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Do After-School Performing Arts Programs Impact Student Attendance?

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A THREE - PART DISSERTATION:

Part I: Do After-School Performing Arts Programs Impact Student Attendance?

Part II: Attendance Matters! We Must Decrease Student Truancy and Absenteeism.

Part III: Attendance Matters! A Policy Advocacy Document.

Robert Gabriel Hubbird

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This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The "program" can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

This three-part dissertation concentrates on student attendance. It is clear that we have a student attendance problem in our nation, particularly in urban school districts. There have been other studies, discussions, and debates on how to improve student attendance, but identifying a single policy, program, incentive, and/or intervention to positively impact absenteeism is difficult. Student absenteeism has and will continue to be a national problem. Many factors play a role in student attendance, to a certain degree, some are controllable and others are extremely difficult to affect.

Part I of this dissertation is a Program Evaluation focusing on the correlation between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs. This study is an Empirical-Analytical Quantitative analysis of longitudinal archived data for schools in a large Midwest urban school district. The longitudinal data from 8 schools within the Midwest urban school district was analyzed. These schools were selected because they had an after-school performing arts program for at least two consecutive years.

The results show that the second year of implementation for an After-School Program, there is a strong positive linear relationship between School Attendance and After-School Program Attendance. However, the findings also make it difficult to answer the primary question of this program evaluation. Overall, the data implies that a longer study is needed to gage what type of linear relationship exist between School Attendance and After-School Program Attendance.

The overarching challenge is for school districts to be able to proactively manage student attendance to ensure children are in school on a regular basis. Creating a culture of collaboration for student attendance, shared responsibility, and trust are key to address our national student attendance crisis.

PREFACE

As a minority male who attended public schools with low student attendance; and, more importantly, as a school leader, leveraging resources to combat low student attendance, it is extremely important to me to find effective practices that reduce absenteeism. As a child attending inner city public schools, my dream was not to be an educator, but to be a tax accountant. Numbers were and continue to be my passion. In order to make some extra money in undergraduate school, I started to tutor students for the SAT and ACT. The passion that developed inside of me from help others learn was unmeasurable. I never wanted to be an educator, but somehow the calling to serve others was too loud for me to ignore.

As a servant leader in public education, it is my responsibility to provide all students with a quality education by moving teaching and learning forward. This three-part dissertation focuses on combating student absenteeism. In order to improve student attendance, my past experiences confirm that one must be able to explain the strength and the direction of the relationships between student attendance and the targeted incentives. I believe after-school performing arts programs are key to improving student attendance.

In 2012, I was selected as the principal of a low performing Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade school with unacceptable student attendance. I took what I had learned from the previous two schools I led and developed an action plan to transform the school into a high performing Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics (STEAM) school. Within three years, the school had seen significant double digit growth in their academic data, nearly a 5% increase in their student attendance data, and significant double digit decreases in the number of student infractions.

My past experiences as an administrator in schools with historically low student performance, low student attendance, high chronically truant students, and high absenteeism has shown me the importance of student attendance. People do not go to places that they do not like. If student attendance is low, then perhaps it is because students do not like the school or maybe because no one at the school has established a meaningful relationship with them or maybe those children are not being challenged academically. Regardless of the rationale, low student attendance plus high chronic truancy equals low student performance for a school district.

My professional journey has shown me that there is a positive correlation between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs, but I did not have a research-based evaluation to show support for this belief.

Part I of this dissertation tries to lay the groundwork to develop research-based data supporting a positive correlation between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a marathon runner, crossing the finish line of this dissertation was by far the hardest race I have ever completed. It was a race against myself. A race without limits, time, or direction, but I was determined to find my way and complete the race. My confidence, work ethic, professional responsibilities, and family obligations were stretched beyond all limitations.

Crossing the finish line of this doctoral race was a result of the love, support, and encouragement of many people.

If it weren't for my loving family, supportive friends, and my amazing mentors, I could not have completed this journey. Their patience and support helped me more than they'll ever know.

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my beautiful children, Ximena and Octavio. During these years, I thank you for putting up with my limited availability and long work hours. I thank you for giving me the space to complete this work. Your patience and understanding during this time was greatly appreciated; know that you are loved.

To all of my family members, thank you for believing in me!

To all of my mentors, thank you for your words of wisdom, for being an active listener, and for pushing me forward!

DEDICATION

To the fiery spirit of my beloved grandmother,

Dolores Galloges Tevenal Talavera Diaz!

Thank you for giving me the strength to always believe…

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

It is clear that we have a student attendance problem in our nation with three million high school students and 3.5 million elementary school students chronically absent, particularly in urban school districts (United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). Absenteeism is widespread and not uniformly defined to be tracked. In a 2012 article, Balfanz & Byrnes summarized the national attendance problem by stating it is not acted upon because it is not measured, so we fail to notice it (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). Epstein and Steven found that family-school-community partnership practices predicted either an increase in daily attendance or a decrease in chronic absenteeism, or both (Epstein & Steven, 2010). Also in 2010, Sheldon's analyses of elementary student attendance data from the state of Ohio showed that schools that implemented school, family, and community partnership programs yielded an improved student attendance by an average of 0.5% when compared to schools without programs (Sheldon, 2010). There have been other studies, discussions, and debates on how to improve student attendance, but identifying a single policy, program, incentive, and/or intervention to positively impact absenteeism is difficult. Student absenteeism has and will continue to be a national problem. Many factors play a role in student attendance, to a certain degree, some are controllable and others are extremely difficult to affect. In a statement issued by the U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr., he said, "Frequent absences from school can be devastating to a child's education. Missing school leads to low academic achievement and triggers drop outs" (Blad, 2016, p. 1). It is unacceptable that in the 2013 - 2014 school year, nearly 500 school districts within the United States had at least 30 percent of students missing 15 or more days of school (Blad, 2016).

In 2012, I was placed as the principal in a low performing Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade school with unacceptable student attendance. I took what I had learned from the previous two schools I led and developed an action plan to transform the school into a high performing Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics (STEAM) school. I established partnerships with local corporations and colleges to secure over $2.5 million in funding to integrate performing arts programs into the curriculum and after-school programs. As a result, within three years, the school had seen significant double digit growth in their academic data, nearly a 5% increase in their student attendance data, and significant double digit decreases in the number of student infractions.

As a result of my past experiences, I am conducting this program evaluation to determine if there is a correlation between student attendance and participation in after-school performing arts programs. I will be evaluating the impact of participation in an after-school performing arts programs has on student attendance. My professional journey has shown me that there is a positive correlation, but I do not have a research-based evaluation to show support for this belief. Thus, I am evaluating longitudinal archived student attendance data from schools that have implemented after-school performing arts programs to test my hypothesis and better understand the extent in which performing arts programs influence student attendance.

My program is an Empirical-Analytical Quantitative analysis of longitudinal archived data. I will be dissecting longitudinal attendance data from multiple schools within a large Midwestern urban school district that have implemented an after-school performing arts program for at least two consecutive years. In addition, I will implement

an after-school performing arts program within a district during the 2016-2017 school year and monitor their student attendance. My primary question is, "To what extent do after-school performing arts programs have a relationship with student attendance?"

Research Purpose

In 1999, a study on extracurricular involvement found that participation in prosocial activities (performing arts) was linked to positive educational trajectories (Eccles & Barber). The California Department of Education (2015) realized the importance of after-school programs and from 1999 to 2007 significantly increased funding from $50 million to $550 million to expand their programs. My past experiences and the growing support around after-school programs and the successes yielded from these programs, particularly around improved student attendance, is why I think it is worthy of exploring the relationship between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs.

The purpose of my evaluation is to see if there is a correlation between student attendance and participation in after-school performing arts programs. The methodology utilized for this study will require disaggregation of longitudinal archived attendance data from two schools that have implemented after-school performing arts programs for the past three years; and, six schools that have implemented programs for the past two years. Furthermore, data analysis of student attendance data within a district for school year 2016-2017 that implements an after-school performing arts program will also be considered. As a minority male who attended public schools with low student attendance; and, more importantly, as a school leader, leveraging resources to combat low student attendance, it is extremely important to me to find effective practices that reduce

absenteeism. This study is being conducted to explain the strength and the direction of the relationships between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs. The driving force behind this study is to contribute to scholars in this field to advocate for continued after-school performing arts funding and to inform school administrators when making policy decisions that combat absenteeism.

In my literature review, I will dive deeper into the examination of research related to absenteeism within our nation and after-school programs, with a focus on performing arts programs adopted by schools. This synthesis of related literature on absenteeism and after-school programs will serve to lay the foundation for this evaluation.

Rationale

In 2008, I was charged with developing an International Baccalaureate Primary & Middle Years Programme School in a large urban school district. Prior to 2008, the school was a low performing school in a high crime area. By the end of school year 2010, the school was on the trajectory to becoming a high performing International Baccalaureate Primary & Middle Years Programme School. As a result of my work there, I was charged with transforming another low performing school in the same large urban school district. This school was one of the worst performing Pre-Kindergarten to 8th grade schools in the state. With the knowledge I had gained from the International Baccalaureate Programmes, I developed a plan to transform this school by integrating a performing arts program in collaboration with a local college. After two years, the school was able to celebrate academic gains, increased student attendance, and a decrease in student behavior infractions. However, due to unforeseen challenges, within the community and the district, which were beyond the control of the school, the district

decided to close the school. I took what I had learned at these two schools and implemented similar structures at my new assignment, to move this new school forward, beginning in 2012.

Student attendance is a driving force behind student success and students being college and career ready. A 2011 study in California noted that only 17 percent of children missing more than 15 days of school in both Kindergarten and 1st grade were proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade as compared to 64 percent of their peers who missed less than 8 days of school (Attendance, 2011). Another study found that among poverty children, chronic absences in Kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of academic achievement at the end of 5th grade (Chang & Romero, 2008). However, the relationship between student attendance and the available opportunities to learn also needs to be explored. In order to have the opportunity to be college and career ready, students need to be in school.

Additionally, student attendance is tied to district funding. Federal and local funding formulas allocate funds to districts based on their student attendance. The stakeholders for this program evaluation are school districts and after-school performing arts providers. This program evaluation is important to school districts because it provides them with a means to increase student attendance, which leads to increased school funding, increase in instructional time for students, and as research has shown, an increase in a student's opportunity to be successful in college and career endeavors. In 2007, an analysis of student attendance data from a 2000 - 2001 cohort of freshmen from Chicago Public Schools, noticed that only 63 percent of students who missed 5 to 9 days graduated on time, compared to 87 percent of those who missed 5 days of less. This study

also noted how great of a concern this is, since only one-quarter of Chicago Public Schools freshmen miss 5 days or less per school year (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

In addition, this program evaluation is important to providers of after-school performing arts programs to aide in justifying their programs and positive contributions to a school's climate and culture. Prior to 2015, art education was not given equal weight as core subjects. However, in December of 2015, the President signed into law the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) making way for a new era of federal K-12 education policy, with innovative opportunities for art education. For example, under ESSA, the arts are included as an integral part of well-rounded education with equal weight to math, reading, science, and other disciplines; more importantly, making the arts and arts programs eligible for funds for federal education programs (Focus, 2016).

Over the past decade, there has been a drastic decrease in funding for performing arts programs. As of February 2016, 50 United Arts funds are known to be actively operating in the United States, a decrease from the 66 United Arts funds in operation in 2003 (United, 2014). The educational community at large and the policy makers need to see the value of performing arts programs to provide a holistic educational experience for all children as they hammer out the structure of the ESSA. Unfortunately, in low income urban communities, the opportunity to have access to performing arts programs within a school is less likely in comparison to schools within more affluent communities. The College Board's National Task Force recommended that, "greater access to arts education can serve as an effective tool in closing the achievement gap, increasing the number of underserved students that achieve at the highest level in education" (2009). Likewise, a

study in 2002 found that arts play a unique role in academic achievement for students from under-resourced environments and low-performing students (Deasy, 2002).

Goals

At this stage, my overall outcome is to identify if participation in after-school performing arts programs impacts a student's daily attendance in school. If the data reveals a strong positive correlation, then I hope this leads to further investigations and funding for performing arts programs to aid in improving our national problem of absenteeism. On a more micro-level, if the data shows that student attendance improved, then I will continue to advocate and implement after-school performing arts programs in the schools I lead. In my current district, my activity goal is that students will increase their student attendance by one percent by participating in an after-school performing arts program. My primary question is, “To what extent do after-school performing arts programs have a relationship with student attendance?”

Learning takes place all around you, in and outside of a school. It is true that many factors affect student achievement, directly and indirectly. Some of these factors, such as curriculum, parents, testing climate, educators, and attendance can be controlled to a certain degree. Whereas others, such as socioeconomic status, family demographics, ethnicity, etc. are more difficult to control. If there is a positive correlation between a student's daily attendance and participation in an after-school performing arts program, then a student’s instructional time will increase. Hopefully, this increase in instructional time will directly and/or indirectly positively influence student achievement.

I envision my program evaluation study fostering a culture of evaluative thinking within my current school so that the entire staff is intentional and accountable.

Furthermore, my hope is that the staff is more focused and prioritized, systematic, and distinguishes inputs and processes from outcomes to improve student attendance. I hope the staff will plan strategies that help increase student attendance and then implement those strategies with fidelity, while having thought about contingency strategies for high flyers. Every staff member in a school needs to take ownership of student attendance. Within a school, we are all accountable to create an environment that promotes student attendance; we must systematically examine our individual actions to ensure they support increasing student attendance. There are many external factors that contribute to student attendance and as a school, we must focus and prioritize initiatives. Our initiatives must be purposeful and we must own the results of them. During the year, we must be systematic during our documentation of each strategy we employ. We must look at the connections between the process of each strategy and its outcome.

More importantly, as a school community, we must learn as we go through the implementation process of our attendance initiatives, while also evaluating the final data to develop a culture that fosters high student attendance. According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2013 - 2014 school year, an estimated thirteen percent of high school students missed 15 or more school days (Blad, 2016). The problem of chronic absenteeism exists across all ethnic and racial groups. During the 2013 - 2014 school year, the percentage of Black students who missed 15 or more school days was around 16.3% and 13.6% for Hispanics (Blad, 2016). Blacks and Hispanics are the two largest ethnic groups served in my current district. In order to make significant growth in our student attendance, we must find ways to tackle absenteeism of all groups. My

program evaluation aims to identify and describe the kind of correlation between student attendance and participation in an after-school performing arts programs.

Research Questions

As previously stated, my primary question is, “To what extent do after-school performing arts programs have a relationship with student attendance?” The subset questions that will keep my evaluation research on track are:

- How has a school's attendance changed over the past three years after implementing an after-school performing arts program?
- What types of after-school programs did students participate in?
- What was the student attendance rate in each after-school program per school?

SECTION II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I will examine research on student attendance while diving deeper into the examination of research related to absenteeism within our nation and after-school programs, with a focus on performing arts programs adopted by schools. This synthesis of related literature on absenteeism and after-school programs will serve to lay the foundation for this evaluation.

As with all research, there are limitations. The limitations of this literature review are based on the lack of research available on after-school performing arts programs as they relate to student attendance. There are endless amounts of research that focuses on how absenteeism and other student/school variables affect students academically, but little to none on after-school performing arts programs.

Absenteeism

In this era of accountability from all aspects of the government, researchers and policymakers are increasingly studying the connection between student attendance and academic achievement. A quick *Google Scholar* search for studies involving "student attendance and achievement produces results for about 6,110 studies in under 0.05 seconds for the year 2019. Even though research has shown that high quality teachers are the strongest school-related determinant of student academic achievement, students who are chronically absent/truant reduces the effectiveness of any teacher's best abilities to provide learning opportunities (Adelman, 2006).

Across the United States, many adolescents are at risk due to poor attendance in school. According to Dryfoos (1990), research has shown that students absent from school is detrimental to their achievement and chronic absenteeism will exacerbate

educational risk factors for them in future years. Dryfoos points out that there are literally thousands of programs to prevent or ameliorate various problem behaviors (absenteeism). However, these programs are not yielding substantial success because they are too fragmented and weak to have a large scale impact (Dryfoos, 1990).

In a 1993 quantitative study, Caldas reexamined the effect that input and process factors have on public school achievement. This study refers to process factors as those factors that schools can control and the factors that schools cannot control as input factors. According to this study, student attendance is a process factor that schools can control through attendance policies (Caldas, 1993). Additionally, Caldas's study found that minority and socioeconomic status were the strongest predictors of a school's achievement. However, student attendance had a substantial ($p < .001$) effect in each of their models on school achievement (Caldas, 1993).

More recently, the *Washington Post* published a story on chronic absenteeism in 2015 as a result of the Obama Administration publishing data on chronic absenteeism rates in schools nationwide. In the United States, an estimated 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each school year (Brown, 2015). One may conclude from these numbers that schools throughout the country are failing to effectively handle the issue of chronic absenteeism. Researchers support the publication of chronic absenteeism rates and think it will force superintendents and principals to begin focusing on a problem that has been ignored for too long (Brown, 2015).

No matter how much attention school administrators give to chronic absenteeism, a teacher cannot educate an empty seat. A recent study of young children found a relationship between attendance and reading/math growth. The study found that high

absenteeism in Kindergarten were associated with negative student outcomes in First Grade. In addition, the study found that absenteeism in Kindergarten leads to negative outcomes in subsequent years in reading, math, and general knowledge (Romero, 2007).

A study of 15,037 teenagers found that students with high absenteeism, truancy, and delinquency behaviors did not identify positively with academic achievement and most likely will drop out of school (Kunjufu, 2013). As educators, it is our professional responsibility to ensure students have positive experiences in school, programs such as after-school performing arts classes give students a positive outlet to express themselves and re-engage with a school. Children do not just drop out of school without warning signs. Teenagers who have dropped out of high school have been found to exhibit a history of warning signs (negative behaviors), particularly high levels of absenteeism throughout their schooling (Hickman, 2007). Allensworth and Easton's (2005) study found that high school students who dropped out missed significantly more days of school while in First Grade than their peers who graduated from high school.

The conclusion of a 3 year student attendance study in 1999 found that when all stakeholders in a school increase their focus and ownership on attendance, then attendance rates increase at a faster rate. Additionally, the Blyth and Milner study found that it is important to reward improvements in attendance for at risk pupils requiring group or individual counseling (Blyth, E., & Milner, J., 1999).

There are many empirical studies on how student attendance impacts student achievement, but little research exists on chronic absenteeism and student achievement. Dunlap's 2016 study examined the influence of chronic absenteeism on Grade 6-8 middle schools' NJ ASK ELA and Mathematics scores. His findings showed that no matter how

much emphasis is placed on monitoring chronic absenteeism, this reform of monitoring had minimal influence on improving the passing percentage rate of the Grade 6 through 8 ELA and Mathematics NJ ASK. For both ELA and Mathematics, chronic absenteeism was a statistically significant variable although it was a weak contributor (Dunlap, 2016).

After-School Programs

In 1918, The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education stated that in order to support the different states of student development, a need existed to differentiate the curriculum. They stressed how schools should begin exposing students to skills they will need as adults and how this exposure provides students with a more intimate knowledge of skills required by adults (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918).

In 1998, Lipka, Lounsbury, Toepfer, Vars, Allessi, and Kridel revised the Progressive Education Association Eight-Year study, a seminal work, to explore how schools can be changed to better service students. This study broadened the concept of a school to more than a curriculum; a school is a society in which everyone works together to function as an educative force (Lipka, Lounsbury, Toepfer, Vars, Allessi, & Kridel, 1998). Schools within the Eight-Year study that succeeded in developing a curriculum based on problems and concerns of students celebrated their students by recognizing that their students will excel in their future studies (Giles, McCutchen, & Zechiel, 1942). The success of these schools demonstrated that comprehensive educational improvement is possible. A comprehensive education program gives equal weight to extracurriculars and performing arts programs. Schools can learn from the results of the Eight-Year Study to

improve student outcomes, such as attendance and achievement. (Lipka, Lounsbury, Toepfer, Vars, Allessi, & Kridel, 1998).

Posner and Vandell (1994) found that attending after-school programs was associated with better academic achievement and social adjustment. They also recognized that a student's experience varied in different after-school settings, but involvement in after-school programs meant more time in academic activities and enrichment lessons and less time playing outside unsupervised than other children (1994).

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reauthorized the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to after-school programs called the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). The 2002 NCLB reauthorization transferred the administration of the grants from the federal government to the state education agencies. Previously, the 21st CCLC grant centered around the community learning center model, however, in 2002, NCLB focused the grant to an after-school program model that provided services only to students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools (United States Department of Education, 2016).

The California Department of Education, along with other community organizations, have responded to our national crisis of few after-school programs by increasing their support for Out-of-School Time (OST) programs, summer programs, and Saturday school. In 2002, California voted to approve Proposition 49, which lead to the After School Education and Safety Program (ASES). The ASES program funds the establishment of local after-school education and enrichment programs through community partnerships. Due to this initiative, after-school programs have been on the rise in California (California Department of Education, 2015).

Additionally, in 2002, Lauver conducted a study to see whether an after-school program in an urban public middle school, with limited funding, could make meaningful improvements academically and behaviorally for students in the program. Lauver's process evaluation showed an overwhelmingly positive relationship between staff and students. Furthermore, Lauver's impact study revealed that the after-school program had a significantly positive effect on students doing homework and on their educational aspirations. In terms of academics and behavior, there were no measurable benefits of the after-school program on standardized test scores or academic grades; in-school behavior or attendance showed no measurable benefits either (Lauver, 2002).

All of today's youth could benefit from after-school programs. There has been an increase in the number of research findings that suggest after-school program participation has a strong correlation to increase academic acheivements and standardized test scores, especially for low-income students (Hamilton & Klein, 1998; Ohio Hunger Task Force, 1999; Schinke, Cole, & Poulin, 1998). From my experience, poor, inner-city communities are in need of more after-school programs to provide additional academic, social, performing arts, and recreational opportunities for youth. Evidence of this increased need are displayed in the Chicago Park District which has increased funding for after-school performing arts programs (Culture, Arts, Gymnastics, etc.) from 2011 to 2017 by 321.5% (Chicago Park District). A variety of research studies have linked participation in an after-school program with higher expectations of school achievement, improved attitudes toward school, higher attendance rates, and better work habits, especially for students classified as low-income (Brooks, Mojica, & Land, 1995; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Schinke, Cole, & Poulin, 1998; Witt, 1997).

SECTION III: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

In our complex world, situations are too unique to be approached with a singular evaluation method. Throughout our history, there has been endless trials and errors to innovate and move society forward. In the end, the trials and errors just want to find out the effectiveness, efficiency, and purpose of all that we do. Program evaluations are our modern day trials and errors. They allow for collecting and analyzing data in a systematic method to answer many questions. The findings from program evaluations can help shape projects and policies, particularly about a variables effectiveness and efficiency. Program evaluations differ from social commentary and newspaper reporting by utilizing the scientific method, by being held to a higher standard of evidence, and by being scrutinized by the scientific community (Berk & Rossi, 1999). In 1978, Patton published the 1st edition of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation.* After decades of application and testing, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* is grounded with strong evidence that evaluations are the foundation of use to adequately prepare information. Patton states that utilization-focused evaluations' primary focus is to help "primary intended users select the most appropriate content, model, methods, theory, and uses for their particular situation" (2008, p. 14). I believe the structure of the utilization-focused evaluation will allow me to tailor my program evaluation to the real and specific correlation between after-school performing arts programs and student attendance, while aiding me in remaining value-free, performing competently during my data-based inquiries.

My plan is to conduct a disaggregation of historical longitudinal attendance data from eight schools within a large Midwestern urban school district that implemented an

after-school performing arts program for at least two consecutive years. I will obtain data from a college that serves as a community partner to these schools and oversees their after-school performing arts programs. Due to confidentiality, the names of the schools and college were changed. The names of the schools will be: School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, School F, School G, and School H. The name of the college providing the data will be called pARTS College. I will also obtain the schools' attendance data from the State Board of Education's public website. Additionally, I will implement an after-school performing arts program within a district for school year 2016-2017 and monitor student attendance data and participation in the after-school program. Surveys were created for students, parents, and teachers to gather data in order to capture a sense of the program's impact on student attendance (Patton, 2008).

In either case, I must first organize the data (quantitative and/or qualitative) to identify patterns to interpret and report to stakeholders. I must put my emphasis on methodological appropriateness in order to match the data collection and program design to my evaluation questions, and the needs of my stakeholders (Patton, 2008). During the interpretation, I regularly asked the two questions posed by Patton (2008): "What do the results mean?" and "What's the significance of the findings?" Next, I must determine whether results show a positive, neutral, or negative correlation between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs. Finally, I must add a plan of action to my analysis to recommend what should be done moving forward to improve student attendance.

Based on the advice from Baxter and Jack (2008), I must do more research on the "internal influencing factors" and "external influencing factors" for student attendance to drive my decision making.

In terms of "data for urgency", the extremely high truancy rates and low attendance of minorities and children of poverty should be alarming. Likewise, research on the positive correlation between student attendance and how it affects achievement are disheartening. For example, in 2013, fourth grade math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress were twelve scale points lower for students with three or more absences in the month before they took the assessment (Blad, 2014). Additionally, data on the lack of performing arts programs available for these students should motivate people to take action to increase student attendance with performing arts programs.

Online Surveys

I invited all students who partook in the 2016 - 2017 after-school performing arts program to participate in an online survey. Additionally, I extended an invitation to all of the parents and teachers of the student participants to take an online survey. An estimated 150 students will participate in the after-school program and these students are served by an estimated 30 teachers; this includes support teachers, special education teachers, content area teachers and/or grade-level teachers. All survey questions will use a Likert Scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, Undecided. In addition, each survey will have a final question in which participants can provide some specific examples that will help understand their ratings.

Recruitment

I will obtain the trend data from after-school performing arts programs at various schools that were overseen by a college within a large urban school district within the Midwest. I will ensure to maintain the confidentiality of the schools and college by using fictitious names in my program evaluation.

In terms of recruitment for the participants in the online survey, I must ensure to utilize a manner that avoids feelings of coercion and/or pressure to complete the survey. The online surveys (see Appendices A, B, & C) will be presented to students, parents, and teachers in April or May of 2017; I will stress the anonymous nature of the surveys. I will host two meetings to speak directly to all survey participants about the purpose and scope of my program evaluation. All students, parents, and teachers will be given the choice of taking the survey, while being assured that their responses will be kept confidential. During these meetings, informed consent will be obtained (see Appendix D) and once obtained, a link to the online survey will be sent to the provided email addresses. I will use the same invitation email for students, parents, and teachers with directions for accessing the online survey (see Appendix E).

Participants

The key participants for my research study are the students within the multiple schools that have worked with the pARTS college partner to provide after-school performing arts programs for at least the past two years. I will include descriptive statistics for each school around their attendance trends and participation in the after-school performing arts programs. In addition to participants' historical data, I may utilize participants from a school that I implement an after-school performing arts program in

2016 - 2017, in which I will gather quantitative and qualitative data. My program evaluation will take a Utilization-Focused perspective (Patton, 2008). I have chosen to do a quantitative analysis of archived data and a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies on a new after-school performing arts program to enhance the credibility of my findings (Yin, 2009). I will be conducting online surveys with around 150 students, around 90 parents, and around 30 teachers who participate in the 2016 - 2017 after-school performing arts program. For this program evaluation, I just focused on analyzing the archived data.

I selected these schools because of the after-school performing arts programs they have implemented over the past few years. To ensure valid generalization and appropriate test of statistical significance, I must employ a sufficient sample size from the historical data (Patton, 2008). For my change plan, with the qualitative data I gather from my surveys at the after-school performing arts program I am implementing, I will employ "purposeful samples" of an information-rich case (Patton, 2002). For example, much can be learned from the implementation of an after-school program around how to improve student attendance initiatives within the context of performing arts (Patton, 2008). I believe that in any evaluation, power, politics, and ethics are factors that must be considered. Reflecting on my research design, I do not see how power might be an issue. I will be analyzing longitudinal data and collecting data from a new after-school program. Therefore, I do not foresee power as a concern. However, I do foresee the areas of politics and ethics possibly being an issue. To guard against unwanted political dilemmas, I must take in consideration the following: students, parents, and staff members who have values and perceptions around attendance and their involvement in the proposed

evaluation which may influence the process. Also, since programs are involved, the allocation of resources to these programs may negatively affect other programs. However, to be financially responsible, schools must regularly analyze how they allocate their funds and how effective their return on investment is for those funds to move their teaching and learning forward. This negative impact can be mitigated by schools taking a proactive approach to be financially responsible for all funds.

In terms of ethical dilemmas, as a researcher, it is my professional responsibility to act morally, honest, and unbiased throughout the entire study. I must regularly adhere to the ethical principles outlined in the *Belmont Report* (1978) to continuously work at eliminating/ minimizing any ethical dilemmas. The basic ethical principles outlined in the *Belmont Report* state that as a researcher using any human subjects, I must show "respect for persons" by protecting all subjects' autonomy, be truthful, and allow for informed consent. I must minimize the risks to the research subjects, called "beneficence"; I must ensure "justice" by employing non-exploitative procedures that are administered fairly for all subjects (1978).

Data Gathering Technique(s)

Sagor's (2005) Chapter 2 opens with the power of purpose statements. A purpose statement helps researchers stay on track, while remaining close to their evaluation goals. When collecting data, I must constantly reflect on my purpose statement so I do not harm the data. I must also remember the power of words. The word "evaluation" automatically causes undue discomfort and embarrassment. It is human nature to think, "Did I do something wrong?" and to worry about a light being shined on our shortcomings when they hear the word "evaluation" (Sagor, 2005).

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical data collection methods, while decreasing discomfort/ embarrassment to participants, I must familiarize myself with the School District's policy on data collection for students, staff, and families. Then, I will obtain consent after clearly identifying the intent of the research, the data collection strategies, the research benefits and risks, and who will have access to the information. I will secure all data (personal information and experiences) gathered to maintain confidentiality of all participants, while employing research techniques that are valid and reliable. Most importantly, I must build a rapport with participants by being honest about the pros and cons of the research and how it will be reported.

Quantitative Technique(s)

My main data is coming from longitudinal archived data provided to me by pART College. The data will be sent to me in Excel files. This data encompasses the number of students in each after-school performing arts program from 8 to 10 schools, the types of programs at each school, and student attendance in each program per school for each year. I will access each school's student attendance data from the public domain. I will then conduct descriptive statistic methods on this data to see if a correlation exists, and if so, what kind of relationship exist between student attendance and participation in an after-school performing arts program. During year two of my program evaluation, I will gather similar quantitative data from the after-school performing arts program I implement in school year 2016-17.

During year two of my research, I will utilize surveys from students, parents, and teachers to gather data to capture a sense of the program's impact on student attendance

(Patton, 2008). In addition to previously stated techniques, I will clearly indicate to all participants that their participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdrawal from the after-school performing arts program at any time and/or do not have to complete the online survey without any negative consequences.

Data Analysis Technique(s)

The advantage of using quantitative methods is that I can analyze larger groups of data to answer my program evaluation questions about the variance and/or correlation of student attendance and after-school performing arts programs. I can also dive deeper into addressing issues of progress, opinions, classification, or levels of satisfaction and outcomes (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008). My primary research question is, "To what extent do after-school performing arts programs have a relationship with student attendance?" By utilizing a quantitative paradigm approach to analyze my data, I will be able to measure the statistical relationships between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs.

As mentioned earlier, I am in the process of finalizing the implementation of an after-school performing arts program within a district for school year 2016-2017 and am monitoring student attendance and participation within the after-school program. Approval and funding have been secured, so I will be able to incorporate qualitative methods, such as a reflection survey, where students, parents, and teachers can reflect on what kind of impact their participation in the after-school performing arts program has had on student attendance. This method allows for insight by the students, parents, and teachers; the degree of the insight is tied to their responses. I must remember, for all willing participants, the ethics of informed consent applies here because I am using their

responses as research data (Sagor, 2005). With this method, I must also clearly outline whether and to what extent the reflection data will be used, how results will be reported, and whether any additional permission will be obtained prior to using direct quotes (James, 2008). I plan on conducting a triangulation of both data sets to confirm the validity, credibility, and reliability of the correlation, if one exists.

Risks and Benefits

During year one of my program evaluation, I will only utilize quantitative methods. Even though quantitative methods will answer my research questions, by identifying, "How is student attendance progressing?", the biggest disadvantage of this method is that it leaves out the power of the insight gained for the human reflection. Yet, a mixed methodology integrates the power of the human experience data with the quantified evidence, which in turn, will allow me to build a broader understanding of the relationship between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs. Plus, a mixed methodology approach will allow me to understand the context (changing demographics; economically stable or unstable), understand the process (background that leads to low attendance), and relationships (breakdown the complex relationship between student attendance and performing arts programs), while providing data to understand the opinions/attitudes of groups in the school community regarding attendance.

The potential benefits of identifying a positive correlation between after-school performing arts programs and absenteeism are significant. Each year, schools try interventions to combat student absenteeism. This program evaluation will provide research-based evidence for school districts to increase funding for the performing arts to tackle student absenteeism.

My online surveys pose minimal potential risks to the student, parent, and teacher participants. The surveys are completely anonymous as participants will access the surveys via a third party such as Google Forms or Survey Monkey. Google Forms and Survey Monkey provide aggregated descriptive analysis reports and anonymous individual response data. As a result, it will not be possible to identify a participant with their responses.

SECTION IV: FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION

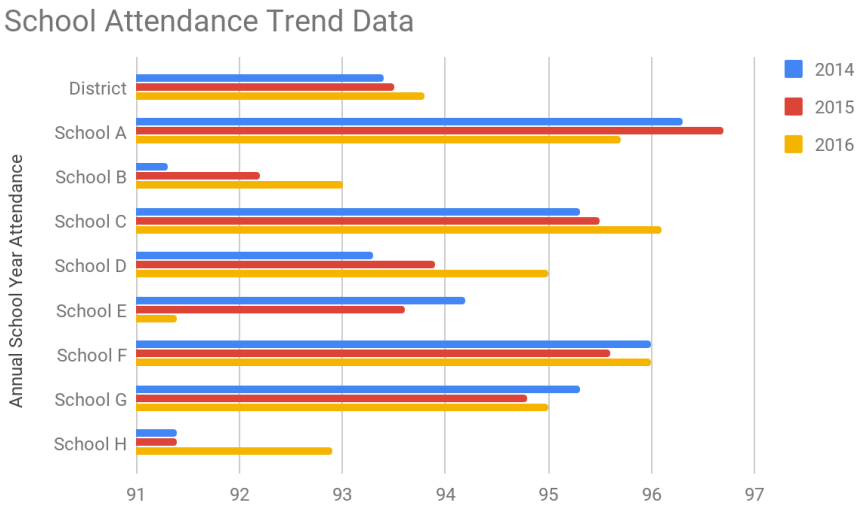
In order to gage the relationship between after-school performing arts programs and absenteeism, this next section focuses on my program evaluation findings to interpret the data. My primary program equation question is, "To what extent do after-school performing arts programs have a relationship with student attendance?"

Findings

Table 4.1 Attendance

Annual School Year Attendance

	2014	2015	2016
District	93.4	93.5	93.8
School A	96.3	96.7	95.7
School B	91.3	92.2	93
School C	95.3	95.5	96.1
School D	93.3	93.9	95
School E	94.2	93.6	91.4
School F	96	95.6	96
School G	95.3	94.8	95
School H	91.4	91.4	92.9



Based on Table 4.1, Schools A, F, and G trend attendance data show a roller coaster of an increase and decrease. Schools B, C, and D show a 3 year consecutive

increase, while School H was consistent for 2014 and 2015, but increased by 1.5% in 2016. Additionally, School H has the lowest student attendance rate for 2015 (91.4%) and the second lowest rate for 2014 (91.4%) and 2016 (92.9%). School E student attendance rate has decreased for 3 consecutive years. Even though all of these schools have percentages in the 90's, the tenths changes are meaningful because they can equate to more instructional time for students.

Table 4.2 Chronic Truancy

Chronic Truancy

	2014	2015	2016
District	27.8	27.3	31.7
School A	16.7	14.0	31.9
School B	60.0	61.9	54.7
School C	15.2	5.3	3.1
School D	48.6	34.1	48.5
School E	35.2	40.5	70.5
School F	16.3	17.8	17.6
School G	13.1	17.9	22.0
School H	30.7	21.8	70.0

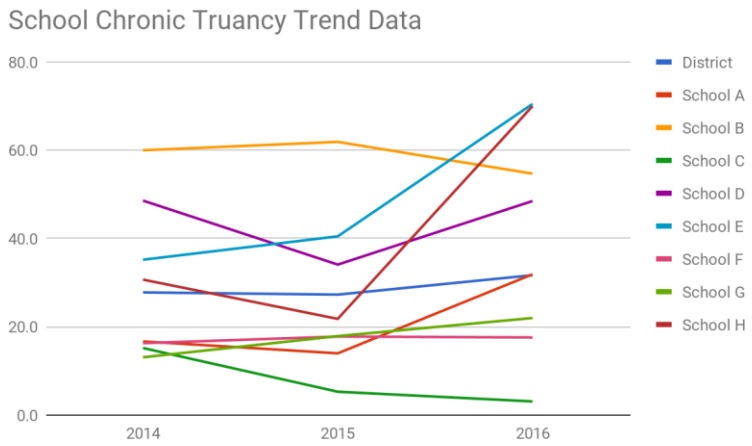


Table 4.2 shows the trend data for a school's Chronic Truancy between school years 2014 through 2016. The following schools had seen a decrease in their chronic truancy rate and then an increase the following year: A, D, and H. School B had seen an

increase of 1.9%, then a decrease of 7.2% the following school year. During 2014 - 2017, Schools E, F, and G experienced consecutive increases in their Chronic Truancy Rate. School C is the only school that decreased their Chronic Truancy Rate for three consecutive years.

Table 4.3 After-School Attendance Rate

After-School Attendance Rate %			
	2014 - 2015	**2015 - 2016**	**2016 - 2017**
School A	70.8%	84.2%	
School B	86.8%	71.7%	66.5%
School C	80.7%	75.3%	
School D	58.8%	45.1%	56.1%
School E	37.2%	65.0%	
School F	83.3%	84.4%	
School G	80.2%	76.5%	
School H	61.4%	47.9%	

Table 4.3.1 After-School Program Attendance Trend Data Bar Graph

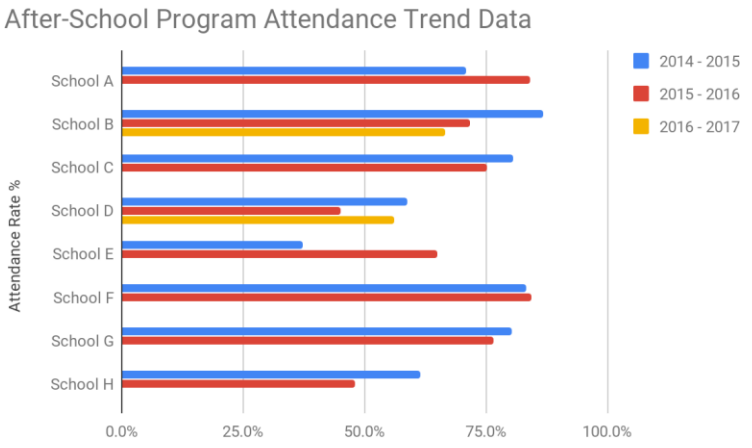


Table 4.3.2 After-School Program Attendance Trend Data Line Graph

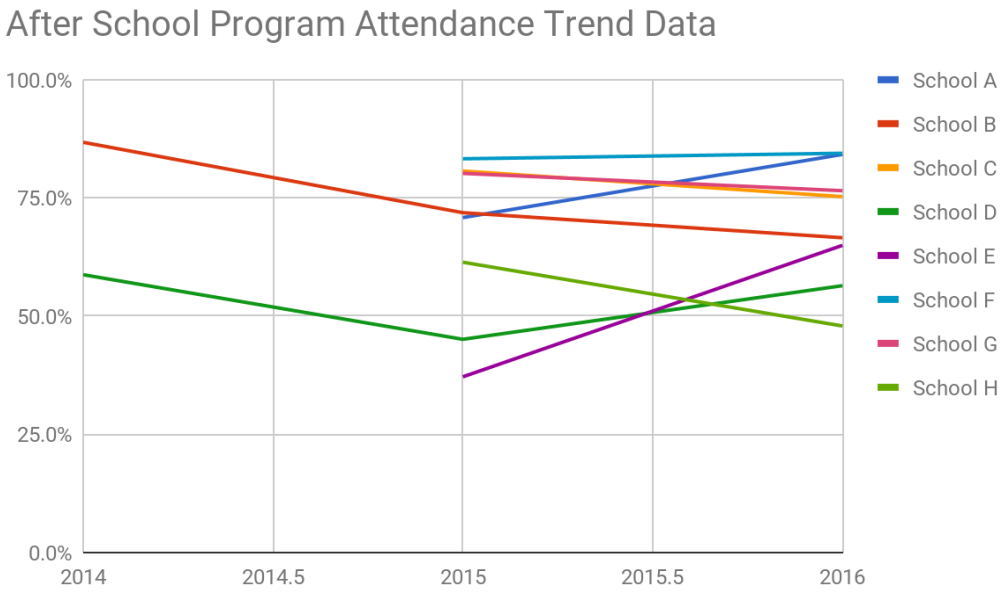


Table 4.3 displays the After-School Attendance Rate for each school. Only School B and School D has data for three school years. Tables 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 shows the same data as Table 4.3, but in a bar graph and line graph format. Each chart shows the attendance rate for 2 or 3 consecutive years of after-school performing arts programs for 8 schools.

Schools B and D are the only schools with three years of After-School Program Attendance data; all of the other schools only have two years of trend data. The chart in Table 4.3 show that Schools A, E, and F had increases each year in their After-School Program attendance rate. While Schools B, C, G, and H had decreases each year in their attendance rate. School D experienced a decrease, and then an increase in their After-School Program Attendance Rate.

Table 4.4 Number of Participants in After-School Programs

# Student Participants in After-School Programs			
	2014 - 2015	**2015 - 2016**	**2016 - 2017**
School A	151	119	
School B	198	129	310
School C	181	228	
School D	213	209	180
School E	182	185	
School F	167	287	
School G	150	296	
School H	129	165	

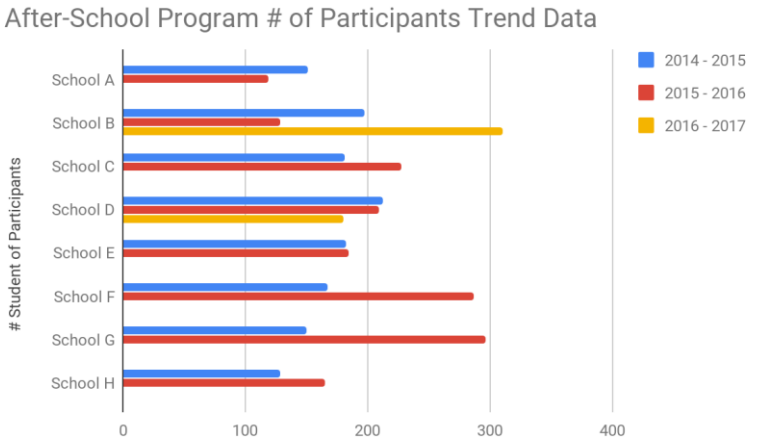


Table 4.4 charts show the after-school performing arts program trend data for the number of students who participated annually. The trend data shows that the following schools had consecutive years of increasing the number of students participating in their after-school programs: Schools C, E, F, G, and H. Whereas, Schools A and D had consecutive years of decreasing the number of students participating. School B experienced a decrease of 69 students one year and then an increase of 181 students the next year.

Table 4.5 Comparison of School & After-school Attendance Data

	2014 - 2015		2015 - 2016		2016 - 2017	
	School Attendance	**After School Attendance**	**School Attendance**	**After-school Attendance**	**School Attendance**	**After-school Attendance**
District	93.4%		93.5%		93.8%	
School A	96.3%	70.8%	96.7%	84.2%	95.7%	
School B	91.3%	86.8%	92.2%	71.7%	93.0%	66.5%
School C	95.3%	80.7%	95.5%	75.3%	96.1%	
School D	93.3%	58.8%	93.9%	45.1%	95.0%	56.1%
School E	94.2%	37.2%	93.6%	65.0%	91.4%	
School F	96.0%	83.3%	95.6%	84.4%	96.0%	
School G	95.3%	80.2%	94.8%	76.5%	95.0%	
School H	91.4%	61.4%	91.4%	47.9%	92.9%	

Correlation of School & After-school Attendance:	**0.148**	**0.713**

	2014 - 2016		2015 - 2017	
	School Growth	After School Growth	School Growth	After School Growth
District	0.11%		0.32%	
School A	0.42%	19%	-1.03%	
School B	0.99%	-17%	0.87%	-7%
School C	0.21%	-7%	0.63%	
School D	0.64%	-23%	1.17%	24%
School E	-0.64%	75%	-2.35%	
School F	-0.42%	1%	0.42%	
School G	-0.52%	-5%	0.21%	
School H	0.00%	-22%	1.64%	

	2014 - 2017	
	School Growth	After School Growth
School B	1.86%	-23%
School D	0.84%	-4%

Calculation Sample of Growth:

School A Growth

0.42 =	(96.7 - 96.3)
	96.3

The charts in Table 4.5 compare the school and after-school program attendance data. The first chart calculates *r*, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of After-School Program Attendance (independent variable) and School Attendance (dependent variable). For 2014 - 2015 school year, the correlation coefficient, *r = 0.148*, is a weak positive linear relationship. However, for the 2015 - 2016, the correlation coefficient, *r = 0.713*, is a strong positive linear relationship. The sample size of schools for 2016 - 2017 was not large enough to calculate the correlation coefficient.

The second chart in Table 4.5 calculates the attendance growth for each school and after-school program. Growth was calculated by taking the difference of the second year and first year rates divided by the first-year rate (See formula example in Table 4.5).

The following findings are from an analysis of attendance growth from 2014 - 2016. School A was the only school with both positive School Attendance Growth and After-School Attendance Program Growth. Schools B, C, and D had positive School Attendance Growth with negative After-School Attendance Growth. Schools E, F, and H had negative School Attendance Growth with positive After-School Attendance Growth. These findings are opposite of what this program evaluation is arguing. A deeper dive into these schools climate and culture data and the type of after-school programs offered is needed to better understand the relationship findings. Lastly, School G had both negative School Attendance Growth and After-School Attendance Program Growth.

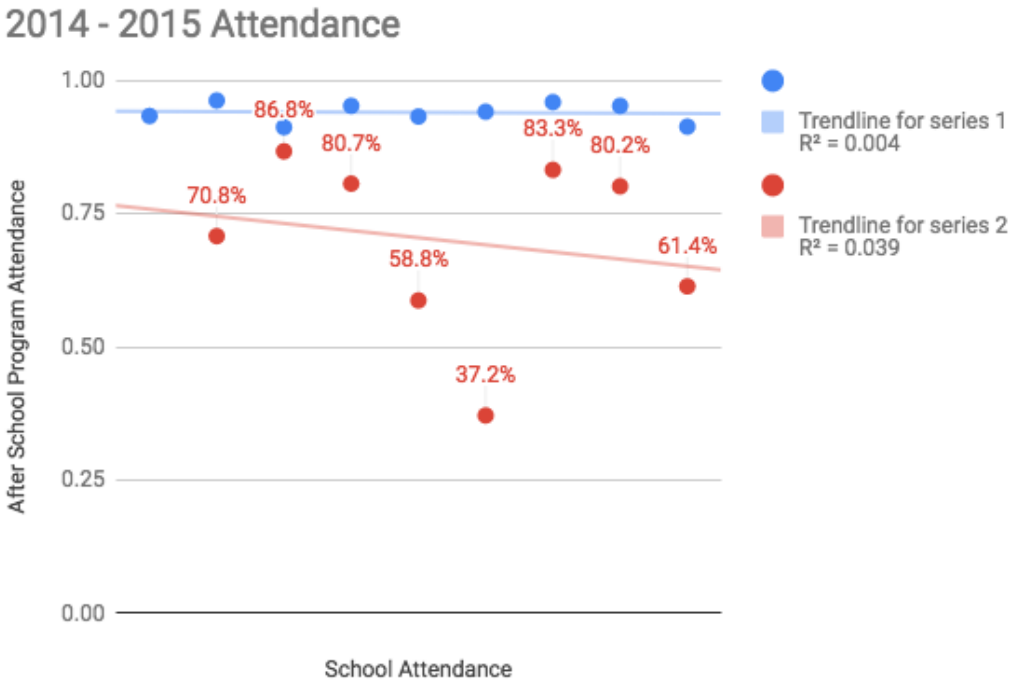
Additionally, an analysis was done on attendance growth from 2014 - 2017 for the two schools that had data. Over three consecutive school years, Schools B and D both had positive School Attendance Growth with negative After-School Attendance Growth.

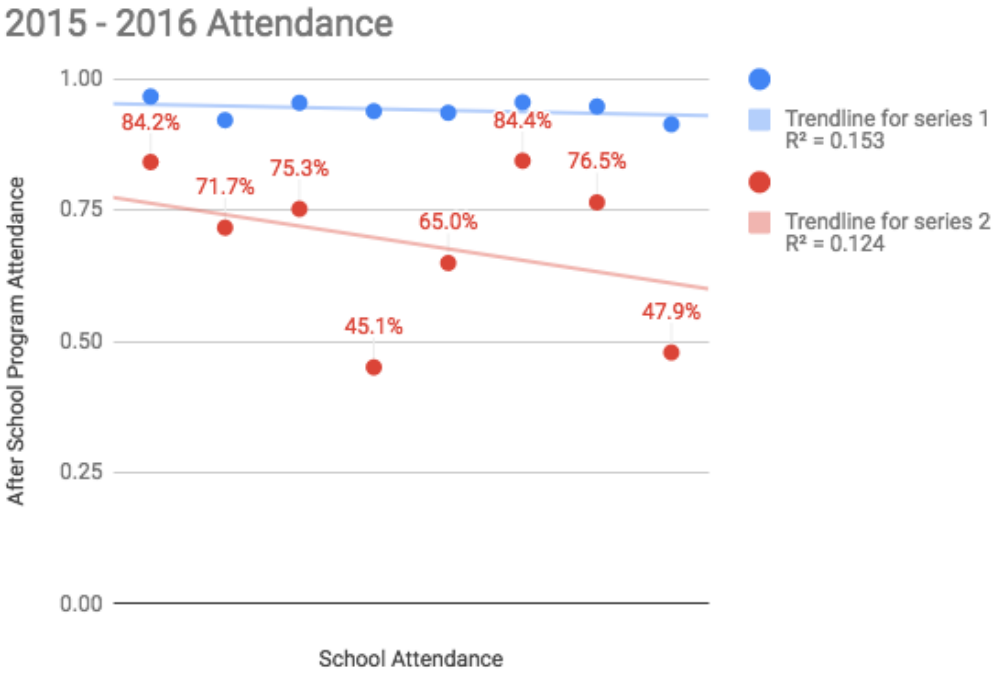
The results show that the second year of implementation for an After-School Program, there is a strong positive linear relationship between School Attendance and After-School Program Attendance.

These findings make it difficult to answer the primary question of this program evaluation. Schools A, B, C, and D had positive student attendance growth, but Schools E, F, G, and H had negative student attendance growth. All schools implemented an after-school performing arts program. The data implies that a longer study is needed to gage what type of linear relationship exist between School Attendance and After-School Program Attendance.

I would speculate that for schools with three to five consecutive years of implementing after-school performing arts programing would yield a strong positive linear relationship between School Attendance and After-School Program Attendance. However, a yearly analysis of the after-school programs being offered needs to be conducted to ensure that the programs meet the needs of the school community to keep interest high in participating in the after-school programs.

Table 4.6 Regression Line of Attendance Data





In order to analyze how close the attendance data fits to a regression line, the two charts in Table 4.6 show the statistical measure R^2 created for 2014 - 2015 and 2015 - 2016. In 2014 - 2015, the coefficient of determination for School Attendance is $R^2 = 0.004$ and for After-School Program Attendance it is $R^2 = 0.039$. For the 2015 - 2016 school year, the School Attendance measure is $R^2 = 0.153$ and the After-School Program Attendance measure is $R^2 = 0.124$.

Table 4.7 T-test

	2014 - 2015		2015 - 2016		2016 - 2017	
	School Attendance	After-school Attendance	School Attendance	After-school Attendance	School Attendance	After-school Attendance
District	93.4%		93.5%		93.8%	
School A	96.3%	70.8%	96.7%	84.2%	95.7%	
School B	91.3%	86.8%	92.2%	71.7%	93.0%	66.5%
School C	95.3%	80.7%	95.5%	75.3%	96.1%	
School D	93.3%	58.8%	93.9%	45.1%	95.0%	56.1%
School E	94.2%	37.2%	93.6%	65.0%	91.4%	
School F	96.0%	83.3%	95.6%	84.4%	96.0%	
School G	95.3%	80.2%	94.8%	76.5%	95.0%	
School H	91.4%	61.4%	91.4%	47.9%	92.9%	
Average	94.1%	69.9%	94.2%	68.8%	94.4%	61.3%
Standard Dev.	0.0197	0.1671	0.0179	0.1514	0.0173	0.0731
T-Test	0.00445		0.00200			

In order to compare the averages (means) of the data for Student Attendance and After-School Program Attendance, a paired T-test, with a grouping variable of School Attendance, was completed to identify if they are different from each other and to see how significant the differences are. The T-test variable, specifically, the comparison categories are the paired student attendance during school and the after-school program student attendance. The T-test formula used was with 2 tails to compare both above and

below and a type three which does not assume that the variation in both data sets is the same because there is no reason within this evaluation to assume that they are. The reason for performing a paired T-test on the data is to reduce the intersubject variability. Table 4.7 shows the 2014 - 2015 *p-value* is 0.00445 and the 2015 - 2016 *p-value* is 0.00200. To statistically test my hypothesis, the *p-value* was calculated to help determine the significance of the results while testing the validity of the correlation between Student Attendance and After-School Program Attendance.

Interpretation

The correlation coefficient for two consecutive years of an After-School Program yielded a strong positive relationship with a School's Attendance. These results are significant because they imply that with consistent implementation of an After-School Program, a district can improve their overall year-to-date student attendance. Additionally, there could be a third variable influencing student attendance that is not being captured by this program evaluation. Unfortunately, there was not a large enough sample size for schools with three consecutive years of an After-School Program to disaggregate. Therefore, it is unclear why this data turned out this way because there were not a large enough sample of school data to analyze for three consecutive years. Regardless of the reason, the strong positive correlation supports Posner and Vandell's findings that involvement in after-school programs meant more time in academic activities (1994). Going beyond the data, it would be interesting to analyze these schools' academic data to see if their summative assessment scores also increased during this time.

It is interesting that in Table 4.5, School A is the only school with both positive Student Attendance Growth and After-School Attendance Growth. Going beyond the

data, it would be intriguing to explore the unique school culture and climate that School A has compared to the other schools to see what they offer versus the other schools. For a future study, it would be intriguing to dive deep into School A's 5Essential trend data to understand the culture and climate from the perspectives of the parents, students, and staff. Additionally, an analysis of the types of after-school programs School A offered and how they identified those programs could be a future evaluation. On the other side of the spectrum, in Table 4.5 shows that School G is the only school with both negative School Attendance Growth and After-School Attendance Program Growth.

In order to dive deeper into the data and visualize how close the data fits to a regression line, Table 4.6 R^2 charts were created. The closer R^2 is to 1.0, the better the fit of the regression line resulting in the line passing through all of the points. In both years, the statistical measure of R^2 is low which means that the model does not explain the variability of the response data around its mean. These low R^2 measures are problematic in predicting precisely the relationship between School Attendance and After-School Program Attendance. It is important to note that even if the R^2 value is low and there are statistically significant predictors, then important conclusions can still be drawn about how changes in the predictor values relate to changes in the response values.

T-tests are used to test whether differences are statistically significant and the *p-value* standard is 0.05. The 2014 - 2015 *p-value* of 0.00445 is significantly below the standard so that is a statistically significant result and the increase in Student Attendance Rate is significantly less than the increase in After-School Program Attendance. Similarly, Table 4.7 shows the 2015 - 2016 *p-value* = 0.00200 is significantly below the

standard so that is a statistically significant result and the increase in Student Attendance Rate is significantly less than the increase in After-School Program Attendance.

SECTION V: JUDGMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of my evaluation was to see if there is a correlation between student attendance and participation in after-school performing arts programs. My goal was to explain the strength and the direction of the relationships between student attendance and after-school performing arts programs. The data is mixed. There is a strong positive correlation between a student's daily attendance and participation in an after-school performing arts program, but it is unclear if this is a result of the after-school programs. It is my belief that there is a positive relationship, but longitudinal data for at least five consecutive years is needed to gain a better understanding of the relationship. In the end, each school did increase their average daily attendance, therefore, the students in these schools did have more instructional time. Even though the results are mixed, data does imply that if a school consistently implements an After-School Program over consecutive years, then the school should improve their overall year-to-date student attendance. My primary question is, "To what extent do after-school performing arts programs have a relationship with student attendance?" Based on the data disaggregation, there is a strong positive correlation that is significant, but it is unclear if outside values also contributed to the increased attendance. Moving forward, it is imperative that I intertwine this program evaluation with my change plan to conduct the qualitative analysis of the After-School Performing Arts programs that I implement in a school district.

I hope that this program evaluation fosters a culture of evaluative thinking within a school and amongst all staff members to be intentional around student attendance. I would recommend that schools explore their student attendance data, climate and culture data, and after-school program data together to get a holistic picture of how to improve

student attendance. Equally as important, are the types of after-school programs that are offered each year. I recommend that schools engage the parents and students when identifying the types of programs that will be offered.

A deep dive needs to include a theoretical framework addressing social capitol theory and/or social control theory to help find the root cause of the attendance epidemic the country faces. Some argue that social capital is a public good (Coleman, 1988) and others advocate that social capital is in fact a private good (Fukuyama, 2001). Additionally, Fukuyama states that social capital produces extensive positive and negative externalities (2002). Regardless of whether the public or private benefits from social capital, there are many empirical studies that show the importance of social capital to socioeconomic phenomena (Krishna, 2001) such as the significance of human relations, of networks, quality of life and of developmental performance (Adam & Roncevic, 2003).

On the other hand, social control theory states that people do not break the law (missing school) as a result of people's relationships, values, commitments, beliefs, and norms. Social control theory focuses on the moral codes that are internalized for individuals and to their community. Schools need to engage key stakeholders to foster a culture of student attendance to strengthen their moral codes around the importance of attending school each day.

Each theoretical framework focuses on establishing relationships with key stakeholders (parents, community members, students, and staff) to develop a healthy culture of student attendance to maximize learning.

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Appendix A: Teacher Survey Questions

Question 1: Unique Identifier # of Survey

Question 2: Student Grade

To what extent have you observed these behaviors in this student:

Question 3: Improve his/her student attendance.

Question 4: Improve his/her performance in reading.

Question 5: Improve his/her performance in math.

Question 6: Improve his/her social skills.

Question 7: Exhibit more persistence in his/her work in class.

Question 8: Student collaborates with his/her peers more frequently.

Question 9: Please provide some specific examples that will help us understand your ratings.

Appendix B: Parent Survey Questions

Question 1: Unique Identifier # of Survey

Question 2: Student Grade

Question 3: My child is more interested in attending school.

Question 4: My child shows interest in being in the after-school performing arts program.

Question 5: My child appears more engaged or interested in learning.

Question 6: My child has shown improved reading performance because of participation in the after-school performing arts program.

Question 7: My child has shown improved math performance because of participation in the after-school performing arts program.

Question 8: My child has shown improved social skills because of participation in the after-school performing arts program.

Question 9: My child is learning to express ideas through words or the arts.

Question 10: My child is learning skills in an art form (visual art, dance, music, etc.).

Question 11: My child is learning how to work with other students.

Question 12: My child is learning how to deal with conflict or difficult situations.

Question 13: My child is learning how to work toward a goal or final product.

Question 14: Please provide some specific examples that will help us understand your ratings.

Appendix C: Student Survey

Question 1: Unique Identifier # of Survey **Question 2**: Grade Level

Question 3: I am more interested in attending school.

Question 4: My interest in school has increased since participating in the after-school performing arts program.

Question 5: I am more engaged or interested in learning.

Question 6: Participation in the after-school performing arts program has helped me learn to read better.

Question 7: Participation in the after-school performing arts program has helped me understand math better.

Question 8: Participation in the after-school performing arts program has helped me learn how to share my feelings better.

Question 9: Participation in the after-school performing arts program has helped me feel proud about my work.

Question 10: Participation in the after-school performing arts program has provided me a safe place to spend my time after-school.

Question 11: Participation in the after-school performing arts program has helped me to enjoy school more.

Question 12: I look forward to continue participating in the after-school performing arts program next year.

Question 13: Please provide some specific examples that will help us understand your ratings.

Appendix D: Survey Informed Consent

My name is Robert G. Hubbird, and I am a Doctoral student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in this study, **"Do Performing Arts Programs Impact Student Attendance?",** occurring from September 2016-June 2017. The purpose of this study is to understand how participation in after-school performing arts programs affects student attendance. This study will help researchers develop a deeper understanding of the correlation between absenteeism and participation in after-school performing arts programs. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Robert G. Hubbird, Doctoral student, at National Louis University, Chicago. As a participant, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the impact of participation in an after-school performing arts programs correlation to a student's daily attendance and *not* to advocate for performing arts programs. Participation in this study will include:

- 1 end of the year online survey to be completed at your convenience in spring of 2016 – 17 school year. See Appendix A.
    - The online survey will last up to 12 min. and include approximately 10 - 15 questions to understand how participation in an after-school performing arts program impacted their absenteeism.
    - The online survey link will be emailed to the participations of the after-school performing arts program. Survey responses will be anonymous.

The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported in group form, and employed to inform policy change around interventions to tackle student absenteeism and funding for performing arts programs. Participants' identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants).

To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will secure data on a locked computer; only the researcher will have access to the data.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be useful to the after-school program organizations and school districts looking to initiate or refine student absenteeism initiatives.

Upon request, you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email Robert G. Hubbird, at rhubbird@my.nl.edu to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Robert G. Hubbird, rhubbird@my.nl.edu at 773-988-5420.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Harrington Gibson at Harrington.Gibson@nl.edu or the chair of NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: Shaunti Knauth; email: shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; phone: 312-261-3526. Chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date
_____	_____
Researcher's Signature	Date

Appendix E: Invitation Email for Students, Parents, and Teachers

Dear Survey Participants,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my program evaluation by completing the online survey. I am using the after-school performing arts survey as one source of valuable data to help focus our planning on to address absenteeism. The online survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete, and your responses are completely anonymous. The online survey may be accessed through End Date.

This email contains all the information required to complete the online survey. Follow the steps listed below and you will be able to access and complete the survey.

1. Click on link below to access survey.
2. Click on student, parent, or teacher.
3. Enter student's grade-level
4. Click on Continue / Next to begin the survey
5. Keep clicking continue / next once you have answered the question(s) on that page until you get to a submit button.

No one will be able to connect email address with your survey answers. I want to reiterate that participation is voluntary and each participant has the right to withdrawal from the after-school performing arts program at any time and/or does not have to complete the online survey without any negative consequences.

In case of difficulties, please feel free to contact me at rhubbird@my.nl.edu.

Thank you,

Robert G. Hubbird