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An Internship in School Administration
at the William Davies Middle School
Mays Landing, New Jersey

by
Robert Baker

A Masters Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in The Graduate School of
Rowan University
May, 1998

Approved by _____

Date Approved April 28, 1998

Abstract

Robert Baker

An Internship in School
Administration at the
William Davies Middle School
1998
Dr. Ronald J. Capasso
School Administration

The purpose of this internship was to provide the intern with an opportunity to acquire and utilize professional administrative skills necessary to become a successful school leader.

The internship at William Davies Middle school included the implementation of the PRO plan, a discipline strategy designed to reduce the amount of discipline referrals.

The PRO plan included three main elements: 1) the institution of a teacher-mentor program, 2) the utilization of the Project Success Program and 3) the development of a school discipline committee.

The results of the PRO plan included a forty-three percent reduction of discipline referrals. Additionally, there was a twenty percent reduction in administrative detentions, internal suspensions and external suspensions

Mini-Abstract

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The internship at William Davies Middle School included the implementation of a discipline plan referred to as the PRO plan, the use of leadership skills, and the changing of a discipline policy at the school.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my internship supervisor, Dr. Ronald Capasso, for his patience in guiding me through the internship process.

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I would like to thank my colleagues at the William Davies Middle School for their cooperation and support.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Focus of the Study

Product Outcome Statement

The practice of disciplining students at William Davies Middle School in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County provides the focal point of this study. In the past, teachers were able to write discipline referrals as they saw fit. The policy of administration was to “let the teachers write the referrals and we’ll sort it out here.” As a result of this policy, the number of administrative detentions, internal suspensions and external suspensions increased dramatically. Additionally, student discipline developed into a reaction to poor behavior.

As student infractions increased, administrative personnel became deluged in dispensing discipline. In the 1995-96 school year, the William Davies Middle School administration registered 2066 administrative detentions, 429 internal suspensions and 306 external suspensions. In the 1996-97 school year, the administration issued 2130 administrative detentions, 412 internal suspensions and 239 external suspensions.

The high number of detentions, internal suspensions and

external suspensions has reflected poorly on the school.

Additionally, the high number of discipline incidents created an increased workload for the school's guidance department, vice-principal and principal. Most importantly, many members of the teaching staff have been writing discipline referrals instead of attempting to diffuse problems at a non-administrative level.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to implement the PRO discipline plan to reduce the number of administrative referrals and discipline infractions by twenty-five percent, allow the intern to use human relation skills and administer a school-wide program, and establish a discipline system to create better order for the William Davies Middle School.

The teachers of William Davies Middle School will be given a plan to follow designed to empower the staff. The teachers will obtain a new sense of responsibility in handling discipline. This responsibility is not one of forcing the teachers to handle problems outside of their capabilities but rather provide the teacher with strategies to identify, prevent and address discipline problems. Empowering the teachers to address student discipline problems will give the staff an alternative to writing referrals.

The development of a revised discipline policy and multi-faceted discipline plan, referred to as the PRO discipline plan, will be instituted at William Davies Middle School. The new discipline strategy will deal with student discipline problems through a series of new approaches. Most importantly, the implementation of the PRO plan and policy will change William Davies Middle School from using a reactive discipline strategy to using a proactive discipline model.

The intern intends to implement the revised discipline strategy or PRO and interact successfully with the staff of William Davies Middle School. As a result of this study, the intern will use human relation skills to facilitate the implementation of the revised discipline strategy.

The William Davies Middle School organization will benefit from this study. The school will adopt the PRO discipline strategy and the number of administrative detentions, internal suspensions and external suspension will be reduced.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used throughout this study:

PRO Plan- refers to the newly implemented proactive discipline model.

Referral- is used to describe when a teacher at William Davies Middle School believes that a student needs discipline from the administration.

Administrative detention - refers to a period of forty-five minutes to be served by the student after school in the Davies cafeteria.

Internal suspension- denotes a day in room A-1 of William Davies Middle School. The day consists of eight periods filled with classwork assigned by the students' regular teachers. The student in internal suspension is restricted from socializing with others during the assigned day.

External suspension- refers to a period in which the student is restricted from attending school. A student who merits an external suspension is most likely assigned this discipline because of a severe infraction or repeated minor infractions.

Teacher detention- a period of forty-five minutes after school in which a student attends the disciplining teacher's classroom.

PAC- an acronym for Pupil Assistance Committee. A pupil assistance committee, consisting of

teachers, administration and guidance department is design to aid the “At-Risk” student by developing strategies to help the student deal with behaviors which may require discipline action.

Project Success- an acronym which means Students Utilize Cooperative Community and Engaging Skills Successfully. The purpose of this project is to modify student behavior, generate self-worth and develop a sense of pride in the school by allowing repeat discipline offenders the opportunity to assist teachers and support staff in small operations inside of the school.

Limitations of the Study

The PRO plan, on which the study is based, is a plan designed specifically for William Davies Middle School in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County, New Jersey. Although the PRO plan is concentrated on William Davies, it is in essence a proactive discipline plan. Because the plan addresses discipline problems proactively, a specific program could be designed to apply towards other middle schools experiencing multiple student discipline infractions.

The variables of this study are the current discipline problems

at William Davies Middle School and the PRO discipline strategy. Since the study focuses on the reduction of discipline problems at William Davies Middle School through the implementation of the PRO discipline plan, the results are measured in the amount of administrative actions. The PRO plan targets many discipline situations and the prevention of certain dilemmas. However, the confounding variable in this study is the unpredictability of the student population. At any time, an unforeseen event could distort the data results.

Setting of the Study

The setting of the study takes place in William Davies Middle School of Hamilton Township, Atlantic County. The school sits just west of the center Mays Landing. Hamilton Township is the largest township in the state of New Jersey and contains over 115 square miles of land. (Abramson, 1987)

In 1978, Hamilton Township began to change dramatically with introduction of the casino industry to Atlantic City. Student population began to swell in the school as new families moved into the area. Hamilton Township Business and Industrial Park opened in 1980 and later that decade the Hamilton Mall was built.

The 1990's brought many changes to Hamilton Township. Because the township lies close to the Black Horse Pike, the Garden

State Parkway and the Atlantic City Expressway, the area provides an excellent place for commercial businesses. Two additional malls were established and the influx of jobs and people continued.

With six new casinos under construction in Atlantic City and the proposed construction of a Nascar Raceway city planners have authorized over 500 new housing starts. (Hamilton Township, 1997) Because Hamilton Township has acres of undeveloped land and large commercial areas, it is also believed that the student population will increase at approximately three hundred students per year for the next five years. (Hamilton Township)

From 1978 through 1985 the student population of Hamilton Township increase approximately one hundred students per year. (Hamilton Township) School overcrowding forced the district to establish a split session schedule. Several effort to approve a new school building where blocked by the local citizens. Through the use of a lease-purchase agreement, nine million five hundred thousand dollars was spent on the development of a new middle school for sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

Although the construction of the William Davies Middle School in 1987 was designed to alleviate overcrowding, the district found itself at capacity after only one year. Heated debate resulted in the construction of the twenty-seven million dollar George L. Hess

Educational Complex housing grades kindergarten and third through sixth. William Davies then became a seventh and eighth grade facility.

In a 1997 mayorial address, Charles Pritchard stated that the population of Hamilton Township was 16,012 people. Fifty-one percent of the population is male. Along racial lines, seventy-seven percent are Caucasian, fifteen percent are African-American, five percent are Hispanic and three percent are of Asian origin. Twenty-seven percent of the population is under the age of eighteen. Sixty-five percent of the population is between the age of nineteen and sixty-four. Eight percent of the population is over sixty-five.

The majority (61%) of the people in Hamilton Township are high school graduates. Thirteen percent of the people are not high school graduates. Twenty-six percent of the population have a college degree.

The per capita income of Hamilton Township is \$15,948. The median household income is \$40,690. The average house sales range between \$90,000 and \$100,000 dollars. The current property tax rate is 3.03 per \$100 with the school tax rate of 1.22 per \$100.

William Davies Middle School currently houses 538 seventh and eighth grade students. The school contains sixteen large classrooms, fourteen smaller special education and resource rooms,

five science labs, two health rooms, an art room, a technology education room, one music room, a home economics room and a computer room. Additional rooms include a cafeteria, gymnasium, library and nurse's office. The hub of the school contains the administrative offices which includes the guidance office.

There are sixty-one staff members at William Davies Middle School. Included in the staff is one vice-principal, one principal, one school psychologist, two guidance counselors, three secretaries, a school nurse, a librarian, a school social worker, and fifty classroom teachers.

The student school day at William Davies Middle School begins at 7:30 in the morning and ends at 2:15 in the afternoon. There is a nine period schedule with each class lasting approximately forty-two minutes. In addition to the nine period day there is a six day cycle, A through F, in which students attend their specials. Specials include art, computers, tech, home economics, health, music and physical education. In addition to these specials, students also attend RAM or Related Art Math and supplementals, classes design to aid in standardized test scores.

Hamilton Township's diverse community is reflected in the William Davies student population. Of the 578 students, 317 are

Caucasian, 136 are African-American, 62 are Hispanic and 20 Asian. Sixty-one percent of the seventh graders and sixty-six percent of eighth graders receive free or reduced lunch.

Importance of the Study

The overwhelming number of administrative discipline actions dispensed to the students of William Davies Middle School causes several problems within the school itself. The administration is over burdened. Teachers feel powerless to maintain order. Students are unfamiliar with the discipline standards established at William Davies.

Although the discipline policies of William Davies Middle School remain untouched, the PRO discipline plan creates solutions to problems and a consistent platform of discipline procedure. The real question that remains and the true importance of this study is to determine the extent to which a proactive, innovative approach can correct minor and major discipline infractions.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Each chapter outlines a specific aspect of this collaborative action research project.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature. This chapter will

give credence to the study by demonstrating previous research in the subject. A review of the literature is also key to determining the design of the study.

Chapter Three's main purpose will be to illustrate the design of the study. How data is collected and analyzed will be explained in this chapter.

The results of the study and research will be explained in Chapter Four. Charts and graphs will be use to aid in the explanation.

Major conclusions of the project, the intern's leadership development and the change brought about in the organization are all themes that will be discussed in Chapter Five. Major implications of the study will also be communicated.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to reduce the number of detentions, internal suspension and external suspensions by twenty-five percent for seventh and eighth grade students at William Davies Middle School. This outcome will be established through the use of the PRO discipline strategy. Chapter 2 will investigate studies on the implementation of discipline strategies and their effectiveness in reducing student infractions.

The PRO plan draws its components from the ideas and research of others. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the PRO plan is derived from quantitative data on the number of discipline infractions and referrals in the 1997-1998 school year at William Davies.

The PRO plan actively addresses discipline problems in many areas. Most importantly, the PRO plan focuses on students with repeated discipline problems. In 1995, Nancy Bell Ruppert and Margaret Smith, teachers at a South Carolina high school, conducted

a study involving two nine-week programs. In the study, the researchers used surveys and questionnaires to gather data from teachers, tenth and eleventh grade students and their parents. The most important question to the study was what causes repeated discipline problems. The forty-two teachers surveyed indicated that the key factor that causes student discipline infractions is lack of parent involvement. Consequently, the PRO plan focuses on involving the parent through various methods for the reduction of discipline infractions. First, teachers are required to phone home and communicate with parents on minor infractions. Second, an established pupil assistance committee requires parents to attend a conference to help address poor student behavior. Third, a change in discipline policies demands that parents meet with administration after their son or daughter attains a high level of infractions.

In the same Ruppert and Smith study, the three hundred sixty-seven students surveyed reported that the students causing the discipline problems show very little effort to reform their behaviors.

The PRO plan specifically focuses on repeat offenders in the form of Project Success. Project Success is designed to provide positive school experiences by involving repeat offenders in projects for the community and school.

The one hundred ninety-two parents surveyed in the Ruppert and Smith study stated that a large problem exists because of a poor teacher and administrative relationship with the community.

This issue arises again in Billie R. Nweze's "Increasing Parent Involvement, Student Attendance and Appropriate School Behavior of At-Risk Middle School Students Through Parent Partnerships."

(1994) The study profiles a plan to reduce discipline referrals and suspensions for one hundred At-Risk students. Nweze plan brought in another aspect in the reduction of discipline infractions, parental involvement.

Nweze's plan called for the increase in the involvement of parents by providing parenting classes, involving parents in the day to day activities of the school and assigning parents to a discipline review board. The results of the study indicated that discipline referrals and suspensions were cut by one-half and there was a decrease in absences by sixty-two percent.

The PRO plan is designed to actively involve parents in William Davies Middle School. The plan addresses this problem by establishing the Davies Planning Team. The Team consists of teachers, administration, and parents making decisions from curriculum to discipline.

In a Louisiana study, Cyda Avellar-Fleming (1994)

implemented a program with twenty eighth grade regular education students in an “average middle school.” The quantitative data was gathered by evaluating seventh grade records and comparing them with the eighth grade records after the introduction of the program.

The results of the study yielded an average of a thirty-one percent reduction in the amount of referrals for the twenty students. Avellar-Fleming established a faculty team network where each of four teacher teams were assigned five students with recurring discipline problems. The focus of the study indicated that the use of mentoring, counseling and a discipline committee would reduce the rate of repeat offenders.

Vice Principal Rebecca Shore of Huntington Beach High School in California discussed teacher-student partnerships in her article “Personalization.” (1996) Ms. Shore personalized the school experience for At-Risk students by identifying the population at need, teaming adult volunteers with these students, creating a faculty council and forming a positive reward system. The plan resulted in 47% fewer suspensions the following year.

This study draws particular interest because of its theory of empowerment. Teachers involved on a faculty council and in a mentoring program establish a positive, proactive relationship with the administration and the student population. Additionally, this

study addresses the entire school population as well as the At-Risk student.

The Avellar-Fleming and Shore studies gave credence to the establishment of the PRO plan's pupil assistance committee. Additionally, the PRO plan employed teacher mentors as recommended by the studies. Some teachers were relieved of their duties and became a mentor to an "At-Risk" student. The teacher mentors were assigned to students with chronic discipline problems.

The PRO plan also reflects results from Darrell Jeffcoat and Clete Bulach's 1995 study of Beaverbrook Elementary School in Spalding County, Georgia. Jeffcoat and Bulach created a plan to reduce discipline referrals in their school. Their research called for a committee to create "consistency and conformity" in administering discipline. The key to the plan involved the institution of a mandatory teacher phone call for every discipline problem. Referral for minor infractions were not addressed unless the teacher used a procedural checklist. Referrals that were instantly honored were the once that addressed a fight or other major event.

The results of the study yielded a fifty-three percent reduction in the number of discipline referrals and a sixteen percent decrease in the number of suspensions.

The PRO plan empowers teachers to handle minor discipline problems. Like the Jeffcoat and Bulach study, the PRO plan requires that the teachers of William Davies Middle School communicate with the parents of those who commit minor offenses.

Studies for reducing discipline infractions are not as prevalent as the theories to reduce the infractions. Through analyzing discipline reduction research, the PRO discipline plan was developed. The PRO plan's foundation is based on the recurring themes of involving and communicating with parents, empowering teachers, improving teacher-student relationships and attacking the problems of repeat offenders.

The PRO plan's curriculum and planning teams are designed to tackle the problem of parent involvement and communication. This issue is the key ingredient to the success of the PRO plan.

The PRO plan addresses the empowerment of teachers by allowing them to communicate with parents and to make decisions for themselves. Implementation of the phone call system suggested by the Jeffcoat and Bulach study is an additional key ingredient to success.

The problem of creating a positive rapport between teacher and student is addressed by the PRO plan by the implementation of a pupil assistance committee and teacher mentors.

Project Success is the PRO plans solution to the problem of repeat offenders of the discipline policy. Drawing on the research of Ruppert and Smith, Project Success involves “At-Risk” students in positive and rewarding school experiences.

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

Description of the Research Design

The idea for producing a plan to lower the rate of discipline infractions had its origins in a meeting in January of 1997. This was the first meeting of the William Davies Middle School Discipline Committee. Its major mission was to solve the problem of a central office inundated with work from an overwhelming number of discipline referrals. The goal was to reduce discipline referrals and infractions along with lowering the number of detentions, internal suspensions, and external suspensions. Most importantly, the idea of finding a system that met the need of students unaffected by conventional discipline strategies. From the discipline committee came the first elements of the PRO plan and the research design to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

The Design and Development of the Research Instruments

The design and development of the research instruments posed a problem. From research and the ideas of the Davies Discipline

Committee came the establishment of the PRO plan and its focus on three major areas. The first area involved a greater involvement in assisting "At-Risk" students. In the opinion of many teachers, administrators, and parents the school was failing because it was not meeting the needs of the "At-Risk" student. The second aspect of the PRO plan involved empowering teachers and students to handle minor discipline problems. A key to the success of the PRO plan was giving the teachers the help to deal with problems on their own and involving students in the discipline process. The third aspect of the program created a coordinated inner office to address discipline problems in a proactive and responsive manner.

Upon investigating the discipline records at William Davies Middle School an important discovery was uncovered. A small minority of the students, twenty-two percent, were responsible for ninety-six percent of all discipline referrals. This research reinforced the main focus of the PRO plan, "At-Risk" students. Three specific programs were developed. Each was designed to instill self-respect, increase self-concept, and improve academic performance.

First, a student-teacher mentoring program was established at William Davies. The four teachers pioneered the program and entitled it the S. O. S. or Save Our Students Program. The four

teachers played a significant role in the design of the program.

S. O. S. was developed to link teacher mentors with those students experiencing academic and behavior problems. The four teachers would be given a duty which assigned them to five students, one for each day of the week. During the weekly sessions, teacher would assist students by reviewing homework assignments, finding solutions to their minor social problems, giving the students techniques in establishing a positive rapport with teachers, and developing behavior modifications focusing on ways to avoid conflict. Twenty students with varying needs were selected and assigned to the teachers.

Another program, Project Success, attempted to reach "At-Risk" children through community activities. The Project Success coordinator organized and assigned various activities geared to involve the disinterested child in the school and to improve conditions inside the facility. The purpose of Project Success was dedicated to increasing student motivation, self-concept, and involvement in their own education. Through activities including changing the school marquee to list monthly events, managing the schools sports team, assisting in the distribution of school communications, and photocopying memorandums, students gained a positive relationship with the teachers and administration.

The third avenue to assist the “At-Risk” student was the creation of the “Timeout” room. As the school year evolved, students with several referrals discipline infractions, and negative attitudes about school were identified and became candidates for the “Timeout” room. Instead of being sent to the office with a discipline referral, a student was escorted to a special room to complete his or her work or just calm down. While in this special room, a student received counseling in behavior management and self control. Five invitations to the “Timeout” room resulted in a discipline referral and administrative action. The result of the “Timeout” room was to avoid the avoidable by diffusing small situations before they became significant problems.

The second focus of the PRO plan addressed the empowerment of teachers and student in dealing with minor discipline problems. Teachers were given inservice in crisis prevention and behavior management. During this inservice, teachers received specific training in diffusing potential problem situations and techniques in establishing a positive rapport with students.

Teachers were also given the universal directive to communicate with the parents of problem students. The administration would honor teacher referrals on major discipline

problems but on minor infractions a phone call was required. Teachers were also asked to give teacher detention for breaking minor school rules like gum chewing, eating candy, and arriving late to class. Chronic problems, such as those that happen more than twice, would be handled by the school administrative team.

William Davies Middle School developed a peer mediation club and program. Various seventh and eighth grade students with good leadership and communication skills were selected to become members of the club. These students were trained through videos, guest speakers, and booklets to diffuse student arguments by various peer mediation techniques. The work of the peer mediation club was significant to the PRO plan because it helped to eliminate suspensions caused by fighting, physical contact, and verbal abuse.

The third theme adopted by the PRO plan involved the leadership of the school and its pledge to be responsive to the school's discipline problems. The first task of administration was to officially establish a discipline committee. The discipline committee accepted volunteers from the teaching staff and community. The chairperson of the committee was the Davies school's Vice-Principal. Due to the overwhelming amount of referrals and discipline problems, the committee adopted as its first task the process of reviewing and revising the discipline

policies of William Davies Middle School.

Secondly, the administration established the first Pupil Assistance Committee at William Davies. The pupil assistance committee consisted of the building Principal and Vice-Principal, two guidance counselors and four seventh and eighth grade classroom teachers. The PAC committee reviewed cases of student with academic and behavioral problems. Students discussed during a PAC meeting were recommended by teachers. The process of recommendation was through written referral sheets. The committee issued recommendations to solve student problems and communicated with parents of these students.

The Description of the Sample and Sampling Technique

All the students in William Davies Middle School constituted the sample of this study. The number of referrals from the students provided the data collected. The sample was all seventh and eighth grade students attending William Davies School during the 1997-1998 and 1996-1997 school year. The demographics of William Davies Middle School were outlined in Chapter One of this document.

The sampling technique was the quantitative calculation of the number of detentions and suspensions in the 1997-1998 and 1996-1997 school year.

A Description of the Data Collection Approach

The evaluation of the PRO plan and the research design was interpreted by means of the quantitative data recovered. The data collected was the total amount of detentions and suspensions under the PRO plan. The PRO plan was designed to reduce the number of infractions by twenty-five percent. The number of discipline infractions for 1997-1998 school year were recorded in a log book. At the end of the month, the total number of infractions were calculated and recorded in a discipline log book. Each month, the discipline committee would meet and discuss the data. The PRO plan's effectiveness was measured by the reduction of administrative detentions, internal suspensions, and external suspensions. Data was gathered each month and compared with data gathered from the 1996-97 school year. Additionally, individuals characterized as "At-Risk" or addressed in the PAC committee were evaluated. The infractions and rate of infractions for each student before their involvement in the PRO plan's programs and the rate of infractions after involvement in the PRO plan's programs were compared.

Besides the quantitative data collected, qualitative data was also collected. During the implementation of the PRO plan, students and teachers were surveyed to analyze the effectiveness of the

program in general and each specific facet of the entire plan.

The data analysis plan was primarily focused on the numbers. In other words, the quantitative data collected was compared with the data from the previous years. The PRO plan would be deemed effective if the reduction of detentions, internal suspensions, and external suspensions exceeds twenty-five percent.

In addition to the quantitative data, the new program was evaluated by qualitative method to ascertain three objectives. Questionnaires and surveys were distributed to teachers in students involved in the program. Then, a random sample of teachers was selected. Parents of students involved in the program were also questioned and surveyed. The first objective of the qualitative research was to determine if the program facilitated a positive school climate. Had the PRO plan improved the discipline at William Davies Middle School? Secondly, the students' responses were solicited to determine the viewpoints of the students towards the program.

Description of the Data Analysis Plan

Did the program benefit the students? Was the help given to them interpreted as successful. The real test of the PRO plan relied evidence presented in the number of detentions and suspensions. A

dramatic reduction, over twenty-five percent, would prove the programs effectiveness. An additional ingredient to the successfulness of the PRO plan was the views of the community. The parents of students affected by the PRO plan were asked to give their impressions of its effectiveness. Did this program help your child?

In order to fully acknowledge the effectiveness of the PRO plan it was necessary to gather qualitative as well as quantitative data. If the raw data proved the effectiveness of the PRO plan and the community gave positive feedback, then the last true test came with the opinions of those who worked within the system. In order to fully measure the PRO plan, the teachers had to provide input and see results.

Chapter 4

The Results of the Research Study

What information was found?

The design of the PRO plan focused on the reduction of administrative discipline at William Davies Middle School. The PRO plan measured administrative discipline in three categories, detentions, internal suspensions, and external suspensions. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the PRO plan, the number of discipline infractions in the 1997-1998 school year were recorded and compared to the number of discipline infraction in the 1996-1997 school year.

The 1996-1997 school year at William Davies Middle School had two thousand seven hundred eighty-one discipline referrals. The purpose of the PRO plan was to reduce this number by twenty-five percent. The data collected represented the first six months of the 1996-1997 school year and the first six months of the 1997-1998 school year. The first six months of the 1996-1997 school year yielded one thousand three hundred thirty-six discipline infractions. The first six months of the 1997-1998 yielded seven hundred sixty-

five discipline infractions. The results indicated a decline of five hundred forty-seven discipline referrals. There was a forty-three percent reduction of discipline infractions (see figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1 The number of discipline referrals in the 1996-1997 and the 1997-1998 school years

The administrative detention had the most dramatic reduction. Detentions were reduced forty-seven percent from one thousand five in 196-1997 to five hundred twenty-nine in 1997-1998 (see figure 5.2).

MONTH	1996-1997	1997-1998
September	0	9
October	205	96
November	152	82
December	211	109
January	235	131
February	202	102

Figure 5.2 Month by month detentions at William Davies

In addition to the overall forty-seven percent reduction, administrative detentions decrease by at least thirty-five percent reduction in every month but September. In September of 1996-1997, there were no administrative detentions because there were no activities buses for that month (see figure 5.3).

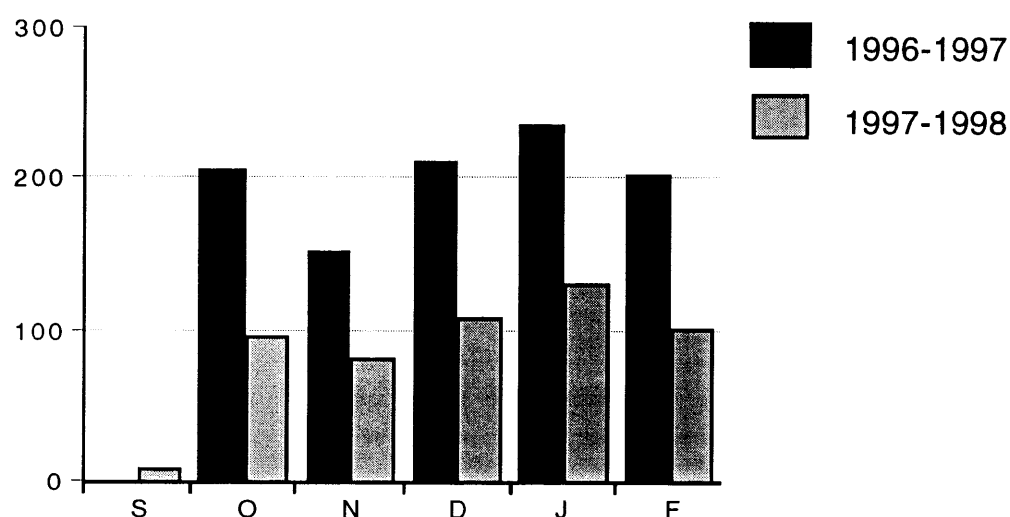


Figure 5.3 Administrative detentions for each month in the 1996-1997 and the 1997-1998 school years

One aspect of the PRO plan dealt with the reduction in the number of internal suspensions. An internal suspension is assigned when a student is a repeat offender or commits a serious discipline infraction. The number of internal suspensions at the William Davies Middle School was also reduced by twenty-three percent. There was a decline in every month recorded (see figure 5.4). Most significant was the data recorded in January and February of 1998.

The number of internal suspensions decline twenty-three percent in January and thirty-three percent in February.

Sixty-seven of the one hundred seventy-two internal suspensions or sixty-one percent of infractions were assigned for cutting administrative detentions. The penalty for cutting an administrative detention is one day in William Davies' internal suspension room.

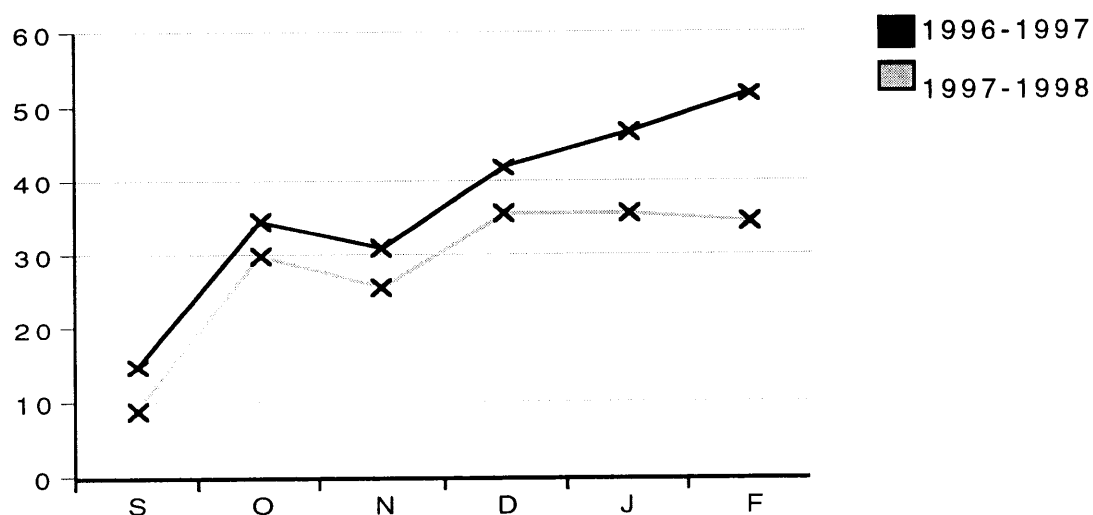


Figure 5.4 The number of internal suspensions for the 1996-1997 and the 1997-1998 school year

Implementation of the PRO plan caused the reduction of external suspensions by forty-one percent. The number of external suspensions was reduced in each month with a sixty-one percent reduction in the month of January (see figure 5.5).

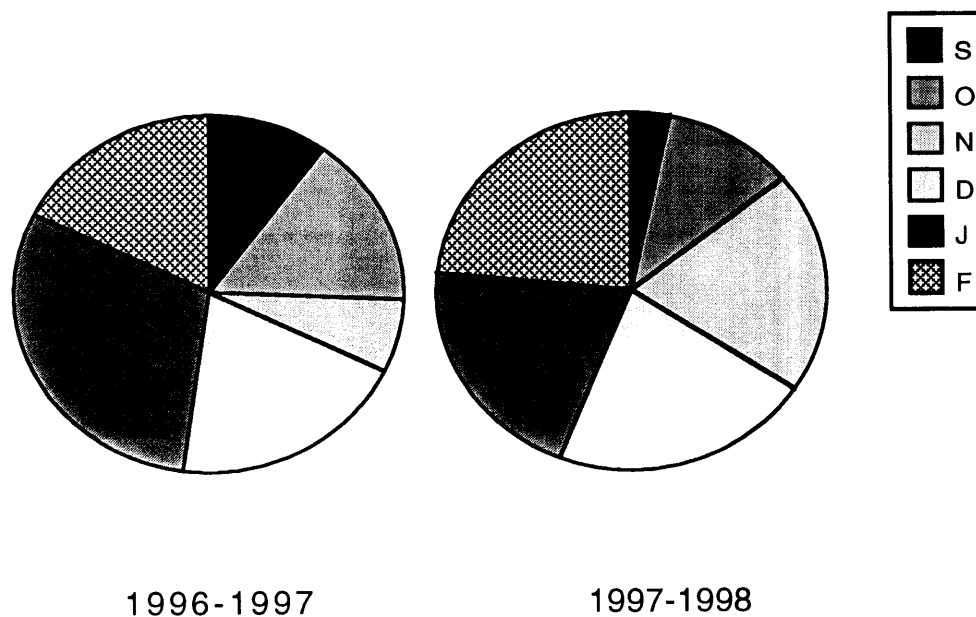


Figure 5.5 Percentage of external suspensions month by month at William Davies Middle School for the 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 school years

What is the meaning of the data?

The numbers indicate that the William Davies Middle School experienced a forty-three percent reduction in the number of administrative discipline referrals. This reduction allowed the main office administration to focus on other duties besides discipline. Additionally, this lightening of discipline allowed the administration greater pupil contact time.

The PRO plan is responsible for the reduction by the several programs specifically designed to reduce detentions, internal suspensions, external suspensions. The original goal was to reduce

the number of discipline referrals by twenty-five percent. The PRO plan exceeded the objective by eighteen percent. In addition, the number of detentions exceeded the twenty-five percent by twenty-two percent. The internal suspension goal was not met because the actual results fell two percent shy of the goal. The reduction of external suspensions exceeded expectations by sixteen percent.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

The implementation of the PRO plan, the intern's leadership development, and the change to William Davies Middle School highlight this chapter. The past six months of this study have indicated several conclusions for the project. Additionally, many implications can be drawn from this study. The internship also yielded areas for further study.

Project Conclusions

The PRO plan was originally designed to reduce the amount of student discipline referrals at William Davies Middle School by twenty-five percent. The result indicated that the amount of student discipline referral exceeded forty percent with a result of forty-three percent. Additionally a reduction over the goal of twenty-five percent occurred in the number of detentions, internal suspensions, and external suspensions.

The individual aspects of the PRO plan played a significant role

to the whole's success. The Project Success and the teacher-mentor programs significantly reduced recidivism of "At-Risk" students. The teacher empowerment element avoided some referrals to the administrative offices. The pupil assistance committee addressed those student who could possibly "At-Risk" students.

Intern's Leadership Development Conclusions

The intern's leadership development focused on the ability to communicate ideas, use human relation skills, and interact effectively with the staff and students. The intern had the opportunity to chair the William Davies Discipline Committee to help reevaluate the discipline code and policy. The intern also used communication skills to empower the staff on techniques to avoid discipline problems in the classrooms and hallways. The intern used interaction skills to address student-teacher conflicts and student discipline problems.

Organizational Change And Conclusions

William Davies Middle School used the PRO discipline plan in the 1997-1998 school year. The reduction of the discipline problems at William Davies has ensured the adoption of the PRO plan for the 1998-1999 school year. The reduction of the referrals and administrative discipline actions resulted in the organization operating in a more effective manner. Discipline became another

duty rather than the sole duty of the school's vice-principal. The school will continue the PRO plan to reduce the discipline problem further. The PRO plan will become policy in next years teacher handbook. The plan will undergo changes to adjust to needs of the school.

Major Implications

The aspects of the PRO plan focused on all areas of discipline problems. The PRO plan used several techniques to address discipline problems of the school. Major offenders of the school discipline policy were affected by the individual treatment offered by the PRO plans Pupil Assistance Committee, Project Success, and Teacher-Mentor program. Teachers handled minor discipline problems through the empowerment elements in the PRO plan. By addressing problem areas proactively and aggressively, the PRO plan was effective.

The question that remains is could the PRO plan be successful in other similar middle schools? The several aspects of the plan can be used in other middle schools. However, the PRO plan is tailor made for the William Davies Middle School. The PRO plan will need further study.

Needs for Further Study

The PRO plan's effectiveness should be studied over a longer

period of time than just one year. The PRO plan should be tested for at least five years to determine if the reduction of discipline infractions and referrals in the 1997-1998 school year was an anomaly.

The PRO plan is a entity that constantly changes to address major problems. The individual aspects of the PRO plan should be studied to determine the actual effectiveness of each. New aspects of the PRO plan should be tested each year to ascertain their appropriateness and effectiveness.

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Appendix A

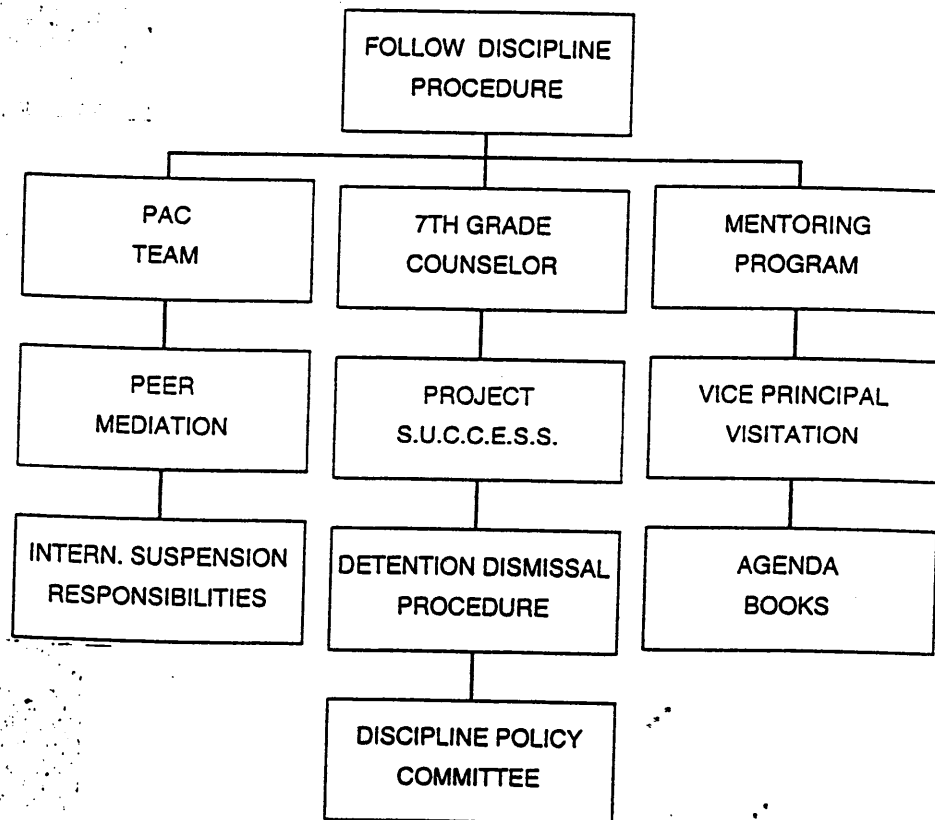
Teacher Flow Chart on the PRO plan

**WILLIAM DAVIES MIDDLE SCHOOL
ACTION PLAN
ON
DISCIPLINE**

41

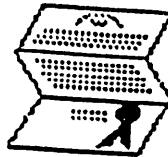
**OBJECTIVE: TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF REFERRALS SENT TO THE
OFFICE DURING THE 1997-98 SCHOOL YEAR.**

PROACTIVE STEPS



Appendix B

Project Success Permission Slip



PROJECT S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
(STUDENTS UTILIZE COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY AND ENGAGEMENT SKILLS SUCCESSFULLY)

Date: _____

Dear _____

William Davies Middle School is interested in developing well-rounded individuals. Occasionally, we find that one of our students needs a little extra assistance in succeeding at this grade level. This year we have instituted a new and exciting program aimed at modifying student behavior, and at the same time, encouraging the student to become more interested in school.

The name of this program is called Project S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Students Utilize Cooperative Community and Engagement Skills Successfully). The program focuses on the individual problem that each child has, and then sets out to correct it. For example, if a student is having academic difficulties, we establish goals toward eliminating those. We may do this through after school tutoring by volunteer teachers, students, or the regular classroom instructor. If the student does not see school as important, we try to interest him / her in after school activities that might have some appeal. It could be through running errands for the office or teachers, or it could be helping in another way such as changing the school marquee sign that is in front of the school.

Our belief is that if a child begins to identify in a positive manner with his / her school, then the student will take pride in his / her surroundings. In turn, overall improvement will occur.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Muldoon
Vice Principal

Please send this portion back to school with your child

I, _____ agree to have my child participate in Project
SUCCESS.

Biographical Data

Name	Robert Cameron Baker
Date	January 4, 1969
Place of Birth	Atlantic City, New Jersey
High School	Ocean City High School Ocean City, New Jersey
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Science, History Towson State University Towson, Maryland
Graduate	Master of Arts, Educational Administration and Supervision
Occupation	William Davies Middle School Teacher of Social Studies