AN EVALUATION STUDY OF AN ALTERNATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL AT-RISK PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effectiveness of a middle school alternative program, titled academic recovery, in improving student scores on the state assessment and student outlook on education. The quantitative component of this study analyzed the growth of the test scores of the students in this program on the state assessment for one year in communication arts and mathematics. Additionally, the student’s growth on the state assessment was compared to the growth of a similar group of students who qualified for the program but were not enrolled in the program. The qualitative component of the study examined student perceptions of their experiences in the academic recovery program.

Students in the academic recovery program were found not to have statistically improved on the state assessment in communication arts and mathematics, and they did not statistically improve more on the state assessment in communication arts and mathematics than a similar group of their peers. Through the qualitative analysis it was found students had developed a positive connection with their teacher, had formed friendships at school, and had developed some interests at school. Nevertheless, the students were still struggling academically at school, angry at their non academic recovery teacher, uncertain of their future plans, and sometimes felt they were bullied by peers.