

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE REDUCTION OF DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND RECIDIVISM

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

Sam Houston State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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August, 2020

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## **DEDICATION**

First, I wish to dedicate this dissertation and my entire doctoral marathon to the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, who is the joy and strength of my life. Without HIS divine intervention, this feat would not be possible, for HE is indeed faithful—HIS Word is life and HIS Name is love. During my doctoral marathon, I encountered so many challenges, including cancer and coronavirus pandemic (which I refuse to give power by even capitalizing the words). Yet GOD carried me through each challenge that I met. By HIS grace and mercy, I came through each challenge a little stronger and wiser. Two particular scriptures kept me encouraged and moving toward the finish line: “I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13, KJV); and “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” Jeremiah 29:11, KJV).

GOD blessed me with a phenomenal earthly support system of amazing people to whom I wish to also dedicate my dissertation and doctoral program completion. My parents, Claudis Samuel Johnson, Jr. (deceased) and Gloria Faye Johnson, along with my Godparents, Frank Dan Thomas (deceased) and Hazel Marie Thomas, planted seeds of inquisitiveness and perseverance in me, their only child and godchild. Although Daddy and Frank did not live to see their little girl’s name with PhD behind it, I know they are both smiling and high-fiving each other from heaven with a deep sense of pride and thanksgiving. Momma and Hazel are my own personal Wonder Women. When I grow up, I want to be just like them, as they are powerful Women of GOD who refuse to allow me to settle for anything less than my best effort toward living my best, purpose-driven life. Certainly, I cannot leave out my grandmother, Willie Ola Rusher who is also

deceased. At the age of 98 when she died, she was still insisting that I “keep on keeping on” and never give up on myself, because that would be like giving up on GOD. Big, as I called her, is now smiling in heaven near Daddy and Frank with her hand on her hip, nodding saying, “See what happens when you keep on keeping on!” All of the individuals who served as my primary caregivers as a child and my primary role models as an adult are faithful and lovingly instilled in me a deep and abiding love of and devotion to CHRIST JESUS. “I will praise THEE, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are THY Works; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psalm 139:14, KJV).

My two sons, my “lil chocolate chips,” Claudis-Michael Johnson Foley and Jordan-Samuel Johnson Foley, have been my heart beat, motivation, inspiration, and personal cheering squad since I began this marathon. Their support never wavered even when my doctoral studies consumed their “Mommy and Me Time.” I am proud and thankful that GOD blessed me to have them on my team. In addition to my two sons, this dissertation and doctoral program completion is dedicated to my two Goddaughters, Madalyne-Monet Darnella Smith and Mariah Lindsey Stewart. In these four young lives lay my legacy. I pray that the seeds of love, perseverance, fortitude, and truth that are sown in them by me and the other phenomenal women in their lives, including Crystal Gayle Weems, Claudette Weems, and Sylvia Stewart, will be meaningful, powerful, and fruitful. I love each of you virtuous, phenomenal women more than mere words can possibly express!

Although I am an only child, I was blessed to marry into a huge extended and blended Pearson family filled with faith in the ALMIGHTY GOD, love, and support.

Therefore, this dissertation and doctoral program completion is dedicated to my extended family of brothers- and sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, and cousins who never missed an opportunity to pray for and encourage me. Many of them enthusiastically engaged in being my test clients for practicum, play therapy, assessment, and testing courses. I am eternally grateful for their trust in me while I honed my counseling skills.

My Pastor and First Lady, Rev. Dayle E. Perry and Brenda Perry; my life long church home, Greater Zion Missionary Baptist Church; The Greater Zion Mission Society; as well as my *Sunday School Rocks* Sunday School fellowship are my faith family and prayer warriors. These devout groups of abundantly blessed Christians have been a constant source of support and encouragement. For many months, many of them have been calling me Dr. Chandra for the purpose of encouraging me by “speaking it into existence.” Thus, my doctoral program completion and dissertation is also dedicated to my Faith Family.

The Wells Middle School family is also part of my extended family and cheering squad. Many of my work colleagues have been calling me “Dr. J-P” and often “Dr. J-to-da-P” to help keep me going. My work colleagues at Wells and other learning communities have been a wellspring of knowledge and experience whose purposeful acts of support and encouragement did not go unnoticed and helped to bring my doctoral dream to fruition. I am grateful to GOD for the presence of “The Wells” in my life and dedicate this dissertation and doctoral program completion to my Wells Family.

This dissertation and doctoral program completion is also dedicated to the ladies with whom it began, SHSU CES Cohort VI. We began this marathon together with many laughs and tears as we carpooled up and down I-45 between Huntsville and Houston. I

am indeed proud to bring up the rear behind a group of marvelously talented phenomenal women who preceded me to the doctoral finish line, but never neglected to reach back to me with encouragement, support, and advice. I appreciate the professional connections that we established, as well as the lifelong friendships that we developed. I thank each of you Doctors for your dedication, support, laughter, encouragement, and inspiration. You are amazing!

Last, but certainly not least, I dedicate this dissertation and doctoral program completion to: my Mister; my rock; my Him; my SMOE (he knows what that means); my boo; my partner; my “bestest” best boyfriend ever; my soulmate—my kind, gentle, loving, and supportive husband, Darrell Thomas Pearson. Without Darrell’s compassionate support, my degree would not have been possible. So often throughout this doctoral marathon, Darrell had to be a single parent to our boys while keeping the household running, especially on those long, lonely nights when I commuted to and from Huntsville or The Woodlands for classes; yet, he never complained. In fact, he often sat up with me just to assure me that this journey was ours, not just mine alone. He prepared and brought me meals and snacks to the study where I sequestered myself for countless hours. I will always remember the insight and profound ideas that he shared in our many conversations regarding ethics and policy topics, as well as marriage, family, and intimacy topics. Darrell is a phenomenal man of GOD. He is a treasured gift from GOD for whom I am grateful! Darrell, I love you dearly!

## ABSTRACT

Johnson-Pearson, Chandra V., *Restorative practices in the reduction of disciplinary alternative education program placement and recidivism*. Doctor of Philosophy (Counselor Education), August, 2020, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

The ASCA National Model charged professional school counselors with supporting the social-emotional/personal-social growth, development, and success of all students. The public school need for DAEP placement was driven by problematic behavior displayed by students, which spoke to the inadequate social-emotional/personal-social development of those students with behavioral challenges. As such, DAEP placement recidivism spoke to the inadequate social-emotional/personal-social development of students with behavioral challenges. Thus, concern for effective interventions to reduce DAEP placement and recidivism fell well within the realm of professional school counseling and the role of the professional school counselor. Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to describe how DAEP staff members, interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEPs for additional placements. The purpose was achieved by examining the data gathered from demographic questionnaires and virtual interviews with DAEP staff at a DAEP facility in an urban school district in southeast Texas.

Alarming few studies of DAEP best practices had been conducted. Among the few studies that focused exclusively on DAEPs, only four in the last 20 years were statewide in focus with three being Texas-specific. The paucity of research focusing specifically on restorative practices related to DAEP re-enrollment is even more shocking.

One central research question was relevant to this case study. What are the lived experiences of educational professionals working in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program settings who are implementing restorative justice practices for students placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program?

The emergent themes participants reported as consistently occurring aligned with Compliance Theory, the theoretical framework of this study, and could be identified as remunerative and normative organizational power types which resulted in the students reacting with commitment and calculative behaviors, positive types of behaviors conducive to a healthy school culture and climate. The emergent themes participants reported as primarily occurring at the home campus aligned with Compliance Theory coercive power tactics resulting in student alienative reactions leading to reduced organization effectiveness and dysfunction. The emergent themes not only aligned with theoretical underpinnings, but also previous research DAEP best practices and practices to avoid.

**KEY WORDS:** American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP), DAEP best practices, Discipline referral, Gun-Free Schools Act, Professional School Counselor, Recidivism, Restorative Justice Practices, Restorative Practices, Safe Schools Act, School to Prison Pipeline (S2PP), Zero-Tolerance

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A mere acknowledgement of Dr. Richard C. Henriksen, Jr., my Dissertation Chairperson, would be a disservice and an understatement. Words cannot express my profound appreciation and esteem that I hold for Dr. Henriksen. I wish to recognize and sincerely thank “Dr. H” from the bottom of my heart for his faithful guidance, trust, motivation, authenticity, genuine tough love, support, inspiration, and advocacy throughout my doctoral journey. Dr. H taught me my first doctoral course and stuck by me through the end of my doctoral marathon. Dr. H’s support and advocacy made it possible for my continued enrollment in the SHSU CES doctoral program, even when adverse circumstances contributed to my slow progress. I will always be grateful to him for: his professionalism as an educator and clinician; his thoughtful mentorship; and his guidance. I always knew that I could count on Dr. H for the honest and constructive feedback necessary to extract my best effort. Dr. H, you are a remarkable clinician, teacher, and mentor. I appreciate your dedication to my success and to the body of counseling research.

Dr. Stacey Edmonson, Dean of the College of Education, deserves my utmost acknowledgement for her liberal, yet judicious application of her discretion to grant me reinstatement into the doctoral program and not one, but two extensions to complete the doctoral requirements, specifically, this dissertation. Dr. Edmonson is a consummate professional whose decisions never waver in compassion for students. I am so grateful to Dr. Edmonson for hearing my explanatory pleas and considering my unique hardships and challenges throughout this doctoral marathon. Although I am sure I am not the first SHSU doctoral student to struggle with adversity during doctoral studies, Dr. Edmonson

listened and heard my plight as if they were the first ever and responded with the most reasonable and attainable conditions. Thank you, Dr. Edmonson! Your wise leadership and keen judgement are dearly appreciated! Indeed, your steps are ordered by The LORD.

I wish to acknowledge my esteemed Dissertation Committee Members, Dr. Kathleen Rice and Dr. Dee-Anna Green. Dr. Rice never faltered in advocacy for my continued enrollment in the doctoral program when adverse circumstances contributed to my slow progress. Dr. Green, a fellow professional school counselor, is one of the most genuine and kind people with whom I have had the pleasure of working. At the insistence of Dr. Rice and Dr. Green to look critically at my research work, I was able to discover a deeper relevance of DAEP best practices to professional school counseling. I appreciate your dedication to my success and to the body of professional school counseling research.

For their unselfishly tireless offers and delivery of support, assistance, encouragement, and guidance, I must acknowledge the Sam Houston State University Graduate School Academic Support Coaches and The Writing Center (TWC). Dr. Stephanie Bluth, Leondré E. Queen, and Dr. Wally Barnes never missed an opportunity to offer and give support in countless ways, utilizing every possible platform available to them. They seemed to always be available with valuable feedback and input, even in the COVID-era when new, creative ways of supporting graduate students had to be quickly implemented and tweaked in response to the ever-evolving circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the nine participants of this study. Theirs are the boots on the ground of DAEP work. They are the experts. My nine participants are passionately engaged in the work of educating our students who struggle with behavioral challenges. On a daily basis, my nine participants demonstrate the compassion, expertise, commitment, passion, and professionalism necessary to transform the lives of students with a DAEP placement. I have tremendous respect and admiration for my nine participants, as they are indeed the unsung heroes of DAEP.

To my nine participants: I will always remember your dedication to your DAEP work. Thank you for your input, support, and participation in my research study. Thank you for the transparent and genuine sharing of your interactions with students placed in a DAEP facility. Thank you for trusting me with your story. Thank you for helping and motivating me to change my language, thoughts, attitude, and practices as a professional school counselor. Please know that your passionate dedication has inspired me to be a better professional school counselor, as well as a better educator and change agent for programs impacting our youth who struggle with behavioral challenges.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

While delivering instruction for maximum academic achievement, today's public schools faced an expanding array of challenges including: (a) drugs, violence, and safety issues; (b) family difficulties; and (c) management of students displaying cognitive, language, physical, social-emotional, and behavioral disorders (American School Counseling Association [ASCA], 2019a, 2012; Hatch, 2008; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Nichter & DeTrude, 2003; Nyan, 2017). Additionally, the pressures of high-stakes testing and stringent accountability measures became all-consuming to education stakeholders (Duncan, 2014).

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2019a) National Model suggested that the role of professional school counselors was to manage the school counseling program in such a way as to ensure and enhance student academic and social-emotional success outcomes. Referencing the third edition of the ASCA National Model, Dr. Carol Dahir pointed out that the ASCA National Model bolstered the significance of associating the "...National Standards (for Student Academic, Career, and Personal-Social Development) with the process of implementing a comprehensive, developmental, results-based program that was consistent with the current educational reform agenda and responsive to state, district, and building-level needs" (p. 31). It should be noted that all editions of the ASCA National Standards were not for the programs themselves, but rather for students. As such, the standards referenced in the ASCA National Model editions were authentically program content standards for students, in much the same

way as Texas employs content standards for students in the core content areas.

Professional school counselors around the country used the ASCA National Model as a comprehensive school counseling program model to support all students in reaching their highest potential (ASCA, 2019a & 2012).

### **Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs**

In 2018 the Texas Counseling Association (TCA) produced and published the Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs, Fifth Edition (Texas Model) in accordance with its licensing agreement with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In his Foreword of the Texas Model, Mike Morath, Texas Commissioner of Education, stated, “The Texas Model outlines a process for tailoring school counseling programs to meet the varying needs of students in school districts throughout Texas” (TEA, 2018, p. v). The Fifth Edition of the Texas Model was essentially a revision and expansion of the 2004 publication of the Texas Model to not only address the statutory description of Texas school counseling programs and school counselor responsibilities, but also to further expand to address school counseling statute changes since 2004.

The Texas Model shared far more similarities than differences with the ASCA National Model, third edition (ASCA, 2012; TEA, 2018). Some of the similarities included: the mission statement definition; guidelines for formulating a comprehensive school counseling program mission statement; ethical standards and codes; data analysis and accountability services; rationale for data analysis; and identification of appropriate and inappropriate school counselor activities (ASCA, 2012; TEA, 2018). Perhaps the most prominent similarity between the Texas Model and the ASCA National Model was the detailed descriptions of the school counseling service delivery components: Guidance

Curriculum; Responsive Services; Individual Planning; and System Support (ASCA, 2012; TEA, 2018).

Perhaps the most significant difference in the two models was the detailed description of the Program Curriculum, Section V of the Texas Model which was more prescriptive than the ASCA National Model (TEA, 2018). Section V provided a curriculum scope and sequence, as well as student goals and competencies of the comprehensive school counseling program. To aid Texas school counselors with the implementation of a high quality comprehensive, developmental school counseling program, the Texas Model provided prescriptive details of the four content areas of the comprehensive school counseling program: Intrapersonal Effectiveness; Interpersonal Effectiveness; Post-secondary Planning and Career Readiness; and Personal Health and Safety (TEA, 2018).

### **The ASCA National Model**

In 2019, during the writing of this work, the ASCA published a fourth edition of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2019a). In 2012, the third edition coalesced the nine standards of the ASCA National Standards into three different domains which were: (a) student achievement; (b) career; and (c) social-emotional. Of the nine standards to which the third edition suggested professional school counselors attend, three of them were focused on students' social-emotional development (ASCA, 2012).

**Fourth Edition changes.** The Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model neither suggested nor eliminated any substantive content. However, in keeping with the substantial change in the educational environment, authors of the ASCA National Model, Fourth Edition, substantially changed the language from that of the Third Edition to

reflect the current state of affairs in the education discipline. Thus, the Fourth Edition changed the names of the components from nouns--Foundation, Management, Delivery, and Accountability, to verbs--Define, Manage, Deliver, and Assess. The change to verbs was meant to be representative of the operational shift to the tasks that School Counselors did to support systemic change in student outcomes (ASCA, 2019b).

The Fourth Edition included 35 standards which were “arranged within categories and subcategories based on five general categories of non-cognitive factors related to academic performance as identified...and synthesized in the vast array of research literature” (ASCA, 2019a, p. 8). The first major division was into two sections: Student Standards and Professional Standards. Student Standards of the Fourth Edition served as the defining standards of the school counseling profession for students. Specifically, Student Standards were enumerated as the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student. The division of the Student Standards into two categories, Mindset Standards and Behavior Standards, allowed for a more vivid delineation of the descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students needed in order to more efficiently realize academic success, college- and career-readiness, and social-emotional development. The Mindset Standards were related to the psychosocial attitudes and beliefs about themselves related to academic endeavors as exhibited in behaviors. In other words, the Mindset Standards of the Fourth Edition ASCA National Model informed the counseling program components meant to influence student behaviors manifested by the students’ psychosocial mindset and belief system (ASCA, 2019a).

Category Two, Behavior Standards included student behaviors—outward, visible signs--routinely associated with being a good student. The Behavior Standards were further divided into three sub-categories including: (a) Learning Strategies which were the tactics in which students engaged to support the cognitive work of learning; (b) Self-Management Skills which were the tactics in which students engaged to support continued goal-focus toward higher pursuits while ignoring the attractive distractions of lower pursuits; and (c) Social Skills which were the socially acceptable behaviors in which students engaged to improve social interactions among peers and adults (ASCA, 2019a).

The Fourth Edition was written based upon a review of the literature that recognized that content knowledge and academic skills were only a portion of the factors necessary for student success. The other portion of student success factors were non-cognitive, social-emotional factors. Of the 35 student standards addressed in the fourth edition, 19 or 54% of the standards had a non-cognitive, social-emotional focus. In short, the Fourth Edition changes coalesced into a laser focus on two concepts: (a) the importance of the non-cognitive factors necessary for student success; and (b) the role of the professional school counselor to support the acquisition and development of the non-cognitive factors which determined and were related to student success (ASCA, 2019a & 2019b). Notwithstanding the changes evident in the Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model, attending to students' social-emotional development remained among professional school counselors' top responsibilities regarding the promotion and enhancement the learning process of kindergarten through 12th grade scholars (ASCA, 2019a & 2019b).

Recall that I opened with the mention of the difficulties facing schools. One of professional school counselors' major responsibilities was to attend to students' social-emotional development. When we examined the professional school counselor major responsibility of attending to the social-emotional development of students through the lens of the difficulties facing schools, it became apparent that schools have continued to be tasked with the management of students displaying cognitive, language, physical, social-emotional, and behavioral encumbrances. Thus, student behavior management was a shared responsibility of the professional school counselor (ASCA, 2019a, 2012; Hatch, 2008; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Nichter & DeTrude, 2003; Nyan, 2017; Rathus, 2016).

According to Rathus, behavior referred to the full range of physical and emotional behaviors in which humans engage "biologically, socially, intellectually, etc. and are influenced by culture, attitudes, emotions, values, ethics, authority, rapport, persuasion, coercion and/or genetics" (2016, p. 11). One of the domain areas of the ASCA National Model was student social-emotional development. Thus, student behavior management fell well within the realm of responsibility of professional school counselors. However, professional school counselors could not and have not shouldered the responsibility of student behavior management in isolation. According to the ASCA National Model (2019a, 2012), professional school counselors were expected to work collaboratively with all education stakeholders including, parents or guardians, students, teachers, administrators, school staff, clinicians, and community members to ensure quality school counseling programs which, among other things, addressed the social-emotional wellness of all students in preparation for the challenges of life in the 21st century.

**Justification for the ASCA National Model.** It is important to note that every edition of the ASCA National Model was the accepted standard of professional school counseling among public schools in all states. Texas public schools, as well as public schools in all other states developed, adopted, and followed their own models of professional school counseling which were largely based upon the ASCA National Model (Nichter & DeTrude, 2003; Nyan, 2017; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Texas Counseling Association [TCA], 2018). This study was rooted in the standards noted in the four components of the Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model which were delineated by the verbs: Define, Manage, Deliver, and Assess (ASCA, 2019a). Verbs were more active, thus, more clearly described the tasks that professional school counselors do in the framework of a more complex state of education in this 21st century global society (ASCA, 2019b). In addition, the earlier editions of the ASCA National Model identified the fourth component as “Accountability” which connotes blame and responsibility (ASCA, 2012). Consequently, some professional school counselors reported reluctance to initiating particular programs for fear that the “Accountability” of the model would be used to find fault and cast blame when results of implemented counseling programs yielded results that were less than expectations (ASCA, 2019b). Because the ASCA National Model was meant to inform, not impair school counseling programs, “Assess” more accurately reflected the spirit of the ASCA National Model and the “need to evaluate efforts to determine their effectiveness and to make necessary adjustments, without denoting blame or responsibility” (ASCA, 2019b, p. 1).

Notwithstanding the fact that this study was based in a Texas public school, this study was based upon the Fourth Edition standards of the ASCA National Model for

several reasons. The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (TEA, 2018), while it was largely based upon the ASCA National Model (2012), did not reflect the latest changes in the ASCA National Model (2019a) related to the connotation of the components and the complex state of education and professional school counseling programming. With the publication of the Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model in 2019, the Texas Model simply has not had an opportunity to catch up with a more up-to-date edition. Thus, for the sake of universality, this Texas based study was rooted in the standards of the 2019 Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model.

### **School Safety**

School administrators continued to have a responsibility to stakeholders to use all effective means to maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment for all students. Maintaining a safe environment was an integral part of most, if not all school mission statements. Teachers could not teach and students could not learn in a chaotic and disruption-laden environment. “[In schools] there is an orderly, purposeful, business-like atmosphere, which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning” (Turner, 2010, p. 1).

Regardless of whether the school climate was conducive to teaching and learning, disciplinary measures must be employed to manage student behavior during the process of educating students, both academically and socially. Yet, the social or behavioral component of education was lacking in many Texas schools and was certainly lacking in most Texas Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) settings (Academic Information Management [AIM], 2001; American Psychological Association Zero-tolerance Task Force [APA Task Force], 2006; Cobb, 2008; Cole, 2013; Duncan, 2014;

Farler, 2005; Fenning, 2007; Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Hasson, 2017; Henkel, 2015; Insley, 2002; Johnson, 2013; Martinez, 2014; McCreight, 1999; McDonald, 2011; McGough, 2015; Russell, 2013; Sughrue, 2003; Stango, 2017; Texas Appleseed, 2008; TEA, 2007).

For the purposes of this study, a DAEP facility was defined an educational institute that may be public, private, or charter which services the kindergarten through 12th grade educational needs of students who, for disciplinary reasons, were removed from the traditional school setting by the decision of the school, correctional system, and/or district administration as mandated by the Safe School Act of 1995 (Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Mullen & Lambie, 2013). In practice, the current Texas DAEP model provided neither the means nor the method by which to remediate or rehabilitate student behavior by addressing that third domain of the ASCA National Model, social-emotional development (APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Duncan, 2014; Farler, 2005; Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Insley, 2002; McDonald, 2011; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Restorative Practices Working Group [RPWG], 2014; Sughrue, 2003; Turner, 2010).

Several findings demonstrated the conspicuous absence of social-emotional supports in zero-tolerance school practices that were meant to bolster school safety and elucidate best practices in Texas DAEP models. In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) authorized a task force to review data from research on the effects of zero-tolerance school policies on students. In the 11 mentions of psychosocial development, which was a concept synonymous to personal-social development, in the APA Task Force Report (2006), all 11 were with reference to the adolescent

developmental considerations for mitigating factors in judgments of blameworthiness for student code of conduct behavioral infractions. Not a single mention of psychosocial development was made with reference to the provision of the means or the method by which to address the social-emotional development of students as addressed in the ASCA National Model in the remediation or rehabilitation of student behavior in a DAEP or regular school setting.

A particular section of the Texas Education Code (TEC), §103.1201, Standards for the Operation of School District Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs established, in conformance with the Texas Education Code (TEC), §37.008, the standards for DAEPs that serviced students in elementary through high school grades who were removed from regular classroom settings for mandatory or discretionary disciplinary purposes. Yet no language in the TEC addressed the infusion of social-emotional, personal-social, or psychosocial supports in DAEPs (TEA, 2018a).

Furthermore, TEA, as a function of its Division of Accountability Research, released a policy research report entitled, *Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Practices* (2007), that presented an overview of the best practices of DAEPs revealed in the research to date. There were zero references to social-emotional development, personal-social development, psychosocial development, or any other synonym to such a construct that was addressed in the ASCA National Model. In short, while there may have been numerous mentions of social-emotional, personal-social, and psychosocial development, and synonyms, there were no connections made to the social-emotional, personal-social, and psychosocial development supports in DAEP best practices.

## **DAEP Mandate**

The adoption of the Safe Schools Act in 1995 with multiple supplements, the latest in 2013, required Texas public schools to provide DAEPs to serve as alternative education settings for scholars who were temporarily removed from the regular instructional setting due to behavioral infractions (Safe Schools Act, 1995/1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013). The accepted model of a DAEP served as an alternative education setting for students who were temporarily removed from the traditional, home, or zoned school setting because of disciplinary issues.

According to Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), school districts were required to meet the educational and behavioral needs of students assigned to Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Therefore, DAEPs were established with two related purposes: (a) to remove students with substantial discipline concerns from the classroom; and (b) to continue providing all students with a public education (Garba, 2011; Turner, 2010). With such a program purpose, TEC, left DAEP program design and content to local school district discretion (Safe Schools Act, 1995/1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013).

Findings of the 2006 APA Task Force revealed that:

Since the early 1990s the national discourse on school discipline has been dominated by the philosophy of zero-tolerance. Originally developed as an approach to drug enforcement, the term became widely adopted in schools in the early 1990s as a philosophy or policy that mandates the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, that are

intended to be applied regardless of the gravity of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context. (p. 852)

Using zero-tolerance policies, administrators assumed that removing students who continually engaged in disruptive behavior deterred others from similar disruption; while, at the same time, created an improved instructional and learning climate for those less disruptive students who remained (APA Task Force, 2006). Because of the zero tolerance mentality, the United States has seen steep growth in school disciplinary programs in the last twenty years with little scholarly review. According to Tajalli and Garba (2014):

Although nearly half a million students are annually sent to disciplinary alternative programs, there is scant scholarly literature on the issue. For the most part, the 14,000 independent school districts in the United States have a free hand in deciding their own disciplinary policies. In addition to disciplinary alternative programs, there exists a wide range of disciplinary practices among school districts. (pp. 620-621)

Because statewide school accountability reports in Texas (known as the Academic Excellence Indicator System [AEIS] prior to the 2012-2013 school year and the Texas Academic Performance Reports [TAPR] since 2012-2013) did not indicate students with a DAEP placement as a separate demographic, little data were available that specifically described the academic outcomes of students with a history of DAEP placement(s). The lack of data for this specific population confounded measurement of the effectiveness (program accountability) of DAEPs in light of the purpose for which they were created. “High recidivism and dropout rates underscore the failure of DAEPs to meet the needs of

large numbers of students—a problem compounded by the lack of state oversight” (Turner, 2010, p. 2).

### **Restorative Practices**

After observing and evaluating school disciplinary policies for 10 years, the APA Zero-tolerance Task Force (2006) concluded that removing students from the learning environment was not an effective student behavior management technique. The APA Task Force (2006) further concluded that zero-tolerance policies failed to do what they were designed to do—make schools safer. According to the RPWG (2014), zero-tolerance endangered the relationship between teachers and students and did not help students to address their social-emotional issues. Zero-tolerance policies further adversely affected students by contributing to: (a) academic difficulties, (b) truancy, (c) acting out, (d) psychological trauma, (e) mental health consequences, and (f) dropping out or being pushed out of school (APA Task Force, 2006; Hasson, 2017; RPWG, 2014).

As defined by Ted Wachtel (2016), founder of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), restorative practices (RP), were processes that proactively built healthy relationships and a sense of community that prevented and addressed conflict and misbehavior. Moreover, RP was a social science focused on building social capital and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making in order to build healthy communities, decrease antisocial behavior, repair harm, and restore relationships. The implementation of RP helped to: reduce crime, violence, and bullying behaviors; improve human behavior; strengthen civil society; provide effective leadership; restore previously broken relationships; and repair harm (IIRP, 2016; RPWG, 2014).

When appropriately implemented, RP could serve as an alternative to consequences of zero-tolerance policies (i.e., in-school suspension [ISS], out-of-school suspension [OSS], DAEP placement, and expulsion). Additionally, RP could serve to: (a) engage students and families; (b) foster healthy relationships among all education stakeholders; (c) support student social-emotional learning (SEL); (d) improve school climate; (e) promote accountability; and (f) promote effective two-way communication among all stakeholders (Hasson, 2017; RPWG, 2014). The implementation of RP could create a snowball effect of positive outcomes beginning with improved school culture and climate; thus leading to increased engagement of students, resulting in improved attendance, fewer classroom disruptions, higher academic performance, and increased graduation rates (RPWG, 2014).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the prevailing climate of illegal and illicit substances, threats, weapons, violence, family problems, homelessness, poverty, mental health issues, and cultural non-proficiency, schools faced a growing array of challenges to the mission of educating students (ASCA, 2012; Hatch, 2008; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Nichter & DeTrude, 2003; Nyan, 2017). Often, the many challenges to the mission of student education were manifested in student behaviors that threatened the positive school climate necessary for optimal teaching and learning (AIM, 2001; APA Task Force, 2006; Hasson, 2017; McGough, 2015; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Restorative Practices Working Group, 2014; Russell, 2013; Stango, 2017). Although it was understood that human beings were born to learn, humans did not do so in isolation (Smilkstein, 2011). Humans tended to learn most efficiently in environments fostering mutual learning opportunities for students and

educators that were characterized by positive relationships and interactions with peers (RPWG, 2014). Educators recognized the reality of optimal human learning and purposefully maintained the idea of social-emotional/personal-social student health in the deliberate and central focus of learning. In 2014, in a groundbreaking project in the social science of RP, RPWG researchers determined that:

As educators partner with districts to move away from zero-tolerance discipline policies and ramp up efforts to strengthen safe and supportive schools, address conflict, improve school climate, and build a positive school culture that students are connected to, many campuses are looking to implement alternative restorative approaches. (RPWG, 2014, p. 1)

In traditional schools, the classroom teacher was the first line of student behavior management. The classroom teacher established a system of classroom rules and consequences within the school district's Student Code of Conduct guidelines which clearly outlined the expectations for student behavior. Although the classroom teacher was the first line of student behavior management, the student support team collaborated to determine effective behavioral interventions and consequences aimed at eliminating behaviors that were inappropriate for school and problematic for school officials to manage. Specifically, the student support team was usually composed of school counselors, clinicians, social workers, administrators, teachers, parents or guardians, and other professional educators with varying roles (i.e., 504 Coordinator, Student Support Specialist [SSS], Campus Testing Coordinator [CTC], Response to Intervention [RTI] Coordinator, Content Coach, Department Chairperson [DC], and English Language Learner [ELL] Coordinator) [TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007].

In traditional public schools, students who engaged in disruptive behaviors were disciplined in a variety of ways, depending upon the gravity of the violation which was usually based upon the level of disruption to the educational environment (TEA, 2007). Ideally, the consequence or intervention for mildly disruptive behavior was minimal. More serious infractions were addressed with ISS/OSS or expulsion from school with DAEP placement being a mandated option available for consideration when classroom teacher and campus administrator interventions were unsuccessful in remediating the problem behavior (Gun-Free Schools Act [GFSA], 1993; Safe Schools Act, 1995/1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013). Contributors to most sources agreed that the relationship between the infraction and the punishment was minimal (APA Task Force, 2006; Chance, 2009; Cobb, 2008; Coleman, 2002; Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Duncan, 2014; Etzioni, 1961, 1975; Fenning, 2007; Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Insley, 2002; Martinez, 2014; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Sughrue, 2003; Turner, 2010).

Developers of the TEC Safe Schools Act effectively provided school classrooms with a respite from students who engaged in disruptive and/or potentially dangerous behaviors; thus, the benefits of the TEC were directed at classrooms and not toward students. However, if the mission of public education was to emphasize students first, an education mandate that relegated student needs to last should not exist. Inherent in the use of disciplinary measures for student behavior management was the responsibility to educate the student academically, as well as socially. Because the current DAEP model in Texas neither provided for the means, nor the method by which student misbehavior is to be remediated, the need of students placed in DAEP for learning appropriate behaviors remained unaddressed. Thus, it was the social-emotional/personal-social learning

component of education that was lacking in most DAEP settings in Texas. As noted in a previous section, according to one of the three domains of the ASCA National Model (2019a, 2019b), it was the role of the professional school counselor to attend to the social-emotional development of all students.

The TEC mandated programs and strategies that remediated also accommodated and compensated for the lack of academic skills among scholars (TEC 29.081). However, there were few developmental, comprehensive, systemic, and empirically reviewed programs that supported students in developing appropriate behaviors, and overcoming the risk factors which placed scholars at-risk of dropping out of school. School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) was a whole-systems approach aimed at effectively teaching students the behaviors that facilitated school success, as well as lifelong success (Hasson, 2017). Nevertheless, the TEC Chapter 37 was lacking in the verbiage focused on the requirement to implement positive behavior support programs, such as School-Wide Positive Behavior Support.

The established DAEP discipline management measures seemed sufficient to manage student behavior while the student was in the DAEP setting. However, the DAEP discipline management measures implemented during scholars' tenure in a DAEP setting did little to replace the target behaviors which contributed to the DAEP placement in the first place (Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Garba, 2011; Texas Appleseed, 2008; TEA, 2016d; Turner, 2010). In short, too many students who successfully completed their assigned time in a DAEP setting returned to their home school setting still lacking adequate behavior skills to facilitate success in the regular classroom setting (Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Garba, 2011; Texas Appleseed, 2008; TEA, 2016d; Turner, 2010). If the

old, unsuccessful behaviors were not addressed and changed while in the DAEP setting during the initial placement, students were likely to return to the home campus only to be placed in DAEP again; thus creating a cycle of DAEP recidivism without behavior remediation or rehabilitation.

The notable problem of the ineffectiveness of DAEP practices to support student social-emotional/personal-social development brought to mind Frederick Douglass' statement written to 1855 slave owners who resisted comprehension of the immorality of slavery, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men" (Rowland, 2014). The idea of the statement, which still held relevance today, inextricably linked adverse childhood experiences to the development of mentally healthy and highly functioning adults (Rowland, 2014). With this study, in essence, I examined the validity of Frederick Douglass' statement within the frame of DAEP staff interactions with students and DAEP recidivism.

In more direct terms, the ASCA National Model charged professional school counselors with supporting the social-emotional/personal-social growth, development, and success of all students (ASCA, 2019a, 2019b, 2012). The public school need for DAEP placement was driven by problematic behavior displayed by students, which spoke to the inadequate social-emotional/personal-social development of those students with behavioral challenges. As such, DAEP placement recidivism certainly spoke to the inadequate social-emotional/personal-social development of students with behavioral challenges. Thus, concern for effective interventions to reduce DAEP placement and recidivism fell well within the realm of professional school counseling and the role of the professional school counselor.

The intended outcomes of this study were: (a) to add to the knowledge base of professional school counseling and student behavior management techniques; (b) to improve discipline practices; and (c) to inform Texas education policy debates. Thereby, benefits of this study may potentially be realized by stakeholders of school counseling and student behavior management including, professional school counselors, school counselor training programs, behavior specialists, behavior specialist training programs, and education systems.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this case study was to describe how DAEP staff members, interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEPs for additional placements. In the research, the management of problematic student behavior was generally defined as discipline.

### **Significance of the Study**

Zero-tolerance policies presumed that removing disruptive students deterred others from disrupting the learning environment; thereby, creating an improved school climate for those students who remained in the setting (APA Task Force, 2006). Despite 25 years of zero-tolerance policy implementation in schools, and nearly 20 years of federal policy, the research base of zero-tolerance policy implementation was significantly insufficient to evaluate the impact of zero-tolerance policy practices on school climate and student behavior (APA Task Force, 2006; Coleman, 2002; Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Duncan, 2014; Hanson, 2005; Hasson, 2017; Insley, 2002; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Turner, 2010). In fact, findings from the available research on zero-tolerance and exclusionary disciplinary practices contradicted the idea that zero-tolerance

policies improved school climate and student behavior (Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Duncan, 2014; Hasson, 2017; Henkel, 2015; International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2016; McGough, 2015; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Restorative Practices Working Group, 2014; Russell, 2013; Stango, 2017; Texas Appleseed, 2007; TEA, 2007; Vertugo, 2002; Wachtel, 2016; Welsch, 2015). A closer examination of five of the key assumptions of zero-tolerance policies helped to describe the contradiction.

**Zero-tolerance key assumption number one.** The first zero-tolerance key assumption was, “School violence is at a serious level and increasing, thus necessitating forceful, no-nonsense strategies for violence prevention” (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 3). Because violence and disruptions of the learning environment were unacceptable in schools, they were “concerns that must be continually addressed in education (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 4). Notwithstanding the need for addressing violence and disruptions in school settings, since 1985, the data consistently indicated that serious school violence and disruption remained stable (APA Task Force, 2006).

**Zero-tolerance key assumption number two.** The second key assumption of zero-tolerance was, “Through the provision of mandated punishment for certain offenses, zero-tolerance increases the consistency of school discipline and thereby the clarity of the disciplinary message to students” (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 4). Within a school system, consistency in the implementation of behavioral interventions was a significant factor in defining the clarity with which students perceive disciplinary messages. Yet, evidence revealed by members of the APA Task Force (2006) suggested that consistency of school discipline had not increased. Suspension and expulsion rates were widely varied across schools and school districts. In fact, the variation appeared to the APA Task Force

(2006) to be equally due to the attitudes or behavior of students and characteristics of schools and the staff of the schools.

**Zero-tolerance key assumption number three.** The third zero-tolerance key assumption was, “Removal of students who violate school rules will create a school climate more conducive to learning for those students who remain” (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 4). Zero-tolerance policy assumed that removing students who substantially disrupted the school environment would result in a safer school climate for the non- or less disruptive students who remain in the school setting.

Although the assumption was intuitive, school climate indicator data bore out the opposite effect. Specifically, schools with higher expulsion and suspension rates had lower or less satisfactory ratings on the following indicators: 1) school climate; 2) school governance; and 3) spent disproportionate amounts of time on disciplinary issues, rather than academic achievement issues (APA Task Force, 2006). Although the findings were not demonstrative of causality, the suggested negative relationship between disruptive student removal and academic achievement made it difficult to argue in favor of zero-tolerance policies helping to create a more positive school climate, especially when the use of zero-tolerance policies were associated with negative achievement outcomes (APA Task Force, 2006).

**Zero-tolerance key assumption number four.** The fourth key assumption of zero-tolerance was, “The swift and certain punishments of zero-tolerance have a deterrent effect upon students, thus improving overall student behavior and discipline” (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 5). Central to the philosophy of zero-tolerance was the idea of deterrence of future misbehavior and breaking of the rules. Contrary to the assumption, data

reflected that removal practices of zero-tolerance policies predicted future higher rates of misbehavior among the students who were removed. Thereby, zero-tolerance policy implementation removals from the education setting were associated with students being at higher risk of dropping out of school and failing to graduate on time (APA Task Force, 2006).

**Zero-tolerance assumption number five.** The fifth and final key assumption of zero-tolerance policies that described the contradiction was, “Parents overwhelmingly support the implementation of zero-tolerance policies to ensure the safety of schools, and students feel safer knowing that transgressions will be dealt with in no uncertain terms” (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 5). The mixed data regarding this assumption made its validity inconclusive. Media accounts of school violence and disruption, as well as some survey results, suggested that communities and parents who feared that students’ safety was in jeopardy, reacted favorably to the increased disciplinary punishments of zero-tolerance policies (APA Task Force, 2006; Cortez & Cortez, 2009). Conversely, communities often reacted very negatively to the perception of a threat to the student right to an education. Although some students used the time provided by school removals to reflect on their own behavior, available evidence also suggested that students generally experienced school removals as unfair and ineffective (APA Task Force, 2006).

### **Significance in Insufficiency and Contradiction**

Because findings described by the available research on zero-tolerance implementation practices contradicted, and in some aspects were significantly insufficient to support the idea that zero-tolerance policies improved school climate and student behavior, the significance of this study laid in being able to describe how DAEP staff

members implement best practices associated with successful DAEPs. The Texas Education Agency and a number of other researcher stakeholders identified many practices that, when employed with fidelity in DAEP settings, could result in lower recidivism rates (AIM, 2001; APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Cole, 2013; Coleman, 2002; Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Duncan, 2014; Farler, 2005; Fenning, 2007; Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Hasson, 2017; Henkel, 2015; Insley, 2002; Johnson, 2013; Martinez, 2014; McCreight, 1999; McDonald, 2011; McGough, 2015; Meagher, 2009; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Moore & King, 2005; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Reyes, 2006; Stango, 2017; Sughrue, 2003; Tajalli & Garba, 2014; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007; Turner, 2010; Vertugo, 2002; Williams, 2009). With this study I was able to describe, from the participants' perspective, what actions and activities were employed with fidelity in the DAEP setting by DAEP staff that resulted in students successfully transitioning from DAEP placement back to the home school setting without engaging in behaviors that led to DAEP placement recidivism.

With regard to professional school counseling, the ASCA National Model charged professional school counselors with supporting the social-emotional/personal-social growth, development, and success of all students (ASCA, 2019a, 2019b, 2012). The public school need for DAEP placement was driven by problematic behavior displayed by students, which spoke to the inadequate social-emotional/personal-social development of those students with behavioral challenges. As such, DAEP placement recidivism certainly spoke to the inadequate social-emotional/personal-social development of students with behavioral challenges. Thus, concern for effective interventions to reduce DAEP placement and recidivism fell well within the realm of

professional school counseling and the role of the professional school counselor. Therefore, this study held particular significance to professional school counselors because the student behaviors that led to DAEP placement and recidivism could be traced directly back to the inefficacy of professional school counseling strategies to support the social-emotional/personal-social growth, development, and success of all students, especially students whose behavior subjected them to DAEP placement and recidivism (ASCA, 2019a, 2019b, 2012).

### **Definition of Terms**

The entries in the following section defined common terms used in this case study. For the purposes of this case study, the following operational definitions will be observed.

**Alternative Education Program (AEP).** An Alternative Education Program (AEP) was an educational program or system that was separate from a mainstream educational program or system and that was designed especially for students with academic or behavioral difficulties (Tennessee State Board of Education [SBOE], 2000, revised). According to Mullen and Lambie (2013), multiple forms of AESs existed in US public school systems. AESs may be categorized in several groups: (a) popular innovation – choice schools designed to challenge students to do better; (b) last chance programs – mandated schools prior to expelling students from the school system completely; and (c) remedial programs – remediation school for students who needed specialized assistance.

**Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).** A Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) was an educational institute that may be public,

private, or charter which serviced the kindergarten through 12th grade educational needs of students who, for disciplinary reasons, were removed from the traditional school setting by the decision of the school, correctional system, and/or district administration as mandated by the Safe School Act of 1995 (Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Mullen & Lambie, 2013).

**Discipline Referral.** A discipline referral in a school may have resulted from a student's problematic observable behavior in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. A discipline referral referred to the removal of a student from a regular classroom environment to the administrator's office for discipline infraction(s) (Sughrue, 2003).

**Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP).** A Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) placement in 32 Texas counties is an AEP operated by the Juvenile Justice Department in collaboration with school districts for students who have been expelled from school for engaging in delinquent behavior based on TEC, Chapter 31.011 (Welsch, 2015).

**Restorative Practices (RP).** Restorative practices (RP), which evolved from restorative justice, constituted a new field of study in social sciences that had the potential to positively influence human behavior and strengthen civil society around the world. International Institute for Restorative Practices founder, Ted Wachtel (2016), defined RP, as processes that proactively built healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and misbehavior. Moreover, RP focused on building social capital and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making in order to build healthy communities, decrease antisocial behavior, repair harm, and restore relationships (IRRP, 2016; RPWG, 2014).

**Student Code of Conduct.** The Student Code of Conduct was a published set of collaboratively determined rules, expectations, and behaviors that students were expected to follow within a school system (GFSA, 1993; Safe Schools Act, 1995/1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This case study of how DAEP staff members interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that result in the students not returning to DAEP for additional placements was grounded in the conceptual framework of organizational typology and the theoretical framework of Compliance Theory, both offered by Amitai Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997). Although the Compliance Theory was originated by Etzioni over 50 years ago, it had sustained its relevance, especially with regard to educational organizations as demonstrated by its citations in numerous studies as recent as 2012 (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, 2008; Chance, 2009; Champoux, 2011; Coleman, 2002; Lunenburg, 1983; Lunenburg, 1984; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas, Kreps, & Cage, 1977).

According to Compliance Theory, organizations, including schools, “can be classified by the type of power they use to direct the behavior of their members and the type of involvement of the participants” (Lunenburg, 2012, p. 4). Schools have tended to have the characteristics of normative organizations, a term which will be explained in more detail. However, when school officials used types of power which were inappropriate for the organization’s environment, the practice resulted in a reduction in the effectiveness of the organization measured by an adverse school climate, as well as escalated student misbehavior and disruptions to the learning environment (Lunenburg,

2012). Thus, Compliance Theory forces observers' attention "both to a relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor's power and to the orientation of the subordinated actor to the power applied" (Etzioni, 1975, p. 3).

One of the primary roles of school in American society was the transmission of culture through the facilitation of education (Chance, 2009). According to Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997), having knowledge of the role of an organization in society fundamentally drove the definition of the primary purpose of that organization. According to Thomas, Kreps, and Cage (1977),

...Etzioni's Compliance Theory provides a model that facilitates a more thorough understanding of the influence of the school organization on juvenile delinquency...[Compliance Theory] suggests that theoretical models that have been employed in organizational analyses might provide a useful means of explaining that aspect of delinquency which is associated with school experience (p. 157).

**Organizational typology.** According to Chance (2009), Lunenburg, (1983, 1984, 2012), as well as, Thomas et al. (1977), Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) based his classification of organizations upon the three types of power he identified as being exerted by the leadership of the organization to obtain compliance of its members: (a) coercive power, which was more physical in nature; (b) remunerative power, which was more material in nature; and (c) normative power, which was more symbolic in nature.

**Coercive power.** Coercive power was the power exerted by applying physical sanctions, (i.e., detention, suspension, and expulsion). For the purposes of this study, coercive power was considered: the assignment of ISS/OSS; lunch detention; before and

after school detention; DAEP placement; or expulsion for student discipline infractions (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

***Remunerative power.*** Remunerative power was described by the power exerted by the use of material rewards, (i.e., salaries, bonuses, or fringe benefits). For the purposes of this study remunerative power of educators was treats (i.e., field trips, social functions, pizza, ice cream, popcorn, etc. parties) given to individuals or student groups as rewards, incentives, or positive reinforcers for good behavior (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

***Normative power.*** The power exerted by educators employing symbolic rewards or sanctions, (i.e., recommendations, commendations, honors, or grades) described normative power. For the purposes of this study, normative power was employed by educators when they utilized positive behavior supports, RP, RtI, or conduct grades on report cards and progress reports (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

According to Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997), each type of power was typically met with a specific reaction. The three reactions were characterized by varying intensity levels along a continuum of involvement ranging from intensely positive to intensely negative. On the intensely positive end of reaction spectrum was commitment. Along the spectrum midline was calculation--either a mildly negative or mildly positive reaction. Finally, alienation was an intensely negative reaction to power exertions by leadership or, in the case of this study, educators.

Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) and Lunenburg (2012) posited that each type of power was typically most congruent with a specific reaction type. Coercive power exertion tended to be met with the reaction of alienation. Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997), further characterized organizations that primarily utilized threats or applied physical sanctions as a means of controlling members as coercive organizations. Remunerative power usage generally resulted in the reaction of calculation. Utilitarian organization was the term that Etzioni classified organizations which primarily used remunerative power. Commitment was the reaction most commonly associated with the predominant use of normative power. Likewise, Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) classified organizations which chiefly utilized normative power as normative organizations.

### **Organizational Structure Generalizations of Compliance Theory**

Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) conceptually organized the presentation of Compliance Theory around power, reactions, and organization types to make organizational structure generalizations (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). The four organizational variables were: (a) elites; (b) goals or objectives; (c) communication; and (d) socialization.

**Elites.** The second organizational variable, elites, were powerful individuals within the organization. Elites were subcategorized into: officers; informal leaders; and formal leaders.

**Officers.** As the name suggested, officers' power derived exclusively from the individual's position or office within the organization. The organization's officers controlled instrumental activities, or those tasks which were instrumental to achieving the goals of the organization (Etzioni, 1997). In a school organization, officers were central

and site-based administrators, as well as lead professional staff, and lead paraprofessional staff who are placed in and recognized as authority over students and other school staff members.

***Informal leaders.*** Although informal leaders did not hold a position of authority or power and were technically subordinate to officers, informal leaders were recognized to have influential, personal power over other members within the organization by controlling the expressive activities of the organization members. Expressive activities were the processes involved with the encouragement of social integration and maintaining values among the organization members (Etzioni, 1997). Further, open conflict may have been present between officers and informal leaders (Chance, 2009). In the case of public school organizations, informal leaders were education stakeholders other than school staff, particularly students and non-administrative staff whose leadership exerted influence over other stakeholders within the organization with positive or negative impact on the overall culture and climate of the school organization (Chance, 2009; Etzioni, 1997; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012).

***Formal leaders.*** Individuals who held an office within the organization and had personal power to exert influence over others within the organization were referred to as formal leaders (Etzioni, 1997). In public school organizations, formal leaders were student sports team captains, Student Council officers and representatives, Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) officers, organization boosters within the school, coordinators, department chairpersons, team leaders, coaches, mentors, and others who took on a title along with the leadership responsibilities of the office (Chance, 2009; Etzioni, 1997; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012).

Compliance Theory further distinguished three types of goals or objectives which an organization tried to achieve: (a) culture goals, (b) order goals, and (c) economic goals (Etzioni, 1997). The following presented a deeper explanation of each type of goal or objective.

**Culture goals.** Culture goals had the intention of creating or preserving cultural symbols or artifacts. In a school organization, culture goals may have been appropriate citizenship or the development of lifelong learners in a global economy. The culture goals of a school organization were most readily documented in its school mission statement (Chance, 2009; Etzioni, 1997; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012).

**Order goals.** Order goals were those which sought to control the organization's members through segregation or through preventative measures from involvement in deviant activities. Such goals were the cornerstone of any public school organization which the student participants were mandated to attend. Public school organization order goals included, but certainly were not limited to: goals related to student academic placement in the least restrictive environment; goals inherent in labeling or grouping students in special populations (i.e., students with disabilities, gifted and talented (GT), students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), or students from economically disadvantaged families); or goals related to placement of students for behavioral consequences (i.e., ISS/OSS, detention assignments, behavior RtI Tier system, or DAEP referral) (Chance, 2009; Etzioni, 1997; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012).

**Economic goals.** Economic goals referred to those goals relating to profit from goods and services production. With respect to school organizations, economic goals were the loftier, farther reaching goals of creating a public education system capable of

producing citizens who were significant contributors to the world's economy (Chance, 2009; Etzioni, 1997; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012).

Etzioni (1961, 1975 1997) suggested that each goal type was best matched to a specific type of organization. Thus, coercive organizations tended to have order goals; utilitarian organizations were disposed toward economic goals; and normative organizations were primarily concerned with culture goals.

### **Compliance Theory Applied to School Organizations**

With the transmission of culture as one of the primary goals of school organizations, Compliance Theory, informed the notion that normative power was ideally suited for school organizations (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). However, because order must be maintained among students in the transmission of school culture, there was a tendency toward replacement of normative power with coercive strategies (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977). Such replacement resulted in alienation of students, parents, and staff; in addition to division among administrators, staff, students, parents, and community (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977). Etzioni scholars agreed that the effective implementation of normative power in school organizations must be accomplished through collaborative cooperation among all school stakeholders (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

Historically, Etzioni (1975, 1997) characterized schools as bearing twofold compliance components resonating characteristics of both normative power and coercive power. Despite the duality, normative power characteristics seemed to be more distinctly emphasized in school organizations (Etzioni, 1975, 1997). Yet, Thomas et al. (1977) maintained that although school organizations represented themselves as primarily reliant upon normative power to gain the compliance of students, the reality was that school officials, not unlike prison organizations, must retain control over students before realizing increases in academic achievement and skills, as well as in social and moral skill acquisition. In addition, Thomas et al. (1977) reported that:

To the extent that the structure of public schools does reflect a greater emphasis on the exercise of coercive power, we would expect to find increasing degrees of negative commitment among student populations. Negative commitment, moreover, would be expected to stimulate student responses to the school that would impair the success of the organization in attaining its change-oriented goals (p. 159).

Thomas et al. (1977) concluded that it was unavoidable for school organizations to pursue and achieve their designated mission and goal of academic and social change without structuring themselves with the use of coercive power. Thus, having the ability to exert a high level of social control over students, the lower participant members of the organization, who were mandated, by law, to attend school. The legal mandate for student attendance existed regardless of the individual student's level of commitment to the formal goals of education; thereby, leading to the duality of power types with a higher degree of coercive power than normative power being exerted by school organizations.

Further, student experience of alienation fostered negative affect toward school staff, the school mission and goals, as well as school involvement. Alienation led to student feelings of powerlessness of their control over the school-related portion of life; which were, in turn, related to student commitment levels to the school. In short, the dual compliance structures of school organizations created a cyclical effect of diminished student commitment to the school goals and staff. Diminished student commitment led to alienation of the students. Student alienation led to feelings of powerlessness regarding school related matters. Student feelings of powerlessness cyclically led back to diminished commitment among students toward the school organization (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

### **Theoretical Framework Conclusion**

According to Lunenburg (2012), Compliance Theory was “an approach to organizational structure that integrates several ideas from the classical and participatory management models” (p. 4). Compliance Theory classified organizations by the type of power the organization used to direct the behavior of its members and the type of involvement of the organization’s members.

Typology of organization power and member involvement was characterized in three predictable combinations: (a) coercive-alienative; (b) normative-calculative; and (c) remunerative-commitment. Some organizations combined two or all three power-involvement types. However, the use of an inappropriate power type for the environment of a school organization reduced organization effectiveness and led to organizational

dysfunction of varying degrees (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

### **Research Question**

One central research question was relevant to this case study. Therefore, I employed the following research question to describe the unique, lived experiences of DAEP staff members who taught and interacted with students assigned and reassigned to DAEP placements which employed restorative justice practices in an urban school district in southeast Texas:

1. What are the lived experiences of educational professionals working in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program settings who are implementing restorative justice practices for students placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program?

### **Limitations**

One of the potential limitations of this study was RP implementation and the level of such implementation was based upon self-report and may not have been an accurate reflection of what was actually taking place at the DAEP. Likewise, because the study took place at one location, the transferability of the findings was limited to that particular area of the region. Additionally, the use of self-report depended upon the authenticity of the participants. Although the importance of authenticity and genuineness of responses was addressed in the expectations of participants, the possibility of the lack of authenticity presented a further limitation to the study.

Ideally, it would be the intention of the primary researcher to include an additional layer of data involving: primary researcher observation of participant

interactions with students in the DAEP facility, as well as the DAEP environment itself. However, at the time of the study, the COVID-19 Pandemic Texas school closure, social distancing protocols, and prudence necessitated a change from primary researcher visits to the DAEP site to facilitate the face-to-face interview protocol to a virtual interview protocol with DAEP staff working from home to engage with DAEP students engaged in distance learning. Thus, the primary researcher was unable to enter the DAEP for the interviews to collect observational data relating to DAEP staff interactions with DAEP students. The inability to do DAEP site visits to conduct the interview and collect on-site observational data in observance of social distancing protocols to slow the spread of COVID-19 also constituted a limit of this study. Nonetheless, even without DAEP site visits to facilitate observational data collection, multiple data sources collected via observation of the participants during the virtual interview ensured data triangulation and information-rich participant responses (Yin, 2009).

### **Delimitations**

The case study was delimited by the sample. I collected data from a purposeful and criterion sample in a limited geographic area, in a single school, in a single DAEP facility, in a single urban school district in southeast Texas.

For the purposes of this study, home school was defined as the school where the student engaged in the offense that resulted in the DAEP placement and the school the student transitioned back to after serving the DAEP placement. In order to protect the anonymity of the study participants, home school, DAEP facility, school district, and partnering alternative education service provider, for the purposes of this study, I referred to the participants and various organizations by pseudonyms. For the purposes of this

case study, in order to protect privacy, minimize identifiability, and ensure confidentiality, all participants self-designated a pseudonym to which to be referred. However, due to the small sample size, the participant self-selected pseudonyms still seemed too identifiable. Therefore, at the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee Members, the primary researcher designated participant pseudonyms in order of interview occurrence as names of U.S. states in order of entry into the Union. In other words, the first participant to be interviewed was given the pseudonym of the first state to join the United States Union, Delaware. The ninth participant interviewed was given the pseudonym of the ninth state to join the United States Union, New Hampshire. Accordingly, the second through eighth participants interviewed were given pseudonyms of the second through eighth states to join the Union. As primary researcher, I selected the pseudonyms of the home school, DAEP facility, school district, and partnering alternative education service provider. The pseudonym of the home school was Goode Middle School (GMS). The pseudonym of the DAEP facility was Hope Academy (HA). The pseudonym of the school district was Kidd Hope Independent School District (KHISD). The pseudonym of the partnering alternative education service provider was Kidd Educational Services (KES).

### **Assumptions**

Through this case study, I sought to investigate the effects and efficacy of RP in enabling secondary school students to make decisions that led to lasting changes in their behavior as measured by the reduction of DAEP placements and recidivism in an urban school district in southeast Texas. As such, an analysis of RP in all schools throughout the United States was not addressed. Similarly, I neither intended to provide a forum to

diminish the responsibilities set forth by administrators for student behavior management, nor took away from the educational opportunities afforded by behavior management education programs in the United States. Therefore, for the purposes of this study the following assumptions were made: (a) all participants were appropriately certified educators who were employed at a public school in the state of Texas; (b) all educator participants responded honestly to the questions presented in the semi-structured virtual interview; (c) all educator participants had the best interests of students at heart; (d) the social, emotional, and physical wellness of a student affected academic achievement; (e) data collection and analyses produced reliable information with results which could be utilized by education stakeholders; and (f) the research study was conducted ethically.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study was presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 served as the Introduction of the topic. Included in Chapter 1 was: the background of the study; statement of the problem; purpose of the study; significance of the study; definition of terms; theoretical framework; research questions; limitations; delimitations; and assumptions of the study.

Chapter 2 served as the review of the literature of the history and efficacy of zero-tolerance policies and DAEPs. Chapter 3 presented the methodology used for the research study. The methodology included the selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 described the study and the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 served to: summarize the study, discuss the findings, as well as the theoretical and practical implications of the finding. Chapter 5 concluded with: (a) discussion of the

findings; (b) implications for practice; (c) recommendations for further research; and (d) conclusions.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

#### Introduction

I used this review of the literature to frame the contextual implications of the Texas model of DAEPs, the primary focus of this study. Thus, Chapter 2, the review of literature includes: a brief history of the development of DAEPs in the US; a survey of the positive and negative aspects of DAEPs; a review of the Texas DAEP guidelines; and a summary of DAEP best practices. In short, in this chapter, I provided a glimpse into the historical efficacy of programs aimed at managing student behavior in public schools.

#### Historical Development of DAEPs

The evolution of school disciplinary policies reflects the ideological, legal, political, religious, and social reality of the over 14,000 independent school districts in the United States (Hasson, 2017; Henkel, 2015; Martinez, 2014; McGough, 2015; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Stango, 2017). Traditionally, school districts were empowered to determine their own curriculum, as well as their own discipline policies.

**Corporal punishment.** Discipline policy empowerment allowed school districts to use a variety of tools to discipline students including corporal punishment, which was an accepted and frequently used discipline method until the mid-1960s (Tajalli & Garba, 2014). Ideological, political and social changes of the 1960s led compassionate members of society to question the wisdom of corporal and other punishments which were considered inhumane. Consequently, educators, psychologists, and social scientists joined forces demanding that school officials reconsider discipline policies. In fact, members of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that corporal punishment

be abolished throughout the country because of the damage it inflicts on students' self-image and academic performance, as well as its contribution to students' violent and disruptive behaviors (Mullen & Lambie, 2013). Nevertheless, the Academy writers' argument has not been convincing to the 20 states (mostly in the Bible Belt), including Texas, that still have not abolished corporal punishment in public schools, maintaining belief in the 'Spare the rod, spoil the child' doctrine (McDonald, 2011; Tajalli & Garba, 2014). As recently as the 2006-2007 school year, over 49,000 Texas students were subjected to corporal punishment, thus making Texas, by some standards, "the least student-friendly state in the country" (Tajalli & Garba, 2014, p. 621). Although parental consent was usually required before paddling or swatting was permitted, over 96% of Texas school districts still included the use of corporal punishment (McDonald, 2011).

**Discipline procedures of the 1950s – 1980s.** Through the 1980s, school discipline was left to local school administrators, because school discipline was "accomplished through teacher administered discipline, corporal punishment, and administrative proceedings" (Hanson, 2005, p. 298). In the 1960s, growing individual human rights concerns prompted school officials to revise school disciplinary guidelines. According to Hanson (2005), "corporal punishment was found to be less acceptable and less effective in the 1960s..." (p. 298). "In the late 1970s and early 1980s school officials began using in-school suspensions as an alternative to exclusionary policies following lawsuits such as *Goss v. Lopez*, which challenged expulsions and suspension on due process" (Insley, 2002, p. 1046). Classroom disruptive behaviors were dealt with by assigning ISS and expulsion (Hanson, 2005, Insley, 2002; Tajalli & Garba, 2014). Hanson (2005) further argued that ISS was a more humane form of punishment than was

expulsion because ISS allowed students the opportunity to complete academic assignments; whereas, expulsion halted students' academic work.

When the US crime rate steadily increased by 40% from the mid-1980s until 1991 (Safe Schools Act, 1995/1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013), school officials tied the high crime rate to school violence and began rethinking disciplinary measures by abandoning rehabilitative discipline programs in favor of tougher policies (Insley, 2002).

Garber (2011) stated:

In New York, for example...Donald Batista, superintendent of the Yonkers school system, applied a zero-tolerance policy to disruptive students. These 'drastic' measures gained popularity in the mid-1990s with the adoption of the Gun-Free Schools Act ([GFSA], 1993), which mandated the application of zero-tolerance policies for firearms in all fifty states (p. 5).

**Zero-tolerance policies of the 1990s.** According to Hanson (2005), "zero-tolerance refers to school or district-wide policies that mandate pre-determined and typically harsh consequences or punishments (such as suspensions and expulsion) for a wide variety of broadly defined school rule violations" (p. 301). Being popularized by federal and state drug enforcement policies in the 1980s, the term was first used by the U.S. Attorney General of San Diego who embraced the zero-tolerance philosophy by ordering customs agents to seize vehicles used to transport drugs across U.S. borders (Vertugo, 2002).

In response to perceived increases in school violence, the GFSA (1993) was enacted by the Clinton Administration with the intent of reducing school violence in the United States by mandating harsh, punitive disciplinary actions for gun or weapon

possession on school grounds. Moreover, the GFSA featured a clause that permitted the chief administrative officer of a school or school district to modify expulsion disciplinary decisions on a case-by-case basis (Garba, 2011; Tajalli & Garba, 2014). Sughrue (2003) maintained that “this administrative discretion was to be the moderating influence over an otherwise severe disciplinary response” (p. 241).

The GFSA incentivized the application of the new law by withholding federal funding from school districts that did not enforce a zero-tolerance policy and providing fiscal incentives for school districts that put zero-tolerance policies into effect. As a result, \$75 million in grants were distributed to school districts to fight crime in 1994 and \$100 million in grants were paid out to school districts most troubled by crime in 1995 (Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Insley, 2002; Sughrue, 2003; Tajalli & Garba, 2014; Vertugo, 2002).

In order to receive funding from the multi-million dollar GFSA budget, most United States schools enacted some sort of zero-tolerance policy during the 1993-1994 school year, even if the respective district’s policy was poorly defined and structured. By late 1995, all 50 states had legislated policies aligned with the Gun-Free Schools Act. Additionally, local school authorities were required to comply with implementing zero-tolerance policies (Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Tajalli & Garba, 2014; Texas Appleseed, 2007; Vertugo, 2002). Most states’ policies mirrored the GFSA verbiage, and the policies extended the coverage to a wide range of student misconduct (i.e., fights on school grounds, prescription drug, alcohol, or tobacco possession, verbal abuse, and chronic non-attendance issues); thus, making offenses significantly lesser in severity than firearm possession subject to ISS, OSS, or expulsion under the zero-tolerance policies

(Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Insley, 2002; Sughrue, 2003; Tajalli & Garba, 2014; Texas Appleseed, 2007; Vertugo, 2002).

### **Zero-Tolerance Leads to Texas DAEP Provisions**

According to Tajalli & Garba (2014), Texas Appleseed (2007), and Insley (2002), only a small number of U.S. states created alternative education programs for students who were suspended or expelled. Fortunately, Texas, as well as Connecticut, Hawaii, and Kentucky began providing DAEPs as an alternative education provision under zero-tolerance policies. In particular, in 1995, Texas enacted the Safe Schools Act (Safe Schools Act, 1995/1997, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013) requiring Texas school districts to establish DAEPs for students who committed certain violations of the local Student Code of Conduct, including acts that may or may not have been criminal offenses.

Tajalli and Garba (2014) reported that:

Under pressure from unionized educators who were dissatisfied with suspension and expulsion of students, the Safe Schools Act established DAEPs for students ‘whose behavior violated local or state-mandated rules of conduct.’ The purpose of these programs has been to provide a temporary place to deal with the educational and behavioral needs of suspended or expelled students. Our data show that for the academic year 2009-2010, about 25% of the 1,227 school districts in Texas had at least one off-campus DAEP (p. 622).

With respect to DAEP placement, the TEA (2007) defined disciplinary offenses, prescribed discipline levels, and divided offenses into two major placement categories: mandatory and discretionary. In addition to mandatory disciplinary actions emanating from state laws, school districts throughout the country have retained their age-old

discretionary authority to punish students. Consequently, Texas school districts currently use both discretionary and mandatory policies to discipline students. Texas school districts have unlimited discretion to refer students for suspensions for any disciplinary infraction (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Levin, 2006). Numerous studies (Cobb, 2008; Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Reyes, 2006; Vertugo, 2002) have reported that the overwhelming majority of student suspensions are through the discretionary authority of school officials rather than what is mandated by the Texas state law and education code. In particular, during the 2005-2006 school year, TEA reported that almost two-thirds of referrals to Texas DAEPs were discretionary placements (TEA, 2007). Tajalli and Garba's 2014 "sample of 207 Texas DAEP shows more than 71% of the referrals to be discretionary" (p. 623).

### **Effectiveness of Zero-Tolerance Educational Systems**

Within many communities, schools have deemphasized traditional school-based disciplinary interventions, while greatly expanding the use of zero-tolerance disciplinary approaches that exclude students from their schools through OSS, expulsions, and referrals to alternative schools or programs (i.e., DAEPs). The original intent of these policies and practices was to address serious threats to school safety, but the reality is that the vast majority of these extreme punishments are imposed for non-violent behaviors such as classroom disruptions, skipping school, displays of disrespect, and dress code violations (APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Farler, 2005; Garba, 2011; Hanson, 2005; Hasson, 2017; Insley, 2002; McDonald, 2011; Reyes, 2006; Sughrue, 2003; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007).

Researchers have shown that removing students from the learning environment for extended periods of time is not an effective way to manage student behavior. After evaluating school disciplinary policies for 10 years, the APA Task Force (2008) concluded that zero-tolerance policies failed to make schools safer. In fact, the APA Task Force (2008) reported that zero-tolerance policies may make schools less safe, because schools with higher rates of suspension and expulsion “appear to have less satisfactory ratings of school climate, to have less satisfactory school governance structures, and to spend a disproportionate amount of time on disciplinary matters” (p. 853). Zero-tolerance as an approach hurts the relationship between teachers and student and fails to help students address their individual issues. Furthermore, individual students and the overall classroom “...wind up worse off than before” (APA Task Force, 2006, p. 852).

These harsh disciplinary approaches have created a school-to-prison pipeline (S2PP) endangering educational opportunities and making dropout and incarceration far more likely for millions of children and young adults across the country (Texas Appleseed, 2007). The effects of these policies include:

**Academic difficulties.** Students who are not in class are not doing much learning. Thus, students subjected to harsh disciplinary measures that exclude them from school tend to fall behind academically (APA Task Force, 2006; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007).

**Truancy.** Students who face harsh discipline often feel alienated from their schools, resulting in more absenteeism. Increased absenteeism separates students from the learning opportunity and makes parents and guardians of students who are chronically

absent vulnerable to legal action for truancy (APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Hanson, 2005; Insley, 2002; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007).

**Acting out.** Students punished by zero-tolerance measures often fall behind their peers due to lost learning time. As a result, they often become frustrated or embarrassed and proceed to disrupt class (APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Martinez, 2014; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Sughrue, 2003; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007).

**Psychological trauma and mental health consequences.** Unjust disciplinary consequences have led to public humiliation, diminished self-worth, and distrust of school officials; thus, are frequently traumatizing for students. Also, unjust disciplinary measures often triggered a cycle of disengagement from school, within which students became less trusting and more resentful of school staff; thus, losing the connectedness that is a critical component of academic success (Texas Appleseed, 2007, p. 56). As students became more alienated, they were more likely to engage in risky behaviors, violence, and alcohol and substance abuse (APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Martinez, 2014; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Sughrue, 2003; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007).

**Dropping out and being pushed out of school.** According to Texas Appleseed, zero-tolerance discipline measures allowed for unnecessarily severe disciplinary tactics which sent the message to students that they were not valued (Texas Appleseed, 2007). The danger of students feeling de-valued by discipline practices was that they feel pushed out of school; thus, making it easier for unnecessarily severely disciplined students to drop out of school (Texas Appleseed, 2007).

Students succeeded and behavior improved when students were in challenging and engaging classrooms contained within welcoming, nurturing schools. The OSS crisis affected an estimated 3.3 million students who were suspended from school each year.

Furthermore, out-of-school suspensions (OSSs) had a disproportionate impact on students of color and students with disabilities (Mendez & Knoff, 2003). According to former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, citing the US Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), “African-American students without disabilities are more than three times as likely as their white peers without disabilities to be expelled or suspended for the same behavior” (Duncan, 2014, p. 4).

### **Alternatives to Zero-Tolerance Educational Systems Exist**

A number of other viable practices with fewer adverse consequences than zero-tolerance policies have served as alternatives to exclusionary disciplinary practices. Alternative practices have been used to improve school climate, foster healthy relationships between educators and students, decrease disciplinary disparities, engage students and families, support social-emotional learning, and promote accountability and two-way communication. Yet, referrals to DAEPs predicated on zero-tolerance policies have continued as an integral part of our education system (APA Task Force, 2006; Cobb, 2008; Martinez, 2014; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Sughrue, 2003; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007). When the culture and climate of the school is improved, students become more engaged, resulting in: improved attendance, fewer classroom disruptions, higher academic performance, and increased graduation rates (APA Task Force, 2006; Duncan, 2014; TEA, 2007; Texas Appleseed, 2007).

## DAEP “Best Practices” Literature

In reviewing the literature for indications of DAEP “best practices”, among the few studies that focus exclusively on DAEPs, only four in the last 20 years were statewide in focus with three being Texas-specific. Notably, the term, *best practices*, was not defined in the ‘Definition of Terms’ section of this study because definitions of *best practices* varied among the four studies. Additionally, the researchers utilized varied sources of information, as well as different collection and analyzation methods (TEA, 2007).

**The McCreight Study of Texas Superintendents.** McCreight (1999) surveyed Texas school district superintendents regarding the program characteristics of on- and off-campus DAEPs. Survey data aggregation and analysis revealed a clustering of DAEP best practices into nine different categories including:

***Program characteristics.*** DAEP staff and teachers collaboratively develop successful programs which: had a clear mission; created efficient, structured environments focused on student success; and based instructional plans on the results of student assessment. In addition, successful programs ensured that students built capacity to meet high expectations by utilizing a myriad of instructional strategies, particularly maintaining a teacher-student ratio at no more than 1:15 (McCreight, 1999).

***Curriculum and instruction (C & I).*** The major goal of high functioning DAEP C&I is to engage students in experiences that helped them improve behavior, attitude, and self-esteem. Also, these experiences provided relevant and functional academic, social, and daily living skills through a variety of innovative, nontraditional methods.

Most importantly, instruction was appealing, individualized, self-paced, and challenging (McCreight, 1999).

***Teachers and staff.*** Successful DAEP teachers and staff were highly qualified, caring, dedicated, optimistic, and skilled professionals willing to take responsibility for student success by working collaboratively to maximize student success and achievement. Their belief in educating the whole child drove them to address the needs of the students by simultaneously working within several roles, including teacher, mentor, nurturer, as well as counselor (McCreight, 1999).

***Teacher and staff training.*** Successful DAEP teachers and staff were highly trained and well-versed in discipline and anger management, as well as conflict resolution. Also, teachers and staff were culturally sensitive and worked well with students from diverse backgrounds (McCreight, 1999).

***Discipline.*** Successful DAEP disciplinary systems are based upon a clear, strict, fair, and equitable discipline code which served to develop the coping skills, self-control, and problem-solving abilities of all students, regardless of their starting level. Additionally, the discipline system featured positive and negative consequences for various student behaviors (McCreight, 1999).

***Transitional component.*** Successful DAEPs featured cohesive strategic activities and procedures to facilitate student transitions from and back to the regular educational program on the home campus. The seamless transition component involved all stakeholders (i.e., students, DAEP staff, home campus staff, parents, community agency staff, and victims directly affected by the offending student's behavior, as applicable). The transitional component was necessary to support and help ensure that the student

appropriately and consistently used the newly acquired and developing problem-solving, social, and coping skills across all environments in which the student interacted with others (McCreight, 1999).

***Parental involvement.*** Successful DAEPs strongly promoted and demanded parental involvement in every aspect of the process. Parent involvement helped to ensure that developing skills address issues related to family and home life away from school. Additionally, parents were encouraged to volunteer at the DAEP facility, as well as participate in parenting skills training (McCreight, 1999).

***Community services.*** Successful DAEPs featured collaborative partnerships with community youth and educational agencies. This collaboration served to assist students and families with a range of services and training opportunities available outside the school: (a) health and human services, (b) homeless services, (c) juvenile justice services, (d) employment services, (e) career services, and (f) vocational training services (McCreight, 1999).

***Counseling.*** Successful DAEP counseling services connected students and families with counseling services through community and state programs. In addition, students are provided peer and adult mentoring opportunities (McCreight, 1999).

***Compilation of eight best practices reported by McCreight Study.*** The eight best practices reported as non-negotiables to ensure DAEP success by at least 60% of survey respondents were: One-on-one instruction; Parent involvement at DAEP entrance and exit conference; DAEP placement with the ultimate goal of success in the mainstream program upon return to the home campus; One-time DAEP placement; Program planning featuring establishment of individual student goals; Meaningful conflict-resolution

professional development; Improved academic achievement during DAEP placement; and DAEP academic program delivery addressing each student's fundamental reading level (McCreight, 1999).

**The Academic Information Management Study (AIMS).** In 2001, the AIMS summarized the program practices of successful DAEPs in Texas. The AIMS intent was to provide DAEP and regular school educators with a resource of support and assistance in the implementation of a DAEP (AIMS, 2001). Before they developed the summary, AIMS researchers collected information in a TEA-commissioned study as background for the first DAEP Annual Evaluation Report in 2001. The multi-year effort was conducted in collaboration with: TEA staff; a DAEP advisory committee; and the Commissioner of Education. AIMS researchers collected data from a variety of different sources with authentic DAEP experience, including: on-site visits to 10 DAEP programs in nine Texas districts; statewide surveys of DAEP educators; reviews of published state and national studies on DAEP practices; and comments and suggestions from members of the staff of the former TEA Division of Safe Schools (TEA, 2007). AIMS researchers (AIMS, 2001; TEA, 2007) identified the following categories of program characteristics as best practices in Texas successful DAEPs:

*Academic performance and instructional arrangements.* The indicated goals of the academic performance portion of this category included: (a) maintaining high academic expectations for all students; and (b) utilizing weekly grade reporting practices to inform parents and home campus staff of progress via oral and written communication. The indicated goals of the instructional arrangements portion of this category included: (a) effective use of instructional technology by balancing computer-assisted and teacher-

directed instruction; (b) maintaining small class sizes to facilitate meaningful connections, as well as one-on-one interactions; (c) providing adequate access to up-to-date textbooks and materials for on- and off-grade level instruction; (d) collaborating (between home campus staff and DAEP staff) to develop individualized instructional plans for each student; (e) providing instruction, interventions, modifications, and accommodations aligned with special education Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), 504 Service Plans, and Response to Intervention (RtI) plans, as applicable; and (f) using varied instructional approaches based upon students' various learning styles (AIMS, 2001).

***School staff and staff development.*** According to AIMS (2001) researchers, successful DAEPs featured school staff and staff development guidelines. AIMS (2001) identified hiring experienced, highly qualified teachers as a best practice. A best practice related to staff development was providing adequate professional learning opportunities. Adequate professional learning opportunities ensured that instructional and relational approaches were adequate to meet the academic, diversity, conflict resolution, conflict management, behavior management, and counseling needs of each student.

***Discipline, behavior management, and school safety.*** The AIMS (2001) researchers' focused on discipline, behavior management, and school safety as DAEP best practices because such a focus ensured coherence between district policies and practices and those observed in the DAEP facility. The best practice of implementing a behavior management plan to manage privileges worked to reinforce strict DAEP rules. Use of discipline, instructional practices, services, and classroom settings aligned and in compliance with special education Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee

decisions was also a best practice in this category. Further, practices in this category fostered a caring environment with committed, culturally sensitive staff who facilitated the behavioral progress of students; and assisted staff who consistently, strategically, and systematically practiced and reinforced school safety and security.

***School counseling and support services.*** With respect to school counseling and support services, the AIMS (2001) researchers reported that DAEP professionals followed several best practices. DAEPs maintained a low student/school counselor ratio among professional school counselors who emphasized proactive counseling activities in order to ensure availability of school counselors to students, staff, and parents. School counselors engaged in appropriate counseling assessment during intake and exit procedures. School counselors also developed and maintained productive relationships and collaborations with social service agencies in order to provide service information to students, staff (DAEP and home campus), and parents. Another best practice in this category ensured that school counselors consistently facilitated behavior modification and life skills classes informed by curricula designed to address self-esteem, positive social skills, daily living skills, and job preparation, as well as developmental milestones and crises which may occur. School counselors also provided drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as necessary.

***Transitions.*** With regard to transitions, according to the AIMS researchers (AIMS, 2001), successful DAEPs featured transitions which emphasized the importance of the home campus providing objective-specific discipline referrals to effectively communicate the target behaviors to DAEP staff. Successful DAEPs utilized DAEP admission procedures which appropriately oriented entering DAEP students and parents

to DAEP expectations. Successful DAEPs developed individual student plans and contracts which could be executed among the entering student, parent, and DAEP facility which formalized expectations. In addition, successful DAEPs employed DAEP exit procedures that ensured that DAEP staff (i.e., teachers, school counselors, and social workers) followed-up with home campus staff after the student's return to the home campus. Furthermore, upon return to the home campus, successful DAEPs provided transition counseling and other services to assist students as they readjusted to the emotional and social effects of reentering the home campus. In addition, staff serving in successful DAEPs maintained an ongoing dialogue with the home campus staff regarding issues salient to meeting student needs after transition back to the home campus.

*Additional DAEP practices to reinforce behavioral change.* The AIMS (2001) researchers identified three additional strategies practiced by successful DAEPs to reinforce behavioral change. The first of which was engaging students in community service to ensure that they become and remain connected with the community and other individuals needing assistance. The second of which was facilitating and strongly encouraging parent participation at the DAEP facility to help parents to develop parenting skills, and potentially strengthen relational bonds between the DAEP, students, and parents. The third practice was providing opportunities to learning about internships, jobs, and continuing education to assist students in preparing for future goals beyond their return to the home campus and high school graduation.

*The Moore and King Study.* In the 1980's, the Tennessee General Assembly mandated that each school district receiving school funds must establish one or more

alternative schools to accommodate suspended and expelled students in Grades seven-12 (Moore & King, 2005). TEA reported that:

In 2000, the General Assembly required that the State Board of Education (SBOE) develop a curriculum for alternative schools. In response, the SBOE developed a comprehensive framework of recommended alternative school program standards for districts to use in developing successful local alternative school programs (p. 9).

Tennessee alternative school program standards were developed according to task force recommendations and statewide review (Tennessee State Board of Education [SBOE], 2000). Basic principles guiding the standards were drawn from research literature relevant to teaching at-risk students. The mandated Tennessee SBOE (2000) standards, which identified specific program practices, were:

Standard 1.0 - The alternative school program will establish collaborative partnerships in a system of shared responsibility for program support and for service delivery to enrolled students.

Standard 2.0 - The alternative school program will integrate life skills development within the curriculum.

Standard 3.0 - The alternative school will have an effective system of positive student management.

Standard 4.0 - The alternative school will utilize innovative teaching strategies.

Standard 5.0 - The alternative school will have curriculum developed in response to needs of the student population.

Standard 6.0 - The alternative school program will provide appropriate assessment and support services.

Standard 7.0 - The alternative school program will provide an environment that is conducive to learning.

Standard 8.0 - The alternative school program will be implemented by effective, qualified staff.

Standard 9.0 - The alternative school will have an effective transition process for students entering and exiting the program (p. 11, revised, table 4A).

In 2004, the Tennessee General Assembly followed up the disciplinary alternative schools mandate by calling for a study of the state system of alternative schools for suspended and expelled students. The study was grounded in the mandated standards that had previously been established. The study included a statewide survey of district superintendents and alternative school directors, interviews, and site visits to individual schools (Moore & King, 2005).

***Standard 3.0 alternative school practice alignment.*** Of 136 surveys distributed to superintendents, 106 (77.9%) were returned. Of 152 surveys distributed to school directors, 107 (70.4%) were returned (Moore & King, 2005). A number of program practices were reported by Moore and King (2005) that supported the SBOE standards. Over 50 percent of school directors reported using tangible, material incentives to reward positive behavior, a practice aligned with Standard 3.0. Another 25 percent of directors reported alignment with a Standard 3.0 practice by offering early program exit, as well as access to increased privileges in the student behavior "level system" as student rewards. A moderate percentage of reporters reported the use of a referral system as a form of due

process which was also considered a practice aligned with Standard 3.0. About 25 percent referred students to the school system disciplinary hearing authority, and about 20 percent referred students to the court system (Moore & King, 2005).

***Mandated Standard non-alignment.*** School directors reported usage of a range of sanctions for misconduct, a practice which did not align with any of the SBOE mandated Standards. Over 35 percent used out-of-school suspension in all areas of the educational system. Nearly 25 percent extended time assigned to the alternative school. Nearly 20 percent used level demotion within the alternative school (Moore & King, 2005).

***Standard 5.0 alternative school practice alignment.*** Over 90 percent of school directors reported practices aligned with Standard 5.0: grading standards consistency with those of sending schools or student work grading by teachers in the sending schools. Likewise, nearly 90 percent of school directors reported that alternative school core curricula were well-aligned with the regular school program, a Standard 5.0 practice (Moore & King, 2005).

***Standard 7.0 and 8.0 alternative school practice alignment.*** Three-quarters of school directors reported the alternative school met the recommended student-teacher ratio of 12:1, a Standard 7.0 practice. Over 90 percent of school directors reported that all teachers working in the program were certified, a Standard 8.0 practice. Approximately two-thirds of school directors reported having at least one certified special education teacher assigned to the alternative program, a Standard 8.0 practice (Moore & King, 2005).

***Standard 9.0 alternative school practice alignment.*** Just over 84 percent of school directors reported receiving both academic and behavioral information on students from sending schools, a practice aligned with Standard 9.0. Over 70 percent of school directors reported implementing student transition processes that involved sharing of student information when students returned to sending schools, a practice also aligned with Standard 9.0. About 40% reported sharing academic but not comprehensive behavioral information. Eighty percent of school directors reported that development of long-range plans for students involved the participation of alternative school staff. Sixty-three percent reported that student long-range goal planning involved collaborative participation of regular school staff; while 51 percent reported that student long-range goal planning also collaboratively involved parent participation (Moore & King, 2005).

***Study conclusions.*** Survey data allowed researchers to identify unmet needs in the Tennessee SBOE system of alternative schools for suspended and expelled students. According to Moore and King (2005), most unmet program practice needs were associated with the capacity of alternative programs to provide necessary student instruction.

The identified Standard 1.0 unmet needs practices were: ongoing, long-term counseling, psychological, and support services. Forty percent of school directors reported their programs did not regularly provide such services (Moore & King, 2005).

Reports indicated several unmet or inadequately met Standard 8.0 needs. Alternative programs needed more qualified teachers in certain content areas. School directors reported teachers often taught multiple grade levels and subjects, some of which were outside the teacher's certification content and/or grade level. It was challenging for

alternative programs to provide lab science, foreign language, vocational, elective, and advanced course content for students enrolled in such classes in the regular school setting. Teachers in alternative schools and those in regular schools needed common training to "promote well-aligned, professional efforts for instructing at-risk students" (Moore & King, 2005, p. 36).

The survey yielded information about Tennessee's alternative schools which potentially served to strengthen the entire Tennessee public education system. Moore and King (2005) also concluded that in order to fully align with mandated SBOE standards, alternative programs needed: (a) to develop more comprehensive transition processes that included transition staff coordinators; (b) to consistently collect of data on student outcomes; (c) to facilitate and ensure ongoing communication between alternative and regular schools; and (d) to garner more partnerships and collaborations with community agencies.

**The Coleman Study.** To identify the effects of DAEP attendance on students with long-term, multiple referrals, for his dissertation, Coleman (2002) conducted a case study of Texas DAEPs in 2001. The site of Coleman's (2002) study was a rather large suburban school district of about 32,000 students. To discern the perceptions and experience of students and teachers in the DAEP, Coleman (2002) collected data via interview with 20 DAEP students, 20 DAEP staff, and five staff members from the home campus with the greatest number of students referred to the DAEP. Other data collected included information obtained via observation, document (e.g., grade books and campus handbooks) review, as well as district and TEA data (Coleman, 2002).

*Student Types identified by the Coleman Study.* Coleman (2002) and TEA (2007) identified the following three basic types of students assigned to the DAEP: (a) Type A students preferred the home campus and were most likely to be one-time DAEP referrals; (b) Type B students preferred the DAEP setting; therefore, were more successful in the DAEP setting and were most likely to display behaviors which led to multiple DAEP referrals; and (c) Type C students neither wanted to be at the home campus, nor at the DAEP facility; therefore, were unlikely to be successful in either setting and tended to be returned to the DAEP, expelled, or referred to the County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) (Coleman, 2002; TEA, 2007). Teachers associated the following practices with positive changes in academic, personal, and social behaviors of Type B students while attending the DAEP facility.

*Program area groupings by the Coleman Study.* DAEP practices were grouped in eight program areas, as identified by Coleman (2002) and TEA (2007). As reported by TEA (2007), the eight programs were: (a) communication between teachers and students; (b) educational focus; (c) faculty teamwork and role; (d) security measures; (e) pupil-teacher ratio; (f) transition into the DAEP; (g) social skills development; and (h) structure and rules.

*Communication between teachers and students.* The communication program area promoted open communication channels between teachers and students in order to build trust and establish rapport with students. The program area featured teachers tolerating student behaviors (i.e., use of profanity) that would otherwise be considered unacceptable or offensive in the home school setting. In addition, teachers made an effort to be

receptive to the discussion of issues (i.e., illegal behaviors, suicide, sex, and substance use) considered taboo in the home school setting.

*Educational focus.* Although the DAEP facility delivered essentially the same curricula as the home school, DAEP staff offered considerably more one-to-one assistance and intervention support for students who were not on grade level. Students assigned to the DAEP were given more opportunities to engage in guided practice of concepts immediately after they were taught to ensure greater success during the independent practice and assessment. DAEP staff engaged in parent phone calls to notify parents of the outstanding work the students were doing in order to encourage more positive interaction among parents and students at home. Student engagement in classwork was encouraged by other means than the earning of low grades. The denial of points toward DAEP discharge strongly encouraged student engagement. The focus of this program area was to: support students in finding value in education; build student capacity in academic ability; and to elicit student pride in academic accomplishments.

*Faculty teamwork and role.* The program area focused on DAEP staff: (a) exploring various approaches to supporting students in successful DAEP completion and (b) gaining comfort in performing various program roles until each DAEP staff member enjoys a level of comfort with each role, as well as mutual respect for the abilities, skills, and performance each person brings to the table.

*Security measures.* The program area ensured the safety of all DAEP students and staff by: (a) increasing security measures beyond those of the home campus (i.e., strictly enforcing rules of disallowed items; use of metal detectors; use of backpack and pocket searches; and regular utilization of substance sniffing animals); and (b) imposing

restrictions (i.e., student dress code; prohibition of jewelry and personal technology; structured movement in single-file line; and strategic restriction reduction with point system).

*Pupil-teacher ratio.* The case study site maintained a low pupil-teacher ratio of 10:1. The case study site maintained a small school environment of 15 teachers.

*Transition into the DAEP.* New students to the DAEP were transitioned into the DAEP via strict socialization which successfully oriented students to the DAEP expectations. Initial orientation was achieved by placing each new student in a graduated system of classrooms that allowed students to progressively adjust to less restrictive environments.

*Social skills development.* The program area purposefully encouraged the development of social skills with the provision of a class encouraging students to think about the social effects of personal behavior. The program area featured the engagement of students in group discussions about the behaviors that led to DAEP placement. Students were routinely encouraged to analyze their own and each other's behaviors in various settings.

*Structure and rules.* The structure of the DAEP served to neutralize potential disruptions typically caused by social issues among students (i.e., choice of clothing and adornment). The DAEP established written and prominently posted rules of behavior, as well as the consequences that followed various behaviors. A point system was used to monitor and track individual student behavior. DAEP staff ensured that rules were consistently and respectfully enforced without bias.

### **Summary of Best Practices Identified by Four DAEP Studies**

In 2007, TEA presented an overview of DAEP characteristic and practices described as best practices in research. TEA identified practices in the following areas as best practices in DAEP implementation: discipline management; curricula; instructional strategies; teachers and staff; professional development; counseling and support services; and student transitions (TEA, 2007). “Although many of the practices would be viewed as best practices in any type of educational program, some receive particular emphasis in DAEPs” (TEA, 2007, p. 12). Regardless of the research approach of each of the four studies, the studies consistently described DAEP best practices in similar ways.

Information revealed in the four studies noted the design of discipline management systems in DAEPs to monitor and positively change student behavior. Best practice behavior management plans routinely reinforced rules through structured reward and consequence or sanction procedures.

Best practice DAEP reward systems included a variety of rewards designed to elicit desired improved behavior. Rewards may have included: material incentives; promotion within student behavior point systems; and reduced length of assignments to DAEPs. Likewise, best practice DAEP sanctions were varied from lost privileges to extended DAEP assignments (TEA, 2007).

Interestingly, researchers revealed that individualized instruction is strongly emphasized in successful Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. A notable common finding among all four studies was the tendency for successful DAEPs to emphasize the collaborative relationship among home campus and DAEP staff to ensure the establishment of individual student goals, instructional plans, and other instructional

approaches accommodating individual learning styles to ensure that each student's individual needs were met (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; TEA, 2007; Tennessee SBOE, 2000, revised).

In the four studies, researchers addressed an experience unique to students referred to DAEPs: the transition between the home campus and DAEP. Successful facilitation of this transition seemed to be critical to the successful development of academic achievement, social skills, conflict resolution skills, self-esteem, and self-control skills in students temporarily referred to DAEPs (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; TEA, 2007; Tennessee SBOE, 2000, revised).

Further, researchers agreed that a formal, collaborative, and inclusive transition process to orient new referrals and parents to DAEP structures, procedures, and expectations was necessary to promote a successful DAEP experience (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; TEA, 2007; Tennessee SBOE, 2000, revised). Likewise, all four studies highlighted the crucial need for transitional services and dialogue between the DAEP and home campus to foster the successful return of students to mainstream educational programs (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; TEA, 2007; Tennessee SBOE, 2000, revised).

Counseling as a best practice to help students cope with the emotional and social effects of transitioning is common among all four studies. Further, a comprehensive approach to student transition was recognized to include follow-up services by teachers, school counselors, and social workers (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; SBOE, 2000, revised; TEA, 2007).

**Summary**

Chapter 2 served as the review of literature of the history and efficacy of zero-tolerance policies and DAEPs. Chapter 3 presented the methodology used for the research study. The methodology included the selection of the participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

As Yin (2009) stated, the research design was “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions...The case study method was most likely to be appropriate for “how” and “why” questions...” (p. 26 & 27). Further, Stake (1995) indicated that research focused on a concern or issue using one bounded case to illustrate the issue was best accomplished by conducting a case study. Therefore, I utilized a case study approach within the bounded system of an urban DAEP facility in southeast Texas to explore how the lived experiences of educational professionals at a DAEP facility informed the use of RP meant to improve student behavior after completion of a DAEP placement was.

#### **Participant Selection**

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), the use of criterion sampling involved selecting cases or participants who met some predetermined criterion of importance to the research questions. In the research design of this case study, criterion sampling was most useful to ensure the identification and understanding of cases that were information rich. As the primary researcher, I want to ensure that data collection from each participant was of good quality with regard to answering the identified research question. The predetermined criterion that all participants met was that of a professional educator of students assigned or reassigned to a DAEP facility in an urban school district in southeast Texas. The predetermined criterion was met by virtue of performing a teaching or administrative role in the active engagement of restorative

practices (RP) provided in the DAEP facility in an urban school district in southeast Texas.

**Purposeful sampling.** To focus on the unique contexts of the case, qualitative sampling “tends to be more strategic and purposive” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 32). As primary researcher, as well as a seasoned professional middle school counselor with ties to a number of school districts in southeast Texas, I purposefully selected participants who could “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). In addition, the participants were conveniently, immediately, and geographically accessible to me as a researcher. Moreover, my roles as primary researcher and seasoned professional educator with positive relationships with administrators and teachers in a number of southeast Texas school districts allowed me easy access to potential participants who were open to being studied; thereby, allowing ease of communication with a robust group of potential participants who met the predetermined, purposeful criterion to ascertain their interest in study participation.

**Approvals to conduct research study.** Upon university Institutional Review Board (IRB) and school district External Research Review Committee (ERRC), as well as DAEP facility partnering alternative education service provider approval, I allowed potential participants to self-select participation. First, I introduced the study to potential participants who were employed at a DAEP via email by describing: the tasks involved with participation; the potential benefits; and the potential harms involved in study participation. Once the potential participants expressed interest in study participation by responding to the Recruitment Email, I provided potential participants with the Informed Consent document. Potential participants who showed interest by responding to the

Recruitment Email were allowed to later opt-out of participation by withholding consent and no further contact was attempted. No attempt to recruit participants occurred prior to the Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB, school district ERRC, and DAEP alternative education service provider approval for the research activity of this case study. However, formal contact with the school district central administration official responsible for ERRC approval was made to confirm viability of conducting the research activity for this case study within the school district.

### **Bracketing and Researcher Bias**

According to Moustakas (1994), bracketing, one of the primary components of qualitative research, referred to epoché which is a Greek term that meant “to refrain from judgment; to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things...in the Epoché, we set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things” (p. 33 & 85). Creswell (2013) interpreted bracketing or the epoché as the attempt of the researcher to bracket out (or set aside) his or her assumptions and knowledge of the phenomenon in an effort to obtain a fresh understanding of the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon. Succinctly, Nyan (2017) indicated, “bracketing allows the researcher to suspend preconceived notions to discover the true essence of the experience through the consciousness of the participants” (p. 59-60).

Likewise, by bracketing or epoché, I suspended all judgments regarding the research problem in an effort to focus on how my participants experienced the phenomenon of RP implementation in DAEP placements. Successful bracketing essentially minimized the influence of researcher biases and preconceptions; thereby, ensured researcher openness to results that could not be predicted because the results

were outside the researcher's realm of experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). In essence, bracketing ensured that extreme cases and negative cases could be recognized, as well as the typical cases of phenomenological study (Nyan, 2017). Bracketing, thereby, led to more robust data collection and interpretation (Moustakas, 1994).

It was an expected practice to bracket out the researcher's personal experiences in qualitative research. I did so by approaching the collection and analysis of the data gathered from each participant and the participants, themselves, as fresh, new experiences with clean slates. I took the expressions of each participant at face value, without assumption, and sought clarity with follow-up questions whenever necessary. Realizing that my expectations and biases with the phenomenon could color and skew my interpretation of the data, I interpreted the data without expectation and at face value.

I accomplished unbiased, expectation-free data interpretation employing the use of several different strategies, including, freeing myself of bias and preconception or bracketing myself with reflexivity journaling (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Another bracketing technique in which I engaged was the utilization of multiple data sources to aid in the identification of data convergence (Yin, 2009). I engaged in debriefing conversations with critical debriefers, including: (1) professional colleagues, (2) doctoral peers, (3) my Dissertation Chair, and (4) other Dissertation Committee Members throughout the data collection and analysis process as an added measure to prevent bias from seeping into my research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), researcher engagement in reflexivity journaling before, during, and after all fieldwork activities ensured researcher ability to separate personal

preconceptions, opinions, biases, and expectations from information shared, demonstrated and articulated by participants during the data collection process.

Yin's (2009) assertion that thorough triangulation of data articulated and demonstrated by participants, ensured support of the events or facts of a case study by multiple sources of evidence. Therefore, data triangulation via multiple source data collection also supported my bracketing efforts by substantiating findings that comprehensively responded to the research question. Further, dissertation advisors, colleagues, and peers served as critical debriefers to support and hold me accountable in my bracketing efforts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

**Primary researcher bracketing.** Moustakas (1994) maintained that the premise for bracketing or epoché was to diminish or eliminate the effect of researcher bias, preconceptions, and previous experience with the phenomenon on interpretation of the data which could subsequently skew the results of the study. I acknowledged that my prior experience as a RP Trainer of Trainers (ToT), RP facilitator, and as a School Counselor on the Behavioral Response to Intervention (BRtI) Team with students referred to DAEP supported the development of some preconceived notions about RP and DAEP procedures in my mind. Nonetheless, my years of experience as a professional educator equipped me to recognize gaps in the literature related to DAEP recidivism, which constituted my purpose for initiating this case study. If I hoped to fill any of the literature gaps with data from this case study research activity, I could not afford to allow my preconceptions, biases, or prior experiences to sully the plausibility of contributing to the body of knowledge which may inform the reduction and eventual alleviation of DAEP recidivism. Summarily, my commitment to the authenticity and validity of the

results of this case study, along with bracketing myself or epoché by: (1) reflexivity journaling; (2) utilization of multiple data sources to aid in the identification of data convergence; and (3) engagement in debriefing conversations with critical debriefers led to more robust data collection and interpretation of the participants' experiences with RP and DAEP recidivism. Succinctly, I utilized the enumerated bracketing techniques throughout the data collection and analysis process to ensure that principal researcher bias did not influence the results of this research study.

**Dissertation Committee bracketing.** Dr. Richard Henriksen, Jr., the chair of this Dissertation Committee, has been teaching at the university level for 20 years and has focused much of his attention on working with students in DAEP settings as a mental health counselor. He is interested in young people who have not been successful in public schools because of his background as a student who would have been placed in a DAEP, if they had been in existence. He has conducted research that has been published and presented on this topic. To bracket his background, he talks with a colleague about his experiences.

Dr. Kathleen Rice, a Dissertation Committee Member, has been a counselor, researcher, clinical supervisor, counselor educator (CE), and advocate. Dr. Rice's core identity is counselor and she has been licensed for 12 years. Dr. Rice has worked as a professional counselor in various clinical settings assisting clients with mental health, trauma, and substance abuse issues. She has been a Counselor Educator (CE) for 10 years and currently serves as Chair for the Department of Counselor Education and Associate Dean of College of Education Graduate Programs. Dr. Rice is lead or co-researcher on multiple research projects. Her research focuses on counselor supervision

and training with an emphasis in ethical considerations, the implications of historical/generational trauma, and the impact of substance abuse on individuals, families, and the community. Dr. Rice also incorporates the use of biomarkers in her research to understand emotional regulation, risky behaviors, and resiliency. Dr. Rice's goal is to have a direct impact on clinicians and clients by doing clinically relevant and applicable research.

Dr. Rice has no direct knowledge of or experience with Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs). Her clinical work and research has focused on individuals who engage in risky behavior. Thus, she does tend to see the potential in others and hold the optimism for them to engage in behaviors and decision-making that will lead them to healthy and fulfilling lives. In order to bracket her background and experiences, Dr. Rice will work closely with colleagues and engage in self-reflection.

Dr. Dee-Anna Green, a Committee Member, recently began teaching at the university level. Previously, her experience took place at both the elementary and secondary levels as a school counselor where she worked with many students in DAEP. In her role as a school counselor, she would at times go to DAEP and work with students to assist them in successfully transitioning to traditional schooling. She has a heart for students who are at-risk because she came from a similar background. She plans to continue to research and advocate for students who are considered at-risk in order to contribute to the field of research as well as influence best practices. In order to bracket her background and experiences, she talks to and works closely with colleagues as well as participating in self-evaluation.

## **Trustworthiness**

It was crucial for researchers to consistently utilize strategies and processes to ensure the validity or trustworthiness of research work. To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of my research work with this case study, I utilized the following validation strategies: (1) peer reviewer; (2) member checking; (3) rich data; and (4) quasi-statistics (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005).

Ideally, it would be the intention of the primary researcher to include an additional layer of trustworthiness involving: long-term observation. However, at the time of the study, the COVID-19 Pandemic Texas school closure, social distancing protocols, and prudence necessitated a change from primary researcher visits to the DAEP site to facilitate the face-to-face interview protocol to a virtual interview protocol with DAEP staff working from home to interact with DAEP students engaged in distance learning. Thus, the primary researcher was unable to enter the DAEP for the interviews to collect observational data relating to DAEP staff interactions with DAEP students.

**Peer reviewer.** According to Creswell (2013) and Maxwell (2005), a peer reviewer, also called a debriefer, allowed for an extra set of eyes to review the research and raise critical objections in a similar manner as someone playing the role of devil's advocate in order to keep the researcher honestly reporting research findings and outcomes. Employing the services of a peer reviewer or debriefer added trustworthiness by having a peer who was knowledgeable about the topics of education, behavioral interventions, and DAEPs to review the research method and ask purposeful questions to help determine whether the data collection and data analysis of the research approach was sound enough to produce meaningful data. The peer reviewer who I utilized was a

practicing Nurse in a different DAEP facility in a different school district than the site and school district where the case study was conducted. To further establish the trustworthiness of my research method, I conducted a mock interview using the interview protocols with my peer reviewer, a practicing DAEP Nurse in a different DAEP site in a different school district. The mock interview not only allowed the peer reviewer to authentically experience the data collection protocol; but also, allowed me to make any modifications or adjustments to the protocol prior to the actual interviews with the case study participants.

**Member checking.** Member checking was also utilized as a validation and trustworthiness strategy, as it allowed me to return to the case study participants to present them with their responses to the interview questions and allowed them a second look to “judge the accuracy and credibility of the account” for themselves (Creswell, 2013, p. 252.). Member checking allowed the case study participants the opportunity to look over my analysis and determine if it was accurate based upon their accounts of their DAEP practices and interactions with students. In addition, member checking allowed the participants the opportunity to notify me of any changes necessary to make the case study more trustworthy.

**Long-term participant observation.** According to Maxwell (2005), long-term participant observation was the number one provider of complete data about specific situations and events. It was understood that repeated observations of the interactions of DAEP staff with students along with the interviews of the DAEP staff conducted in the DAEP setting would allow increased validity of the research by helping to rule out spurious associations and premature conclusions. It was also clear that long-term

participant observation would allow greater opportunity to “develop and test alternative hypotheses during the course of the research” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). Ideally, it would be the intention of the primary researcher to include a fifth layer of trustworthiness involving: long-term observation. However, at the time of the study, the COVID-19 Pandemic Texas school closure, social distancing protocols, and prudence necessitated a change from primary researcher visits to the DAEP site to facilitate a face-to-face interview protocol to a virtual interview protocol with DAEP staff working from home to interact with DAEP students engaged in distance learning. Thus, the primary researcher was unable to enter the DAEP for the interviews to collect observational data relating to DAEP staff interactions with DAEP students. Nonetheless, even without DAEP site visits to facilitate observational data collection, multiple data sources collected via observation of the participants during the virtual interview ensured trustworthiness, data triangulation, and information-rich participant responses (Yin, 2009).

**Rich data.** Maxwell (2005) supported the notion that long-term involvement with participants and intensive interviews helped to facilitate the collection of rich data. Rich data were defined as data that was sufficiently varied and detailed to provide a complete and revealing picture of what was happening within the case (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005). In this case study, I collected data from the verbatim transcription of virtual interviews which I personally conducted. Maxwell (2005) indicated that rich data were most readily collected from interview studies by verbatim transcripts of the interviews. Maxwell (2005) further indicated that rich data collection was also the product of detailed, descriptive note taking, and transcribing. Not only did I audiotape every

interview for later verbatim transcription, but I engaged in detailed, descriptive note taking during the virtual interview.

**Quasi-statistics.** Conclusions of qualitative studies often had implicit quantitative components (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005). Maxwell (2005) maintained that claims of a finding being typical, prevalent, rare, or atypical in the setting studied was inherently quantitative in nature and needed to be supported quantitatively. Quasi-statistics allowed researchers to support inherently quantitative claims, but also enabled researchers to assess the amount of evidence in the data that had bearing on a particular conclusion (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005). I used quasi-statistics to further validate data that inherently tended toward quantitative interpretation to support conclusions.

### **Instrumentation**

I, the principal researcher, serving as the primary instrument in the study engaged in a semi-structured, virtual interview of the participants utilizing a demographic questionnaire to acquire participant information, one written open-ended question, and a semi-structured interview using 10 grand tour questions to elicit data-rich responses relating to the participants' interactions and lived experiences with students within the DAEP setting.

There was no peer-reviewed, empirically validated questionnaire or survey that elicited responses that zeroed in on descriptions of how DAEP staff interacted with DAEP student resulting in their not returning to a DAEP for additional placements. There was certainly none that utilized the theoretical framework which was applied to this case study, Etzioni's (1964, 1975, 1997) Compliance Theory. Consequently, this case study utilized the dissertation work of Rayetta M. Johnson (2013) in which she

theoretically framed her mixed methods study of educator perceptions and student responses to the use of power at a Texas DAEP in Etzioni's Compliance Theory as the validating model for this case study's interview questions. According to Johnson, she used Roach's (1995) Power Base Measure as the model for her survey development.

In addition, the dissertation work of Kristi Y. Cole (2013) in her case study of the implementation of restorative practices as an alternative to punitive disciplinary practices in an urban high school strongly informed the development and validation of the demographic questionnaire and the semi-structured grand tour questions of my case study. In the following sections, I described the demographic questionnaire and the semi-structured virtual interview that was used in this case study.

**Demographic questionnaire with written question.** At the scheduling of the virtual interview, the participant was provided with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent and Demographic Questionnaire along with instructions to complete the Demographic Questionnaire and transmit the completed document to the primary researcher via any means most convenient to the participant before or shortly after the conclusion of the virtual interview. At the beginning of the virtual interview with the primary researcher, the participant was again provided with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent to review for verbal consent and to keep for the participant's records. Once the informed consent was confirmed, if the participant had not already transmitted the completed Demographic Questionnaire, the primary researcher provided the participant with another electronic copy of the Demographic Questionnaire; and requested its completion and transmission as soon after the virtual interview as possible. At the time of the virtual interview, if the primary researcher had received the

participant's completed Demographic Questionnaire, in order to avoid the creation of bias or distraction by seeing participant's questionnaire responses, the primary researcher placed the completed questionnaire in a secure binder out of reach and sight during the virtual semi-structured interview phase of data collection.

Appendix A contains the Demographic Questionnaire that was used for this case study. The Demographic Questionnaire requested that the participant respond as candidly as possible to the following topics: (1) pseudonym; (2) participant's position at the DAEP facility; (3) years of experience as an educator/teacher/administrator; (4) years of experience in a traditional school setting; (5) years of experience in an alternative setting; (6) provide examples of types of alternative settings experienced by the participant, if applicable; (7) highest degree earned; (8) gender identification; (9) ethnicity/race identification; (10) years of experience in any DAEP setting and in this DAEP setting; and (11) years of experience implementing restorative justice practices. Each participant was asked to provide a written response to the following: describe your understanding of restorative justice practices.

The following questions comprised the demographic questionnaire of this case study of the lived experiences of DAEP staff working with students in DAEP settings. For the reasons indicated above, the following questions of my case study were modeled on the demographic questionnaire used by Cole (2013).

- (1) For the purposes of this case study, to protect your identity, by what pseudonym do you wish to be referred?
- (2) By what gender do you identify?
- (3) By what ethnicity and race do you identify?

- (4) What is your highest degree earned?
- (5) What is your role/position at this Disciplinary Alternative Education Program facility?
- (6) What are your responsibilities in this role/position?
- (7) How many years of experience in any Disciplinary Alternative Education Program setting? This Disciplinary Alternative Education Program setting?
- (8) How many years of experience in a traditional school setting?
- (9) How many years of experience in an alternative setting?
- (10) Provide examples of types of alternative settings in which you have worked, if applicable.
- (11) How many years of experience implementing restorative justice practices?
- (12) Describe your understanding of restorative justice practices.

**Semi-structured virtual interview protocol.** The virtual interview protocol which guided this study followed Spradley's (1979) grand tour questions approach to the semi-structured interview. According to Spradley (1979), grand tour questions essentially encouraged the participant to share a verbal tour of an event, location, person, activity, object, experience, or procedure that they know well.

In the case of this study, grand tour questions encouraged the participant to share a verbal tour of their experience with RP and students in a DAEP setting. Although Spradley (1979) cautioned that grand tour questions could, "encourage informants to ramble on and on," I, as the primary researcher, used more specific follow-up questions to gain clarity and redirect focus on the most salient content to the research question (p. 87).

The semi-structured interview was composed of the type of grand tour questions which Spradley (1979) coined as typical grand tour questions and specific grand tour questions. Typical grand tour questions sought the participant's description of how things typically or usually existed (Spradley, 1979). Specific grand tour questions obtained information about a recent experience from participants who may have found it difficult to generalize about a typical or usual experience. However, participants may have found it easier to relate an experience that recently or notably happened (Spradley, 1979).

Spradley (1979) noted two other types of grand tour questions which were not used in this case study: (1) guided grand tour questions which sought to gain an actual grand tour from the informant; and (2) task-related grand tour questions which requested the informant to complete a simple task that would support the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon. An example of a guided grand tour question was: 'Please show me around the DAEP facility.' An example of a task-related grand tour question was: 'Please draw a flow chart of the DAEP procedures for intake and transition back to the home school.'

In his study of the nine components of successful DAEPs in Texas, Farler (2005) recommended that further research was necessary in the area of implementation of the nine components, of which roles, curriculum, and mission were three areas which were relevant to the implementation of RP in the reduction of DAEP placement recidivism. According to Stango's (2017) research on the impact of teacher beliefs about discipline and justice on the implementation of RP, the efficacy of RP in the reduction of DAEP placement recidivism was still under-researched. Thus, the first two typical grand tour

questions of this case study were informed by the recommendations of Farler (2005) and Stango (2017) for further research.

Garba (2014) conducted an analytical study of Texas DAEPs and the role of school districts' wealth, location, and size. Garba (2014) concluded that further research was necessary on creating a dialogue regarding the way teacher-student cultural differences impacted student behavior. Thus, the third grand tour question of the semi-structured virtual interview was a specific grand tour question stemming from Garba's (2014) recommendation for further research.

The recommendations for further research illuminated by the research of Stango (2017) informed the fourth and fifth questions of the semi-structured virtual interview. Stango (2017) maintained that because of: the lack of conceptual clarity about RP; the application of RP in the school setting; and how RP influenced student behavior, more research was necessary for educators to understand RP and effective RP implementation in various relational contexts. Finally, findings from Stango's (2017) study convinced him that further research focusing on the impact of RP on educators and educators' relationships with students. Therefore, the work of Stango (2017) informed the formulation of all of the remaining virtual interview questions. Additionally, for the reasons indicated in the previous section, the semi-structured, virtual interview questions were modeled on the interview questions used by Cole (2013) and Johnson (2013). A full list of the semi-structured virtual interview questions was listed in Appendix B. The questions that comprised the semi-structured, virtual interview and were presented to the participants in the virtual interview in this case study were the following:

- (1) Describe the procedure for working with students assigned to the DAEP (Cole, 2013; Farler, 2005; Johnson, 2013; Stango, 2017).
- (2) How are restorative practices (RP) implemented with DAEP students (Farler, 2005; IIRP, 2016; Meager, 2009; RPWG, 2014; Stango, 2017)?
- (3) Describe what it is like working with DAEP students from differing cultural backgrounds (Cole, 2013; Garba, 2014; Johnson, 2013).
- (4) Describe the behavior management practices you use when working with DAEP students (Cole, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Stango, 2017).
- (5) Describe the discipline practices you use when working with DAEP students (Cole, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Stango, 2017).
- (6) Describe the practices you use when working with DAEP students (Cole, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Stango, 2017).
- (7) If you could implement any change(s) you desired to help the DAEP students learn appropriate behaviors to avoid recidivism, what would the change(s) be (Cole, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Stango, 2017)?
- (8) Describe the typical procedures followed to interact with a student assigned to the DAEP facility for the second or subsequent time after the first time. Please include the typical role you play in implementing restorative justice practices in interacting with the repeat student (Cole, 2013; IIRP, 2016; Johnson, 2013; Meager, 2009; RPWG, 2014; Stango, 2017).

- (9) Describe the difference(s) that you have observed in students who have recidivated and those who have not (Cole, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Stango, 2017).
- (10) Describe how the DAEP tracks which and to what degree restorative justice practice implementation is taking place (Cole, 2013; IIRP, 2016; Johnson, 2013; Meager, 2009; RPWG, 2014; Stango, 2017).

### **Data Collection**

Upon receipt of written IRB approval from Sam Houston State University, as well as from the ERRC of the school district, and the alternative education service company of the DAEP which bounds this case study, I employed the following methods of data collection: (1) participant completion of a demographic questionnaire; (2) participant response to a written question; (3) participant engagement in the semi-structured, virtual interview with the primary researcher; and (4) primary researcher observation of participants during the virtual interview.

It was understood that repeated observations of the interactions of DAEP staff with students along with the interviews of the DAEP staff conducted in the DAEP setting allowed increased validity of the research by helping to rule out spurious associations and premature conclusions. It was also clear that long-term participant observation allowed greater opportunity to “develop and test alternative hypotheses during the course of the research” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). Ideally, it would be the intention of the primary researcher to include a fifth layer of data involving: primary researcher observation of participant interactions with students in the DAEP facility, as well as the DAEP environment itself. However, at the time of the study, the COVID-19 Pandemic Texas

school closure, social distancing protocols, and prudence dictated a change from visits to the DAEP sites to facilitate the face-to-face interview protocol to a virtual interview protocol with DAEP staff working from home to interact with DAEP students engaged in distance learning. Thus, the primary researcher was unable to enter the DAEP for the interviews to collect observational data relating to DAEP staff interactions with DAEP students. Nonetheless, even without DAEP site visits to facilitate observational data collection, multiple data sources collected via observation of the participants during the virtual interview ensured data triangulation and information-rich participant responses (Yin, 2009).

As previously noted, no participants were recruited prior to university IRB, school district ERRC, and DAEP alternative education service provider approval. Thus, it was necessary to identify a purposeful and criterion sampling of DAEP staff who were willing to participate in the case study and perform at least five of the following roles: (1) Executive Director, the administrator who performed as the instructional leader of the DAEP in much the same way as the Principal of a traditional school; (2) Education Director, the administrator who assisted the Executive Director as the instructional leader of a specific demographic or grade level of the DAEP in much the same way as the Assistant or Associate Principal of a traditional school; (3) Director of Student Services, the individual who attended to the academic, social-emotional, and career needs of the students in much the same way as the School Counselor of a traditional school; (4) Transition Liaison, the individual who worked to partner with the student, parents, and home school to ensure a seamless transition from the home school to the DAEP facility and back to the home school performing duties similar to, but not limited to those of a

Registrar of a traditional school; (5) Behavior Analyst, the individual who collaborated with other professionals, observed student behavior, and prescribed behavioral interventions to modify student behavior in much the same way as the Behavior Specialist of a traditional school; and (6) Classroom Teacher who taught core content in a classroom setting in much the same way as a Classroom Teacher of a traditional school. To identify willing participants who fit the study criteria by virtue of the role that they served in the DAEP, all potential participants were solicited via email to notify them of the purpose, potential risks, and potential benefits of study participation and provided with a brief explanation of the Informed Consent which was displayed in its entirety in Appendix C.

The Recruitment Email, which was displayed in its entirety in Appendix D, also briefly explained the logistics of the data collection process. The Recruitment Email included brief explanations of the following: (1) the virtual format of the interviews in order to maintain social distancing protocols due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; (2) the use of the Google Hangouts video conferencing application with the participant and primary researcher in locations that afforded privacy and confidentiality; (3) the occurrence of the virtual interviews in the spring of 2020, at a time, during the school day that was convenient to the participant; (4) the length of each interview would be no more than one hour; (5) the audio recording of all interviews on the primary researcher's Android smartphone protected with biometric security; followed by the uploading and saving to a password protected computer for transcription and analysis; (6) the need for participants to designate a pseudonym on the demographic questionnaire in order to protect the participant's identity throughout the study and reporting of the data; and (7) the general

or pseudonym reference of: the home campus, school district, DAEP alternative education service provider, and DAEP facility as: Goode Middle School (GMS); Kidd Hope Independent School District (KHISD); Kidd Educational Services (KES) and Hope Academy (HA) in order to maintain privacy and confidentiality throughout the study and reporting of the data.

As it was previously noted, for the purposes of this case study, in order to protect privacy, minimize identifiability, and to ensure confidentiality, all participants self-designated a pseudonym to which to be referred. However, due to the small sample size, the participant self-selected pseudonyms still seemed too identifiable. Therefore, at the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee Members, the primary researcher designated participant pseudonyms in order of interview occurrence as names of U.S. states in order of entry into the Union. In other words, the first participant to be interviewed was given the pseudonym of the first state to join the United States Union, Delaware. The ninth participant interviewed was given the pseudonym of the ninth state to join the United States Union, New Hampshire. Accordingly, the second through eighth participants interviewed were given pseudonyms of the second through eighth states to join the Union.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Yin (2009), development of a general analytic strategy for case study organization was a necessary practice. This case study was predicated on a qualitative purpose, as were the data collection instruments. Furthermore, the ideas for the framework of the interview protocol came from the review of literature researcher recommendations for further research as noted in the citations of each of the grand tour

questions. Thus, the general analytic strategy for this case study was grounded in a qualitative framework.

Yin (2009) further stated that once a general analytic strategy was determined, an analytic technique must be determined to guide data analysis. For this case study, I employed one of the most desirable analysis techniques, pattern-matching logic to further strengthen the internal validity of the case study (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), pattern-matching logic compared “an empirically based pattern with a predicted one” (p. 136). Specifically, for this case study, the empirically based pattern was the implementation of DAEP best practices in DAEP staff interactions with DAEP students; and the predicted pattern was the successful return to the home campus with no DAEP recidivism. Data analysis by pattern-matching logic was relevant because the predicted pattern of specific variables, utilization of DAEP best practices, was defined prior to data collection as interactions with DAEP students that led to successful DAEPs which resisted recidivism.

No data analysis software was used for this case study. I coded all data by hand. Once the transcriptions were complete, I emailed each participant’s transcript to a pre-determined secure email address to allow the participant to engage in member checking. Member checking, resulting in respondent validation ensured the accuracy, credibility, and validity of the responses (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Using member checks to verify or extend interpretations and conclusions also supported the alleviation of anonymity issues, as participants were usually able target and spot information that could potentially identify them and breach confidentiality (Maxwell, 2005; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Once member checking was complete, I employed the

eight-step, “well-organized strategy for wading through volumes of” virtual interview transcribed data suggested by Lunenburg and Irby (2008) to individually analyze and code the transcripts for key concepts using common words, themes, and conceptualized ideas of behaviors (p. 222). I systematically developed and applied categories focusing primarily on relationships that connect statements into whole ideas, utilizing thematic coding. As the study was not looking to generalize results, analysis of data concentrated solely on connecting codes that directly correlated to the research purpose, the description of how DAEP staff members, interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEPs for additional placements.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study utilized the case study as its methodological approach. Chapter III described the following aspects of this qualitative study in detail: (1) research design, (2) research question, (3) participant selection, (4) criterion sampling and purposeful sampling, (5) bracketing techniques to reduce researcher bias, (6) instrumentation, (7) data collection, (8) demographic questionnaire with written response, (9) virtual interview protocol with a semi-structured interview, and (10) data analysis. Chapter IV was written after IRB, ERRC, and DAEP education service provider approval for research study and data collection. The findings, discussion of findings, implications, recommendations for further study, and conclusion were thoroughly covered in Chapters IV and V.

## CHAPTER IV

### Data Analysis and Results

#### Introduction

This qualitative case study intended to investigate and describe the unique, lived experiences of DAEP staff members who teach and interact with students assigned and reassigned to DAEP placements in a DAEP site which employs restorative justice practices in an urban school district in southeast Texas. For the purposes of this case study, in order to protect privacy, minimize identifiability, and ensure confidentiality, all participants self-designated a pseudonym to which to be referred. However, due to the small sample size, the participant self-selected pseudonyms still seemed too identifiable. Therefore, at the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee Members, the primary researcher designated participant pseudonyms in order of interview occurrence as names of U.S. states in order of entry into the Union. In other words, the first participant to be interviewed was given the pseudonym of the first state to join the United States Union, Delaware. The ninth participant interviewed was given the pseudonym of the ninth state to join the United States Union, New Hampshire. Accordingly, the second through eighth participants interviewed were given pseudonyms of the second through eighth states to join the Union. Additionally, the home campus, school district, DAEP educational service company, and DAEP facility were referred to in general terms or by the primary researcher-assigned pseudonyms: Goode Middle School (GMS); Kidd Hope Independent School District (KHISD); Kidd Educational Services (KES) and Hope Academy (HA).

The purpose of this study was to describe how DAEP staff members, interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEPs for additional placements. The purpose was achieved by examining the data gathered from virtual interviews with nine DAEP staff at Hope Academy (HA), a DAEP in an urban school district in southeast Texas, regarding their interactions with scholars assigned and reassigned to a DAEP facility in an urban school district in southeast Texas, Kidd Hope ISD (KHISD).

The following data analysis and results intended to respond to the single research question of the case study: What are the lived experiences of educational professionals working in DAEP settings who are implementing restorative justice practices for students placed in a DAEP? At the time that I scheduled the virtual interview with each of the nine participants, they were presented with the Demographic Questionnaire with written response to complete and transmit to me before or shortly after the scheduled virtual interview. Each of the nine participant's recorded virtual interview was transcribed verbatim, removing only the following verbal pauses: um; uh; ah; and you know. In order to ensure accurate transcription, the participants were afforded the opportunity to engage in member checking which allowed them to review their responses, scanning for inaccuracies, unclear statements, and indications that might reveal their identity. Chapter IV presented the results of the data analysis for the single stated research question that resulted from the data collection activities mentioned above.

Chapter IV began with an introduction in the first major section. Then, data gathered from each participant's completed Demographic Questionnaire was reported in the second major section of the chapter. The themes, sub-themes, categories, and

repetitions of responses that emerged from the detailed coding process were reported in the third major section of the chapter. The fourth major section of the chapter was used, as Moustakas (1994) suggested, to report the various conceptualized ideas gleaned from the virtual interviews that elucidated the essence of the case study. Succinctly, the data drawn from the Demographic Questionnaire completed by participants was reported in subheading two of Chapter IV, Participant Characteristics; the data derived from responses to questions one through six of the semi-structured, virtual interviews were reported in subheading three of Chapter IV, Emergent Themes, Sub-themes, and Categories; and data extracted from responses to questions seven through 10 and the additional comments made by the participants were reported in subheading four of Chapter IV, Emergent Conceptualized Ideas.

### **Participant Characteristics**

Participant demographic information was gathered utilizing the Demographic Questionnaire which all participants were asked to complete and submit to the primary researcher before or shortly after the semi-structured, virtual interview. At the scheduling of the virtual interview, each participant was provided with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent and Demographic Questionnaire along with a request to complete the Demographic Questionnaire and transmit the completed document to the primary researcher via any means most convenient to the participant before or shortly after the virtual interview. At the beginning of the virtual interview, once informed consent was confirmed, if the participant had not transmitted the completed Demographic Questionnaire, the primary researcher provided the participant with another electronic copy of the Demographic Questionnaire and requested its completion and transmission as

soon after the virtual interview as possible. Seven of the nine participants complied with the request to complete and transmit the Demographic Questionnaire to the primary researcher either before or shortly after the interview. Maryland, HA Administrative Assistant and New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs, did not transmit a completed Demographic Questionnaire. Data collected from the seven questionnaires submitted were represented in Table 1, which consolidated the role, gender identity, ethnicity/race identity, education level, and various experience levels of each participant.

Data contained on Table 1 were generalizable to several ideas. The seven participants who transmitted the Demographic Questionnaire reported experience working at Hope Academy (HA), the case study DAEP site, no less than two of the five years that HA had been in operation in Kidd Hope ISD (KHISD). All but one of the seven participants who submitted a Demographic Questionnaire identified as a person of color. The HA Administrators (Regional Director, South Carolina and Administrator, New Jersey) who submitted a Demographic Questionnaire, reported as the second and third most seasoned education professionals at 24- and 14-years, respectively. The HA Administrators also reported the first and third (tie) most years of experience with RP at 24 and five. Similarly, the Middle School and High School Team Leaders (Pennsylvania and Massachusetts), the HA staff who had the most behavior-related daily interaction with HA students, reported the highest number of years of experience in alternative education at 19 and 28 years. Likewise, the HA Team Leaders reported the second and third (tie) most years of experience with RP at eight and five. Further details were presented in Table 1 of the following pages.

Quasi-statistical analysis of the demographic data led me to conclude that the most experienced educators at HA were the administrators who were the decision makers and overseers of DAEP services at HA. Likewise, the HA educators with the most RP experience were the administrators. The HA Team Leaders, who had the most behavior-related contact with HA students had significantly high levels of experience in alternative education. The significantly high levels of traditional education, alternative education, and RP experience of the HA staff highly qualified them for the formidable task of providing quality DAEP service and RP delivery. Furthermore, the HA staff experience levels highly qualified them to inform this study with rich data. Further details of participant demographics were presented in Table 1 on the following pages.





Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	HA Role	Identified	Identified	Highest	HA	Traditional	Alternative	RP
		Gender	Ethnicity/Race	Degree	Experience	Education Setting Experience	Education Setting Experience	Experience
Maryland	Administrative	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Assistant	Submission	Submission	Submission	Submission	Submission	Submission	Submission
Connecticut	Academic	Female	Black	BS/BA	4	4	4	4
	Coordinator							
Georgia	Middle School	Female	Black/African American	BS/BA	2	1	2	2
	ELAR & Science							
	Teacher							

Pseudonym	HA Role	Identified Gender	Identified Ethnicity/Race	Highest Degree	HA Experience	Traditional Education Setting Experience	Alternative Education Setting Experience	RP Experience
	District Director of Student Affairs	No Submission	No Submission	No Submission	No Submission	No Submission	No Submission	No Submission
Pennsylvania	Middle School Team Leader	Female	African American	BS/BA	5	0	19	5
Massachusetts	High School Team Leader	Male	Black	BS/BA	5	0	28	8
New Jersey	Administrator	Female	African American	MS & MEd	2	14	3	5

Pseudonym	HA Role	Identified Gender	Identified Ethnicity/Race	Highest Degree	HA Experience	Traditional	Alternative	RP Experience
						Education Setting Experience	Education Setting Experience	
Delaware	Behavior Specialist	Male	Hispanic/White	MS/MA	2.5	9	9	1
South Carolina	Regional Director	Male	African American	MS/MA	5	1	24	24

*Note. 'No Submission' denotes that participant did not transmit a completed Demographic Questionnaire to the primary researcher. 'HA' denotes Hope Academy, the DAEP studied. At the time of the study, HA had been in operation for five years. All numbers indicate experience in years.*

**Demographic Questionnaire written question responses.** In order to get an idea of each participant's understanding of RP, the Demographic Questionnaire written question was targeted at fleshing out each participant's conceptual definition of RP. The seven participants who submitted a questionnaire provided responses articulating the atoning, reconciliatory, safe, resolving, restorative, and pro-social skills building nature of RP.

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator wrote, "...having a forum that allows students to safely confront any issues they have with themselves, other students, family, community, and staff....The objective would be conflict resolution and atonement for all parties involved."

Georgia, HA Middle School ELAR and Science Teacher, wrote:

My understanding is that restorative justice practices are tools used to help students become more aware of how their poor decision making has negative consequences to not only themselves, but their family, their school, and the community as a whole. The whole point of restorative justice is that the student learns from their mistake and become leaders on their home campus and to really take responsibility for their education and the outcomes of their effort.

Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, wrote that RP "...is helping students turn from anti-social to pro-social in a positive manner." Similarly, New Jersey, HA Administrator, wrote that RP are "...essentially systems and strategies that are put in place to re-engage student that have demonstrated the need for redirection [due to] poor decision-making....The goal is to transition the student from anti-social to pro-social behaviors in their day-to-day lives." Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader,

wrote that RP is “encouraging and assisting students in understanding the process of reconciliation by providing support and opportunities showing the importance of taking ownership of their success.”

Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist provided the most detailed description of his understanding of RP. He also included an analogy to help illustrate his understanding.

When I think of the concept of restorative justice, I think about a process that includes the person(s) that was harmed, the person(s) that caused the harm, and the greater community. Restorative Justice is a process that seeks to make all of these people “whole.” If I break into the corner store, the shop owner loses money, property and a sense of safety. I may be arrested and serve time. If so, I won’t make money while incarcerated, and will probably lose my job. While I’m detained, my family loses access to any money I bring in, and any help or companionship I provide. My absence disrupts my employer and any number of individuals my work impacts (colleagues, customers, the food truck I buy work lunch from). The criminal justice system consumes tax dollars throughout the process, and after release, if I’m subject to any community supervision. Once I have “paid my debt to society,” I am released. My child didn’t have their father on their birthday. My partner was tired of being alone and left. Nobody wants to hire me, because I have a record, and the shop owner’s window is still broken. Restorative Justice brings a structure and formality that lets people speak truthfully and find creative ways to heal and repair everyone involved, not just the person that would traditionally be labeled the victim.

Finally, KES Regional Director, South Carolina, who had the most RP experience (24 years) and second most alternative education experience (24 years), described his DAEP role to “oversee all departments and ensure that expectations set by the school district, federal, state, and local regulations are met” wrote that his RP understanding “...involves retraining the sensitive nature of a person to build their worth, respect their community, and make pro-social choices. Also, to learn coping strategies for difficult situations.”

### **Emergent Themes and Sub-themes**

Utilizing the eight-step strategy suggested by Lunenburg and Irby (2008) for analysis of the volumes of data from the nine transcribed, member checked interviews, the primary researcher: determined a coherent pattern of themes; identified sub-themes and categories; and applied a coding system to the analysis process. Through the coding process, the primary researcher was able to discover common patterns and categories that developed into emergent themes. Appendix E featured the Code Book that emerged from the coding process.

In order to gain insight into the procedures for working with DAEP students, as well as the various RP, behavior management practices, discipline practices, and general practices DAEP staff use in their interactions with DAEP students, the first six questions of the interview were focused on procedures and practices routinely used for interacting with DAEP students. Appendix B featured the Interview Protocol: Semi-Structured Interview Questions. Appendix E featured the Code Book that emerged from the coding process. From the data emerged nine themes which lent themselves to division into 41 sub-themes which were listed below.

The first emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: RP Embedded in DAEP Daily Activities. The nine sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Communication; 2) Guided Group Interaction (GGI); 3) Orientation; 4) Protocol; 5) Respect; 6) Redirection Levels; 7) Six Steps to Success; 8) Town House; and 9) Transparency.

The second emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: Specific Behavior Management Practices. The seven sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Confrontation; 2) Consistency; 3) Discipline; 4) Remain the Solid Object; 5) Structure; 6) Fair and Equitable Treatment of All Scholars; and 7) Focus on Addressing the Root Cause of Negative Behavior and Clean Slate Concept.

The third emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: RP Targets. The six sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Broadened View; 2) Built Confidence; 3) Built Pro-Social Skills; 4) Developed Leadership Skills; 5) Provided Voice for Scholars; and 6) Supported Fulfillment of DAEP Purpose.

The fourth emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: Contributing Factors to DAEP Team Efficacy. The three sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Clearly Defined Roles; 2) Passion for Job and Scholars; and 3) Responsive to Scholars' Needs.

The fifth emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: RP Tools Routinely Used by DAEP Staff. The five sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Accountability and Building Concept; 2) Culture; 3) Expectations and Integration; 4) Norms and Normative Language; and 5) Student Government, Incentive System, and Rating System.

The sixth emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: Disdain for Prison Terminology References in Connection with DAEP. The two sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Rationale; and 2) Alternative Language.

The seventh emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: Building Rapport. The four sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Relationship; 2) Established Family-Like Connection; 3) Perspective and Perception; and 4) Reads at Check and All Interactions.

The eighth emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: Home Campus Issues. The three sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Setting Size; 2) Missed a Need That Went Unsupported; and 3) Target on Your Back to be Bullied or Railroaded.

The ninth and final emergent theme that data analysis revealed was: Poor Districtwide RP Usage. The two sub-themes of this theme that data analysis revealed were: 1) Not Where It Needs to Be; and 2) Implementation Looks Different on Home Campus and DAEP.

The nine emergent themes and 41 sub-themes listed above were revealed by data analysis. Details of the emergent themes and sub-themes were reported in detail in the following sections of Chapter IV.

**RP embedded in DAEP daily activities.** Although all HA staff may not have recognized and acknowledged RP by name, the general consensus among all nine participants was that RP was embedded in HA daily activities. Furthermore, KES, the education service company which oversaw HA, routinely made RP-focused professional development and training opportunities available to all staff at its alternative education

facilities. South Carolina, the Regional Director, said, "...all day we're using restorative practices. So within our model, we have so many tools that we use that are part of the restorative practice guideline or within restorative practices." New Jersey, HA Administrator confirmed the embedding of RP in daily HA routines with:

So, built into our program, we have instructional strategies that we implement in the classroom and outside the classroom. In the first question, I spoke about the culture and the norm. Some of those things are embedded in our day-to-day. So, talking about restorative, it's not necessarily a one thing that we do. It's how the day flows....It happens continuously throughout the day...It's embedded into the culture....It's not just one thing. It's the culture of the school.

As an individual who did not work full time on the HA campus, Delaware, the home campus, Goode Middle School (GMS) Behavior Specialist, further confirmed New Jersey' statement from the student's perspective:

I can tell you that every youth [returning from HA] that I've had direct contact with—they talk about it. If you ask them a question, they describe it [interactions consistent with RP] to you in detail...It is happening. It is happening regularly and it is happening with consistency!

Although Maryland, the HA Administrative Assistant, Georgia, the HA Middle School ELAR and Science Teacher, and Connecticut, the HA Academic Coordinator, requested clarification of my reference to RP, each clearly described regular interactions with HA scholars verifying prevalence of an RP culture at HA. Maryland said:

We're going to focus on making sure these kids can come in and go out better.

And do their best work while they're here...And also make them understand that

everything's going to be all right—that we're going to get through it and better on the other side. Just because they're here, doesn't make them different or a bad person.

Georgia, HA Middle School Teacher, said:

So, it's like you gotta meet them where they're at...So, in my case, as a teacher, once you build that rapport, you are more than just the teacher. They come to you and talk to you about a lot of things—a lot of the problems that they have outside of school and in school...I just try to embed the restorative practices in my academic instruction by meeting them where they are...

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, said:

Restorative Practices—that's something that's done daily...For the Behavior Staff and the Team Leaders, that is an everyday thing, because that is a constant happening throughout the day...And, of course, we don't want our teachers to stop teaching. So, the Team Leader will: go into the classroom; pull the student out; talk to the student; a lot of times they may take the student in another room to allow the student to calm down; talk to the student in such a way to have them reflect on what it is that they were doing; what would have made a better outcome; and then, have them re-enter the after they have talked to the teacher and gotten to the bottom of what has happened, so that the teacher and the student are both on the same page.

Massachusetts, the HA High School Team Leader, summed up the idea of embedding RP in the HA daily activities with:

It's all kind of the same, because we merge it all. We believe that you can take: the social; the emotional; and you put all the academics together; and, that's a merger that has to take place to help the students.

**Communication.** Communication was an RP strategy that was frequently reported as embedded in the HA culture. In fact, South Carolina, the HA staff with the second most alternative education experience (24 years) and the most RP experience (24 years) described the vast amount of communication that happened within a DAEP:

We'll talk their head off. They get through the day, come home and say, 'They talked to me more than I actually got any instruction done.' It was because you [the DAEP student] were probably not ready for the classroom. You weren't performing in the classroom, so we're going to pull you out. One of my colleagues, the superintendent of KES, has the saying that, 'the folks that are helping the students with their behavior while in DAEP schools need to go home every day with laryngitis.' [That is because of] the many interactions that we have with our kids [involving communication.]

South Carolina further reported that communication within the DAEP is intentional. When HA students applied for a position in student government, "We intentionally put them in that position to have to write an essay, then go around and practice those communication skills to get signatures from their teachers, Team Leader, and from other student government members."

Not only did the participants report much communication among DAEP staff and students, according to South Carolina, the communication also extended to parents:

We try to tell them what's going to happen at our campus...by the time the student comes to us, this isn't the first time that they've been in trouble. So it becomes kind of like habit for a parent to nod and say, 'Okay...Yes...Okay, I'll agree to help them do that.' But then when we call them up a few days later—a week later and say, 'Hey, your kid's doing well with this, but they still need some help with that.' Then they start to understand that we're a little bit different. We're about positive communication—and a lot of it.

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, and Georgia, HA Middle School Teacher, confirmed the idea of the massive amount of communication that was prevalent to support restorative practices. According to Connecticut, "I think a lot of our restorative practices definitely are centered around conversation." On her Demographic Questionnaire, Georgia indicated that a major part of her teacher role was to "communicate necessary information regularly to students, colleagues, and parents regarding student progress and student needs."

With 19 years of alternative education, Pennsylvania, the HA Middle School Team Leader, summed up the importance of communication to the theme of embedding RP into DAEP daily activities with, "...after all these years, I communicate. We communicate. Communication stops all fights....A fight's going to occur because people be overlooking the signs folks give you....But those are [the discipline practices]—just a lot of communication—a lot of communication."

***Guided Group Interaction (GGI).*** As an individual not working directly in the DAEP, Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist, alluded to the embedding of Guided Group Interaction (GGI) in DAEP daily routine with "...every youth that I've had direct contact

with....They talk about it....They describe it to you.” Early in the interview, Delaware could not recall the acronym, GGI; however, he described it thusly:

They have a restorative practice-based meeting which, for the life of me, I cannot recall what it is termed....I’ve got it written down somewhere. It’s like JCC or GG. Maybe the GCC—I’m blanking on what it is, but they have them. They don’t call it RP. They don’t call it Circles. Oh, they may call it a chat of some variety, but it is both. It’s a format. My understanding is it’s a format that both has a relationship building and restorative component, as well as a conflict management type of component. It’s a daily format and a harm repairing format...

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, offered the following overview of GGI:

We have our GGI Circles—our Guided Group Interactions. And that’s something that we have daily at HA. That’s normally in the teacher’s classrooms. The students get in a circle and we have topics that are discussed. That’s a more relaxed atmosphere. The topics that are discussed are usually student-generated. So the topic is generally to make the students focus on themselves and reflect on respect, peer pressure, a lot of things that are relevant to our population that are there at the time....We don’t make them talk. But we get very good feedback from the students...once they are comfortable with talking amongst their peers....And there’s a lot of time to reflect with them....And then normally too, because we have our Student Government, our students that are at the top of our Student Government—the Rams and the Executives, we definitely encourage them to help facilitate the GGI Circles. And the teachers, we don’t sit as by-

standers. We actually sit within the circle and participate. We become one with the group.

Georgia, HA Middle School Teacher, confirmed Connecticut's report:

I do participate with GGI, which is a conversation that we have amongst our students daily about topics that are important to them. In that aspect, I think that's a big part of the restorative practices that we do. A lot of the students do enjoy having that time to really express themselves....GGI is one thing that I make sure I go to. It's not required for the teachers because it usually is the Behavior Staff facilitating. But, I like to go in there because kids really have things to talk about. They want to express themselves. So I think that's a good part of their day. That's one of my favorite parts of the day.

Near the end of his interview, in his response to the DAEP internal tracking protocols question, South Carolina, KES Regional Director, said:

We have Guided Group Interaction. Whereas, I know just a few years ago in KHISD, they started up what they call 'Circles.' With that being said, and I know with you being a counselor, you know [engaging in RP] Circles gives you a chance to talk about some very real things that are going on, whether it's with yourself or others—learning to use your empathy—showing respect to others—all types of self-esteem building—different character traits that are done during that time. At times, we just talk about things that have to do with current events, because what's going on in someone's neighborhood is way more important sometimes than what's going on at Capitol Hill or in Austin or on the state legislative branch. And sometimes it's hearing things that may keep them alive;

keep them out of jail; keep them away from getting kicked out of their home; hearing others talk about things that put them in a bad situation; or decisions that they made that kept them out of a bad situation.

Near the beginning of her interview, regarding GGI being an integral part of RP embedded in daily DAEP structure, Pennsylvania, the HA Middle School Team Leader, further clarified that:

After lunch we have a GGI and we give them topics...maybe could be current events. If something is going on or sometimes we just have them free talk on something that they want to talk about. And it's in a group....And we just sit in a circle...everybody facing each other. We just talk like 15-20 minutes.

Sometimes it's longer, but we don't cut them off. If they're open to share, that's what we do.

Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, elaborated that the GGI is a “safe zone.” Massachusetts also clarified that one of the HA “norms is what's said in GGI, stays in GGI.” New Jersey, HA Administrator, added, “And so they have that [GGI] opportunity every day....It's a safe opportunity to converse among their peers in a constructive way to discuss the things that are really bothering them, like being relevant.”

***Orientation.*** Early in the interview, the KES Regional Director, South Carolina, clearly outlined how the Orientation process fit into the RP embedded in the daily routines of the DAEP:

Whereas, the [home] school has either decided that they have committed a mandatory or discretionary [DAEP placement offense]—but they want to try to give some other type of intervention to the child that may be off of their campus.

So at that point, they send the referral to us. The parent is instructed to show up for an Orientation. And when they show up for an Orientation, then we...take over and try to curtail all misconceptions that they may have heard, because there are a lot of myths out there about being in the DAEP. Sometimes, they are warranted. But we try to tell them what's [really] going to happen at our campus.

Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, added to the explanation of how Orientation, a RP activity, is embedded in the daily DAEP routine that,

Sometimes they have different ideas or some thoughts about it. And some even have some prior knowledge that other people have shared—some factual, some not factual. So I come in and try to ease the pain or dissolve their reservations. By putting a face to a name and saying that you can contact me directly and these are the hands that your son or daughter will be in for their time here at HA. And then what I like to give them is a day in the life of the student at HA, and I like to take them through [a typical day] from the morning that they arrive to the campus...to how they're going home and take them through the process. So once we get through that Orientation process, they can be a little more comfortable.

Regarding Orientation, New Jersey, HA Administrator, added that, "...we only do Orientation with the parent and the student so both parties are aware of: what the expectation is; what the consequences may be if they are not able to adhere to the norms." Maryland also added that one of her responsibilities during the Orientation is to, "...find out what's going on—what happened—tap in. Then I refer that information...to the right people....It's imperative that we make sure that we have these Orientations and

ask as many questions as we can to find out issues...” that can then be channeled to the appropriate HA staff to appropriately address during the student’s DAEP placement.

*Protocol.* Regarding the practice that HA refers to as ‘Protocol’, KES Regional Director, South Carolina, described:

The way we walk is a restorative practice. [We tell them,] “Hey, we always want to keep you quiet because we want to make sure that nothing’s sounding like something’s wrong at the wrong time. We want you in Protocol,” which is with your hands behind your back. And when a parent asks, “Why?” Well, a lot of students have been accused of touching someone inappropriately. You can’t touch someone with your hands behind your back. You can’t touch someone. They can’t touch you. We can’t think that someone is fighting, if the hands are behind the back. No one’s going to be accused of....A lot of things are alleviated by just that one thing. And it also gives us an idea of whether the student is complying or not. That’s not a hard thing to do, unless you have some type of shoulder situation that you need something different. You can have your hands behind your back.

Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, further clarified that the HA expectation was to, “...walk with their hands behind their back. It’s the Protocol—behind the back, because we have all kinds of fighters and that way if anybody is out of Protocol, they’re going against the norm.” Pennsylvania admitted, “it’s challenging,” but with Protocol being a consistent expectation and norm that is part of the HA culture, students new to the DAEP soon fall in and embrace Protocol.

**Respect.** Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist, put it quite succinctly, “But to me, the huge—the biggest thing to RP is just respect. Respect is priority number one!” Delaware continued later in the interview to elucidate regarding respect as a huge component of RP embedded in DAEP daily life:

You can peel back understanding function [of behavior]. And you can peel back consistency and the appropriateness of intervention and corrective consequences and all those pieces. But to me, it comes down to respect and how do you have respect? You have a relationship. And what is restorative discipline and restorative practices perfect for? Building, maintaining, and repairing relationships. So, it’s being honest. It’s being respectful. It’s being okay to say, “I don’t know.” It’s admitting when you’re wrong. And it’s doing your dead level best to be consistent. If you say you’re going to do something, do it. So, [in my role], I very rarely make a promise to anybody [a young person] because I don’t want to be the person who said I’m going to do something and doesn’t. Then, all of a sudden, I’m now that adult who said, “I care about you.” Then lied about it.

New Jersey observed respect to the degree that she, the Administrator, does not even visit GGI without getting “permission from the students....Because that’s their Circle and I want to make sure that I’m respecting their norms.” Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, observed that conversations in GGI, another RP component embedded in the DAEP daily routine, supported the diverse cultures of students to “learn from each other and build respect for each other from [the intimate conversations with] one another.

Moreover, Massachusetts's statements concurred with Delaware, as he continued on the sub-theme of respect to say:

Our main thing is respect. So when I tell the students, you don't have to like everybody, but what we try to do is teach ones [our DAEP students] to respect everybody. Respect the differences. Respect that their lifestyle might be different. Respect that they were raised different. Respect that they think different. Respect that. And again, if you respect it, you don't have to fight over it!

***Redirection Levels.*** In response to the interview question about discipline practices, Pennsylvania, the Middle School Team Leader and leader of the behavior staff for the middle school floor at HA, described the five Redirection Levels. Although Pennsylvania was the only participant who mentioned HA Redirection Levels, her description made it clear to me that the Redirection Levels were a restorative component routinely used at HA. Thus, Redirection Levels was included as a valid sub-theme.

According to Pennsylvania, there were five levels of redirection with the first four levels handled by the teacher in the classroom and the fifth level handled by the Team Leader, Behavior Specialist, or other member of the HA Behavior Staff, often as a pull-out or push-in. The five Redirection Levels were: (1) Friendly Nonverbal; (2) Concerned Nonverbal; (3) Friendly Verbal; (4) Concerned Verbal; and (5) Student Staff Support Intervention. "The first two are nonverbal--eye contact or [gesturing with] your hands—no verbal communication." With all levels of redirection, as urgency of the concern increased, so did the teacher's proximity to the student engaged in the behavior. Levels 3 and 4 involved verbal communication with varying teacher proximity to the student

engaged in the behavior. Level 5 involved Student Staff Support Intervention. “So, I’m that last level--that fifth. And that’s basically a pull-out. So, let’s talk. Let’s see what’s going on...and we regroup....But they’re definitely going to regroup and then allowed to go back in the class.”

*Six Steps of Success.* Similar to the presentation of the Redirection Levels by only Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, the HA High School Team Leader, was the only participant to mention the Six Steps to Success. Likewise, the Six Steps of Success emerged as worthy of inclusion as a valid sub-theme on the strength of Massachusetts’s passionate description. During our interview Massachusetts easily recited the Six Steps of Success from memory:

There are things that we go over that we ask students to memorize to help toward that reconciliation. So, we give what’s called, Six Steps of Success. And that Six Steps of Success is something that students, before they leave Hope Academy, they’ll be able to recite that by memory because that’s something that we say every day:

- (1) Help support your peers.
- (2) Accept all intervention—right or wrong—weak or strong.
- (3) Be where you’re supposed to be—on time. Plan ahead.
- (4) Do what you’re supposed to do.
- (5) Take pride in Hope Academy.
- (6) Work together to succeed.

So that’s part of that reconciliation....So, the reason why it’s imperative for us to build that culture with those leaders is because that confrontation shouldn’t

always come from a staff person. It should also come from the students, because that's part of the Six Steps to Success—to help support your peers. If you see a peer doing something that's not productive, you confront them. "Hey, we don't do that—Hey, not around here." Now peers can confront other peers and get a whole lot different or more change than a staff person, because they'll say it different. They'll receive it different. They respect them different.

***Town House.*** Regarding Town House as an embedded RP in the daily DAEP routine, RES Regional Director, South Carolina, stated:

All day we're using restorative practices. So within our model, we have so many tools that we use that are...restorative practices. One of those things being Town House that we have twice daily. Whereas, we've seen in the past, student always complained about not being heard. Well, here's a chance to have a voice. Here's also a chance that we're going to communicate with you and you're going to start to learn how to understand when adults are communicating with you.

New Jersey, HA Administrator, further explained:

And then we do Town House. This is an opportunity—it's a gathering in the morning—in the AM and in the PM. So, from the door, they eat breakfast; then go to Town House. In Town House, we're talking about current events. We're talking about the Word of the Day. And it's a group setting. So all of the middle school is together and all of high school is together. And that's how we start our day. And we can talk....We're kind of gauging to see what the energy levels are and what we need to focus on for the day. We'll give them a challenge. That challenge may be, today in your Math class, you're going to be going over this,

this, and this. I want you to think about how you could implement that in your day-to-day life. Then, at the end of the day, we come back to Town House and have that discussion again.

Pennsylvania added data regarding the restorative nature of Town House, “And [Town House] helps them be comfortable around their peers....it’s all about supporting their peers....It helps them restore.” The morning Town House helped students to “...know what their expectations are for the day....And then if they did great, in the evening time...everything’s positive! That’s the evening Town House....They can hear it. I’m doing good. That’s what the Town Houses are set-up for.”

**Transparency.** Among the HA Team Leaders, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, transparency was a consistent concept or sub-theme of RP embedded in daily DAEP activities. Pennsylvania explained that on Thursdays, she typically shared information with the students regarding: student ratings; student progress toward eligibility for Student Government; number of DAEP days credited; and number of days remaining. “We keep them informed on everything. And that’s stuff they’re not used to.” Massachusetts added, “It’s open. We have nothing to hide. Nothing is closed. Nothing we keep behind closed doors.”

KES Regional Director, South Carolina, confirmed the high degree of transparency and the open-door policy at HA. “Even if I’m in my office, I always keep my door open. They always keep the door open in the Ram Lounge [the Student Government lounge].” The participants confirmed that doors to all of the common areas of the DAEP and staff offices remained open when they are occupied. However, staff chose to close their office door to preserve confidentiality when the situation warranted.

The exception was the general practice of closing classroom doors which helped reduce distractions and the noise level in the DAEP facility. Otherwise, participants reported that HA maintained and encouraged a transparent, open-door policy with regard to staff-student-parent interactions, as well as with regard to physical room and office doors.

**Specific behavior management practices.** In his role as KES Regional Director, South Carolina had the opportunity to influence, establish, and monitor implementation of DAEP policy. With regard to behavior management practices implemented at HA, South Carolina explained the three cornerstones of behavior management that he favored and presented:

Throughout these long years of working with at-risk youth, DAEP, transitional, and accelerated learning facilities, most of the times kids that are in them...because they've had...behaviors that...messed [them] up...and had them not in [the comprehensive] school, I use these three things. I present them to boards that I speak to. I present them to the parents. I present them to the students and my staff: (1) Structure; (2) Discipline; and (3) Consistency.

From the data gathered from the other eight participants, it was clear that other behavior management practices were routinely implemented at HA. However, structure, discipline, and consistency emerged as the keystone concepts of HA behavior management practices. New Jersey, HA Administrator, clearly stated, "It's [Behavior management is] just kind of refocusing the mindset....Because we are the alternative. It's no suspension from us. So, we have to be creative in what we do and how we do it." The following reports all of the behavior management practices that participants indicated as salient to their interactions with DAEP students.

**Confrontation.** Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, identified confrontation as “Our number one behavior management practice...” Massachusetts elaborated adding further explanation of his experience with the effective use of confrontation among peers at HA. According to Massachusetts, peer-to-peer confrontation was effective because of the added layer of respect among peers at HA:

And our confrontation is, “Around here, we don’t do that....We don’t do that around here....Around here, that’s not the way we talk....Around here, that’s not the way we act....Is that the way we act in class around here?” And so, we confront it [the behavior]. And many times...it’s not confronting things that allow issues to build and the norm changes....Now, peers can confront other peers and get a whole lot different or more change than a staff person, because they’ll say it different. [So,] they’ll receive it different, [because] the respect is different.

Georgia, HA Middle School Teacher, also spoke to her experience with confrontation. “[Often], they’re not used to being confronted about their behavior specifically, or right in the moment. So...it’s lost in translation...I feel like I have to address the behavior right then and there so they understand what their consequences are.” Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, agreed with Georgia that the immediacy of confrontation contributed to utilization of confrontation as a best practice in the DAEP setting. “If you cut up....Sometimes where you get in trouble, that’s where you [need to] get confronted at....That’s just best practice.”

**Consistency.** KES Regional Director, South Carolina, pointed out, consistency is a cornerstone of the behavior management practices at HA. In South Carolina’s experience, he viewed consistency as “...the key for any type of normative culture,

because if the structure is already in place, all you have to do is continue to make sure that it's happening." South Carolina simply stated, "Consistency—every day—same thing." He offered as an example of consistency in action, the procedure HA calls, 'Check,' which was the daily arrival procedure of metal detector scan and backpack search of each student:

We're going to Check the students everyday....We won't be mean [about it.] We smile. We say, "Hey, how you doing? Everything good? You looking good today." Give them a handshake, but then we're going to Check them because that makes sure that you're safe along with everyone else in this building—that no one has weapons...drugs...or any other distractions to the culture....[It] builds a rapport. But I'm also going to make sure that they know every day, if I say something to you on Monday and I don't say something to you on Tuesday, [on] Wednesday, more than likely, you're expecting me not to say anything because I wasn't consistent.

New Jersey, HA Administrator, agreed with South Carolina's assessment of the normative effects of consistency on the HA culture:

As far as behavior management practices, we'll remove the student from the classroom, if necessary, if they're disrupting the instructional setting. But it's not for a long period of time. It's maybe just pull them out and have a conversation with them. And then try to re-engage again. And then, kind of push them back into the normal class, because the thing is, if you continue to do that, then that [becomes] the expectation—the norm. "Oh, I'll just cut up in class and then I can get pulled out." And so we don't want to set that standard—that norm. Our norm

is that you're here to learn. So, we're going to do just that. And the teachers are all aware of that too. So even if the teacher says, "Hey, Sue needs a break." So, maybe five minutes. Then we're pushing them right back into the classroom and they are accepted.

Other HA staff shared their experience of the contribution of consistency to the HA culture. Pennsylvania added, "We're consistent....But first, you gotta form your consistency....Once they get used to that, the [compliance] comes naturally....Nothing about our program should have you guessing or slacking off." Georgia, HA Teacher, confirmed, "...I think it all starts from day one. When you meet them, you set the expectation. You give them class norms....We go over it every day. That's something...that they're not used to doing at their home school." In her closing comments about behavior management practices, Georgia added, "...as long as you start at day one with the expectation, they've got to conform. Some of them take longer than others, but eventually they do."

***Discipline.*** KES Regional Director, South Carolina, pointed out that discipline is a cornerstone of the behavior management practices at HA. In South Carolina's explanation of discipline, he pointed out:

Discipline is what made you put together a schedule so that you could get your dissertation done. Discipline is what made us go to sleep and get some rest before a final exam in college. Discipline made us go to classes.... Discipline is just putting yourself in a place where you can learn what you can do—learn what you cannot do and build from it....And [discipline is] also pushing yourself to do something you've never done to achieve something you've never had....

Discipline, once again, is self-inflicted....Discipline isn't something that's done to you. Discipline is something that you do to yourself, for your own growth.

It was clear from the other HA staff explanations of their experiences with discipline in their interactions with HA students that they, too, ascribed to the same notion of discipline as South Carolina. Pennsylvania, Middle School Team Leader, explained, "Discipline isn't hands-on! It's setting the expectation—the structure--the norm—the culture, and staying consistent....They decide to embrace it. That's discipline....We do that form of discipline. It's a job, but it's easy when you don't drop the ball."

*Remain the solid object.* Although it was not until my fifth of nine interviews that I was introduced to the idea of 'remain the solid object,' the concept was clearly a part of the experience of HA staff. Connecticut, the current HA Academic Coordinator and former HA Teacher, was the fifth interview, but the first to mention the concept of remaining the solid object with regard to behavior management practices:

My number one thing that I do is remain the solid object. I always remain calm. I always have de-escalation in my head. So, no matter what's going on throughout the day—no matter what's going on with the student, I am always in a calm and de-escalating mode....So that's the goal. I'll always try to keep in mind that it's never personal. And if I can just get them to come down to where I am [emotionally], then, we can begin to communicate and figure out what's wrong....Whatever I'm doing around the campus, that's my number one tool: just to remain calm; keep my emotions in check; and in de-escalation mode....It's a simple technique that's hard to do, but it works when you're in an environment

where, if you let the student have their way, we will constantly be way up here [Connecticut stood and gestured with her hand high above her head] because a lot of times, that's where our students are—a 100 on the emotion scale.

The interview with High School Team Leader, Massachusetts, was the sixth in the case study and occurred the following day. Massachusetts explained that his experience was similar to Connecticut's with regard to remaining the solid object:

But I give them that straight face, because I've got to serve as that solid object for them....So, I try to get that stable, stoic face all the time. Not that I'm upset. Not that I'm mad. Just stable, stoic, and neutral on that emotion scale.

All nine participants may not have articulated the idea of remaining the solid object, it was clear that HA staff ascribe to that notion as it related to de-escalation techniques in the behavior management of HA students. South Carolina, KES Regional Director, mentioned early in his interview, "...we try to put ourselves as solid objects in their lives while they're with us." HA staff reported remaining the solid object as a simple technique that yields major results when appropriately and consistently applied as a de-escalation tool.

**Structure.** Structure was indicated by KES Regional Director, South Carolina, as the third cornerstone of the behavior management practices at HA. To explain the KES and HA interpretation of structure, South Carolina highlighted what happens in the absence of structure, "...when kids have no structure or less structure, they make up their own program." South Carolina continued to add, "So if you don't have a structured environment, something [unexpected and unwelcome] may happen. You never know what's going to happen because there's nothing there saying what's supposed to happen."

Pennsylvania, the HA Middle School Team Leader who was hired by South Carolina and has been working with him at HA for the full five years of its operation, confirmed, “We’re honest [genuine]. We’re disciplined. We’re structured. We’re consistent. Nothing about our program is a surprise. You see it all coming. In our structure, [there’s] no room to deviate and mess yourself up.” Therefore, according to South Carolina and his staff, “The opposite of structure is destruction.” When he said that, South Carolina gestured dropping the mic for emphasis.

*Fair and equitable treatment of all scholars.* Each of the nine participants mentioned fair and equitable treatment of scholars as a major concept that strongly influenced positive interactions with and compliance from HA students. The participants doubted that behavior management, restoration, repair, and reconciliation could occur without the fair and equitable treatment of scholars. Most participants articulated that KES and HA encouraged recognizing the difference between fairness and equity. They pointed out that fairness involved affording everyone the same treatment, regardless of their personal conditions. Equitable treatment was considered fairness with the twist of affording everyone the same opportunity to reach a specific objective with consideration of personal conditions.

Case in point, Connecticut, who is now in a more administrative role as the Academic Coordinator, reflected:

When I was in the classroom, fairness was everything for me. And I noticed with the students, they’ll spot you in a minute and call you out in a minute if they think that you’re being unfair or unjust. You know we teach them how and encourage them to confront in the moment. So, I made it a point to immediately address

anything that I thought or they thought was unfair or unjust. If I had a student that was saying, “You're not being fair,” I might have to re-examine and either change the way I was doing things to make it fair or—you know since we're the alternative, most of our students are diverse learners in some way—help them to understand that whatever it is really is equitable for everybody that's involved.... But our goal every day, is to get through the day, as peacefully as possible with the students. So, it's hard to do that when...you have students that think they've been wronged--that there's no justice. And so that is something that's constant, because we want the students to feel like they are included and that they are being treated fairly. And if they aren't being treated fairly, then we're definitely going to do something about that—either fix it or broaden their view to help them see the equity in it. How can we expect to manage behavior—to repair—to restore—to reconcile without fairness and equity?

***Focus on addressing the root cause of negative behavior.*** Data from the nine participants revealed that HA staff avoided focusing on the offense that resulted in DAEP placement. Analysis of the data presented by HA staff revealed that they made a special effort to maintain focus on the contract of each student. Analysis of the data allowed me to infer that KES and HA defined the contract as the personalized behavior and academic plan identifying the target behaviors to repair in order to reconcile and restore the student to pro-social behaviors that contributed to the student's successful return to the home campus within the specified number of days of DAEP placement without the need for DAEP re-enrollment in the future. The contract was discussed, agreed upon, and signed by the parent, student, and several HA staff members during Orientation. The contract

also contained the student's schedule, academic progress plan, and any diverse learning interventions that may be necessary during the placement. While the offense might help to inform and support determination of the target behaviors, neither was the offense used for punishment, nor was DAEP placement framed as punishment by HA staff.

Massachusetts, High School Team Leader, expounded:

We are pro-social. We're not punitive....We're not a place of suspensions or ISS or anything like that. Truth be told, some of the students...are used to that. What I tell them is, "I don't want you away from me. I can't work with you [in ISS or OSS]. I can't work with you on that contract unless you're with me."

New Jersey, HA Administrator, expanded on Massachusetts's statement, "The other thing that we focus on is clean slate. We don't hold onto stuff, because it's hard trying to build a rapport with students holding something over their heads, especially with the population we serve."

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, maintained, "We're not concentrating on punishment." Even when a student re-enrolled at HA, "The one thing we don't want to do is highlight the fact that they have been here before....They could be sensitive about that. And it does nothing to support the contract." Georgia, HA Teacher, confirmed that, "I don't even know what they are coming to the DAEP for....So, they're just another student that comes to my class....You also don't want to harp on they keep making a mistake." In Georgia's final statement of the interview she pointedly mentioned:

I think that's the main thing about restorative justice or any program that's going to help students move from the reason [offense] that [led to them being] given one of these contracts. It is building the rapport and making sure that you've reached

each one....They come into my class and we get that 45-day contract to restore what might have been lacking at the home campus.

Maryland, the HA Administrative Assistant, who prepared every HA student contract, confirmed, “We’re going to focus on making sure these kids can come in and go out better.” Georgia, HA Teacher, also confirmed use of the term contract to describe the nature of each student’s DAEP placement, instead of the offense. “At this DAEP, they [usually] all have a 45-day contract.”

**RP targets.** In his Demographic Questionnaire written response, Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist, clearly wrote about the intended targets of restorative justice practices:

When I think of the concept of restorative justice, I think about a process that includes the person(s) that was harmed, the person(s) that caused the harm, and the greater community. Restorative Justice is a process that seeks to make all of these people “whole....” Restorative Justice brings a structure and formality that lets people speak truthfully and find creative ways to heal and repair everyone involved, not just the person that would traditionally be labeled the victim.

The participants unpacked and specifically clarified several targets of RP prevalent in their experience at HA.

**Broadened view.** Like Delaware, Georgia, HA Teacher, in her Demographic Questionnaire written response, she expounded on the contribution of RP to broadening the view of students. Georgia wrote that RP provided tools to “help students become more aware of how their poor decision making had negative consequences to not only themselves, but also to their family, their school and the community as a whole.” South

Carolina, KES Regional Director, indicated in his interview that RP was “building up the individual that may not have understood it in the first place—being a good student—a good person in the community—what’s going to make them a viable and successful person contributing to society in the future.” Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, added, “...we want to broaden their mind. We want to get them thinking something different.” Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, annotated that RP targeted, “...getting the students to see and think outside of themselves, because...their thinking is definitely [narrow and] centered on themselves...get them to look at something from a place bigger than their own.”

***Built confidence.*** From the data emerged the sub-theme related to the confidence building nature of RP. Georgia, HA Teacher, stated:

And you don’t want to give them rigorous work [that] they don’t understand. That’s going to weigh down on their self-esteem even more...[You want to]make sure you integrate differentiated assignments into their instruction so they build their own self-confidence. They understand it. They’re getting A’s on it. And a lot of the times, they’re not used to getting good grades. So, if you did that, they pass. When I pass back the paper and they’re getting A’s or B’s, they’re happy. And that makes me happy. So, then now we’re going to move on to the next assignment. We’ll make it a little bit harder. In my role as a teacher...this is important to me that they see that they can be successful in school—in a classroom, so that when they finish their 45-day contract and they leave me, although the work may be different and may be harder, they can now understand how to sit there and receive instruction and then maybe use the tools that we

developed during that contract to maybe confidently ask questions or do what it takes to get some academic success. A lot of times, it's about confidence. That misbehavior is about confidence and not knowing the content. So, those are the two things that contribute to their misbehavior in class. So, I think that restoring their confidence in their own knowledge is important so that they can be connected to the work....Really, I think our students have less confidence in their ability to be successful because they keep having the same type of consequences. So, RP restores that and builds back up their confidence.

Similarly, Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, stated, "...when they learn that they can do it, it definitely builds their self-esteem up....So that helps them restore." Likewise, Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, echoed, "...our restorative is restoring that whole person. It's restoring that student to feel some confidence about themselves." Maryland, HA Administrative Assistant, co-signed with the following statement: "Our restorative is really just letting them know that they can be someone. That they can do something that's valued. That's how we build confidence with RP."

***Built pro-social skills.*** Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, and New Jersey, HA Administrator, both mentioned the pro-social skill building aspect of RP in their Demographic Questionnaire written response. Pennsylvania wrote RP is, "helping students turn from anti-social to pro-social in a positive manner." Nearly identically, New Jersey wrote the RP goal is to, "transition the student from anti-social to pro-social behavior in their day-to-day life." Finally, KES Regional Director, South Carolina stated early in his interview, "...it's for us to try to build those pro-social skills and give them

coping strategies and different through processes to not be so quick to repeat the same [negative] behavior that got them in trouble before.”

*Developed leadership skills.* In her Demographic Questionnaire written response, Georgia, HA Academic Coordinator, shined a light on the leadership skill building tendency of RP. She wrote, “The whole point of restorative justice is that the student learns from their mistake and become leaders in their home campus, and to really take responsibility for their education and the outcomes of their effort.”

In their interviews, other participants almost exclusively spoke to their experiences with the leadership building tendency in relation to the KES/HA way of implementing RP via their unique way of developing student leadership capacity via involvement with the HA Student Government. South Carolina, KES Regional Director was the facilitator of the HA Student Government. Therefore, his comments are the only featured comments regarding the leadership development RP target. South Carolina’s passion for the connectedness of RP and leadership building clearly shines forth in his comments. According to South Carolina, RP supported the building of those skills necessary to equip students to “not be so quick to repeat the same behavior that got them in trouble before....[We] build leaders, because if they’re following the next kid that hasn’t gone through the building process, they’re going to end up in the same situation.” South Carolina extolled the fact that he has “opened 12 schools...across the country...in the 15 years that I’ve worked for this company.” According to South Carolina, when he opened a school, he hired all the staff and Directors to actually run the school while he trained and supervised them.

Since [I'm on] campus on a daily basis, I run Student Government....I teach them not just coping strategies—not just how to deal with things. I teach them leadership skills that I also teach Directors of schools that I've opened....And, it's amazing to see them because sometimes you have those kids that are gang kids or doing a lot of things in the community that they're getting notoriety on the wrong path and they start to see--if they can get some type of attention for doing something positive—if they can get some type of reward and praise doing something positive, that changes who they are, not just in school, but outside school. Plus, we engage the parents also....In the Student Government sessions I lead and all the [RP strategies involved with] getting into and staying in Student Government, I let them know that you can't wait to become a leader. The activities show them why it's important to be a leader and not to just be a blind follower....We try to instill in them that you can't wait forever to become a leader—to have a leader's mentality—that they have to learn it as soon as possible....So us restoring our kids is just building them into what even they didn't know they could become, or even if they didn't think they had it in them. Just building them up as leaders of their own fate is the biggest restorative weapon that we have. Because I know what it feels like when you have something in you that you can offer to society. When you can offer something to society, it's huge! So I just try to make sure that myself and the folks that I employ all have the same understanding on what the possibilities for our kids are. With that being said, I don't know what's possible with our kids, but I know if they are to run president or if they are to be the local trash pick-up technician, I

want them to be taught in a way, on a daily basis (not just in the classroom) that strengthens their minds in a way that they can just be powerful whichever direction they go.... [Most people] don't necessarily realize that the kids that have the courage to do some of the things and speak up in some of the ways that [our kids] speak up--they'll be our best debaters! They'll be our best politicians, because others don't have the heart to do it! So who really are our best leaders in the district? I usually get to see most of the leaders of the district. It's just our job to help them channel it to realize their potential to use their powers for good and not other things.

*Provided a voice for scholars.* South Carolina's comments also elucidated the tendency of RP to provide a voice for scholars. "Students complain about not being heard. [At HA] with developing the contract, Town House, GGI, confrontation skill building, Student Government activities, pledging and so many other things, [RP offers] a chance for students to have a voice."

*Supported fulfillment of DAEP purpose.* The written responses that seven of the participants provided spoke directly to the support provided by RP to the fulfillment of DAEP purpose. The written responses were detailed more specifically in a previous section of Chapter IV. There were also several participant comments that spoke to the supportive nature of RP to the DAEP purpose.

Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, stated, "What HA and KES are trying to provide is intentional opportunities for student to begin that reconciliation." In the middle of the interview, Massachusetts mentioned, "...the whole [DAEP] purpose is to get that student back on track; to get them back to their home school; to get them to

where they are leaders...and take pride in themselves...and in the school.” In his closing comments, Massachusetts further made his experiential beliefs clear. “All students have ability to be successful....We have a classroom mindset of different learning styles, we also have to take that same mindset with behavior.... RP makes it easier to achieve our mission and reach those students with diverse behaviors.”

New Jersey, HA Administrator, commented on the supportive nature of RP of the DAEP purpose. “Our [DAEP] focus is to reform: the way they think; the decisions they make; and to re-engage them into the educational environment....[DAEP provides] opportunities...to re-engage and learn...different decision making...techniques....Our job is to teach them to make better choices.” Finally, South Carolina, KES Regional Director, stated, “Everything we do is restorative....Basically, [at the DAEP, our purpose is to] teach all the basic behaviors of being a student—a good student.”

**Contributing factors to DAEP team efficacy.** The data gathered revealed a number of emergent factors contributing to the effectiveness of the HA team of professionals. In addition to the high experience level of the HA staff detailed in Table 1 with data from the Demographic Questionnaire. Data revealed by the participant expressions of their experiences with the team contributed to the emergence of several sub-themes.

**Clearly defined roles.** Every HA staff interviewed made at least one reference to the importance of each staff member’s role to the successful attainment of the restorative mission of the DAEP. In fact, early in Maryland’s (HA Administrative Assistant) interview, she made at least three references to the importance of each staff member’s role in the restorative mission of the DAEP. “So that’s why it’s imperative that we make

sure that we have...Orientations and ask as many questions as we can to find out issues that then we can notify, again, the appropriate people at our campus.” Georgia, HA Teacher, pointed out, “...in my role as a teacher, I...focus on the academic side...I do have to address behavioral issues, if they come up....But we do have a strong, cohesive team—a support team who deals with a lot of the behavior issues.”

New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs, and Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist were the two participants who were not employed by KES and are not officed full-time on the HA campus. Regarding this sub-theme, New Hampshire noted, “My role is more facilitative....It’s...gaining information from everyone and finding out the best way the district can support....As far as the individual interaction with the students, I don’t have a great deal of it until it comes to unique situations.” Delaware noted, “I’m involved...in trying to...prevent or delay a DAEP placement. And I’m...involved when a young person returns back from DAEP.” Each participant acknowledged his or her role and the importance of that role in the broader scheme of influencing positive outcomes of DAEP placement.

*Passion for the job and scholars.* Every participant iterated and often reiterated several times the passion for their job. South Carolina, KES Regional Director, expressed his passion for education:

I love education, but the kids that they send me and say that they are this and that...They're totally wrong. These kids have more aspiration to do something with themselves and they're crying out for help more than everybody else. And when they finally get it, you're talking about a phenomenon! You're talking about the world is theirs for whatever they want to achieve! So, I would rather work

with someone that has that, and don't know it because that ah-ha moment, as educators that we get, I enjoy that, especially when we know that your upside potential is way larger than anybody ever thought....But the potential that they possessed is so powerful! I just want to give them a fair chance at all of their potential....So the passion that I have for kids, it's not for alternative ed kids. It's not for at-risk kids. I have passion for our future!

All the participants referred to their job as an enjoyable opportunity to engage and interact with students. In fact, most described their job as a gift by describing their interactions and experiences with the phrase, '...get to...' Georgia, HA Teacher, said, "I get to hear the kids express exactly what's going on with them in a safe zone....I get to work with students one-on-one more." Connecticut, Academic Coordinator, closed her comments by saying, "I just would like to say that working at a DAEP—I just really, really enjoy it. It's very rewarding. I love that I get to build relationships with students that last a lifetime." Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, said, "In my Orientation, the first thing I tell parents is I love what I do. I love where I am. And I love that I get to work with their kids and really see their progress." Like Connecticut, Massachusetts's closing comments were, "I feel like this is my calling. This is where I'm supposed to be because I get to see firsthand, students exercising their previously untapped ability to be successful."

***Responsive to scholar needs.*** From the data emerged the sub-theme that HA team responsiveness to each scholar's needs contributed to the success of the team. Two participants' comments were highlighted below and were typical of the responses inferred and directly stated by all participants interviewed.

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, reported:

If I hear anything that's going on in the hallways that I think needs attention, I get up out of my office and I go and I address it. I see who is taking care of that. If there is no one there at that particular time, then I go in and intervene and talk to the student. So, me and my role as far as interacting with the students—I am there as needed.

Georgia, HA Teacher, reported likewise, “But we have a really good team....I think we have a really good foundation....KES has done their due diligence in trying to understand the academic part and the social-emotional part of a successful student.”

**RP tools routinely used by DAEP staff.** Although there were numerous tools and strategies that could be used to successfully implement restorative justice practices, HA staff reported routinely using several. Several of the emerging sub-themes were reported by HA staff to be used in concert; therefore, they were reported in the same sub-theme category.

***Accountability and the building concept.*** Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, most clearly indicated how HA staff routinely applied accountability:

So often we here in the school system and outside law enforcement say that parents don't discipline their child. But they really do want the best for their child. But they need support too....And then, like the child, if you don't push them, even the parents sometimes want to sit back. Well, with me, you're not sitting back and you're going to help this child to do better. You're going to show them that you care. There can't be a disconnect. If I can try—if the child can try—then everybody who signed this 45-day contract can try....And, together,

we're going to fix this as much as we can. Our structure and culture involves the parent and makes the parent accountable for the parent's part...The parents know the expectations too, because they need the structure and the help too. And then too, what I love about our program is that [the parents] give you more if you include them. We have parent workshops. We have award ceremonies. So if we're owning it and the child is owning it, so is the parent. So it's no opting out for [the parent] either. We have them participate. We communicate. The biggest thing is the parents know we have their child's best interest at heart.

Pennsylvania also shared nuggets regarding the building concept of RP at HA.

“With us, there is no opting out. Sooner or later, you've got to engage—opt in—begin to build that capacity to restore—reconcile—get that pro-social skill.”

In his explanation of his interactions with students re-enrolling in HA, South Carolina, KES Regional Director, illuminated the building concept supported by HA practices:

You already know the teachers here. You already know what the expectations are. Therefore, there should be no issues with you. You should go right in building. I told you, I'm a builder, so I let them know you should be building. Helping your teacher; making sure that you're not becoming a problem...Get yourself together because you're wasting your own time. You're wasting your own opportunity to be great! When they come back through our door, we immediately move forward with building.

***Culture.*** Every single participant directly mentioned or alluded to the importance of establishing a culture conducive to producing the expected outcomes of DAEP

placement. However, New Jersey, HA Administrator, articulated a clear explanation of culture:

So, from the door, we start with that [culture]. The introductions are made from the Principal, to the Team Leaders, to the Teachers. We have a very family-oriented type of structure, because it's a smaller setting. So, everybody's on the same page. And the student and the parent understand this. We all sing the same song. We all speak the same language. This is the culture. And so the goal is to get them to come into our culture and then take those tools back with them when they go back to the home campus.

Succinctly, Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, articulated the HA definition of culture, "...our culture [is] the expectation that we have of our staff and our students." Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, added to the clarity of culture, "...we're big on a word called 'culture.' So, we try to establish a culture for the students."

Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, clarified the meaning of a term that she used several times, positive peer culture:

The positive peer culture is a structure that helps with having a climate in my classroom that allows me to be able to focus on teaching in my classroom and conducting business. When someone comes into my classroom that wants to be negative, then one of the other students, without me having to say anything, would address or confront that student who is being negative and not observing the norms or following the expectations of the culture....In our culture, we depend on our Student Government kids to take the lead to promote our positive peer

culture because we know that those students are familiar with that process and have embraced it.

*Expectations and integration.* Like culture, every single participant directly mentioned or alluded to the importance of establishing expectations in building a culture conducive to producing the expected outcomes of DAEP placement. New Jersey, HA Administrator, made it clear that, “We’re very detailed about what our expectations are.” She went on to clarify, “We’re intentional about how we do it and what the norm is in the classroom, but the expectation is in classrooms as well. Hopefully, some of those nuggets stick with them, and then they can implement them in other settings.” Likewise, South Carolina, KES Regional Director, followed up with, “So, we just put the expectations out there....We’re setting expectations for them to follow....This is what we expect you to do. This is what we need from you as a student.” Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader, added, “...expectations are repeated every day. If things go sideways, we stop and repeat them again....When they see today, it’s like this. It’s going to be this Friday. It’s going to be this at the end of the month. That’s expectations.” Georgia, HA Teacher, reiterated: But I think it starts from day one. When you meet them, you set the expectations. You give them class norms. Whenever I have a new student, we go over the norms. We have norms that the school has provided [in the Student Handbook]. Then we also have Georgia’ norms in her classroom. So, we’ll go over that as a class whenever we get a new student in. That’s something that I think that they’re not used to doing at their home school.

Because of her role as a Teacher, Georgia was the only participant who articulated integration. Although no other participants specifically articulated integration, Georgia’

expressed that use of integration was an impactful tool implemented from the academic perspective. Georgia explained how implementation of integration academically supported the restorative capabilities of strategies applied from a social-emotional perspective. Therefore, integration qualified as a valid sub-theme.

I give them a couple of pretests. Once they take those, I can see [where they are]. Then, I really honestly go back to whatever grade level they test at. So, if they're on 4th grade level, I do give them 4th grade work....But I just feel like since I only have them for nine weeks—45-days, I want them to go back with some type of progress. So, I can't expect them to progress from 7th grade to 8th grade in 45-days, or even a half a grade level if they're not even [performing] on the 7th grade level....So, a lot of the times I do integrate that 4th grade work, [or whatever level they're at], with their actual grade level content based activities. So, if we're writing a poem, I have them do a haiku. We get the basics down. Now, I'm not expecting them to do all the figurative language and all that, if you're not on that level. So, our way of serving diverse learners with the pre-test and teaching from their level is our restorative practice on the academic side. So, for me, as far as academically, my restorative practice is making sure that I start them wherever they are. And that has to be done after you take a pre-test, because these kids come to me from all types of schools in Kidd Hope ISD. They come from all different backgrounds of teachers. Some of them have been in ISS for two weeks--two months! So, it's like you've got to meet them where they're at. Integration—teaching them where they're at--that's the academic restorative that

really does help with restoring all the social-emotional and pro-social things--self-esteem and confidence and all that.

*Norms and normative language.* Like culture and expectations, every single participant directly mentioned or alluded to the importance of establishing norms and expectations to building a culture conducive to producing the expected outcomes of DAEP placement. New Jersey, HA Administrator, made it clear that, “Once they’re enrolled, we go through the expectation—the norms—how we, at our campus do things. Not necessarily the rules, but the norms—the culture.” Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, replicated New Jersey’ declaration, “At HA, we don’t use the word ‘rules.’ We use ‘norms.’”

South Carolina, KES Regional Director, consolidated the idea of academic and behavioral norms to which Georgia alluded as reported in a previous section.

We have behavior norms that we use. We have academic norms that we use.

These things, if they follow the norms that we set...for them. And basically, there are not a lot of norms. There are just a few norms and if they did these things consistently and it becomes a habit for them, they would actually be a great student anywhere in the world. And that’s what we’re building—good students—good individuals—good citizens—good leaders who are productive, confident, successful, and know how to use their leadership skills.

Later in the interview, South Carolina added his explanation and analogy further explaining norms and the normative behavior that HA charges itself with building in every HA student:

So, what we try to focus on is what we have control over—that’s the individual that’s in front of us. So we try to work with the individual in front of us to understand what their role is in society--how their community views norms. And we use norms. You’ll hear norms a lot--not rules because rules are made to be broken. A norm is if I come into your home and you have a nice carpet and for some reason you’re not at the door, I’m going to wait and see, am I supposed to walk over this carpet or am I supposed to take my shoes off? That’s the norm. It’s like when you’re driving down 45, and you’re going 65 miles an hour, which is posted, but everybody is almost running you over. The norm is maybe you go 80, so that you don’t have people beeping at you and going past you looking at you funny, wondering why he’s driving so slowly. So we use norms--normative behavior--things that are accepted in the environment that you’re in.

In a previous section in which the sub-theme, consistency, was reported, explanation of the idea of ‘Check’ was reported. To refresh, ‘Check’ was the normative language used to identify the daily arrival procedure of metal detector scan and backpack search of each student upon arrival to HA. Not only did the data reveal that norms were routinely implemented and referred to as part of the HA normative culture. HA staff consistently used normative language to further support the goal of building those normative behaviors in HA students. New Jersey, HA Administrator, clarified, “...there’s a process at the door, ‘Check’, where we do a search to make sure that there’s no outside distractions being brought into our building.” She went on to connect the normative Check with its restorative opportunity, “From the door, even though we have

Check—that search process—we use that opportunity to kind of gauge where the students are which is another level of rapport building and restorative.”

Another example of HA staff routine preferred use of normative language was use of the word ‘norms’ instead of ‘rules.’ HA staff comments revealed that the practice of purposeful normative language use was restorative. Thus, routine use of normative language was consistent with the HA mission to reconcile, restore, and build.

***Student Government, Incentive System, and Rating System.*** Every single participant interviewed directly referred to Student Government, as well as the Incentive System and Rating System connected with it, as data revealed that Student Government was a mainstay of the HA restorative effort. Georgia, HA Teacher, was the interviewed participant who was least involved with Student Government, yet was able to articulate the Student Government qualification process as followed:

And then we also have the Rams—the Ram Club, which is our Student Government. So when they do well and they progress....So they started off as Neutral. When they first come in, as far as their behavior, then you can move up to Positive; move up to a Ram; and then you're part of the Student Government. So they have incentives for positive behaviors. That's if you're helping your peers stay on task. You're helping the teacher in the classroom. Maybe if there's disruption, you're redirecting students, and things like that. So they do have an incentive program built into KES and HA where the students can improve their behavior and get recognition for it.

Once the schedule of questions was completed, at the end of Georgia’ interview, I asked a clarifying question about the Rating System and Incentive System as they related

to Student Government. Georgia provided the following data in response to that clarifying question:

So, [in the Rating System] everyone starts at Neutral. One underneath Neutral is Concerned. A lot of the times it's if their attendance isn't that great, or they had a fight or something like that. We'll move them down to Concerned. Hardly anybody that we see consistently gets to Concerned. But Concerned is underneath Neutral. Something happens to get to Concerned. Everybody doesn't go to Concerned. But everybody gets Neutral. Then we have Pledge. So a Pledge is someone who is showing effort or progressing academically and following all the norms. They walk around with their Pledge Binder that they have to fill out this folder. And they're getting signatures from all their teachers as to us agreeing that their behavior, their academics is all lined up for them to start receiving some type of incentives as a Pledge. You get your signatures from your teachers. You get signatures from your peers, and then you get signatures from my supervisor, the Middle School Team Leader, the Behavior Specialist, and the Director--Regional Director. So, he is the last person that they talk to as a Pledge before being admitted to Student Government. But a Pledge is somebody who is doing well--doing everything they're supposed to be doing as far as behavior and academics. And then they fill out this form as to why they believe they should be a member of Student Government. They have to write an essay as to why they believe they should be as part of the Ram Club....But as a Ram--the next step up from Pledge--Rams are part of Student Government, which is directed by the Regional Director. Then, they do a lot of things around the

school. They do the tours when we have any visitors. They speak to how they feel they've changed things by being at our school. They do: confronting and redirecting in classrooms; or in the hallway; they don't have to be in Protocol. So as a Ram and part of Student Government, then they hold weekly meetings where South Carolina will talk to them about different topics. It could be about confidence. It could be about anything leadership or building oriented. It's more so holistic as being a productive person in society. So, he'll have weekly meetings. Sometimes guest speakers will come in and talk to them. Every week is different. But he'll always give them food. So, they love that. So it's a freedom. It's a positive.

Oh, I skipped over Positive. I'm sorry. Positive is just like acknowledging that they are there. They're doing the program. They're doing well. The Positive kids haven't gone over to Pledge yet. We've got to see them in the school a little bit more to confirm they're really working the program—their contract. Or maybe it's an effort in class thing. You've got to put a little bit more effort doing your work or following the expectations—the norms. The Positives hadn't earned that Pledge packet yet. But you're doing well. So it's Neutral-Positive-Pledge-Ram-Executive. Executive is, I'm going to be somebody who does above and beyond. So, this person is helpful to their teachers and to the other teachers in the school, they show the utmost respect. They can be trusted to speak to our Mission Statement, and they really believe it. Like, it's not that they just can say, the Executives also do a lot of work with South Carolina, as far as organizing Student Government. Normally, Execs are the President, Vice President, [and] Secretary

of the Student Government. And so they have to write an essay to my supervisor as to why they should be an Exec. But it's really just those students that are like always on it. They're redirecting students. They're informing the teacher about whatever is going on if there's any issues within the classroom or outside of the classroom, because a lot of times, it starts going on social media. But, it's not about them snitching or anything like that, but just how could the culture of the classroom—the culture of our school--be harmed by some beef or something else that's going on outside of our school. Basically, that's an Executive. The Rams are ambassadors for people who tour. They can speak a little bit about what the mission is for KES. And, they are on their way to advancing within that Student Government. They have proven themselves and then the Executives are going above and beyond that. They're helpful to everybody. It's consistent. They can be trusted. They can talk about it; be about it; and you know that they are believing what they're taught. They're there. They're practicing what they preach and they believe it. The Execs can say I'm part of Student Government, which they don't have at their home school. It's building self-confidence. So, those Executives are those students who really acknowledge that they made a mistake and want to do better. But they don't want to come back. They don't want to get into any other trouble. And a lot of times they want to take this whole Student Government thing to their home campuses. Now, everybody that's a Ram does not become an Executive. You have to write an essay to your Team Leader as to why you should be an Executive. And if you have less than 15 days, she doesn't really move it forward because she wants you to be seen amongst your peers as an

Executive for an extended amount of time. So usually if they have only three weeks left, then we just keep them as a Ram. But, they still get all the incentives. But, those who take it a step further and earlier, those are the students that are taking it serious enough to write a second essay and want to be seen. They get to wear a chain. They get a different color shirt. You know, they want to be seen as leaders.

South Carolina, KES Regional Director and Director of Student Government

added only the following:

When you become a member of Student Government and have built up that trust level, you don't have to walk with your hands behind your back—in Protocol.

You become a student member of student government member, you don't have to sit in the cafeteria at lunchtime. You go to the Student Government Lounge, the Ram Lounge, which is directly across from my office. And as you eat, you can play some video games that are in there; and you play foosball; play some chess or checkers; any type of board game that we have--that doesn't have dice.

**Disdain for prison terminology references in connection with DAEP.** As indicated in Chapter III, in keeping with the standards of quality research, it was my intention to present each participant with the same questions and to follow-up with clarifying questions as necessary. However, early in the interview process, several participants expressed their dislike for certain terminology that was pervasive throughout the study. In fact, during the research study approval process when I conferred with South Carolina, KES Regional Director, seeking KES approval to move forward with the study and interview HA staff, he asked me several pointed questions regarding the nature

and motive of my study, as well as how I would bracket myself of any biases that may exist. At the time, with no frame of reference, South Carolina's questions seemed to gently impugn my integrity as a researcher. As my responses to South Carolina's pre-approval conference questions must have assuaged South Carolina's doubts regarding any biases skewing my research, he recommended approval of my study to KES. However, it was not until I interviewed New Jersey, HA Administrator, that I fully grasped the rationale for South Carolina's hesitation with moving forward with the study.

***Rationale.*** Tameka Edwards, HA Administrator was the third participant interviewed and the first to express her discomfort with and disdain for the use of prison terminology in connection with DAEPs. Once the primary researcher finished verbalizing question number seven which included the word 'recidivism,' New Jersey said:

Can I say this really quick? That word 'recidivism,' it bothers me. And...I know these are your interview questions, but the reason I say that it bothers me is because it kind of gives a negative connotation, because they use that wording in the prison system. And so, you know, one thing that I am big on when I'm talking to parents and you know, administrators and different district liaisons, we try to steer away from that prison terminology or anything that could reference the School to Prison Pipeline, because we're really there to help. Everything connected to the penal system is exactly that—a penalty—a form of punishment. And we're not about any form of punishment. So, I want to say 're-enrollment' instead of 'recidivism.'

*Alternative language.* Although with every interview following New Jersey', I was careful to say 're-enrollment,' in addition to 'recidivism,' Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader and my sixth interviewee, expressed the following early in the interview:

And, the other thing with our reconciliation or restorative justice, even though, everything that we do leads up to restorative justice, we don't use those terminologies. We try not to use any terminologies of the judicial system. So as we look at recidivism, we don't use the word 'recidivism.' You know, we might use, [the term] 're-enrollment', because some of our students have been in that type of confinement and in that situation. And so, we want to broaden their mind. We want to get them thinking something different. So we're going to talk about success. Our mission statement [is] "To change lives by empowering students to take ownership and leadership of their pathway to success."

Chapter V followed with further discussion of the implications of the data gathered regarding this theme and others.

**Building rapport.** Every participant interviewed acknowledged rapport building as a mainstay to delivery of RP in a DAEP setting. Georgia, HA Teacher, succinctly expressed, "That's the most important part, especially with middle school students at their home school. If the teachers spent more time with that building rapport, we might not see so many of them!" Georgia continued, "...once you build that rapport, you are more than just the teacher....Bottom line—it's about building rapport!" Several sub-themes emerged from the data gathered from the interviews.

***Relationship.*** Georgia, HA Teacher, reflected on the crucial importance of building a relationship with students that was conducive to successful delivery of RP, “a lot of behavior management for me comes from building a rapport with the student. And knowing what you can say to them to motivate them to do better.” Georgia continued to say, “Building a positive relationship is important because, you want to make sure, especially when you’re in an academic setting, that you are able to reach the student, especially in middle school, especially in a DAEP.” Succinctly, Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, expressed, “Point blank, we are building relationships! Some great teachers only know how to teach content. Our kids won’t work with you unless you know how to reach them. Once you learn how to reach them, they’re willing to hear your content.”

***Established family-like connection.*** Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, spoke to the drawback of the absence of a connection. “And because connections and relationships that you build with students are everything....If there’s a student that I don’t have a relationship or connection with, then me talking to them...when it’s chaotic...they may not listen to me at that particular time.” Connecticut also succinctly stated, “Here at HA it’s more personal, like family.”

Nearly all participants mentioned or alluded to the importance of there being a family-like structure or connection among the staff and students at HA. Massachusetts HA High School Team Leader, spoke of the kinship factor at HA, “...we work on that merger and say, ‘It’s not your child. It’s not my child. It’s our child.’ Then we could help them be a lot more successful.” Massachusetts further said, “[I tell the students] when you go back [to your home campus] if you act out, it makes me look bad. ‘Don’t

make the family look bad!” New Jersey, HA Administrator, said it most concisely, “We have a very, family-oriented type of structure....When they re-enroll, I’m that Auntie who’s disappointed!”

***Perception and perspective.*** The concept of perception in relation to positive rapport building was specified or alluded to by all of the participants. However, South Carolina, KES Regional Director, clearly articulated the essence of all the participants’ statements regarding the connectedness of perception and rapport building:

What I’ve noticed while I’ve worked in different districts around the country is that all kids want to be successful. If you can put something in front of them that equates to their idea of success, you will be able to communicate with them successfully and begin building, restoring, and reconciling.

The concept of perspective in relation to positive rapport building was specified or alluded to by all of the participants, usually in connection with perception. Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, concisely stated, “Our goal is to restore that pro-social...to get them to think about a situation or a person from a different perspective—that is always one of my goals when talking to students.” Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist, clearly articulated the essence of all the participants’ statements related to the interconnectedness of perception, perspective, and rapport building:

Depending on what language I’m speaking, and depending on what group I’m in; and depending who I’m sitting next to, people think I’m White. People think I’m Hispanic. People think I’m Asian. People think I’m Balkan. And because you see what you see. And we all have our own lenses. It’s something, I think is important to be really cognizant of, and really respectful of, because we all have

our own perspectives. We all bring a wealth of knowledge and we all come from places where there's been wounding and there has been injury. And our perspective tends to inform, negatively or positively, our perception of all other people and things. Young people, especially those struggling with behaviors and unmet needs tend not to have the tools necessary to make those connections or detect when those connections are erroneously being made about them.

***Reads at Check and all interactions.*** The data revealed that administrative HA staff were primarily the staff on duty during Check. Therefore, they were the participants who most strongly related data connected to reads at Check, a procedure which could be perceived as negative in the HA environment with the mission, “To change lives by empowering students to take ownership and leadership of their pathway to success.”

New Jersey, HA Administrator, stated:

From the door, even though we have Check, we use that opportunity to kind of read the students' demeanor and gauge where the students are. You notice something that they may have on or something different or that they missed a couple of days. And so, we're very intuitive about what's going on in each student's situation. We're very intentional about learning names. So, when they hit the door, it's a sense of, “Okay, they know me. They recognize that I've been missing. They noticed something was different.” If they come in and there's maybe like a negative demeanor, we pull them to the side. Now, that's from the door during Check that can have a very negative note. And we're like, “What's going on? I noticed something different about you today.”

Regarding the restorative value of doing readings at every opportunity, South Carolina, KES Regional Director, further related:

And we have norms in place. Check is one of them where we're smiling, shaking hands, searching, and reading our kids. My shirt's going to be tucked in. Your shirt's going to be tucked in. If your shirt's not tucked in, then I'm going to say, "Hey, what's up? Is something going on. You got a spot on your pants or something? What's going on? Talk to me."

**Home campus issues.** In all the interviews, it was clear that all participants made an effort to avoid blaming the home campus for having created a need for DAEPs. Several of the participants made similar statements to that of Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist, "And campuses are already stressed." Likewise, Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator stated, "...with the huge populations of kids on KHISD secondary [home] campuses—hundreds, even thousands--there's so much that staff have to contend with." Participants cited several issues common to the home campus that prevent or make it difficult to implement RP in the same manner or with the same consistency as the DAEP.

**Larger setting.** New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs, stated in his response to the very first question:

[The home campus] entity has to weigh how they do implementation in the context of the hundreds and hundreds and sometimes thousands of students on a campus. Whereas, a DAEP's sole focus is that particular item and making sure that those students are placed in an area where they can learn those corrective measures so they can get back to their home campus and be successful.

The data gathered from Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator, supported the idea of the merits of a smaller setting. “Us having a smaller population...we’re able to talk to and relate to the students and get to know the students on a different level...” Later in the interview, Connecticut shared, “When they go back to that big home campus, I think they get lost in the system...” New Jersey, HA Administrator, echoed, “When they go back [to the home campus], they’re in the hallway with a thousand other kids or hundreds of other kids. But over here, there’s just 10 in a class.”

*Missed a need that went unsupported.* Like numerous other themes and sub-themes, all participants interviewed specifically referenced or alluded to needs of the student going unsupported or unaddressed at the home campus as the precipitating or causative factor in DAEP placement. New Jersey, HA Administrator, indicated the following:

But when we get down to the nitty gritty about why they’re there and the reason that they make the choices that they make, there are no color lines—no ethnic lines—no cultural lines. There’s just the line of needs that aren’t being addressed.

Speaking as an individual affiliated with the DAEP, but not employed by KES and working full time within the DAEP, Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist likewise articulated:

Part of my job is to: come in and do observations; work with teachers, counselors, administrators, or otherwise; and look at what the function of behavior might be. And see if we can implement some practices--some interventions: that might be restorative practices; that might be restorative chats; or reframing how consequences could take a more corrective or restorative practice in the classroom

as a way of improving behavior. But also as a way of identifying and kind of smoking out individuals that might have an impairment or a disability that needs other supports and other services.... I've diverted more than one young person from going to DAEP multiple times--for multiple stents. And I've pointed out another number of missed opportunities for: implementing behavior planning; diversional practices; restorative practices; things we can try prior to [repeat DAEP] and that kind of thing. To me, like the biggest thing is if somebody is going back, I think it really, really begs the question, why are they going back? What opportunities did we miss? What are they getting in DAEP that they may not be getting from us that they like, want, or perceive that they need? And then, coming back, honestly, I'm a big believer in really tearing through as much information as I can get on the young person. Because sometimes when we find out that somebody has come back from DAEP more than one time, if you really start digging, you see that, you know what? They have an impairment that hasn't been served. You know, I can't count how many times, in a previous district, I worked with a young person who was coming back from DAEP, who we later find out was experiencing command hallucinations and had a pretty significant psychiatric impairment that people were just looking at the surface behavior. And that individual later received services at a residential treatment facility through special education services. So, a significant need that was missed. So, did we drop a ball somewhere? And my concern is, I think, a lot of times that we really do.

*Target on your back to be bullied or railroaded.* Similar to a number of other themes and sub-themes, all participants commented on the perceived tendency of home campus staff to practice hyper-vigilance with seeking reasons to refer a student back to DAEP. Maryland, HA Administrative Assistant, grudgingly admitted, “Sometimes I feel like the regular school gets a little frustrated with these kids and find any little thing to send these kids back to DAEP and I feel like there should be more things that they can do to prevent that DAEP referral from happening.”

Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader, specifically articulated the idea of an ‘X’ or target on a returning student’s back:

A lot of times, you know, sometimes it's not just a student that's the reason why there are re-enrollments. That's where a merger [between HA and the home campus] comes in because sometimes I believe they return back [because, as I tell our students], “[When you go back,] you have an ‘X’ on your back.” It's unfair. But it's real. [I say,] “So many people [at the home campus] are watching you.” And this is not negative. This is just honest. Whatever the reason, someone [at that home campus] is not going to be happy that you're returning back [to the home campus]. I don't say that as a negative for them not to like anybody and not to like the school. I say it to prepare them to make sure they do everything right. So, sometimes with their re-enrollment to us, it's obvious that if someone would have caught them a little quicker—maybe said something to them a little sooner, they may not be right back here now. But other times, it’s also obvious that somebody [at the home campus] was looking just for a reason to send them back.

New Jersey, HA Administrator, also specifically shared the idea of a target on the back of DAEP students when they return to the home campus:

[At HA] I'm a leader. It's a smaller setting. I'm getting attention. It's positive. And then to have to go back to the home campus and suddenly, now I'm the kid that keeps getting in trouble. I have a target on my back. I don't have a support system. I'm in the hallway with thousands of kids or hundreds of kids.

**Poor districtwide RP Usage.** Two participants, New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs, and Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist, spoke to this theme. New Hampshire spoke from the perspective of RP implementation in KHISD not being where it needed to be. Delaware spoke from the perspective of the significant time factor necessary to realize the benefits of RP implementation with fidelity.

*Not where it needs to be.* Regarding implementation of RP at all schools of KHISD, at the beginning of the interview, New Hampshire stated:

Well, ideally, we want them to be at a place where the vast majority of our students are receiving those items that we see that can restore those pro-social skills. Practically speaking, it is something that we started, as a district last year, so the understanding that we're not at the [optimal] level [of implementation] is understandable, especially after one year and this year, which is really a half year--if you technically think about it--that we've actually had to engage with those restorative principles and practices. So, it's better than it was, but it's not where it needs to be. We're growing in how we're dealing with restorative circles and restorative discipline....When I converse and go to conferences and meetings and stuff where members from other districts, throughout the city...and, I see some

districts who are [implementing restorative practices], [some] have a stronger pull on restorative and some don't have any. So, I think we're in a really good position where we are. Here, it's [restorative practices is] a focus and it's something that we'll look at discipline and how we handle students differently than [it's been done].

Delaware offered the following additional data indicating his experience with the time factor involved with RP implementation:

I'm a really big believer [in restorative justice practices]. I think it's really powerful. I also think it's really time consuming.... You know, if somebody is doing motivational interviewing. You know, if somebody is implementing CHAMPS with fidelity. But there's not the same level of official programming for RP. So that makes it difficult to implement. So, it's time consuming. It's difficult to implement. And campuses are already stressed. So, I think a lot of times people think it might be a good idea, but this [implementing RP] is taking too much time out of my already over-packed schedule.

***Different look of RP implementation on home campus and DAEP.*** New

Hampshire described the difference in the aspect of the appearance of RP implementation on the larger home campus and the smaller DAEP setting. "They're essentially the same, in context, and in the overall understanding of it. However, the particulars and the details of them tend to be quite different. Whereas, they all rest under the umbrella of trying to support students and doing what's in the best interest of students for corrective behavior measures. So they're all focused under that particular umbrella.... Again, they all fall under the same umbrella. And that umbrella is to ensure that corrective measures for

those students' behavior concerns are being implemented. The home campus can go about that in a number of different ways that might be differently than the DAEP, but there'll still use the same type of tactics. They'll still use the same instruments. We'll say, the DAEP people use those instruments more frequently and more in depth, in some cases, than the [home] campus. To give an example, say, conferencing. Just conferencing in general--having conversations with students. Both entities are going to use those conversations with students, whereas they try to dig in and find what are the factors that are kind of leading to this issue that a student may have? But on a home campus level, that's something that you will also have the Behavior Specialists who might intervene. You'll have Counselors that intervene. You'll have, a SSS, Student Support Specialist, individuals who are all going to intervene and have those conferences and have those discussions. Whereas, in a DAEP, you're having individuals like that Director. You have that Principal. You have counseling services aligned, but they also build things within the normal day where there's a more structured environment for students to do group share and things of that nature. So, whereas, one is more individualized with a lot of other people, this was going to be more, it's still individualized, but you also encapsulate that group format with those individuals and you're also going to have a more intense dive in it than you may have on a [comprehensive] campus.

### **Emergent Conceptualized Ideas**

The fourth and final section of this chapter was used, as Moustakas (1994) suggested, to report the various conceptualized ideas gleaned from the virtual interviews that elucidated the essence of the case study. In short, this section featured report of data

extracted from responses to questions seven through 10 and the additional comments made by the participants.

**Participant recommended DAEP changes.** Question seven of the semi-structured interview was: If you could implement any change(s) you desired to help DAEP students learn appropriate behaviors to avoid recidivism, what would the change(s) be? All except two of the nine participants recommended a change that involved an intervention rooted in counseling, mental health support, or Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) to better address the social-emotional needs of students. Most other recommendations involved longer assignments to DAEP to allow for deeper saturation of newly learned pro-social skills or more graduated, systematic, and prescriptive transition procedures. Other recommendations involved more collaboration and consultation among DAEP staff and home campus staff. Table 2 provided a more holistic view of the recommendations. On Table 2, participant recommendations were presented in order of the occurrence of the interview. The Delaware interview happened first; so the Delaware recommendations were listed on Table 2 first. The New Hampshire interview occurred last; so the New Hampshire recommendations were presented last on Table 2.

As most of the recommendations were grounded in one or both emergent concepts: (1) counseling, mental health, and SEL supports; or (2) collaborative practices among DAEP staff and home campus staff, the concept in which the recommendation was grounded appeared in column three of Table 2. All participant recommendations were listed in Table 2. However, as the Table 2 'Note' indicated, repetitions of recommendations were noted in column three. Likewise, recommendations that were not grounded in one or both emergent concepts were noted.



Table 2

*Participant Recommended Changes to DAEP Procedures and Protocols*

Participant, Role	Recommended Changes to DAEP Procedures and Protocols	Grounding (C/MH/SEL &/or Collaborative)
Joseph Martinez, GMS Behavior Specialist	1. Regular Home Campus Staff Visits	1. C/MH/SEL & Collaborative
	2. Gradual Systematic Transition Back to Home Campus	2. C/MH/SEL & Collaborative
	3. Improve Transition and General Communication Among Home Campus Staff and DAEP Staff	3. C/MH/SEL & Collaborative
Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader	1. Regular Home Campus Staff Visits	1. Repeat
	2. Gradual Systematic Transition Back to Home Campus	2. Repeat
	3. Better Correlated Norms, Structure, and Expectations Between DAEP and Home Campus	3. C/MH/SEL & Collaborative

Participant, Role	Recommended Changes to DAEP Procedures and Protocols	Grounding (C/MH/SEL &/or Collaborative)
New Jersey, HA Administrator	1. Support Group or Modified GGI at Home Campus with DAEP Representative	1. C/MH/SEL & Collaborative
	2. Deeper Work at DAEP with Counseling/Mental Health Interventions	2. C/MH/SEL
Georgia, HA Middle School ELAR and Science Teacher	1. Mandatory Counseling for All DAEP Students	1. C/MH/SEL
	2. More Intentional Integration of Social-Emotional Learning with Academics	2.C/MH/SEL
	3. Raise Expectations for Level Progression on Incentive System	3. Neither
	4. More Intentional Integration of Incentive System with Academics	4. Neither

Participant, Role	Recommended Changes to DAEP Procedures and Protocols	Grounding (C/MH/SEL &/or Collaborative)
Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust DAEP Length of Stay to a Prescriptive Structure Based Upon Scholar's Needs</li> <li>Regular Home Campus Staff Visits to Students with DAEP Placement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative</li> <li>Repeat</li> </ol>
Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Merger: Improve Transition and General Communication Among Home Campus Staff and DAEP Staff</li> <li>Increase Length of DAEP Placement for Re-Enrollees</li> <li>More Intentional Integration of Social-Emotional Learning</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C/MH/SEL &amp; Collaborative</li> <li>Neither</li> <li>C/MH/SEL</li> </ol>
Maryland, HA Administrative Assistant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory Counseling for All DAEP Students</li> <li>Exploration of Other Means of Engagement at Home Campus</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat</li> <li>Neither</li> </ol>
South Carolina, HA Regional Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only Semester or Full Year DAEP Place Assignments</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither</li> </ol>

Participant, Role	Recommended Changes to DAEP Procedures and Protocols	Grounding (C/MH/SEL &/or Collaborative)
New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs	1. Explore and Provide Home Supports (i.e., Wraparound Services, CYS)	1. C/MH/SEL & Collaborative
	2. Implement Districtwide RP with Fidelity	2. C/MH/SEL

*Note. Participant recommendations are presented in order of the occurrence of the interview. Recommendations grounded in counseling, mental health, or Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports are listed in column 3 as C/MH/SEL. Recommendations grounded in collaborative strategies are listed in column 3 as Collaborative. Recommendations that are not grounded in either category are listed in column 3 as Neither. Recommendations that are a repetition of a previous recommendation are listed in column 3 as Repeat.*

**Staff interactions with re-enrollees.** Question eight of the semi-structured interview was: Describe the typical procedures followed to interact with a student assigned to the DAEP facility for the second or subsequent time after the first time. Please include the typical role you play in implementing restorative justice practices in interacting with the repeat student. The interactions reported by each participant were presented in Table 3.

Without exception all participants acknowledged that they would interact with the re-enrollee utilizing one, some, or all of the following seven approaches: (1) readily recognize the student upon arrival for Orientation; (2) express disappointment; (3) engage in a private, one-on-one conversation with the re-enrollee to determine what happened; then never revisit or mention the offense; (4) raise expectations of compliance and progression up the Rating System restarting at Neutral regardless of the student's rank when he or she withdrew from the last placement; (5) collaborate closely with the student, parent, and staff to develop another contract for agreed upon target behaviors; (6) encourage balance of acknowledgment and accountability for the mistake that brought the student back; and (7) collaboratively with DAEP and home campus staff, explore indications of the root cause of the negative behavior. The various interactions reported by each participant with re-enrollees were presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Staff Interactions with Re-Enrollees*

Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
Maryland, HA Administrative Assistant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="626 443 1320 548">1. Readily recognize the student and parent at re-enrollment Orientation.</li> <li data-bbox="626 594 1386 842">2. Engage in private conversations to purposefully gather detailed information from student and parent to determine the challenges and/or changes in the student's life that might attribute to the behavior that led to the offense warranting DAEP re-enrollment.</li> </ol>

Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
<p>Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Depend more upon the re-enrollee to promote positive peer culture.</li> <li>2. Raise expectations of compliance and progression up the Rating System restarting at Neutral, regardless of the student's rank when he/she withdrew from the previous DAEP placement.</li> <li>3. Engage in more private conversations with the student to purposefully gather information about the root cause of the behavior that led to the offense that warranted DAEP re-enrollment.</li> <li>4. Readily recognize the student and parent at re-enrollment Orientation.</li> <li>5. Engage in private conversations to purposefully gather detailed information from student and parent to determine the challenges and/or changes in the student's life that might attribute to the behavior that led to the offense warranting DAEP re-enrollment.</li> </ol>
<p>Georgia, HA Middle School ELAR &amp; Science Teacher</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Avoid focus on the offense that warranted re-enrollment.</li> <li>2. Engage in more private conversations with the student to purposefully gather information about the root cause of the behavior that led to the offense that warranted DAEP re-enrollment.</li> <li>3. Encourage balance of acknowledgement of the mistake and accountability for any harm that the mistake caused.</li> </ol>

Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs	<p>1. Collaborate with DAEP staff and home campus staff to focus on determining the root cause of the behavior that led to DAEP re-enrollment.</p>
Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader	<p>1. Readily recognize the student and parent at re-enrollment Orientation.</p> <p>2. Because the strategies utilized in the Individualized Behavior Plan developed at the previous DAEP placement were not successful, collaborate with the student and parent to develop and try different strategies.</p> <p>3. Raise expectations of compliance and progression up the Rating System restarting at Neutral, regardless of the student's rank when he/she withdrew from the previous DAEP placement.</p> <p>4. Engage in private conversations to purposefully gather detailed information from student and parent to determine the challenges and/or changes in the student's life that might attribute to the behavior that led to the offense warranting DAEP re-enrollment.</p>

Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="626 300 1317 401">1. Readily recognize the student and parent at re-enrollment Orientation.</li> <li data-bbox="626 447 1341 548">2. Express intense disappointment in much the same way as a family member would.</li> <li data-bbox="626 594 1406 842">3. Support the student in developing a student-focused and student-driven Individualized Behavior Plan to address the root cause of the behavior, keeping in mind that the first one did not work and reasons why it did not work.</li> <li data-bbox="626 888 1398 1062">4. Raise expectations of compliance and progression up the Rating System restarting at Neutral, regardless of the student's rank when he/she withdrew from the previous DAEP placement.</li> <li data-bbox="626 1108 1382 1209">5. Interact with re-enrollees with few words to encourage detailed explanations and descriptions from the student.</li> <li data-bbox="626 1255 1382 1499">6. Engage in private conversations to purposefully gather detailed information from student and parent to determine the challenges and/or changes in the student's life that might attribute to the behavior that led to the offense warranting DAEP re-enrollment.</li> </ol>

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Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
New Jersey, HA Administrator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="626 300 1317 401">1. Readily recognize the student and parent at re-enrollment Orientation.</li><li data-bbox="626 447 1341 548">2. Express intense disappointment in much the same way as a family member would.</li><li data-bbox="626 594 1406 842">3. Support the student in developing a student-focused and student-driven Individualized Behavior Plan to address the root cause of the behavior, keeping in mind that the first one did not work and reasons why it did not work.</li><li data-bbox="626 888 1406 1060">4. Raise expectations of compliance and progression up the Rating System restarting at Neutral, regardless of the student's rank when he/she withdrew from the previous DAEP placement.</li></ol>

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Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="626 300 1406 478">1. Collaborate with DAEP staff and home campus staff to focus on determining the root cause of the behavior that led to DAEP re-enrollment.</li><li data-bbox="626 520 1406 699">2. Engage in deep, meaningful conversations with the student and parent to purposefully gather information about the root cause of the behavior that led to the offense that warranted DAEP re-enrollment.</li></ol> <p data-bbox="626 741 1406 846">The intended outcome of the conversations would be to gather as much information as possible from the youth in order to determine:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="626 888 1000 919">a) Why is the student returning?</li><li data-bbox="626 961 1268 993">b) What opportunities did the home campus staff miss?</li><li data-bbox="626 1035 1390 1134">c) What is the student getting at the DAEP that they like, want, or perceive that they need?</li></ol>

Participant, Role	Interactions with Re-Enrollees
South Carolina, KES Regional Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in one deep, meaningful, private conversation with the student to regarding the details of the offense that warranted DAEP re-enrollment (because the offense is in the past).</li> <li>2. Avoid focus on the offense that warranted re-enrollment, after the initial deep, meaningful, private conversation about it.</li> <li>3. Express intense disappointment in much the same way as a family member would.</li> <li>4. Immediately begin RP to begin the building process.</li> <li>5. Raise expectations of compliance and progression up the Rating System restarting at Neutral, regardless of the student's rank when he/she withdrew from the previous DAEP placement.</li> </ol>

### **Differences in students who re-enroll in DAEP and those who do not.**

Question number nine of the semi-structured interview was: Describe the difference(s) that you have observed in students who have recidivated/re-enrolled and those who have not. The differences reported by each participant were presented in Table 4. Collective data from participant responses was centered on six commonalities among re-enrollees. Re-enrollees: (1) had less confidence in their ability to succeed; (2) expressed a perception or feeling of being bullied or railroaded by home campus administrators; (3) had a lengthy behavior incident history; (4) did not respect, accept, or embrace the restorative process presented by the DAEP; (5) engaged in a cyclical progression-regression movement through the restorative process throughout the first placement; and

(6) parents were either disengaged in the restorative process or found their student's DAEP placement to be more convenient than home school attendance with the initial DAEP placement.

Table 4

*Differences in Students Who Re-Enroll in DAEP and Those Who Do Not*

Participant, Role	Differences in Re-Enrollees
Maryland, HA Administrative Assistant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-enrollees tend to embrace the ideals of “street justice,” including high emphasis on retaliation and severe consequences for “snitching”—informing the authorities on someone.</li> </ol>
Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-enrollees tend not to accept the building process.</li> <li>2. Those who cyclically progress-regress-progress-regress just enough to meet the minimal expectations of the 45-day placement tend to be more prone to re-enrollment.</li> </ol>
Georgia, HA Middle School ELAR & Science Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-enrollees tend to have lower expectations and confidence of success at the home campus.</li> <li>2. Re-enrollees tend to feel bullied or railroaded by home campus administrators.</li> </ol>
New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-enrollees tend to have a lengthy history of disciplinary action in school, as well as involvement with law enforcement and the legal system.</li> </ol>

Participant, Role	Differences in Re-Enrollees
<p>Pennsylvania, HA Middle School Team Leader</p>	<p>1. Parents of re-enrollees tend to find the DAEP culture and procedures more convenient for the parent; whereas, parents of non-repeaters make it clear to their student that the inconvenience of the DAEP procedures is unacceptable.</p>
<p>Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader</p>	<p>1. Re-enrollees tend to have a “dimmer light of motivation.” The intrinsic light of motivation is generally none existent with only a glimmer of extrinsic light of motivation.</p>
<p>New Jersey, HA Administrator</p>	<p>1. Re-enrollees tend to have an unaddressed need that remains unsupported throughout the initial DAEP placement and requires deeper restorative work.</p> <p>2. Re-enrollees tend to have a dysfunctional or tenuously stable parental relationship.</p>
<p>Delaware, GMS Behavior Specialist</p>	<p>1. Re-enrollees tend to be lower performing academically.</p> <p>2. Re-enrollees tend to have an unrecognized/unaddressed impairment that manifests in negative behaviors.</p>
<p>South Carolina, KES Regional Director</p>	<p>1. Re-enrollees tend to be less mature.</p> <p>2. Re-enrollees tend to have less parental advocacy that educators respect.</p> <p>3. Re-enrollees tend to have more difficulty with the adolescent stage of development, identity vs role confusion corresponding with Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development.</p>

Participant, Role	Differences in Re-Enrollees
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*Note. All differences reported are tendencies observed in students during the first DAEP placement who later re-enrolled.*

**RP internal tracking protocols.** Question number ten was: Describe how the DAEP tracks which and to what degree RP is taking place. The participants provided consistent, often identical data indicating that tracking of all aspects of a student's contract from enrollment and Orientation to withdrawal and transition back to the home campus was required by KES which periodically conducted internal audits of student records. The HA Transition Liaison was the HA staff member who was tasked with collecting, maintaining, storing, and reporting tracked RP data relating to every HA student.

In a weekly team meeting the status and progress of every HA student was covered. Every HA student was assigned to three teachers. The team, led by the Middle School or High School Team Leader, consisted of the three middle school or high school teachers, Middle School or High School Team Leader, Middle School or High School Team Behavior Specialist, and Transition Liaison. At the weekly team meeting, every student was individually discussed regarding rating status, academic progress, and behavioral progress. The team specifically noted techniques and strategies that were effective or ineffective and discussed changes that may or may not be necessary for the student's contracted personalized behavior plan goals to be met within the length of

DAEP placement. The Transition Liaison was ultimately responsible for maintaining an up-to-date record of the team meetings with the tracking data for each student.

### **Key Findings of the Study**

Analysis of the massive amount of data gleaned from the interviews of nine participants who worked in or closely with a DAEP setting in an urban school district in southeast Texas revealed several key findings regarding DAEP placement and recidivism. Because the participants' use of RP in their interactions with students in DAEP placement was driven and informed by their understanding of RP, a clear description of the findings began with a description of how the participants understood RP. The lived experiences reported by the nine individuals who participated in this study revealed that the daily practices which they regularly employed were informed and driven by their understanding of the principles of RP. The nine participants articulated that their understanding of the nature of RP was atoning, reconciliatory, safe, resolving, restorative, and pro-social skills building.

Based upon the participants' understanding of RP, correlates could be drawn to organizational Typology of Compliance Theory in the way that the participants employed several of the themed practices as strategies to develop and maintain a normative and remunerative power structure within the DAEP. Through data analysis, I found that the themed practices participants employed were described by the following emergent themes, along with their emergent sub-themes: 1) RP Embedded in DAEP Daily Activities; 2) Specific Behavior Management Practices; 3) RP Targets; 4) Contributing Factors to DAEP Team Efficacy; 5) RP Tools Routinely Used by DAEP Staff; and 6) Building Rapport.

Furthermore, through data analysis, I found that according to participant perceptions, the correlating normative and remunerative power structure contributed to the restoration and development of pro-social skills in students during the DAEP placement. According to participants, if the RP strategies utilized by the DAEP staff were adequate to meet the individual student needs, and then DAEP re-enrollment was not necessary; thereby, contributing to the reduction of recidivism. If the RP strategies were inadequate to address the needs of the student, then recidivism was imminent.

Although DAEP staff were reluctant to blame the home campus for DAEP recidivism, they shared concrete ideas to support DAEP best practices and to help further reduce DAEP recidivism. Through data analysis, I found that the recidivism reduction ideas were described by the following emergent themes, along with their corresponding emergent sub-themes: 1) Home Campus Issues; 2) Poor Districtwide RP Usage; and Participant Recommended Changes to DAEP Procedures and Protocols which were fully described in Table 2.

Among the final key findings were DAEP staff were acutely aware of a perceived societal tendency to identify the failed work of DAEP placement with the School-to-Prison-Pipeline. Therefore, participants articulated particular disdain for prison terminology (i.e., recidivism, commit offense(s), do the time, rules, and metal detector search). Instead, participants articulated their preference for normative language that removed prison terminology from the language of DAEP staff and students. Through data analysis, I found that participants routinely referred to: recidivism as re-enrollment; commit offense as made a mistake; do the time as placement period; rules as norms; metal detector search as Check.

## Summary

The first major section of Chapter IV introduced the chapter. Then, the data drawn from the Demographic Questionnaire completed by participants were reported in subheading two of Chapter IV, Participant Characteristics; the data derived from responses to questions one through six of the semi-structured, virtual interview were reported in subheading three of Chapter IV, Emergent Themes and Sub-themes; and data extracted from responses to questions seven through 10 and the additional comments made by the participants were reported in subheading four of Chapter IV, Emergent Conceptualized Ideas.

Chapter V featured an: Introduction, Summary of the Study; Discussion of the Findings; Implications for Practice; Recommendations for Future Research; and Conclusions. In the Summary of the Study section, I provided: a brief overview of the problem and purpose of the study; the theoretical framework; research question; methodology; and findings. In the Discussion of the Findings section, I evaluated the meaning of the results couched within the theoretical framework and research gaps discovered in the review of the literature. In the Implications for Practice section, I suggested how the findings of this study might be applied to the practice of education, particularly school counseling and behavior management. In the Recommendations for Future Research, I not only pointed out ideas for future topics of research related to RP, DAEP practices, education, and school counseling; but also ways in which the study could be broadened and made more meaningful. Finally, in the Conclusions section, I elucidated the extent to which the research question was answered.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

#### Introduction

This qualitative case study intended to investigate and describe the unique, lived experiences of DAEP staff members who teach and interact with students assigned and reassigned to DAEP placements in a DAEP site which employed restorative justice practices in an urban school district in southeast Texas. The discussion of the results which follows was intended to respond to the single research question of the case study: What are the lived experiences of educational professionals working in DAEP settings who are implementing restorative justice practices for students placed in a DAEP?

The purpose of this study was to describe how DAEP staff members, interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEPs for additional placements. The purpose was achieved by examining the data gathered from virtual interviews with nine DAEP staff at Hope Academy (HA) regarding their interactions with scholars assigned and reassigned to HA, a DAEP facility in an urban school district in southeast Texas, Kidd Hope ISD (KHISD).

Chapter V presented: a summary of the study; discussion of the findings and conclusions; implications for practice; and recommendations for further research. Ultimately, Chapter V aimed to make sense of the emergent themes and to “examine the extent to which the data answered” the research question (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 229).

## Summary of the Study

Because the current DAEP model in Texas neither provided for the means, nor the method by which student misbehavior was to be remediated, the need of students placed in DAEP for learning appropriate behaviors remained largely unaddressed. Thus, it was the social-emotional/personal-social learning component of education that was lacking in most DAEP settings in Texas. In short, too many students who successfully completed their assigned time in a DAEP setting returned to their home school setting still lacking adequate behavior skills to facilitate success in the regular classroom setting (Cortez & Cortez, 2009; Garba, 2011; Texas Appleseed, 2008; TEA, 2016d; Turner, 2010). If the old, unsuccessful behaviors were not addressed and changed while in the DAEP setting, students were likely to be placed in DAEP again; thereby creating a cycle of DAEP recidivism without behavior remediation or rehabilitation. Thus, the purpose of this study was to describe how DAEP staff members, interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEPs for additional placements.

This case study of how DAEP staff members interacted with students placed in DAEP settings in ways that resulted in the students not returning to DAEP for additional placements was grounded in the conceptual framework of organizational typology and the theoretical framework of Compliance Theory, both offered by Amitai Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997). Although the Compliance Theory was originated by Etzioni over 50 years ago, it had sustained its relevance, especially with regard to educational organizations as demonstrated by its citation in numerous studies as recent as 2012 (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, 2008; Chance, 2009; Champoux, 2011; Coleman, 2002; Lunenburg, 1983;

Lunenburg, 1984; Lunenburg, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas, Kreps, & Cage, 1977).

One central research question was relevant to this case study. Therefore, I employed the following research question to describe the unique, lived experiences of DAEP staff members who teach and interact with students assigned and reassigned to DAEP placements which employed restorative justice practices in an urban school district in southeast Texas:

- (1) What are the lived experiences of educational professionals working in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program settings who are implementing restorative justice practices for students placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program?

This qualitative study utilized the case study as the methodological approach. It was customary in qualitative to practice bracketing to minimize the insertion of researcher bias. By bracketing, my Dissertation Committee and I suspended all judgments in an effort to focus on how my participants experienced the phenomenon of RP implementation in DAEP placements by utilizing bracketing or epoché. Success at bracketing essentially minimized the influence of researcher biases and preconceptions to ensure openness to results that the researcher could not predict because they laid outside the researcher's realm of experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of my research work with this case study, I utilized the following validation strategies: (1) peer reviewer; (2) member checking; (3) rich data; and (4) quasi-statistics (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005). Ideally, for qualitative research, it would be the intention of the primary researcher to engage in

face-to-face contact in order to include an additional layer of data involving: primary researcher observation of participant interactions with students in the DAEP facility, as well as the DAEP environment itself. However, at the time of the study, the COVID-19 Pandemic Texas school closure, social distancing protocols, and prudence necessitated a change from primary researcher visits to the DAEP site to facilitate the face-to-face interview protocol to a virtual interview protocol with DAEP staff working from home to interact with DAEP students engaged in distance learning. Thus, the primary researcher was unable to enter the DAEP for the interviews to collect observational data relating to DAEP staff interactions with DAEP students. All observational data was collected during the virtual interview, as I observed each participant non-verbal cues throughout the virtual interview.

No participants were contacted prior to Sam Houston State University IRB, school district ERRC, and DAEP alternative education service provider approval of the research study. Upon IRB, ERRC, and DAEP service provider approval, the potential participants, selected via criterion and purposeful sampling, were contacted via Recruitment Email, presented in Appendix D, to determine interest. Once the nine individuals confirmed interest by reaching out to me, I scheduled the Google Hangouts video conference at the same time that I electronically provided them with the Informed Consent and Demographic Questionnaire, presented in Appendix C and Appendix A, respectively. Each participant was asked to complete and transmit and electronically transmit the Demographic Questionnaire to me before or shortly after the virtual interview. Each of the nine participant's recorded virtual interview was transcribed verbatim, removing only the following verbal pauses: um; uh; ah; and you know. In

order to ensure accurate transcription, the participants were afforded the opportunity to engage in member checking which allowed them to review their responses, scanning for inaccuracies, unclear statements, and indications that might reveal their identity.

For the purposes of this case study, in order to protect privacy, minimize identifiability, and to ensure confidentiality, all participants self-designated a pseudonym to which to be referred. However, due to the small sample size, the participant self-selected pseudonyms still seemed too identifiable. Therefore, at the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee Members, the primary researcher designated participant pseudonyms in order of interview occurrence as names of U.S. states in order of entry into the Union. In other words, the first participant to be interviewed was given the pseudonym of the first state to join the United States Union, Delaware. The ninth participant interviewed was given the pseudonym of the ninth state to join the United States Union, New Hampshire. Accordingly, the second through eighth participants interviewed were given pseudonyms of the second through eighth states to join the Union. Additionally, the home campus, school district, DAEP educational service company, and DAEP facility were referred to in general terms or by an assigned pseudonym. Goode Middle School (GMS) referred to the home campus. Kidd Hope Independent School District (KHISD) referred to the school district served by the DAEP. Kidd Educational Services (KES) referred to the educational service company which served the DAEP and contracted with the school district to provide DAEP services; thereby, making the DAEP staff, employees of the DAEP educational service company, not the school district. Hope Academy (HA) referred to the DAEP facility.

From data analysis utilizing the eight-step strategy of Lunenburg and Irby (2008), nine themes emerged which I reported in Chapter IV. I presented the Code Book listing the nine emergent themes and 40 sub-themes gleaned from the nine participant interviews in Appendix E.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

According to the exhaustive search featured in Chapter II, the Review of Literature, alarmingly few studies of DAEP best practices had been conducted. Among the few studies that focused exclusively on DAEPs, only four in the last 20 years were statewide in focus with three being Texas-specific. The paucity of research focusing specifically on RP related to DAEP re-enrollment is even more shocking. Nonetheless, the goal of this case study was to investigate and describe the unique, lived experiences of DAEP staff members who teach and interact with students assigned and reassigned to DAEP placements in a DAEP site which employs restorative justice practices in an urban school district in southeast Texas. This section discussed the implications of the findings detailed in Chapter IV to the research question.

**Research question.** One central research question was relevant to this case study. The one research question relevant to this case study was: What are the lived experiences of educational professionals working in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program settings who are implementing restorative justice practices for students placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program?

**Theoretical framework—Compliance Theory.** This case study was grounded in the conceptual framework of organizational typology and the theoretical framework of Compliance Theory, both offered by Amitai Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997). According to

Compliance Theory, schools could “be classified by the type of power they use to direct the behavior of their members and the type of involvement of the participants”

(Lunenburg, 2012, p. 4). However, when school officials used types of power which were inappropriate for the school environment, the practice resulted in a reduction in the effectiveness of the school as measured by the existence of an adverse school climate, as well as escalated student misbehavior and disruptions to the learning environment (Lunenburg, 2012). Thus, Compliance Theory attended “both to a relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor’s power and to the orientation of the subordinated actor to the power applied” (Etzioni, 1975, p. 3).

Coercive power was the power exerted by applying physical sanctions, (i.e., detention, suspension, and expulsion). At the home campus, coercive power might be considered: the assignment of ISS/OSS; lunch detention; before and after school detention; DAEP placement; or expulsion for student discipline infractions (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

Remunerative power was described by the power exerted by the use of material rewards, (i.e., salaries, bonuses, or fringe benefits). At the home campus or DAEP, remunerative power may be treats (i.e., field trips, social functions, pizza, ice cream, popcorn, etc. parties) given as rewards, incentives, or positive reinforcers for good behavior (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

Normative power was described as employing symbolic rewards or sanctions, (i.e., recommendations, commendations, honors, or grades). At the DAEP or home

campus, normative power may be implementation of behavior supports, RP, RtI, or conduct grades on report cards and progress reports (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

According to Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997), each type of power was typically met with a specific reaction. The three reactions were characterized by varying intensity levels along a continuum of involvement ranging from intensely positive to intensely negative. On the intensely positive end of the reaction spectrum was commitment. Along the spectrum midline was calculation--either a mildly negative or mildly positive reaction. Finally, alienation was an intensely negative reaction to power exertions by educators.

Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) and Lunenburg (2012) posited that each type of power was typically most congruent with a specific reaction type. Coercive power exertion tended to be met with the reaction of alienation. Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) further characterized organizations that primarily utilized threats or applied physical sanctions as a means of controlling members as coercive organizations. Remunerative power usage generally resulted in the reaction of calculation. An organization primarily using remunerative power was classified as a utilitarian organization. Commitment was the reaction most commonly associated with the predominant use of normative power. Likewise, Etzioni (1961, 1975, 1997) classified organizations which chiefly utilized normative power as normative organizations.

**Alignment of theoretical framework and prior research with findings of this study.** Compliance Theory classified organizations by the type of power the organization used to direct the behavior of its members and the type of involvement of the

organization's members. Typology of organization power and member involvement was characterized in three predictable combinations: (a) coercive-alienative; (b) normative-calculative; and (c) remunerative-commitment.

Applying the concepts of Compliance Theory to the emergent themes that data analysis revealed aligned well with what the participants reported as their lived experiences. The following seven emergent themes were most consistently favorably reported among DAEP staff experiences in their interactions with DAEP students: (1) RP Embedded in DAEP Daily Activities; (2) Specific Behavior Management Practices; (3) RP Targets; (4) Contributing Factors to DAEP Team Efficacy; (5) RP Tools Routinely Used by DAEP Staff; (6) Disdain for Prison Terminology Referenced in Connection with DAEP; and (7) Building Rapport. These seven themes strongly aligned with the remunerative and normative organizational power typology of Compliance Theory. The student reactions associated with remunerative and normative organizational power typology were commitment and calculative, which were positive and desirable student reactions that were most conducive to building and maintaining positive school culture. In addition, the themes were supportive of the restorative, rebuilding, and reconciliatory goal of the DAEP. The seven positive and desirable themes that emerged were also among the DAEP best practices identified by researchers discovered in my exhaustive review of literature focused on statewide DAEP studies (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; TEA, 2007; Tennessee SBOE, 2005, revised).

Conversely, the following were emergent themes unfavorably reported by DAEP staff experience in their interactions with DAEP students: (1) Home Campus Issues; and (2) Poor Districtwide RP Usage. Connecticut, HA Academic Coordinator stated, "...with

the huge populations of kids on KHISD secondary [home] campuses—hundreds, even thousands--there's so much that staff have to contend with.” Participants cited several issues common to the home campus that prevent or make it difficult to implement RP in the same manner or with the same consistency as the DAEP. Chief among those issues were the substantially larger size of the home campuses and poor saturation of RP implementation across the district. These two emergent themes were primarily occurring or not occurring at the home campus and reportedly had an adverse effect on student behavior, which was in alignment with the theoretical ungirding of Compliance Theory. These two themes strongly aligned with the coercive organizational power typology of Compliance Theory. The reaction associated with the use of coercive organizational power was alienative, a negative and undesirable reaction that most negatively impacted school culture. Furthermore, the themes reportedly contributed to circumstances leading to DAEP re-enrollment. In addition, these particular themes were not identified among DAEP best practices identified by researchers discovered in my exhaustive review of literature focused on statewide DAEP studies (AIMS, 2001; Coleman, 2002; McCreight, 1999; Moore & King, 2005; TEA, 2007; Tennessee SBOE, 2005, revised). In fact, the themes in these two categories were identified among the practices to avoid doing in order to ensure favorable outcomes with DAEP placement

It should be noted that according to Compliance Theory, some organizations combined two or all three power-involvement types. However, the use of an inappropriate power type for the environment of a school organization reduced organization effectiveness and led to organizational dysfunction of varying degrees

(Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2012; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977).

Summarily, the seven emergent themes participants reported as consistently occurring at HA aligned with Compliance Theory, the theoretical framework of this study, and could be identified as remunerative and normative organizational power types. When school leaders and staff exercised remunerative and normative power tactics (i.e., Ram Lounge, Ram/Exec status, Rating System, happy calls to parents, recognition ceremonies, GGI, Town House) to direct student behavior, the students reacted with commitment and calculative behaviors (i.e., exercised initiative to become Executive/Ram/Pledge, responded favorably to confrontation, contributed to positive peer culture, walk in Protocol). Commitment and calculative behaviors were certainly positive types of behaviors that were conducive to a healthy school culture and climate. The description of the behavior management practices utilized by the DAEP offered by New Jersey, HA Administrator, succinctly illustrated the commitment and calculative reactions of students to the exercise of remunerative and normative power types by DAEP staff:

We have a system and it's...Student Government....Once you progress up this [Rating System] ladder, you become a Pledge and then a Ram,...one of the leaders or potential leaders on our campus....We give them more privileges....They are the tour guides or Ambassadors when we have visitors. They're the student that can speak to the program. They are the ones that are assisting the teachers in the classroom, if there are behavior issues. They're the kids that run errands....They can bring their cell phones. They can wear jewelry.

They wear a different colored shirt. So, they are very proud of moving up this ladder. It's almost like an incentive for them to behave and to perform academically, as well....We have Student Government Meetings every Friday where they get pizza or [some edible treat that is different from what is served in the school cafeteria]. That guides the behavior because not only are you held accountable by the staff, you're held accountable by your peers as well....So your different color shirt identifies you as a leader. You're looked at and held to a different standard. And so, your decision making has to be based on whether or not you want to continue to wear your Ram shirt and be afforded the incentives and privileges of a [Student Government] leader. Or do you want to be considered someone...who has not shown themselves accountable....It governs itself....That's something that our kids are excited about because...traditionally, these are the kids at the home campuses that are in trouble all the time. They're known for the bad decisions that they make. But now, they're being acknowledged for the positives. So, it's refocusing the mindset, which is what our kids become accustomed to and want to continue.

On the other hand, the two emergent themes that HA staff reported as primarily occurring at the home campus aligned with Compliance Theory coercive power tactics. Specifically, when home campus staff exercised those coercive power tactics (i.e., ISS/OSS, detention, and other exclusionary disciplinary practices), the student reaction was alienative (i.e., disengagement, truancy, substantial disruptions, school avoidance, drop-out). The continuation of New Jersey' explanation of HA Student Government succinctly illustrated the student alienative tendency of coercive power tactics:

Because we are the alternative, there's no suspension from us. We can't in-school or out-of-school suspend from DAEP. So, we have to be creative in what we do and how we do it....So, with our kids, even if they're a negative leader, our goal is to focus in on their strengths to turn those negatives into the positive, and then they will shift the culture. And we won't have to do much.

Additionally, according to Compliance Theory, when school officials used an inappropriate power type for the environment, it led to reduced organization effectiveness and dysfunction. When students abruptly transitioned from HA with staff who consistently utilized remunerative and normative power tactics back to the home campus with staff who were consistently exercising coercive power tactics, the entire system experienced dysfunction that often led to DAEP re-enrollment.

Therefore, in practical terms, according to the principles of Compliance Theory DAEP re-enrollment could be reduced or avoided if any number of the emergent themed practices occurred with fidelity regarding the change recommendations that participants articulated as presented on Table 2. Some of those change recommendations included: regular home campus staff visits to DAEP students; home campus staff avoidance of targeting a student with one DAEP placement for DAEP re-enrollment; gradual systematic transition back to home campus; better correlation of norms, structure, and expectations between DAEP and home campus; support group/modified GGI at home campus with DAEP representative; deeper work at DAEP with counseling interventions; mandatory counseling for all DAEP students; more intentional integration of SEL with academics; implement districtwide RP with fidelity; explore other means of engagement/re-engagement at the home campus; explore and provide additional home

supports; and intentionally develop a merger of collaborative communication among DAEP and home campus staff.

Finally, Compliance Theory scholars agreed that the effective implementation of normative and remunerative power in school organizations must be accomplished through collaborative cooperation and consultation (Bulach et al., 2008; Champoux, 2011; Chance, 2009; Lunenburg, 1983, 1984, 2102; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012; Thomas et al., 1977). The data bore out that 8 out of the 18 participant recommendations for DAEP change were collaborative in nature. Therefore, the findings of this study supported and affirmed its theoretical underpinnings. I offered a full presentation of the 18 recommendations, along with their grounding category [collaborative and/or counseling/mental health/Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)] on Table 2.

### **Implications for Practice**

The nine participants of this case study were asked what changes to DAEP practices they would recommend to address the DAEP re-enrollment rate. Of the total of 18 different recommended changes, 12 of them were grounded in counseling, mental health, or SEL supports. In addition, the data revealed that eight out of the 18 participant recommendations for DAEP change were collaborative in nature; and seven of the participant recommendations were both counseling/mental health/SEL and collaborative in nature. I fully presented all 18 of the participant reported change recommendations along with an indication of whether the recommendation was grounded in counseling/mental health/SEL or collaborative strategies on Table 2. All 18 of the recommendations were generated from seasoned professionals who collectively had: nearly 100-years of alternative education experience; nearly 30-years of traditional

education experience; and nearly 50-years of RP implementation experience. Thus, the 18 recommendations of DAEP seasoned professionals held firm and well-founded implications for future practice.

This study held far-reaching implications for Professional School Counselors, as well as those education professionals specializing in student support. Each of the 12 counseling-, mental health-, and SEL-rooted DAEP change recommendations could easily be put into practice with significantly impactful outcomes for all students and the school culture as a whole. Ultimately, according to the ASCA National Model, Professional School Counselors were tasked with providing direct services to every student, not just the ones who showed up in the counseling suite.

As was indicated in Chapter I, the Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model neither suggested nor eliminated any substantive content. However, in keeping with the substantial change in the educational environment, authors of the ASCA National Model, Fourth Edition, substantially changed the language from that of the Third Edition to reflect the current state of affairs in the education discipline. The Fourth Edition changed the names of the components from nouns--Foundation, Management, Delivery, and Accountability, to verbs--Define, Manage, Deliver, and Assess. The change to verbs, action words, was meant to be representative of the operational shift to the tasks that School Counselors did to support systemic change in student outcomes (ASCA, 2019b).

Furthermore, the Fourth Edition was written based upon a review of the literature that recognized that content knowledge and academic skills was only a portion of the factors necessary for student success. The other portion of student success factors were non-cognitive, social-emotional factors. In short, the Fourth Edition changes coalesced

into a laser focus on two concepts: (a) the importance of the non-cognitive factors necessary for student success; and (b) the role of the professional school counselor to support the acquisition and development of the non-cognitive factors which determined and were related to student success (ASCA, 2019a & 2019b). Thus, the Fourth Edition of the ASCA National Model strongly affirmed that attending to students' social-emotional development remained among professional school counselors' top responsibilities (ASCA, 2019a & 2019b). Likewise, findings from this study implied that the implementation of any number of the 12 participant recommended counseling-, mental health-, SEL-grounded strategies presented in Table 2 could significantly impact the efficacy of the practice of professional school counseling when implemented in accordance with delivery of a proactive, comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. With the affirmation and support of the latest edition of the ASCA National Model, the necessary resources, Professional School Counselors, are already in place in schools. Therefore, no additional expense or resources would be necessary to effect a significant change in programmatic efficacy in the reduction of DAEP re-enrollment or recidivism. However, the utilization of the professional school counselors as transformative resources for student social-emotional development would have to be purposeful and intentional beginning first with administrators recognizing that the specialized training and focus of professional school counselors can best be harnessed in attending to the social-emotional development of all students.

New Jersey, HA Administrator, was the third participant interviewed and the first to express her discomfort with and disdain for the use of prison terminology in

connection with DAEPs. Once I finished verbalizing question number seven which included the word ‘recidivism,’ New Jersey said:

Can I say this really quick? That word ‘recidivism,’ it bothers me. And...I know these are your interview questions, but the reason I say that it bothers me is because it kind of gives a negative connotation, because they use that wording in the prison system. And so, one thing that I am big on when I'm talking to parents, administrators, and different district liaisons, we try to steer away from that prison terminology or anything that could reference the School-to-Prison Pipeline, because we're really there to help. Everything connected to the penal system is exactly that—a penalty—a form of punishment. And we're not about any form of punishment. So, I want to say, ‘re-enrollment’ instead of ‘recidivism.’

Although with every interview following New Jersey’, I was careful to say, ‘re-enrollment’ instead of ‘recidivism,’ Massachusetts, HA High School Team Leader expressed the following early in his interview:

And, the other thing with our reconciliation or restorative justice, even though we...Everything that we do leads up to restorative justice, we don't use those terminologies. We try not to use any terminologies of the judicial system. So, as we look at recidivism, we don't use the word ‘recidivism.’ You know, we might use, [the term,] ‘re-enrollment’, because some of our students have been in that type of confinement and in that situation. And so, we want to broaden their mind. We want to get them thinking something different. So we're going to talk about success. Our mission statement [is:] “To change lives by empowering students to take ownership and leadership of their pathway to success.”

When New Jersey, HA Administrator, so genuinely and judiciously presented her argument, I, as a Professional School Counselor, whose dissertation title contained the word ‘recidivism,’ was immediately convicted, ashamed, and enlightened. I had the overwhelming feeling that my Professional School Counselor self should have known better. I felt an overwhelming urge to change my dissertation title so that I would not have to continue to live my shame. Of course, I could not change my dissertation title. But, I could certainly change my view to be far more cognizant of my language, as well as the connotative language that I received and accepted. I knew that language was not just a way to express thoughts. Theoretically, language influenced and could even determine thoughts. Moreover, thoughts could influence attitudes which could, in turn, determine behaviors. Thanks to my participants, I was reminded that we all can be more intentional about guarding our thoughts from flippant, careless language. We can do better. In that respect, this study held implications for individuals’ personal practice of language censoring, as well as advocacy for the thoughtful language censoring by whole professional learning communities. The findings from this study implied that professional learning communities should practice more purposeful and thoughtful language usage in connection with DAEPs. If it is truly the desire of education professionals to plug the school to prison pipeline, perhaps the effort needs to begin with ridding education of penal system connotative language and replacing it with more empathic, encouraging, and restorative language. The Fourth Edition changes to the ASCA National Model are indicative of Professional School Counselors’ fitness to the task of replacing penal system connotative language with empathic, encouraging, and

restorative language. Professional School Counselors are uniquely qualified by their training and mindset to be the industry leaders in transforming language.

With regard to Professional School Counselors, the concept that language led to thoughts, which then led to attitudes, which led to action, the four components of the ASCA Model Fourth Edition Professional School Counselors has now changed to verbs which were action words that guided our practice and should guide our attitudes. We must definitely guard our actions and school counseling practice from negative influences of inappropriately charged language. Therefore, since the findings from this study implied that professional learning communities practiced more purposeful and thoughtful language usage in connection with DAEPs, perhaps Professional School Counselors must lead the charge of plugging the School-to-Prison Pipeline by embracing and advocating ridding education of penal system connotative language and replace it with more empathic, encouraging, and restorative language.

Based upon findings from this study, the academic and paraprofessional DAEP staff was not able to identify the concept of restorative justice practices by name; yet, upon being provided with a general definition of RP, they were able to articulate the specific practices utilized by DAEP staff that related to RP. To address this, there needed to be more intentional and formal professional development to move all staff who interacted with DAEP students to the same page as related to connecting restorative practices to rationale and positive behavior outcomes.

Finally, New Hampshire, KHISD Director of Student Affairs, indicated that districtwide RP implementation “is not where it needs to be.” There needed to be more

purposeful districtwide professional development to ensure staff training, monitoring, and tracking in order that RP implementation moved to “where it needs to be” in KHISD.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings from this study and elements from available research, further research is needed to investigate what impact RP may have on school climate in a school district with varying degrees of RP integration and implementation fidelity. Since this case study focused on RP implementation in a DAEP setting and not only did a district Director articulate the importance of districtwide RP implementation, there needs to be further longitudinal research on the impact of RP on school climate and culture in school districts and individual schools with varying saturations of RP training and implementation.

As COVID-19 social distancing protocols prevented my visit to the DAEP site, the opportunity to gather substantive observational data was eliminated. Additional research is necessary, when community conditions are safe to do so, to obtain observational data to further triangulate and validate the findings of this study.

When community conditions are safe to do so, a replication of this study substantially expanding the number of cases and participants is recommended. Expanding the number of cases would substantially broaden the transferability of the findings beyond an urban school district in southeast Texas. Greater transferability would also inform practice and have a greater impact on filling the research gap with regard to DAEP best practices and the impact RP implementation and school counseling interventions on student behavioral concerns.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study supported and expanded the research work of previous researchers who explored best practices of successful DAEPs. This exploration revealed that seven of the nine emergent themes were consistent with best practices of successful DAEPs identified by previous researchers. This exploration expanded previous research work in that it specifically identified themes, sub-themes, and categories with which to build successful DAEP practices. The emergent themes, sub-themes, and categories were succinctly displayed in the Code Book in Appendix E.

The findings of this study supported and affirmed its theoretical underpinnings. Specifically, implementation of the specific normative and remunerative power types described by the participants in the emergent themes, sub-themes, and categories which were succinctly displayed in the Code Book in Appendix E, could potentially positively transform school climate. The theoretical underpinnings confirm the potential of extension of the impact to any school climate, be it alternative or traditional.

Furthermore, implementation of the specific normative and remunerative power types described by the participants in the emergent themes, sub-themes, and categories (Appendix E Code Book) at traditional schools could potentially significantly reduce, and even eliminate the need for DAEP re-enrollment because students, performing with commitment or with calculative reactions would find fulfillment of the needs that drive the functions of negative behaviors at the home campus without having to resort to engagement in negative behaviors that previously resulted in DAEP placement.

As a previous section pointed out, the ASCA National Model charged professional school counselors with supporting the social-emotional growth,

development, and success of all students (ASCA, 2019a, 2019b, 2012). The public school need for DAEP placement was driven by problematic behavior displayed by students, which spoke to the inadequate social-emotional development of those students with behavioral challenges. As such, DAEP placement recidivism certainly spoke to the inadequate social-emotional support of students with behavioral challenges. Thus, concern for effective interventions to reduce DAEP placement and recidivism fell well within the realm of professional school counseling and the role of the professional school counselor. Findings from this study implied that the implementation of any number of the 12 participant-recommended counseling-, mental health-, SEL-grounded strategies presented in Table 2 could significantly impact the efficacy of the practice of professional school counseling when implemented in accordance with delivery of a proactive, comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. Therefore, implementation of the 12 participant-recommended counseling-, mental health-, SEL-grounded strategies could have a dual-faceted impact— (1) to effectively narrow or even close the gap identified in best practices of successful DAEPs and (2) fulfill the ASCA recommendation of the role of the professional school counselor organized around the broad domain to promote the social-emotional mindsets and behaviors of all students (ASCA, 2019a, 2019b, 2012).

In conclusion, as supported in the preceding sections, the findings of this study accomplished three lofty goals of quality research. First, the findings of this study accomplished the goal of addressing the central research question. Secondly, the findings of this study supported and affirmed its theoretical underpinnings. Thirdly, the findings

of this study supported and expanded the research work of previous researchers who explored best practices of successful DAEPs.

### **Summary**

In Chapter V, I presented: a summary of the study; discussion of the findings; implications for practice; recommendations for further research; and conclusions. Ultimately, with Chapter V, I aimed to make sense of the emergent themes and “examine the extent to which the data answered” the research question (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 229). Accomplishing the goals of quality research, not only did I sufficiently address the central research question; but, I aligned the findings of the study with the theoretical underpinnings and previous research. I also drew strong conclusions and implications from the findings of the emergent themes to professional school counselor practice, as well as future research study recommendations.

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## APPENDIX A

### Demographic Questionnaire

In the space provided, please provide your response as candidly as possible. The primary researcher will be available to provide clarity, if necessary.

- (1) For the purposes of this case study, to protect your identity, by what pseudonym do you wish to be referred?
  - (2) By what gender do you identify?
  - (3) By what ethnicity and race do you identify?
  - (4) What is your highest degree earned?
  - (5) What is your role/position at this Disciplinary Alternative Education Program facility?
  - (6) What are your responsibilities in this role/position?
  - (7) How many years of experience in any Disciplinary Alternative Education Program setting? This Disciplinary Alternative Education Program setting?
  - (8) How many years of experience in a traditional school setting?
  - (9) How many years of experience in an alternative setting?
  - (10) Provide examples of types of alternative settings in which you have worked, if applicable.
  - (11) How many years of experience implementing restorative justice practices?
  - (12) Describe your understanding of restorative justice practices.
-

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Protocol: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- (1) Describe the procedure for working with students assigned to the DAEP.
- (2) How are restorative practices (RP) implemented with DAEP students?
- (3) Describe what it is like working with DAEP students from differing cultural backgrounds.
- (4) Describe the behavior management practices you use when working with DAEP students.
- (5) Describe the discipline practices you use when working with DAEP students.
- (6) Describe the practices you use when working with DAEP students.
- (7) If you could implement any change(s) you desired to help the DAEP students learn appropriate behaviors to avoid recidivism, what would the change(s) be?
- (8) Describe the typical procedures followed to interact with a student assigned to the DAEP facility for the second or subsequent time after the first time. Please include the typical role you play in implementing restorative justice practices in interacting with the repeat student.
- (9) Describe the difference(s) that you have observed in students who have recidivated and those who have not.
- (10) Describe how the DAEP tracks which and to what degree restorative justice practice implementation is taking place.

**APPENDIX C****INFORMED CONSENT****INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT****for Doctoral Study Approved by Kidd Hope ISD External Research Review  
Committee (ERRC):*****RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE REDUCTION OF DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND RECIDIVISM***

**Institution:** Sam Houston State University

**Department:** Counselor Education Doctoral Program

**Principal Investigator:** Chandra V. Johnson-Pearson, MA, NCC

[Chandrajp@springisd.org](mailto:Chandrajp@springisd.org) or [cvj001@shsu.edu](mailto:cvj001@shsu.edu) or (713)256-8484

**Advisor:** Richard Henriksen, Jr., PhD

[RCH008@shsu.edu](mailto:RCH008@shsu.edu) or (936)294-1209

Greetings Esteemed Colleague,

My name is Chandra V. Johnson-Pearson, a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department at Sam Houston State University hoping to complete my dissertation in August of 2020. I am conducting a study under the direction of Dr. Richard Henriksen, Jr., exploring *Restorative Practices in the Reduction of Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement and Recidivism* which is the title of my dissertation and study. I am hoping to gain a better understanding of the impact of restorative practices (RP) implementation in DAEPs and best practices related to reducing DAEP recidivism by exploring the relationship between the lived experiences of DAEP staff and implementation of RP. I am inviting professional educators engaged in servicing students assigned or re-assigned to DAEP placement to participate in my study by engaging in the completion of a demographic questionnaire and a virtual, audiotaped, semi-structured interview with me regarding the lived experiences of professional DAEP staff servicing students assigned or re-assigned to DAEP placement. The results will be reported in a dissertation that I will complete as requirement of my doctoral program.

The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Sam Houston State University, as well as the External Research Review Committee (ERRC) of the local school district of the DAEP. For purposes of confidentiality, the participants, local school district, and DAEP will not be reported by name in my dissertation or subsequent presentations or reports. The following security and confidentiality measures will be implemented: (1) all interviews will be audio recorded on the primary researcher's Android smartphone protected with dual-layered biometric and password security; then

uploaded, and saved to a password protected computer for transcription and analysis; (2) all participants will designate a pseudonym on the demographic questionnaire and will be referred to only by the pseudonym and demographic information throughout the study to protect the participant's identity; and (3) for the purposes of this case study, the home campus, school district, DAEP education servicing company, and DAEP facility will be referred to in general terms as a home campus, school district, DAEP parent company or DAEP facility in urban southeast Texas or by the pseudonyms: Goode Middle School (GMS); Kidd Hope Independent School District (KHISD); Kidd Educational Services (KES) and Hope Academy (HA). As an added measure of security and validity, once the interview has been transcribed, each participant will have the opportunity to engage in member checking to review the transcribed interview to ensure validity, anonymity, and confidentiality.

To qualify for this study, you must be over the age of 18 and employed at a DAEP performing in the role of a professional educator servicing students assigned or re-assigned to the DAEP. Participation in this study is voluntary and completely confidential in that participant identity will not be revealed in the results of the study. Participants will choose their own pseudonym, participate in the completion of a demographic questionnaire regarding the participant's role in the DAEP serving students, and engage in an audiotaped, virtual, semi-structured interview with me at the DAEP at a time convenient to the participant. Participation will require a total time commitment of no more than two hours. As an added measure of security and validity, once the interview has been transcribed, each participant will have the opportunity to engage in member checking to review the transcribed interview to ensure validity, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Furthermore, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Previously, you received a Recruitment Email describing the study. You expressed interest in participating in the study by contacting the Primary Investigator, Chandra Johnson-Pearson, to schedule the virtual interview via Google Hangouts. This document is a written copy of the Informed Consent document which you may read and keep for your records; then verbally offer your consent once all concerns are addressed. No written record of your identity as a participant will be obtained. After verbal consent is obtained, we will proceed with completing the demographic questionnaire and the audiotaped, semi-structured, virtual interview.

If you have any questions regarding participation in the study, please feel free to contact me at (713)256-8484 or [cvj001@shsu.edu](mailto:cvj001@shsu.edu). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participation in this study, or to report research-related problems, you may feel free to call the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Sam Houston State University for information at (936)294-4875 or [irb@shsu.edu](mailto:irb@shsu.edu). Your consideration is greatly appreciated regardless of your decision to participate. Nonetheless, I look forward to exploring DAEP best practices with you and/or your colleagues.

*To indicate your consent to participate in this study, please verbalize the following sentence to the Primary Investigator, Chandra Johnson-Pearson, at the time of the virtual interview:*

***“I agree to participate in this study.”***

***A copy of this document will be made available for you to keep for your records.***

## APPENDIX D

### RECRUITMENT EMAIL

#### RECRUITMENT EMAIL

#### for Doctoral Study Approved by Kidd Hope ISD External Research Review Committee (ERRC):

#### *RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE REDUCTION OF DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND RECIDIVISM*

**Institution:** Sam Houston State University

**Department:** Counselor Education Doctoral Program

**Principal Investigator:** Chandra V. Johnson-Pearson, MA, NCC

[Chandrajp@springisd.org](mailto:Chandrajp@springisd.org) or [cvj001@shsu.edu](mailto:cvj001@shsu.edu) or (713)256-8484

**Advisor:** Richard Henriksen, Jr., PhD

[RCH008@shsu.edu](mailto:RCH008@shsu.edu) or (936)294-1209

Greetings Esteemed Colleague,

My name is Chandra V. Johnson-Pearson, a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department at Sam Houston State University hoping to complete my dissertation in August of 2020. I am conducting a study under the direction of Dr. Richard Henriksen, Jr., exploring *Restorative Practices in the Reduction of Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement and Recidivism* which is the title of my dissertation and study. I am hoping to gain a better understanding of the impact of restorative practices (RP) implementation in DAEPs and best practices related to reducing DAEP recidivism by exploring the relationship between the lived experiences of DAEP staff and implementation of RP.

The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Sam Houston State University, as well as the External Research Review Committee (ERRC) of the local school district of the DAEP. For purposes of confidentiality, the participants, local school district, and DAEP will not be reported by name in my dissertation or subsequent presentations or reports. The following COVID-19 Stay Home-Work Safe Order compliant, security, and confidentiality measures will be implemented: (1) all interviews will be conducted via a virtual platform utilizing Google Hangouts technology; (2) all virtual interviews will be audio recorded on the primary researcher's Android smartphone protected with dual-layered biometric and password security; then uploaded, and saved to a password protected computer for transcription and analysis; (3) all participants will designate a pseudonym on the demographic questionnaire and will be referred to only by the pseudonym and demographic information throughout the study to protect the

participant's identity; and (4) for the purposes of this case study, the home campus, school district, DAEP education service company, and DAEP facility will be referred to in general terms as a home campus, school district, DAEP parent company or DAEP facility in urban southeast Texas or by the pseudonyms: Goode Middle School (GMS); Kidd Hope Independent School District (KHISD); Kidd Educational Services (KES); and Hope Academy (HA). As an added measure of security and validity, once the interview has been transcribed, each participant will have the opportunity to engage in member checking to review the transcribed interview to ensure validity, anonymity, and confidentiality.

To qualify for this study, you must be over the age of 18 and employed at a DAEP performing in the role of a professional educator servicing students assigned or re-assigned to the DAEP. Participation in this study is voluntary and completely confidential in that participant identity will not be revealed in the results of the study of subsequent presentations of the study results. Participants will choose their own pseudonym, participate in the completion of a demographic questionnaire regarding the participant's role in the DAEP serving students, and engage in an audiotaped, virtual, semi-structured interview with me at the DAEP at a time convenient to the participant. Participation will require a total time commitment of no more than two hours. As an added measure of security and validity, once the interview has been transcribed, each participant will have the opportunity to engage in member checking to review the transcribed interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Furthermore, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Nonetheless, I look forward to exploring DAEP best practices with you and/or your colleagues. If you know of anyone who would be interested in this research, please feel free to forward this email to them.

If you would like to participate in this study, please reach out to me via return email at [cvj001@shsu.edu](mailto:cvj001@shsu.edu) and/or [chandrajp@springisd.org](mailto:chandrajp@springisd.org). Once you contact me indicating your participation interest, I will schedule the virtual interview with you on a date and time of your convenience. When we virtually meet via Google Hangouts, I will provide you with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent document which you may read and keep for your records; then verbally offer your consent once all concerns are addressed. No written record of your identity as a participant will be obtained. After verbal consent is obtained, we will proceed with completing the demographic questionnaire and the audiotaped, virtual, semi-structured interview.

Sincerely,  
Chandra V. Johnson-Pearson, MA, NCC

## APPENDIX E

### CODE BOOK

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
I. RP Embedded in DAEP Daily Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Communication</li> <li>B. Guided Group Interaction (GGI)</li> <li>C. Orientation</li> <li>D. Protocol</li> <li>E. Respect</li> <li>F. Redirection Levels</li> <li>G. Six Steps to Success</li> <li>H. Town House</li> <li>I. Transparency</li> </ul>
II. Specific Behavior Management Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Confrontation</li> <li>B. Consistency</li> <li>C. Discipline</li> <li>D. Remain the Solid Object</li> <li>E. Structure</li> <li>F. Fair and Equitable Treatment of All Scholars</li> <li>G. Focus on Addressing the Root Cause of Negative Behavior</li> </ul>
III. RP Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Broadened View</li> <li>B. Built Confidence</li> <li>C. Built Pro-Social Skills</li> <li>D. Developed Leadership Skills</li> <li>E. Provided Voice for Scholars</li> <li>F. Supported Fulfillment of DAEP Purpose</li> </ul>
IV. Contributing Factors to DAEP Team Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Clearly Defined Roles</li> <li>B. Passion for the Job and Scholars</li> <li>C. Responsive to Scholars' Needs</li> </ul>
V. RP Tools Routinely Used by DAEP Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Accountability and Building Concept</li> <li>B. Culture</li> <li>C. Expectations and Integration</li> <li>D. Norms and Normative Language</li> <li>E. Student Government, Incentive System, and Rating System</li> </ul>
VI. Disdain for Prison Terminology References in Connection with DAEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Rationale</li> <li>B. Alternative Language</li> </ul>
VII. Building Rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Relationship</li> <li>B. Established Family-Like Connection</li> <li>C. Perspective and Perception</li> <li>D. Reads at Check and All Interactions</li> </ul>
VIII. Home Campus Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Larger Setting</li> <li>B. Missed a Need That Went Unsupported</li> <li>C. Target on Your Back to be Bullied or Railroaded</li> </ul>
IX. Poor Districtwide RP Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Not Where It Needs to Be</li> <li>B. Different Look of RP Implementation on Home Campus and DAEP</li> </ul>

## VITA

**Chandra V. Johnson-Pearson, MA, NCC**

### EDUCATION

Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education at Sam Houston State University, June, 2008 - present, pending successful defense of dissertation in July, 2020. Dissertation title: “Restorative Practices in the Reduction of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement and Recidivism.”

Master of Arts (December, 2005) in Counseling, Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, Texas.

Bachelor of Arts (August, 1986) in Communication Studies, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

### PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

District Lead Middle School Counselor, Spring Independent School District, August, 2014 – present. Responsibilities include: assist Director of Guidance and Counseling and Executive Director of Student Support Services as a liaison to Middle School Counselors to ensure the efficacy and delivery of middle school counseling programs that focus on positive student outcomes, teach student competencies, and are delivered with identified professional competencies, using the ASCA National Model as a framework for development and delivery.

Campus Lead School Counselor, Edwin M. Wells Middle School (WMS), Spring Independent School District, February, 2012 – present. Responsibilities include: serve on the campus leadership team and provide proactive leadership to ensure that the WMS Counseling Program aligns with the school mission and vision to support the academic achievement of all students.

Grade Level School Counselor, Edwin M. Wells Middle School (WMS), Spring Independent School District, August, 2006 – present. Responsibilities include: attend to the development and guidance of all scholars in the assigned grade level through the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive, data-driven, developmental, and systematic school counseling program focusing on the academic, career, and socio-emotional domains; collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure positive outcomes among all scholars in the assigned grade level. WMS ascribes to the model of the School Counselor and Assistant Principal team looping with the scholars throughout the middle school career from 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### PUBLICATIONS

Johnson, C. V., (1994). The effects of the nonverbal communication of touch on interpersonal relationships. *Texas Journal of Speech Communications*, (2)1, 11-29.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V., (2020). *Restorative practices in the reduction of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and recidivism* (in progress).

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *The College Admissions Process*, Spring ISD College Empowerment Conference, January, 2020.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *Bully Prevention*. Spring ISD Parent University, yearly in November, 2018 – present.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *Adults Reaching Kids (ARK) Parenting Workshop Series*. Spring ISD Parent University, October, 2019 - February, 2020.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resource Guide*. WMS Staff Development, yearly in September, 2015 - present.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *Building Empathy in Youth*. Spring ISD School Counselor Professional Development, October, 2019.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *Preparing Your 5<sup>th</sup> Grader for Middle School*. Spring ISD Parent University, November, 2018.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *Getting the Most Out of Middle School*. Emmanuel COGIC Education Night, May, 2017.

Johnson-Pearson, C. V. *The Myth: Middle School Counseling*. Texas School Counseling Association (TSCA) 2014 School Counselors Conference, Galveston, Texas, November 2014.

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Chi Sigma Iota, May, 2004 – present.

American Counseling Association (ACA), January, 2004 – present.

American School Counseling Association (ASCA), January, 2004 – present.

Texas School Counseling Association (TSCA), January, 2004 – present.

Texas Counseling Association (TCA), January, 2004 – present.

Spring Creek Counseling Association (SCCA), August, 2010 – present.