

Public Abstract

First Name:Keith

Middle Name:

Last Name:Matlock

Adviser's First Name:Paul

Adviser's Last Name:Watkins

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title:POSITIVE SUPPORT TEAMS: INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF POVERTY TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE, TEST SCORES, AND GRADUATION RATE IN A RURAL MISSOURI HIGH SCHOOL

This is a case study of the effect of PST (Positive Support Teams) on students of poverty in a high school located in rural Missouri. The school evaluated, Battlefield High (a pseudonym) recently incorporated a system of interventions based on the RTI (Response to Intervention) pyramid to provide academic assistance to students deemed at-risk to fall behind their high school cohort. The PST approach to interventions is a systematic intervention system that is designed to begin with a broad range of interventions provided to a large number of students. As students achieve success, fewer interventions are needed. For the students who continue to struggle, interventions can intensify.

The effects of poverty impact the students of Battlefield High School with a significant percentage of its students on a government subsidized nutrition program. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of PST interventions at Battlefield High in terms of improvements in three areas of student achievement, attendance, test scores and graduation rate. These three criteria have been chosen because Battlefield High school keeps records of these due to their being a significant factor in state accreditation. The framework of this case study used a critical inquiry analysis. Critical inquiry was used because the school is employing a standardized intervention system to change the status quo of student failure. This study looked at the impact of PST on low income students as measured by three Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) goals. The three goals were attendance, standardized test scores and graduation rate. The researcher utilized a t-test and a z-test to run analysis. The tests were used to determine what effect the PST program had on the attendance, EOC test scores, and graduation rate of students of poverty.

Two graduating classes were chosen to provide data for this case study, 2011 and 2013. The class of 2011 was chosen because the class graduated one year before the PST program was fully implemented. The students graduating from that class would not have had access to the PST program for their entire high school career. The other graduating class chosen to provide data for this case study was the class of 2013.

The class of 2013 was chosen because the PST program was implemented in time for the class of 2012 to have access to the PST interventions. Using data for the class of 2013 gave the PST program a full year to be implemented. The time period also provided a period of time between the two classes being evaluated.

The findings in this research were mixed with most of the data not supporting past research of interventions positively affecting students of poverty. The effect of PST on the academic success of low-income students at Battlefield High was not able to be proven within the level of significance that was required in two of the three categories analyzed. Instead of finding improvement with EOC test scores of the graduating cohort having access to the PST program for the entirety of its high school career; the scores came in lower than the cohort without PST access. The effect of PST on attendance of low income students could not be proven with significance, leaving uncertainty as to what was the cause of the improvement. Only improvements in graduation rate were proven with significance.