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An internship experience in educational leadership at Millville Memorial High School

Stephen R. Saul
Rowan University

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AN INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AT MILLVILLE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

by
Stephen R. Saul

A Masters Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Masters of Arts Degree in The Graduate School of Rowan University
April 1998

Approved by

Date Approved April 21, 1998
ABSTRACT

Stephen R. Saul  
An Internship Experience in Educational Leadership at Millville Memorial High School  
1998  
Dr. Ronald L. Capasso  
School Administration

The purpose of the study is to determine if the at-risk youth employment internship program can improve student performance in the areas of attendance, academic achievement, and discipline offenses. The at-risk youth employment internship program is a two year pilot program supported by the state of New Jersey. The Millville school district was selected as the representative for Cumberland county. The at-risk youth employment internship program places an at-risk student in a job shadowing experience for an eight week period. The student is required to attend three days per week for two hours per day. The student is given a stipend of $25 per week for a total of $200. The employer is given a stipend of $150 per month for a total of $300. Data was recorded for students participating in the program for three marking periods. Data was collected based on marking period averages in attendance, grades, and discipline offenses. Attendance and academic achievement did not improve as a result of participation in the program. The number of discipline offenses did decrease significantly in the third marking period.
The purpose of the study is to determine if the at-risk youth employment internship program can improve student performance in the areas of attendance, academic achievement, and discipline offenses. Data was collected based on marking period averages in attendance, grades, and discipline offenses. Attendance and academic achievement did not improve as a result of participation in the program. The number of discipline offenses did decrease significantly in the third marking period.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The at-risk youth employment internship program is funded under P.L. 1995, c. 256. Mr. Charles J. Brett, director of grants for the Millville school district, was responsible for the intern's district receiving the grant. The intern was the coordinator for the grant and had the continual support of Mr. Brett. The intern would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs. Joanne Colacurcio who assisted in conducting the career profiles on the Sigi Plus computer program.

The at-risk youth employment internship program will continue in the Millville school district for an additional marking period. The data for the fourth marking period was unavailable at the time of publication. Information on students participating in the program dropping out of school is also unavailable at the time of publication. This information will be recorded and reported to the state in October of 1998.
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CHAPTER 1
Introduction: Focus of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The problems of at-risk students have been widely recognized in recent years by educators throughout the country. By the year 2020, the majority of public school students will be classified as living in conditions which place them at-risk. (Rossi, p.73) At-risk students often present challenges for schools to attempt to develop programs to combat the problems of poor attendance, low academic achievement, and behavior problems often associated with at-risk students. The intern's district is a prime example of the growing number of at-risk students in our public schools. The intern will describe the demographic factors which effect Millville's growing number of at-risk students later in this paper. The State of New Jersey has recognized the importance of developing programs for at-risk students. The intern believes that one such program can have a positive impact on Millville's students.

The State of New Jersey recently established a two year pilot program based on P.L. 1993, c. 236 known as the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program. The two year pilot program will involve 1 school district from each of New Jersey's 21 counties. School districts with the highest number of at-risk students were given the first opportunity to participate in the program. The intern's district was the third choice of the state in Cumberland county, however, the first two districts chose not to apply for this grant. The specifics of the program involve enrolling an at-risk student in the ninth grade in a two month employment internship. The student is required to attend the internship for two hours per day, three days per week, for eight weeks. The student is given a stipend of $25 per week for a maximum of $200. The participating employers in the internship are given a stipend of $300 to cover any administrative cost that may occur.
Product Outcome Statement

All students participating in the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program will improve their attendance, academic performance, and reduce their discipline referrals. The intern will serve as the coordinator of the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program and will be responsible for monitoring the students progress as a direct result of involvement in the program (see Appendix).

Purpose of the Study

The application for the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship describes the purpose of the program as:

The purpose of this program is to enable at-risk students to acquire a knowledge of the business operations of the employer with whom the student is placed and an understanding of the linkage between the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary for school success and future successful functioning as an adult in the workplace.

The application also states that the primary objective of the program is to keep students in school that would be in danger of dropping out.

Definitions

The following terms will be used as an integral part of this study:

*at-risk pupil*: pupils eligible for free milk or free lunch under the federal nutrition programs.

*At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program*: signed into law November 4, 1995 establishing a two year pilot program placing at-risk students in employment internships.

*P.L. 1993,c. 236*: the actual law that established the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program.

Limitations of the Study

The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program will have numerous intervening variables that will challenge the intern. The program is a two year pilot
program and guidelines are provided by the state, however, the exact procedure for implementing the program is to be decided by each district (see Appendix). The first limitation the intern will confront is locating prospective employers that will possess the qualities necessary to provide a positive experience for the at-risk students. The second limitation will be the perception of the students to the program. The number of at-risk students in the intern's district is large and the intern will need to develop a screening process to select the student's with the best chance of succeeding in the program. Transportation for the at-risk students to their internship will be another limitation the intern anticipates. Many of the at-risk students live within the actual city limits and many of the prospective employers are several miles outside of the city limits. Perhaps the greatest limitation for the intern will be that the program is a pilot program established by the state and the intern must follow the guidelines established for this program.

Setting of the Study

The city of Millville is located in Cumberland County in the State of New Jersey. Millville's population in 1990 was 25,992 which represents a 4.7% increase when compared to 1980(Fenton, 1995). Millville has been historically known as a manufacturing town with the glass industry being the leading source of manufacturing jobs. A comparison of statistics from 1980 and 1990 demonstrates the changes currently occurring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data demonstrates the decline in manufacturing jobs and the increase in construction, services, and public administration which may hold implications for the district's vocational and business curriculum (Fenton, 1995).

Millville has a commission style of government. Elections are held every four years and five commissioners are elected. The commissioner receiving the most votes is appointed as the mayor.

The first building to be referred to generally as "Millville Senior High School," was erected in 1895 on Second Street. The cornerstone for this building was laid on November 30, 1895. The building was then known as the "Sensor School." By 1920, the school's enrollment exceeded the capacity of the building on Second Street so the Board of Education secured two World War I prefabricated buildings and erected them in the area between Second and Third Streets.

After reviewing information provided by the administration, it was established that in 1925, a new building named "Memorial High School," was to be completed at Fifth and Broad Streets and was to open for classes in September of that year. In the early days, courses were designed for one of two fields; (1) preparation for college, and (2) preparation for office work. More than 50% of the students took college preparatory courses.

The opening of the new school in September 1925, made it possible to expand and enlarge the program of instruction. For the first time, the school had such things under its roof as an auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, library, mechanical drawing room, and combined metal-wood shop. The office of the city's superintendent of schools occupied the present principal's office and the principal's office occupied the space now devoted to the medical room.

Until 1937, there were two separate terms of school. One ended in February, the other completed in June.
In September 1964, the building at Fifth and Broad Streets was occupied by Memorial junior high School, and the Senior High School was established in its present structure at the corner of Wade Boulevard and Pine Street.

Today, Memorial high School houses all of Millville's eighth graders and all of the district's ninth graders, an enrollment figure of approximately 900 students. The Senior High School contains all tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students form Millville, and the sending districts, enrolling approximately 1,400 students. The total high school enrollment (ninth grade through twelfth grade) approaches 1,800 students.

Millville's school district houses an array of ethnicity within its barriers. The average economic situation for the community and the student population is lower-middle class. The ethnic background of our student enrollment is as follows: 75.2% are white, 15.5% are African-American, 9% are Hispanic, .2% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and .1% is American Indian. The gender population is almost divided down the middle, but the males outnumber the females by about 50 students.

Based on the school district's yearly study of racial makeup of each school, it is evident the minority population is growing in the center-city area and that the white population is growing in the western part of the city. In 1990, of those households with children under 18 present, 69.9% were headed by two parents, 7.0% by male without a spouse present, and 23.4% by female without a spouse present. Comparisons to state averages are somewhat disquieting. Children in Millville are significantly more likely to be living in homes without two parents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Millville</th>
<th>New Jersey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Only</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Only</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows that nearly one-third of our city's children are living in single-
parent homes, a fact which carries serious implications for the school district. For one thing, it is often harder to make contact with and involve single parents in their children's education. As the sole provider and the only parent available to perform all the daily household duties, a single parent may have trouble finding time to meet with teachers or attend educational meetings (Fenton, 1995).

Data on income shows that, in general, local residents have less disposable income to spend on the educational and cultural things that enrich children's early years and prepare them for a strong start in school. It is also clear that the burdens of property fall disproportionately on minority families. In general, minority children are more likely to come to school needing significant supplementary support and services so they can succeed in school. The 1990 Census data on income shows that Millville's residents are less affluent than the state average, but slightly more affluent than the county average (Fenton, 1995):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Income Levels</th>
<th>Millville</th>
<th>Cumberland Co.</th>
<th>New Jersey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita income</td>
<td>13,748</td>
<td>12,560</td>
<td>18,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family income</td>
<td>36,654</td>
<td>34,571</td>
<td>47,589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Millville's Per Capita income levels by Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita income</td>
<td>14,677</td>
<td>8,313</td>
<td>7,017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Residents Living in Poverty</th>
<th>Millville</th>
<th>Cumberland Co.</th>
<th>New Jersey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty Level</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The disadvantages of poverty fall most heavily on Millville's minority population. Hispanic children bear an especially heavy burden since nearly two thirds live in poverty and many enter school with an incomplete knowledge of English. The district's concerted efforts to improve the English skills of Hispanic students and the bilingual teacher's and supervisor's efforts to involve the parents are important steps in helping the children get a good education. It is apparent that the local schools must allocate more resources to addressing the educational disadvantage of poverty than must most other school districts in New Jersey.

Educational attainments in Millville lag behind those of those state residents as a whole, especially in the area of college and graduate degrees. Persons with less education are at a disadvantage in today's job market, which increasingly requires higher educational skills. The local area is at a disadvantage in trying to attract companies which need a well-educated work force. The schools hold an important key to improving the quality of life for individuals and for the county as a whole. All persons, both within and without the school system, should impress upon children, of all races, the importance and advantages of a good education.

**Educational Levels of Millville Residents 25 Years and Older**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Millville</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent with No High School Diploma</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with High School Diploma or Better</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with Bachelor's Degree or Better</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with Graduate/Professional Degree</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Educational Levels of Millville Residents, Compared to State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Millville</th>
<th></th>
<th>NJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent with No High School Diploma</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with High School Diploma or Better</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with Bachelor's Degree or Better</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with Graduate/Professional Degree</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demographic data show that many of Millville's youth suffer social and economic disadvantages which may impair their ability to learn in school and to succeed in
society once they leave an educational environment. Addressing these problems will take concerted efforts of the schools, social-service agencies, churches, governmental entities, and the entire community. It is also evident that Millville's residents alone lack the economic resources necessary to provide the compensatory help which many of our students need. Recent increases in state aid have been a tremendous assistance in providing some of the services needed by our children. The district hopes the legislature will continue to meet its obligation so that Millville's children may receive a start in life more equal to the affluent sections of New Jersey.

Importance of the Study

The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program application lists the following rationale:

The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program will assist, on a pilot basis, in addressing the needs and conditions which place students at-risk of not acquiring the knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes necessary for school success and future successful functioning as adults in society (Henry, 1997).

The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program will be a valuable program to attempt to combat the problems facing the at-risk students in the interns district. The findings of the 1995-1996 Vital Education Statistics found that the highest dropout rates occur between grades nine and ten. The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program, if successful, can help to reduce the dropout rate for the district. The program also has the potential to improve students academic performance, attendance, and behavior. The program also will assist the intern's district in meeting the recommendations of the Core Curriculum Content Standards and the Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of education in New Jersey. The program also provides the intern's district the opportunity to establish a positive relationship between local businesses and the schools. This relationship between the schools and the local businesses is needed to meet the changes taking place in Millville's economic base.
Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study will include a review of the literature, the design of the study, a presentation of research findings, and conclusions and implications for further study.
CHAPTER 2
Review of the Literature

The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program was created to combat the problems associated with at-risk students. The number of at-risk students is steadily increasing and by the year 2020, the majority of public school students will be classified as living in conditions which place them at-risk (Rossi, 1995). The increase in at-risk students and the numerous problems facing at-risk students has caused educators to seriously address solutions. The researcher will first demonstrate the specific problems associated with at-risk students and the importance of not ignoring these problems. The researcher will then highlight some of the general strategies implemented to assist schools with at-risk students. Finally, the researcher will review several programs that have been able to have a positive impact on at-risk students.

The primary objective of the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program is to prevent at-risk students from dropping out of school. A study conducted by the United States General Accounting Office in 1986 discovered that at-risk students were three times more likely to dropout of school when compared to students from a higher socioeconomic background (Coyle-Williams, 1989). The high school dropout will be at a severe disadvantage throughout life that effect not only the individual, but society as well. The high school dropout is twice as likely to be unemployed and suitable for only one in six jobs when compared to students with a high school education (The Appalachian Regional Commision, 1987). The high school drop out that manages to find employment will only earn two thirds the income of a high school graduate (Ranbom, 1986).

A study conducted in 1988 by the William T. Grant Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship also supports the bleak outlook for a high school dropout. The study held three major findings: 1. High school dropouts have a higher rate of unemployment than all other groups, 2. Only 55% of dropouts under age 20 were employed, with only one in
five working full-time, and 3. Only one in seven female dropouts were employed full-time (Coyle-Williams, 1989).

The impact that dropouts have on society are staggering. Dropouts represent 66% of the prison population (Day, 1982). The National Alliance of Business in 1988 cited the following cost to society: $210 billion for training, $41 billion on welfare programs, $16 billion on teen pregnancy welfare costs, $25 billion on remediation and lost productivity, and $240 billion in lost lifetime earnings and taxes for each year's dropouts (Coyle-Williams, 1989).

A study of demographic trends concluded that by the year 2000 dropouts will face the following challenges: 1. many low-skilled jobs will disappear, 2. more than fifty percent of all new jobs will require education beyond high school, and 3. the low-skilled jobs that will remain will be in industries with weak wage gains and growth (Johnston 1987). An additional study conducted projected the following consequences for society: 1. business will lack prepared workers, 2. the costs of welfare will continue to increase, 3. crime, alcohol and drug abuse will increase, and 4. the social security system will be placed at greater risk (Miller, 1988).

It is apparent that educators must focus their efforts on preventing students from dropping out of high school. Because such a large percentage of at-risk students continue to dropout of school, the greatest improvement can be made by developing strategies and programs to keep at-risk students in school. A reoccurring theme throughout the literature is the importance of providing the at-risk student with someone that can encourage and guide the at-risk student through the challenges faced. The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program shares a similar characteristic with several programs that have proven to be successful. That shared characteristic is that the at-risk student will benefit from interacting with an adult on a one on one basis. The researcher will summarize numerous programs that have been successful with at-risk students. Some
programs involve teacher mentors, college mentors or business mentors, but all the programs share the basic one on one approach that demonstrates to the at-risk student that someone cares about them.

The first program was conducted at Lely High School in Naples Florida. The program placed 29 at-risk students with grade point averages 1.5 or less with 29 teacher advisors. The only requirement of the program was that the students and teachers had to meet at least once a week for a minimum of 15 minutes. The program monitored the progress of the students over a 21 week period and compared the results to a control group of randomly selected students that also had a grade point average of 1.5 or less. At the end of the 21 weeks, statistics were gathered in the following categories: grade point averages, attendance, dropout rates, self-concepts, and self-assessments of intellectual status and school status. The following results occurred: "During the 21 weeks of the experiment, students in the experimental group were absent from school significantly fewer days than were the similar students who had no teacher advisor. Of the 29 students in the control group, 12 dropped out of school, but only five of the 29 students who had advisors did so. The mean grade point average of students with advisors was better (1.05) than that of students without advisors(0.66). There was no statistical significant differences between the two groups in self-concept or in self-assessment of intellectual status and school status, but students in the experimental group did score higher than students in the control group on the Piers-Harris self-concept scale(Testerman, 1996). Programs such as the one conducted in Lely High School demonstrate the positive impact a caring adult can have on the at-risk student.

Another successful program for at-risk students is Project Raise. Project Raise was started in Baltimore in 1988. The project involved 60 at-risk students hat were each given a community mentor. The goal of Project Raise was to "create on a large scale the kind of sustained caring connections which can make a dramatic difference in the lives of
very high risk children (Mcpartland, 1991). The students who participated in project Raise program improved their school attendance by 3 percent, but were still below the districts average (McPartland, 1991). The evaluation of the this program emphasized the importance of strong one to one mentoring and the personal qualities of the individual mentors. This was an important consideration for the researcher as he attempted to arrange prospective employers for the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program.

The "Let's Do Lunch" program involved placing an at-risk student with an adult volunteer from a local business. The school chose eight students identified as being of the highest risk of dropping out of school and selected eight adult volunteers. The pairs ate lunch together once a week for 14 weeks. At the end of the 14 weeks the students went on a field trip to the business of the eight adult volunteers. Students were given a pre-and post test using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. The study found that "Although results did not indicate a statistically significant improvement in overall self-concept, or on any of the subscales of the PH, there was a trend toward increased scores and much anecdotal evidence that the children had enjoyed participating in the program, felt better about themselves, and learned some interesting information about the world of work" (Friedman, 1995).

A PBS flagship station Thirteen/WNET in New York has developed a program called "What's Up in Factories?" The program is designed to assist educators in teaching their students the skills that are needed in the changing world of manufacturing. The program revolves around a curriculum developed by Thirteen/WNET that provides training and materials to teachers. WNET's Director of Outreach, Ann Mauze, feels "the program is popular with educators because it offers a fresh look at manufacturing and at the opportunities the industry holds for high school and college graduates" (Miller, 1996). Students involved in the program experience both classroom problem solving activities as well as field trips to different factories. One student had the following comments about
the program; "I learned how fast we can get things done by working together and the need to work more with computers and technology, because every day things are changing, and it will make me more qualified for a job I choose" (Miller, 1996). Mr. Miller, the Director of Publishing at WNET concluded that "recurring throughout the comments of teachers and students is a recognition of the importance in the workplace of such qualities as a willingness to take responsibility, punctuality, cooperation, effective communication, and ingenuity" (Miller, 1996).

One of the concepts of the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program is that the at-risk student may benefit from a vocational experience at an earlier age then usually offered. There is evidence that involving vocational education with at-risk students can have positive results. "The National Assessment of Vocational Education study found that vocational education does help some students stay in school and that some schools can document such program outcomes as increased student attendance, retention, and graduation rates (Coyle-Williams, 1989). A two year study of non-college bound youth by the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship gave the following recommendation: "continued public and private sector attention to cooperative education, internship, apprenticeship, and other forms of hands on experiential learning" (Coyle-Williams, 1989).

The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program is also supported by the Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education in New Jersey. In that plan the following goals relate to the program:

"1. Goal 1, Strategy 3: Develop partnerships with other agencies of state and local government and private and community-based organizations involved in the provision of services in which academic and non-academic needs overlap. These partnerships will create a more coherent support network for the provision of services through schools, allowing educators to focus on the core academic mission."
2. Goal 9, Strategy 5: Collaborate with business and higher education to develop common understandings, expectations and, where appropriate, cooperative initiatives to better prepare students for advanced study and employment.

3. The Core Curriculum Content Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in May, 1996, include five cross-content workplace readiness standards: career planning; use of technology, information, and other tools; critical thinking; decision making, and problem-solving skills; self-management skills; and safety principles. Through these five cross-content workplace readiness standards, the knowledge and skills associated with career education have been elevated in importance for all instructional areas. These standards apply to all students and reinforce the philosophy of the School-to-Work Initiative" (Henry, 1997).

The researcher feels very strongly that the literature supports that the At-Risk Youth Employment Internship Program can be highly successful. An urgent need exists to implement programs to keep at-risk students from dropping out of school and creating a lifetime of hardship not only for themselves, but also for society.
CHAPTER 3
The Design of the Study

General Description of the Research Design

The research design for the at-risk youth employment internship program needed to meet the guidelines set forth by the state of New Jersey. The state has established this two-year pilot program to combat the problems faced by at-risk students. It defines an at-risk pupil as being eligible for free milk or free lunch under the federal nutrition program. The maximum amount a district can be reimbursed is $23,809. Each student participant will be given a $200 stipend and each employer will be given a $300 stipend for their participation in the program.

Description of the Development and Design of the Research Instruments Used in the Study

The intern began implementing the program by obtaining a copy of the district's ninth grade free milk and lunch list. The intern's district had approximately 150 students eligible for free milk and lunch. Based on the stipend amount given to students and employers it would cost approximately $75,000 to involve all eligible students. It was not possible for the intern to involve each eligible student due to financial considerations. The state allowed each district to design and develop their student selection criteria.

The application for the at-risk youth employment internship program lists a rationale that assisted the intern in developing the research design. The rationale states the ninth grade was chosen because statistically that is when the highest dropout rates occur. The intern, along with members of the committee, decided to focus on three factors that increase the likelihood that a student will dropout. Those three factors are: 1. Attendance, 2. Academic Achievement, and 3. Discipline.

The first factor, attendance, was easily monitored for potential applicants to the program. The intern was able to utilize the districts computer to check the attendance
record of applicants. Attendance was considered to be a major factor in the placing of students in the program.

The second factor, academic achievement, was monitored on a marking period basis for all applicants. The intern was able to check students grades on the district's computer on a marking period basis. The intern attempted to find applicants whose grades reflected a need for improvement.

The third factor, discipline, was also checked for each applicant. The intern was able to utilize the district's computer to check the number of discipline referrals, and the nature of each offense. A determination had been made by the committee to eliminate any applicants that were extreme behavior problems.

The intern also received input from several individuals that recommended potential candidates to the program. The intern met with the vice-principal in charge of guidance over the summer and explained all aspects of the program. The intern also met with the substance awareness counselor and explained all aspects of the program to him.

Description of the Data Collection Approach

Once a student was identified as a potential candidate for the program the intern contacted the student and described the program to the student. If the student was interested in the program, an appointment was set up to stay after school with the intern and develop a career profile. Students were assisted by the intern and the school's business/career teacher in the use of the SigiPlus computer program. Students were able to develop a career profile and search any possible career they wished. The student was given a printout of the information and the intern documented which possible careers the individual had demonstrated an interest towards.

The intern sought out prospective employers through a letter describing the program that was sent to employers that had previously demonstrated a willingness to work with the school district. Members of the committee also spoke at the chambers of
commerce meeting and the Kiwannas meeting to seek additional employers. The intern also contacted specific employers based on the career profile the students had completed on the SigiPlus computer program.

Students were placed in the best possible match based on their career profile and the employers available. The intern met with both the employer and the student to set up times and dates for the eight week long internship. Students were responsible for completing a time sheet that was verified by the employer. The intern coordinated the payment of both students and employers through the payroll department. Students were interviewed upon completion of the program by the intern. Students were asked to write a brief essay of what they learned through their experience.

Data was collected on each student that entered the program. A record of the student's attendance, grades, and discipline referrals prior to entering the program was kept on file for each student. A file was established for each student contained the above information as well as parental permission slips, employers name and phone number, and all other pertinent information.

Description of the data Analysis Plan

The intern evaluated the program based on the criteria set forth by the state as well as the committees criteria. The state was primarily concerned with students dropping out of school. This data was easily obtained by checking how many of the students that participated in the program had dropped out of school. The state mentions that this frequently happens between the ninth and tenth grade. The intern will need to check enrollment in the fall of 1998 to determine if the participants are still in school.

The intern will use three sets of data for each of the three criteria (attendance, academic achievement, and discipline). The students attendance will be examined before, during, and after participating in the program. The students grades will be compared before, during and after participating in the program. The students discipline will be
examined before, during and after participating in the program. Most students will begin the internship in the third marking period which allows the intern two marking periods of data prior, one marking period during, and one marking period after the program.
What Information was Found?

The at-risk youth employment internship program led to data collection in three primary areas. Students' attendance was recorded for marking period #1, marking period #2, and marking period #3. Students' academic achievement was recorded by examining report cards for marking period #1, marking period #2, and marking period #3. Students' discipline offenses were recorded for marking period #1, marking period #2, and marking period #3. The intern was able to utilize the district's computer system to acquire the necessary data.

The intern first looked at the attendance record for the student participants. The following is a group average of days absent per marking period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Period</th>
<th>Days Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Attendance Chart]
The second area the intern examined was the students academic achievement. The intern calculated grade point averages for each participant per marking period. The intern then calculated the following group grade point average for each marking period based on a 4.0 scale:

**GRADE POINT AVERAGES**

- Marking Period #1: 2.4
- Marking Period #2: 2.1
- Marking Period #3: 2.0

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The third area the intern examined was the number of discipline offenses per marking period of each participant. The intern calculated this data through the districts computer system that records each time a student is referred to the discipline office. The following is the group average of discipline offenses per marking period:

**DISCIPLINE OFFENSES**

- Marking Period #1: 2.6
- Marking Period #2: 5.3
- Marking Period #3: 2.8
What did the Information Mean?

The average attendance of the participants dropped each marking period. Four of the participants in the program had eight or more absences during marking period three. These individuals had an impact on the overall average. The intern was optimistic that attendance would improve for the participants and was disappointed, but not discouraged with the results. The problems faced by the at-risk population are numerous and the program, while a source of motivation, is unable to address all the needs of this population.

The academic achievement of the participants also declined each marking period. The grades of the participants were fairly consistent. One student improved from a 1.6 g.p.a. in marking period #1 to a 2.4 g.p.a. in marking period #2, and finally to a 3.3 g.p.a. in marking period #3. The student informed the intern that her mentor for the internship was also helping her with her homework and motivating her to better academically.
The discipline offenses for the participants increased in the second marking period and leveled off to just above the first marking period average for the third marking period. The intern feels this was largely due to the fact that most participants began the job shadowing experience at the end of the second marking period. The intern and the vice-principals in charge of discipline emphasized that they could be removed from the program if their behavior in school was not appropriate. One student had 13 offenses in marking period #2 and only 2 in marking period #3. This was an area that the intern feels the program has had a positive impact.
CHAPTER 5
Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Major Conclusions for the Project

The intern feels that the at-risk youth employment internship program had a positive impact on the lives of the participants. The decrease in discipline offenses for the participants between the second and third marking period can be attributed to the participants involvement in the program. The feedback from the students was primarily positive. Students were asked by the intern to recall an exciting day that stands out in their mind. One student, that was job shadowing with the police department, described the day he was able to do a ride along with the officers. Another student, that was job shadowing in a doctors office, described how amazed he was to be able to watch the doctors perform procedures on cardiac patients. Another student, that was job shadowing in a law office, described the day she was able to sit in on a deposition. These are just several examples of the positive experiences that occurred as a result of the program.

The intern was disappointed that the areas of attendance and academic achievement did not realize a significant improvement. These were two major goals of the program. The intern may have had unrealistic expectations in these areas. The problems of the at-risk student are broad and complex and not easily addressed by a program of this nature. The main objective of the state of New Jersey for this program is that the students do not dropout of high school. The intern will continue to track these students to determine if this objective is met.

Several students did not have a positive experience in the program. One student stopped attending the program after several weeks because he was "bored and not learning anything". Another student had to be temporarily removed due to immature behavior that was disrupting the employers business. The intern was able to address the behavior with the student and the employer agreed to give the student a second chance.
Major Conclusions for the Intern's Leadership Development

The intern experienced improvement in his leadership through his diverse experience as coordinator of the at-risk youth employment internship program. The intern was able to interact with administrators at all levels including the principal, vice-principals, guidance staff, and central administration. The intern was responsible for coordinating teachers to assist in the career profiles and was able to utilize the expertise of specific teachers to facilitate a positive experience for the students in this area. The intern was responsible for interacting with the state and was interviewed during the monitoring process by state representatives. The intern also interacted with numerous business and political leaders in the community including the mayor and chief of police. The intern feels his leadership improved as he assumed the role of salesman of the program.

Major Conclusions for the Change Brought About in the Organization

The intern feels that the at-risk youth employment internship program assisted the organization in developing a collaborative relationship with numerous businesses in the community. Recent research emphasizes the importance of building a community partnership for learning which this program was able to accomplish on a small scale. The other major asset to the organization was an additional method for motivating students to behave appropriately in school. Students interested in participating in the program realized they needed to modify their behavior. Feedback from the administration in this area was very positive.

Major Implications of the Study in All Areas

The at-risk youth employment internship program is a two-year pilot program and the intern feels that certain improvements need to be made if the program is to be successful. The state does not outline for the employer or for the student exactly what is supposed to happen during the eight weeks. The intern feels it would be wise to have a handbook for both the student and the employer to facilitate a positive experience. The
The intern also feels that information should be provided to the employer on the characteristics of a positive mentor. The students that had positive experiences also had strong mentors that demonstrated a genuine interest in the student. The intern would also recommend that the job shadowing experience be modified from the eight week format. The intern feels that it would benefit both parties if the student were able to job shadow with several employers. Students placed in businesses that offered little diversity became bored. This could be corrected by having the student visit several different employers over the eight week period.

The Need for Further Study

The problems confronted by the at-risk student continue to be a major concern for educators as we prepare for the 21st century. The at-risk youth employment internship program has the potential to assist in addressing some of the issues, but in all reality it merely scratches the surface. The at-risk student frequently lacks a positive role model to demonstrate what can be accomplished through education and hard work. Schools need to seek out positive mentors and involve them with our students. Future researchers would be wise to focus on developing programs that engage students year round, not just for eight weeks. Unfortunately, many of the problems faced by the at-risk student will continue to exist after their completion of the at-risk youth employment internship program.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Fenton, W. (1995). Demographic variables which may affect the local educational process. (Available from [Millville Public Schools, Millville, NJ ]).


APPENDIX A
Phase II: Implementation Plan

A. Student Participant Identification
B. Student Selection Criteria
C. Student Referral Process
D. Employer Identification Process
E. Employer Participant Identification
F. Student-Employer Matching Process
G. Student Participant Outcomes
H. Program Coordinator
FY'98 AT-RISK YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PHASE II: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

APPLICANT NAME: Millville Board of Education

Provide the requested information on the implementation plan and obtain the signature of the chief school administrator or business administrator in the space provided. Attach additional pages as necessary.

A. Student Participant Identification

Identify the number of ninth grade at-risk students who will participate in this program. (Note: The number of students is an estimate only and may change as the program is implemented.)

40 number of students to participate

B. Student Selection Criteria

Describe the criteria to be used for selecting students to participate in this program, which, in addition to eligibility for at-risk funding under section 80 of P.L. 1990, c. 52 (C. 18A:7D-20), shall include the identification of students who are not meeting the district standards of behavior and academic achievement. Identify the basis for the development and use of these criteria. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

The criteria used to identify those At-Risk students for program participation will be attendance, grades, discipline and eligibility for the free lunch program. Students will have to meet one or more of the criteria to be eligible for the program.

Students who are eligible for at-risk funding under section 80 of P.L. 1990,c. 52 (C.18A:7D-20) will be considered along with those students who are not meeting Millville's attendance requirement. Student behavior will also be an identifying criteria for eligibility for the program. Students who have had a problem with truancy, lateness or lack of motivation would be good candidates for the program. However, those students that have been disruptive and disrespectful to the teaching staff will not be invited to participate in the program. A review committee will be established to make decisions on which students will participate in the program. The establishment of these attendance and behavioral criteria has been developed through many years of Millville Board of Education policies and administrative procedures. These attendance and behavioral procedures were established and have been in place for many years.

The review committee will consist of the Memorial High School Principal or his designee, a guidance counselor, a teacher, one or more parents and the Project Coordinator. The committee will develop screening criteria and review each applicant to select those that best meet the criteria.
D. Employer Identification Process

Describe the process used to identify prospective employers. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

Attach to this page a copy of the district's form letter sent to employers to solicit participation. The letter should address the following:

* Flat $150 administrative stipend per month, not based on the number of students in internships with a particular employer;
* One two-month program to a maximum of 48 hours per student focused on career awareness;
* Student stipend of $25 per week paid by district;
* Prohibition of work by students primarily to benefit the employer(s);
* Name and phone number of district contact person; and
* Notification of the participating employer's responsibility to submit an employer verification letter for student participation upon program completion.

Millville School System has a long standing relationship with the employers in the community. We have a very active co-op program that places many (80 students) grade twelve students in jobs in the community. The high school offers COE (Cooperative Office Education), CIE (Cooperative Industrial Education), and DE (Marketing or Distributive Education) programs. These programs and their coordinators have worked with our local employers for many years.

Mr. Steve Saul, currently a teacher at Memorial High School is in the process of completing an internship with Rowan University and will coordinate this program as part of that internship. Mr. Saul, a native of Millville, will coordinate employer contact and student placement in the program. The employers will understand that they will function as mentors to the students and that students are prohibited from working primarily to benefit the employer.

We have attached a preliminary letter that has been sent to local employers explaining the program and asking them to participate.
June 2, 1997

Dear [Recipient],

Recently the Millville Board of Education was chosen by the State of New Jersey to receive a grant entitled The At-Risk Youth Employment Internship. The intent of this grant is to place at-risk ninth grade students in a work-based learning environment. The idea is to have the students develop good job skills and job attitudes. Each student participating in the program will have a two month internship, six hours per week, for a maximum of 48 hours.

The state has structured this grant so that the school system can: (1) Reimburse the employer, $150.00 each month for two months, for their participation; (2) Provide a weekly stipend of $25.00 for the student involved in the program.

This program should provide students with incentive to stay in school and work towards obtaining a good job after graduation.

We are in the process of developing phase two in the grant application. A component of this part of the grant application is that we must identify a list of employers who will be interested in participating in the program. In the past your organization has been very involved with student employment programs. We believe that your business would provide an excellent site for student mentorship.

We would like to offer you the opportunity to participate in this program. The advantage to you will be that you can help one or more at-risk students find direction in their individual career choice. While you are acting as a mentor for these students the school system will provide a stipend to offset your cost. At the conclusion of the student mentorship the employer will be required to submit an employer verification letter to receive compensation.

Please respond on the attached form to let us know if you are interested in participating in this very valuable project. We have enclosed a self-address stamped envelope for your response.

Sincerely,

Mr. Charles J. Brett Jr.
Director of Grants and Continuing Ed.
C. **Student Referral Process**

Describe the process by which students will be referred for participation in this program. For example:

* Indicate who can refer a student (e.g., student self-referral, parent referral);
* Identify who will receive the referrals; and
* Describe the plan for publicizing the program.

Attach to this page a copy of the district's form letter for parent notification and permission. This letter should include the following:

* Name, address and phone number of employer,
* Name of the internship program;
* Length of internship (beginning and end dates) and number of hours per week;
* Potential stipend amount of $25 per week for a maximum of 8 weeks; and
* Space for parent signature and date.

Students will be referred to this program by teachers, counselors and administrators. Parents and/or the student may request referrals through any of these school staff members.

The referrals will be relieved by the Program Coordinator and brought in the form of a recommendation to the review committee for acceptance into the program.

The program will be publicized by advertising it in the student bulletin of Memorial High School. Memorial houses all of our ninth grade students. The program coordinator will also publicize the program with the employers by:

(a) Personnel Contact
(b) Speaking to the Chamber of Commerce
(c) Speaking to the Millville Kiwanis Club
    (a very active group of local business leaders.)
Dear

Recently the Millville Board of Education was chosen by the State of New Jersey to receive a grant. The intent of the grant is to place ninth grade students in a work-based learning environment. The idea is to have the students develop good job skills and job attitudes. This program should provide students with incentive to stay in school and work towards obtaining a good job after graduation.

Your son/daughter has been placed with the following employer:

Employer: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Telephone: ____________________________
Manager: ____________________________

Your son/daughter will have a two month internship with the above employer. They will participate in this program 3 days a week for 2 hours each day. They will receive a stipend of $25.00 a week for their participation in this program.

We believe that your son/daughter will benefit from participation in this program. Please sign in the space provided at the bottom of this form. If you have any questions about the program please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Mr. Stephen Saul
Project Coordinator

_________________________  ___________________________
Parents Signature                 Date
**E. Employer Participant Identification**

Provide the following information for each of the prospective participating employers. Attach additional pages if necessary.

1. **Employer Name:**
   - Contact Person:
   - Address:
   - City, State, Zip:

2. **Employer Name:**
   - Contact Person:
   - Address:
   - City, State, Zip:

3. **Employer Name:**
   - Contact Person:
   - Address:
   - City, State, Zip:

4. **Employer Name:**
   - Contact Person:
   - Address:
   - City, State, Zip:

5. **Employer Name:**
   - Contact Person:
   - Address:
   - City, State, Zip:

6. **Employer Name:**
   - Contact Person:
   - Address:
   - City, State, Zip:
F. **Student-Employer Matching Process**

Outline the process that will be used to match students to employers. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Mr. Saul, the Project Coordinator, and the review committee will be responsible for matching the students and employers. Students will have the opportunity to work with the school systems Sigy Plus program to select a career major that they are interested in. Consideration will be given to student career preference. Employee-employer compatibility will be taken into account. Students will also have a personal interview either with Mr. Saul or one of the schools guidance personnel before placement. At this interview the Kuder Preference test and other appropriate career inventories will be discussed.
G. Student Participation Outcomes

Describe the manner in which student employment experiences will enhance the self-esteem and assimilation of life skills necessary for productive functioning in the school setting and society. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Students participating in the program should demonstrate a 10% improvement in their school attendance rate during (and after the completion of) the program.

Students participating in the program will demonstrate a review interest in school by signing up for one additional after school extra curricular activity by the completion of the program.

Students participating in the program will demonstrate a letter grade increase in at least one subject area after successfully completing the program.

(See Attached Sheet)

H. Program Coordinator

Identify the person who will coordinate/oversee this program for the district. Indicate that individual's phone and fax numbers, as well as the location at which they can be reached by mail.

Mr. Steve Saul
Project Coordinator
Millville Memorial High School
504 East Broad Street
Millville, NJ 08332
Phone (609) 327-6072
Fax (609) 825-4480

Signature: 

Title: Project Coordinator

Date: June 24, 1997
The student employment experience should provide the opportunity for students to enhance their self-esteem by participating and successfully completing the program. Many of these students do not have role models to model their work-based behavior on; this will be corrected during the grant experience. Another factor that will enhance their self-esteem will be the weekly stipend that they will earn while participating.

It is hoped that each student will assimilate the life skills necessary to hold down a job. Attendance, punctuality, appearance and attitude at the work-based site will provide students with the opportunity to learn to function in society.

We expect students involved in the program to meet the outcome of better attendance, better grades and a renewed interest in school as listed in the above outcomes.
Biographical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Stephen R. Saul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Date and Place of Birth   | April 15, 1969
Millville, NJ              |
| High School Graduation    | Millville Senior High School
Millville, NJ              |
| Undergraduate Information | Bachelor of Science
Health and Physical Education
West Chester University
West Chester, Pa           |
| Graduate Information      | Masters of Arts
School Administration
Rowan University
Glassboro, NJ              |
| Present Occupation        | Teacher
Health and Physical Education
Millville Memorial High School
Millville, NJ               |