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INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
AT THREE URBAN SCHOOLS

A Dissertation Presented

by

BARBARA ANN SMITH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1993

School of Education

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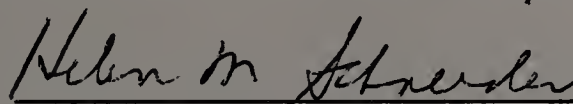
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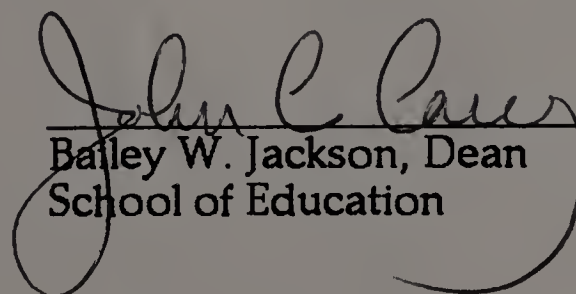
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ABSTRACT

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
AT THREE URBAN SCHOOLS

MAY 1993

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This study examined the impact of a specific form of intervention on the school performance and behavior of students to determine if such intervention can influence achievement. Students perceived as needing help were referred to a support group in their school led by a psychologist and a teacher, assisted by a team of school staff volunteers. The intervention consisted of giving three sets of sixth to twelfth grade students a support group to deal with the children's everyday issues and problems using a combination of human relations and group therapy techniques. The groups met weekly for ten weeks. Activities were designed to focus on self-esteem and problems affecting school behavior.

The sample was composed of 100 high school and middle school students. Participants represented a cross-section of the population, both ethnically and socioeconomically. A control group of similar students also

met weekly, using an open discussion format and worksheet projects. For evaluation purposes, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, the Student Rating Scale, attendance records and records of staff observation were used.

Significant changes were observed, suggesting that this type of intervention made a major difference in the way these adolescents perceived school and themselves. Even students who had not been expected to benefit from the intervention responded and, further, showed improvement in several areas in a short time period.

The comparison for pre- and post- measures of school behavior showed that the procedure had influenced students' school performance. Of the factors measured, attendance was most positively affected by intervention, although reading scores also rose. Gains in reading achievement as well as attendance were made in 10 weeks by Black males who had previously failed to respond to more traditional approaches to student improvement.

The experimental students' attendance improved, while the control group attendance did not. The study results indicate that intervention has an impact on attendance and influences achievement to some degree. Intervention is therefore suggested as a useful alternative to traditional methods of dropout prevention and performance improvement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that many of our large urban schools are faced with major problems of discipline, poor attendance and an overall decline in learning. Concern about the decline in the quality of education for inner-city children throughout the nation has been voiced repeatedly (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983). Educators face a clear imperative to find more effective ways to work on these problems.

Although there are several schools of thought on how to deal effectively with the social and behavioral problems typically found in urban schools, they can be grouped essentially into two basic categories. One focuses on an educational model, which usually stresses discipline, "back to basics", and the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). The other focuses on a human service model framed by an examination of social conditions and utilizes counseling and preventive measures.

One or another of these models has been utilized by many schools with varying degrees of success. After a period of time, however, the school often finds itself again searching for solutions to the same problems. Teen pregnancy, absenteeism and behavior problems are not easily conquered. They have a multiplicity of consequences in the schools, not least of which is their effect on learning, and their causes are too complex and too embedded in the culture to be significantly altered by single-focus programs. Research on factors affecting learning makes it clear that the environment of a student's life has a real impact

on that student's learning (Thompson, 1985). For some time now, teachers themselves have also suggested that factors such as self-esteem, money, and social pressure affect a student's academic performance. All this has led to the beginnings of a change in the way that schools approach the social problems which impact on their students, but the current state of education makes it evident that even more change, intelligently chosen and carefully implemented, must occur.

One understandable response has been to develop programs that are meant to produce change in the students' lives. In recent years there has been a noticeable increase in such programs in schools. Some illustrative examples of such programs follow.

In Washington D.C., a summer and after-school pilot program was established in four junior high schools to address the dropout problem. After-school tutoring is provided for at-risk middle school students in math, science, English and social studies, to improve academic performance (American Teacher, Nov.1989). In New York City, paraprofessionals are hired to work with at-risk elementary school students (American Teacher, Nov.1989).

In Jacksonville, Florida, volunteering teachers are teamed with middle school students at risk of dropping out in a program called Teachers as Advisors. Student and teacher meet regularly to discuss not only school work, but any personal problems that the student may want to talk about. Involvement with the student's parents is also encouraged (Boston Globe, Feb. 1989).

A number of cities have added alternative schools to their system to meet the perceived needs of some group in the population. In Minneapolis, for instance, where Native American students reportedly have had a 35 to 40 percent dropout rate, students who need to work can still attend school because the alternative school starts at noon and runs through the late afternoon. Those who

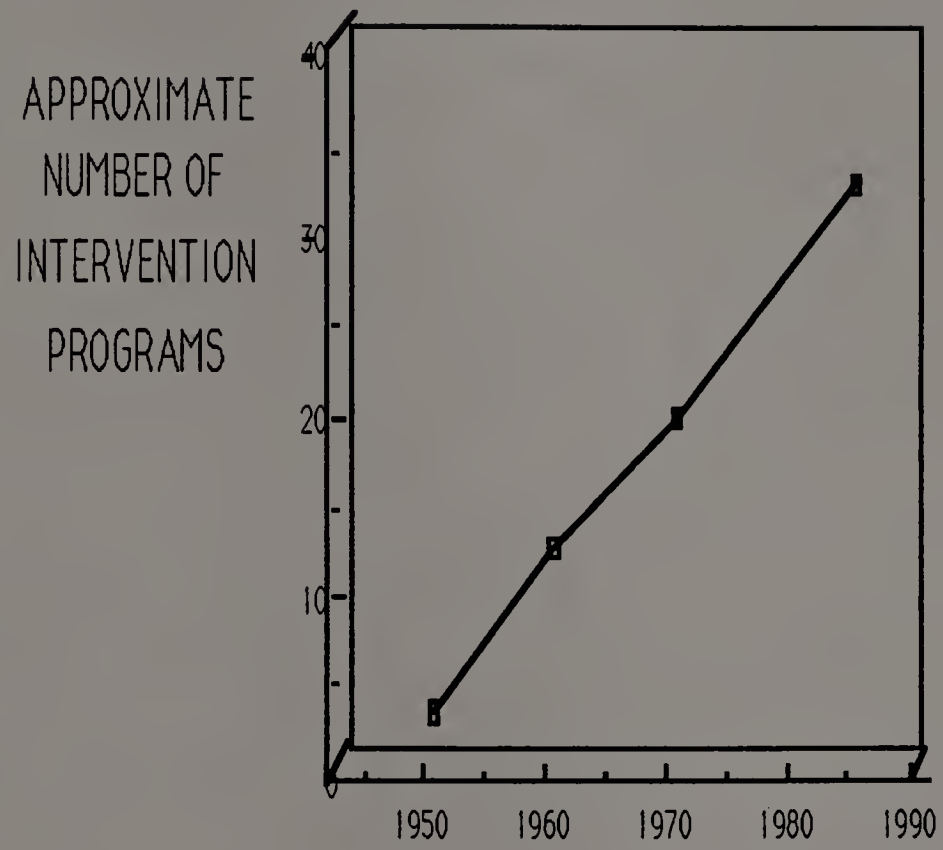
need to babysit while parents work or who, for whatever reason, cannot attend school during traditional hours, have an opportunity to fit school into their schedule (Glass, 1989).

Today, at the beginning of the '90s, there is an increasing number of alternative programs (see Table 1) in the Boston Public School system , some well known and others less so. Some of the alternative programs with a primary goal of keeping students in school by decreasing the dropout rate and improving academic performance are briefly described below.

One such is the Jobs for Youth Program, designed to bring back students who have dropped out of school by helping them fulfill the requirements necessary for a high school diploma through a variety of options. Students are offered a work/study program so that they may continue their education and work at the same time. They attend mandatory weekly life skills and pre-vocational workshops. Job training and other kinds of assistance are ongoing aspects of this program. While classes are based on the regular Boston Public School curriculum, a point system is used to evaluate progress. Students receive credits in required subject areas and work in a competency-based format.

Table 1

Intervention Programs in the Boston Public Schools



Another is the Humphrey Occupational Resource Program, a resource center that provides career preparation for dropouts between the ages of 16 and 22. Training programs are offered in printing, auto mechanics and data processing, among others. A private technical training institute runs the program in collaboration with the public school system. The program begins at 3:00 in the afternoon and ends at 6:00 in the evening, three days a week.

Also funded by Boston Public Schools is Project Promise at the Timilty School, a new initiative to boost performance on the Metropolitan Achievement Test given annually to students in the United States as a method of measuring student progress. Since students in the inner city public schools usually score poorly on this test, Project Promise was designed to improve reading, writing and communication skills for this population. The program is an entire middle school with a longer school day (1.5 hours longer) from Monday to Thursday. Friday is a normal day, followed by a half day on Saturday. Totally, 38% more time has been added to the school schedule. The education at Timilty is the same as that of a traditional school in the Boston School System with the exception of the extended schedule. The curriculum is focused on remediation and enrichment, with a faculty-student ratio of 1 to 18.

At English High School, a program has been funded in which juniors and seniors recognized as being at-risk for dropping out are referred to a special program by their teachers. To help students who need a small-group learning environment, the program exists as a school within the school, located on a separate floor. The uniqueness of this program, called The Fenway, lies in its being designed to meet not only the needs of students who require more supportive academic remediation but also of those who are bored with the traditional classroom and need more challenge.

The program provides a small classroom situation, with a faculty-student ratio of 1-15. Students are required to complete curricular modules and proceed to the next level as progress is demonstrated in each subject.

For another population, the Boston Community Schools, a part of the public school system, have an education component offering adult basic education and classes in English as a Second Language designed to assist people who are 19 or older in preparing for the GED (General Education Diploma).

Yet another program provided by the Boston Public School System is the Teen Comprehensive Parenting Program to help teen parents stay in school. Begun at English High School about ten years ago as a collaboration between the school and local hospitals, the program now involves more than twenty hospitals and health centers, two high schools and a middle school, and works with pregnant teens as well as teens who are parents. Counseling on health issues and nutrition, and information on day care and home tutoring are provided. Teenagers may be referred to hospitals for prenatal care or assigned a counselor who assists them with homework and school matters. The point is to keep these students in school and to help them learn parenting skills as well as to prevent students from having more pregnancies, while improving the health and well-being of the young mother and child. The ultimate hope is that these students will move back into a regular school program and obtain a diploma. The students take morning classes with students from the GED and diploma programs. Students are grouped by ability.

The introduction of 'magnet' or alternative schools for students who wish to specialize in music or languages has resulted in an increased enrollment of white students in one school whose white enrollment had dropped from 60% to 20% prior to that change. At another Boston school, students who were normally suspended for behavior problems were given an opportunity to attend an

alternative school with an individualized educational program that included counseling. Many of these students completed high school. (Boston Directory of Alternative Programs, 1987).

Finally, some interesting intervention programs acting directly on the student in school have been implemented in the Boston Public School system. In one, teachers and staff consult with one another or with an affiliated agency like the court clinic about student needs and remedies; in another, group techniques such as group therapy and family counseling are used to help students. Although as illustrated above there are many kinds of alternative and intervention programs in the Boston schools, each with its own goal, the overall picture suggests that the effect of powerful social and emotional issues in students' lives, too often more than a student can cope with, are the most crucial to address.

Background

In general, the background of this study is the fact that urban schools, suffering from both a decline in student performance and an increase in behavior problems, have tried many strategies to attack these problems but those attempts have only infrequently been seriously evaluated by research. Only a few investigators, for example, have researched the use of intervention strategies for prevention of behavior problems in secondary schools (Dole 1972, Arends 1977, Crabbs 1984). These programs continue to grow in number, but are not being formally evaluated in published research, a situation that needs remedying.

The Boston School Population

The regular education programs in the Boston system include 17 high schools with student populations ranging from 450 to 2,250. There are also 22 middle schools with 200 to 850 students in each. The students are largely of multi-ethnic populations from both working class and poor socio-economic backgrounds. In terms of ethnic groups, the students are Black, White, Hispanic

and Asian, with small numbers of Native Americans. The Black students are mostly African-American, Jamaican and Haitian. The majority of the Hispanic students come from Puerto Rican, Cuban, Honduran and Panamanian backgrounds. The Asian students are largely Chinese with a recent influx from Vietnam. Native Americans, from the Mohawk, Blackfeet and Wampanoag nations are also represented in Boston schools. While students of Irish-American and Italian-American backgrounds make up a large number of the students, there are also significant numbers of Polish, Greek, and Portuguese, as well as children of bi-racial origins.

Many of these children come from Catholic homes, but there is also a significant Jewish population and many come from Protestant families. After the desegregation period, more students from Muslim homes began to be counted. There are also students who come from homes with no religious training or affiliation. The schools have kept no statistics on this demographic factor.

With so many different ethnic/racial groups represented, it is easily understandable why desegregation, which took place during a very trying and turbulent time in the United States and which had a polarizing effect in Boston, has had a special impact on education. Since desegregation, the question of cultural differences in learning and how students are affected by culture or race in classroom instruction, has been the subject of much debate. If adults have difficulty responding fully and thoughtfully to these social issues, then we can assume that adolescents, struggling with their own developmental tasks, will experience real difficulty integrating in their lives meaningful responses to these issues. Support of some kind for their efforts is clearly needed. Whether that support comes from the home or school is not important. What is important is that some mechanism be in place to help the student work through issues that can be so frustrating as to result in misdirected behavior and school failure.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the impact of a specific form of intervention on the school performance and behavior of students and to determine if such intervention can influence achievement.

The background for the research described in this study is a sizable movement during the last dozen years in the Boston Public School System. In 1979, the Boston Public Schools undertook an effort to improve the overall quality of education through a collaborative agreement with business, colleges and community organizations called the Boston Compact. Collaboratives were established with private industry councils to work with schools and with community agencies and government to help students acquire the skills to find and keep jobs as a way to escape poverty. The students needed a good education as the foundation for career advancement and the employers needed a better educated work force.

Another aspect of the collaboratives more recently developed under the Boston Compact has been an involvement with human services consisting of a network of the support systems found in the school system. The staggering rates of teenage suicide attempts, of substance abuse, and other problems that disrupt the developmental process of our adolescents led a number of Boston schools to establish this human services collaborative, a comprehensive formal system in which clear procedures are established for the recognition, assessment, referral and treatment of troubled students. The idea behind human service collaboratives was to help fill the gap between schools and social services. This human services collaboration is the framework from which many intervention strategies grew.

The Intervention Period

Focusing on interventions in the middle and high school years is very important. According to a report from the Boston Public Schools, the overall dropout rates are low until 9th grade, and a peak occurs in the 10th grade. Tables 2 and 3 suggest the dimensions of the problem.

“The most troubled grade in the public system is the ninth. Nearly one half of the regular education students are held back each year. One third of the ninth graders dropout. The problems of the ninth grade ripple throughout the high schools.”

(Compact Ventures Executive Summary 1987).

Those students who remain in school until the 12th grade are less likely to drop out than high school students in the lower grades. Students whose repeated failure has caused them to be two years over the average age of other students in their grade are at a high risk of dropping out (BPS “Characteristics of Students Who Dropout from the Boston Public Schools 1988”). A study of 6,136 students who started 9th grade in 1981 found that 2,677 (44%) of the students dropped out of school for a number of reasons. (Citywide Educational Coalition, 1987).

The collaborative intervention strategies discussed in this study, it is hoped, can help adolescents in the urban middle and high schools find a source of support, enhance their chances for a better education, and make them more predisposed to learning.

The Target Schools

Jamaica Plain High School, the Roosevelt Middle School, and the Boston Prep School were chosen as target schools for this study. The schools are on a point system in which students are graded from A to F and a numeric value is placed on each letter. By the end of the senior year, students must have a certain number of points in order to graduate based on a sum total of the letter grades they have received over the four year period. Each of the schools is described in

some detail below. Parts of the descriptions, such as the goals listed for each school, are taken from "School Profiles", Boston Public Schools, 1985. The Attendance and Discipline Indicators Profiles, available for only two of the schools, are here as Table 2 and Table 3.

Jamaica Plain High. Jamaica Plain High is a school which has a history almost as old and unique as the neighborhood itself. For this study however, we focused only on the modern high school, built in the 1970's. The school is located in a predominantly white section of the city which has undergone significant changes resulting in an immigrant influx. Over the past 10 years the neighborhood has increased its minority population, so that it now includes numbers of Guatemalans, Africans, African-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Hondurans. This working class neighborhood is still undergoing demographic change.

The high school had 810 regular education places (seats), 140 bi-lingual places and 48 special education openings. There were 210 ninth grade students, 191 tenth graders, 161 eleventh grade students and 128 students in grade twelve. Several special education programs were offered, namely the Learning Adaptive Behavior Program, the Resource Room, Supportive Academic Remediation, Learning Disabilities, Speech and Vision Services and a part-time combined Supportive Academic Remediation and Learning Disabilities class. There were 16 Black teachers, 43 white, 2 Hispanic and 1 Asian.

The attendance and discipline indicators for the Jamaica Plain High School are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2
Attendance and Discipline Indicators
Jamaica Plain High School

	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>
Attendance	74.8%	80.2%
% absent over 15% of school year	38.2%	35.4%
Number of suspensions:		
Black	150	222
White	12	15
Asian	2	3
Hispanic	51	54
Total suspensions	215	294

Source "BPS SCHOOL PROFILES" 1984

The following more formal description of Jamaica Plain High is organized in categories which will be repeated for each of the other two schools in the study.

A. Description

A regular high school that provides services for children in grades 9-12, this school is a Boston public school open to children living in the city. It is a large modern school with an 810 seat capacity, and a comparable pupil/teacher ratio. Students are required to attend a full day; they earn credits for classes passed and the curriculum meets the general requirements outlined for all high school programs for graduation. There are several extra-curricular activities such as football, basketball and orchestra.

B. Goals

- Increase number of students passing 'basic skills'
- Decrease dropout rate by 10%
- Exhibit appreciation for diverse cultural and linguistic differences

C. Academic Component

- Regular BPS schedule
- Same general program as other high schools

D. Discipline Resources

- Suspensions
- Guidance Counselor

E. Staff

- Headmaster
- Assistant Headmaster
- 4 Housemasters
- Teachers
- Nurse
- Guidance Counselors

F. Adjunct Staff

- School Psychologist
- Part-time Physician

The Roosevelt School. The Roosevelt School is a middle school, located in a section of the city which has undergone tremendous change. Economic decline and social change plague the school's neighborhood. The school is located in Roxbury but geographically borders Jamaica Plain and Dorchester.

Initially the school had a large Jewish population which dwindled as the neighborhood experienced sociological and economical change, resulting in a Black ghetto. Like other institutions in the neighborhood, the school was affected by this slow but steady change in its surroundings. While many of the previous teachers stayed with the school, the student population became increasingly African-American, Hispanic and Southeast Asian. The end result was a majority of teachers from a European/Old Boston background and a majority of students from a Third World/New Boston background.

The old two-story brick building houses a cafeteria, a gym and a large auditorium in addition to the required classrooms and offices. The regular education program has 240 seats. A bi-lingual program prepares students of limited English speaking ability to learn English. There are 87 sixth grade students, 78 seventh graders and 73 eighth graders.

A. Description

A regular middle school that provides educational services to children from the city of Boston in grades 6-8, the Roosevelt is an old school built in 1922, typical of that era in size and style. The school has a resource room for students who need extra help as well as a Learning Adaptive Behavior Class for students who have difficulty in the regular classroom. Extra curricular activities include after-school sports, orchestra and a student council.

B. Goals

- To improve daily attendance
- To help every student meet the promotion requirement
- To improve the school climate

B. Goals

- To improve daily attendance
- To help every student meet the promotion requirement
- To improve the school climate

C. Academic Component

- Regular Classes
- Special education
- Bilingual program

D. Discipline Resources

- Suspension
- Time out

E. Staff

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Teachers

F. Adjunct Staff

- School Psychologist
- School Nurse
- Evaluation Team Leader for Chapter 766 Programs

G. Collaboratives Affiliations

- ESAC (Ecumenical Social Action Committee)
- Brookside Clinic
- Children's Hospital

The attendance and discipline indicators for the Roosevelt Middle School are shown below in Table 3.

Table 3

Attendance and Discipline Indicators
Roosevelt Middle School

	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>
Attendance	73.4%	87.2%
% absent over 15% of school year	35.0%	28.6%
Number of Suspensions		
Black	100	75
White	22	3
Asian	0	0
Hispanic	17	18
Total suspensions	139	96

Source "BPS SCHOOL PROFILES" 1984

Boston Prep. Boston Prep, despite its name, is part of the public school system. It is an alternative school aimed at retaining students who have fallen behind academically. Students who are at least two years below grade level are offered a chance to earn credits and graduate. The school was started in 1982 in response to absenteeism and a high dropout rate. Housed in the old Peter Fanueil School on Beacon Hill, its central location makes it an ideal program for students traveling from all parts of the city. Boston Prep is housed on the first floor and shares the building with another public school program.

The program has a young multi-ethnic staff similar in this respect to the students who are enrolled in the school. Students come to the program as the result of a core evaluation or by the recommendation of their school principal. Classes meet every day and there is an early dismissal on Friday to allow a time for staff meetings and planning. Although students take classes at Boston Prep, as they earn points toward graduation these are added on to the record of the home school and the student graduates with his or her schoolmates.

The distribution of boys to girls at Boston Prep is disproportionate; boys outnumber girls by a margin of two to one. For many of these students poor attendance is secondary to a larger problem such as school failure, work obligations and family problems. Other reasons reported by students for dropping out of school include being needed at home, having a physical handicap or mental illness, difficulty with staff or difficulty with other students.

Boston Prep is a relatively new school and therefore has little history as a school itself. Its purpose was to address the increasing drop-out rate and to improve the basic skills of students in the Boston Public School System, based on the idea that a small concentrated program focusing on basic skills can improve students' overall performance. If the student was removed from distracting stimuli found in his home school, it was believed, he could concentrate on the

subject at hand and therefore learn better. The school offers supportive services such as counseling as part of the curriculum, guest speakers on current issues affecting adolescents, communication with other service providers (probation officers or social workers), and a time-out room.

Boston Prep students are selected through an intake process in which staff review their academic records and educational objectives. Students can also gain entry through a Chapter 766 evaluation in which students are evaluated by teachers, a psychologist and other professionals such as a speech therapist and pupil adjustment counselor to determine if they have special needs. After the evaluations have been made, the team and the student's parents decide on the best possible educational placement for the student.

This school offers credits based on a student's ability to successfully demonstrate that he has gained specific skills which together make up a core curriculum. There is no pressure on students to move on to the next skill, but students are aware that they must obtain these credits in order to graduate. Each student earns credits at his own pace. There is also an opportunity to demonstrate learned skills through internships or jobs.

Since it is centrally located in the downtown section of the city, the school provides equal access to all children in the city, in terms of commuting. There is a small school yard where students can go outside on their break. Except for a student council, there are no sports or other extracurricular activities. Many students who attend Boston Prep have jobs after school, some have appointments with social service professionals and others must return home to care for their young children.

The school has a student capacity of 75 and a comparable staff size. The faculty is multi-cultural, representative of the diversity of the student population. Each staff member has a special expertise in addition to the professional training

of an educator. Some have traveled extensively, one has worked as a mathematician in private industry and one is a media specialist.

The teachers also double as counselors, making themselves available to students after school and on breaks. Integral to the school's program are team meetings of staff members discussing individual student progress. There are 'educational rounds' sessions where teachers present cases to the psychologist. These meetings provide teachers an opportunity to exchange information about individual students and hear suggestions about how to modify behavior.

Another special dimension of this school is its behavior management technique. When students feel out of control or unable to participate in classroom activities they are sent to the time-out room, in order to eliminate undesirable behavior within the classroom and to allow students to remove themselves from a situation that may get them suspended.

A. Description

Boston Prep is an alternative program where high school students can earn credit from a core curriculum and learn at their own pace. It provides services for children in grades 9-12. The students come with attendance problems and low academic performance. Completion results in a high school diploma granted from the student's home school. Although Boston Prep is part of the Boston Public Schools, its enrollment is limited to those students referred by school principals and Chapter 766 teams from other local public schools in Boston.

B. Goals

- To improve daily attendance
- To provide emotional and academic support
- To help students earn credits toward graduation
- To assist students in graduating with his home school
- To improve self-esteem

C. Academic Component

- Regular classes
- Awareness workshops

D. Discipline

- Suspension
- Time out
- Behavior modification contract

E. Staff

- Director
- Assistant director
- Teachers

F. Adjunct Staff

- School psychologist
- School nurse

G. Collaborative Affiliations

- Thom Clinic
- Family and Children's Services
- Boston City Hospital

Attendance and discipline indicators were not reported for Boston Prep in the BPS profiles

In summary, from the attendance and disciplinary indicators shown, it is clear that interventive action is needed in the Boston schools, and especially in the middle and high schools. Regrettably, it is evident that there is no consensus on the degree and types of intervention that will work. Continuing high absenteeism and a dropout rate of 40% suggest that a large number of students in the Boston Public Schools lack what Dewey called "the most important attitude that can be formed ... that of the desire to go on learning." (Dole, 1972). The desire to go on learning which may have been present earlier has somehow disappeared by the time these students reach middle and high school level.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a specific form of intervention on the school performance and behavior of students and to determine if such intervention can influence achievement.

Research Questions

In light of the situation described above, this study followed the design and implementation of the plan designed for this study at the target schools and provided an evaluation of the effect of that intervention. The following research questions were examined:

1. Is academic achievement influenced by the presence of intervention strategies?
2. Are there significant pre- and post-differences in achievement and attendance?
3. Can the presence of intervention strategies serve as a predictor of learning outcomes for students in the peak dropout period?
4. Do all students taking part in such intervention experience the same type of changes? In other words, is there a common denominator in what students experience as they participate in interventions?.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were integral to the study being reported here.

1. Student attitudes and achievement can be changed.
2. Interventions can be identified which will make students' attitudes toward school more positive.
3. Interventions can be identified which will improve student achievement.
4. Intervention is necessary to the educational process and intervention strategies can be designed to be an integral part of the learning environment.

Definitions of terms

The specific meanings described below are intended when the following terms are used.

Attitude: Expression of feeling towards others and the school.

Behavior problem: Any display of acting out, such as disrespect to teacher or peers, physical abuse, profanity or any other verbal abuse, refusal to do class work, and high absenteeism.

Intervention strategy: A planned mechanism that intervenes to improve student behavior or achievement in order to smooth the acquisition of knowledge and prevent potentially destructive behavior.

Self-esteem: The level of respect that one has about oneself.

Support group: A short-term counseling group on school grounds functioning as a place of refuge from judgment on academic ability and designed to permit the airing of frustrations, to help students set limits, gain control of their individual behavior and build on their strengths to enhance the quality of their learning experience.

Support system: A mechanism built into the institutional structure for the airing of frustrations and the provision of reassurance or advocacy.

Summary

The dimensions of the problems facing Boston's inner city middle and high schools are daunting, impelling a continuing search for effective solutions. This study, recognizing that personal, social and economic pressures produce dropouts, was focused on evaluating a strategy for promptly locating and working on the student problems which derive from those pressures. Implementation of this strategy took place in the three schools described above. The end goal is to enable more students to make it to high school graduation.

In the next chapter, the literature on this subject will be reviewed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adolescents in contemporary American society seem to be faced with extraordinarily traumatic stresses. Drug abuse, teen pregnancy and teen suicide are among their problems, and for many of them, abject poverty as well. It is hard not to believe that an entire generation is at risk and that consequently the subject of effective interventions, especially through support systems in the schools, is crucial.

Among practitioners, the major schools of thought regarding the amelioration of behavior problems in school, as has been said before, fall into two groups: one stresses the human service model and the other stresses the educational model. The model used in this study differs from others in that it combined the two major schools of thought, the educational model and the human service model. While the project was seemingly part of the human service model it was in fact designed to serve academic goals.

Information on intervention strategies as an influence on behavior problems in school has been poorly documented in the literature. Until recently, most of the literature published on this topic revolved around behavior modification, such as modeling schedules of reinforcement. Much of the work documents the extinguishing of acting-out behaviors and was designed to teach teachers to ignore negative behavior and reward positive behavior (Argyris, 1970; Thompson, 1985; Pottenbaum, Keith and Ehly, 1986). The literature reviewed in this chapter is that which deals directly with intervention strategies

and support systems in urban public schools, and the literature on the educational structure and its incorporation of intervention strategies, including alternative programs.

This study was based on the principle of Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Basic Needs.' When basic needs are not met, then there are certain physical and/or behavioral consequences. In the school setting, when basic needs are not met, the result is a behavior problem. In the theory of personality structure, if defenses are removed unusual behavior can result because the individual is left without any defenses, yet if left with at least a minimal of defense mechanisms, the personality stays intact. If a student's support systems at home (i.e. family), are removed it is difficult for him to function as he would if support systems were in place.

Thanks in large measure to Maslow's theory of motivation and his ideas that cognitive or aesthetic needs do not emerge until love and esteem needs have been satisfied, it is generally understood and accepted that the existence of an emotional problem can seriously inhibit a pupil's academic achievement. (Kolesnik, 1970).

Another baseline for this project was the work of William Perry. Through his descriptions of certain characteristics of an urban school that had worked effectively with problem students, Perry's research produced essential guidelines for intervention programs (Perry, 1980). As a result of his work, essential program elements have been identified which result in clear goals and a relatively positive school climate. One such element is limited use of controlling strategies that tightly regulate the student's behavior or learning. Another element involves acts supporting students when they are insecure. Intervention strategies such as the programs examined in this study are examples of such controlling strategies. If learning is affected by behavior problems, then participating in some form of intervention should improve learning as

demonstrated by improved achievement or grades. Although it is difficult to measure learning, there are standard ways to measure achievement, and these measurements can help demonstrate that the teaching strategies do or do not fit the problem.

Studies on Interventions

Several trends in the literature suggest that interventions are a useful approach. Non-traditional approaches to the resolution of behavior problems are increasingly favored. Much of this literature stresses the humanistic aspects of a school setting in which both teachers and students can develop, as well as reinforcing our knowledge that American education is an endlessly complex process and structure, reflecting its society in microcosm. Interestingly, much of the literature addressing questions of educational policy and structures indicates that fairly small gains in productivity can bring about useful change in society, save money and time and conserve resources (Walberg 1978, Dole 1972, Rist 1978, Buriel 1983).

A limited number of studies have been done in order to establish the impact of intervention strategies and their effect on student performance on the secondary level. Research indicates that interventions focused on behaviors made a considerable impact on student achievement (Pottenbaum, Keith and Ehly, 1986; Katzell, 1983; Relph, 1984; Nagle, 1979).

With the changing roles which schools are forced to adapt and the rapid change in our society, we see the development of a new generation of students with new needs. Studies of the relationship between behavior problems and intervention indicates that there are many environmental factors that correlate with academic performance (Fraser 1983, Rosenthal 1973, Goodman 1980).

There are certainly problems with intervention implementation. Some of the work in this area questions whether schools and teachers can be encouraged

to develop more productive classroom environments as a means of addressing behavior problems and adolescent needs (Walberg 1978; Gajendra and Bagley 1979; Buriel 1983, et al.). Teachers may resent outside observers professing that they can do a better job educating students. In the past, interventions were customarily implemented without approval or input from teachers, because such a process was considered a purely administrative matter. Having been left out of the planning process, teachers may be hesitant to rely on a program they did not choose or help design. The task of helping teachers is complicated by lack of trust, the omnipresence of school politics and, not least, by past experience (Stevens and Driscoll, 1987).

Another difficulty in matching problems with solutions is teacher perception and prior involvement with the interventive program. "Even though the content of the program is relevant to the problem and research-based and administrative support is present, teachers will vary in their implementation of the solution" (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977). Teachers, it is evident, must have a genuine understanding of the need and purpose of the intervention process. They would need to understand, for instance, that:

...in contrast to traditional programs of non-therapeutic discipline in which students are frequently suspended from school, the program of therapeutic discipline keeps problem students in school and provides them with a more fulfilling educational experience in which they study the dynamics of their own behavior, participate in counseling and therapy, analyze their behavior and develop carry through to a constructive course of action to alter their behavior (Miller, 1986).

Culture and race (or ethnicity) are variables thought to be related to behavioral problems, especially in the learning situation (Buriel 1983). "Evidence suggests that teachers treat students differently according to various characteristics, including demographic factors and academic labels" (Wooldridge

and Richman 1985). Therefore the need for intervention of a supportive nature may have greater significance for African-American and other students of color, and for immigrants as well as for the urban poor.

Service Agencies in the Schools

Social issues and environmental issues, helping to exacerbate the problems of children with special needs, compound the dilemma that teachers face in the classroom. This topic may be given a perspective by citing the fact that today over 135,000 students receive special services, psychological and social, from the Chapter 766 Program, a program to assist children with special needs in the state of Massachusetts, according to the Massachusetts Department of Education. Research demonstrates that the behavior problems of disruptive students effect their academic performance (1981 Safer, Heaton and Parker; 1973 Upper and Goodenough). With mental health intervention in a middle school, fewer suspensions and less grade failure occurred, indicating that this kind of intervention has an impact on student performance (1981 Safer, Heaton and Parker).

Support systems have influenced many aspects of our society from government institutions to hospitals. More recently this phenomena has affected the educational system. With schools being obliged by the society to assume many of the responsibilities that were once a function of the home, the schools themselves must now look to support systems as a natural and necessary tool for their work.

Among the problems in the Boston Public Schools are the prevalence of students with children. From 1980 to 1984, teenagers gave birth to 36,490 babies in Massachusetts. In 1985 61% of all Massachusetts teen births were focused in twenty communities; one of those communities was Boston. In fifteen years the proportion of births to unwed teens increased from 28% in 1970 to 71% in 1985.

Thousands of young mothers leave school and live in poverty. They are at an economic disadvantage, depending on the state for financial assistance. The children of teen mothers are at risk for learning problems, developmental disabilities and mental or physical problems. In response, the state has set aside funds to establish support systems for teen parents and to prevent teenage pregnancy. Recognizing the epidemic proportions of teen pregnancy, the schools began, in their turn, to set up clinics in schools for birth control information, child care and parenting skills. Recently some schools have established day care programs for teen mothers enabling them to continue their schooling (BPS, 1989).

The cost of teenage pregnancy falls disproportionately on those least able to provide assistance - low income families with few resources. Recent research shows that teens with similar family incomes whether black, white or Hispanic, have similar rates of childbearing. Teenage pregnancy is costing the state tens of millions of dollars in welfare, health and social services. But it is the costs to the young parents, their babies and their families that are of most concern. By not delaying pregnancy, these teenage mothers and fathers, as well as their children, may not have the opportunity to grow to their fullest potential.

(Mass. Task Force Report on Pregnant & Parenting Teens 1987).

A support system in schools would seem to have a good chance for success because it involves teachers, parents and students together not only in theory but in practice, thus satisfying the dicta that schools need to become more satisfying places in which people learn and work (Arends, R. and Arends, J. 1977).

Intervention Strategies

Even though total school enrollment has been increasing, another phenomenon "has been operating for the past two decades that deprived a substantial number of children of the fundamental education they need, i.e. increasing rates of school absenteeism in particular, increasing rates of truancy" (Miller, 1986). A major concern of educators nationwide is the alarmingly high

numbers of students who leave schools before graduating. (Austin Independent Schools, 1984). Chronic absenteeism is a prelude to dropping out of school totally. Students with high absenteeism are usually those with adjustment problems, those who are failing academically, and those who 'fall between the cracks'.

These same students are typically in danger of the punishment mode of dealing with discipline infractions, namely suspension from school. This is counterproductive for a student who is already truant. "In contrast to traditional programs of non-therapeutic discipline in which students are frequently suspended from school, the program of therapeutic discipline keeps problem students in school and provides them with a more fulfilling education experience"(Miller, 1986). There is therefore currently a trend toward more productive alternatives, usually forms of in-house suspension requiring the student to spend a predetermined amount of time in the school's suspension center.

Students who participate in attendance improvement/dropout prevention programs, receive more comprehensive services and show improved attendance. This is particularly true for students who participate over a long period as opposed to those whose participation is briefer. Examining the attendance behavior of 10,180 middle school students, Guttenberg reported strong empirical support for the use of intervention to improve attendance (Guttenberg, 1987).

Employment, usually a necessity for inner city adolescents, is one of the most common reasons among middle school and high school students for dropping out. Students who work have high dropout rates. The decline in school involvement and overall performance is greatest among students who work, due to the sociological and economic conditions involved in a student's working . According to the literature, Native Americans have the highest dropout rate of

any ethnic group, Hispanics follow with the next highest rate, then African-Americans, white and Asians in that order.

School absences often develop into school dropouts. A factor that contributes to a high absentee rate is failure to progress appropriately through the promotion system. Negative interaction with teachers and personnel of a different ethnic and socioeconomic background or who were perhaps less sensitive to minority and poor students was also seen as a contributing factor to the high absentee rate of students. Discipline problems, low grades and poor self-esteem are among other reasons given for high absentee rates. Attendance and tardiness records are highly correlated with the dropout rate. This stresses the important relationship between poor attendance and variables involved in dropping out, and warns that without intervention the problem grows progressively worse until the student has dropped out of school completely. Even the institutional character of the school is thought to have an impact on absenteeism (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986).

Types of Intervention Strategies

Various strategies and models of intervention reflect the many hypotheses concerning intervention and poor attendance. As represented in the literature, the range of interventions can be categorized into the following groups:

1. Cognitive/academic intervention; 2. Psychological intervention; 3. Social/environmental; and, 4. Program intervention. Cognitive/academic intervention refers to programs that focus on improving basic skills.

Psychological intervention includes support systems, crisis intervention, and psychotherapeutic involvement, individually or in groups. The social/environmental type of intervention provides remedies for personal and family issues, living conditions and substance abuse. Program intervention may

include social support programs, health care clinics within the school, university collaboratives and other alternative programs.

Trends in intervention have reflected trends in society. Behavior modification caught on quickly and was indiscriminately used for everything from classroom management to the increase of students' attention spans. The trouble with this approach was that after witnessing a few successes educators no longer weighed the pros and cons of an intervention, but used the same intervention for individual students, classroom groups, special needs students and everyone in between. Therefore, whether the intervention was appropriate or not, it was used under the premise that it would produce immediate results. In some cases, this was true, in others it was not. In education, behavior modification may have caught on so readily because of the great need and multifaceted problems unique to public education.

In order to promote the welfare of the children, schools have been forced to take a more versatile approach in meeting the goal of educating and making productive citizens out of its students. Although interventive strategies have been visible in the society for sometime, it is only recently that we see such widespread usage of these strategies in schools, perhaps because our schools have become all-encompassing. It has become imperative for some form of intervention to be brought to children to help them survive their own vulnerability and the risk factors in their lives.

Formulation of children's mental health policy is thus inherently difficult because of the interaction between the individual child's vulnerability and risk factors present in that child's environment. Children are highly dependent on their environment; thus, mental health problems depend both on the child and the stresses on support present in his or her family, school and community.(Saxe, Cross and Silverman 1988).

Since a child's mental health problems depend on stress or support coming from family, school and community according to Saxe, Cross and Silverman, if any one of these systems fails, then the potential for individual pathology is a real possibility. Given the diversity of individual and environmental problems, they concluded, a broad range of interventions are needed.

Such studies suggest that individuals such as educators, mental health professionals and others dealing with school aged children have become more willing to examine the effectiveness of intervention strategies as a method of resolving adolescent issues. On the other hand, it should be noted that interventions in schools tend to focus on crises rather than being a pre-planned part of the curriculum. In the 1950's polio shots were introduced to the schools as a way to decrease the incidence of the disease among school-aged children, but the program was not introduced until polio was running rampant among the population of children and adults in the United States.

Even though teen pregnancies were around in the 1960's there were few (if any) programs of intervention to address the problem of curbing adolescent pregnancy. Over the five year period of 1980 to 1984 teenagers gave birth to 36,490 babies in Massachusetts (1988 Task Force on Pregnant and Parenting Teens). Yet it was not until teen pregnancy reached these epidemic proportions that schools began pilot programs.

Another example of crisis intervention involves the growing problem of drugs and alcohol. Once thought to be a characteristic of only a small minority of students, most public high schools and middle schools in Boston now have a drug awareness and counseling program geared toward the entire student body. Intervention strategies focussed on substance abuse, reflecting the sense of crisis at large, are not only becoming more intense, but they are also becoming more widespread. (Ryan 1971; Safer, Heaton, and Parker; Schwitzgebel and Kolb 1984).

The idea of intervention is generally seen in a limited context. Intervention will be perceived as having a beginning and an end, with the specific purpose of alleviating an immediate problem or settling a crisis, and this approach automatically limits the long-range effectiveness possible from the intervention process.

More recently university collaborations with school systems have demonstrated the taking of a "hands-on" approach to meet the needs of urban schools. An example of urban effectiveness is the Harriet Beecher Stowe Middle School in St. Louis, where a former Project Director at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education introduced a program of intervention in which he was directly involved (American Teacher, 1988). The school was transformed from a typical urban middle school (one with poor socio-economic conditions, high crime, low motivation, etc.) to one with only 3% of its students scoring in the lowest quartile of the California Achievement Test. "Students consistently score at or above the national norm on achievement tests... The Effective Schools Program assumes that every child can learn." (American Teacher, 1988). Such direct involvement is one example of the broad range of intervention strategies available and, in this case, one of considerable success.

Some designs look ahead to the end result and the kind of social skills that will have been developed through the process of the intervention. Researchers are now beginning to take into consideration planning social skills in the design of intervention strategies (Arends & Arends 1977; Dole, 1972; Fraser, 1983).

Alternative Programs as a mode of intervention

Alternative programs across the nation are springing up to meet the growing needs of a rapidly changing population and are documented in the literature. In general students with a positive self-esteem coming from a two-parent, intact family are not typical consumers of such programs. These

programs have been designed to meet the needs of the atypical students whose numbers increase each year.

Alternative programs reach out to students who for one reason or another have not succeeded in the traditional mainstream. They range from accelerated curricula for the gifted to adaptive physical education for the physically challenged. There are in-school day care programs for children of teenage mothers, college preparatory programs where high school students take a college courses for credit, dropout-prevention programs for at-risk students and many more.

At one school, in 1982 a group counseling option was opened to students in the academic mainstream. Eight group themes were chosen on the basis of the most pressing needs of students as perceived by staff social workers and psychologists. This group counseling program became an integral part of the self-contained alternative program at the high school (Communique 1988).

Some alternative programs take on a more global perspective, for example, providing grants to schools for innovative strategies to motivate students or designing urban planning programs that make education more accessible to students. Instead of providing direct services, alternative programs with a conservative approach attempt to stay away from direct involvement, thus allowing the schools to make change causing as little disruption in school routine as possible. In either case, alternative programs as an intervention strategy in an academic setting can help shape the individual's life according to Knoblock.

All academic work must be highly personalized and timed to fit the interests, needs, preoccupations and life experiences of each child. The very pathology of a child can often be used very successfully as the basis for beginning an academic program. The teaching process attempts to modify behavior and growth with an interpersonal relationship
(1966, Knoblock).

If education is to modify behavior and growth as stated by Knoblock then the relationship between alternative programs and student behavior becomes clear. The greatest impact of alternative programs on student behavior seems to be motivational. Allowing students to know that they have an alternative has in itself resulted in stronger motivation.

In a highly structured alternative classroom with a conflict management process based on human relations theory and peer group interaction, students showed a 30% lower incidence of absenteeism than students who did not participate in this program (Abbot, 1987). A study of elementary school classrooms and instructional groups "shows how school systems successively transform the composition of schools, grades and classes as part of a process of allocating and using resources" (Dreeben and Bar, 1988). In summary, the research on alternative programs indicates that though they may be difficult to implement, such programs can have a major impact on student behavior. However, they do not enjoy unquestioning acceptance from the public or from teachers and administrators.

Public and Teacher Criticism of Interventions in Schools

Among the involved public and the involved faculty there are a wide range of perceptions and beliefs about the problems of the schools, the possibility of solutions, and the utility of the many solutions proposed by educators. Although they do not always surface promptly in the literature of education, these attitudes and beliefs about the schools, their problems and possible solutions serve as powerful prods to, or brakes on, the possibility of change. Some of these attitudes are described below.

Some argue against the use of intervention strategies in schools because they interfere with 'regular' school programming. Children must be removed from class to attend some of these programs and miss the material being taught

while they are out of the room. Over a period of time such a gap in learning may create a serious deficit. Intervention is also rejected by some critics who believe that the situation in urban schools is hopeless, since the students are lazy and come from problem homes that will not take advantage of resources.

Some opponents contend that those students who want to improve will achieve with or without intervention. They question the ability of society to change and to become more pluralistic so that individual differences become less of a barrier to achievement. Some investigators doubt that society will change enough to make a major difference in the significance of intervention for a certain population of students (Nurcomb 1976). One of the problems here is that the family is discussed in isolation as though it were the only reason for a child's success or failure in school. There is of course a basis for this belief, but educators and social workers have dwelt on the family as a central focus for so long that 'blaming the victim' is clearly taking place (Ryan, 1971). This premise becomes weakened in the face of the number of individuals who have prospered educationally despite lack of family involvement or a family's negative attitude toward education.

Another, and stronger, argument against intervention strategies is that of inadequate funding. Many of the schools complain that there is not enough money available to run the basic programs that are already required by the Board of Education, let alone finding money for outside programs. Teachers do not feel strongly enough about social service and mental health interventions to push for them because they fear that other programs with which they are concerned would get a smaller piece of the pie.

Educational programs are already competing with one another: special education vs. regular education programs, college prep vs. vocational education, and the list goes on. Funding is being requested for bilingual educational

programs and public health programs. There is a fear that too many interventions may mean cutbacks in required academic programs, fewer traditional courses taught and eventually fewer traditional teachers. An insecurity comes with new programs, particularly those with which staff are not familiar.

Some recognize the difficulty of having too many people involved and of consolidating the many proposed interventions. The consolidation of intervention programs and staff is an enormous task not to be undertaken without solid evidence of its worth. Political issues, particularly those concerning the locus of authority and responsibility, are often used in the argument against interventions that involve social/psychological aspects of education.

The argument is also made that more evidence is needed to determine the usefulness of specific intervention programs in schools. This argument holds that the appearance of effectiveness is in fact merely the operation of the Hawthorne effect, namely that subjects perform better because they are aware of attention. Even some researchers are not thoroughly convinced that intervention strategies actually work (Pottenbaum, Keith & Ehly, 1986). Opponents of certain intervention programs in schools claim that the relationship between education and private industry will never work as an intervention project because private industry will need to place monetary gain over educational achievement.

One of the problems is the diversity of the populations served and our limited knowledge of the cultures and learning styles present in our students. Critics such as Ogbu argue that there is a caste system at work which prepares certain segments of the population for menial tasks, largely people of color and the urban poor, and prepares other segments, usually affluent whites, for more professional roles. His premise raises even more questions about the worth of intervention strategies in education.

Evaluation of such programs, so clearly needed, is complicated by the problems of following up the participants. Once the interventive program has been completed, it is often very difficult to find the individuals who were initially involved in the intervention. This dilutes the process of determining effectiveness, which can also make staff suspicious about everything from the original nature and intent of the program to the safety of the students involved. The conclusion that may be drawn is that the risks may outweigh the benefits.

Summary

Theorists agree that some solution is needed to move the American education system out of risk, and that a myriad of problems exist. It is difficult however, to move beyond identifying the problem and into a feasible method of addressing it. Variables such as home literacy, culture and socio-economic status influence school performance. As noted earlier, many of society's ills are placed at the doorstep of the educational system (Altbach, Kelly and Weiss, 1985).

The impact of intervention on student performance on the secondary level is the subject of some current research indicating that intervention is effective in improving attendance, lowering the dropout rate, and improving performance on achievement tests.

Finally, an important recommendation for change specifically in the exploration of interventions suggests that a longer involvement of intervention in the educational process would provide for a more definitive statement about the effectiveness of intervention in schools (Pottenbaum, Keith and Ehly 1986).

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of an intervention on school performance and behavior of students and to determine if such intervention can influence achievement. The intervention consisted of giving three sets of 6th to 12th grade students a support group to deal with the children's everyday issues and problems, using a combination of human relations and group therapy techniques. The population, its setting, the procedures and the evaluation tools are described below.

Research Setting and Population

The setting for this study was two urban high schools each with 690 students and one urban middle school with 280 students, in the Boston school system. The intervention process being studied took place from September, 1985 to May, 1986. The study was focused on the academic performance, behavior problems and attendance of students prior to and after involvement with the intervention. Student attendance rates, attitudes towards school, the nature of behaviors under a specific set of circumstances, self-esteem and the degree to which these factors affected motivation, were examined.

The schools, described in detail in Chapter I, were selected on the basis of availability and the expressed desire by teachers to become involved in this school-based, secondary school improvement project. The criteria used for selection of the schools to be invited included low attendance rates, escalating behavior problems (such as violence, dropping out of school, and premature

pregnancy) and the presence of teachers willing to volunteer. Permission was granted for the study, and for accessing the necessary data from student records, by the Superintendent's Office. Meetings were held at each school in November 1984 with each principal to explain the procedure for the groups. In December 1984 a team was developed for each school with the School Psychologist and a teacher from that school serving as team leaders.

The three schools service students from the inner city. Most of the residents of the school catchment areas come from working class backgrounds with low incomes or incomes below the poverty line. The students from these schools generally score low on standardized achievement tests and tests of basic skills (Cohen 1983, Boston Globe). The teachers at each of the schools are experienced and indicated through words and action considerable dedication to their students (Cohen, October 1983, Boston Globe).

The make-up of the team at each school is shown below in Table 4 on staff participation. Sex and race are given to provide a sense of the range of personnel involved. The teachers came from varied backgrounds: some had been in private industry while others were veteran teachers who had taught from 10 to 20 years. The teachers working with the support groups were ethnically and racially diverse, as evidenced in the descriptions of the specific schools and Appendix G. Further data on the staff was not recorded since the focus of the study was on the students.

Table 4
Staffing of Intervention Project, by School

<u>Boston Prep</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Race</u>
Teacher A	F	W
Teacher B	M	W
Teacher C	F	B
Teacher D	M	B
Teacher E	F	O
Principal	F	W
Psychologist	F	B
<u>Jamaica Plain High</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Race</u>
Teacher A	M	B
Teacher B	F	B
Teacher C	F	W
Teacher D	F	B
Teacher E	M	O
Principal	M	B
Psychologist	F	B
<u>Roosevelt</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Race</u>
Teacher A	M	W
Teacher B	M	W
Teacher C	F	B
Teacher D	M	W
Librarian	F	B
Principal (limited)	M	W
Asst. Principal	M	W
Psychologist	F	B

Code: B=Black, W=White, O=Other

At each school teachers were invited to participate by the principals who made the announcement at a teachers' meeting. Those teachers who responded were then invited to a separate meeting by the researcher and the principal. At this meeting a team was organized and logistics were worked out to produce support groups, one for each school.

The support groups were created and designed to address certain areas of concern to teachers and administrators, specifically:

- serving at-risk students.
- providing an organized manner of handling a large number of counseling referrals.
- decreasing acting-out behavior in school.
- giving support to students with poor self-esteem.
- improving attendance.

The goal of the support group was to provide a more comprehensive program of direct services integrated into the school curriculum to deal with everyday issues. Put simply, the idea was to catch a student before he or she became just another statistic, hopelessly lost and resigned to dropping out of school. The support group was one of many resources that made up a network of direct services for students at risk. It served as a preventive program that allowed students to examine issues impacting their schooling. By preventing social and academic problems from escalating, it was hoped that stumbling blocks would be removed and students would be free to concentrate on academics and eventually envision graduating. As an outcome of the experience in the group, a change of attitude might, it was thought, trigger a reassessment of motivation and values. This school-based project, then, would provide a mechanism through which students and staff could feel that emotional needs were being addressed.

A teacher or the director could refer a student for the group or a student could make a self-referral. The group, a small one of six to eight students, was conducted by a school psychologist and met once a week in the school. Participants were male and female students, from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Verbal participation was included as one of the determinants of progress. Since it is difficult to measure the degree of verbal participation, no formal record of this factor was made. Instead, an informal observation of students' willingness to speak voluntarily was noted. In addition, it was noted if verbal participation changed and, if so, how it changed. Such information was written intermittently in the group leader's notes. It was not an ongoing concern or goal, but rather additional data to be noted if significant.

A confidential Observation Report was kept in which the number of days absent, the average grade and the number of incident reports was recorded by a team member (see Appendix J). This form was used only at the beginning of the study. Because data was collected differently, this form became less effective and was discarded for more efficient methods of data collection as described in this chapter.

Population

The sample was composed of 100 high school students ranging in age from 14 to 21 years old. Student participants represented a cross section of ethnic and socio-economic population. Many, although not all, of the students came from single-parent or extended-family homes where grandparents or aunts and uncles served as guardians. Many were involved with the Department of Social Services (D.S.S.), some because of socio-economic conditions, and some because they were handicapped or immigrants or had other forms of legal involvement.

Of the 100 students who participated in the study, two dropped out, one male and one female. Actual participants in the study consisted of 44 males and 56 females. The numbers of students in the control group of 50 and the experimental group of 50 at each of the three schools were matched: 18 in each of the groups at Boston Prep, 16 in each of the groups at Roosevelt and 16 in each of the groups at Jamaica Plain. Table 5, below, shows the range of ages and the grade level of students participating in the study.

Table 5
Ages and Grades of Students
(Experimental and Control Groups)

Age	White		Black		Hispanic		Other		# of students
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
12	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	4
13	3	1	5	1	4	0	2	2	18*
14	2	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	9
15	7	3	6	2	0	1	0	1	20
16	3	3	1	6	2	2	1	0	18
17	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	0	13
18	1	0	5	3	1	1	0	0	11
19	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	5
20	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

<u>Grade in school</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
6	2
7	9
8	20
9	19
10	27
11	18
12	5

*One student dropped out of study (see p. 44) after being counted in original total.

Although all staff members were invited to participate, only a small number at each school responded. Those teachers who showed interest were asked to act as co-leaders by attending group sessions, or to assist with record keeping. Teachers who did not take part in the program indicated in informal discussions that they felt overwhelmed by their already busy schedule and heavy workload. The students on the other hand showed enthusiasm for participating.

Procedures

A plan was worked out so that the proposed study would fit smoothly into the existing curriculum with as little interruption as possible.

Periodic meetings (Appendix G gives the specific dates) were held with school staff who showed an interest in school improvement. Two staff members from the Boston Secondary Schools Project of the University of Massachusetts acted as team leaders for the total group. (The Boston Secondary Schools Project was a collaboration between the Boston Public Schools and the School of Education of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, put together to help solve school-based problems, using University faculty as facilitators.) Goals and objectives of the project and of this particular study were explained to team members by the team leaders with support from the principals at each school, with the exception of Boston Prep whose Principal left the school. The Assistant Principal took over his duties.

The participating teachers represented a diverse background both in terms of ethnicity and interest. Since a small number of staff members showed an interest in the project there was no need for a formal selection process. All who wanted to be involved were accepted. At the start of the project a booklet was put together by this writer to help clarify the intent of the project (See Appendix G). The booklet contained an introduction, a statement of goals and a description

of the method for reaching those goals. Copies of the booklet were made available for staff, students and parents.

Responsibilities of individual team members ranged from checking attendance records and acting as a co-leader in groups to checking student grades. A total of five to seven staff members (not including the two team leaders) participated in the study at each school. The range of staff members included a special education teacher, a science teacher, a math teacher, a librarian, two principals and an assistant principal. There were no incentives offered.

Two open sessions were offered for parents or staff to come and participate as observers. (Unfortunately no one took advantage of the open sessions.)

Selection of Sample

No student was forced to participate in the intervention. All students were invited to participate so there was no issue of volunteers vs. those recruited. Students that were referred and seen as potential beneficiaries of an intervention were pooled together with other students (by student number) so that a random sampling could take place. Therefore there was no known variable influencing participation on the basis of selection.

Verbal participation by students was considered an indicator of involvement. While there was no formal tabulation of the number of times an individual student would participate, informal observations were made, taking note of the degree of participation by the various students.

One hundred students were selected by random sampling: 36 from Boston Prep, 32 from Roosevelt Middle School, and 32 from Jamaica Plain High. The experimental group was selected from a teachers' list of students who might benefit from some intervention. These students were identified by student

numbers. Not all students referred were used in the study. Students were randomly selected by choosing every other student on the master list.

The list of students for the control group was compiled by going through the school's roll of students, also identified by student number, and, again, randomizing by choosing every other student on the master list.

Relevant portions of student records were examined to determine what grades were before the intervention was introduced and examined again to determine grades after the intervention. The control group, who received a placebo treatment, had their records examined similarly. Access to records was limited to that portion of the record which showed attendance and grades. No names were required, since student numbers were used in order to maintain confidentiality. Students in the second, or control, group were selected by choosing every fifth student on the computer printout by student number. A comparison was made of both groups' performance.

Permission slips were given to students to obtain permission for participation in the group (Appendix E). A release had to be signed by parents in the event that photographs were taken during the course of the sessions (Appendix F). Prior approval had been granted by the School Department, but since the team leader was already a school psychologist and routinely did group counseling in the course of the job, the Superintendent's Office also approved the project. A copy of selected pages of the study were requested and submitted to the Assistant Superintendent, after a meeting to explain procedures and methodology.

Support Group Format

The experimental group was made up of 50 students who received intervention in the form of a support group which had a specific 'curriculum' or format. Students in the experimental group were required to meet once a week

for the ten-week life of the project. These sessions involved a series of human relations exercises combined with therapeutic techniques based on Maslow's theory. The goals and expectations were clearly outlined.

The sessions in Weeks I and II were devoted to introductions and getting acquainted. A copy of the handbook (Appendix G) was given to each student so that she or he would know what was going on. These two sessions were designed to eliminate anxiety and introduce participants to group process. The purpose of the next sessions (Weeks III, IV and V) was to establish trust, allow students to see themselves as they were seen by the others, and to illustrate how we impose our values on others. Week V was also used to examine personal value systems. The next section (Weeks VI, VII and VIII) was designed to improve decision making and dealing with stress. Students were encouraged to recall stress-producing situations and think about ways to solve that. Finally, Weeks IX and X were designed to explore issues of self-esteem. Students were asked to think about what made them feel good and what made them feel bad and how this could be changed. (See Appendix A.)

Further, when discussion centered around administrative issues that prevented students from reaching their intended goals of good attendance, fewer discipline infractions and passing grades, these were promptly taken up with the administration; for example, the students' stated desire for an update on the number of points they had earned, part of the requirements for graduation, was followed up and a report made back to them.

Control Group Format

The control group received what it thought was the same treatment as the experimental group. They were also required to meet on a weekly basis. Instead of a structured format, however, this group was offered unstructured discussions. In the first two weeks the topic (chosen by the group leader) was

'values'. The students were asked to define values in writing and complete a student rating scale (Appendix C). The topic for the next three weeks was 'decision making'. For the sixth to ninth sessions the students were permitted to choose the topic for discussion. Another goal of these latter sessions was to foster self-esteem; the approach to this was unstructured, addressing self-esteem indirectly through positive self-confidence which most of the students in the group already had, thus utilizing skills students possessed. The final, tenth, session was designed to see how students liked the activity and to permit them to evaluate it. The control group's progress was measured by referring to school records.

In contrast, the experimental group was actively and purposefully engaged in a series of group dynamics exercises designed to change behaviors of self-esteem and school attendance.

Detailed descriptions of the interventions used with the experimental and control groups are given in Appendices A and B.

At each of the three sites a teacher and the school psychologist met with the students in the experimental group. While a different teacher was used for each group, the same school psychologist was used for all groups.

Data Collection

The data which were collected for both groups included: 1) the school's achievement test scores for students (Metropolitan Achievement Test); 2) students' grades; 3) the relevant attendance records; 4) student evaluations (see Appendix D), 5) informal observations; and 6) teacher evaluations (see Appendices I and J).

No formal instruments were used to measure change in student attitudes. The Metropolitan Achievement Test, which is given routinely at the beginning and end of the school year, was administered. This is a standardized

achievement test that measures degrees of reading ability and ability with arithmetic. It is a nationally recognized group test routinely used in the Boston Public Schools. Test results are reported in percentiles ranging from scores in the 10th percentile to the 100th percentile.

Other relevant factors measured included an examination of goals and whether or not each group had met its goal on the basis of student grades, attendance records and informal teacher/staff reports. The manner in which student behavior was changed or altered, based on student comment and performance, was also a factor used to determine program effectiveness. Students would make unsolicited comments during the course of a group session revealing changes in their behavior and attitude. Some of these comments indicated that those who earlier had a negative opinion of teachers now felt that all teachers were not bad and had more positive comments about teachers. Changed attitudes about school were measured in terms of the number of positive or negative statements made about school in the group sessions. Further, non-specific ways in which this information was gained was through the return of homework, the student's willingness to participate in a class, etc. (See Tables 10 through 15).

Information about homework return and class participation was revealed as teachers spontaneously volunteered information to the author of this study. There also some semi-structured interviews with teachers in which they were asked to give their impressions of students who had participated in the group. The Principal referred the researcher to teachers with students in the group who made comments to him about the support group. These teachers were then interviewed by the researcher in order to collect the data reported here.

Grades were recorded from students' records in order to make 'before and after' comparisons. Attendance records were also checked, as described later.

Additional data were obtained from evaluations forms given to each student at the last group session (Appendix D). Teacher evaluations that were given to all regular classroom teachers (including those who did not participate in the study) prior to the study were used to collect information on program effectiveness and to support data indicating behavior changes. informal observations made by the researcher added to the body of information collected. However there were no formal records kept of such observations and teacher comments.

Analysis of Data

The method of triangulation used in this study was applied as follows:

1. Data triangulation

a. Time

b. Space

c. Person

1) interactive analysis

2) the collectivity

2. Theory triangulation

3. Methodological triangulation

a. with-in method

b. between method

Data were collected over a period of time using multiple sources. The data on attendance and achievement gathered by analysis of school records, pre- and post-test performance on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, and semi-structured interviews with school personnel were compared for accuracy and similarities. The scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Tests were examined for each student before and after participation in the support group to look for any differences after taking part in this intervention. In addition to the data

above, informal follow-up interviews were reported when teachers gave unsolicited comments regarding changes in students whom they knew were participants. A team member would report to the group that while in the teacher's room, for example, he/she was told something positive about certain students regarding attendance or their attitude toward school. Another teacher or, in some cases, the Principal would make comments about students' changes in behavior, or that a parent reported that the child no longer cut classes. Personal observations by the team members were also noted.

All of these comments were counted and assigned categories. The following categories were assigned to the various comments:

- achievement
- attendance
- attitude toward school
- cooperation
- motivation
- self-esteem
- opinion of teachers

To repeat, this study had sought to accomplish the following:

1. analyze the relationship between intervention and achievement in a high school setting through looking at students' records of performance (grades), participation in the support group and scores obtained on the Metropolitan Achievement Test;
2. demonstrate that support systems could be a factor in the prevention of absenteeism by counting the number of absences on the student's record before and after the intervention;

3. identify if and how students' attitudes changed as a result of intervention through teacher reports, counting the number of students making positive comments about school. The Student Rating Scale was also used to determine how much students' attitudes had changed; and finally,

4. evaluate the benefits and value of the support group procedures in a high school and middle school by making a comparison between the control group and the experimental group. A student evaluation was also give to students to evaluate the support group and help determine its benefits with a middle school or high school population..

Findings related to these four issues were analyzed using the data triangulation of time. This particular method of analysis included the average number of days and comparison of attendance rates pre- and post-intervention (See Table 8). Data triangulation with regard to person was also made for the analysis of population differences (e.g. race/ethnic groups, male and female groups). The findings are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The results of this study are described here first in relation to the questions asked of the total data, and then in a more detailed description of the consequences at each of the schools.

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of a specific form of intervention on the school performance and behavior of students and to determine if such intervention can influence achievement. The data were, therefore, checked for answers to these specific questions:

Was attendance at school affected by this procedure?

If so, how?

Were there any significant changes in grades or achievement after intervention?

If so, what were they?

The general conclusion reached from the answers to these questions was that when the high school students in this study were compared for pre- and post-measures of school behavior, this program of intervention was found to be beneficial. Table 6, below, gives an overview of the design variables and the results by percentage. Of the factors measured, attendance was the one most clearly affected by intervention, although reading scores also rose. The data used to provide answers to the major questions is discussed in greater detail below.

The differences in variables were measured by changes in grades, attendance records and performance on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Informal teacher reports and incident reports were also used in the analysis of data. These latter were useful in cross-validating results.

Table 6

Design Variables

Overview of Results by Percentage *

Variable (# students)	Support Group with positive outcome	Other intervention with positive outcome	Mixed intervention with positive outcome
Academic Achievement (100)	40%	25%	35%
Self-esteem (100)	50%	9.5%	40.5%
Attitude toward school (100)	40%	10%	50%
Cooperation (100)	40%	20%	40%
Attendance (100)	60%	20%	20%

* Percent of outcomes as reported by informal teacher reports for the total population (experimental and control groups).

"Other intervention" here means approaches other than the Support Group, e.g., after-school tutoring.

"Mixed intervention" here means a combination of the Support Group and other approaches, e.g., individual psychotherapy and after-school tutoring program.

While attendance and achievement were viewed as separate entities at the beginning of the study, it soon became clear that the two were interrelated and that it would be almost impossible to talk about one without talking about the other. One of the outcomes of the study consequently is the recognition of the correlation between attendance and achievement. Attendance can be a primary predictor of achievement and both were influenced by the intervention.

Achievement and attendance appeared to be dependent upon cultural influence and prior training. These variables could not be controlled. Perhaps differences in response to intervention may be explained in cultural terms.

Student ability level may have influenced the relative effectiveness of the outcome. High and low ability students evidenced greater gains in reading achievement following participation in the experimental support group. Students of medium ability gained more from the human relations experience, showing an increased tolerance for differences and an increase in taking responsibility for individual behavior. The participation of these latter students did not affect their achievement and attendance in any measurable manner while the study was in progress.

The Question of Attendance

Prior to the intervention the average number of days in a month that students in the support group attended was 15 days. After intervention, the average number of days attended per month for the support group improved by 6 days. One month after the intervention had ended, the number of days of attendance tapered off, reverting back to the pre-treatment level. Table 7 shows the pre- and post-intervention attendance change for the experimental group, Table 8 shows the attendance for the control group and Table 9 shows the differences in attendance between the experimental and the control group over the intervention period.

Differences in male and female attendance were immediately apparent upon content analysis of the data (see Tables 7 and 8). All females, who initially had fewer attendance problems than males prior to intervention, were found to have the same attendance rates after intervention. Pre-intervention attendance rates for females were 11% while post-intervention rates were also 11%. On the other hand, males showed a marked increase in attendance after intervention. Pre-intervention attendance rates for all males was 5%; post-intervention rates showed that the attendance of 20% of the males attending school on a regular basis had increased. An increase of 15% of the male population attending on a regular basis was demonstrated. No explanation was found for the difference between male and female attendance rate changes. Male and female differences within racial groups, discussed in the next section, also showed little change in female attendance rates.

Attendance Changes and Sex Differences Among Racial Groups

Experimental Group.

Black – Methodological triangulation with-in method revealed vast differences between male and female attendance rates for Black students. Males showed greater overall improvement. While the attendance rate of Black males was 10% prior to intervention, after participation in the support group this population showed a 40% attendance rate, an increase of 30%. Female Black students on the other hand showed only a 10% increase in attendance.

White –The same method of analysis was used to examine the white male and female students' attendance rates. White males showed no difference (0%) in pre- and post-attendance; white females showed a 10% increase.

Table 7

Attendance Change by Sex and Racial Group for Total
Experimental Population

Pre-Intervention									Post-Intervention								
%	Black		White		Hispanic		Other		Black		White		Hispanic		Other		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
100																	100
90																	90
80																	80
70																	70
60																	60
50																	50
40																	40
30																	30
20																	20
10																	10

<div>Table 8</div> <div>Attendance Change by Sex and Racial Group for Total Control Population</div>																	
Pre-Intervention									Post-Intervention								
%	Black		White		Hispanic		Other		Black		White		Hispanic		Other		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
100																	100
90																	90
80																	80
70																	70
60																	60
50																	50
40																	40
30																	30
20																	20
10																	10

Hispanic – Methodological triangulation with-in method was also applied in the analysis of differences between Hispanic male and female student attendance rates. As with Black males, Hispanic females showed a marked increase in attendance. Prior to the intervention, 40% of the Hispanic females attended school regularly. After the intervention, 60% of the Hispanic females were attending regularly, a 20% increase. Hispanic males had 10% attendance rate pre-intervention and a 20% attendance rate after intervention, an increase of only 10%.

Other – This group included Asian students, bi-racial students and others whose racial background was unsubstantiated. The data for this group was similarly analysed, and showed no changes in attendance rates for males or females in the group. However 90% of this population was in regular attendance pre-intervention and this rate continued post-intervention. This may reflect support systems these students already had in place.

Control Group.

Black – Using methodological triangulation with-in method, no change of attendance rates post-intervention showed for either Black males or females in the control group. Black males of this group had a 60% attendance rate before and after intervention. Black females of this group had an 80% attendance rate before and after intervention.

White – The control group's white females showed no change in attendance. However the males in this group, who had had a pre-intervention attendance rate of 80%, showed an attendance drop post-intervention to 70%.

Hispanic – No change in attendance rates showed for the Hispanic students in the control group. Hispanic males had a 60% attendance before and after, and Hispanic females had a 70% attendance rate before and after intervention.

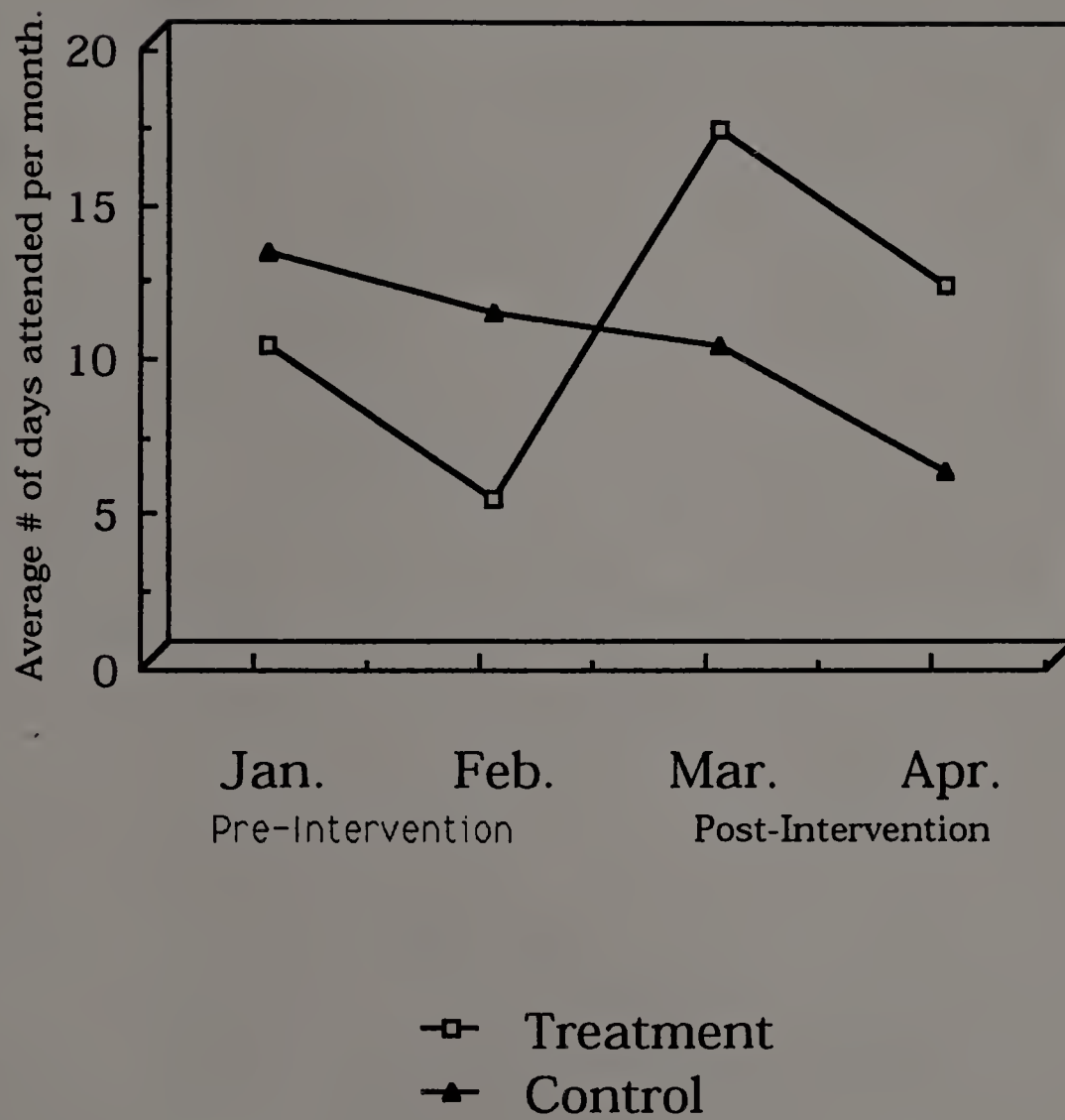
Other – For this population of the control group, both male and female attendance rates were 90% pre-and post-intervention. Since they were already regular attendants, an intervention designed for 'delinquent' students was probably not applicable to them.

The average number of days per month that students in the control group attended was 15 days before the study began. After the study the average number of days per month dropped to about 10. While findings suggest that when an intervention is used some students come to school more often, one possible explanation of the drop in attendance for the control group is that their discussion group may have been perceived as an interruption of the normal routine. These students already knew the rules and followed them. If an intervention was introduced, it was a break in the normal rules with which students were familiar, thus causing a disturbance in their program. Things were different and it is possible that students in the control group now felt insecure. This finding emphasizes the danger of introducing an intervention where it is not needed.

Table 9

Pre- and Post-Intervention Attendance

Control and Experimental Groups



There were 22 school days in January, 15 in February, 21 in March and 17 in April.

Pre- and post-intervention differences in attendance reveal that the greatest difference was found for the treatment group (See Table 9). At the start of the group the average number of days that students of this group attended school were 10. While there was a brief drop in the number of days attended during February, this trend did not continue. A sharp increase in attendance was noted once intervention was well underway. The examination of pre- and post-intervention results suggest a significant difference in attendance with an increase of three days.

While pre-intervention rates of attendance showed an average number of 10 days, post-intervention rates showed an average number of 13 days. Although the difference in pre- and post-intervention rates was small, it is still significant in that it showed a positive outcome. The control group on the other hand showed a steady decline in attendance rates once intervention was in place. At the outset, during the pre-intervention stage the average attendance for control group students was 13 days. The post-intervention rate was 5 days. So while attendance increased by an average of 3 days for the treatment group, attendance decreased by 8 days for the control group.

Achievement Question

Changes in reading achievement for the experimental group were found by comparing Metropolitan Achievement Test scores. Prior to intervention, the average achievement score was at the 15th percentile. After intervention the average score in achievement was at the 20th percentile, an increase of 5 percentile points. These changes will be discussed in relation to Tables 18 to 20.

Grades however were affected to a lesser degree than anticipated with only minimal gains made in grades.

The control group, both before and after the intervention, had an average achievement score in the 40th percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test,

showing that no significant change in achievement had occurred for this group at any of the three schools. The only change occurred in grades. Pre-intervention grades were 2.0 for this group. After intervention the average grade went up to 3.0.

Findings by School

To provide a greater understanding of the particular intervention examined in this study, each school's experience will be described and analyzed separately, followed by a summary analysis.

Jamaica Plain High. The experimental group at this school consisted of a heterogeneous grouping of students ranging in ages from 12 to 15. Each participant had an opportunity to participate actively. An intervention module was used which took place in a regular classroom during the regularly scheduled school day.

Participants were informed that they were required to have permission slips signed by parents or guardians and returned by the second group meeting. A general orientation was given by the group leader outlining the expectations and the confidentiality of the group. The scheduling and integration of the support group with other school activities were explained by the co-leader, a teacher.

The process of having a leader and co-leader worked well for several reasons:

1. In case of illness one could take over for the other.
2. The group did not have to be cancelled if one or the other could not attend, so continuity was maintained.
3. It provided a sense of direction for participants.

The control group was made up of students ranging in age from 13 to 15. Each student was allowed to participate freely; no student was forced to take

part in the group process. There was no assigned seating plan. Students were allowed to take a different seat each time they came or keep the same seat.

Like the students in the experimental group, control group participants were informed that they were required to take permission slips home and return them signed by parents or guardians. An orientation was given by the team leader outlining the curriculum plan and the scheduling, while integration of the group with other school activities was explained by the co-leader, who was a teacher.

In the experimental group, verbal participation, one indicator of involvement, increased with each session. At first all the student members of this group were somewhat distant and suspicious; however after the first few sessions "high participators" and "low participators" had developed. Some students became high participators to the extent of helping the leader and co-leader. Others remained low participators, staying quiet. It was not found possible to quantify the high and low participation because of the level of activity.

There were also shifts in the tone of participation. For the most part students were compassionate toward one another. Those who chose to remain silent were treated well. They were gently coaxed into participating by their peers. If someone did not wish to be active, that person was generally left alone. Their silence was treated as a "do not disturb" sign.

Influence played a strong role on student participation. When some spoke others tended to listen and follow. Shifts in influence were controlled at times by the group leader. This control of the shift of influence was usually necessary only when there was a struggle for leadership among a few students. On the whole, the style of influence was quite positive, enlisting cooperation. Those students who expressed their feelings openly were not evaluated or judged.

Only one student violated the trust of the group by telling someone outside of the group what happened in the group. Fortunately the person she told was a teacher who respected the confidentiality of the group and did not let the information go any further. Since the group was about to end when this event occurred, the student was allowed to remain in the group for the last session.

An analysis of the study comparing this group with the other two groups revealed that the degree of cohesiveness was greatest in this group. Students communicated more openly. The formation of an inner group was discouraged by other students when some students who knew one another attempted to close themselves off from the rest of the group. This situation only took place during the first session.

Most of the students in the 'inner group' lived in the same neighborhood. Once they became involved in the group process they appeared to find other bonds of commonality. Societal barriers became invisible. Students showed a disregard for grouping by color/race and academic standing; it appeared as though they forgot old ways for a while and adapted to new rules created by the support group.

At Jamaica Plain High the teacher who worked with this support group was well invested in the group process and worked collectively with the group leader, as well as with students.

Boston Prep. Students in this group bonded more than participants in the other two groups. Initially it started out the same as the other groups. Communications were good, with participants listening not only to the team leader but also to other participants. Members of the group respected one another and conformed readily to rules of the group; yet at the same time each maintained a sense of self.

Some students literally started out on the outskirts of the group, as noted in the author's observations. At first they sat on the outer perimeter of the circle, but by the third session these students had become active members of the group. Although no discussion of their position occurred, the students gradually moved themselves into the group.

An extra session was planned due to the amount of enthusiasm for the group but due to time constraints, the extra session never took place. This turn of events made for a better study because it ensured that each group had the same number of sessions. This group ended on an upbeat note with teachers and the building administrator requesting a similar group for the following school year.

Roosevelt Middle School. This group showed a comparatively moderate motivation. Some staff felt threatened and participated in a passive-aggressive manner. The staff person (a teacher) who had agreed to co-lead the group never showed up. A reminder notice was sent to this person and a personal inquiry as to whether or not there were any problems. The teacher denied any problems or conflicts. When she did not show up for the second group meeting another staff person who just happened to attend the group was given her position as co-leader.

At first students were somewhat apprehensive. This attitude was expressed by resisting participation. Others were curious and showed an interest in participation. Those who did participate fully were able to benefit from the experience (i.e. feeling closer, changing learning expectations, etc), in that the more participants met and saw one another the more accustomed they became to meeting. At one point (the 3rd or 4th session), students reminded the group leader that the group needed to finish something that had not been finished the previous week. By the end of the last group meeting these students showed

greater interest in the group by participating with more enthusiasm than that previously shown. They also showed disappointment that the group would end. Two students stated, "We should do this again."

Further Findings

Attendance did fall off around the seventh week; this may have been a result of inclement weather common to the New England area. Records show that during the winter months attendance rates normally go down and tardiness goes up. (Superintendent's Report to the School Committee 1964-1976). When compared with the overall attendance rate of the Boston Public School population, the drop-off is in keeping with current trends.

Change in motivation showed about the sixth week, after attendance, attitude and opinion of teachers had changed. Change in student motivation was reported by teachers and other staff on an informal basis. Teachers reported that students participated more in classroom activities. Students who had previously shown an ambivalent attitude about classwork increased their classroom participation.

Prior to intervention, these students had showed little interest in the proposed intervention. By the sixth week they were asking how they could refer students to the group. In other words, attendance changed first, and was then followed by other changes.

As anticipated, the more complex the behavior, the more time was needed for intervention before any change could be observed. Self-esteem, for example, based upon informal teachers' reports and direct observation, showed no change until the eighth week. Changes in achievement as demonstrated by results of the Metropolitan Achievement Test were not apparent until the intervention had been well established. Although it is impossible to state the exact time that changes in achievement took place it is possible to state that other changes in

achievement were noted after some intervention. These changes included the return of homework, finishing assignments and volunteering in class.

For students in the Control Group there were no changes noted during the ten week span.

Tables 10 through 15, which follow this page, display the data recorded on change or lack of change in both groups at the three schools. Tables 16 and 17 report evaluations of change in achievement and in other measurable behaviors of both the experimental and the control groups as attested to by observers, teachers, staff and other students. The information in Tables 18, 19 and 20 records the improvement, lack of change, or decline of reading skill as measured by the tests described earlier . It is apparent that the reading scores were improved for most of the experimental group students.

Table 10
Indicators of Change for Experimental Group
Jamaica Plain High

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	—	0	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	0	0	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	0	0	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	0	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	+	+	+	+	+	0
<u>WEEK 9</u>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<u>WEEK 10</u>	+	+	+	+	+	+

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

Table 11
Indicators of Change for Control Group
Jamaica Plain High

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 9</u>	—	0	0	0	0	—
<u>WEEK 10</u>	—	0	0	0	0	—

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

Table 12
 Indicators of Change for Experimental Group
 Boston Prep

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	+	+	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	+	+	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	+	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	+	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<u>WEEK 9</u>	—	+	+	+	+	+
<u>WEEK 10</u>	—	+	+	+	+	+

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

TABLE 13
Indicators of Change for Control Group
Boston Prep

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 9</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 10</u>	—	0	0	0	0	+

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

Table 14
Indicators of Change for Experimental Group
Roosevelt

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	0	+	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	0	+	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	0	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	+	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	+	+	+	+	+	0
<u>WEEK 9</u>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<u>WEEK 10</u>	—	+	+	+	+	+

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

Table15
Indicators of Change for Control Group
Roosevelt

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 9</u>	—	0	0	0	0	—
<u>WEEK 10</u>	—	0	0	0	0	+

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

Although the aggregate picture yields a more significant finding than individual school differences, it becomes apparent that each school experienced differences at varying rates. Both the control and the experimental groups at all schools showed a decline in attendance during the last week of the group. For the experimental groups, it is thought that since students knew ahead of time when the group would end, they chose not to attend. From a psychological perspective, this behavior might suggest a wish that the group would not end, that is, a denial that the support group was over; students may have thought, "If I do not attend the last session, it's not over."

Students of high ability and low ability were almost indistinguishable when examining degrees of progress across all variables. High ability students stayed the same in reading achievement while low ability students made strides in reading achievement. Low ability students stayed the same in their grades while high ability students made a slight improvement. Specific data on this phenomenon is not readily attainable due to the design of the study which did not focus on high and low ability students but rather on a random sampling. When looking at achievement, the results reflect the entire population of the schools.

The members of the control group, on the other hand, regardless of ability, showed absolutely no change except in attendance, a negative change as attendance decreased. A slight change in grades contributed to achievement as a whole, just barely moving it up by one grade point for the control group, from 2.0, a 'C', to 3.0, a 'B'. With the exception of this slight change in grades, the intervention selected had an opposite, partially negative, effect on students in the control group.

this group. It is interesting to note, however, that the rate of change for the control groups and the experimental groups at each school occurred at the same rate.

Only one positive change in overall achievement occurred for the control group during the 10th week of intervention . The change came about as the result of a change in grades, not as a result of improvement on the achievement test or any other measure. Prior to that, during week 9, achievement went down, showing a negative change. Week 9, almost at the end of the program, was the first time that any change, positive or negative, took place. Attendance showed a negative change for the control group during the 9th and 10th weeks.

Attendance, attitude toward school, motivation, self-esteem, opinion of teachers and overall achievement changes occurred about the same week in most cases, as can be seen in Tables 10 through 15. More specific changes will be discussed below by school.

Jamaica Plain High. Tables 10 and 11 display the changes for students at Jamaica Plain High. In the experimental group at this school positive changes in attendance were not as pronounced as those the other two schools. Not only did it take longer for any change to take place in any of the six areas measured, but when change did take place it was not all positive. Attendance went down. At the same time, students' opinions of teachers improved. These first changes took place during the 4th week of intervention. The attendance decline, contrary to expectations, lasted until the 8th week when a positive change showed. Attendance increased during the 8th and 9th weeks, but during the 10th week declined again.

Attendance rates for the control group showed a more consistent pattern. There was no change until the 4th week when attendance decreased. It also decreased in the 6th week, the 9th week and the 10th week. For the experimental

group most positive changes took place during the 7th and 8th weeks with the exception of students' opinions of teachers and their overall achievement.

Students in the experimental group changed their opinions of teachers positively after four weeks had passed. Overall achievement changes for this group took longer, manifesting themselves in the 9th week. The control group showed no change in the opinion of teachers, and their overall achievement decreased during the last two weeks (9th and 10th) of their program.

Boston Prep. Tables 12 and 13 display the changes for students at Boston Prep. The experimental group students at Boston Prep showed an immediate response to intervention in the areas of attendance, attitude toward school and their opinion of teachers. In all these areas, students showed positive change. At the same time, the control group there showed a negative change in attendance, and no change in attitude toward school or in their opinion of teachers.

Other changes for the experimental group did not occur until the 6th week or later. All the positive changes remained constant except attendance. During the last two weeks of intervention a negative change occurred in attendance. The control group also showed a negative change in attendance during the last two weeks.

Change in self-esteem did not occur until the 8th week. Improvement in motivation appeared to be a prerequisite for this group before they could show a positive change in self-esteem. Overall achievement also improved during the 8th week of intervention. The control group on the other hand showed a negative change during the 9th and 10th weeks of intervention as their achievement actually went down.

Roosevelt Middle School. Tables 14 and 15 display the changes for students at Roosevelt. While attendance did not improve as rapidly at Roosevelt as it had for the Boston Prep experimental group, it did show positive

improvement. At the 7th week of intervention, students in Roosevelt's experimental group showed a positive change in attendance. Gains in this area, however, were lost during the 10th week when attendance rates fell off.

The control group at this school showed change in attendance early on, but the change was negative. Attendance went down after four weeks of intervention, and dropped down again after six weeks. During weeks 7 and 8, attendance remained steady. Towards the end of the intervention, during weeks 9 and 10, attendance decreased again.

For the experimental group, students' opinion of teachers and attitude toward school occurred early in the intervention when compared with other changes. Their opinion of teachers showed positive change in week 3 and remained constant to the end of the intervention. A similar finding was shown in students' attitudes toward school, even though the change did not occur until the following week (Week 4). No change surfaced in these areas for the control group.

Positive changes were seen in motivation in the 6th week for students in the experimental group. Like students at the other two schools, they showed no change in self-esteem until the 8th week of the intervention. Absolutely no change was seen in motivation for the control group. Overall achievement for the control group showed a negative change. During Weeks 9 and 10, achievement actually went down for students in the control group at the Roosevelt School.

In overview, analysis of the results of Tables 10 through 15 suggests that students at Jamaica Plain High experienced a more unstable rate of attendance than students at the other two schools in the study. Attendance at that school, decreased, then increased, and then during the last week of intervention, decreased again (See Table 10). At Boston Prep and the Roosevelt the rate of

In overview, analysis of the results of Tables 10 through 15 suggests that students at Jamaica Plain High experienced a more unstable rate of attendance than students at the other two schools in the study. Attendance at that school, decreased, then increased, and then during the last week of intervention, decreased again (See Table 10). At Boston Prep and the Roosevelt the rate of attendance was relatively constant once it had increased. As mentioned earlier, all three schools experienced a decrease in attendance towards the end of the intervention.

There were mixed changes for the control groups, but all changes tended to be negative. Students who did not need intervention showed no change or did worse in the six areas measured. On the other hand, students who were at risk were able to benefit in some way from the intervention.

Looking at each of the schools individually, one does not see a big change in the areas measured (attendance, attitude toward school, motivation, self-esteem, opinion of teachers and overall achievement). For statistical purposes it is more useful to look at the three schools together when considering the outcomes.

Table 16

Indicators of Change for Total Experimental Group

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	0	+	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	+	+	0	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	+	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	0	+	+	0	+	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	0	+	+	+	+	+
<u>WEEK 9</u>	0	+	+	+	+	+
<u>WEEK 10</u>	0	+	+	+	+	+

Code: 0 = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

Table 17

Indicators of Change for Total Control Group Students

	Atten- dance	Attitude to school	Motiva- tion	Self- esteem	Opinion of teachers	Overall Achievement
<u>WEEK 1</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 2</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 3</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 4</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 5</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 6</u>	—	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 7</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 8</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>WEEK 9</u>	—	0	0	0	0	—
<u>WEEK 10</u>	0	0	0	0	0	+

Code: — = no change; + = positive change; — = negative change.

In this particular study, as Tables 16 and 17 show, differences in achievement test results and other measurable data illustrated that even under the most favorable conditions an expected outcome may not occur. As an example, it had been supposed that all groups would show some improvement at all three schools on all levels; however, white males and Asians of both sexes showed no change in attendance. Attendance for these groups appeared least affected by intervention. Black males and Hispanic females showed the greatest change in attendance (see Tables 18 through 20).

As Table 16 illustrates, some positive change was almost immediate for the students receiving the experimental intervention. In examining the pattern of change, the first observable change was noted in the 'opinion of teachers'. Students had changed their opinions of teachers. The next factor of change was in students' general attitude toward school which became more positive. Increased attendance rates surfaced next, although the improved attendance rate did not remain constant. In contrast, once achievement changed it did remain steady throughout the study. There were no relapses in achievement.

Self-esteem also showed a permanent, positive change through the course of the study. Although change in self-esteem was not seen until the eighth week, it is thought to be a significant factor that was influenced by other indicators of change and in turn influenced still other indicators. There were no indicators of change for the control group.

There was, as noted above, a noticeable change regarding various ethnic groups as well as male/female contrast. This change took place for Black males and Hispanic females who showed the greatest degree of improvement through the intervention of the support group. Those who were least affected were Asians and whites, both male and female. Asians and whites showed no improvement which is possibly due to the fact that the system was already

working for them. Another hypothesis is that these students were performing adequately already; therefore any change did not affect (even to improve) their good records.

The measures of pre- and post-intervention on attendance for both the experimental and the control groups was the most significant change shown in this study. Attendance grew at the fastest rate and though it did not remain constant it is thought to be one of the most significant outcomes of the study.

Achievement and attendance appear to be dependent upon cultural influence and prior training. These variables could not be controlled. Perhaps differences in response to intervention may be explained in cultural terms. it is unclear why such a difference was found.

Table 18
Reading Achievement Change — Jamaica Plain Experimental Group

RACE	SEX	STUDENT	AGE	*SCORE	*SCORE
				Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
W	M	0190	15	15	20 (+)
W	M	0200	15	10	15 (+)
H	F	0210	15	15	20 (+)
W	M	0220	15	20	25 (+)
B	F	0230	15	15	20 (+)
H	F	0240	16	20	25 (+)
H	M	0250	16	15	20 (+)
B	M	0260	16	05	15 (+)
H	F	0270	16	15	20 (+)
W	F	0280	16	10	15 (+)
H	M	0290	16	15	20 (+)
B	M	0300	17	15	25 (+)
B	F	0310	18	15	20 (+)
B	M	0320	18	10	20 (+)
B	M	0330	18	15	20 (+)
B	M	0340	19	15	20 (+)
				Average 15	Average 20

* Scores are reported by percentile.

Table 19
Reading Achievement Change — Boston Prep Experimental Group

RACE	SEX	STUDENT	AGE	SCORE*	SCORE*
				Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
W	M	0010	15	15	20 (+)
W	F	0020	15	10	15 (+)
W	M	0030	15	15	15 (0)
W	F	0040	15	20	25 (+)
B	F	0050	16	15	20 (+)
B	F	0060	16	10	15 (+)
B	F	0070	16	15	20 (+)
W	M	0080	17	15	15 (0)
W	M	0090	17	20	20 (0)
W	M	0100	17	10	10 (0)
O	M	0110	17	15	15 (0)
B	M	0120	17	05	10 (+)
B	M	0130	18	10	15 (+)
B	F	0140	18	15	20 (+)
B	F	0150	18	10	15 (+)
W	M	0160	19	15	10 (–)
B	M	0170	19	15	20 (+)
B	M	0180	20	15	20 (+)
* Scores are reported by percentile.				Average 16	Average 17.5

Table 20
Reading Achievement Change — Roosevelt Experimental Group

RACE	SEX	STUDENT	AGE	SCORE*	
				Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
H	M	0350	12	10	20 (+)
B	M	0360	12	05	25 (+)
H	M	0370	13	15	25 (+)
H	M	0380	13	20	30 (+)
B	M	0390	13	15	25 (+)
W	M	0400	13	20	20 (0)
W	M	0410	13	15	15 (0)
O	M	0420	13	20	15 (-)
B	F	0430	13	05	15 (+)
O	F	0440	13	15	15 (0)
B	M	0450	13	10	20 (+)
H	M	0460	14	15	20 (+)
B	M	0470	14	05	10 (+)
W	M	0480	14	15	20 (+)
B	F	0490	14	15	20 (+)
B	M	0500	15	10	20 (+)
				Average 15	Average 20

* Scores are reported by percentile.

Table 21
Reading Achievement — Jamaica Plain Control Group

RACE	SEX	STUDENT	AGE	SCORE*	
				Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
W	M	0201	15	40	40 (0)
W	F	0202	15	60	60 (0)
W	M	0203	15	75	75 (0)
B	M	0204	15	40	40 (0)
B	M	0205	15	50	50 (0)
B	F	0206	16	50	50 (0)
B	F	0207	16	40	40 (0)
B	F	0209	17	40	40 (0)
B	F	0211	17	40	40 (0)
H	F	0212	17	50	50 (0)
H	M	0213	18	30	30 (0)
H	F	0214	18	40	40 (0)
H	M	0215	19	40	40 (0)
H	M	0216	17	40	40 (0)
O	M	0217	17	70	70 (0)

* Scores are reported by percentile.

Table 22
Reading Achievement — Boston PrepControl Group

RACE	SEX	STUDENT	AGE	SCORE*	SCORE*
				Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
B	M	0031	18	40	40 (0)
B	M	0032	18	50	50 (0)
W	M	0033	18	60	60 (0)
B	M	0034	19	40	40 (0)
W	M	0035	17	30	30 (0)
W	M	0036	16	40	40 (0)
W	M	0037	16	60	60 (0)
B	M	0038	15	40	40 (0)
B	F	0039	15	40	40 (0)
W	F	0041	16	30	30 (0)
B	F	0042	17	20	20 (0)
W	F	0043	16	40	40 (0)
W	M	0044	16	40	40 (0)
B	F	0045	16	40	40 (0)
O	M	0046	16	10	10 (0)

* Scores are reported by percentile.

Table 23
Reading Achievement — Roosevelt Control Group

RACE	SEX	STUDENT	AGE	SCORE*	
				Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
B	M	0361	13	30	30 (0)
B	M	0362	13	40	40 (0)
H	M	0363	13	40	40 (0)
H	M	0364	13	30	30 (0)
B	M	0365	12	40	40 (0)
B	M	0366	13	40	40 (0)
B	F	0367	14	40	40 (0)
B	F	0368	14	40	40 (0)
H	F	0369	14	60	60 (0)
B	M	0371	15	40	40 (0)
W	M	0372	12	75	75 (0)
W	F	0373	13	60	60 (0)
W	M	0374	13	40	40 (0)
W	M	0375	14	40	40 (0)
O	F	0376	13	75	75 (0)
O	M	0377	13	75	75 (0)

* Scores are reported by percentile.

The experimental groups whose pre- and post-intervention reading scores are shown in Tables 18, 19, and 20 shared a history of being educated in the Boston Public Schools. They differed, of course, on several personal characteristic variables such as age, race, economic status, being parents or not. It should be noted that a decrease in observable behavior problems, beyond the major problem of poor attendance, was reported from all three schools and that the participating staff and principals, in an unplanned dividend, shared the experience of exchanging dialogue and working on this specific program to change student behavior, overall a positive experience.

In reading achievement, Black males between the ages of 12 and 15 showed a greater improvement as a result of intervention. One student improved his reading achievement by 20 percentile points, moving from the 5th to the 25th percentile. This finding does not mean to suggest that older Black males did not benefit at all. On the contrary, older Black males in the experimental group also showed improvement in reading achievement based on the Metropolitan Achievement Test scores.

The average score for the total experimental group at Jamaica Plain High was in the 15th percentile prior to intervention. After intervention the average score was in the 20th percentile. Thirteen students improved their achievement by 5 percentage points. Three Black males improved their achievement by 10 percentage points. At this school Hispanic males and white males also improved in achievement.

At Boston Prep the average pre-intervention achievement score was in the 16th percentile. After intervention the average score was between the 15th and 20th percentiles. Unlike Jamaica Plain High, Boston Prep had one student whose reading achievement score dropped after intervention. One white male at Boston Prep scored 5 percentile points lower than his pre-intervention score. One

student in the "Other" category, similar to most of the white males, showed no improvement in post-intervention reading achievement. Pre- and post-intervention percentile scores remained the same for these two groups of males, white and 'Other'.

Students at Roosevelt scored on the average in the 15th percentile before intervention. After intervention the average score was in the 20th percentile. As had been manifested at the other schools, ethnic and cultural differences were evident in student performance in reading achievement at the Roosevelt. There were four students who improved by 5 percentile points and seven who improved by 10 percentile points. Of the students who improved, eleven were either Black or Hispanic. All but two of the students showing improvement were males.

Black males at Roosevelt showed the greatest improvement, with one showing a remarkable gain of 20 percentage points. White males showed no change in pre-and post-test performance. The scores of one male in the 'Other' category actually dropped.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In summary, an intervention which served both as a support group for students and a structure that provided responsive respectful attention to their frustrations and problems produced measurable change in the school lives of the middle school and high school students in this study. Attendance rates went up. Reading achievement improved for a majority of the group and more positive attitudes about schooling were evidenced. Once they became involved in the group process they appeared to find other bonds of commonality. Societal barriers became invisible. Students showed a disregard for grouping by color/race and academic standing; it appeared as though they forgot old ways for a while and adapted to new rules created by the support group.

This chapter will comment on these findings, offer suggestions for implementing similar interventions and, finally, make some recommendations for future research.

In order to learn, students must have a positive attitude about the process. Such an attitude results from defining a goal and then working towards the achievement of that goal. Life goals often cannot be defined in the classroom, but can be articulated in a support group. Working towards a goal, becoming a better-prepared student, improving school attendance – these mutually reinforcing changes resulted from the intervention strategy described in this study.

Asians and whites showed no improvement which may be explained as due to the fact that the system was already working for them. Another hypothesis is that these students were performing adequately already; therefore change did not affect, even towards improvement, their good records.

The measures of pre- and post-intervention on attendance for both the experimental and the control groups was the most significant change shown in this student. Attendance grew at the fastest rate and though it did not remain constant it is thought to be one of the most significant outcomes of the study.

Achievement and attendance appear to be dependent upon cultural influence and prior training. These variables could not be controlled. Perhaps differences in response to intervention may be explained in cultural terms. It is unclear why such a difference was found.

The quality of student performance, the results suggest, improves when students know they have a mechanism through which they can vent frustration as well as a way to work through some of the aspects of adolescent development which often surfaces as behavior problems in school. There can be little doubt of the importance to a student of knowing that a system of support is immediately available to him or her. It seems most probable that a structured support group may also be useful as a preventive measure, preventing unnoticed dropouts, perhaps even preventing the act of dropping out itself by maintaining the support group to ventilate problems, to encourage perseverance in the pursuit of life goals and to demonstrate respect for the students' needs.

Administrators often do not have the necessary resources to meet even the fundamental needs of the population they serve. Before initiating a new school program, there must be some proof of its effectiveness. One outcome of this study was just such a demonstration of effectiveness for specific intervention strategies. This demonstration also had a further benefit as the staff who

participated in the three schools became more receptive to efforts on behalf of other intervention programs. The support group intervention technique was also reported as notably helpful to the staff in these schools in understanding and meeting the needs of students. The inclusion of this type of service, once considered only appropriate when 'outside of school,' should be increasingly perceived as a necessary part of the regular curriculum.

The significance here is that a viable, workable and inexpensive intervention strategy is available, countering the argument that programs to enhance student achievement are costly and time-consuming. In addition, this study demonstrates that progressive programs contributing to school improvement can co-exist with traditional programs without undercutting the traditional program. The implementation of these experimental strategies caused little disruption in the regular school routine. Although no formal measures of fiscal feasibility were made, there is a tremendous savings indicated for schools, since expensive consultants are not needed. Payments for costly treatment programs could be saved by using small interpersonal groups and available staff.

A support group shifts responsibility to all the parties involved rather than placing the burden of alleviating problems on one individual or one institution. Using a structured support group creates a comprehensive unit of treatment where the student, the school and the family can have input, increasing the likelihood of an environment of mutual support for the goals and needs of the participants.

Implications

This study suggests implications for both schools and researchers. Variables have been documented and explored which may well affect programs of intervention in middle and high school settings. Using a support group with this population proved beneficial, producing positive changes in achievement.

Although no formal measure of fiscal feasibility was made, a tremendous savings is indicated for schools, since expensive consultants are not needed to implement this form of intervention.

If we are to succeed in eliminating some of the problems facing contemporary students in urban public schools, we need to pool resources. These problems are multi-faceted and call for responses touching upon the range of needs produced by the problems. The complex behaviors which are associated with school failure seem to be best altered by a gradual process over an extended period of time. Intervention strategies, both as preventive measures and as treatment programs, should be given a high priority in our time and energy.

Combining an intervention such as the support group described here with other methods may prove to be the treatment of choice for schools with limited resources. Further research is certainly needed on this topic. While this study cannot demonstrate the utility of this particular intervention in all settings, the evidence of the study shows that the learning process seems to be positively affected by it. Viewed in the perspective of Maslow's theory on self-esteem needs, in which fulfillment of the need reduces the strength of the need, students whose behavior showed positive change had had their needs met.

Implementing Similar Interventions

The first, and perhaps self-evident, requirement is for clear communication among all those involved, and also good communication of information about the project to everyone else in the school. Widespread clear communication is important to reduce suspicion and enhance cooperation. Further, sharing ideas and information may lead to a pooling of resources yielding results that benefit all parties.

A support group should be integrated into the regular structure of responsibility within a school. All school personnel, for instance, should know which member of the administration has the ultimate responsibility for the staff, both internal and external members of the group. Problems with paper work, conflicts with room accessibility and other logistics should be referred to that person. It was clear in this project that success was dependent upon having the group viewed as integral to the school's structure.

Strategies for change also depend for their success upon the good will and cooperation of the staff in a given school. The results of this study suggest that teachers and other staff must be willing to accommodate the selected program of intervention and that its structure and planning are as important as the actual intervention itself.

It should be noted that the process of having both a leader and co-leader worked well; the group did not have to be canceled if one or the other could not attend, so continuity could be maintained and the co-leaders also felt they had support.

Due to limitations in availability of staff and time, parent involvement was not an extensive part of this study; however, it is an aspect of intervention that should be included. Parents can be a valuable resource in the interventive process. Not only do they have a vested interest in intervention, they can serve as advocates for intervention. Although parents had an opportunity to participate in this intervention, they did not, which suggests that they may need special encouragement to participate in programs that are new to the school.

Recommendations for Further Research

A support group may prove far more effective if combined with another intervention. The degree of effectiveness of a combination of interventions should be addressed in another study. Perhaps the absence of change in the

attendance behavior of certain ethnic groups found in this study could be explained in further research.

The optimal duration of a support group intervention and the possibility of greater change from a longer session would also be a most useful topic for further research.

The study could profitably be repeated with a larger sample and different geographical areas. Such a study should have a research design that would investigate the type of problems defined here: the problems of inclusion, parental involvement and incorporation into an already existing curriculum.

It may also be advantageous to look for similarities rather than differences in ethnic and racial responses to the intervention of a support group. Similarities in response as well as similarities in background brought to the intervention can make a difference in the quality of the experience.

That intervention strategies can help prevent as well as ameliorate behavior problems in middle and high school adolescents should become part of the knowledge of all teachers. The potential for genuine change in our schools which is strongly suggested by this study of structured intervention should not be overlooked.

An in-depth analysis of findings reveals that age and grade have some correlation to degree of success with intervention. Students who were younger in the grade that corresponded to their chronological age made greater strides than older students, who may have been kept back, finding themselves with younger classmates. These results suggest that when students are with their age peers they tend to show achievement improved by several points over a short period of time. Such a finding does not negate the fact that older students given even a minimal intervention still respond, but it does suggest that if intervention occurs early enough, it will yield greater results.

Not only do students benefit from intervention of this kind but staff members can benefit as well. When teachers witness the progress of students, they may be motivated to become more creative in their curriculum planning. In keeping with Maslow's theory of motivation, the particular intervention used in this study – a support group – could serve to make people feel better about themselves thus improving self-esteem which would theoretically lead to the merging of cognitive needs (Maslow, 1954). While there is no hard data to support this theory, there is evidence here of a domino effect that would offer support. Students' opinions of teachers changed in a positive way as shown in Table 16.

The relationship between attendance and achievement was quite clear. Although it was previously thought that the two were related, it became evident that one was dependent upon the other. These results strongly suggest that when students attend school regularly, improvement in achievement can occur. Others have documented this association (BPS, 1988; Carnegie Report, 1986). This is not to say that students automatically achieve because they attend school; too many other variables affect school progress. More precisely, attendance is essential to achievement, but not by itself sufficient for progress, and this study supports that finding.

The data presented is impressive if one considers the attendance changes for Black and Hispanic males over such a short period of time. Most of this population derived some benefit from the intervention. This study indicates that one effective way of improving attendance for high school students is through some sort of intervention early on, such as a support group. The implication is that, given a longer period of time, a support group such as the one in this study could act as a clear model for future programs of intervention involving students, parents and teachers together.

To summarize, the intervention presented here is different from any others that have been found in the literature. Two models, the educational model and the human service model, were used together to serve academic goals. The study dealt with intervention strategies and support systems in urban public schools, focussed directly on the incorporation of intervention strategies into the education structure.

The theoretical construct from which the support group intervention was developed rested on the work of Perry and Maslow: Perry's perception of using approaches that create a positive climate and provide support for students when they are insecure, and Maslow's discussion of the basis of motivation and how it affects theoretical cognitive or aesthetic needs.

The resulting significant changes indicate that this intervention made a major difference in the way adolescents perceived school and themselves. A surprising element was that even students not expected to benefit from this intervention not only responded but improved in several areas over a short time period. Substantial gains in reading achievement occurred in 12 weeks for Black males who had not responded to earlier, more traditional, approaches.

The results of this study suggest also that, for adolescents, the earlier the intervention in attendance and achievement, the greater the gain. Age is shown to be a factor in the success of the intervention. Further, the study confirms the theoretical position that students do better when learning is shared in a supportive environment, regardless of race, sex or socio-economic class.

This study of intervention strategies and student achievement in three urban schools is an important addition to the literature, because it applied Perry and Maslow's theories to contemporary student problems and produced a successful outcome. While service agencies have been in the schools for some time, and appropriate staff have also been in place, the approach described here

had not been tried. The use of resources already in place, drawing no additional costs and therefore not taxing an already over-burdened system, was a novel and yet practical idea. New creative ways to meet the needs of a system constitute a welcome addition to planning and overall delivery of services to clients. The approach described in this study enabled the school system's use of its current resources to deliver helpful and needed services to the students who were its clients.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this study is that an intervention of such short duration still managed to be effective. The pre- and post- measures of school behavior showed the influence on students' school performance. Not only was attendance improved, but also reading achievement. The results suggest strongly that any intervention of this type, however minimal, could be effective with the populations that need it most. Not only was progress made in school performance, but racial and ethnic barriers were overcome within the support group. Suspicion, motivational trends and stereotypical expectations were among these fallen barriers to working together.

Another suggestion evident in this study's results is that students thought of as "at-risk" may well have a reachable potential for achievement and success. The hypothesis becomes: the more success the student has, the greater his or her chances for positive self-esteem, and therefore the greater the motivation for school attendance, without which no learning will occur.

While it is unclear to what extent the group leader's race affected the support group, it is clear that race and culture are an important part of the learning process and that role models of the same racial backgrounds as that of students can be a crucial factor in education.

If self-esteem, opinion of teachers and, perhaps more importantly, achievement can be improved for a population with whom no other practice has

been effective, this is a technique that should have serious consideration. When both students and teachers have an alternative to traditional teaching strategies, the findings suggest, they tend to be motivated and more productive. The implications for further study clearly include a focus on more intensive involvement of teachers, as well as the involvement of parents and a follow-up of the involved students.

As “a causal model of educational achievement”, such as is described by Parkerson et al (1984), this study adds to the literature of dropout prediction and prevention. In the final analysis this work could contribute to the field of education both as a guide for educators and a basis for further research in the area of intervention. It is to be hoped that such research will help provide better services to the students of the public schools.

Afterword

By the conclusion of this study another public high school had been merged with Jamaica Plain High, and the name of the combined school became English High. Some of the staff stayed; others fell victim to budget cuts and shifts in positions after the merger. The Roosevelt Middle School was phased out to make room for a new innovative elementary school that is totally bi-lingual with a Spanish/English curriculum and has specific criteria for admission. And finally, Boston Prep has been moved to a new building in Charlestown.

APPENDIX A
SUPPORT GROUP
PLAN

Week I - Introduction (Open Session)

Goal: To introduce participants to the group process.

Method: Make introduction of self and group members. Explain to students the purpose of the group. Hand out booklets "Support Group, Let's Talk About it" (Smith, 1985). Give participants an opportunity to read through the booklet.

Answer questions.

Materials: Support Group Booklets (See Appendix IV)

Week II - Getting Acquainted

Goal: To eliminate anxiety and increase attention to detail.

Method: Place lemons on a table. Ask students to take a lemon and look at it.

Collect lemons and place them back on the table. Ask students to go up to the table and pick out their lemon. Ask how they were able to recognize their lemon and if someone else has taken their lemon how would they talk the person into returning it, without using intimidation.

Materials: Lemons

Week III - Trust

Goal: To foster a sense of responsibility and to develop a sense of trust.

Method: Explain what is about to happen. State that if anyone feels uncomfortable he or she does not have to participate. Have half of the group cover their eyes with a blindfold. Match up teams of two and instruct the one without the blindfold to lead the other one around the room. Those who do not

wish to participate should be observers making certain that no one takes advantage of the blindfolded team member. Participants should change places after about five minutes. Ask each student how they felt in the trusting capacity and in the other role. Ask observers to share what they saw.

Materials:Blindfolds

Week IV -

Goal:To allow students to see the way they come across to others.

Method:The group should be asked to assume the stature and mannerisms of the person sitting to their left. Give each person a minute or two for a few comments in the role of the person he is playing. Change roles. As each person to assume the role of the person to their right. Discussion.

Week V - Who Am I?

Goal:To demonstrate that looks can be deceiving and how we impose our own values on others.

Method:Give out an index card to each student. Ask that they write 5 dimensions about themselves on the card. Have students hold the cards up or pin them on and circulate. Ask students to read what others have written about himself/herself. After five minutes ask that they return to those they found interesting and talk to that person about his/her dimensions written on the card. Return to larger group. Discussion.

Materials:Index cards, pencils

Week VI - Decision Making

Goal:To improve decision making. To emphasize how trust and mistrust can affect one's interpersonal relationships.

Method:Hand out space game sheets of paper. (see attached). Ask individuals to select necessary items, first alone, then as a group. Ask that they compare to see if individual selections match group selections. Use time limit. Then give correct answers.

Week VII - Problem Solving (Open Session)

Goal:To work on problem solving.

Method: Give out small pieces of paper. Ask students to write a situation that they think may occur during the day in school. Place all papers in a bag. Ask for a volunteer to reach into the bag and pick out one situation and assume the role that the situation calls for.

Materials: Paper, pencils, paper bag

Week VIII - Dealing with Stress

Goal:To provide a format for students to air their concerns about stress and to provide students with information on dealing with stress as it relates to school and home.

Method:Ask students if they know what stress is; how many have experienced stress. Using handouts, explain what stress is. Go over handouts. Ask students to discuss positive and negative ways that we deal with stress in our society.

Week IX -

Goal:To explore issues of self-esteem.

Method:Instruct students to think about what makes them feel good and what makes them feel bad. Ask that volunteers state out loud some of those thoughts. Ask members of the group do they feel good when someone puts them down. Why or why not? What are ways that we put one another down? How can we change that? Pose the question "Why does someone become a bully? Allow

students to continue discussion. Resolve any issues or disagreements that may have come up during the discussion.

Week X - Wrap-up

Goal:To resolve any unresolved issues. To evaluate the group.

Method:Ask students what they liked about the group and what they did not like. Give out self-made evaluation forms and ask that students complete the form. Announce that placing names on the form is optional. Discussion.

SPACE GAME

INSTRUCTIONS; You are a member of a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties, however, your ship was forced to land at a spot some 200 miles from the rendezvous point. During landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged, and since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip. Below are listed the 15 items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank order them in terms of their importance to your crew in allowing them to reach the rendezvous point. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important, and so on, through number 15, the least important. You have 15 minutes to complete this phase of the exercise.

- ___ Box of matches
- ___ Food concentrate
- ___ 50 feet of nylon rope
- ___ Parachute silk
- ___ Portable heating unit
- ___ Two .45 calibre pistols
- ___ One case dehydrated Pet milk
- ___ Two 100-lb. tanks of oxygen
- ___ Stellar map (of the moon's constellation)
- ___ Life Raft
- ___ Magnetic compass
- ___ 5 gallons of water
- ___ Signal flares
- ___ First aid kit containing injection needles
- ___ Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter

* Source: National Training Laboratories

Stress Worksheet

1. What is the definition of stress?
2. What causes stress for you?
3. How do you cope with stress?
4. How effective is your method of coping with stress?
5. I have the following questions about stress:

APPENDIX B

PLACEBO GROUP PLAN

Week 1

Goals:To teach students to think about values as it relates to each individual and to society in general.

Methods:Ask students to define values. Ask how many have heard the word before and where they heard it. Allow discussion around the issue and meaning of values. Ask "How do we learn values.?" Pose a series of questions involving conflicts in values; ideas for resolving conflicts and personal experiences in school. After discussion give students the proper definition of values. Give out paper and ask students to write down their own definition of values. Request that they write down what they think when they hear the term. Have students look it up in the dictionary. No special seating arrangement is required.

Materials:Dictionaries, paper, chalk

Week 2

Goals:To teach students to think about values as it relates to each individual and to continue last week's goals of defining values.

Methods:Review last week's discussion. Ask students if they have any questions. Handout Student Rating Scale on values. Ask students to complete the scale.

Materials:Self-made handouts "Student Rating Scale (attached)."

Week 3

Goals:To evaluate last week's goals and to allow students to put into practice what they learned.

Method:Have open discussion on values and its place in society.

Week 4

Goals:To help students develop a sense of responsibility and to allow students to make a decision and think about consequences of their decision.

Method:Give students a hypothetical situation in which they as individuals must make a decision. Ask students why they made a particular decision. Encourage students to examine the process of decision making.

Materials:Paper and pencils

Week 5

Goals:To familiarize students in the process of evaluating a decision.

Method:Ask that students describe the outcome of a decision they have made.

Allow students to tell how they may have made a different decision than that of their peers and why? Ask students to speculate about the outcome had a different decision been made.

Week 6

Goals:To allow students an opportunity for self-direction within the group.

Method:Discussion. Allow students to discuss whatever they wish.

Week 7

Goals:To allow support of students.

Method:Define stress, pose the question "What causes stress?" Ask students to make a list of situations that cause stress. Ask that students list ways that they deal with stress.

Materials:Paper and pencils

Week 8

Goals:To foster discussion and to allow students to develop a sense of self-esteem through positive self-confidence through temporarily taking over the teacher's responsibility.

Method:Tell students that this is an unstructured meeting and it will be up to them to decide what to talk about and the length of time to spend on each subject.

Week 9

Goals:To provide an unstructured meeting.

Method:Allow students to have an open discussion around issues that affect them.

Week 10

Goals:To review and to evaluate the group.

Method:Give out self-made student evaluation sheets and ask students to complete the evaluation form.

Materials:Self-made student evaluation sheets, (see attached), pencils.

APPENDIX C
STUDENT RATING SCALE

On a scale of 1-10 rate what you consider acceptable behaviors.

1 = Unacceptable; 10 = Totally acceptable; 11 = Unsure

1. Defacing public property 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
2. Physical fighting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
3. Being a "bully" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
4. Cheating by copying someone else's paper 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
5. Talking back to teachers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
6. Talking back to parents 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
7. Swearing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
8. Cause harm to someone who has not harmed you 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11
9. Call someone a name which puts down their race 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11
10. Getting drunk or high 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
11. Driving while drinking alcohol 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

APPENDIX D
STUDENT EVALUATION

1. Check one.

I liked the group ____

I did not like the group ____ (Why? _____)

2. Check all that apply.

I think we need more time per meeting ____

I think we need more people in the group ____

I think we need less people in the group ____

I think we need better space ____

3. Check one.

Students should help organize groups ____ yes, ____ no

4. Issues I would like to see addressed in the group next year are:

5. Check one.

I think the team leader was:

Poor ____

Fair ____

Good ____

Super ____

6. Check one.

I think the group assistant was:

Poor ____

Fair ____

Good ____

Super ____

7. I wish more of my teachers knew about the program. ____

I wish fewer teachers knew about the program. ____

It doesn't matter to me. ____

8. What did you learn by participating in this group?

9a. I would not participate again if the group was held again at later date ____

b. I would participate if certain changes were made ____

c. I would participate regardless ____

10. COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU ANSWERED b. TO THE ABOVE QUESTION.

What things would you like to see changed?

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX E

PARENT PERMISSION SLIP

(Name) School/B.S.S.P. Group

Permission Slip and Release

Date _____

I give permission for my child _____ to participate in a series of group sessions focusing on adolescent issues such as values, self-esteem and stress. I understand that this will be a short term group that will meet at the school as a part of the school improvement program, led by a school psychologist and a teacher.

I authorize release of information pertinent to the group.

Signature _____

(Parent/Guardian)

Date signed _____

APPENDIX F

PHOTO RELEASE

(Name) School/B.S.S.P. Group

Photo Release

Date _____

Name _____

Homeroom _____

Address

Check one:

____ Student ____ Administrator

____ Teacher ____ Team Member

____ Other (Specify) _____

I give permission to the Boston Secondary School Project Team to take my picture and use the photograph or slide for academic purposes only at the university responsible for the project. I understand that pictures will not be published or used for any other purpose without prior permission from me. This release will expire in one year from the above date.

Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

APPENDIX G
GROUP HANDBOOK

Welcome to
the B.S.S.P./ (Name) School
Support Group

Let's talk about it!



(compiled and written by Barbara Smith)

Introduction

This booklet is for students, staff and parents participating in the project. In an effort to meet the needs of students at the (name) School, a group has been put together revolving around adolescent issues. This group will be a time limited group focusing on specific issues which are common to those members of the group.

The group will be led by a team member who is a trained professional in the group process and an assistant. The project is meant to be a learning experience for students and staff that will augment the regular education process. A curriculum for classroom instruction is being developed by a professional educator to provide continuity and theoretical background of principles for practical application.

For those who may be unable to participate with direct involvement you can find out more about the project by attending an open session or by contacting one of the team members during school hours.

Philosophy

The classroom teacher is often confronted by students who require more than the traditional learning process can provide. There are many factors involved in a student's performance. We should take a practical approach to look at some of those factors in an effort to improve learning.

Components

The team is organized into two broad divisions which offer complementary services to the school.

- Values in Education Curriculum Development
- Support Methods and Learning Values

Goals

1. To provide a curriculum of values in education
2. To provide group counseling for students in need of support services on a limited basis.
3. To provide the school with an overview of one aspect of school improvement.

Methodology

Students who have been identified as possible candidates will participate in a series of group sessions and a unit of lesson plans based on values, self-esteem and stress. For the purpose of this project "behavior problem" is defined as poor attendance, poor academic achievement or limited involvement with some disciplinary action. The group will meet one day a week at the school for a period of three months beginning January 1985 - March 1985, then be evaluated. Participation in this project requires maximum commitment for which we hope individuals will receive certain benefits to enhance individual growth and improve their school.

From time to time an open session will be offered where guests (i.e. staff, parents, administrators, etc.) may participate as an observer. A schedule of open sessions will be made available to interested parties so that participants will know of such meetings in advance.

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

January 8, 1985

January 15 HOLIDAY

January 22

January 29

February 5

February 12

February 19 NO SCHOOL

February 26

March 5

March 12

March 19

March 26

April 2 (Optional)

Team Members

Principal

B.S.S.P./ Team Leader (Teacher)

B.S.S.P./ Team Leader (School Psychologist)

Chapter 766 Program, ETL

Science Teacher

Asst. Principal

Special Education Teacher

Teacher

Librarian

APPENDIX H

PARENT-STUDENT CONSENT FORM

To: _____, Middle School/High School
Student Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA 02119

From: Barbara Smith, Doctoral Student, School of Education 206 Furcolo Hall University of
Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003

Re: Participation in Research Study Middle School/High School Support Systems as
Intervention

You may know me as a school psychologist, however I am now working in a different role. I am in the process of completing requirements for a doctoral degree at the University of Massachusetts (in Amherst). My dissertation will be a study of statistical data gathered by the school. Your name will not be used and the study will not include the name or specific location of your school. Information regarding achievement test scores, absentee rates and utilization of specific programs will be kept confidential.

My goal is to analyze the material gathered in the study for presentation in my doctoral dissertation. I may also use the information about results of the study in journal articles, workshops for support services personnel and possibly a book. I will not under any circumstances use your name or the name of any other student in this study. This is a group study involving the examination of records.

Although I would appreciate your participation in the study you are under no obligation to do so. You will not be placed at a disadvantage now or in the future if you decide not to take part. Furthermore you have the right to change your mind, if you agree now to participate, you may withdraw at any time.

In order to take part in the study, you must have the written consent of your parent or legal guardian. If you sign the attached consent form you and your parent/guardian are giving me permission to look at test scores and your attendance record. My goal is to evaluate the education process through school improvement projects. Without your help I cannot achieve this goal.

Finally, in signing the form below, you and your parent/guardian are agreeing to your taking part in the study under the conditions set forth above. You are also assuring that you will make no financial claim on the university or myself; now or in the future for your participation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Participant's Consent: I, _____, have read the statement above and agree to participate in the study under the conditions stated therein.

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Consent: I, _____, have read the statement above and agree to my son/daughter's participation in the study under the conditions stated therein.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX I
TEACHER SURVEY

RE: Attached Survey

DATE: October 1984

Please complete the attached Teacher Survey and return it to the school secretary.

This is a brief survey to help determine some of the needs and problem areas in your school. Please answer questions according to your current situation.

RETURN SURVEY BY: The end of the school day

TEACHER SURVEY

DIRECTIONS:

Please read through each category and check off the most appropriate item for your situation. Please look at your watch before you begin and note the time. After completing the survey you will be asked how much time was spent answering the questions.

CLASS SIZE

1. How many students are assigned to you?

a. less than 10 students ____

b. 10 - 20 students ____

c. 20 - 30 students ____

d. over 30 ____

e. other ____ (Explain) _____

ATTENDANCE

2. Is attendance a problem with your students?

a. yes ____

b. no ____

c. sometimes _____

3. How would you rate overall attendance at your school?

a. good (85% or better) _____

b. fair (70% - 85%) _____

c. poor (50% - 70%) _____

d. severely deficient (Less than 50%) _____

HOMEWORK

4. Do you think that your students see the importance of returning homework?

a. yes _____

b. no _____

5. Are homework assignment returned

a. 100% of the time? _____

b. 50% of the time? _____

c. 10% of the time? _____

d. other _____ (Explain) _____

PARENT CONTACT

6. Under what circumstances do you see parents?

a. Usually when the child is in trouble _____

b. At PTA meetings _____

c. Other _____ (Please explain) _____

7. How often do you see parents?

a. one a month _____

b. at the end of every marking term _____

c. one a year _____

d. other _____ (Please explain) _____

OTHER ISSUES

8. Please indicate the problems that you encounter in your class. You may check more than one.

- a. lack of support from student's home ____
- b. discipline problems ____
- c. lack of respect for teachers ____
- d. low regard for an education ____
- e. social issues (i.e. parent-child relationships etc.) ____
- f. communication with students ____
- g. students' self esteem ____
- h. other ____ (Please explain) _____

9. Are there any other issues that concern you as a classroom teacher?

10. How long did it take you to complete this survey?

APPENDIX J
CONFIDENTIAL OBSERVATION REPORT

B.S.S.P. Report

School_____

Pre-observation:

Name	Homeroom	#Days Absent
------	----------	--------------

#Incident Reports	Average Grade_____
-------------------	--------------------

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Incidence Reports = Documented Disciplinary Action (suspensions, detentions, etc.)

Team Member:_____

Date:_____

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