding/Connects with students	6B
Listens and values/respects student input	6C
Advises/Teaches character	6D

Disinterested/Lack of Teacher Buy-in	6E

Question 7: Character Education time gives you the opportunity to discuss issues with your classmates and teacher. Do you think these discussions help you deal with middle school problems? Why or why not?

Relevant & Practical for Middle School Students	7A
Teacher Support	7B
Classmate Support	7C
Opportunity to Express Feelings	7D
Teacher Student Disconnect/Impractical	7E

Question 8: If you could give the character education program a grade (A,B,C,D,F), what grade would you give it and why?

Tier 1
A-27
B-27
C-7
D-1

Tier 2
A-0
B-2
C-4
D-3
F-3

Tier 3
A-0
B-7
C-8
D-1
F-2

Practical	8A
Opportunity to communicate/express feelings	8B
Childish/Impractical	8C
Boring/Don't do anything	8D
More Time Needed	8E
Uncomfortable sharing personal problems	8F
Classes should be mixed/not gender grouped	8G

Question 9: Can you give me an example of something you learned during Character Education time? How have you been able to use what you learned in school or at home?

Drug Prevention	9A
Character	9B
Bullying	9C
Conflict Resolution	9D
Nothing/Impractical	9E

Question 10: Describe what takes place on a typical day of character education time. Be as detailed as possible.

Character Education & Discussion	10A
Projects and Activities	10B
Hang out & Talk with Friends	10C

Question 11: Each student in the school has been assigned a CARES teacher. In what ways does your CARES teacher help you?

Academic Support	11A
Advisor/Counselor	11B
Sincere & Caring	11C
Listens & Values my voice	11D
Not Helpful	11E

Question 12: Why do you trust or not trust your CARES teacher?

He/She is a teacher	12A
Credible	12B
Respects Privacy	12C
Caring/Helpful	12D
Likeable/Fun	12E
Not Sincere	12F
Rarely Interacts	12G
Lack of Respect	12H
Sharing Private conversations	12I

Question 13: What does your CARES teacher do that shows he/she respects you?

Listens/Values what you have to say	13A

Patience	13B
Takes a personal interest in you	13C
Recognizes/Compliments Success	13D
Doesn't Yell & Degrade	13E
Fair	13F
Caring/Helpful	13G
Credible	13H
Uses Good Manners	13I
Autonomy	13J

Question 14: What do you like most about having a teacher advocate?

Advisor/Counselor	14A
Academic Support	14B
Voice my opinion	14C
Relax/unwind	14D
Nothing/Not Helpful	14E
Get to Know the Teacher	14F

Question 15: What needs to be done to improve the relationship with your advocate teacher?

One on One Time with Teacher	15A
Additional Character Education	15B
Choose your CARES teacher	15C
Less Criticism	15D

Question 16: On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, you have the opportunity to get extra tutoring in a particular subject area. Or, at times, you get to use CARES time to catch up on your work. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it? Explain why?

<u>Likes</u>	
Make-up work/Study hall	16A
Tutoring/Teacher Instructional Support	16B
<u>Dislikes</u>	16C
(too diverse to categorize)	

Question 17: If you could give the remediation part of CARES a grade (A,B,C,D,F), what grade would you give it and why?

Tier 1
A-42
B-16
C-3
D-1

Tier 2
A-5
B-8
C-5
D-1
F-2

Tier 3
A-7
B-9
C-2
D-0
F-0

Make-up Work/Study Hall	17A
Tutoring/Instructional Support	17B
Dislike	17C

Question 18: Describe what takes place on a typical day of remediation class. Be as detailed as possible.

Make-up Work/Study Hall	18A
Tutoring/Instructional Support	18B

Question 19: One day each week, students who are caught up with their work and do not need extra tutoring are allowed to go to enrichment class during CARES time. How do you feel about this part of CARES? Do you like/dislike it. Explain why.

Likes

Fun Free Time with Friends	19A
Get to Do a Variety of Different Activities	19B
Serves as a Motivator	19C

Dislikes

Repetition/Same Activity or class	19D
Inability to choose enrichment class	19E
No accountability system	19F

20. Describe what takes place on a typical day of enrichment. Be as detailed as possible.

Band	20A
Academic Games	20B
Gym/Lifetime Sports	20C
Art	20D
Keyboarding	20E
Computers	20F
Chorus	20G
Other	20H

21. If you could give the enrichment part of CARES a grade (A,B,C,D,F), what would you give it and why?

Tier 1
A-47
B-13
C-1
D-0
F-1

Tier 2
A-5
B-3
C-2
D-2
F-1

Tier 3
A-7
B-6
C-3
D-1
F-1

Fun Free Time	21A
Get to do a variety of activities	21B
Serves as a motivator	21C
Repetition/Same Activity or class	21D
Inability to choose enrichment class	21E
No accountability system	21F

Question 22: Friday mornings during CARES time are designated for pep rallies and school clubs. What do you like/dislike about morning clubs?

Likes	
Fun & Relaxing	22A
Communication from Administration	22B
Get Excited & Cheer	22C
Ability to Choose Clubs that Interest You	22D
Recognition in Front of Peers	22E
Get to be with kids in different grades	22H
Dislikes	
Too Long/Take up Class Time	22F
Don't Like Club/Can't Choose or Change	22G
Have to sit in CARES class/pep rallies	22I

Question 23: Describe what takes place on a typical Friday during CARES. Be as detailed as possible.

FFA	23A
4H	23B
Computers	23C
Band	23D
FCA	23E
Safety Patrol	23F
Chess Club	23G
Chorus/PASS	23H
TSA	23I
Academic Games	23J
Peer Helpers	23K
Yearbook	23L
Lifetime Sports	23M
Future Cities	23N
Leo Club	23O
Art	23P
Dance	23Q
Reading Bowl	23R

Question 24: If you could give the school spirit part of CARES a grade (A,B,C,D,F), what grade would you give it and why?

Tier 1

A-46
B-12
C-4
D-0
F-0

Tier 2
A-3
B-2
C-7
D-2
F-0

Tier 3
A-7
B-6
C-5
D-0
F-0

Same coding used in Question 22 for Question 25

Question 25: In what ways does the CARES program at PCMS make you feel supported and connected to school? Or, if it doesn't at all, explain why?

Teacher Support	25A
Opportunity to express opinions/feelings/issues	25B
Teacher Advisor/Counselor	25C
Experience New Activities	25D
Communicates Activities at School	25E
Not enough Time	25F
Not Applicable	25G
Builds Positive Relationships	25H
Academic Support	25I

Question 26: If you could be the principal of the school, would you continue to have CARES or would you rather go back to just homeroom time. Explain why you would or would not. What changes, if any would you make?

Teacher Advisor/Counselor	26A
Variety of fun activities	26B
Builds Positive Relationships	26C
Opportunity to Express Feelings/Opinions	26D
Academic Support	26E
Connects us to the School	26F
Extend CARES Time	26G
Remove Character Education	26H
Doesn't like to talk/express feelings	26I

Appendix G: Reflective Journal

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

The Attitudes and Perceptions of Middle School Students Towards the Character Education, Advocacy, Remediation, and Enrichment Program (CARES)

Saturday January 2, 2010

This is my first entry into my reflexive journal, which I will be recording daily (Monday-Friday) during the actual implementation of my research study. The purpose of my study is to better understand the attitudes and perceptions of middle school students towards the Character, Advisory, Remediation, and Enrichment Program at Kingsford County Middle School.

Over the past couple of months I have been working on obtaining approval from the Liberty University's Institutional Review Board to conduct this study here at the school. I received official approval during the first week of December. From that point on, I was able to disseminate research consent forms to all of the students at the school. I felt that it would be good to utilize the three weeks before the Christmas vacation to focus on getting as many consent forms back as possible. As stated in the IRB application, as well as in my methodology, I was able to speak with each grade level during their lunch periods as well as during a school assembly. I also made announcements in the afternoons during dismissal encouraging students to get the forms signed and brought in as soon as possible. Students who turned in the signed consent forms each received Dragon Scales (which is basically school money used to purchase items at the school store and to win prizes) and also were provided the opportunity to win a fifty dollar Simon Mall card.

With an enrollment of approximately 500 students (516) last time I checked, I received a total of 172 approved to participate consent forMs. This number gave me 34% return rate. I am going to do some research and determine how, or to what extent this percentage will impact the validity of my study. While my research is phenomenological and qualitative, I still believe that the greater percentage of students I have to pick from the pool, the more reliable my data will be.

I am going to begin the interview process on Wednesday January 6th and hope to get at least three interviews completed per day. I will be meeting with Eileen Westover (interviewer) on Tuesday January 5th to review the procedures and process and am confident that it should go smoothly since a pilot study was conducted earlier this school year. My plan is to have grade level focus group interviews set up for the week of January 25th. I will need to spend some time making sure I have the camcorder set up and ready to go.

As of right now, I feel organized and ready to go. I am anxious to get started and am curious to see how the data gathered will dictate the number of interviews and follow up interviews/questions I will be asking. It is critical that I make sure I have the depth of data necessary to draw conclusions about how the students feel about the program. I will sign back in on Monday January 4th and post another entry.

Monday January 4th, 2010

Today is an in-service day and the students report back from the holiday break tomorrow. Eileen Westover, my interviewer is off today and returns to work tomorrow as well so I decided to look over and make sure I had the consent forms organized by grade level and into the three categories of special education students, general education students, and gifted students. Tomorrow, I am going to randomly select the three focus groups to ensure that I have enough students to pull from each sample. I would like to have 4 general education students, 2 gifted students, and 2 special education students from each grade. If I do not have enough, I will pull another general education student which I believe I may have to do for one of the grade levels. I will then meet with Eileen Westover in the morning and go over the procedures again with her, making sure we are on the same page.

I have thought about which would be the most efficient way of selecting students for interviews for each day. I think it might be easiest if the students are selected first thing each morning. That way, it would be easier to pull the students from their connections classes. Also, to eliminate any kind of bias or speculation, I will give the folders to the office staff members who will randomly select the students. I think the less handling I have in this process the better. I will discuss this with Eileen tomorrow to see what her thoughts are about the methodology.

I feel pretty good about the project but I must say I'm a little on the edge about everything. I want to make sure I dot all I's and cross all T's if you will since I know that the validity of my research is contingent upon eliminating any kind of bias or inconsistencies. I want for people to see this project and to feel confident that they could replicate the process in their contextual setting and be able yield beneficial results.

Tuesday January 5th, 2010

Today was a very busy yet productive day. I was able to purchase an audio voice recorder last night to backup the interviews and focus group presentations. In addition, I got some storage folders to organize the paperwork (data) that will be coming my way soon. I was able to meet with Ms. Westover today and we reviewed the procedures for the individual student interviews. I had my office receptionist take the consent forms and shuffle them around to ensure that I did not pull students from the same CARES classes (as many may have turned them into the teacher the same way).

Afterwards, we were able to randomly select the students for the focus group interviews. Two gifted students, two special education students, and 4 general education students

were randomly pulled from the pile. The exception is 7th grade where only 1 special education student was pulled due to a lack of student participation from that subgroup.

After pulling the focus group students, we then agreed to pull the consent form from the very top of each pile starting with gifted, then general, then special education. Once the gifted students and special education students have all been interviewed we obviously would stick with just the one pile per grade level. Eileen began interviews this afternoon and was able to interview two 8th grade students. The process went well, and Eileen used the audio voice recorder as a backup. The 2nd interview did not work on the audio recorder so that is something that will need to get fixed for tomorrow. Tomorrow, the plan will be to interview 6 kids and hopefully we can interview 6 kids per day. More details about the project to come tomorrow.

Thursday January 7, 2010

I have been very pleased with the interviews so far. Eileen was able to completed 6 interviews in one day. She said the process is working great so far and I am making sure to save the data in multiple sources, as well as place a hard copy on file as well. I have read through each interview received in order to get a snap shot picture of how the students are responding as well as to see if I notice any preliminary repetition in the responses.

Today is an early release day due to inclement weather and it looks like we may be out of school tomorrow as well so I'm not sure how many interviews I will have complete this week. I am working on scheduling the focus group interviews in two weeks.

Friday January 8th, 2010

Today was a snow day for the students and staff. I am confident that the weekend will be enough time to get the snow and ice off the roads. I will continue with the interviewing on Monday. I began to proofread my chapters 1-3 and clean up some typos, grammatical errors, and APA formatting issues. Well, hopefully, the routing will return on Monday.

Wednesday January 13, 2010

The students have still been out of school due to the icy road conditions. It is hard to believe so little snow and ice could do so much damage. Jasper, GA is just on the foothills of the mountains so when conditions are icy and the temperature has not been above freezing, it simply is too dangerous to bus students to and from school safely. I am hoping the delay does not delay my time frame too much with the interviews. I would like to get done with the data collection by mid February so I can begin analysis. I need to make sure that I am not rushing things though. I am supposed to interview until I have reached data saturation so I need to be sure that I have thoroughly utilized the interviews and focus groups. I have almost 200 students to pull from so I need to stay focused on getting the results I need and not worry about the time frame. There is nothing I can do about the weather!

Thursday January 14, 2010

School is finally back in session! We had a 2 hour delay today but at least we got the students back. Ms. Westover was actually able to complete 3 interviews today on the modified schedule. Hopefully, we can get back into a routine and continue a 6 interview per day pace. So far, as I skim over the interviews, I am initially noticing some recurring themes. One of them that keeps popping up is the issue of trust. Many of the kids are openly saying they trust their CARES teacher simply because they are the teachers. In other words, it looks like the kids automatically place a degree of trust into teachers because of their position. What a great responsibility this places on educators! I also am noticing that the students like to be heard. In other words, having the opportunity to be heard is significant to the students.

Friday January 15, 2010

Five more interviews were conducted today! Moving right along. I scheduled a phone conference with Dr. Smith for Tuesday afternoon to discuss progress on my project. I have to admit, I am feeling a little overwhelmed, not necessarily with what I have to do, but when I am going to have time to do it. My days are full of school issues and it sometimes isn't until later afternoon once the students are gone that I can sit down and get some work done. I am also trying to spend quality time with my family. I pray to the Lord for wisdom, patience, and the strength to press on and finish the endeavor started.

I sat down with Ms. Courtney Smith (technology teacher) and we have scheduled to conduct the focus group interviews on Wednesday January 27, 2010 in the conference room. She was very helpful in providing and setting up the camcorder for the sessions. The students have already been chosen and I will be making sure that they are notified this week. I am planning on backing up the session on the audio recorder as well. Since the session involves several students, I will create a special statement that will be read to the kids prior to the interviews. I am looking forward to seeing the type of data gathered from these interviews.

Friday January 22 2010

This Tuesday I had a phone conference with Dr. Smith and have developed a plan to prepare for Defense by mid-April. While I know that I will be extremely busy over the next few months, I look forward to pushing myself and getting this finished. The interviews are moving right along. So far, Eileen has interviewed well over 30 students. I am beginning to see some redundancy in the responses but I will continue to interview through next week to make sure I have interviewed enough students in Tier 1. That will leave me with about 60 individual student interviews total. Tier 2 will include 3 focus group interviews (24 students total), and for Tier 3 I will plan on interviewing 10-20 students with follow up questions.

Here is the time frame I have tentatively scheduled:

January 27th Complete all Tier II. Interviews (Focus Groups)

January 29th Complete all Tier I. Interviews

February 5th Complete all Tier III. Interviews

February 28th Code & Organize all Data collected

February 28th Chapters 1-3 Complete, Edited, and Ready for Professional Editor

March 31st Chapters 4-5 Completely Written

April 12th Chapters 1-5 Completely Written (ready for professional Editing)

April 30th Final Revisions Preparation for Defense

I have scheduled focus group interviews for next Wednesday January 27, 2010.

Monday January 25, 2010

I sent emails out to Ms. Westover and Ms. Smith to remind them of the protocol for the focus group interviews scheduled for this Wednesday. I drafted a brief statement for Ms. Westover to read to the students which pretty much lets the students know the purpose of the interviews, encouraged them to be open and honest with their answers, and to make sure they projected their voices loudly and waited their turn to speak.

I must admit that I'm a little nervous about the focus groups. The fact that it involves the camcorder, several students, and not a lot of room for error makes me a bit anxious. As a back up, I will have the digital recorder in the room which hopefully will pick up the voices just in case something goes wrong with the camcorder.

Tuesday January 26, 2010

Ms. Westover has continued full force with the interviewing. I think that by the end of this week I will have reached data saturation. I noticed last week that I was getting a lot of the same responses and I feel that one extra week of interviewing should be fine. By Friday, I will have a total of 60 student interviews. In addition, I will be interviewing 24 additional students on Wednesday leaving my total participants so far at 84 students out of approximately 180 who signed consent forms. Next week, I will begin the 3rd and final tier of interviews. I believe that it will be critical that I take a good thorough look at the data before making my selections for the follow up interviews. I have thought about two different ways I can utilize the 3rd tier. I could, for one, interview students already interviewed to follow up with them and ask them to explain their answers in further

detail. This way, I could get a better picture about how they feel the various components of CARES. Another option would be to select other students to interview based upon what I have seen in the data. For example, if I noticed a lot of the gifted kids speaking negatively about remediation, then I would be interested in interviewing some other gifted students for more information. I will have to see after checking out the data. I believe, however, with the fact that I have some 84 student participants, I should be able to utilize what I already have.

Wednesday January 27, 2010

Today was the big day! Tier 2 focus groups. It was hectic getting things started. We had a fire drill 5 minutes prior to the interviews which made for an interesting start. On top of that, Ms. Smith was running late and we were a little rushed getting things set up. The conference room was reserved and most of the 7th grade students (assigned first) reported to the office as directed. Since some of the students selected for the interviews were absent that day, I randomly selected replacements. Consequently, my initial goal to have 2 SPED students, 4 GEN students, and 2 GIF students was not able to work out. Regardless, I believe the students in each group were selected in a methodical process that should have no problem being replicated if other schools would like to replicate this study.

The min-dvd's from the session were handed over to Ms. Smith, our technology teacher who would burn them into 3 DVD's that I can use for transcribing. I am looking forward to getting this data on paper to begin the analysis and writing portion of the dissertation. After spending so much time compiling information, I am anxious to develop a plan for Chapters 4 and 5 of the study. Ms. Westover will be interviewing the final 6 students tomorrow and I hope to begin Tier 3 (follow up interviews) on Monday February 1st.

Thursday January 28, 2010

I have been thinking of different ways to organize the data gathered and thought it would be powerful to take each interview question and record each student response to each question below each other. By doing this, I will be able to get a feel for the students' attitudes and perception by visually reading over and over the text from the interviews. I realize this will take a lot of time but the copying and pasting will force me to immerse myself in the data. Phenomenology involves truly seeking to experience what others experience and to feel what others feel. Consequently, I think this activity will be very effective and meaningful.

Friday January 29, 2010

Today was my first real situation where I started to panic. Things have been going so smoothly over the weeks, almost too smooth so something was bound to happen! Ms. Smith contacted me mid-day and told me she cannot find one of the mini-DVD's which consisted of the 7th grade focus group. I combed the area, my desk, the conference room, and also talked to Ms. Westover and it was nowhere to be found. I realized that I had

backed up all of the data using the audio recorder and that in the worst case scenario, I still could transcribe their words using the recorder but did want to watch actual video to get a better read on what and how they were responding. Fortunately, the DVD was found jammed into the wrong drive. One of the students in the technology class who was helping burn the DVD's (under Ms. Smith's supervision of course) had mistakenly placed it in the wrong drive. Fortunately, Ms. Smith was able to remove the DVD and as I speak I have all 3 in my possession ready to transcribe. So that is where I am at right now, transcribing the data and preparing to identify 10-20 additional interviews for Tier 3 which I hope to have complete by next week.

February 1, 2010

This weekend, I was able to review the focus groups as well as the tier 1 interviews and identify 6 students in each grade that I would like to either interview for the first time (based upon the focus groups) or interview for the second time informing them that I am interested in what else they would like to share. The 3rd tier interviews to me I look at as sort of the bonus round in a game. I feel very confident that I have a lot of depth in the interviews and focus groups but think that any additional information found in this final round will be extremely helpful. I created a document that gives my rationale for choosing each of the 18 students for the 3rd tier. While there was no formula for my choices, I think that it is important to at least shed light on my rationale for my choices.

The interviews will take place this week and I will have Eileen Westover interview the students. For students who have already been interviewed, she will read the question to the student as well as their response and then ask them if they would like to share any additional information about the question. Eileen will then note in italics the additional information shared.

February 3, 2010

Slowly but surely, I am in the process of transcribing the focus group interviews. It is taking a lot of time but know that once they are finished, it will be a very valuable resource. One thing I did notice about the groups so far is how the students tend to feed off of each other and say the same things as others. It will be interesting to compare the data gleaned from the focus groups with those in Tier 1.

I am also sliding the responses to each interview question and compiling it into one massive document that will allow me to see all 60 responses right below each other. I believe this will help me identify themes in a more organized manner. From that data, I will then look over the focus group transcripts and then the 18 from tier 3.

February 10, 2010

I am finally complete with the focus group transcripts. There was one technology concern which initially I thought would be a major problem but turned out to not be a big deal. The DVDs only recorded 30 minutes of each 45-55 minute focus group interview.

The good news however, was the fact that the rest of the interviews could easily be heard on the digital voice recorder. A backup plan is a very good thing! By that point, I was able to easily recognize all of the student voices and the sound quality was actually better on the voice recorder than the DVD's.

I am waiting to get back the first 3 chapters of my dissertation from the writing center which I am sure I will be busy reviewing and making several necessary changes. In the meantime, I am working on transferring the interview data onto one large document. The process takes me about 45 minutes per question but as I write the responses to the questions I am using it as an opportunity to carefully review the data and get a sense of what the students' take is with CARES. I hope to be completely done with the data collection by next week so I can begin coding and writing during the last week of February.

Wednesday February 17, 2010

Well, I have 3 more questions to answer and my Tier 1 Data Collection sheet is complete. The focus group interviews are transcribed and my Tier 3 interviews are ready to be analyzed as well. I would like to begin coding this week. I believe that I will use different colored pens/highlighters to mark the data. Each color will represent a different theme.

In my research proposal, I stated that I would have someone review my findings to confirm that my conclusions are valid and reliable. I am going to ask Lisa Galloway, an assistant principal at the high school and a graduate student at UGA to look over my data. She is working on her doctorate and is completing a qualitative research study herself so she is already familiar with the process and will be an excellent source for feedback.

Friday February 19, 2010

Today I began coding the data into identified categories for each of the questions. I will use this to begin writing Chapter four of the study. I have already noticed some recurring themes developing and I should be finished this weekend.

Sunday February 21, 2010

I completed the coding and categorizing on all 27 questions. This process took a long time but it really has helped me capture a picture of where to go next in the project. I feel like I have more than enough data to accurately describe the various attitudes and perceptions the students have towards CARES. This entry will conclude my reflective journal as I will begin the actual writing over the next couple of weeks.

Appendix H: Audit Trail

Provided below, is a time line which summarizes the dates in which different aspects of the study and data collection were complete.

August 27, 2009	Research Proposal Submitted to Dissertation Committee
September 18, 2009	Phone Conference with Committee Approving Proposal
October 1, 2009	IRB Application Submitted for Review & Approval
November 19, 2009	IRB Application Approved
December 2, 2009	Research Consent forms Distributed to student body
December 17, 2009	All Research Consent forms collected and filed for study
January 7-28, 2010	Tier 1 (Individual Student Interviews) Conducted
January 27, 2010	Tier 2 (Focus Group Interviews) Conducted
February 1-5, 2010	Tier 3 (Follow-up Interviews) Conducted
February 8-26, 2010	Student Data Analyzed and Coded for Writing
March 1-April 16, 2010	Chapters 4 & 5 Completed
April 16-May 17, 2010	Chapters 1-5 Edited, Revised for Submission for Defense
May 18, 2010	Dissertation Submitted & Defense Date Scheduled