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# An Evaluation of a Secondary Student Advisement Program

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AN EVALUATION OF A SECONDARY STUDENT ADVISEMENT PROGRAM

by

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(Under the Direction of James E. Green)

ABSTRACT

This mixed methods program evaluation examines the effectiveness of a high school advisory program in meeting its stated goals from the perspective of its various stakeholders. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods and applying a concurrent embedded strategy, the researcher uses Stufflebeam's CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, McKee & McKee, 2003) as a framework to conduct a study of the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program in a rural high school in Georgia. Surveys were administered to 205 students, 40 parents, and 17 advisors. Two district administrators, three school administrators, and two counselors were interviewed. In addition, focus group discussions were held with a purposeful sample of students, recent graduates, parents, and faculty advisors. As a final step, the ancillary materials utilized in the program were analyzed.

Analysis of the data collected indicates that stakeholders believe the program goals are being met. Identified strengths of the program include the advisors who serve as caring, adult advocates for advisees, monitor their advisees' academic progress, and celebrate their achievements. Advisor training, communication between the home and school, and a balanced curriculum were identified as areas needing improvement. The end goal for program evaluation (Stufflebeam et al., 2003) is to determine a program's effectiveness in order to inform decision making about the program. The findings from this study will be disseminated to school and district administrators and the School Advisory Committee, in order to enable school leaders to make informed decisions about the TAA program.

INDEX WORDS: Teachers-as-advisors, Advisory, Advisory program, High school, High school advisory program, Program evaluation, Case study evaluation, Evaluation

AN EVALUATION OF A SECONDARY STUDENT ADVISEMENT PROGRAM

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DEDICATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my mother, Mrs. Robbie L. Jordan, and my mentor, Mrs. Delores T. McGraw. My mother taught me to keep my priorities straight (i.e., "Seek first the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, and all other things would be added unto me" [Matt. 6:33]). A strong, resourceful, talented, intelligent, and caring woman, she was my inspiration and my motivation, and I will cherish her memory always.

The second strong, unbelievably gifted woman in whose memory I dedicate this project was my sixth grade English teacher and my high school chorus teacher, my STAR Teacher, "Miss T." She took me under her wing when I moved to the junior high / high school campus my sixth grade year, and we shared so many significant life experiences thereafter. Her work ethic, musical talent, and love of high fashion made an indelible imprint on my life. I lost both women in the middle of this journey to completing my dissertation, but I know they would be so proud.

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INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of the success of programs which have been implemented in schools does not always take place. Too often, schools make the decision to adopt or implement a program (or have a program thrust upon them), then roll it out only to discard it within a short span of time without truly determining whether the expected outcomes were realized (Gallagher, 2006; Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007). In this age of accountability, however, it is imperative that schools carefully and thoroughly analyze programs which have been initiated. One such program, the Teachers-As-Advisors Program, promoted for secondary schools by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) in its *Graduation Counts!* Manual (2006), risks following such a path if a comprehensive program evaluation is not implemented at the local and state levels.

The importance and benefits of an effective advisory program cannot be disputed. Glatthorn and Jailall (2000) have asserted the major problem in schools is not low student academic achievement, but the real problem is student alienation. They point out that there are too many schools without "heart." Schools where "everyone feels known, is considered important, and works for the common good" (p. 113) are schools with heart. National educational leaders such as Gene Bottoms of the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) [*High Schools that Work* initiative], Bill Daggett of the International Center for Leadership in Education, and Bill Gates of the Gates Foundation in their research on effective schools have provided three pieces to solve the puzzle of educating students in the 21st century—rigor, relevance, and relationships. In addition, the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (2007) devotes its third session in the training of school leaders to relationships. The premise, therefore, is that in order for students to succeed academically, they must feel a

sense of belonging and form caring relationships at school—with teachers and their peers. Since the building of relationships is so important, educational leaders must evaluate the effectiveness of the vehicle with which they have chosen to foster these relationships—in this case, the student advisement program.

## Background

### Historical Perspective

Student advisement has undergone some substantive changes over the past century. What began as vocational guidance in the late 19th and early 20th century changed to career counseling and career development in the 1950s (Pope, 2000). Pope stated, "The birth and subsequent development of career counseling in the United States has occurred during times of major societal change" (p. 194). With these changes in mind, he developed the following social transitions model to describe the development of career counseling in the United States (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Career Counseling in the United States*

| CAREER COUNSELING IN THE UNITED STATES | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage** | **Years** | **Focus** |
| 1 | 1890-1919 | Job Placement Services |
| 2 | 1920-1939 | Educational Guidance in the Schools |
| 3 | 1940-1959 | Colleges and Universities and the Training of Counselors |
| 4 | 1960-1979 | Meaningful Work and Organizational Career Development |
| 5 | 1980-1989 | Independent Practice Career Counseling and Outplacement Counseling |
| 6 | 1990-Present | A Focus on the School-to-Job Transition, Internalization of Career Counseling, Multicultural Career Counseling, and Increasing Sophistication in the Use of Technology |

Gysbers and Henderson (2001) described the first attempts at implementation of the guidance and counseling programs as simply appointing teachers to the position of vocational counselor with no formal organizational structure in place; frequently these teachers were not relieved of their teaching duties and received no additional pay. By the 1960s, partly as a result of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, full-time personnel were being hired to provide guidance and counseling in the schools. An organizational structure, termed "pupil personnel services," was more or less in place.

As guidance and counseling has evolved and responded to societal change, the focus of the program has evolved. In 1906, in the midst of the Progressive Era, Frank Parsons, the father of vocational counseling, gave a lecture to the Economic Club of Boston in which he set forth the idea that youth needed help in choosing a vocation (Zytowski, 2001). His legacy, however, has encompassed more than matching an individual with a job; according to O'Brien (2001), Parsons actually addressed the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of career development as well. Johnson and Johnson (2003) discussed this changing focus of guidance and counseling from helping students match their skills with available job options to providing mental health counseling (an add-on);  aiding in college and university placement and assisting in helping students find financial aid; advising more students to take math and science; and preparing counselors to provide individual and group counseling.

Today, the focus is on a more comprehensive guidance and counseling program consisting of three elements: content, organizational framework, and resources (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The content element identifies competencies that students achieve, usually displayed by grade level or grade-level groupings (elementary, middle, and high school) and organized by domains (career, academic, and personal/social). The content of advisory programs

evolved from Parson's vocational counseling (1906) to encompass academic, career, and personal/social areas; likewise, the delivery model has evolved to encompass both centralized and decentralized counseling and advisory programs.

In the centralized models at the high school level, the counseling or career center, staffed by guidance counselors and, perhaps, a paraprofessional, provides all advisement services for students. The task of providing meaningful services to students is quite difficult with the student to counselor ratio being funded by the Georgia Department of Education at a rate of 400 to 1 FTE (full time equivalent count). For this reason, the movement in recent years has been to a more decentralized model—teachers serving as advisors at the secondary level. The Georgia State Department of Education has published a *Graduation Counts!* booklet with one entire section devoted to and encouraging schools to develop a Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) program.

Colleges and universities, on the other hand, moved in a somewhat different direction. Teachers with an interest in counseling but no formal training first served as faculty advisors for students. However, what began as vocational guidance for the influx of new, more non-traditional college students following World War II transitioned into professional counseling centers with greater emphasis on the clinical approach. Hodges (2001) described the need for more specific training, coordination of services, and philosophical paradigm shifting in order to meet the counseling needs of the 21st century's more multicultural, pluralistic, and diverse high-tech age. In addition, some colleges and universities have found peer counseling to be a viable part of their cadre of counseling services (Hodges, 2001; Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008).

**Advisement and Academic Achievement**

Whatever the framework used to provide advisement, the key to student academic success is the relationship (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2000). Much of the research conducted in the

area of relationships focuses on the larger construct of students' sense of belonging as a definite influence on academic achievement. For example, studies such as the one conducted by Faircloth and Hamm (2005) support this conclusion. Using structural equation modeling, these authors investigated the dimensions and mechanisms of belonging relevant to motivation and achievement among high schools representing four ethnic groups: African American, Asian-descent, Latino, and European American. They used survey data from 9th-12th grade students ($N$ = 5,494) attending seven ethnically-diverse high schools. They found all four measures of belonging (student-teacher relationships, relationships with peers, extra-curricular involvement, and perceived discrimination) were significant for European American and Latino students. Even though some limitations were found (the pre-determination of four dimensions of belonging and problems with one-dimensional conceptualization of two of the measured variables), Faircloth and Hamm still concluded that "…belonging as a construct best explained the relationship between motivation and achievement, as measured by the study" (p. 304).

Booker (2004) also examined this idea of school belonging and academic achievement as it relates to African American adolescents, with an emphasis on possible cultural and ecological influences. Using a mixed method quantitative and qualitative design, the researcher administered Goodenow's (1993) Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM) to a cross-sectional group of 61 10th, 11th and 12th graders and conducted in-depth individual interviews with seven males and six females of the original pool of students completing the survey. Results of the study show that students described their sense of belonging in many ways with the following factors tending to influence their sense of belonging most: relationships with peers, teachers, and involvement in extra-curricular activities.  In the individual interviews, students reported that their academic achievement was most influenced by personal and, to a

lesser extent, parental motivations. Booker noted that there may be latent variables (such as motivation, participation and specific interpersonal relationships) not tested in this study which explain the reason for the lack of a relationship between belonging and achievement.

Looking at this issue of relationships at a more direct level, Welkowitz et al. (2000) conducted interviews with 59 high school students who participated in a Mentor/Advisor Project in Vermont funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to evaluate the program's effect on the students; in their report, they focused on the interview data obtained from the students. Results indicated that the mentor/advisor program had a positive effect, particularly on "at-risk" students, with respect to relationship building, increased sense of control, and positive self-concept. Students reported that being a part of their mentor group gave them a chance to be accepted and provided them with a sense of belonging not based on traditional social groups.

Smerdon (2002) studied the construct of school membership using a sample population of 11,807 students in the National Education Longitudinal Study. The first wave of longitudinal data was collected in 1988 from 8th graders, followed by a second wave in 1990 when the students were in the 10th grade. Full cognitive data and school and student questionnaires were available for the base year and the first follow-up. Smerdon describes school membership as inclusive of (a) feelings of belonging, (b) commitment to school, and (c) commitment to academic work. Results of the multilevel analysis, measured by the hierarchical linear modeling (HLM/2L) program developed by Bryk (1986), indicated that perceived school membership varies significantly among schools and can be modeled as a function of school characteristics; students' opportunities and experiences within the schools they attend appeared to be a stronger factor for determining perceptions of membership. Recommendations for reform include the

development of a supportive school environment in which relationships between students and adults and students and their peers are considered essential to the students' growth and development.

Advisory programs are important not only at the secondary level but also at the collegiate level. Sanchez-Leguelinel (2008) reported the findings of a study of 210 college sophomores who had completed between 30 and 44 credits at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. These sophomores participated in a Sophomore Peer Counseling Program, the purpose of which was to increase retention, academic performance, and college satisfaction for sophomores during their critical second year. The program consisted of a mandatory one-on-one peer academic advisement session and dissemination of information regarding various services and activities designed to address the students' professional and social needs. The participants were asked to complete the Sophomore Peer Counseling Program: Student Satisfaction Survey, which was handed out at the end of the counseling session; students were to return the survey at their convenience; the survey was a 22-item self-report instrument developed by the author. There were several limitations to be considered when interpreting the results; however, one observation made by the researcher was that students rated the one-on-one counseling session more favorably than the other activities and services which were available.

If the research supports the importance of advisories to student success, the next logical step once a program has been implemented is to determine its effectiveness. Research must be conducted to gauge the success of how the program is structured and administered, as well as the results.

**Program Evaluation**

Advisory programs are integral and necessary components of a school's comprehensive

plan to promote student achievement and academic success, but they are only one component of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. Gysbers and Henderson (2001) gave a detailed overview of the three components of a comprehensive program referenced earlier in this chapter. For the first component, content, competencies deemed important by the school district for students to master as a result of participating in the program are identified. Organizational framework, the second element, is composed of three structural components (definition, rationale, and assumptions) and four program components (guidance curriculum, individual planning, response services, and system support), along with a suggested plan for distribution of the school counselor's time to cover the four program components. The final element, resources, looks at the human, financial, and political resources required to fully implement the program. Advisory programs, as one means of meeting the goals of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, embody each of these components; they have competencies, an organizational framework, and resources.

When fully implemented, programs must be evaluated in order to determine their effectiveness. The three key questions about counseling program accountability which follow were framed by Myrick (2003), a leading counselor educator:

1. Is there a written program with standards in place?

2. What counselor interventions or activities are used to address those standards and student needs?

3. What evidence is there that the program and specific interventions are making a positive difference?

Even though Myrick was addressing the guidance and counseling program as a whole, the questions can be applied to advisory programs as well. Much has been written on the

development of advisory programs, but very little research exists which addresses the comprehensive evaluation of them (GaDOE, 2006; Osofsky, Sinner, & Wolk, 2003; SREB, 2006).

Stufflebeam, McKee, and McKee (2003) discussed the importance of comprehensive program evaluation. After having conducted a thorough study of research on the topic, these authors pointed out the paradigm shift in the impetus for program evaluation. They say earlier approaches to program evaluation were focused on verifying the school's failures in meeting "dubious" program goals, not on identifying the deficiencies and developing a plan to remediate them. However, most of the evaluation research projects in schools which Stufflebeam et al. (2003) cited were initiated because of federal requirements; they were not initiated because of the school or school district's interest in determining a program's effectiveness in order to inform decision making about that program.

A study which bears out this latter conclusion was conducted by Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, and Siegle (2008) on method selection in conclusions about the effectiveness of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. According to the researchers, a subsection of the No Child Left Behind Act (the Access to High Standards Act) of 2001, provides for support through allocation of federal grants to high school and middle school level programs (such as AVID) designed to increase students' participation and success in advanced placement (AP) programs. Subsequently, applicants for the AP incentive grants are required to provide a plan for program evaluation that specifies the types of data to be collected, the methods of data collection, instrument development, and the method of data analysis in order to be considered for the funding.

Again, informed decisions about programs implemented in schools cannot be made

without comprehensive evaluation data and data analysis. Therefore, program evaluation is necessary.

## Problem Statement

Accountability is not a new phenomenon. The need for and importance of accountability for outcomes has been stressed in every decade since the 1920s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Yet, fulfilling the need for research that helps drive both the important decisions that are made and the outcomes of those decisions has been relatively sparse, particularly by practitioners at the secondary level.

School leaders must take the lead role in evaluating the programs that schools implement. One such program, the Teachers-As-Advisors Program, promoted in secondary schools by the Georgia Department of Education in its *Graduation Counts!* Manual (2006), will follow the path of other programs if a comprehensive program evaluation is not implemented at local and state levels. Currently the emphasis is only implementation of Teachers-As-Advisors programs. No mandate has been issued to require evaluation data on such programs.

In the Wisteria County School System, the Teachers-As-Advisors Program was implemented for grades 9-12 eleven years ago, and for grades 6-8 eight years ago. Since its inception, the program has not been evaluated. In order to determine the effectiveness of the program, this researcher will conduct a program evaluation which examines various stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated goals.

## Research Questions

In order to evaluate the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program, the following research questions will serve as a guide:

**Overarching Question:** How do the various stakeholders--students, recent graduates, parents, faculty advisors, and administrators--in the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated goals?

> **Sub-Question$_1$:** To what extent does the TAA Program provide a caring, trained adult advocate?
>
> **Sub-Question$_2$:** To what extent does the TAA Program establish regular communication and an effective link between home and school?
>
> **Sub-Question$_3$:** To what extent does the TAA Program create, facilitate, and guide student movement toward a career concentration?
>
> **Sub-Question$_4$:** To what extent does the TAA Program facilitate seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families?

## Method

The method selected to conduct this research, a program evaluation, has been purposefully chosen to address the research questions. The descriptions which follow elaborate on the research design, setting, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

### Research Design

This investigation was conducted as a program evaluation, with Stufflebeam's Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model (Stufflebeam, McKee, & McKee, 2003) serving as the framework. The CIPP model is especially useful for conducting a comprehensive evaluation of a given school program for the purpose of formative evaluation and guiding program development. According to Stufflebeam, McKee, and McKee, multiple sources of data of various kinds are

used in a program evaluation, hence the design can also be characterized as mixed method. In the case of this program evaluation, the mixed method approach made use of a concurrent embedded strategy (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative data in the form of surveys were utilized in conjunction with qualitative data in the form of interviews. In addition, content analysis of selected school documents, such as policy manuals, student and teacher handbooks, and professional development materials were included in the qualitative data collection and analysis.

**Setting**

The Teachers-As-Advisors Program was implemented during the 2003-04 school year at Wisteria High School. The high school, located in rural Georgia, currently serves 920 students in grades 9-12. The student distribution is as follows: 9th grade – 255 students; 10th grade – 246 students; 11th grade – 227 students; 12th grade – 192 students; gender – 49% female, 51% male; and ethnicity – 75% Black, 23% White, 2% other. Approximately 75% of the students qualify for free or reduced price meals. Despite the low socio-economic status of the students the school's graduation rate for 2008 was 76% compared to the state of Georgia's graduation rate of 75.4% (GaDOE, 2008).

With this demographic information as a backdrop, the Wisteria County High School secondary advisement committee and this researcher, as chair of the committee, realized the need to evaluate the effectiveness of its school-wide advisement program. The program is a shared component of student services and the guidance and counseling program of the high school; sharing in the oversight of the program is the School Advisement Committee, composed of administrators, counselors, teachers, and students. While the school's guidance counselors have been and continue to be an integral part of its development and implementation, the primary

responsibility for coordinating the advisory program rests with the assistant principal for student services.

The Wisteria County High School TAA program as designed utilizes every teacher, all but one building level administrator, and both counselors to provide academic, interpersonal, and career guidance to groups of 12 to 15 students in weekly advisement sessions. Advisement groups remain intact for all four years; changes are made by exception only. The mission of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program, as stated in its advisement brochure, is to "ensure high levels of student achievement through the following:

1. providing a caring, trained adult advocate;

2. establishing regular communications and an effective link between home and school;

3. advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievements;

4. creating, facilitating and guiding movement toward a career concentration so that each child will be post-secondary ready; and

5. facilitating a seamless academic and social transition across grades and schools for students and their families."

**Participants**

Multi-level sampling was utilized for this study. As previously stated, the mixed method approach provides the means to obtain a broader perspective on the research question. By sampling participants from multiple levels, this goal was met.

The participants for the quantitative portion of the study included all advisors and selected students and parents.   A stratified random sample of 256 students from grades 9-12 were selected based on grade, gender, and ethnic group. A stratified random sample of 128 parents was selected based on grade level of child, gender, and ethnic group.  With

randomization and stratification, the researcher can thereby obtain a sample which is more representative of and which can then be generalized to the population (Creswell, 2009).

The participants for the qualitative portion of the study included the following: (a) a purposeful sample of eight students; (b) a purposeful sample of eight recent graduates; (c) a purposeful sample of eight teachers; (d) a purposeful sample of eight parents; (e) three school-level administrators; (f) two counselors and one graduation coach; and (g) two central office administrators. Understanding the problem and the research question is aided by purposeful selection of the participants, a mainstay of qualitative research (Creswell, (2009).

**Instrumentation**

In the quantitative portion of the study, the participants completed researcher-designed surveys. The content of the questions were based on the goals of the Wisteria High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program, and then the questions were sorted using the selected CIPP model categories for program evaluation—context, input, process, and product (Stufflebeam et al., 2003). The researcher designed a separate survey for students, parents, and faculty advisors by creating a matrix cross-referencing stakeholders with the categories of questions applicable to them. Primarily close-ended response options were utilized with two or three open-ended response items added to allow for any observations not covered by the researcher. Face validity for the instruments was established by administering a pilot survey to a representative panel of students, parents, and advisors.

For the qualitative portion of the study, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with all school-level administrators, counselors and graduation coaches, and two central office administrators; focus groups were conducted with a purposeful sample of students, recent graduates, parents, and faculty advisors. As recommended for qualitative research (Creswell,

2009; Glesne, 2006), a separate interview protocol for each group, which includes semi-structured and open-ended questions, was established to standardize the research procedures and guide the interview (See Appendices E-K). Face validity will be established by conducting a pilot interview and focus group.

**Data Collection**

Consent to participate in the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University and from all participants in the study. In the case of students under the age of 18, informed consent from a parent or legal guardian was also obtained. Once obtained, the researcher proceeded with the collection of data.

In order to secure an acceptable response rate, the process of administering the quantitative surveys followed specified steps. Participants were notified approximately one week beforehand. Then the surveys were disseminated. Follow-up with non-respondents occurred within a week. The researcher administered the student and faculty surveys using *Google Forms*. Proper notification and prior consent for student participation obtained from parents, and parents were given the opportunity to complete the survey on-line or on paper.

Interviews and focus groups were set up in an agreed upon site (as non-threatening and/or neutral for the respondents as possible). Each focus group lasted approximately 45 to 55 minutes. The purpose and focus of the questions were communicated to the respondents prior to the interview via electronic mail or other available means in order to facilitate the process. The researcher audio-recorded the interviews and took field notes. Each interviewee and focus group was assigned a number which was placed on the audio-recording of the interview in order to maintain confidentiality. The focus group interviews were held prior to administration of the

quantitative surveys in order that the responses could be coded and incorporated into the survey instrument.

**Data Analysis**

For the quantitative portion of the study, the researcher followed the steps as outlined by Creswell (2009): (a) report information about the number of participants who did not return the survey; a table with numbers and percentages describing the respondents and non-respondents will be created; (b) provide descriptive analysis of the data collected; and (c) present the results in a table or figure and interpret the results based on the research questions.

The researcher utilized the basic interpretive method (Merriam, 1998) to examine the qualitative data collected from the individual interviews and focus groups using the following steps:  (a) prepare word processed transcriptions from the audiotapes, making any necessary notations derived from review of the field notes;(b) use open coding to identify themes and sub-themes; (c) draw conclusions; (d) check accuracy of the findings by having a methodologist check the raw data against the findings; and (e) analyze findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data to draw final conclusions about the program's effectiveness as delineated in the research questions and make recommendations for improvement.

As an instrument of the study and having a vested interest in the findings of the study, the researcher was careful in utilizing methods which ensured that the interviews were as objective as possible and that the interpretation of the findings from both the surveys and interviews did not reflect my subjectivity. Emphasis was be placed on assuring participants that their honest feedback was needed to accurately assess the program's effectiveness and they were assured that no negative repercussions would  occur from their revealing any uncomplimentary opinions about the program to the researcher/administrator.

A final step in the CIPP framework necessitated presenting the findings to the Secondary Advisement Committee for review and discussion to plan improvement to the program. Key questions outlined by Stufflebeam, McKee and McKee (2003) as part of the CIPP Model summative evaluation included the following:

1. Were the important needs addressed?

2. Was the effort guided by a defensible plan and budget?

3. Was the service design executed competently and modified as needed?

4. Did the effort succeed?

Answers to these questions form the basis of decision making and improvement planning. Since continuous progress and continuous improvement are a primary focus of education today, it was imperative that the researcher carry out this final step in the study.

## Delimitations and Limitations

In order to make the study more feasible and take a more in-depth look at the program, the researcher has limited the scope of the research being done to the one high school in the researcher's rural Georgia school system. The advisory programs at the two feeder middle schools are not included. In addition, the number of participants for the survey portion of the research has been reduced to a representative sample rather than surveying the entire population. The researcher also acknowledges the possible bias which may affect the findings as a result of the researcher being an instrument of the study and having a vested interest in the findings of the study.

Since the research is being conducted in and focuses on the advisory program in one high school in rural Georgia, the results cannot be generalized to other advisory programs that do not have the same components and demographics. However, school leaders may be able to examine

the components of this program and the evaluation of the program's effectiveness to transfer those elements which would be beneficial in their setting.

## Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, an explanation of key terms is provided below.

**Guidance**

According to Johnson and Johnson (2003), guidance refers to a developmentally appropriate, planned, sequential program in which counselors are responsible for assuring that all students gain specific guidance-related competencies. These competencies are categorized according to the educational, career and personal/social needs of students.

**Counseling**

Counseling is a service which may be provided in a small group or individually to students who have a problem or difficulty coping with relationships, personal concerns, or normal developmental tasks (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The emphasis is on helping students to identify problems and causes, alternatives, possible consequences, and to follow through with appropriate action.

**Advisement**

Advisement describes the interaction between an adult advisor and an individual or group of students (advisees) in which the advisor provides guidance on academic, career, and/or personal/social needs of the students (Myrick, 1990; GaDOE, 2006). The advisor is seen as the caring adult in the school building who helps students navigate through school and into a post-secondary institution or career.

**Student Advisory Program**

The Student Advisory Program is a component of a school's guidance program in which teachers and other staff serve as advisors for a group of 12 to 20 students (numbers may vary) whom they meet with regularly to provide career guidance (GaDoe, 2006; Myrick, 1990; Osofsky, Sinner & Wolk, 2003).

**Summary**

Program evaluation is an important part of a school leader's duties. This research will take a comprehensive look at the effectiveness of the Teachers-As-Advisors Program at Wisteria County High School.

Research suggests (Booker, 2004; Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Glatthorn & Jailall, 2000; Myrick, 2003; Smerdon, 2002; Welkowitz et al., 2000) that academic achievement is heavily influenced by the relationships formed in schools. The literature indicates that these relations have evolved over time from a focus on vocational counseling provided by a teacher/counselor to a more comprehensive approach with a focus on academic, career, and personal/social areas provided in both centralized and decentralized counseling and advisory programs (Pope, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Hodges, 2001; and Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008). Even though researchers have looked at individual aspects of advisory programs, little has been done in the way of evaluation of a complete program. This study will focus on the teachers-as-advisors program at Wisteria County High School. The research will examine how the school has utilized teachers as advisors to provide a caring, trained adult to help students navigate their way through high school to pursue their desired post-secondary goals upon graduation.

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, applying a concurrent embedded strategy, this researcher used Stufflebeam's CIPP Model as a framework to conduct a study of

the Teachers-As-Advisors Program at Wisteria High School. The stakeholders in the program completed surveys and were interviewed to determine their views on whether the program actually has achieved its stated goals. The findings will be used to make decisions about the program, both its continuation and improvement.

It is incumbent upon school leaders to take a proactive approach to evaluating the various programs which are implemented in their schools. In this age of accountability to the public and climate of continuous improvement, particularly with respect to the No Child Left Behind legislation, each program or initiative implemented and maintained must show positive results. The responsibility for ensuring the success of these programs rests firmly on the shoulders of the principal as the instructional leader in the school. On a larger scale, the very continuation and improvement of our democratic way of life is dependent upon how well we educate our children. President Roosevelt said it this way, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education" ("Franklin D. Roosevelt," 1938). Reflecting on the connection established between academic achievement and relationships, this researcher has seen a need to conduct a program evaluation on the effectiveness of the advisory program which she oversees in order to ensure that the program fulfills its purpose.

CHAPTER 2

AN EVALUATION OF A SECONDARY STUDENT ADVISEMENT PROGRAM

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The evaluation of student advisory programs and their effectiveness in meeting student needs is the focus of this review. The very nature of this research topic has necessitated an examination of the literature in three distinct areas:  (a) the evolution of student advisory programs as one component of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program; (b) the empirical research on the connection between advisement and academic achievement; and (c) the research on teachers-as-advisors at each educational level. An overview of the literature in these areas has provided a deeper belief in the need for continuous evaluation of student advisory programs in order to assess each individual program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of students as delineated in its stated goals.

**The Search Process**

Finding appropriate primary and secondary sources has been an ongoing task throughout the beginning phases of this research project.  The search process commenced with a Galileo search of the EBSCOhost database.  Within EBSCOhost, the following databases were selected: Academic Search Complete, Book Collection: Nonfiction, ERIC, Middle Search Plus, Newspaper Source, Professional Development Collection, PsycINFO, Sociological Collection, TOPICsearch, and Vocational and Career Collection.  Advanced search options were selected which included both subject and author search terms, as well as related words. The following search term combinations were used: "advisory programs and high school," "advisement and high school," "career counseling and education," "mentoring and education," and "counseling and education."

In addition, the researcher initiated a search of ProQuest Dissertations & Theses to find

studies done on teacher advisory programs. The following search terms or combinations were used: "teachers-as-advisors," "teacher advisory programs and student achievement." Particular attention was given to searching for a variety of studies from elementary to college level. The resulting information covers a foundation of theory and research that has been built on the history of and research on teacher advisory programs.

### Historical Perspective on Student Advisement

Student advisement in the educational arena has evolved over the past century to meet the changing needs of society (Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Pope, 2000). What began as vocational guidance in the early 1900s was designed to prepare young people for their entrance into the world of work and was seen as a response to the economic, educational, and social problems of the time (Gysbers).

One aspect of this early evolution of guidance and student advisement which can be compared to the stated goals of the student advisory program is the two distinctly different perspectives on the purpose of vocational guidance. On the one hand, there was the social efficiency philosophy, espoused by David Snedden and Charles Prosser, which proposed that the reason we have an educational system is to enable the economy to function efficiently (Wirth, 1983). On the other hand, the principles of the democratic philosophy, espoused by George H. Mead, John Dewey, and Frank Leavitt, posited that vocational guidance, if carried out in a comprehensive, purposeful, and scientific way, would force many changes and improvements upon industry which would be good for children and for industry (Wirth, 1980). Both of these perspectives, according to Gysbers, grew out of the Progressive Movement, which sought to change negative social conditions brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

As guidance and counseling has evolved and responded to societal change, the focus of

the program has evolved. In 1906 in the midst of the Progressive Era, Frank Parsons, the father of vocational counseling, stood firm on the idea that youth needed help in choosing a vocation (Zytowski, 2001). His legacy, however, encompassed more than matching an individual with a job; rather, Parsons actually addressed the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of career development (O'Brien, 2001). Parson's impact is evident from the late teens and early 1920s onward, the focus in guidance and counseling shifting from vocational to educational guidance (Gysbers, 2001). That shift manifested itself as less attention to social and industrial issues and more attention to the personal and educational aspects of individuals.

Several movements influenced the shift that was taking place in guidance in the 1920s. The mental hygiene (mental health) and measurement (testing) movements, developmental studies of children (child development), the introduction of the cumulative records, and progressive education (led by John Dewey) are all listed by Gysbers (2001) as providing an impetus for the more clinical model of guidance which emerged. By the 1930s, as a result of the mental health movement and the beginning of the clinical model of guidance, personal counseling began to dominate professional theory and practice. This decade also saw an emphasis on education as guidance, even though the vocational emphasis still proved strong but more narrowly focused.

A number of pieces of legislation also influenced the direction of guidance and counseling in the decades following the 1930s (Gysbers, 2001; Pope, 2000). Two acts which provided funds for a federal office and for state supervision of guidance as well as support for vocational counselors in the schools were the George-Deen Act (An Act to Provide for the Further Development of Vocational Education of 1936) and the Vocational Education Act of 1946. Furthermore, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 substantially changed how the

purpose of guidance was framed in schools; the focus shifted to identifying and counseling scientifically talented students, with an emphasis on the college-bound student.

In addition to all of the above pieces of legislation which impacted the evolution of guidance and counseling and the movement towards student advisory programs, the decades of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s saw even more responsiveness to national needs and concerns (Gysbers, 2001). Social problems like substance abuse, violence in schools, mental health issues, and changing family patterns, along with economic issues dealing with the changing needs of the labor force and globalization of industry all helped to shape and redefine the purpose of guidance in the schools and the role of the school counselors. The economic issues renewed interest in vocational guidance as expressed in the final three pieces of federal vocational education legislation, namely, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998.

By the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, in response to the various factors discussed above, the structure and organization of guidance and counseling had evolved from "a position" to "a service" to "a comprehensive program" (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Gysbers and Henderson have described the first attempts at implementation of the guidance and counseling programs as simply appointing teachers to the position of vocational counselor with no formal organizational structure in place other than a list of duties; frequently these teachers were not relieved of their teaching duties and received no additional pay or formal training.

By the 1930s, a new organizational structure called pupil personnel work was introduced (Gysbers, 2001). The personnel in this structure included attendance officers, visiting teachers, school nurses, school physicians, and vocational counselors. This structure continued throughout

the 1940s and 1950s until it became pupil personnel services by the 1960s. The "services" included guidance, health, psychological services, school social work, and attendance. A rise in the interest in psychotherapeutic procedures followed the publication of Carl Rogers' book *Counseling and Psychotherapy* in 1942. One bright spot in this era was the availability of funds to provide formal training for counselors via The National Defense Act of 1958. By the 1970s and 1980s, the term "student services" was being used. From the 1960s to the 1980s, Gysbers (2001) observed, guidance was still pretty much an undefined program within which school counselors functioned mainly in supporting roles in a student services framework.

The actual services model of the position of school counselors came under the microscope in the 1970s. During the 1970s and 1980s, three program models were under development (Gysbers, 2001). These models included Myrick's developmental guidance and counseling model, Johnson and Johnson's competency-based model, and Gysbers and Moore's comprehensive model. The latter model was refined and enhanced by Gysbers and Henderson over a 15-year period. Myrick's model, according to Paisley (2001), emphasized a focus on provision of programs for all students; a guidance curriculum which is organized, planned, and sequential, but flexible; and the need for an integrated approach which involves all school personnel. Johnson and Johnson's focus was on the acquisition by all students of competencies which would help them succeed in in school and as they transitioned from school to higher education or to employment. The student was seen as the primary client to be served in a total pupil services program. The last model developed by Gysbers, Moore, and Henderson was more results oriented and focused on an organizational structure consisting of content, an organizational framework, and resources. Focus on all students, an organizational structure, and a guidance curriculum are common threads throughout the three models.

Johnson and Johnson (2003) described the changing faces of guidance and counseling as moving from helping students match their skills with available job options to providing mental health counseling (an add-on). Next, counselors were aiding in college and university placement and assisting in helping students find financial aid. Advising more students to take math and science was followed by the development of programs preparing counselors for individual and group counseling. Emphases in the next decades included such tasks as lowering dropout rates, career development and academic achievement, drug and child abuse prevention, suicide prevention, school violence prevention, safety, bullying prevention, and grief counseling. The list of tasks for counselors seemed to keep adding up with nothing being subtracted.

Today the focus is on a more comprehensive guidance and counseling program consisting of three elements: content, organizational framework, and resources (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The content element identifies competencies that students achieve, usually displayed by grade level or grade-level groupings (elementary, middle, and high school) and organized by domains (career, academic, and personal/social). This shift for addressing 21st century needs is reflected in the ASCA National Model developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in 2003 and revised in 2012 (ASCA, 2008). The model consists of four interrelated components: foundation, management systems, delivery systems, and accountability. Included in the foundation component are the student competences which center around the three content domains referred to earlier by Gysbers and Henderson. The delivery systems component would be where the advisory program would be incorporated.

Not only has the content of advisory programs evolved from mere vocational counseling to encompass academic, career, and personal/social areas, but also the delivery model has expanded to encompass both centralized and decentralized counseling and advisory programs. In

the centralized models at the high school level, the counseling or career center, staffed by guidance counselors and, perhaps, a paraprofessional, provides all advisement services for students.

Using teachers to serve as student advisors actually began with the middle school reform movement in the mid-1980s (Galassi & Gulledge, 1997). Many organizations listed advisory programs as one of the features which define "exemplary" middle schools (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; NASSP, 1985; NMSA, 1982 & 1995). Galassi and Gulledge described the programs as "…based on the premises that guidance is everybody's business, that there are not enough trained counselors to handle all of a school's guidance needs, and that teacher-based guidance is an important supplement to school counseling" (p. 1).

The need for additional staff to assist with the task of providing meaningful services to students can be seen in Georgia with the student to counselor ratio currently being funded by the Georgia Department of Education at 400 to 1 FTE (full time equivalent count) for high schools. For this reason, the movement in recent years has been to a more decentralized model—teachers serving as advisors at the secondary level as well. Indeed, the Georgia State Department of Education has published *Graduation Counts!* (2006) with one entire section devoted to and encouraging schools to develop a Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) program.

In addition, the Georgia General Assembly passed the BRIDGE Act of 2010 (2014) which addresses guiding students in middle and high school so that they graduate college and/or career ready. The act requires that middle and high school students be provided with career counseling and regularly-scheduled advisement to help them choose and/or develop a focused plan of study. The Georgia State Department of Education has stipulated that school systems meet the requirements of the act via a combination of the Teachers-As-Advisors program, career

connections classes, and school counselors. (See Appendix A for a listing of the tasks the state has mandated schools must have students complete.)

Colleges and universities, however, moved in a somewhat different direction. Teachers with an interest in counseling but no formal training initially acted as faculty advisors for students. But what began as vocational guidance for the influx of new, more non-traditional college students following World War II transitioned into professional counseling centers with more of an emphasis on the clinical approach. Hodges (2001) described the need for more specific training, coordination of services, and philosophical paradigm shifting in order to meet the counseling needs of the 21st century's more multicultural, pluralistic, and diverse high-tech age. In addition, some colleges and universities have found peer counseling to be a viable part of their cadre of counseling services (Hodges; Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008).

## Advisement and Academic Achievement

Advisement should not be viewed as merely a service provided by counselors or teachers-as-advisors. On the contrary, "advisement" should be examined for its benefit to students. A key benefit is traditionally thought to be its impact on academic achievement. Factors affecting academic achievement which may be impacted by an effective advisory program include attendance, conduct, and motivation.

Further examination of the literature reveals key findings about the connection between advisement and academic achievement. Much of the research conducted in this area focuses on the larger construct of the students' sense of belonging as a definite influence on academic achievement. For example, studies such as the one conducted by Faircloth and Hamm (2005) supported this conclusion. Using structural equation modeling, the authors investigated the dimensions and mechanisms of belonging relevant to motivation and achievement among high

schools representing four ethnic groups: African-American, Asian-descent, Latino, and European American. They used survey data from 9th-12th grade students ($N = 5,494$) attending seven ethnically-diverse high schools. They found all four measures of belonging (student-teacher relationships, relationships with peers, extra-curricular involvement, and perceived discrimination) to be significant for European-American and Latino students. Even though some limitations were found (the pre-determination of four dimensions of belonging and problems with one-dimensional conceptualization of two of the measured variables), Faircloth and Hamm concluded that the relationship between motivation and achievement as measured by the study could be attributed to the students' sense of belonging.

Booker (2004) also examined this idea of school belonging and academic achievement as it relates to African American adolescents, with an emphasis on possible cultural and ecological influences. Using a mixed methods quantitative and qualitative design, the researcher administered Goodenow's (1993) Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM) to a cross-sectional group of 61 10th, 11th and 12th graders and conducted in-depth individual interviews with seven males and six females of the original pool of students completing the survey. Results of the study showed that students described their sense of belonging in many ways with the following factors influencing their sense of belonging most: relationships with peers, teachers, and involvement in extra-curricular activities. In the individual interviews, students reported that their academic achievement was most influenced by personal and, to a lesser extent, parental motivations. Booker postulated that the lack of a positive correlation between belonging and achievement might be attributable to variables such as motivation, participation, and specific interpersonal relationships which were not tested.

Looking at this issue of relationships at a more direct level, Welkowitz et al. (2000)

conducted interviews with 59 high school students who participated in a Mentor/Advisor Project in Vermont, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to evaluate the program's effect on the students. However, this report focused on the interview data obtained from the students. Results indicated that the mentor/advisor program had a positive effect particularly on "at-risk" students with respect to relationship building, increased sense of control, and positive self-concept. Students reported that being a part of their mentor group gave them a chance to be accepted and a sense of belonging not based on traditional social groups.

Becky Smerdon (2002), principal research scientist for the American Institute of Research, took a broader perspective of the concept of school membership in a study of 11,807 students, with longitudinal data taken from the first two waves of the National Education Longitudinal study of 1988 when students were in the 8th grade and the first follow-up in 1990 when the students were in the 10th grade. Full cognitive data and school and student questionnaires were available for the base year and the first follow-up. Smerdon described school membership as inclusive of 1) feelings of belonging, 2) commitment to school, and 3) commitment to academic work. Results of the multilevel analysis, measured by the hierarchical linear modeling (HLM/2L) program developed by Bryk (1986), indicated that perceived school membership varied significantly among schools and could be modeled as a function of school characteristics; students' opportunities and experiences within the schools they attend appeared to be a stronger factor for determining perceptions of membership. Recommendations for reform include development of supportive school environment in which relationships between students and adults and students and their peers are considered essential to students' growth and development.

In more recent studies conducted by graduate students at universities across the country, doctoral students have examined the effect of advisory programs on academic achievement among other factors. For example, Walloff (2010) conducted a qualitative study of student and teacher perceptions of the impact of a Pennsylvania high school advisory program on academic performance, character development, sense of connectedness, and school climate. In this large suburban high school of 1806 students, survey results and focus and interview data revealed that the school advisory program did positively affect character development (teachers only) and school connectedness (both groups); but the students and teachers both stated the advisory program did not impact academic achievement or school climate. This latter opinion is a shift from the conclusions drawn in the earlier studies cited.

Another study which investigated academic achievement in Arkansas high schools based on the implementation level of a teacher advisory program was conducted by Dooly (2005). The study sampled 20 TAPS schools as a treatment group and 40 non-TAPS schools as the control group meeting at different intervals (daily, weekly, and two or three times a year). Using regression analysis, the researcher analyzed the effectiveness of the advisory programs on seven academic and attendance related outcomes. The results of the study yielded no significant relationship between participation in advisory at any of the levels and academic achievement or attendance related measures. Results like these have to be taken into consideration when determining continued expenditures in time and resources.

Advisement is not only considered important at the secondary level but also at the collegiate level. Just as in middle and high schools, advisement at colleges and universities has evolved over time in response to the various societal changes. The main focus of academic advisement at this level has become the selection of courses, although Frost suggests students

would benefit more from developmental advising which is tailored to the diverse needs of the students (Craig, 2004; Frost, 1991). Provision of counseling services has shifted from being the responsibility of the president to the shoulders of the faculty (Craig, 2004; Rudolph, 1990).

Sanchez-Leguelinel (2008) reported the findings of a study of 210 college sophomores who had completed between 30 and 44 credits at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. These sophomores participated in a Sophomore Peer Counseling Program, the purpose of which was to increase retention, academic performance, and college satisfaction for sophomores during their critical second year. The program consisted of a mandatory one-on-one peer academic advisement session and dissemination of information regarding various services and activities designed to address the students' professional and social needs. The participants were asked to complete the researcher-designed Sophomore Peer Counseling Program: Student Satisfaction Survey, which was handed out at the end of the counseling session; students were to return the survey at their convenience. There were several limitations to be considered when interpreting the results; however, one observation made by the researcher was that students rated the one-on-one counseling session more favorably than the other activities and services which were available.

Academic advising at the collegiate level, nurtured and supported by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), continues to evolve. Founded in 1977, NACADA's purpose is ". . . to promote the quality of academic advising in institutions of higher education . . .", and it is ". . . dedicated to the support and professional growth of academic advising and advisors." (Thurmond & Miller, 2006, *web page-History*). Its membership consists of professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students who work together to enhance student learning and development.

**Teachers-As-Advisors:  What the Research Says**

Advisory programs have indeed become more prevalent since the middle school movement of the 1980s and endorsement by such reputable organizations as the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), the National Middle School Association (1982/1992), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1985), and the Coalition of Essential Schools (Makkonen, 2004). Teachers-as advisor programs provide for the personalized attention students need. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) defines the main objective of advisory programs as the facilitation of relationship building to make it possible for every student in a school to have a supportive relationship with one adult.

Sizer (1992) stated,

We believe that everyone at the school should be accorded the respect of being known well, that the particular strengths and weaknesses, worries and hopes, of each young person should be understood and accommodated. Personalization is not just [a] courtesy; it is the necessary condition for efficient and effective teaching of each student. (p. 143)

What follows is a review of the research on how colleges, elementary/middle schools, and high schools have met the challenge of personalizing their learning environments.

**College**

As discussed in an earlier section of this study, colleges and universities have moved from total reliance on faculty advisors to more reliance on advisement centers (Evans, 2000; Hodges, 2001; Kittrell-Mikell, 1997; Rakes, 2008; Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008). As will be seen, however, faculty advisors are still being utilized. Some issues which are addressed in the research include the definition of advisement, faculty advisors vs. professional counselors,

developmental versus prescriptive academic advisement, and the impact of advisement.

Rakes (2008) identified several concerns centering on how advisement is defined and supported at the collegiate level based on a sampling of 37 students, 31 faculty advisors and admissions counselors, and the administrator who oversees advisement. Her research revealed no common understanding of what advisement was and a disconnect between Delaware Technical College advisors' definition and practice of advisement. In practice, Rakes found that advisement was more synonymous with registration. In fact, Rakes cited the college's student handbook definition of the advisor's role as helping students plan their academic program and seeing that they take appropriate courses to complete graduation requirements. Yet, advisors believed that advisement encompassed more than registration; it should be about academic and career planning. Other findings identified in Rakes' research included the following: a lack of communication between admissions counselors and faculty advisors; advisor caseload too high (100 students); time constraints; inadequate resources to support advisement (number of advisors, training, professional development, handbooks, and technology tools); and registration procedure issues (on-line registration eliminated "requirement" to meet with an advisor).

What the role of the advisor is and the process by which advisement is carried out has been and continues to be an issue. Kittrell-Mikell (1997), examined the academic advising process in the College of Education at Georgia Southern University. Like Rakes (2008), Kittrell-Mikell cites no clear understanding on the part of stakeholders as to what advisement is and should be as one of the impediments to effective advisory programs.  Part of her report focused on the effectiveness of faculty versus professional advisors. She identifies the following factors as making faculty advisors less effective: demands of teaching and research and the lack of professional development in the area of advising. Kittrell-Mikell also stated that the lack of in-

depth knowledge of courses, programs, and educational and career opportunities in a given discipline detracts from the effectiveness of professional advisors. As a solution, she suggested developmental advising, which requires that advisors have training in developmental theories and utilizing developmental strategies. A holistic approach should then be used by the advisor to assist students and address their concerns. As identified in her research, these services are provided in advisement centers staffed by professional advisors. However, her research findings suggested that there is room for improvement in student perception of services provided, the advisor's role and limitations, and the actual goal of the advisement center.

Craig's (2004) findings validated the fact that college students prefer a developmental approach to academic advising. In a mixed method study of 250 first-term, first-year students and 415 graduating seniors, Craig administered the Academic Advisement Inventory (AAI) and conducted focus group interviews of eight first-term, first-year students and six graduating seniors. Of the freshmen surveyed, 98.4 % preferred developmental academic advisement and, of the graduating seniors, 81.0 % experienced developmental academic advisement.

**Elementary and Middle School**

One of the major proponents of developmental guidance, Robert Myrick, discussed its appropriateness in meeting the needs of all students and how the teachers-as-advisors (TAP) program can be an excellent vehicle for providing that guidance (Myrick, Myrick, et al., 1990). By utilizing the TAP program, the authors believe student potential can be maximized and, thereby, our nation's human resources strengthened. However, they did not recommend the use of TAP until middle school, arguing that elementary children are mostly in self-contained classrooms where teachers have more opportunity to get to know them personally.

In the time since Myrick's recommendation, many schools across the nation have

implemented TAP at the middle school level—some successfully, some unsuccessfully. Bunte (1995) delved more deeply into the issue of middle school advisory programs with research focusing on four Illinois middle schools.  For successful implementation of a middle school advisory program, she found the following factors relevant to effective programs: a) keep the size of the groups to 15 to 20 students; b) have a well-designed, continuing program of professional development; c) provide time for planning; d) have a well-defined curriculum before beginning the program; e) have administrative support; and f) have a feedback/maintenance loop built in so that the program is continually reviewed and revised.

Of particular note for the purpose of this study is Bunte's (1995) suggestion that as a part of developing a well-defined curriculum goals and outcomes for each grade should be identified. The development of goals and outcomes will feed naturally into the collection of evaluation data to measure the program's effectiveness. Recommended types of data include discipline and counseling referrals, achievement test data, and student and teacher attitude surveys. Bunte's list of implementation recommendations is not exhaustive but is a good beginning.

Much has been written about the impact and effectiveness of middle school advisory programs. Foote (2008) examined programs at four California Middle Schools in an effort to determine, based on teacher perceptions, if there was a causal link between the advisor-advisee relationships and student engagement, motivation, and achievement. His report delineated the following three findings:  (a) program goals were aligned to teachers' professional goals; (b) common goals were identified at all of the schools, but the schools were stratified in terms of teachers' perceptions; and (c) particular features of the programs were associated with positive outcomes for students. Of particular note were the features of the program which yielded positive outcomes. The teachers found success when they closely monitored student academic progress

and effectively facilitated groups so that students developed trusting relationships with the teacher and the other students in the group. For the most challenging students, serving as an advocate beyond the advisory class was found to be effective. Foote also identified steep learning curves for beginning advisors, but their results improved over time. Study participants included 37 teachers whose perceptions were collected using a 47-item questionnaire and audio-taped face-to-face interviews. Limitations to Foote's results include a volunteer sample, small school size, and the fact that all data was drawn entirely from teacher perceptions.

In a larger study conducted by the Carnegie Corporation Middle Grades School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI) during the 1997-98 school year, data were collected from 6,768 teachers and 113,598 students in grades 4-9 across 16 states employing the High Performance Learning Community Assessments (HiPLaces Assessments). Caswell (2003) reported the data and results for students in grades 6-8. Administrators were also surveyed. Caswell conducted regression analyses on a hierarchical basis with respect to school location, advisory structure, advisory practices, teacher attitudes, and student experiences. Her findings indicated schools that implemented teacher-based advisory programs found value added through increased teacher job satisfaction and improved student experiences and achievement. Also, the data suggested that the level of implementation of the program is crucial. For the optimum impact, advisory should be scheduled for thirty or more minutes daily. A final observation from her report is that although the cost to implement the program is not extensive, teacher commitment has to be.

Several factors may have affected the results of the Caswell study. The participating Carnegie schools were interested in reform and improving instruction and student achievement, possibly skewing results in favor of advisory. Only 10 of the 298 schools had implemented a full advisory program of 30 minutes or more daily for an entire year. Furthermore, the sample

population may not have been representative because it included a high minority, low socio-economic, and high urban student population. Finally, there may have been other factors besides the advisory program which contributed to the findings of increased teacher job satisfaction and improved student experiences and achievement.

In a mixed methods study, Shulkind (2007) used student and teacher questionnaires to identify advisories producing high levels of student connectedness and then used student focus groups, teacher interviews, and advisory observations to further analyze the quantitative findings. The sample population included 501 students and 31 advisors in three California middle schools. This study attempted to ascertain the common characteristics and components of advisories and advisors, as well as teacher perceptions of the academic impact of advisory programs. Findings from this study indicated that advisories improve students' academic performance and that advisors and advisories that foster student connectedness share common characteristics.

Shulkind (2007) identified three common characteristics and components of the nine advisories in her study with the highest connectedness scores. They included positive association with the advisory, a focus on topical community issues, and the fostering of open communication amongst all members of the advisory. The common characteristics of advisors that foster connectedness included those who knew and cared about their advisees as students and individuals, oversaw their academic progress, and helped them solve academic and social problems. Overall factors which affected student connectedness were the different stages of the advisory program development, the different structures of the advisory programs, and the role of the advisory program within the school.

Several factors may have limited the applicability of Shulkind's (2007) findings. First of all, the investigation occurred during a period of less than a year, and the geographical focus was

limited to one region (i.e., urban California). Moreover, the researcher was not able to construct a control group. Also, the logistical challenge of parental consent forms limited participation, which affected the representativeness of the sample. And finally, researcher bias might have entered into the interpretation of the data, given that the researcher was assisting the UCLA School Management Program. This program was providing support for schools engaged in school reform and improvement and was interested in advisory programs as a strategy for supporting secondary school improvement.

**High School**

Within the past 10 years, more empirical research has been conducted on advisory programs at the secondary level (Dooly, 2005; Meloro, 2005; Walloff, 2010). The remainder of this review of the literature focuses on findings from studies on high school advisory programs. Some topics which have surfaced in the literature include the purpose of advisory (academics or socialization), the effect of student and faculty perceptions of the focus for advisory, and the impact of advisory on the social skills and behavior of students (Borgeson, 2009; Lessard, 2008; Poole, 2003; and Stover, 2009).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals in its groundbreaking work, "Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution," (1996) offered the following as the third of its seven recommendations for creating a climate conducive to teaching and learning: "Every high school student will have a Personal Adult Advocate to help him or her personalize the educational experience" (p. 31). Every program studied thus far has embraced this goal that every student will be well-known by one adult in the building.

Lessard (2008) studied an advisory program at a Pacific Northwest high school in which he surveyed 31 students and kept a log of notes about conversations and observations about

advisory. Students and staff were placed in small groups (which remained consistent throughout students' time at the school) where they had time to direct their own learning and get to know themselves and each other, while overseen by an adult actively involved in their lives. He concluded that students felt well-known by a staff member, but did not view the advisory period as academically important. In fact, Lessard suggested that the high school was ineffective because of the conflicting views of the purpose of advisory periods in general. Students and staff alike did not have a clear idea of whether the program's focus was academic or social. Students spent four hours a week, one hour each day except Wednesday, in the advisory period; however, the time could be spent getting academic help as needed from other teachers or socializing. The latter usually won out (with too many students wandering the halls socializing rather than reporting to advisory). A limitation of this study was the size of the sample group and the lack of generalizability to other schools.

Stover (2009) surveyed 66 teachers and 700 students from grades 10-12 in a mixed method case study of the impact of one high school's "Check and Connect" program on student and staff relationships, monitoring student performance, and the social skills and behaviors of students. He also conducted focus group interviews with four groups of 4-6 teachers (volunteers). Findings indicated that teachers and students perceived an advisory had a strong impact on their relationships with one another, a moderate impact on monitoring student performance, and a weak impact on social skills and behavior. Stover attributed the ineffectiveness in the noted areas to the structure of the program. He cited the lack of adherence to following recommendations by Myrick (1990). Stover concluded that the goals in the area of behavior and social skills were not clearly conveyed by the administration to the students or teachers as indicated by the data.

In another mixed methods study conducted at three large Midwest high schools, Poole (2003) focused on the following four areas of the advisory program: the educational focus of the groups, the relationships of the students and faculty in the groups, the influence of the program on sense of belonging, and communication within the advisory group membership. Poole surveyed 200 students at each of the three schools, 100 before and 100 after having conducted two follow-up focus groups (one student and one faculty). The data suggested that large schools provide more opportunity for isolation of groups of students with students feeling disconnected; and that students perceived advisory programs more effective for relationship building (student to student and student to adult) and for improving communication of important high school events. The educational component varied from school to school with students collectively not perceiving this component as effective. The researcher noted the impact of the program was dependent upon the implementation skills of the advisor.

Borgeson (2009) considered whether students' sense of belonging impacted success in school. She conducted a mixed methods case study of a 500-student suburban high school in the Northeastern United States in which 210 advisees in grades 9 and 10, 41 assistant advisors in grade 12, and 14 teacher advisors were surveyed. The surveys included some open-ended questions. The conceptual framework for the study utilized Tinto's persistence theory. Tinto and Cullen (1993) claimed that students' academic and social participation is a strong predictor of retention in college. In this case, Tinto's theory was applied to high school. Borgeson argued that Tinto's theory reinforces the goals of the advisory program, and that "both support that expanding each student's social network, having personal interactions with advisors and feeling a sense of belonging in the school will help in student retention" (p. 17). In addition to findings similar to other studies (i.e., advisees benefiting from interaction with advisors), the study in this

school found that advisees wanted more time for advisory and assistant advisors desired a larger role in the program. In addition, the advisors recommended that the curriculum needed continuous improvement.

## Summary

Student achievement is the goal, and "No Child Left Behind" is the mandate in the United States (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). Accountability for student achievement is emphasized in today's assessment-driven society; and the stakes are high in these serious economic times (Riddle, 2009). From the federal to the state government, from the U.S. Department of Education to the Georgia Department of Education to the local of boards of education, the expectation is that students will graduate from school on time, receive some post-secondary training, and become productive citizens. The question that every school has to answer is, "Does this school provide effective programs which prepare students for the next educational level and to become productive citizens in society?" Program evaluation research is a means of whereby school leaders can answer that question (Gall et al., 2003; Stufflebeam et al., 2003).

One program, which could benefit from a more comprehensive look at its effectiveness, is the teachers-as-advisors program. Several studies and articles describing the components and benefits of advisory programs at the collegiate, middle and secondary level have been examined in this chapter. In addition, reports of research projects documenting the effectiveness of various aspects of advisory programs have been reviewed. Factors which have been analyzed in the studies include the following:

- The structure of the program (size of groups, frequency of meetings)
- The focus of the program (academics vs. socialization)

- Selection of advisors

- Advisory curriculum

- Impact of advisory programs on factors such as:

    o student engagement

    o motivation

    o academic achievement

    o student retention

    o discipline

    o sense of belonging and connectedness

    o communication

    o meeting program goals

- Stakeholder buy-in (administration, teachers, students)

There continues, however, to be a lack of comprehensive studies of advisory programs. Instead, most of the current research focuses on only one or two aspects of the various programs. Based on the wide variety of program designs and program goals, it would be inappropriate to generalize findings from these studies. Therefore, a need exists to conduct more comprehensive program evaluations of total programs.

Schools and districts, nationally, would benefit from access to more information on the effectiveness of all aspects and components of individual programs. Since in most instances no two programs are completely alike, schools can study effective practices and adapt them to their settings for continuous improvement. Schools that do not have programs at all can study the research on existing advisories to guide their decision making on whether or not to implement a

program and the actual implementation process if they choose to start a program.

CHAPTER 3

AN EVALUATION OF A SECONDARY STUDENT ADVISEMENT PROGRAM

METHODS

This study examined specific aspects of the advisory program at Wisteria High School and evaluated the program's effectiveness from the perspective of various stakeholders. In this chapter, the methods and materials used to conduct the study are described in detail. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) Research Questions, (b) Research Design, (c) Research Procedures (Setting, Participants, Instrumentation, and Data Collection), and (d) Data Analysis.

## Research Questions

In evaluating the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program, the following research questions served as a guide:

**Overarching Question:** How do the various stakeholders--students, recent graduates, parents, faculty advisors, and administrators--in the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated goals?

**Sub-Question$_1$:** To what extent does the TAA Program provide a caring, trained adult advocate?

**Sub-Question$_2$:** How effectively does the TAA Program establish regular communication and an effective link between home and school?

**Sub-Question$_3$:** To what extent does the TAA Program create, facilitate, and guide student movement toward a career concentration?

**Sub-Question₄:**  To what extent does the TAA Program facilitate seamless

academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their

families?

The parameters of these research questions provide the "scope and depth" of this program

evaluation (Yin, 2003, p. 23).

## Research Design

This investigation was conducted as a program evaluation, utilizing Stufflebeam's

(Stufflebeam, McKee, & McKee, 2003) Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model.

Stufflebeam, McKee, and McKee have described the CIPP theoretical model as a

"…comprehensive framework for guiding formative and summative evaluations of projects,

programs, personnel, products, institutions, and systems" (p. 3). The model's configuration

allows for its use in internal evaluations, self-evaluations, and contracted or mandated external

evaluations. The components of Stufflebeam's CIPP Evaluation Model are built on a set of

identified core values which ground the evaluation process. The four components are as follows:

(a) *context evaluation*, which compares the goals and priorities of the program to assessed needs,

problems, assets, and opportunities; (b) *input evaluation,* which compares the program's

strategy, design, and budget to those of critical competitors and to the targeted needs of its

beneficiaries; (c) *process evaluation,* which compares the design to the actual processes and

costs of the program; and (d) *product evaluation,* which compares the outcomes and side effects

to the program's targeted needs as well as to the effort's assessed context, inputs, and processes.

The components and attributes described above show the CIPP Model's unique suitability as a

framework for the evaluation of the Teachers-As-Advisor Program at Wisteria County High School by this researcher.

Program evaluation, by its nature, is a mixed methods approach. This particular study was designed as a concurrent embedded strategy where the predominant method is quantitative and the embedded method is qualitative (Creswell, 2009). The concurrent embedded strategy serves several purposes for this research project.  First, it provides a broader perspective as a result of using mixed methods. Second, it facilitates the study of different groups' assessments of the program. Lastly, it allows for the collection of two different types of data simultaneously during a single data collection phase (Creswell, 2009). The design also provides an opportunity for the researcher to triangulate the results from the various components of the qualitative and quantitative portions of the study (Creswell et al., 2003; Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

## Research Procedures

The report of the research procedures which follows includes a description of the setting, participants, instrumentation, and data collection. These components were strategically chosen and implemented in order to provide a firm foundation for the analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

### Setting

The Teachers-As-Advisors Program was implemented during the 2003-04 school year at Wisteria High School. The high school, located in rural Georgia, currently serves 755 students in grades 9-12, 75% of which qualified for free and reduced priced lunch. The school's graduation rate for 2011 was 81.3%.  The student distribution is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2

*Wisteria High School Student Demographics*

| Grade | 9th | 10th | 11th | 12th |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 180 | 218 | 205 | 152 |
| Ethnicity | Black | | White | | Other |
| | 68% | | 28% | | 4% |
| Gender | Male | | Female | |
| | 52% | | 48% | |

With this demographic information as a backdrop, the Wisteria County High School School Advisement Committee and this researcher, as chairperson of the committee, realized the need to evaluate the effectiveness of its school-wide advisement program. The program is a shared component of student services and the guidance and counseling program of the high school. While the counselors have been and continue to be an integral part of its development and implementation, the primary responsibility rests with the assistant principal for student services. The program utilizes every teacher, all but one building level administrator, and both counselors to provide academic, interpersonal, and career guidance to groups of 12 to 16 students in bi-monthly advisement sessions. Advisement groups remain intact for all four years; changes are made by exception only. The mission, as stated in the advisory brochure of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program, is to "ensure high levels of student achievement through the following:

1. providing a caring, trained adult advocate;

2. establishing regular communications and an effective link between home and school;

3. advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievements;

4.  creating, facilitating and guiding movement toward a career concentration so that
    each child will be post-secondary ready; and

5.  facilitating a seamless academic and social transition across grades and schools for
    students and their families" (inside page).

**Participants**

Multi-level sampling was utilized for this study.  As previously stated, a mixed methods approach provides the means to obtain a broader perspective on the research question.  In order to meet this goal, participants were sampled from multiple levels.

Participants for the quantitative portion of the study included the following:  (a) a stratified random sample of 256 students from grades 9-12 (selected based on grade [year in school], gender, ethnic group, and academic achievement level); (b) all advisors; and (c) a stratified random sample of 128 parents (selected based on grade level of student, gender, and ethnic group).  See Table 3 below for the breakdown by category. Randomization and stratification have been utilized to obtain a more representative sample of the population (Creswell, 2009). The sample size was determined using the National Statistical Service sample size calculator (Australian Bureau of Statistics,1968).

Table 3

*Participants by Category*

| *Year in School | 1st Year | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Students** | | | | |
| White Male | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| White Female | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Black Male | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Black Female | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Other Male | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Other Female | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Total Students** | **64** | **64** | **64** | **64** |
| **Parents** | | | | |
| White | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Black | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Total Parents** | **32** | **32** | **32** | **32** |

*\*Note: The headings in this row indicate the students' year in school and what year the parent's child is in school.*

Participants for the qualitative portion of the study included the following: (a) a purposeful sample of eight students; (b) a purposeful sample of eight recent graduates; (c) a purposeful sample of eight teachers; (d) a purposeful sample of eight parents; (e) three school-level administrators; (f) two counselors; and (g) two central office administrators. The graduation coach, who was listed as a participant in the original design, was omitted because she was no longer at the high school. Students, teachers, and parents were selected on the basis of grade level (year in school), gender, and ethnicity, and recent graduates were selected on the basis of post-secondary status (enrolled 2-year or 4-year college, enrolled in technical college, enlisted in the military, employed, or none of the above). Understanding of the problem and the research question was aided by purposeful selection of the participants, a mainstay of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009) With deliberate, purposeful sampling, have argued that the researcher can

gather important information that cannot be obtained as well from other sources (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

**Instrumentation**

For the quantitative portion of the study, the participants completed researcher-designed surveys. The content of the questions were based on the goals of the Wisteria High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program, as well as the criteria and descriptions of advisory programs outlined by Myrick and Myrick (1990) and in the GaDOE Graduation Counts! booklet (2006). The questions were sorted using the selected CIPP model categories for program evaluation—context, input, process, and product (Stufflebeam et al., 2003). The researcher designed a separate survey for students (see Appendix B), parents (see Appendix C), and faculty advisors (see Appendix D) by creating a matrix cross-referencing stakeholders with the categories of questions applicable to them. Primarily close-ended response options were utilized with two or three open-ended response items added to allow for any observations not covered by the researcher. Face validity of the instruments was established by administering a pilot survey to a representative panel of students, parents, and advisors; the panel was chosen based on advisement year, gender, and ethnicity (Creswell, 2009; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Glesne, 2006). Based on results of the pilot, adjustments were made to the open-ended questions for all instruments and in the wording of some of the close-ended survey questions.

For the qualitative portion of the study, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with all school-level administrators, counselors and two central office administrators; focus groups were conducted with a purposeful sample of students, recent graduates, parents, and faculty advisors. These interview participants were directly involved with the program in a supervisory capacity or as advisors; the focus group participants were chosen to provide a

representative sample based on advisement year, gender, and ethnicity (Creswell, 2009; Gall et al., 2003; Glesne, 2006). As recommended for qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2006), a separate, specific interview protocol for each group (including structured and open-ended questions) was established to standardize the research procedures and guide the interviews (See Appendices E-K). Face validity was established by conducting a pilot interview and focus group. The pilot interview and focus group consisted of a teacher, parent, administrator, counselor, and student, with a cross-section of gender, ethnicity, and advisement years represented. According to Yin (2013), the greatest challenge to the validity of case study evaluations occurs when the studies are exploratory (seeking a cause/effect relationship) rather than when they are descriptive in nature. Of the available methods for strengthening validity (plausible, rival explanations; triangulation; and logic models), he has recommended the following two types of triangulation for case study evaluations: data source and methods, with an emphasis on methods triangulation given the renewed interest in mixed methods research.

**Data Collection**

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University and informed consent for participation from all participants. In the case of students under the age of 18, informed consent from a parent or legal guardian was obtained. The researcher then proceeded with the collection of data.

In order to secure an acceptable number of responses from participants, the process of administering the quantitative surveys followed specified steps. Participants were notified at least one week beforehand via distribution of packets to the students in an advisory session. Packets contained a flyer inviting parents and students to participate in the study and the student consent form which was to be signed and returned to the advisor. Following receipt of the consent forms,

student surveys were administered by the researcher in the school's computer lab. Parents were contacted via telephone, e-mail, or in person and given the option of completing the surveys on-line or on paper. Advisors were invited to participate via an e-mail from the School Advisement Committee. All on-line surveys were administered using *Google Forms*. Completion of on-line parent and advisor surveys were monitored for response rate, and after two weeks, follow-up contacts were made in order to obtain the stipulated number of responses needed.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted in an agreed upon site (as non-threatening and/or neutral as possible for participants), i.e., the school's media center for school participants and the district office for district office participants or the city library if preferred. Interview time lasted approximately 45 to 55 minutes. The purpose and focus of the questions were communicated to the participants prior to the interview via electronic mail or other available means in order to facilitate the process. The researcher audio-recorded the interviews and jotted field notes. Each interviewee and focus group was assigned a number in order to maintain confidentiality.

To further ensure confidentiality of data collected from the participants, the following measures were taken: (a) survey data, audio recordings, and printed interview and focus group transcripts were locked in a secure location at the researcher's residence;(b) all electronic password protected transcripts were stored on the hard drive of the researcher's personal computer; and (c) survey responses and interview participant responses were kept anonymous. Furthermore, at no time was any participant personally identifiable. All raw data will be kept for three years after dissertation approval, at which time the data will be destroyed by the researcher.

The researcher has also collected pertinent artifacts utilized in delivering the Teachers-As-Advisors program at Wisteria High School. Analysis of these materials has provided

information about the curriculum, advisor training, communication, and the overall program implementation. These artifacts include the ancillary materials listed below:

- Advisory curriculum matrix

- Advisory bell schedule

- Advisory program orientation PowerPoint

- Advisory brochure

- Advisory professional development PowerPoints

- Secondary advisory committee minutes

- School advisory committee minutes

- Advisory spring conference documents

## Data Analysis

For the quantitative portion of the study, the researcher followed these steps as outlined by Creswell (2009): (a) reported information about the number of participants who did not return the survey; a table with numbers and percentages describing the respondents and non-respondents was created; (b) provided descriptive analysis of the data collected; and (c) presented the results in tables or figures and interpreted the results based on the research questions.

For the qualitative portion, the researcher prepared word processed transcriptions from the audio-recordings, making any necessary notations derived from review of the field notes. The interview data were analyzed using a basic interpretative method using three stages of analysis: a) open coding to observe patterns; b) analysis to find broader themes from the patterns; and c) analysis of themes in the context of the research questions (Merriam, 1998). Member checking was utilized to verify the accuracy of the data obtained in the interviews and focus groups. A tool

was created to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the artifacts collected utilizing steps outlined by Borg et al. (2009)—i.e., selected a sample of documents to analyze and developed a category-coding protocol). Findings regarding the artifacts were also been added to the report on the overall program effectiveness.

As an instrument of the study and having a vested interest in the findings of the study, the researcher was careful to ensure that interviews were as objective as possible and that interpretation of the findings from both the surveys and interviews did not reflect the researcher's subjectivity. The researcher emphasized to participants that their honest feedback was needed to accurately assess the program's effectiveness and that no negative repercussions would occur from revealing any uncomplimentary opinions about the program to the researcher/administrator. Focus group interviews with the advisors were conducted by a college instructor with no direct supervisory authority over the participants. All interviews, focus group discussions, and student surveys were conducted in mutually agreed upon or neutral locations (i.e., the media center, computer lab, interviewee's office, or the district office. Parent surveys were completed on-line at a location of the parents' choice.

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher will present the findings to the School Advisement Committee for review and discussion to plan program improvement. Key questions outlined by Stufflebeam et al. (2003) as part of the CIPP Model summative evaluation will guide the discussion and include the following:

1. Were the important needs addressed?

2. Was the effort guided by a defensible plan and budget?

3. Was the service design executed competently and modified as needed?

4. Did the effort succeed?

Answers to these questions form the basis of decision making and improvement planning. Since continuous progress and continuous improvement are a primary focus of education today, it is imperative that the researcher carry out this final step in the evaluation of the advisory program at Wisteria High School.

As issues of validity and generalization are concerns in case study evaluations, Yin (2013) proposes the use of ". . . analytic generalization as an appropriate logic for generalizing the findings from a case study . . ." (p. 325). Researchers must make a conscious effort to analyze the findings in a case study evaluation to extract the ideas that apply to the case at hand but are abstract enough to be applied to other newer situations. With these thoughts in mind, this researcher has attempted to make "analytic or conceptual generalizations" that might, when considered in conjunction with other cases found in the extant literature, add to the cumulative knowledge of the phenomenon known as teacher advisory programs.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

For the purpose of this study, the program evaluation method was chosen for its suitability in evaluating school programs (Stufflebeam et al., 2003). The mixed methods approach to the study, with a concurrent embedded strategy, served a three-fold purpose by allowing for a broader perspective, facilitating the study of different stakeholders' assessments of the program, and allowing for the collection of two types of data, within a single data collection phase (Creswell, 2009). By utilizing surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the researcher assessed the effectiveness of the Wisteria High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program from the perspective of the following stakeholders:  students, recent graduates, parents, faculty advisors, and administrators.

To strengthen the validity of the study and its finding, the researcher utilized triangulation of data sources and methods (Yin, 2013). Additionally, results will be analyzed to extrapolate "analytic generalizations" which when connected to findings in the extant literature, may be applied to other advisory programs and/or to the cumulative

CHAPTER 4

AN EVALUATION OF A SECONDARY STUDENT ADVISEMENT PROGRAM

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This mixed methods study of the effectiveness of the Teachers-As-Advisors Program at Wisteria High School yielded both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis and interpretation. The quantitative portion of the study included surveys of students, parents, and teacher advisors. The qualitative portion included individual interviews conducted with central office administrators, school administrators, and school counselors, with focus groups interviews conducted with students, parents, teacher advisors, and recent graduates.

In this chapter, a brief description of the research method and descriptive data from the survey and interview/focus group participants will be reported, followed by the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the survey and focus group results for each sub-question.  Next, descriptive data from analysis of ancillary materials will be shared. The chapter will end with a brief overview and summary of the findings.

**Data Collection**

The report of the data collection phase includes descriptions of the survey participants and the interview and focus group participants. Procedures followed in collecting data from these two groups are also described.

**Survey Participants**

Collection of survey data began in the fall of the 2014-2015 school year.  Three groups were surveyed:  a) students, b) parents, and c) teacher advisors. Target sample size for the quantitative portion of the study was as follows:  students – 205; parents (128); and advisors – 56. For the first two groups, packets were distributed to all students ($N = 813$) in their advisory

sessions. These packets contained a flyer (see Appendix L) and consent forms which described the study and invited parent and student participation. Of the packets distributed, 205 parental consent forms were returned giving permission for students to participate in the study. All 205 students for whom informed consent was given by parents were administered the questionnaire in the school's computer lab. From this pool of 205 students who returned the signed permission forms, all parents were contacted via telephone, e-mail, and/or in person. These parents were given the option of completing the survey on paper or on-line. In the first iteration of the parents contacted, only 25 completed the survey (on-line). In the second iteration, 15 additional parents completed the survey (on-line). For the third group, an invitation to participate, with a link to the survey, was e-mailed from the Secondary Advisory Committee to teacher advisors. Due to the slow response rate, a second e-mail was sent from the School Advisory Committee two weeks later. Teacher participant response rate was approximately 30%. The low response rates for parent and teacher advisor groups could be attributed to several factors, including dissatisfaction with the program, lack of time, the number of surveys which have been conducted for various programs during the data collection period, or apathy. Despite the low response rate for these two groups, the data collected revealed substantive opinions about the program, particularly in the responses to open-ended questions. The response rate data for the survey participants are reported below in Table 4.

Table 4

*Response Rate of Survey Participants*

| Students | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | 1st Year | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year | Target | N = | Rate |
| Male | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 120 | 104 | 87% |
| Female | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 120 | 101 | 84% |
| Black | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 160 | 147 | 92% |
| White | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 48 | 60% |
| Other | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | 10 | 63% |
| Target | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 256 | 205 | 80% |
| N = | 63 | 51 | 43 | 48 | 256 | 205 | |
| Rate | 98% | 80% | 67% | 75% | | 80% | |
| Parents | | | | | | | |
| Group | 1st Year | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year | Target | N = | Rate |
| White | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 | 9 | 23% |
| Black | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 30 | 38% |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 13% |
| Target | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 128 | 40 | 31% |
| N = | 13 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 128 | | |
| Rate | 41% | 25% | 28% | 47% | | | |
| Teacher Advisors | | | | | | | |
| Group | 1st Year | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year | Target | N = | Rate |
| All | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 56 | 17 | 30% |

Additional demographic data collected from the parent and teacher surveys are reported

in Table 5.  The majority of responding parents reported having only one child in the high

school.  However, the responses also reflect contributions from seven parents who have two or

three children in the high school. These parents' responses reflect the unique perspective of

having experience with more than one advisor at more than one grade level. Teacher advisor

participation was reflective of the larger population of advisors. In the total population of

advisors, Whites outnumbered Blacks and other ethnic groups (36 to 20) and females

outnumbered males (32 to 24). Similarly, in the survey participation, white respondents

outnumber Black respondents ten to six (with one respondent not identifying their gender) and

female respondents outnumber male respondents thirteen to four. The researcher notes that there were no respondents from the "other" category of advisors. Nevertheless, the diversity of these two demographic groups (gender and ethnicity) further contributes to the richness of the data collected.

Table 5

*Additional Demographic Information for Survey Participants*

| Parents by Number of Children | |
| --- | --- |
| 1 Child | 33 |
| 2 Children | 5 |
| 3 Children | 2 |

| Teacher Advisors by Gender | |
| --- | --- |
| Male | 4 |
| Female | 13 |

| Teacher Advisors by Race | |
| --- | --- |
| White | 10 |
| Black | 6 |
| Not reported | 1 |

| Teacher Advisors by Years of Experience as Advisor | |
| --- | --- |
| 2 Years | 1 |
| 3 Years | 4 |
| 4 Years | 4 |
| 4 or more | 8 |

| Teacher Advisors by Years of Experience as Teacher | |
| --- | --- |
| 0 – 5 Years | 4 |
| 6 – 10 Years | 3 |
| 11 – 15 Years | 7 |
| 16 – 20 Years | 1 |
| 20 or more | 2 |

**Interview and Focus Group Participants**

Interview and focus group participants for this study were contacted via telephone, e-mail, or in person. As outlined in the research design, face-to-face interviews were conducted at an agreed upon location (either at the school or at the district office) with the following: two central office administrators, three school administrators, and the two counselors. Because the school no longer has a graduation coach, that interview was omitted. Focus group interviews for students, recent graduates, parents, and teacher advisors were conducted at the school. Participant characteristics germane to the context of the study are detailed in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

*Interview Participant Characteristics*

| Participants | Role in and/or Experience with TAA Program |
|---|---|
| Superintendent | Central office administrator<br>Established program as HS principal<br>Former advisor<br>Former member of Secondary Advisement Committee |
| Asst. Superintendent | Central office administrator<br>Established program as MS principal;<br>Former member of now defunct Secondary Advisement Committee;<br>Supervises counselors for the school system |
| Principal | School administrator<br>Former advisor<br>Monitors advisement sessions<br>Evaluates teachers advisors<br>Member of School Advisory Committee |
| Asst. Principal | School administrator<br>Advisor<br>Serves on School Advisory Committee |
| Asst. Principal | School administrator<br>Former advisor |
| Counselor | Member of School Advisory Committee Oversees advisory curriculum<br>Monitors / supports advisory sessions |
| Counselor | Member of School Advisory Committee<br>Advisor<br>Assigns students to advisory groups |

Table 7

*Focus Group Participant Characteristics*

| Group | Total | Year in School | | | | Gender | | Ethnicity | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | M | F | B | W | O |
| Students | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Recent Graduates | 4 | N/A | | | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Advisors | 6 | N/A | | | | 0 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Parents | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 |

**Analysis of Data**

The data were organized as it related to each of the five goals of the TAA program. Quantitative data are reported first followed by qualitative data. Findings are reported immediately following each data set. The answer to the overarching question, based on the data collected and analyzed for each of the goals, is provided in the summary at the end of the chapter.

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics for each of the items for each of the survey instruments were calculated (See Appendix N). Then items were grouped by program goal for presentation in Table 8. Statistical calculations were performed on the items grouped by program goal, and the percentage of grouped responses to each answer choice on the Likert Scale, as well as the mean response are reported. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, all quantitative data is presented in Table 8 in aggregate form with no identifying information included.

Table 8

*Survey Results of the Effectiveness of Advisory Program in Meeting Its Stated Goals*

| Goal 1: Provide a caring, trained adult advocate. | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respondents | Questions From Survey | SA (2 pts) | A (1 pt) | UD (0 pts) | D (-1 pt) | SD (-2 pts) | Mean |
| Students | 1,6,7,8,9,10, 11,12,13,18,24 | 0.37 | 0.39 | 0.11 | 0.10 | 0.03 | 0.97 |
| Parents | 1,2,3,4,5 | 0.59 | 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 1.54 |
| Advisors | 6,7,8,9,10,11, 12,26,27,28,29 | 0.43 | 0.48 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 1.28 |
| Goal 2: Establish regular communication and an effective link between home and school. | | | | | | | |
| Respondents | Questions From Survey | SA (2 pts) | A (1 pt) | UD (0 pts) | D (-1 pt) | SD (-2 pts) | Mean |
| Students | 12,13,14,24 | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.11 | 0.12 | 0.03 | 0.93 |
| Parents | 6,7,8,9,10 | 0.33 | 0.41 | 0.12 | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.87 |
| Advisors | 13 | 0.29 | 0.59 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.00 | 1.24 |
| Goal 3: Advise students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievements. | | | | | | | |
| Respondents | Questions From Survey | SA (2 pts) | A (1 pt) | UD (0 pts) | D (-1 pt) | SD (-2 pts) | Mean |
| Students | 1,2,3,4,14, 18,19,24,25 | 0.39 | 0.42 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.02 | 1.10 |
| Parents | 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 8,9,10,12,13 | 0.45 | 0.39 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 1.17 |
| Advisors | 1,2,4,5,12, 14,19,24,25 | 0.36 | 0.44 | 0.12 | 0.06 | 0.02 | 1.07 |
| Goal 4: Create, facilitate, and guide movement toward a career concentration so that each child will be post-secondary ready. | | | | | | | |
| Respondents | Questions From Survey | SA (2 pts) | A (1 pt) | UD (0 pts) | D (-1 pt) | SD (-2 pts) | Mean |
| Students | 2,3,5,13,15,16, 18,19,20,24,25 | 0.38 | 0.40 | 0.11 | 0.08 | 3% | 1.02 |
| Parents | 2,3,11,12,13 | 0.47 | 0.38 | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 1.23 |
| Advisors | 3,15,16,18, 19,20,24,25 | 26% | 46% | 14% | 12% | 2% | 0.82 |
| Goal 5: Facilitate a seamless academic and social transition across grades and schools for students and their families. | | | | | | | |
| Respondents | Questions From Survey | SA (2 pts) | A (1 pt) | UD (0 pts) | D (-1 pt) | SD (-2 pts) | Mean |
| Students | 5,13,14,16,17,18, 20,21,22,23,24,25 | 0.37 | 0.42 | 0.10 | 0.08 | 0.03 | 1.03 |
| Parents | 11,12,13 | 0.36 | 0.40 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.08 | 0.99 |
| Advisors | 9,12,16,17, 21,22,23 | 0.35 | 0.43 | 0.11 | 0.10 | 0.01 | 1.01 |

**Findings from Quantitative Data Analysis**

Analysis of the quantitative data collected reveals that respondents from all groups felt that all five program goals were being met (see Table 8). Goal Three showed the most consistent affirmative responses from all three groups with the mean ranging from 1.07 from the teacher advisor group to 1.17 from the parent group. Goal Three, which states that advisors advise students about academic decisions and monitor academic achievement, was not addressed in the research sub-questions; but it was addressed in the analysis of data. The goals receiving the highest percentage of negative responses from all groups were Goal Two and Goal Four. Goal Two, which addresses communication between home and school, had a mean response ranging from 0.87 from the parent group to 1.24 from the teacher advisor group. Goal Four, which addresses movement toward a career concentration to enable students to be post-secondary ready, had a mean response ranging from 0.82 from teacher advisors to 1.23 from parents.

High and low individual group ratings for each goal were somewhat inconsistent. Students rated Goal Five, facilitating seamless academic and social transitions, highest with a mean score of 1.03, while they rated Goal Two, facilitating regular communication and an effective link, lowest at 0.93. Parents rated Goal One, the provision of a caring, trained adult advocate, highest with a mean score of 1.54, while in agreement with students, rating Goal Two lowest with a mean score of 0.87. Advisors, in agreement with parents, rated Goal One highest with a mean score of 1.28, while rating Goal Four, movement toward a career concentration, lowest with a mean of 0.82.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

When conducting a mixed methods study, further explanation of these responses can be obtained from analysis of the qualitative findings. In order to cross-check the quantitative

findings and enrich the description of the effectiveness of the advisory program at Wisteria High

School, the researcher followed the specific set of steps for a thematic analysis of the qualitative

data. Glesne (2006) stated that the researcher must "…categorize, synthesize, search for patterns,

and interpret the data" (p. 147). The field notes taken during the focus group and interview

sessions, along with the verbatim audio recorded transcripts, contribute to the body of combined

qualitative and quantitative data used to answer the research question.

Qualitative data in this study are presented based on the dominant themes that emerged

after examining the sources of information discussed above. After reading the interview and

focus group transcripts, the researcher highlighted common words and phrases. Next, in order to

make the sizable amount of information more manageable, the researcher operationalized

Glesne's (2006) steps for thematic analysis as follows:

- Categorization
    - Created two matrices divided into columns to record responses for each goal, with rows on one matrix for each interview participant and rows on the other matrix for each focus group
    - Created a third matrix to record responses for the additional open-ended questions which addressed strengths, weaknesses, benefits, funding, evaluation and suggestions for improvement

- Synthesis
    - Recorded responses from each participant under the appropriate goal(s) or open-ended questions on the matrices (1$^{st}$ iteration)

- Search for Patterns
    - Analyzed the responses to identify major patterns and themes (2nd iteration)

- Interpretation of data

  - Linked the themes to the research questions and sub-questions (3$^{rd}$ iteration)

Table 9 depicts the codes, patterns and themes, and common themes of the three iterations.

Table 9

*Code Map: Three Iterations of Qualitative Data Analysis: An Evaluation of a Secondary Advisement Program*

*Note: (to be read from the bottom up)*

| Research Sub-Questions | | |
|---|---|---|
| RQ#1: A Caring, Trained, Adult Advocate | | |
| RQ#2: Communication and an Effective Link Between Home and School | | |
| RQ#3: Movement Toward a Career Concentration | | |
| RQ#4: Academic and Social Transitions | | |
| **Common Themes among All Participants** | | |
| A. The "Advisor" Makes the Difference | | |
| B. The Home and School Connection: A Split Decision | | |
| C. Career Preparation in Need of a Transfusion | | |
| D. Academic and Social Transitions: Another Split Decision | | |
| **Third Iteration: Application to Research Questions** | | |
| 1A. Caring Advisor | 2A. Trained advisor | 3A. Advisor as Advocate |
| 1B. Advisor-Initiated | 2B. Parent-Initiated | 3B. Other Modes of Communication |
| 1C. Creating Movement | 2C. Facilitating Movement | 3C. Guiding Movement |
| 1D. Academic Across Grades & Schools | 2D. Social Across Grades & Schools | 3D. Seamless Transitions |
| **Second Iteration: Pattern Variables** | | |
| 1A. Shows concern<br>1A. Another momma<br>1A. Helps everybody<br>1A. Shares personal Experiences<br>1A. Same advisor (looping)<br>1A. Teacher buy-in<br>1A. Knows advisees well<br>1A. Develops relationships<br>1A. Pushes students to reach their potential<br>1A. Advises students about grades and personal issues | 2A. More training needed<br>2A. Confidence level (certain topics)<br>2A. New advisors need Even more<br>2A. Engagement during lessons<br>2A. More one-on-one with Advisees<br>2A. Lesson preparation | 3A. Go-to person for parents, students, teachers and admin<br>3A. Contacts teachers and others on behalf of student |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1B. Telephone calls, text messages, e-mail, letters<br>1B. Spring conference<br>1B. Regular<br>1B. Inconsistent<br>1B. Disconnected phones<br>1B. Depends on advisor | 2B. Telephone calls, text messages, e-mail, letters | 3B. Parent portal<br>3B. Call-outs<br>3B. School website & Facebook page<br>3B. Open Houses |
| **Second Iteration: Pattern Variables (continued)** | | |
| 1C. Keeping up with markets difficult<br>1C. Resources can hinder creation<br>1C. Effects of legislation<br>1C. Limited time in advisory<br>1C. Explanded opportunities (dual enrollment, work-based learning, AP courses)<br>1C. Tests on-site (ASVAB, SAT, Compass) | 2C. More lessons on careers<br>2C. Advisor training on careers<br>2C. Advisor lack of confidence in area<br>2C. Career Day<br>2C. Apply to College Day | 3C. Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs)<br>3C. Spring scheduling conference (guidance in course selection)<br>3C. Course connection to pathway<br>3C. Pathway completion<br>3C. Help choosing pathway<br>3C. Career focus earlier |
| 1D. 8<sup>th</sup> grade conference<br>1D. Progress/grade monitoring<br>1D. Advisors complete Promotion/retention Information<br>1D. Provide information about academic help or credit recovery options<br>1D. Well-prepared<br>1D. "Real talk" about next Levels | 2D. Encourage participation in clubs, sports, other organizations & activities<br>2D. Develop relationships outside formal advisory sessions<br>2D. "Real talk" about next levels<br>2D. Need time management lesson | 3D. 8<sup>th</sup> grade conference<br>3D. Spring conference<br>3D. Senior conferences<br>3D. Same advisor (looping) |

**Findings from Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative portion of this program evaluation provided the researcher the

opportunity to delve more deeply into the complex phenomenon that is the Teachers-As-

Advisors Program at Wisteria High School. Responses obtained from students, recent graduates,

parents, faculty advisors, and school and central office administrators were placed into logical,

meaningful categories, analyzed for patterns and themes, and then reviewed holistically in order to determine the effectiveness of the school's advisory program. The findings derived from the qualitative data will be discussed in conjunction with the quantitative findings to address the initial research question, the subsequent sub-questions, and the overall purpose of the study.

**The "Advisor" Makes the Difference**

In response to this study's first research sub-question, "To what extent does the TAA Program provide a caring, trained adult advocate?" three themes emerged from the interviews and focus groups. The three themes are encapsulated in the first goal of the program (i.e., the advisor is caring, trained, and an advocate).

Repeatedly in interviews and focus groups, the stakeholders reiterated that the advisors were "caring." Representative of this theme, in response to the open-ended survey question, "What do you like most about advisement?" one student responded:

> My advisor, [name], is a huge people person; it's easy to talk to her/him and s/he has an interest in our lives after school. S/he has a way of connecting with people that's profound; even the trouble-makers like her/him and participate. S/he makes us want to better ourselves and strive to meet our goals.

While students thought advisors were caring, they still felt advisors in some groups gave less attention to students who were off-task during the lesson or had not settled on a career pathway. A few students in the open-ended survey questions even said what they liked least about advisement was their advisor. Yet, the overwhelming majority of comments both in the student open-ended survey questions and in the parent and student focus groups included words or phrases affirming the caring nature of the advisors (e.g., "helps everybody," "knows advisees well," "shares personal experiences," "pushes me to reach my potential," and "another

momma").

Insufficient training could account for some of the off-task behavior seen in some advisement groups. All stakeholders addressed the issue of advisor training in the interviews and focus groups; rationale for needed training included items such as failure to teach or conduct activities for the entire advisory session, more engaging teaching strategies, and lack of preparedness to teach the lesson. Students suggested that maybe new teacher advisors could be assigned a mentor or observe veteran advisors. Advisors themselves reported lack of confidence with certain topics, such as career pathways and career guidance. A professional development session was provided for teachers on career pathways and another was held to review the components of the spring scheduling conference. However, all stakeholders believe more training is needed.

The last theme, the role of advisor as advocate at WHS, was distilled from all stakeholders. Each group described the advisor as the resource person for parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Whether for an academic or disciplinary problem, the advisor was identified as a point of contact. A grandparent in the parent focus group portrayed the advisor/parent role as a team, citing an example of the advisor setting up the conference with all teachers when there was an issue with his or her grandchild.

These findings suggest advisors were perceived as making a difference with both students and parents/guardians. It would also appear that whether the impact is negative or positive depends on the advisor. As one of the counselors stated, "It [difference made] depends on the advisor's level of commitment." Review of the quantitative data suggests that Wisteria High School is meeting this goal; however, there is room for improvement with 13% disagreeing and 11% undecided (see Table 8). The district superintendent emphatically stated, "A caring, adult

advocate is crucial."

**The Home and School Connection: A Split Decision**

The study's second sub-question asked, "To what extent does the school's TAA program establish regular communication and an effective link between home and school?" Patterns identified for this question included advisor-initiated, parent-initiated, and other modes of communication which, when utilized appropriately, provide quality exchanges between the home and school. For this question, the less than welcome phrase "depends on the advisor," again surfaced in the qualitative data. Progress reports are distributed during advisement sessions, where advisors conference with students, celebrate academic achievement, and provide suggestions to help pull up failing or low grades. Advisors are expected to contact parents on a regular basis, and some do; parents are also urged to access student grades via the parent portal via the internet. Both parent and student focus groups reported advisors and parents exchanging phone calls, e-mails, texts, and letters. However, although the majority of the stakeholders reported (via qualitative data) the program met this goal; quantitative data indicated the lowest mean scores from students and parents were in this area (see Table 8).

**Career Preparation in Need of a Transfusion**

"To what extent does the TAA program create, facilitate, and guide student movement toward a career concentration?" was the fourth sub-question posed in this study. The themes which emerged were create movement, facilitate movement, and guide movement. Student and parent quantitative data on this question demonstrated affirmative responses; however, the advisor and the focus group responses tell a different story.

Students are expected to select a career pathway and take courses which lead to pathway completion. Where the breakdown occurs on this topic is in the balance of the curriculum and

advisors' confidence in this area. Advisory lessons at WHS are divided into three areas—progress/grade report sessions, soft skills (Habitudes) lessons, and other advisory lessons (some of which are strictly career-focused). These categories align with the formal advisory categories of academic, personal/social, and career development (GaDOE, 2006). Advisors and the majority of the focus groups suggest that more emphasis should be placed on career preparation and exploration.

Several activities are planned which create, facilitate, and guide movement toward a career concentration. These activities include the following: development of individual graduation plans, guidance in course selection with a focus on courses in a student's chosen pathway, helping choose a pathway, a Career Day with speakers from various occupations and representatives from colleges and the armed services, an Apply to College Day, and the opportunity to take tests on site which are requirements for certain post-secondary pursuits (e.g., ASVAB, SAT, and Compass). However, advisors expressed they would like (and need) more training on careers. Similarly, students expressed a need for more lessons on careers and career planning.

Another aspect of this topic deals with "creating" movement toward a career concentration. One item, which was repeatedly mentioned in the focus groups and in the open-ended survey responses, was the limited time in advisory. Sessions are 30 minutes long, but advisors, students, and some interviewees felt there is insufficient time to do the needed research and to do justice to the topics on careers (and other topics).

Keeping up with the current markets was also mentioned as a task which would hinder the creation of movement toward a career concentration. In addition, the lack of sufficient resources was cited as a hindrance; for example, a couple of years ago, the state cut funding to

the school system for dual enrollment programs which had previously been funded for both the public school and the technical college. Other legislation which currently affects this area of careers is the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), which rates schools on the number of students who complete a career pathway, along with other indicators which fall into this category. Legislation which changed the college preparatory and technical preparatory diploma types to a general diploma also impacted this area of careers.

So, although technically the school meets this goal with 78% agreement (see Table 8), there are some significant areas that need to be addressed. For example, the curriculum needs to be revamped to adequately address this area and teacher training in this area needs to be redesigned and provided.

**Academic and Social Transitions: Another Split Decision.**

The final sub-question asks, "To what extent does the TAA Program facilitate seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families?" With this question, patterns identified were academic transitions across grades and schools, social transitions across grades and schools, and seamless transitions. Several activities fit into more than one category for this question. One major contributor to seamless transitions across grades is the assignment of one advisor that stays with the student throughout his or her high school years. In addition, eighth grade conference serves as the transition piece from middle school to high school, while senior conferences serve as the transition piece from high school to post-secondary.

During eighth grade conference, which serves to bridge the academic transition to high school, students' individual graduation plans (IGPs) are developed. This IGP, based on students' choice of a career pathway, takes into account students' academic performance. Also,

contributing to the academic transitions across grades are the following: progress/grade reporting advisory sessions; advisor completion of the promotion/retention information at the end of the year; information disseminated during progress/grade report sessions or at the end of the year about academic help or credit recovery options available; and real-world discussion during advisory sessions about the next levels (grade, school, military, or work).

Three of the parents in the focus group gave personal testimonies which endorsed the program's success in providing seamless academic transitions.  For example, one parent spoke of her/his child being guided into the dual enrollment nursing program; in a year, the student will be graduating from the nursing program at Georgia Regents University. Another parent spoke of the professors at the University of Georgia being impressed by her/his child's preparedness for college and the child's stories of the advisement program, through which s/he was advised to take AP courses. These parents, who were very complimentary of the program, had the unique perspective of having a child who is currently enrolled at WCHS and a child who is a WCHS graduate currently enrolled in post-secondary education.

Regarding social transitions, ten of the student focus group participants spoke of encouragement they received from their advisor to participate in clubs, sports, and other organizations and activities. Students also mentioned the relationships developed with advisors outside of formal advisory sessions. Students cited "real-life" discussions with advisors about the next level, what to expect and repercussions when should students not do certain things. One student mentioned and received overwhelming agreement from others in the group that a lesson in time management would have been beneficial.

One suggestion to improve this "transition" area included more collaboration with the middle school in relaxing some of the school expectations for movement about the school (e.g.,

moving in lines down the hall). Additionally, one proposed improvement was closer collaboration between the middle school exploratory class teachers and teachers of companion courses or course areas at the high school.

The mean score for this transition goal ranged from 0.99 from parents to 1.03 from students (see Table 8).  Although a majority of the respondents answer in the affirmative, there is room for improvement on this goal, too. Based on stakeholder responses, there are weak areas which need to be addressed as it relates to the three focus areas for this goal—i.e., the academic, social, and seamless movement between grades and schools.

**Findings from the Review of Ancillary Materials**

Several documents and presentations utilized in the Wisteria High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program were reviewed as part of this study.  A brief description of how the materials were used and what goals were addressed are included in Appendix M.  All materials reviewed except the Advisory Curriculum Matrix (which has not been updated recently) and the Secondary Advisement Committee minutes (this committee now being defunct) were considered current and were being utilized to enhance the program.

**Teachers-as-advisors:  Getting the word out to stakeholders**. The school currently has two formal methods of publicizing the Teachers-As-Advisors Program. For students and parents, a brochure detailing how the program works, the rationale for the program, and the roles of the advisor, the student, and the parent in the program is distributed at the beginning of the school year to the upcoming ninth graders and their parents during Open House. Informally, information about the program is shared at the Parent Night held at the high school for upcoming ninth graders and their parents in the spring of their eighth grade year.  Also, it is discussed with eighth graders during a high school overview presentation at the middle schools in the fall. For new

teachers, a presentation is done at the beginning of the school year. The PowerPoint presentation describes how the program works, the rationale for the program, and the role of the advisor.

Goal Two is suppported as it relates to sharing information about the program, but there is definite room for improvement in this area. At this time, there is no formal information presented to transfer students or their parents about the program. Also, the school's social media outlets (the website, Facebook page, and Twitter) are not being utilized to advertise the program.

**Planning the lessons: A three-way street.** Three categories of documents are utilized in recording the "when" and "what" of advisement lessons (i.e., the advisory schedule, the advisory curriculum matrix, and the advisory lesson plans). The advisory schedule is developed each year. This schedule or calendar includes the dates of the lessons and whether the lesson focus will be one of three categories: a progress/grade report lesson, a Habitudes lesson, or another selected advisory topic. The dates are disseminated to students and staff on the school's student activities calendar. The advisors also receive a schedule of the *Habitudes* lessons for the year which includes the date and lesson by group year.

The advisory curriculum matrix was developed by faculty during a summer professional development workshop in 2007 at the school, facilitated by a consultant who was instrumental in the Georgia Department of Education's push for establishment of advisory programs across the state.. The curriculum matrix or "advisory overview" (as it was called) contained the topics for lessons for each advisory group by year. These lessons were tied to the advisement competencies published by the Georgia Department of Education. One concern with the matrix is that it has not been updated in several years and does not take into account the *Habitudes* curriculum which has now been incorporated. Therefore, there is a need to revise and update this document (e.g., annually) to ensure that the curriculum focus is appropriate and balanced. Also, a copy of this

matrix or overview should be disseminated to advisors for planning purposes.

The third element in this group of documents is the actual advisory lesson plans. Plans are provided for each lesson by group year. For the school-developed lesson topics and the progress/grade checks, the lesson plan format includes the area (academic, career, or personal/social development), competency addressed, topic, projected length of time needed, materials/resources, evaluation, and procedures. For the *Habitudes* lessons, the program came with teacher guides with in-depth lesson plans. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation or flipchart with video links is e-mailed to all teachers in advance for use in teaching the lesson.

**Advisor preparation could be enhanced**.  Currently, two major professional development activities are held each year. The first activity, held in December, is the *Review of Spring Block Schedules and Navigating Course Registration* professional learning time (PLT). The PowerPoint presentation and attending documents are very thorough. The second activity is the *Understanding Career Pathways* PLT held in January prior to the spring advisement conferences; in this conference, teacher advisors meet with their advisees and their parents individually to review the student's graduation plan and register for the next year's courses.

Advisors still report feeling a lack of confidence in certain areas, specifically knowledge of and guidance in selecting career pathways. As such, methods to improve this area should be investigated, planned, and implemented. In addition, there is a need for further feedback from advisors concerning whether more preparation for teaching the individual advisory lessons is needed. In the early years of the program, the counselor (responsible for developing the lessons) met with advisors during their planning periods a day or two before advisement sessions to give an overview of the lesson and answer any questions. However, in recent years, these overview sessions have not been held.

**The advisory program: From the driver's seat**. A program of this magnitude requires constant attention in order to stay on the right course. When the program began at Wisteria High School during the 2003 school year, one administrator and two counselors were charged by the principal with going to a *High Schools That Works* conference and learning about setting up a teachers-as-advisors program. Armed with the information gained at this conference, a school advisory committee, consisting of an administrator, the counselors, and a few teachers, was organized, planning and implementing the first program at Wisteria High School. This committee oversaw all aspects of the program, but no minutes exist from this initial development phase.

Within a year or two, the advisory program extended into the middle schools, and the Secondary Advisement Committee was formed. This committee consisted of district curriculum directors, high school and middle school administrators, counselors, and selected teachers. The focus of the committee's work, as recorded in the minutes, included development of the program at the middle schools, curriculum, alignment of the middle school and high school programs, selection and funding of system-wide career assessments, and discussion of evaluation criteria. Also, three summer professional development workshops to update the advisory overview and design advisement lessons occurred as a result of the committee's work.

As the middle school programs became more established and other initiatives moved to the forefront, the system-wide committee ceased to meet as a full committee. The final meeting of the full group was called to address the requirements of the Bridge Act of 2010 and its impact on advisement at the middle and high school levels. Since that time, the counselors and high school administrator have met to plan transition activities, but that has been the extent of the work of the System-Wide Committee. The necessity for the reformation of the Secondary

Advisement Committee bears exploration.

With the discontinuation of Secondary Advisement Committee meetings, the School Advisement Committee was revitalized and began to meet regularly again. Minutes from the committee's meetings reflect a focus on the overall working of the program. Topics from the minutes include such items as curriculum, requirements of the Bridge Law, the advisory program and the state's new College & Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) which replaced adequate yearly progress measures (AYP), career pathways, program evaluation, scheduling, and revisiting the program's goals and structure. Minutes are recorded and disseminated to members via e-mail.

Analysis of the ancillary documents utilized with the advisory program suggests that the program is meeting all goals, but there is still room for improvement in the areas of advisor training, effective communication between home and school, and career development.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Summary</h3>

This program evaluation of the Teachers-As-Advisors Program at Wisteria High School utilized a case study approach to determine the effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated goals from the perspective of its various stakeholders—students, recent graduates, parents, faculty advisors, and administrators. Mixed methods were employed because, as Creswell (2009, p. 209) pointed out, ". . . there is more insight to be gained from the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research than either form by itself." Indeed, this investigation has provided an in-depth look at the program through various lenses. It has also provided rich descriptions of the multi-faceted elements which inform the ratings for each goal of the school's advisory program. In this chapter, the researcher has presented the data and the implications from the study of the WCHS TAA program.

Review of the data suggests stakeholders perceive that the program is effective in meeting its stated goals. However, the data also indicates there is room for improvement. Stakeholders report there is a need for more advisor training and a more balanced curriculum, particularly in the area of career development. Also, although there are some activities in place which help students to make effective academic and social transition between schools and grade levels, stakeholders report feeling this area still requires improvement. A variety of communication techniques which link the home and school are available and in use, but inconsistency in this area has identified it as needing the most attention. Decidedly, stakeholders agree these goal areas are being met, but effectiveness can be enhanced. The program's strength areas are readily apparent in the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. Advisors are considered caring and advocate for advisees. Furthermore, advisors effectively monitor their advisees' academic achievement. Finally, the district and school administrators are supportive of the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and are committed to its continuation.

CHAPTER 5

AN EVALUATION OF A SECONDARY STUDENT ADVISEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Teachers-As-Advisors Program at Wisteria County High School (WCHS) has been in existence since the 2003-2004 school year. Yet, in the years of its existence, a formal comprehensive evaluation of the program has never been conducted. This research project, *An Evaluation of a Secondary Advisement Program*, has sought to rectify that omission and determine the effectiveness of the program as seen from the perspective of various stakeholders. The findings highlighting the analysis of the program's strengths and weaknesses can subsequently be used to guide decision-making about the program.

The researcher considered the following overarching question in this study: How do the various stakeholders—students, recent graduates, parents, faculty advisors, and administrators— in the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated goals? The following sub-questions were used to answer the overarching question:

Sub-Question$_1$: To what extent does the TAA Program provide a caring, trained adult advocate?

Sub-Question$_2$: To what extent does the TAA Program establish regular communication and an effective link between home and school?

Sub-Question$_3$: To what extent does the TAA Program create, facilitate, and guide student movement toward a career concentration?

Sub-Question$_4$: To what extent does the TAA Program facilitate seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families?

Using a mixed methods approach, the researcher administered surveys to students, parents, and teacher advisors in the quantitative portion of the study. For the qualitative portion of the study, individual interviews were conducted with central office administrators, school administrators and counselors, while focus group interviews were conducted with teacher advisors, students, and recent graduates. Components of Stufflebeam's (Stufflebeamet al., 2003) Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model were used to structure the depth and breadth of survey and interview questions and the protocol for analyzing the ancillary materials. These components were also a guide in analyzing and interpreting data collected.

As a final step in this research project, the findings from the study were presented to the Wisteria High School's district and school administrators, as well as the School Advisement Committee, to inform program and school improvement efforts. Discussion of specific findings follows in the next section, followed by alignment with previous research, recommendations for practice, limitations, implications for future research, and some concluding thoughts.

## Discussion of Findings

**Overview of Key Findings**

Analysis of the quantitative data collected has revealed that respondents from all groups surveyed (students, parents, and teacher advisors) feel that all five program goals are being met (see Table 8). However, further insight into the program's operation was gained from conducting interviews and focus group discussions, as well as reviewing ancillary materials used with the Wisteria High School Advisory program. Some key points surfaced which can be used to guide programmatic decision-making at WCHS. Furthermore, these findings bear potential implications for schools considering implementing and/or evaluating a similar advisory program..

**Discussion of Key Findings**

  **The advisor is crucial to the successful implementation of an advisory program**. Although advisory programs actually fall under the auspices of guidance and counseling programs, it would be impossible for two counselors to meet the academic, career, and personal/social needs of over 800 students. Therefore, teachers-as-advisors play a vital role in meeting student needs in these areas. Goal One of the WCHS Advisory Program states that the program provides a caring, trained, adult advocate. All stakeholders at WCHS perceived the advisors as caring, acting as an advocate or resource person for students. However, the advisor "training" component appears inadequate to meet stakeholder expectations, particularly as rated by advisors. Review of ancillary materials indicates several professional development activities are provided—i.e., orientation to the advisory program (for new teachers), a presentation on scheduling, and a presentation on career pathways. A demonstration lesson on teaching a *Habitudes* lesson is also provided to teachers as noted from interviews with administrators, as well as lesson plans for all lessons. However, if teachers lack confidence in their ability or preparation to adequately teach or facilitate the lessons, then the need for some teacher training is indicated.

  **Communication between the home and school enables and enhances the effective and efficient working of the program.** Two tenets espoused in NASSP's *Breaking Ranks* (1996) are especially relevant in understanding the importance of communication between stakeholders at the high school level. The first tenet addresses the need for the high school staff to collaborate with each other to meet students' learning goals; the second stresses the importance of partnering with students' families. In order to meet the goals of the advisory program at WHS, which ultimately focus on the students' academic, career, and personal/social

needs, communication between all stakeholders is essential.

Goal Two, which states that program will establish regular communication and an effective link between home and school, received mixed ratings from stakeholders in interviews and focus groups. The phrase "depends on the advisor" surfaced in both word and theme in most of the discussion groups and interviews. Even though the majority of advisors were described as making expected contacts with parents and/or guardians, the impact of even one advisor not meeting this expectation is noteworthy considering each advisor serves approximately 15 students. Parents must be kept in the loop, and three-way communication between parents, students, and advisors can be of immense benefit towards promoting student achievement and fostering healthy personal/social growth. Thus, even though this goal was reported as met, there is a need to improve the channel of communication between the home and school.

**The focus on academic decision-making and academic achievement is critical.** The heart of the TAA program is guidance students receive about academic decisions and the monitoring of academic achievement (Goal Three). This goal received consistent affirmative ratings in the quantitative portion of the study (see Table 8). Additionally, in interviews and focus groups, all stakeholders stated that advisors do a good job of monitoring academic achievement. Students, in particular, emphasized that advisors held conferences with them individually to discuss grades and pushed them to do their best. Concern regarding advising students about academic decisions, was reported in the interviews with administrators and counselors. In order to advise students about the various academic decisions they must make, advisors must be well-trained (Goal One), and there must be open effective, communication between advisors, students, and parents (Goal Two). The fact that advisors guide students in making academic decisions does not appear to be in question, but the appropriateness of advice

given is of concern.

**Career preparation must be an integral part of the program.** Career-ready is a very common phrase in educational literature. To ensure students are career-ready, schools must have a system in place which addresses and supports career preparation. For Wisteria High School (and across the state of Georgia as identified in the BRIDGE Act of 2010 passed by the Georgia General Assembly), the advisory program has been identified such a system. Evaluation of WCHS's advisory program suggests some improvement is needed in the program to adequately address Goal Four, creating, facilitating, and guiding movement toward a career concentration so that each child will be post-secondary ready. The Georgia Department of Education, in its College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), holds schools accountable for the "percent of graduates who complete a CTAE [Career Technical & Agricultural Education] pathway, or an advanced academic pathway, or a fine arts pathway, or a world language pathway within their program of study" (indicator nine in the 2015 version) (GaDOE, 2015). Concerns about "facilitating and guiding movement…" towards a career occur in the tension between the specified curriculum and advisors' confidence in their ability in this area.

In the first component of this goal ("creating…movement"), several concerns surfaced. Some stakeholders believed there was a lack of sufficient time in each advisory session to conduct the necessary research on careers or adequately address planned career development lessons. The ability to keep up with current career markets and a lack of sufficient resources were also cited as hindrances. The graduation requirement change to one diploma, introduced in 2007 by the Georgia State Department of Education and adopted by the Georgia Board of Education in policy IHF 160-4-2-.48 on July 21, 2011, has further impacted this goal. This change necessitated the development of an individual graduation plan (part of the Bridge Act of

2010) for each student as opposed to the selection of a prescribed college preparatory and/or vocational diploma.

**The TAA program should facilitate seamless academic and social transitions.**

Advisors and counselors assist students and families in making connections which facilitate seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools. Each student at Wisteria High School is assigned an advisor who stays with them throughout their high school career. This practice allows advisors to get to know their advisees well, be knowledgeable about their academic, social, and career needs, and attend to those needs. In addition, the relationship built with advisees' parents and/or guardians allows them to have a resource person at the school who can help both the child and his or her parent navigate school. There are also several activities conducted by the counselors, as an outgrowth of advisory, which contribute to the seamless transitions (discussed in-depth in Chapter IV). Goal Five is functional at WCHS, but would benefit from additional support.

## Alignment of Findings with Previous Research

The impetus for this study was grounded in the researcher's experience that program evaluation rarely takes place in schools. The review of the literature in Chapter 2 of this study began describing the historical perspective on the evolution of advisory programs, then moved to a review of research studies investigating on the relationship between advisement and academic achievement, and culminated with research dedicated to teachers-as-advisor programs. The literature review revealed two primary reasons why program evaluations were conducted. First, these program evaluations were conducted when data about the program's effectiveness was required by or was important to entities outside the school. Two middle school studies reviewed (Caswell, 2003; Shulkind, 2007) fit this category of program evaluations. The second category

of program evaluations which surfaced in the literature included studies conducted purely for

educational research. As revealed in the literature review, rather than comprehensive program

evaluations, many of these studies evaluate only certain aspects of advisory programs. The

remainder of this section will focus on how the findings of these studies of high school advisory

programs align with the findings of the current study. The researcher will extrapolate

generalizations which when connected with the extant literature, may be applied to other

advisory programs and/or to the cumulative knowledge of effective advisory programs (Yin,

2013).

The current study has several findings in common with previous research (see Table 11).

Table 10

*Current and Previous Research:  Common Findings*

| Literature Review Only | Common Findings | Current Study Only |
|---|---|---|
| No significant relationship between participation and academic/attendance (Dooly, 2005; Lessard, 2008; Walloff, 2010) | Impact dependent on implementation skills of advisor (Poole, 2003) | |
| | Has impact on monitoring of student performance (Stover, 2009) | |
| | Has strong impact on relationships between students and teachers (Borgeson, 2009); Lessard, 2008; Poole, 2003; Stover, 2009) | |
| | Has weak impact on social skills (Stover, 2009) | |
| | Advisors and students want more time for advisory (Borgeson, 2009) | |
| | Continuous curriculum revision important to program success (Borgeson, 2009) | |

There are also a number of findings which do not align with those found in this study. Dooly's (2005) study found no significant relationship between participation in a teachers-as-advisors program and academic and attendance-related outcomes. In the Walloff (2010) study, both the students and teachers reported that the teachers-as-advisors program did not impact academic achievement or school climate. Lessard (2008) reported that the advisory period was not considered academically important by the student respondents in his study of a suburban high school. It should be noted, these studies focused on specific outcomes of advisory programs rather than the overall effectiveness of programs in meeting identified goals.

## Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this research study, the researcher makes the following recommendations for meeting stakeholder expectations for an effective secondary advisory program:

1. Program coordinator(s) should consider conducting a curriculum audit to determine the appropriateness, balance, and delivery of the curriculum with respect to alignment with the program goals. Particular attention should be paid to lessons on career exploration, planning, and preparation.

2. A thorough assessment of training needed for advisors to effectively implement the program should be conducted. Utilizing the results of the assessment, a comprehensive professional development plan should then be designed and implemented.

3. Activities or methods to foster advisor buy-in to the program in order to promote consistency of implementation should be explored. Increased buy-in should le3ssen, maybe even eradicate, the theme of "depends on the advisor."

4. More collaboration between the middle and high school is needed; reorganization of the Secondary Advisement Committee is recommended to provide a seamless advisory program in grades 6-12.

5. Program coordinator(s) should seek ways to improve timely dissemination of pertinent information about the program to all stakeholders. Communication topics and/or methods to be addressed should include processes, procedures, curriculum, and ways to publicize the program.

6. It is important to build into the design of the program methods to monitor and maintain open channels of communication between stakeholders—e.g., parent contact logs, periodic reports tracking the parent and student web access to pertinent information.

## Limitations

Several limitations exist in the current study. Each limitation will be addressed separately. First, in order to make the study more feasible and take a more in-depth look at the program, the researcher limited the scope of the research project to one high school in the researcher's rural Georgia school system. Advisory programs at the high school's two feeder middle schools were not included. Secondly, the number of participants for the quantitative portion of the study was reduced to a representative sample rather than surveying the entire population. Finally, the researcher acknowledges the possible introduction of researcher affecting the findings. Such a possibility may result from the researcher being an instrument of the study while having a vested interest in the study's findings.

As the research was conducted utilizing program evaluation, it focused on one high school in rural Georgia. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized to other advisory programs. However, school leaders examine program components and evaluation of the

program's effectiveness for application to similar elements which are present in their TAA programs.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this research project and the study's limitations, the researcher makes the following recommendations for future research:

1. This program evaluation was conducted in one small rural school. Expanding the project to include more schools of varying sizes in both rural and urban settings could produce different results. The larger sample size and the variety of settings might improve generalizability of the results.

2. This research project was conducted in a small school in rural Georgia. Replication of the study in schools of varying sizes in different parts of the country would investigate if similar results are produced.

3. The effectiveness of the program in this study was measured based on the perspective of the various stakeholders. Future research expanded to include more schools and utilizes more comprehensive and utilizing more comprehensive and objective measures of program effectiveness would add to the body of literature on advisory programs.

## Concluding Thoughts

As stated at the outset of this research project, it is incumbent upon school leaders to take a proactive approach to evaluating the various programs which are implemented in their schools. This age of accountability to our public and the climate of continuous improvement continues to demand that educational initiatives and interventions be data-driven. The responsibility for ensuring the success of these programs still rests firmly on the shoulders of the principal as the school's instructional leader.

Taking this charge seriously, the researcher conducted a program evaluation of the Teachers-As-Advisors Program at Wisteria County High School. Upon completion of the study, these findings will be presented to the School Advisement Committee, as well as appropriate district-level administrators to inform program and/or school improvement efforts. The findings in connection with  extant literature, may also be applied to other advisory programs and/or to the cumulative knowledge of effective advisory programs.

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Appendix A

August 10, 2011

**BRIDGE Act**
**Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Career Information Center**
**ADVISEMENT CHECKLIST**

**Evaluation Process for measuring effective advisement utilizing the Georgia Career Information System (GCIS) as the primary tool for education and career planning in phases:**

➢ Year 1/2010-11 – 80%

➢ **Year 2/2011-12 – 90%**

➢ Year 3/2012-13 – 100%

GCIS and GCIS Junior (www.gcic.peachnet.edu) - Utilize Administration Tools for GCIS and GCIS Junior to track your students' progress. The state, individual systems, and local schools will have the capacity to measure effective advisement by:

_____ % of 6th graders who have portfolio accounts with GCIS or GCIS Junior

_____ % of 6th graders who have taken and saved in their portfolios the Career Cluster Inventory

_____ % of 7th graders who have taken and saved in their portfolios Reality Check

_____ % of 7th graders who explored at least three career clusters and saved the career clusters in their portfolios

_____ % of 8th graders who explored at least three occupations and saved the occupational information in their portfolios, prior to the transitional parent/student conference or student led conference

_____ % of 8th graders who have completed the "My Course Plan" (Individual Graduation Plan) to be utilized during the transitional conference between middle and high school (CAP STONE PROJECT through Language Arts, "Take This Job and Love It!")

_____ % of 9th graders who have explored and investigated at least three additional occupations prior to the annual student/family conference

_____ % of 10th graders who have been made aware of "College Credit Now" programs

_____ % of 11th graders who have made the connection between school and work by exploring and saving in their portfolios at least three possible choices of postsecondary institutions that match their Individual Graduation Plan

_____ % of 12th graders who have identified their next step: college, military, apprenticeship, workforce (self-reported)

Appendix B

Advisor: _____          Year in high School:  1   2   3   4   5

## WisteriaCounty High School
### ADVISORY PROGRAM STUDENT SURVEY

**ABOUT THIS SURVEY:**  Please take the time to thoughtfully complete this advisory program survey.  I take your opinions very seriously, and as we discuss our professional practice, the feedback you give us will play a significant role.  Please note:  this survey is not about whether you like or dislike your advisor.  It is about the quality of the advisement program as a whole, the guidance you received from your advisor, and the curriculum topics covered in each session.  Answer the questions carefully and honestly.

**Directions:**  Please use the rating scale below to circle your answer to the following questions about the advisory program at WCHS.

  1 = Strongly Agree   2 = Agree   3 = Undecided   4 = Disagree   5 = Strongly Disagree

**To me, advisory…**

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Is important and helps me do better in school. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 2. | Helps me understand what I need to graduate. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 3. | Helps me understand that I must plan for a career after high school. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 4. | Helps me understand the importance of attending school regularly. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 5. | Helps me understand the importance of learning and making good grades in school. | 1  2  3  4  5 |

**My advisor…**

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 6. | Is clear about the purposes of our advisory sessions, and helps the group meet those purposes. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 7. | Maintains an orderly, appropriate advisory environment, staying on task and carrying out the planned advisory activities. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 8. | Encourages all students to participate in the group. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 9. | Listens to the students in our group and treats them with care, compassion, and respect. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 10. | Makes our advisory group a warm, inviting place to be. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 11. | Is my advocate and helps me to resolve the difficult situations, access various resources, and refers me to others when appropriate. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 12. | Meets with me individually during the year to talk and to address academic and social concerns as needed. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 13. | Makes contact with my parent/guardian as needed to answer questions, explain decisions, and celebrate successes. | 1  2  3  4  5 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 14. | Monitors my progress/grades in my classes and advises me on steps to improve my grades. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. | Provides me with needed information and guidance as I work toward my career goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

**The topics/activities in advisement…**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 16. | Help me learn the personal characteristics and general employability skills that are desired in school and/or in the workplace (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, integrity, and loyalty). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. | Are relevant to my life and my experiences as a high school student. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. | Help me connect the different opportunities (e.g., academic and elective courses, apprenticeship, dual enrollment, etc.) for career planning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. | Help me recognize and achieve performance levels necessary to reach my educational and career goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. | Help me identify current employment trends, economic conditions, and societal needs that could impact career planning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. | Help me develop habits that facilitate physical and mental health and wellness. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. | Help me develop positive, highly-developed interpersonal skills. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23. | Help me recognize and accept that growth and being able to adapt to change is an essential part of life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. | Help me create and manage my own individualized educational and career plan. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 25. | Help me understand how to make wise decisions and recognize that wise decision-making processes are important to educational and career planning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Additional Comments:

26. What do you like most about advisement?

_____

_____

_____

27. What do you like least about advisement?

_____

_____

_____

28. Please list any suggestions for improvement below:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Number children now in high school:  1  2  3  4      Year in school (each child):  1  2  3  4  5

**Wisteria County High School**
**ADVISORY PROGRAM PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY**

**ABOUT THIS SURVEY:**  Please take the time to thoughtfully complete this survey about the advisory program at Wisteria County High School (WCHS).  I take your opinions very seriously, and as we discuss our professional practice, the feedback you give us will play a significant role.  Please note:  the survey is about the quality of the advisement program as a whole, whether or not we are meeting our program goals and the needs of both you and your child in the area of advisement.  Answer the questions carefully and honestly.

Directions:  Please use the rating scale below to circle your answer to the questions below about the advisory program at WHS.

1 = Strongly Agree   2 = Agree   3 = Undecided    4 = Disagree    5 = Strongly Disagree

**The advisory program as a whole…**

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Is important and helps students do better in school. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 2. | Helps students understand what they need to graduate. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 3. | Helps students understand that they must plan for a career after high school. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 4. | Helps students understand the importance of attending school regularly. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 5. | Helps students understand the importance of learning and making good grades in school. | 1  2  3  4  5 |

**In the area of connecting home and school, …**

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 6. | My child's advisor contacts me as needed (phone calls, texts, e-mails, notes, etc.) regarding my child's academic performance, attendance, or behavior. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 7. | I contact my child's advisor as needed (phone calls, texts, e-mails, notes, etc.) regarding his or her academic performance, attendance, or behavior. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 8. | My child's advisor schedules face-to-face conferences with me and my child to plan/update the academic program of study which is needed to meet his or her career goal. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 9. | I contact my child's advisor to schedule face-to-face conferences with me and my child to plan/update the academic program of study which is needed to meet his or her career goal. | 1  2  3  4  5 |
| 10. | My child's advisor makes contact with me as needed to answer questions, explain decisions, and celebrate successes. | 1  2  3  4  5 |

**In the area of facilitating seamless transitions across grades and schools, …**

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 11. | My child's advisor has helped him or her to make the transition to the high school and/or preparations to enter their post-secondary school easier. | 1  2  3  4  5 |

12. My child's advisor helps my child and me understand what he or she needs to move from grade to grade (including notification about summer school needs).    1  2  3  4  5

13. My child's advisor suggests or makes recommendations for summer opportunities that will enhance or advance movement toward his or her career goal.    1  2  3  4  5

Additional Comments:

14. Thinking about the advisory program as a whole, what has been most beneficial to you or your child?

_____

_____

_____

15. Again thinking about the advisory program as whole, what has been least beneficial to you or your

child?

_____

_____

_____

16. Please list any suggestions for improvement below:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D

Years as an advisor:  1   2   3   4   Other: ___          Year of current advisory group:  1   2   3   4

**Wisteria County High School**
**ADVISORY PROGRAM ADVISOR SURVEY**

**ABOUT THIS SURVEY:**  Please take the time to thoughtfully complete this advisory program survey.  I take your opinions very seriously, and as we discuss our professional practice, the feedback you give us will play a significant role.  Please note:  this survey is not about whether you like or dislike your advisory group.  It is about the quality of the advisement program as a whole, the curriculum topics covered in each session, and the guidance and training you've received.  Answer the questions carefully and honestly.

**Directions:**  Please use the rating scale below to circle your answer to the following questions about the advisory program at WHS.

1 = Strongly Agree   2 = Agree   3 = Undecided   4 = Disagree   5 = Strongly Disagree

**To me, advisory…**

1.  Is important and helps students do better in school.                                  1  2  3  4  5

2.  Helps students understand what they need to graduate.                      1  2  3  4  5

3.  Helps students understand that they must plan for a career after high school.          1  2  3  4  5

4.  Helps students understand the importance of attending school regularly.                1  2  3  4  5

5.  Helps students understand the importance of learning and making good grades in school.  1  2  3  4  5

**As an advisor I …**

6.  Am clear about the purposes of our advisory sessions and help the group meet those purposes.        1  2  3  4  5

7.  Maintain an orderly, appropriate advisory environment, staying on task and carrying out the planned advisory activities.   1  2  3  4  5

8.  Encourage all my advisees to participate in the group.                          1  2  3  4  5

9.  Listen to my advisees and treat them with care, compassion, and respect.       1  2  3  4  5

10. Make our advisory group a warm, inviting place to be.                          1  2  3  4  5

11. Advocate for and help my advisees to resolve difficult situations, access various resources, and refer them to others when appropriate.   1  2  3  4  5

12. Meet with my advisees individually during the year to talk and to address academic and social concerns as needed.        1  2  3  4  5

13. Make contact with my advisees' parent/guardians as needed to answer questions, explain decisions, and celebrate successes.   1  2  3  4  5

14. Monitor my advisees' progress/grades in their classes and advise them on steps to improve their grades.  1 2 3 4 5

15. Provide my advisees with needed information and guidance and help them work toward their career goals.  1 2 3 4 5

**The topics/activities in advisement…**

16. Help my advisees learn the personal characteristics and general employability skills that are desired in school and/or in the workplace (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, integrity, and loyalty).  1 2 3 4 5

17. Are relevant to my advisees' life and their experiences as a high school student.  1 2 3 4 5

18. Help my advisees connect the different opportunities (e.g., academic and elective courses, apprenticeship, dual enrollment, etc.) for career planning.  1 2 3 4 5

19. Help my advisees recognize and achieve performance levels necessary to reach their educational and career goals.  1 2 3 4 5

20. Help my advisees identify current employment trends, economic conditions, and societal needs that could impact career planning.  1 2 3 4 5

21. Help my advisees develop habits that facilitate physical and mental health and wellness.  1 2 3 4 5

22. Help my advisees develop positive, highly-developed interpersonal skills.  1 2 3 4 5

23. Help my advisees recognize and accept that growth and being able to adapt to change is an essential part of life.  1 2 3 4 5

24. Help my advisees create and manage their own individualized educational and career plan.  1 2 3 4 5

25. Help my advisees understand how to make wise decisions and recognize that wise decision-making processes are important to educational and career planning.  1 2 3 4 5

**Regarding guidance and training for the role of advisor, I…**

26. Have received an orientation to the advisory program at my school.  1 2 3 4 5

27. Am provided advisory lesson plans and other necessary materials which are clear, concise, and functional.  1 2 3 4 5

28. Am provided updated information and/or training needed to fulfill my role in guiding my advisees and their parents in the selection of courses, extra-curricular activities, and available work or other experiences related to their career goal.  1 2 3 4 5

29. Have been provided necessary training overall to carry out my duties as an advisor.  1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments:
30. Thinking about the advisory program as a whole, what is most beneficial to you, your advisees and/or

their parents?

_____

_____

_____

31. Again thinking about the advisory program as whole, what has been least beneficial to you, your

advisees and/or their parents?

_____

_____

_____

32. Please list any suggestions for improvement below:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Interview and Focus Group Protocol (All Groups)

This interview (focus group) is a part of a larger research project which is being conducted to evaluate the Teachers-As-Advisors program at Wisteria County High School. Your participation in the project will provide valuable information to determine the effectiveness of the program.

As part of this interview (focus group) and before we continue further, I must obtain your consent to participate in the study. The data collected and artifacts examined will be analyzed as part of my doctoral dissertation at Georgia Southern University.

All information on your identity will be kept confidential unless otherwise required by law. If information about this interview is published, pseudonyms will be used in place of the actual names of the participants. This project is for research and educational purposes only.

You should not experience any discomfort or stress as a result of participating in this interview (focus group). However, if you feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview (focus group), you may decline to answer or withdraw from participation without penalty. No risks are anticipated as a result of your participation. This interview (focus group) will last approximately 45 to 55 minutes. Do you have any questions?

During this interview (focus group), I will be taking written notes, and the questions and your responses will be recorded for future transcription. At the conclusion of this study and upon approval of this dissertation, all records will be destroyed.  Do I have your permission to continue?

_____ Yes          _____ No

_____          _____
          Signature of Participant                              Date

Appendix F

Interview (Focus Group) Questions:

School and Central Office Administrators

1. Please state your first name and your position or role with relationship to Wisteria County High School.

2. What has been the extent of your experience with the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School—e.g., years in the program, position or role with respect to the program?

*Instructions for question 3-8:  Please take a moment to review the copy of the mission and purpose of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program which was sent to you earlier.  If you need another copy, please let me know, and I will provide it for you. For these questions you will be rating how well the school's TAA Program meets its stated goals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very effective and 5 is very effective.  I will ask you to jot down your rating on the form provided and then share your rating and briefly discuss with the group your rationale for that rating.*

3.  How effective is the school's TAA program in providing a caring, trained adult advocate for each student?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

4. How effective is the school's TAA program in establishing regular communication and an effective link between home and school?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

5. How effective is the school's TAA program in advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievement?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

6. How effective is the school's TAA program in creating, facilitating, and guiding student movement toward a career concentration?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

7. How effective is the school's TAA program in facilitating seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

8. How is the Teachers-As-Advisors program at Wisteria High School funded—i.e., out of the school or school system budget?

9. What factors will determine whether or not the TAA program will continue to be implemented?

10. How will determination of the program's effectiveness impact its funding?

11. How is the program's effectiveness currently being evaluated?

12. For this final item, think for a moment about your knowledge of or experience with the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and then share with the group an example of the benefit it has been to [you / your child / the students]  or why you think it has not been beneficial.

Appendix G

Interview (Focus Group) Questions:

Counselors and Graduation Coach

1. Please state your first name and your position or role with relationship to Wisteria County High School.

2. What has been the extent of your experience with the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School—e.g., years in the program, position or role with respect to the program?

*Instructions for question 3-8: Please take a moment to review the copy of the mission and purpose of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program which was sent to you earlier. If you need another copy, please let me know, and I will provide it for you. For these questions you will be rating how well the school's TAA Program meets its stated goals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very effective and 5 is very effective. I will ask you to jot down your rating on the form provided and then share your rating and briefly discuss with the group your rationale for that rating.*

3. How effective is the school's TAA program in providing a caring, trained adult advocate for each student? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

4. How effective is the school's TAA program in establishing regular communication and an effective link between home and school? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

5. How effective is the school's TAA program in advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievement? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

6. How effective is the school's TAA program in creating, facilitating, and guiding student movement toward a career concentration? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

7. How effective is the school's TAA program in facilitating seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

8. What do you consider some strengths of the TAA program at Wisteria High School?

9.  What do you consider some weaknesses of the TAA program?

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the program?

11. What can you do in your capacity as counselor (graduation coach) to improve the program?

12. For this final item, think for a moment about your knowledge of or experience with the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and then share with the group an example of the benefit it has been to [you / your child / the students] or why you think it has not been beneficial.

Appendix H

Interview (Focus Group) Questions:

Recent Graduates

1.  Please state your first name and your position or role with relationship to Wisteria County High School.

2.  What has been the extent of your experience with the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School—e.g., years in the program, position or role with respect to the program?

*Instructions for question 3-8: Please take a moment to review the copy of the mission and purpose of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program which was sent to you earlier. If you need another copy, please let me know, and I will provide it for you. For these questions you will be rating how well the school's TAA Program meets its stated goals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very effective and 5 is very effective. I will ask you to jot down your rating on the form provided and then share your rating and briefly discuss with the group your rationale for that rating.*

3.   How effective is the school's TAA program in providing a caring, trained adult advocate for each student? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

4.  How effective is the school's TAA program in establishing regular communication and an effective link between home and school? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

5.  How effective is the school's TAA program in advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievement? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

6.  How effective is the school's TAA program in creating, facilitating, and guiding student movement toward a career concentration? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

7.  How effective is the school's TAA program in facilitating seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

8.  What do you consider some strengths of the TAA program at Wisteria High School?

9. What do you consider some weaknesses of the TAA program?

10. From the perspective of a recent graduate, what recommendations would you make to improve the program?

11. For this final item, think for a moment about your knowledge of or experience with the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and then share with the group an example of the benefit it has been to [you / your child / the students] or why you think it has not been beneficial.

Appendix I

Interview (Focus Group) Questions:

Students

1. Please state your first name and your position or role with relationship to Wisteria County High School.

2. What has been the extent of your experience with the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School—e.g., years in the program, position or role with respect to the program?

*Instructions for question 3-8:  Please take a moment to review the copy of the mission and purpose of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program which was sent to you earlier.  If you need another copy, please let me know, and I will provide it for you. For these questions you will be rating how well the school's TAA Program meets its stated goals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very effective and 5 is very effective.  I will ask you to jot down your rating on the form provided and then share your rating and briefly discuss with the group your rationale for that rating.*

3.  How effective is the school's TAA program in providing a caring, trained adult advocate for each student?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

4. How effective is the school's TAA program in establishing regular communication and an effective link between home and school?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

5. How effective is the school's TAA program in advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievement?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

6. How effective is the school's TAA program in creating, facilitating, and guiding student movement toward a career concentration?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

7. How effective is the school's TAA program in facilitating seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families?  *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)*  Explain your rating.

8. What do you consider some strengths of the TAA program at Wisteria High School?

9. What do you consider some weaknesses of the TAA program?

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the program?

11. What can Wisteria County High School students do to improve the program?

12. For this final item, think for a moment about your knowledge of or experience with the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and then share with the group an example of the benefit it has been to you or why you think it has not been beneficial.

Appendix J

Interview (Focus Group) Questions:

Faculty Advisors

1. Please state your first name and your position or role with relationship to Wisteria County High School.

2. What has been the extent of your experience with the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School—e.g., years in the program, position or role with respect to the program?

*Instructions for question 3-8: Please take a moment to review the copy of the mission and purpose of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program which was sent to you earlier. If you need another copy, please let me know, and I will provide it for you. For these questions you will be rating how well the school's TAA Program meets its stated goals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very effective and 5 is very effective. I will ask you to jot down your rating on the form provided and then share your rating and briefly discuss with the group your rationale for that rating.*

3. How effective is the school's TAA program in providing a caring, trained adult advocate for each student? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

4. How effective is the school's TAA program in establishing regular communication and an effective link between home and school? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

5. How effective is the school's TAA program in advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievement? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

6. How effective is the school's TAA program in creating, facilitating, and guiding student movement toward a career concentration? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

7. How effective is the school's TAA program in facilitating seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

8. What do you consider some strengths of the TAA program at Wisteria High School?

9. What do you consider some weaknesses of the TAA program?

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the program?

11. What can you do in your capacity as a faculty advisor to make the program better?

12. For this final item, think for a moment about your knowledge of or experience with the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and then share with the group an example of the benefit it has been to [you / your child / the students]  or why you think it has not been beneficial.

Appendix K

Interview (Focus Group) Questions:

Parents

1. Please state your first name and your position or role with relationship to Wisteria County High School.

2. What has been the extent of your experience with the Teachers-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School—e.g., years in the program, position or role with respect to the program?

*Instructions for question 3-8: Please take a moment to review the copy of the mission and purpose of the Wisteria County High School Teachers-As-Advisors Program which was sent to you earlier. If you need another copy, please let me know, and I will provide it for you. For these questions you will be rating how well the school's TAA Program meets its stated goals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very effective and 5 is very effective. I will ask you to jot down your rating on the form provided and then share your rating and briefly discuss with the group your rationale for that rating.*

3. How effective is the school's TAA program in providing a caring, trained adult advocate for each student? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

4. How effective is the school's TAA program in establishing regular communication and an effective link between home and school? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

5. How effective is the school's TAA program in advising students about academic decisions and monitoring academic achievement? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

6. How effective is the school's TAA program in creating, facilitating, and guiding student movement toward a career concentration? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

7. How effective is the school's TAA program in facilitating seamless academic and social transitions across grades and schools for students and their families? *(Pause for respondents to jot down their rating.)* Explain your rating.

8. What do you consider some strengths of the TAA program at Wisteria High School?

9. What do you consider some weaknesses of the TAA program?

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the program?

11. What can you do as a parent to help meet the goals of the program?

12. For this final item, think for a moment about your knowledge of or experience with the advisory program at Wisteria County High School and then share with the group an example of the benefit it has been to [you / your child / the students]  or why you think it has not been beneficial.

Appendix L

# Your opinion matters ...

## Can you hear me now?

## ... an up close look at the Wisteria County High School Adviser-Advisee Program

We need to hear from you → students, teachers, parents, & graduates!!

### What's Working? • What's Not?

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED ...

+ **Volunteers are needed to participate in a research project which will evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher-As-Advisors (TAA) Program at Wisteria County High School.**

## WHAT YOU WILL DO ...

+ **Answer questions about whether or not the TAA program is meeting its goals.**
+ **Group 1 participants will complete either on-line or printed surveys.**
+ **Group 2 participants will participate in an interview or focus group discussion.**

## WHO BENEFITS ...

+ **It is anticipated that everyone involved will benefit from the improvement of the program. Here's a few ways how ...**
  o **More students will achieve at higher levels.**
  o **Communication between the home and school will be enhanced.**
  o **Students will be better prepared for life after high school.**
  o **Human and financial resources will be maximized.**

*Note: Participation in the survey will be anonymous and participation in the group interviews will remain confidential. Also, data from this project will be used by the researcher to complete degree requirements at Georgia SouthernUniversity. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not respond to any further correspondence about this project.*

**For more information, contact Barbara Jordan at (478) 625-9991.**

Appendix M

**TAA Ancillary Materials Content Analysis Protocol**

| Materials | Circulation/Distribution | Program Goal Addressed |
|---|---|---|
| Advisory Curriculum Matrix | This document has not been formally updated. Its intended use was to be a working document utilized by the appropriate staff to guide the development/revision of advisory lessons throughout the year. | Goals 1-5 |
| Advisory Schedule | The advisory calendar is created at the beginning of the school year and meeting dates are disseminated to students and staff in the *Student Activities Calendar.* | Goal 2 |
| Advisory Lesson Plans | Lesson plans are developed and disseminated electronically to teachers at least a week in advance. For Habitudes lessons, a slide presentation is distributed and all teachers have a teacher's manual which contains detailed plans. | Goals 1 & 3-5 |
| TAA Program Orientation PowerPoint | This PowerPoint presentation is revised annually and utilized as part of the new advisor orientation to the TAA program. | Goal 1 |
| TAA Brochure | The TAA brochure is printed and distributed to 9th grade students and parents during the school's Open House at the beginning of the school year. | Goal 2 |
| Professional Development PowerPoints | The two major professional development activities held each school year for which PowerPoint presentations are developed, utilized during the presentation, and shared electronically are as follows: 1) *Review of Spring Block Schedules and Navigating Course Registration* (held in December) and 2) *Understanding Career Pathways* (held in January). | Goals 1-5 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Secondary Advisory Committee Minutes | Only a couple of electronic files were retrievable.  However, this committee is no longer functioning. | |
| School Advisory Committee Minutes | Minutes are recorded and electronically distributed to committee members for all school advisory committee meetings. Meetings are generally held three times a year with additional meetings added as needed. | Goals 1-5 |
| Advisory Spring Conference Documents | These documents included a conference checklist, spring conference roster, course registration form, and accelerated academic pathway course guide. All documents are electronically distributed prior to the spring conference window (late January through the end of February). | Goals 1-5 |

Appendix N

**Descriptive Statistics for Survey Instruments:**
**Program Evaluation of Wisteria HS Teachers-As-Advisors Program**

| Item | M | Median | Mode | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Survey   (N = 205)** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| To me advisory . . . | | | | |
| 1. Is important and helps me do better in school | 1.10 | 1 | 1 | 0.88 |
| 2. Helps me understand what I need to graduate | 1.28 | 1 | 2 | 0.89 |
| 3. Helps me understand that I must plan for a career after high school. | 1.24 | 1 | 2 | 0.96 |
| 4. Helps understand the importance of attending school regularly. | 0.99 | 1 | 1 | 0.93 |
| 5. Helps me understand the importance of learning and making good grades in school | 1.35 | 2 | 2 | 0.85 |
| | | | | |
| My advisor . . . | | | | |
| 6. Is clear about the purposes of our advisory sessions, and helps the group meet those purposes | 1.04 | 1 | 2 | 1.06 |
| 7. Maintains an orderly, appropriate advisory environment, staying on task and carrying out the planned advisory activities | 1.05 | 1 | 1 | 0.98 |
| 8. Encourages all students to participate in the group | 1.07 | 1 | 2 | 1.06 |
| 9. Listens to the students in our group and treats them with care, compassion, and respect | 1.39 | 2 | 2 | 0.92 |
| 10. Makes our advisory group a wamr, inviting place to be | 1.04 | 1 | 2 | 1.04 |
| 11. Is my advocate and helps me to resolve the difficult situations, access various resources, and refers me to others when appropriate | 0.87 | 1 | 1 | 1.07 |
| 12. Meets with me individually during the year to talk and to address academic and social concerns as needed | 0.80 | 1 | 2 | 1.17 |
| 13. Makes contact with my parent/guardian as needed to answer questions, explain decisions, and celebrate successes | 0.51 | 1 | 1 | 1.23 |
| 14. Monitors my progress/grades in my classes and advises me on steps to improve my grades | 1.38 | 2 | 2 | 0.84 |
| 15. Provides me with needed information and guidance as I work toward my career goals | 1.07 | 1 | 2 | 1.05 |
| | | | | |
| The topics/activities in advisement . . . | | | | |
| 16. Help me learn the personal characteristics and general employability skills that are desired in school and/or in the workplace (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, | 1.11 | 1 | 1 | 0.95 |

integrity, and loyalty)

| Item | M | Median | Mode | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Are relevant to my life and my experiences as a high school student | 1.02 | 1 | 1 | 1.05 |
| 18. Help me connect the different opportunities (e.g., academic and elective courses, apprenticeship, dual enrollment, etc.) for career planning | 0.85 | 1 | 1 | 1.05 |
| 19. Help me recognize and achieve performance levels necessary to reach my educational and career goals | 0.97 | 1 | 1 | 1.02 |
| 20. Help me identify current employment trends, economic conditions, and societal needs that could impact career planning | 0.83 | 1 | 1 | 1.07 |
| 21. Help me develop habits that facilitate physical and mental health and wellness | 0.99 | 1 | 1 | 1.04 |
| 22. Help me develop positive, highly-developed interpersonal skills | 1.10 | 1 | 1 | 0.88 |
| 23. Help me recognize and accept that growth and being able to adapt to change is an essential part of life | 1.09 | 1 | 1 | 0.92 |
| 24. Help me create and manage my own individualized educational and career plan | 1.05 | 1 | 1 | 0.98 |
| 25. Help me understand how to make wise decisions and recognize that wise decision-making processes are important to educational and career planning | 1.10 | 1 | 1 | 0.94 |

| Item | M | Median | Mode | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Parent/Guardian Survey   (N = 40)** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| The advisory program as a whole . . . | | | | |
| 1. Is important and helps students do better in school | 1.55 | 2 | 2 | 0.64 |
| 2. Helps students understand what they need to graduate | 1.63 | 2 | 2 | 0.63 |
| 3. Helps students understand that they must plan for a career after high school | 1.45 | 1.5 | 2 | 0.64 |
| 4. Helps students understanding the importance of attending school regularly | 1.43 | 1 | 1 | 0.64 |
| 5. Helps students understand the importance of learning and making good grades in school | 1.48 | 2 | 2 | 0.64 |
| | | | | |
| In the area of connecting home and school, . . . | | | | |
| 6. My child's advisor contacts me as needed (phone calls, texts, e-mails, notes, etc.) regarding my child's academic performance, attendance, or behavior | 0.75 | 1 | 1 | 1.21 |
| 7. I contact my child's advisor as needed (phone calls, texts, e-mails, notes, etc.) regarding his or her academic performance, attendance, or behavior | 0.85 | 1 | 1 | 1.01 |
| 8. My child's advisor schedules face-to-face conferences with me and my child to plan/update the academic program of study which is needed to meet his or her career goal | 0.88 | 1 | 1 | 1.14 |

9. I contact my child's advisor to schedule face-to-face conferences with me and my child to plan/update the academic program of study which is needed to meet his or her career goal — 0.83 · 1 · 1 · 1.11

10. My child's advisor makes contact with me as needed to answer questions, explain decisions, and celebrate successes — 0.70 · 1 · 1 · 1.24

11. My child's advisor has helped him or her to make the transition to the high school and/or preparations to enter their post-secondary school easier — 0.93 · 1 · 1 · 0.86

12. My child's advisor helps my child and me understand what he or she needs to move from grade to grade (including notification about summer school needs) — 0.98 · 1 · 1 · 1.00

13. My child's advisor suggests or makes recommendations for summer opportunities that will enhance or advance movement toward his or her career goal — 0.83 · 1 · 1 · 1.20

| Item | M | Median | Mode | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Advisor Survey  (N = 17)** | | | | |
| To me, advisory . . . | | | | |
| 1. Is important and helps students do better in school | 1.18 | 1 | 2 | 0.95 |
| 2. Helps students understand what they need to graduate | 1.41 | 1 | 2 | 0.62 |
| 3. Helps student understand that they must plan for a career after high school | 1.18 | 1 | 1 | 0.64 |
| 4. Helps students understand the importance of attending school regularly | 1.00 | 1 | 1 | 0.94 |
| 5. Helps students understand the importance of learning and making good grades in school | 1.18 | 1 | 1 | 0.64 |
| As an advisor I . . . | | | | |
| 6. Am clear about the purposes of our advisory sessions and help the group meet those purposes | 1.12 | 1 | 1 | 0.86 |
| 7. Maintain an orderly, appropriate advisory environment, staying on task and carrying out the planned advisory activities | 1.41 | 1 | 1 | 0.51 |
| 8. Encourage all my advisees to participate in the group | 1.53 | 2 | 2 | 0.51 |
| 9. Listen to my advisees and treat them with care, compassion, and respect | 1.65 | 2 | 2 | 0.49 |
| 10. Make our advisory group a warm, inviting place to be | 1.47 | 1 | 1 | 0.51 |
| 11. Advocate for and help my advisees to resolve difficult situations, access various resources, and refer them to others when appropriate | 1.53 | 2 | 2 | 0.51 |
| 12. Meet with my advisees individually during the year to talk and to address academic and social concerns as needed | 1.12 | 1 | 2 | 0.99 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. Make contact with my advisees' parent/guardian as need to answer questions, explain decisions, and celebrate successes | 1.12 | 1 | 1 | 0.78 |
| 14. Monitor my advisees' progress/grades in their classes and advise them on steps to improve their grades | 1.53 | 2 | 2 | 0.62 |
| 15. Provide my advisees with needed information and guidance and help them work toward their career goals | 1.12 | 1 | 1 | 0.70 |

The topics/activities in advisement . . .

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. Help my advisees learn the personal characteristics and general employability skills that are desired in school and/or in the workplace (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, integrity, and loyalty) | 0.88 | 1 | 1 | 0.93 |
| 17. Are relevant to my advisees' life and their experiences as a high school student | 0.94 | 1 | 1 | 0.97 |
| 18. Help my advisees connect the different opportunities (e.g., academic and elective courses, apprenticeship, dual enrollment, etc.) for career planning | 1.06 | 1 | 1 | 0.97 |
| 19. Help my advisees recognize and achieve performance levels necessary to reach their educational and career goals | 0.71 | 1 | 1 | 1.05 |
| 20. Help my advisees identify current employment trends, economic conditions, and societal needs that could impact career planning | 0.18 | 0 | -1 | 1.29 |
| 21. Help my advisees develop habits that facilitate physical and mental health and wellness | 0.76 | 1 | 1 | 1.09 |
| 22. Help my advisees develop positive, highly-developed interpersonal skills | 0.88 | 1 | 2 | 1.17 |
| 23. Help my advisees recognize and accept that growth and being able to adapt to change is an essential part of life | 0.88 | 1 | 1 | 0.93 |
| 24. Help my advisees create and manage their own individualized educational and career plan | 0.71 | 1 | 1 | 1.21 |
| 25. Help my advisees understand how to make wise decisions and recognize that wise decision-making processes are important to educational and career planning | 0.76 | 1 | 1 | 1.09 |

Regarding guidance and training for the role of advisor, I . . .

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. Have received an orientation to the advisory program at my school | 1.00 | 1 | 1 | 1.00 |
| 27. Am provided advisory lesson plans and other necessary materials which are clear, concise, and functional | 1.18 | 1 | 1 | 1.01 |
| 28. Am provided updated information and/or training needed to fulfill my role in guiding my advisees and their parents in the selection of courses, extra-curricular activities, and available work or other experiences related to their career goal | 0.94 | 1 | 1 | 0.97 |

29. Have been provided necessary training overall to carry out my duties as an advisor     1.12     1     1     0.78