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Decreasing chronic absenteeism rate for students with disabilities: One call or text at a time

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DECREASING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RATE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: ONE CALL OR TEXT AT A TIME

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Abstract

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DECREASING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RATE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: ONE CALL OR TEXT AT A TIME

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The purpose of this study was to see if an added layer of communication could reduce the absenteeism rate for Students with Disabilities (SWD). Additionally, the study looked at two areas of interest with regards to communicating with parents and/or guardians (i.e., type of contact and tone of the message being conveyed). The study began by obtaining a list of juniors and sophomores who had missed 10% or more of school for the first 41 days of the 2018-19 school year. The list was then randomly assigned by grade into three groups (i.e., Control, Treatment 1, and Treatment 2). Each group had 10 students identified for the study. The two treatment groups were then further randomized into subgroups for negative and positive tone narratives.

The high school where this study was conducted, had a total enrollment of about 1800 students at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, of those 1800 students, approximately 285 were classified as a SWD. The following research questions to be answered were: 1. Will SWD have better attendance with the added layer of communication (i.e., robocall or text group) compared to those that do not (i.e., Control group)? 2. Will SWD have better attendance when receiving a positive robocall or text message compared to those receiving a negative robocall or text message?

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Chapter 1

Introduction

School absence is one of the first indications that a student will eventually drop out of school if no action is taken (Helm & Burkett, 1989). In addition, graduation rates for several large American cities are poor and other countries experienced significant rates of school absenteeism and dropout (Kearney & Graczyk, 2013). Students who fail to show up to school consistently are at a higher risk for retention and dropping out, correlated to even more social, economic and health problems in adulthood (Childs & Grooms, 2018; Kearney & Graczyk, 2013; Sheldon, 2007). Nolan et al. (2013) found that school dropout is a major concern for students with disabilities (SWD), this group had dropped out of school at a rate of 31.1% (2009).

Unfortunately, the dropout rate has increased for SWD since the 2005-2006 school year of 26% (McConnell & Kubina, 2014) Missing school has been associated with negative and risky student behaviors, such as violence, suicide attempt, pregnancy, injury, tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use (Kearney & Graczyk, 2013; Sheldon, 2007). Thus, keeping students in class may help protect them from engaging in delinquent behaviors and facilitate learning through increase exposure to instruction (Sheldon, 2007). Furthermore, children who do not attend school on a regular basis more often choose unproductive activities that lead to delinquency and effect the community as well as the individual (Childs & Groom, 20018).

Administrators are openly concerned with absenteeism and its implications on both programs and curriculum because students with the poorest attendance are the least able academically (Sheats & Dunkleberger, 1979). Rodger et al. (2016) state that educators care greatly about the amount of time students spend in the classroom because absenteeism results in

substantial loss of classroom learning time. Teachers and administrators estimate that some students may lose not just days, but weeks of learning time, due to tardiness and absences.

Kearney and Graczyk (2013) stated that many schools use to wait to intervene until a student has surpassed a legal limit (e.g., 10 absences in 1 semester). In most states, school funding is received from the state based on average daily attendance; therefore, poor attendance decreases school funding (Helm & Burkett, 1989). Consequently, it is important for schools to monitor attendance due to the many areas that attendance impacts. As a result of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, schools must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) which includes attendance guidelines (Edwards, 2013). Also, schools must routinely monitor the percentage of students who attend school regularly, who are at-risk for chronic absenteeism and who have chronic absenteeism (Kearney & Graczyk, 2013).

Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) indicate that the federal government neither requires nor asks states or school districts to report chronic absenteeism. Instead, as part of the re-authorization of NCLB of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), most states choose to report the average daily attendance of elementary and middle schools, as a second required accountability measure, along with achievement tests in mathematics and English in grades 3 to 8. Average daily attendance, however, masks more than it reveals. Attendance tracking is inconsistent across school districts throughout the United States (Childs & Groom, 20018).

The U.S. Department of Education's Office [US DOE] (2017) states that chronic absenteeism is widespread and that about one out of every seven students missed three weeks or more of school in 2013-14; that translates to approximate 98 million school days lost. Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) have stated that students miss school for many reasons, however, they can be divided into three broad categories:

- Students who *cannot attend* due to illness, family responsibilities, housing instability, the need to work or involvement with the juvenile justice system.
- Students who *will not attend* school to avoid bullying, unsafe conditions, harassment and embarrassment.
- Students who *do not attend* school because they, or their parents, do not see the value in being there, they have something else they would rather do, or nothing stops them from skipping school.

Consequently, as students progress through elementary school and into middle and high school, the likelihood of absenteeism increases (Childs & Groom, 20018). Additionally, approximately 11% of all elementary school students are chronically absent compared to 12% for middle school students and 20% for high school students (Childs & Groom, 20018; US DOE, 2017).

Chronic absenteeism is typically based on total days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences (Balfanz & Byrnes 2012). According to the US DOE (2017), chronic absenteeism is defined as a child who has missed at least 15 days of school during a school year; alternate definitions define chronic absenteeism as students missing 10% (at least 18 days) or more of a school year for any reason (Childs & Groom, 20018).

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights [OCR] (2017) indicates that 6.5 million children were chronically absent during the 2013-2014 school year; this accounts for 13.7% of all students nationwide. Furthermore, OCR (2017) reports that SWD are almost 1.5 times more likely to be chronically absent than students without disabilities. The data supports this claim [to a degree] in showing that 1.1 million SWD accounted for 16.8% of all students nationwide. To further add to the problem of attendance of SWD, Sinclair, Christenson, and

Thurlow (2005) reported that attendance difficulties were a common reason for dropping out noted by youth with learning or emotional or behavioral difficulties.

In New Jersey, OCR (2017) reports that over 32,000 SWD were considered chronically absent and accounted for 20.3% of all students statewide. In the school district that this study will take place (i.e., a South Jersey Urban School District), the NJ Department of Education [NJ DOE] (2016-17) reported [for the first time] the district as having a schoolwide chronic absenteeism rate of 32.30% and that SWD had a rate of 45.10%. The NJ DOE also reports that over 37% of the student population between the grades of K-12 had missed 15 days or more of school for the same school year. Additionally, when combining this with students that have missed 11 to 15 days, the percentage increases to 53% (i.e., 11 or more days out). The only high school within this school district had an enrollment of economically disadvantage students of 79% and SWD of 17%. In addition, the enrolment by race consisted of: 36.5 % Hispanic, 28.2% Black/African American, 20% Asian, and 14.4% White (NJ DOE, 2016-17).

The purpose of this study will be to address two areas of interest related to communicating with the parents/guardians of students with disabilities (SWD) who have been placed/counted as chronically absent from the previous school year (i.e., 2017-18). The first area of interest has to do with what type of message would work best with the parents/guardians, is it the robocall or text that says something such as: "Your child is absent and needs to come to school more often!" or is it; "Your child has shown remarkable attendance thus far and we just wanted to say keep up the good work!" The two examples mentioned above would constitute a negative tone call/text and a positive tone call/text respectively.

The second area of interest deals with how the message is being conveyed (i.e., robocall vs. text messaging). In the era of smartphones/watches, tablets, and laptops, parents/guardians

would have to work very hard not to know what is going on in the world around them. Communicating in this manner may have the potential of saving the district money with regards to manpower hours spent talking to parents/guardians. Subsequently, parents/guardians can also benefit from the instant feedback they received about their child's attendance both positive and negative. The results of this study will be used to see if it can be applied as a viable districtwide tool to help in decreasing our chronic absenteeism rate for both the general and special education population of the South Jersey Urban School District (SJUSD). The research questions for this study were the following:

1. Will SWD have better attendance with the added layer of communication (i.e., robocall or text group) compared to those that do not (i.e., Control group)?

2. Will SWD have better attendance when receiving a positive robocall or text message compared to those receiving a negative robocall or text message?

A possible limitation to this study that could have a negative influence on the data is that some of the parents/guardians may not have a working phone number for their home, cell, or both. In addition, because the population of the high school is made up of 79% economically disadvantage students, it would not be out of the realm of possibility that their parents/guardians are struggling with paying for things such items as: rent, food, and basic utilities. In short, they may not be able to keep a 'working' landline or cell phone for an extended period of time. Furthermore, it is not uncommon, for parents/guardians to be constantly moving within the district for eviction purposes; in fact, on many occasions, official letters sent by the district and/or the high school to the parents/guardians come back with "Return to Sender" stamped on them.

Defining Key Terms:

Chronic Absenteeism – Is typically defined as a child who has missed at least 15 days (i.e., excused and unexcused absences) of school during a school year. Others define it as missing 10% (i.e., 18 days or more) of a given school year. For the purpose of this study, 10% will be used.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – Describes the amount of yearly improvement each Title I school and district are expected to make in order to enable low-achieving children to meet the high performance levels expected of all children.

Students with Disabilities (SWD) – IDEA defines the term of: "child with a disability" to mean a child: "with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services."

Dropout – A student who quits school prior to graduating high school.

Administrator – People placed in the role of leadership such as: principal or vice-principal; who are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to discipline, curriculum, and staff training.

Average Daily Attendance – This is calculated by taking the total number of days present of all students during a school year divided by the days a school is in session.

Parent/Guardian – A person who is legally responsible for the overall care and interests of the child. Also, this person is ultimately answerable to the school district regarding his/her child's attendance, academics, and discipline.

Robocall – A telephone call from an automated source that delivers a prerecorded message to a large number of people or a selected individual.

Text Messaging – The act of composing and the sending correspondence via electronic means.

District Attendance Policy – A school wide policy put in place by the district's board of education to address student absences from school. The guidelines of this policy range from calls home to a court ordered appearance of parents/guardians in front of a judge.

Truancy Officer – Merriam-Webster defines this as a person employed by a public school system to investigate the continued absences of pupils. The same person can also be referred to as an attendance officer.

Individual Education Program (IEP) – NJ Department of Education defines this as a written plan that describes in detail your child's special education program. The IEP should describe how your child currently performs and your child's specific instructional needs. The IEP must include detailed and measurable annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks

Classification – NJ Department of Education defines this as a determination of whether a child is eligible for special education and related services.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Kearney and Graczyk (2013) stated that regular school attendance is foundational to children's success but school absenteeism is a common, serious, and highly vexing problem. Researchers from various disciplines have produced rich yet diverse literature for conceptualizing problematic absenteeism that has led to considerable confusion and lack of consensus about pragmatic and coordinated assessment and intervention approach.

Childs and Grooms (2018) indicated that there has been a dearth of research that has examined attendance interventions. However, only 16 peer-reviewed studies were discovered that examined attendance interventions between 1990 and 2007, with only eight of those studies utilizing group comparison designs and two reporting effect size. Additionally, researchers have examined few interventions for effects on student attendance (Sheldon, 2007).

McConnell and Kubina (2014), have claimed that despite the urgency to examine absenteeism, there is very little comparability when looking at current attendance research. Therefore, with multiple approaches to examining this topic, there is difficulty in understanding the varying causes and solutions to absenteeism.

Intervention Using Rewards

Edwards (2013) study looked at how to decrease the absenteeism rate for both the general and special education population. The elementary school counselors would be responsible for the interventions that include the school monitoring program, incentive programs, and counseling interventions. The purpose of this study was to determine the outcomes of interventions

implemented at a middle school located in the Southern United States. The previous school year saw an absenteeism rate of 26.9% whereas these students missed more than 15 days of school. Because of these numbers, the school principal asked this author to develop and implement a program to address this issue.

The program used multiple interventions that focused on incentives, group counseling, and individual counseling. Participants included the entire school population of 470 students and composed of 97% African-American students and 3% other students. In addition, 21% of the student population were identified as Students with Disabilities (SWD) and 99% of the students were identified as Economically Disadvantaged (ED). The author collected data from the previous school year using the school's computer program and then used the same system to monitor the attendance data weekly in order to report back to the principal.

Procedures for this study consisted of students being involved in the planning process in order for the incentives to be of value. The students were informed their attendance was going to be monitored for the entire school year and incentives were going to be given out in a bi-weekly and quarterly fashion. Furthermore, intervention (i.e., counseling) would take place after a student missed five or more days. The team (i.e., counselors) identified which teacher[s] would be responsible for monitoring the students with perfect attendance and how the other students would be divided up amongst the other teachers. Incentives included game day, movies and popcorn, homework pass, treats in the cafeteria, treats in a bag, ice cream, mp3 players, gift certificates, pizza, bikes, and a grade level competition to have an end of the year pizza party.

The study's results appeared to show that the interventions of both counseling and rewards helped to improve the attendance rate. In comparing the school years of 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, the numbers showed that the absenteeism rates improved in all three areas: 26.9% to

19.6% for the entire student body, 39.2% to 27.3% for SWD, and 26.5% to 19.2% for ED students. Some limitations to this study consisted of no measurement tool used to isolate the counseling sessions from the school wide incentives. Additionally, there was no formal evaluation to gauge the effectiveness of the program.

Intervention Using Mailings

In a study conducted by Rodger et.al (2016), a collaboration between the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) along with the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) [located within the district] and the Student Social Support R & D Lab at Harvard was formed to improve student attendance rates as per the district's 2013 action plan. The district's 4-year graduation rate for the 2011-12 school was only 57% compared to the national average of 80%; however, their percentage is within normal range compared to other urban school districts.

This study's project developed based on a low-cost and easy to implement innovation that could widely be used to reduce student absences. The purpose of this study was to create a randomized control trial (RCT) to study strategies to improve attendance in SDP. The objective of this project was to inform and motivate parents/guardians to reduce student absences through multiple-based communications during the school year (i.e., 2014-15).

The SDP is considered to be the eighth largest school district in the United States serving over 200,000 students between grades pre-K to 12th. The district represents a very diverse population consisting of: 52% African-American, 19% Hispanic/Latino, 14% Caucasian/Euro Americans, 8% Asian, and 4% identified as multiracial or other. Furthermore, the district reported that the percentage of students classified was 9.4% as ELLs and 13.8% as having disabilities (i.e., SWD).

The study's design used 30,000 students from grades 1 through 12 from the elementary, middle, and high schools; in all, 200 schools were involved. Students' households were randomly selected and assigned to four conditions: (1) a Control group that received no additional outreach for this experiment, (2) an *Encourage* treatment group that received mail stressing the importance of attendance and parental responsibility, (3) an *Encourage + Self* group that had the same message as the previous group, but also stated the number of days of school the guardians' student missed, and (4) an *Encourage + Self + Norms* group that received the same mail/information as the previous two groups, but also compared the student's attendance record to that of the typical student in both their school and grade. Finally, the three treatment groups received a total of 5 mailings during the course of the 2014-2015 school year; the first mailing showed their absence records for the previous school year and mailings 2, 3, 4, and 5 provided guardians with up-to-date absence records.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. Does contacting guardians and encouraging them to improve their students' attendance reduce absences?

2. Does communicating to guardians the total number of days their student missed reduce absences? That is, are parents miscalibrated on their beliefs about how many days their students have been absent, and does this miscalibration matter?

3. Does the communicating to guardians the total number of days their student missed as compared to the absences of a typical student reduce absences? That is, are parents miscalibrated on their beliefs about how their students' number of absences compare to their students' classmates' absences, and does this miscalibration matter?

The results of this study indicated strong evidence that sending attendance mail reduced absences. The *Encourage* component reduced absence by 0.60 days as compared to the Control group and the *Self* component reduced absences by an additional 0.45 days. However, there was no significant reduction in absences with the addition of the *Norms* component. Furthermore, overall, the project generated between 15,000 and 20,000 increased days of attendance (fewer days absent) among some of the district's most at-risk students; this is value between $1,100,000 and $1,400,000 (p.10). Finally, the study provided researchers with a better insight on how parents that are given quality information can be motivated to act with regards to student absences.

Interventions Using Phone Calls

The purpose of the Helm and Burkett (1989) study was to determine if selected students who were absent from school and who received calls to their home from the principal, via a computer message device, would have a better school attendance record than would students whose homes were not called. Participants were selected from two high schools and one middle school in Hamblen County, Tennessee. Fifty students were chosen by simple random sampling from the three schools at the beginning of school year for a total of 150 students to make up the treatment group. Additionally, another simple random sampling was conducted to create the control group of 150 students.

After testing the computer devices, the system was put into operation in the first month of school and secretaries or student workers keyed in the names of the students who were absent on a particular day. The device self-activated at 6:00 p.m. each school day and would continue dialing until the home of each student was reached. Once the call was answered, there was a prerecorded message from the principal. Furthermore, the computer dialing device generated a

daily list of who was called and who was reached or not reached by the system. Data collection took place in the eighth month of the school year and consisted of the student's daily attendance record provided by the district's attendance software package and a report from the telecommunications program.

The results of this study show that students whose homes were called with a computer dialing device had a better overall attendance record than students who were not called, in fact, a significant difference was found with regards to the mean days absent of the two groups (i.e., 6.55 vs. 11.18). Finally, when testing the four factorial ANOVAs to determine the interaction of mediating variables, of sex, race, socioeconomic level, and the schools, no significant difference could be found.

The Sheats and Dunkleberger (1979), study addressed two areas of interest related to student attendance. First, it looked at whether school-initiated contacts to parents of chronically absent children had an impact on changing that student's attendance patterns. Second, the study also wanted to determine if telephone calls from a school secretary promoted the same results as those made the principal. The study's subjects were selected using a pre/post group design and were from a rural Maryland elementary school that served grade one through four. Selection of the subjects (i.e., n = 49) was based on missing fifteen or more days in the previous school year (i.e. 1977-78). Treatments groups were created by randomly assigning the 49 students into the 25 secretary-contacted group and the 24 principal-contacted group.

Students in both treatments groups would receive a call on every third missed day of school (i.e., 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15). Prepared scripts were used and the tone would become more serious as the absences progressed; on the ninth day, assistance (e.g., health services) was included in the message to the parent. Results of this study indicated that there was no

significant difference between whether the secretary or principal phoned home. In short, both types of contact saw a significant decrease in student's absences compared to their previous school year.

The Parker and McCoy (1977) study was conducted to asses three procedures (i.e., interventions) for increasing school attendance. The study was conducted in a public elementary school that served first through third-grade children from a lower and middle socioeconomic class neighborhood. The school served a total of 625 students with a ratio of 60% Caucasian and 40% minority. For this study, a total of 8 students (i.e., 4 males and 4 females) from first-grade (i.e., 5) and third-grade (i.e., 3) were selected because of their low attendance rate, chronic medical difficulties, and the lack of severe avoidance reaction to school. Furthermore, subjects were randomly assigned to one of three intervention groups (i.e., principal classroom visits, positive calls, and negative calls) only after baseline attendance data was collected from the school attendance records.

Classroom visits by the principal occurred on the days that the subjects were present and consisted of praise and peer approval during the two-minute stay. After two weeks of perfect attendance, visits were thinned to an intermittent basis. The two other experimental groups had parents receiving positive calls (i.e., praise) when their child came to school and the other group would receive a negative call (i.e., disapproval) when their child did not attend school. As was the case with the principal's visit, the two-minute rule was used and after two weeks of perfect attendance, calls were thinned out to an every other day basis. Furthermore, all three experimental groups had their own variations of dialogues (i.e., three of them) that were randomly used on the days of visits and/or calls. Also, once the perfect attendance was interrupted, for either principal visit or praise call subjects. the process would start all over.

The results of this study showed that, at first, the principal's visits improved the subjects' attendance; but, as the study continued, students' attendance began to decrease. Additionally, McConnell and Kubina (2014) added to Parker and McCoy's study by adding that these two groups receiving the negative and positive phone calls from the principal, showed significant improvement from their baseline attendance rate of 70% to an attendance rate of 95%. Finally, the study also provided a deeper understanding that by engaging parents via a phone call [rather than a classroom visit], parents' levels of concern and participation appeared to increase. Furthermore, there was a spillover effect with regards to siblings living in the same house that received this intervention; their attendance improved as well despite the fact that the principal's call was never about them.

In a study conducted by Copeland et. al (1972), a comparison between phoning parents [with praise] about their child attending summer school versus just phoning parents with a standard message stressing the importance of attending summer school. The study took place in a remedial summer school program in Kansas City, Kansas for elementary level students. Students were recommended [by their teachers] for summer school because of their poor performance during the school year. Furthermore, the nine subjects identified were specifically selected because their attendance was non-existent in the first 4 or 6 days of summer school depending on which group (i.e., call and praised or call-only).

The praise group would receive a phone call from the principal praising the parents about their child's attendance every two to three days and might also have included comments regarding their current academic progress. The intervention lasted from days 5 through 18 and from that point forward, no more calls were made home by the principal. The call-only group would only receive a call in the beginning of the intervention (i.e., day 6) urging the parents to

send their children to summer school and at the conclusion of the intervention period (i.e., day 16). The same message was given as before indicating the importance of attending summer school.

The results of this study indicated that school attendance increased for students who received a phone call home praising parents for their child's attendance. The students went from an attendance rate of 0% in the beginning to a mean of 82.7% by the end of the intervention (i.e., day 18). At the completion of baseline 2 (i.e., days 19 to 30), the rate went down to a mean of 63.7%; this was considered significant at 0.02 level of confidence based on comparison of pre- and post-intervention attendance rates using a t-test. The call-only group only showed a spike in attendance immediately following the two calls home (i.e., days 6 and 16), but would slowly diminish as the study continued. What can be drawn from this call-only group, is that contacting parents regarding their child's absence from school can have instant results, but they are not long-lasting nor sustainable without persistent follow-up every time their child is absent.

The purpose Fiordaliso et.al. (1977), two-year grant funded study was to look at the effects of positive phone calls on two groups (i.e., academic and social), relative to their attendance rates, in comparison to a control group. The setting was in a rural middle school in a lower socioeconomic status community located outside a major metropolitan city. Students were randomly selected for both the academic and social groups and were already participating in the Preparation through Responsive Educational Program (PREP); however, the randomly assigned control group did not participate in either the social or academic programs of PREP. The three groups consisted of 32 subjects for treatment group 1, 30 subjects for treatment group 2 and 25 subjects for the control group. Attendance baselines were based on the first marking period of the school year (i.e., 1974) prior to implementation of treatments.

The treatment consisted of phone calls and letters sent home immediately following an absence; in addition, it was decided that "positive" phone calls and letters would also be performed whenever the children attended school for a prescribed number of consecutive days. The positive reinforcement schedule and a four rates of absenteeism table were created for the purpose of following the prescribed reinforcement that matches the rating scale of monthly absences (e.g. Rate A = 2 days out for the month of September, Rate A = 12-16 days for the month of April, etc.). Finally, subjects in the experimental groups could move in the rating scale (i.e., A-D) depending on their attendance patterns. Additionally, subjects who achieved 20 or more consecutive days of attendance, would be exposed to a thinning out as a reinforcement; however, this would only apply to the subjects in the rating of B through D.

The results of this year-long observation, recording and analyses resulted in strong evidence that both positive phone calls and letters had an impact; 43 out of 62 subjects in the two treatment groups, improved their attendance. On the other hand, the control group had a decrease in attendance rate over the course of this study (i.e., 15 out of 25). The benefits of this study have shown that communicating with parents more frequently and with a positive message, can be a great motivator in getting parents to send their children to school on a more consistent basis and allow them the opportunity to reach their academic potential.

Conclusion

The task of researching and reviewing a myriad of articles has clearly that a limited number of studies have been conducted on students with disabilities (SWD) with regards to chronic absenteeism. The same can also be said (to a smaller degree) about the general education students as well. McConnell and Kubina's (2014), meta-analysis showed that only two out of their nine research studies had been conducted on this population. Further evidence has shown

that, in one of the nine studies mentioned (i.e., Copeland et. al, 1972), dates back to 1972; additionally, three other studies were also included from the 1970s.

Finally, it is apparent that mailings, reward systems, and mentoring programs are simply too time consuming and expensive for school districts to implement, especially in the upper grades. The research articles have presented one possible intervention program that may not be so draining on school districts' resources. Robocalls/phone calls can offer the best means to contact, inform, and motivate parents/guardians to send their child to school more often and at the same time, lowering the chronic absenteeism rate for students with disabilities.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to see if an added layer of communication could reduce the absenteeism rate for SWD. The added layer of communication involved contacting parents and/or guardians by a text message or a robocall and to see what type of scripted narrative worked best (i.e., negative or positive tone). Standard district attendance policy consisted of the following: call home twice (i.e., am and pm) on the day of the absence; student is placed on a hot list for possible intervention on day 3; truancy notification on day 10; and letters sent out to parents and/or guardian on days 5, 10, and 15.

The high school where this study was conducted, had a total enrollment of about 1800 students at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, of those 1800 students, approximately 285 were classified as a SWD. The South Jersey Urban School District (SJUSD) has only one high school, but has 10 other schools consisting of pre-k to 4, pre-k to 5, and pre-k to 8; furthermore, these schools provide services for roughly 5,000 students. Finally, the SJUSD high school is also a receiving district for four nearby towns and also receives students who want to participate in the Capstone Project for the Performing Arts, Music, and NJROTC.

Participants

The students selected for this study consisted of sophomores and juniors only that were classified as SWD. The researcher decided not to include freshman or seniors for two reasons; available data was limited for freshman and seniors have a historically higher attendance rate because they see themselves as graduating. The study began with having separate reports run on

the two grade levels of students who had missed 10% or more of school in the first 41 days of the 2018-19 school year. The separate reports generated 28 juniors and 23 sophomores for the study to utilize. Additionally, the reports indicated that juniors missed, on average, 9.43 days and/or 23% of school and the sophomores missed, on average, 10 days and/or 24% of school. After obtaining the reports, the researcher verified that the students were still on roll prior to randomizing the students into groups by grades. The two reports lost one student each because students were moved to home instruction and could no longer be used for the study; this left the juniors with an n = 27 and sophomores with an n = 22.

Students were then randomly selected into three groups for both grade reports. Juniors groups had a total of 9 each and consisted of a control and two treatment groups (i.e., Text messages or robocalls). The sophomores had a total of 6 in each group as well, with the extra subject being placed in the control group. The study then went ahead and assigned the first five numbers of all groups from both grades to be used for the study. The control and the treatment groups had 10 in each for an overall total of 30 students. Furthermore, the two treatment groups were then further randomized into subgroups for negative or positive tone narratives.

Control group subjects received no additional supports besides the standard district attendance policy and had attendance monitored and recorded throughout the data collection period of 41 days. Treatment group 1 received robocalls only on predetermined days (i.e., days 2, 4, 6, & 8) when the subject had been absent or when the subject had reached an attendance milestone (i.e., days 5, 10, 15, & 20). Treatment group 2 only received text messages, but also followed the same predetermined number of days before either a robocall or text message was generated. Furthermore, the study did not repeat any of the predetermined days for robocalls or text messages; in short, the student's parent or guardian never received the same robocall or text.

The subgroups for each treatment group were either given a negative or positive narrative tone robocall/text message depending on subgroup assignment. Subjects in all treatment groups were monitored and recorded throughout the 41-day study; pre and post data was then used to do a comparison of means. A t-test and p-value was performed between the control and both treatment groups. Additionally, one final comparison was performed to see which narrative tone (i.e., positive and negative) was more effective than the other when analyzed against the control group.

Variables

The dependent variable for this study was the students' absences to be recorder daily and compared (i.e., mean differences) to the first 41 days of the 2018-19 school year. The independent variables for this study consisted of robocalls and text messages. Furthermore, positive and negative tone narratives were used to further understand what parents and/or guardians had reacted to most favorably.

Chapter 4

Results

Summary

In this experimental research study, an added layer of communication to reduce the absenteeism rate for Students with Disabilities (SWD) was examined to see if making additional contacts with parents and/or guardians in the form of a text message or robocall, could result in more consistent attendance. The following research questions to be answered were:

1. Will SWD have better attendance with the added layer of communication (i.e., robocall or text group) compared to those that do not (i.e., Control group)?

2. Will SWD have better attendance when receiving a positive robocall or text message compared to those receiving a negative robocall or text message?

The study began by obtaining a list of juniors and sophomores who had missed 10% or more of school for the first 41 days of the 2018-19 school year. The list was then randomly assigned by grade into three groups (i.e., Control, Treatment 1, and Treatment 2). Each group had 10 students identified for the study. The two treatment groups were then further randomized into subgroups for negative and positive tone narratives. Finally, the randomized list became the study log (Appendix B) used for recording the second 41days that this study used for pre-post data analysis. An average of the differences in attendance were used to determine if the treatment was or was not statistically significant.

Results

Table 1 shows the comparison between the control group and the treatment group #1; robocalls were used as the added layer of communication. Robocall groups of both negative and positive tone narratives were combined to see if the treatment altered the students' attendance on a more consistent basis. The control group difference at the end of the study was -3.5 compared to the treatment group's difference of -2.3. Additionally, both the control group and the treatment group saw an increase in the number days absent in the second 41 days, 12 and 10.8 respectfully.

Table 1

Control and Treatment Group 1 Pre-Post Data Comparison

Control Group	**Pre-Data**	**Post-Data**	**Difference**	**Treatment #1 (Combined) - Robocalls**	**Pre-Data**	**Post-Data**	**Difference**
	Days Absent	**Days Absent**			**Days Absent**	**Days Absent**	
Student A	5	32	**-27**	Student A	6	8	**-2**
Student B	19	20	**-1**	Student B	21	5	**16**
Student C	7	20	**-13**	Student C	6	11	**-5**
Student D	6	9	**-3**	Student D	7	3	**4**
Student E	7	10	**-3**	Student E	6	14	**-8**
Student F	5	7	**-2**	Student A	6	5	**1**
Student G	5	0	**5**	Student B	9	32	**-23**
Student H	10	3	**7**	Student C	7	10	**-3**
Student I	5	3	**2**	Student D	7	7	**0**
Student J	16	16	**0**	Student E	10	13	**-3**
Mean	8.5	12	**-3.5**		8.5	10.8	**-2.3**

Table 2 shows the results of the t-test that was performed between the control group and the treatment 1 group. The differences between the two groups were found to be not statistically significant, with a t-score of -0.26 and a p-value of 0.80; the confidence level was set at <0.05.

This indicated that the treatment of robocalls regardless of negative or positive tone narrative, had only a minimal effect on the attendance of these students.

Table 2

Control Group vs. Treatment Group 1 t-Test Results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Control	***T1=Robocalls (Combined)***
Mean	-3.5	-2.3
Variance	97.39	95.57
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	-0.12	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-0.26	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.40	
t Critical one-tail	1.83	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.80	
t Critical two-tail	2.26	

Table 3 shows the comparison of the control group and treatment group #2; text messages were used as the added layer of communication. Text message groups of both negative and positive tone narratives were combined to see if the treatment altered the behavior of the students to attend school on a more consistent basis. The control group difference at the end of the study was -3.5 compared to the treatment 1 group's difference of -2.4. Additionally, both the control group and the treatment 1 group saw an increase in the days absent in the second 41 days, 12 and 13.4 respectfully.

Table 3

Control Group and Treatment Group 2 Pre-Post Data Comparison

Control Group	**Pre-Data**	**Post-Data**	**Difference**	**Treatment #2 (Combined) – Text Messages**	**Pre-Data**	**Post-Data**	**Difference**
	Days Absent	**Days Absent**			**Days Absent**	**Days Absent**	
Student A	5	32	**-27**	Student A	6	10	**-4**
Student B	19	20	**-1**	Student B	6	3	**3**
Student C	7	20	**-13**	Student C	10	22	**-12**
Student D	6	9	**-3**	Student D	16	33	**-17**
Student E	7	10	**-3**	Student E	7	12	**-5**
Student F	5	7	**-2**	Student A	13	16	**-3**
Student G	5	0	**5**	Student B	8	3	**5**
Student H	10	3	**7**	Student C	16	19	**-3**
Student I	5	3	**2**	Student D	17	3	**14**
Student J	16	16	**0**	Student E	11	13	**-2**
Mean	8.5	12	**-3.5**		11	13.4	**-2.4**

Table 4 shows the results of the t-test that was performed between the control group and treatment group 2. The differences between the two groups were found to be not statistically significant, with a t-score of -0.33 and a p-value of 0.75; the confidence level was set at <0.05. This indicated that the treatment of text messages regardless of negative or positive tone narrative, had only a minimal effect on the attendance of these students.

Table 4

Control Group vs. Treatment Group 2 t-Test Results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Contol	***T2-Text Messages (Combined)***
Mean	-3.5	-2.4
Variance	97.39	74.27
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0.37	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-0.33	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.37	
t Critical one-tail	1.83	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.75	
t Critical two-tail	2.26	

Table 5 shows the comparison of the control group and negative tone combined; both the text and robocall subgroups were combined for analysis to see which tone was most effective. The control group difference at the end of the study was -3.5 compared to the negative tone group's difference of -3. Additionally, both the control group and the negative tone group saw an increase in the days absent in the second 41 days, 12 and 12.1 respectfully.

Table 5

Control Group and Negative Tone Pre-Post Data Comparison

Control Group	**Pre-Data**	**Post-Data**	**Difference**	**Negative Tone (Combined)**	**Pre-Data**	**Post-Data**	**Difference**
	Days Absent	**Days Absent**			**Days Absent**	**Days Absent**	
Student A	5	32	**-27**	Student A	6	8	**-2**
Student B	19	20	**-1**	Student B	21	5	**16**
Student C	7	20	**-13**	Student C	6	11	**-5**
Student D	6	9	**-3**	Student D	7	3	**4**
Student E	7	10	**-3**	Student E	6	14	**-8**
Student F	5	7	**-2**	Student A	6	10	**-4**
Student G	5	0	**5**	Student B	6	3	**3**
Student H	10	3	**7**	Student C	10	22	**-12**
Student I	5	3	**2**	Student D	16	33	**-17**
Student J	16	16	**0**	Student E	7	12	**-5**
Mean	8.5	12	**-3.5**		9.1	12.1	**-3**

Table 6 shows the results of the t-test that was performed between the control group and the negative tone subgroups combined. The differences between the two groups were found to be not statistically significant, with a t-score of -0.11 and a p-value of 0.91; the confidence level was set at <0.05. This indicated that the treatment's use of negative tone narratives whether in the form of calling or texting, had only a minimal effect on the attendance of these students.

Table 6

Control vs. Negative Tone t-Test Results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Control	***Negative Tones (Combined)***
Mean	-3.5	-3
Variance	97.39	84.22
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	-0.10	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-0.11	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.46	
t Critical one-tail	1.83	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.91	
t Critical two-tail	2.26	

Table 7 shows the comparison of the control group and positive tone combined; both the text and robocall subgroups were combined for analysis to see which tone was most effective. The control group difference at the end of the study was -3.5 compared to the positive tone group's difference of -1.7. Additionally, both the control group and the negative tone group saw an increase in the days absent in the second 41 days, 12 and 12.1 respectfully.

Table 7

Control Group and Positive Tone Pre-Post Data Comparison

Control Group	Pre-Data	Post-Data	Difference	Positive Tone (Combined)	Pre-Data	Post-Data	Difference
	Days Absent	Days Absent			Days Absent	Days Absent	
Student A	5	32	**-27**	Student A	6	5	**1**
Student B	19	20	**-1**	Student B	9	32	**-23**
Student C	7	20	**-13**	Student C	7	10	**-3**
Student D	6	9	**-3**	Student D	7	7	**0**
Student E	7	10	**-3**	Student E	10	13	**-3**
Student F	5	7	**-2**	Student A	13	16	**-3**
Student G	5	0	**5**	Student B	8	3	**5**
Student H	10	3	**7**	Student C	16	19	**-3**
Student I	5	3	**2**	Student D	17	3	**14**
Student J	16	16	**0**	Student E	11	13	**-2**
Mean	8.5	12	**-3.5**		10.4	12.1	**-1.7**

Table 8 shows the results of the t-test that was performed between the control group and the positive tone subgroups combined. The differences between the two groups were found to be not statistically significant, with a t-score of -0.43 and a p-value of 0.68; the confidence level was set at <0.05. This indicated that the treatment's use of positive tone narratives whether in the form of calling or texting, had only a minimal effect on the attendance of these students.

Table 8

Control vs. Positive Tone t-Test Results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Control	***Positive Tones (Combined)***
Mean	-3.5	-1.7
Variance	97.39	84.68
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0.03	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-0.43	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.34	
t Critical one-tail	1.83	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.68	
t Critical two-tail	2.26	

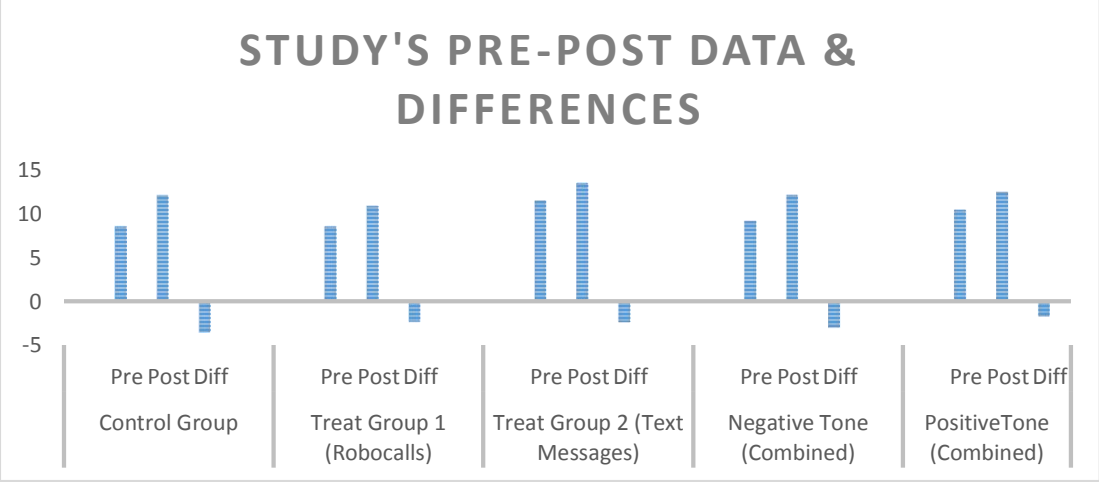

Figure 1. Study's Pre-Post Data & Differences

Figure 1 shows how the five groups did at the completion of the data collection. When comparing the post-data to the pre-data, all five groups had seen increase in their mean average of days absent. Additionally, because of the increase in the mean average of days absent,

calculating for differences between pre-post data, generated a negative number for the five groups shown. Finally, because of the negative numbers representing differences and their relative similarity in values, this severally impacted the results of this study and the belief that an added layer of communication with parents and/or guardians could result in students coming to school on a more consistent basis (see Figure 1).

Chapter 5

Summary

The purpose of this study was to see if an added layer of communication could reduce the absenteeism rate for Students with Disabilities (SWD). Additionally, the study looked at two areas of interest with regards to communicating with parents and/or guardians (i.e., type of contact and tone of the message being conveyed). The type of contact with parents and/or guardians formed the first research question: Will SWD have better attendance with the added layer of communication (i.e., robocall or text group) compared to those that do not (i.e., Control group)?

The positive or negative tone was also looked at to see what the parents and/or guardians responded to most favorably. Positive tone text message/robocall would occur on predetermined days and would increase in praise towards the parents and/or guardians for doing their part in getting their child to school. On the other hand, the negative tone text message/robocall would also incorporate predetermined days, but instead of praise, the message would increase in the level of concern that the school had with regards to the child falling behind academically due to higher than normal absences. The two types of message being conveyed formed the second research question for this study: Will SWD have better attendance when receiving a positive robocall or text message compared to those receiving a negative robocall or text message?

The research study took place at a high school in an urban school district located in southern New Jersey. The urban school district serves grades K-12 and according NJ Department of Education [NJ DOE] (2016-17) reported the district as having a schoolwide chronic absenteeism rate of 32.30% and that SWD had a rate of 45.10%. Furthermore, the only high

school within this district had an enrollment of 79% economically disadvantage students and 17% SWD. Additionally, enrollment by race consisted of: 36.5 Hispanics, 28.2% Black/African American, 20% Asian, and 14% White (NJ DOE, 2016-17).

The study took place in the 2018-19 school year and encompassed a total of 82 days of the school year for the pre-post data analysis to be conducted. The first 41 days (i.e., Pre data) was used to create the lists of both sophomores and juniors classified as SWD who had already missed 10% (i.e., ≥ 4 days) or more of school in the first marking period. The two lists were then randomly assigned into three groups (i.e., Control, treatment groups 1 and 2) by their respective grades. The first five on both lists were placed in the Control Group for a total of 10 students. The two treatments groups also consisted of 10 students each from both grades, but were then further randomized into two subgroups (e.g. negative text, positive robocall, etc.).

The study's treatments and data collection occurred during the months of March, April, and May of 2019. The data analysis of the second 41 days would be compared to the first 41 days by the use of a comparison of means with regards to the number of days absent (i.e., Difference). A t-Test and p-value was performed between the control and both treatment groups and positive/negative tone groups. The results of this analysis showed that both of the research questions were not rejected and strongly suggests that the treatments were non-effective.

The first research question asks the question: Will SWD have better attendance with the added layer of communication (i.e., Robocall or text message) compared to those that do not (i.e., Control)? The results showed that neither robocalls or text messages had any significant impact statistically when compared to the control group. The study's result with regards to robocalls, suggests that two previous studies were not able to be replicated in this research setting (i.e., Urban high school). Helm and Burkett (1989) found a statistical significant

difference in attendance between those who received a robocall and those that did not; their participants were students selected from one junior high and two high schools. Fiordaliso et al. (1977) found an increase in attendance with two treatment groups that received phone calls compared to those that did not. The setting for this study was in a rural middle school in a lower socioeconomic status community located outside a major metropolitan city.

Finally, in looking at the use of text messaging as a tool for communicating with parents and/or guardians, the researcher was unable to obtain any prior studies to mention. However, because of this point, it was included in this study as a novel approach to see if in fact, it might be a more effective tool than robocalls. The results clearly indicate that this is not the case and is no better or worse than using robocalls.

The second research question asks the question: Will SWD have better attendance when receiving a positive robocall or text message compared to those receiving a negative robocall or text message? The results showed that neither a positive or negative tone narrative had a significant impact when compared to the control group. The study's results suggest that two previous studies were not able to be replicated in this research setting (i.e., Urban high school).

Parker and McCoy (1977) found a significant improvement in attendance when the principal phoned home with either a negative or positive message compared to just making classroom visits. The setting of this study took place in an elementary school (i.e., 1st - 3rd grade) serving students from a lower to middle socioeconomic class neighborhood. Copeland et. al (1972) found that praise calls had a significant difference compared to just the standard call home informing parents about the importance of attending school. The setting for this study was an elementary remedial summer school located in Kansas City, Kansas.

Conclusions

The findings from this study have indicated several disturbing beliefs regarding SWD and their poor attendance. First, as the school year progresses, so too does the rate of student absences. Second, it appears that the parents and/or guardians are simply apathetic to what their child does or does not do. Third, the district's truancy office needs to be closely look into to determine where the breakdown may exist [if at all]; Is it that there are no referrals being generated? or Is truancy not going to these people's homes? Finally, the school district is failing to follow their own district policy with regards to taking students off-roll after a predetermined number of days out (i.e., 20 consecutive days out). Granted that SWD have a little more latitude with this policy because of their classification - IEP, however, how can a district overlook the following numbers from this 82-day study: Control group had three students who missed 37, 39, and 32; Treatment group one had one student who missed 41; and Treatment group two had three students who missed 32, 49, and 37 days.

The study also leads the researcher to believe that the high school setting was not the appropriate choice, but perhaps an elementary setting should have been selected instead. This could have had the opportunity to be more effective and maybe buttress the findings of Parker and McCoy (1977), Copeland et. al (1972), and Helm and Burkett (1989).

The elementary setting would also have provided the best opportunity to break the trend of students not coming to school. Most of the elementary schools within this district have an attendance issue despite the fact that these children require no busing. However, for some unexplained reason, they still do not come to school on a consistent basis. Could it be a truancy/referral problem? or Is this simply a negative behavior that needs to be addressed and hopefully broken as early as possible? In short, by the time the students reach the middle school

years (i.e., 6 through 8th grades), it is virtually impossible to break the behavior of not coming to school, thus cementing this for their future academic school years. In fact, this behavior can only get worse because busing now comes into play when students are transported to the high school. It is not uncommon for students in this high school where this research was conducted to state the following: "I missed my bus so I didn't come to school?"

Finally, it is believed that the sampling that this study used (i.e., 30 SWD) was not big enough in order to control for those outliers that may have caused the research questions to not be rejected. The researcher should have included freshman and seniors as well in order to have a bigger sampling; the current sampling had a total of 49 between the sophomores and juniors. Adding the other two grades would have allowed for the study's testing sample to be increased from 30 to 40 or maybe even 50. Additionally, maybe instead of selecting SWD who had missed 10% (i.e., $\geq$ 4 days) of school for the first 41 days of the 2018-19 school year, perhaps the researcher should have used the 5% (i.e., $\geq$ 2 days) criteria instead and thus not needing to include both freshman and seniors.

Recommendations

It is believed that this study can be successful if placed in the right school setting (i.e., Elementary). Conducting the research study in this setting will be more manageable because these type of schools usually have about one-third the number of students enrolled compared to the high school. Data entry either by staff or electronically, would make it easier to find and identify those who were absent by the researcher after the daily attendance report was ran/printed. Additionally, the elementary schools usually have a comparable number of support personnel (e.g., Secretaries, attendance, etc.) to aid a researcher with their study compared to that of the high school.

It is imperative that any information one is receiving from the school, needs to be verified/double-checked for accuracy. The researcher in this study found on two occasions, identified students who were not classified, but were on the initial report prior to assignment of groups. Furthermore, simple mistakes like this, also causes the researcher to look closely at the validity of the phone numbers being provided by the school/district as well. Once again, make sure that these too are correct before starting the study and keep track that they are still working numbers throughout the data collection/treatment phase.

Finally, the district failed to provide the researcher with access to the district's *Integrate PowerSchool with Blackboard Connect* in order to do the robocalls and text messages. In order to overcome this unexpected hurdle, the researcher was able to find and use *DialMyCalls* an online app for the phone calls and *Google Voice* for the text messages. Both applications worked flawlessly and was at no cost to the researcher. Summarily, make sure that everything is in place just before implementation of this kind of study; if not, expect delays that can set one back for a week or two.

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Appendix A

Narratives for Both Positive & Negative Calls/Texts

Positive Calls/Texts:

Day 5: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling to thank you personally for having your student come to school on a consistent basis. Attendance is key for learning and you are truly supporting this effort; once again, thank you and have a good evening.

Day 10: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling to once again thank you for your continued support with regards to your student's attendance in school. Attendance is key to learning and you are supporting our mission to improve overall attendance in the district; once again, thank you and have a good evening.

Day 15: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling to commend your continuing efforts to have your student attend school on a regular basis. Finally, your understanding of the value of attending school and its connection to learning is greatly appreciated. Thank you and have a good evening.

Day 20: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling to congratulate you on having your student attend school for 20 consecutive days. We truly honor your efforts in allowing us to educate and supporting your student in reaching their full potential. Thank you and have a good evening.

Negative Calls/Texts:

Day 2: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling with regards to your student's absence today. Attendance is vital for student success and we hope to see them on the next scheduled day of school. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to call your child's guidance counselor or case manager. Thank you and have a good evening.

Day 4: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling with regards to your student's absence today. Attendance is vital for student success and we hope to see them on the next scheduled day of school. Furthermore, should you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to call your student's guidance counselor or case manager. Thank you and have a good evening.

Day 6: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling with regards to your student's absence today. Attendance is vital for student success and we hope to see them on the next scheduled day of school. Additionally, we are concerned that your student may be in jeopardy of falling behind academically due to their multiple absences from school. If you need any assistance or help, please do not hesitate to call your student's guidance counselor or case manager. Thank you and have a good evening.

Day 8: Hello! This is South Jersey Urban High School calling with regards to your student's absence today. We hope to see them on the next scheduled day of school. Your student's attendance is very important to us and we are seriously concerned that your student may be beginning to fall behind academically due to their multiple absences from school. Finally, please allow us to assist in any way possible to have your student in school on a more consistent basis. Thank you and have a good evening.

Appendix B

Daily Study Log

Control	5-Mar	6-Mar	7-Mar	8-Mar	11-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar
Student A	A	A		A	A	A	
Student B	A						
Student C	A		A		A		
Student D	A (S)						
Student E							
Student F							
Student G							
Student H			A				
Student I							
Student J				A	A		
Treatment #1 - Calls							
Negative Narrative							
Student A						A	**A NC 1**
Student B							
Student C	A (S)		A (S)	A (S)	A		
Student D							A
Student E				A (S)	A(S)	A(S)	A (S)
Positive Narrative							
Student A					**PC 1**		
Student B			A				A
Student C				A			A
Student D	A				A		
Student E					A		A
Treatment #2 - Text							
Negative Narrative							
Student A	A				**A NT 1**		
Student B							
Student C	A				**A NT 1**		A
Student D	A	A **NT 1**	A	**A NT 2**	A		
Student E	A						
Positive Narrative							
Student A			A	A			
Student B					**PT 1**		
Student C	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student D					**PT 1**		
Student E	A (S)					**PT 1**	A (S)
Key							
A = Absent	**S** = Suspended						
PC = Positive Call	**ISS** = In-school Suspension						
NC = Negative Call	**6** = Excused						
PT = Positive Call	**TDA** = Total Days Absent						
NT = Negative Text							

Appendix C

Research Data Sheet

Thesis Study: Decreasing Absenteeism for Students with Disabilities: One call or text at a time

Control Group:		**Pre Data**		**Post- Data**	
	Grade	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***
Student A	10	5	12	32	78
Student B	10	19	46	20	49
Student C	11	7	17	20	49
Student D	10	6	15	9	22
Student E	10	7	17	10	24
Student F	11	5	12	7	17
Student G	11	5	12	0	0
Student H	11	10	24	3	7
Student I	11	5	12	3	7
Student J	11	16	39	16	39
		8.5	**21**	**12**	**29.2**

Treatment Group #1

Negative Robocalls		***Pre-Data***		***Post-Data***	
	Grade	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***
Student A	11	6	15	8	20
Student B	11	21	51	5	12
Student C	11	6	15	11	27
Student D	11	7	17	3	7
Student E	10	6	15	14	34
		9.2	**22.6**	**8.2**	**20**
Positive Robocalls					
Student A	11	6	15	5	12
Student B	10	9	22	32	78
Student C	10	7	17	10	24
Student D	10	7	17	7	17
Student E	10	10	24	13	32
		7.8	**19**	**13.4**	**32.6**

Treatment Group #2

Negative Text Messages		***Pre-Data***		***Post-Data***	
	Grade	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***
Student A	11	6	15	10	24
Student B	11	6	15	3	7
Student C	10	10	24	22	54
Student D	10	16	39	33	80
Student E	10	7	17	12	29
		9	**22**	**16**	**38.8**

Positive Text Messages					
Student A	11	13	32	16	39
Student B	11	8	20	3	7
Student C	11	16	39	19	46
Student D	10	17	41	3	7
Student E	10	11	27	13	32
		13	**31.8**	**10.8**	**26.2**

Negative Tone					
Negative Robocalls		***Pre-Data***		***Post-Data***	
	Grade	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***
Student A	11	6	15	8	20
Student B	11	21	51	5	12
Student C	11	6	15	11	27
Student D	11	7	17	3	7
Student E	10	6	15	14	34
Negative Text Messages					
Student A	11	6	15	10	24
Student B	11	6	15	3	7
Student C	10	10	24	22	54
Student D	10	16	39	33	80
Student E	10	7	17	12	29
		9.1	**22.3**	**12.1**	**29.4**
Positive Tone					
Positive Robocalls					
	Grade	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***	***# of Days Absent***	***% Absent***
Student A	11	6	15	5	12
Student B	10	9	22	32	78
Student C	10	7	17	10	24
Student D	10	7	17	7	17
Student E	10	10	24	13	32
Positive Text Messages					
	Grade				
Student A	11	13	32	16	39
Student B	11	8	20	3	7
Student C	11	16	39	19	46
Student D	10	17	41	3	7
Student E	10	11	27	13	32
		10.4	**25.4**	**12.1**	**29.4**