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THE PEER LEADERS UNITING STUDENTS (PLUS) PROGRAM: THE IMPACT ON SCHOOL CLIMATE, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT MENTORING

by

Reyes Gauna

A Dissertation

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May 6, 2017

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ABSTRACT

Educators are always evaluating how students connect to their school, trying to identify strategies and intervention programs that will help students be success and linked to their school. A school's culture and student engagement opportunities provide areas that can be impacted, especially when mentoring is added to the model being implemented. Educators go into the profession with the goal of having an impact on the lives of students. Key to the success of making an impact is the importance of connecting with students, providing student engagement opportunities, and maximizing mentoring with younger peers.

Peer Leaders Uniting Students program is helping districts address day-to-day issues in a collaborative manner using data. This study evaluated the impact the PLUS Program had from the perception and knowledge of adults (teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff), assessing school climate, student engagement, and student monitoring. The researcher used quantitative and qualitative measurement instruments. A survey was provided to teachers, counselors, administrators, support staff, and PLUS advisors. The survey was followed by interviews that had questions created using data from the adult participants' survey responses.

This grounded theory approach guided the researcher to conclude that even though the PLUS Program is proving to be effective for students, adults need additional training to use the program data. The researcher created a professional development session to meet this need.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

An important component evolving at the national, state, and local education levels is the development of a positive school climate, increased student engagement, and intensified student mentoring. Recently, school districts in California began using allocated state funds outlined in the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) to improve school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring, among others (WestEd, 2014). These targeted elements are focus areas that are embedded in school district's LCAPs. These funds have an accountability piece that is monitored by the county offices of education, the state, and from the community. The accountability component is in place to ensure that student success is at the center of all expenditures. This study was conducted in a district that has specific areas embedded in their LCAP to address the previously mentioned areas.

In California, LCAP funds are also used to identify and support programs that are effective, and that will serve a valuable purpose to begin tackling the elements associated with school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. One identifying program being used is the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) program. This program can be found in Northern California, Southern California, and across the nation. There are PLUS Programs in Hemet Unified School District, Carlsbad Unified School District, Palm Springs Unified School District, and partnerships with San Diego and Stanislaus County Offices of Education (Peer Leaders Uniting Students, n.d.). The program has many areas associated with student engagement that can help improve school climate and incorporate cross age mentoring opportunities. These elements are helping students feel connected to their school, adding the potential of motivating students to perform better academically.

This research adds to the existing research by determining the impact the PLUS Program has from the perception of the adults (teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff). There is evidence that the program is working for students, but there is a great need to determine the adults' perception. Do adults on a school campus have access to the PLUS survey data? Are adults collaborating with students to prioritize issues, and developing an action plan to address the concerns?

Statement of the Problem

Dating back a hundred years or more, researchers have dedicated time to exploring how students can better connect to their schools (Perry, 1908). The research identifies factors that can enhance the experiences by identification of strategies and interventions that will help students be successful. A school's culture, along with student engagement and mentoring, are elements that can provide positive impacts on students and their success. The PLUS Program has elements that have the potential to enhance a school's culture, providing engagement opportunities and interjecting mentoring into the activities.

The PLUS Program is designed so that peer leaders lead forums that have a variety of activities. In these forums, the leaders use the result from PLUS student surveys to engage students to find solutions. The leaders are taking advantage of mentoring opportunities, providing older students mentor activities that can be used to guide younger students, helping them maneuver through school. They also collaborate on issues and develop activities that can be used to address issues. The forums provide the opportunity for younger and older students to communicate regularly, allowing for ongoing mentoring.

Much research has focused on student success with PLUS (Vandenburgh, 2010), however, little work reviews adult perceptions of the program or perceptions of how adults use

the PLUS data. This study was designed in part to investigate how adults use PLUS data. Through the use of the Grounded Theory (Creswell, 2013) qualitative methodology, the theory that emerged indicated a lack in use and understanding of data. When adults at a school site do not use accessible data to support the PLUS Program, the fidelity and efficacy of the implementation is at risk.

Purpose of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the effectiveness and adult perception and knowledge of the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program in kindergarten through twelfth grade schools by determining if PLUS was used to enhance school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring on a school campus.

The outcome was to research the impact the PLUS Program has on school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring from the adults' perceptive. This included the participants' knowledge of the PLUS Program and its impact on students. It was also important to determine if there was validity to the alignment of the PLUS Program using data to catapult school-wide efforts in addressing school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. The research described in the study examined the impact on school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring when students and adults participated in the PLUS Program. It was essential to determine if adult involvement and perception benefit the efforts.

The study was conducted at two kindergarten through eighth grade schools, one sixth through twelfth grade school, and one ninth through twelfth grade school.

Significance of the Study

This study measures adult (teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff) perception and knowledge of school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring through

the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) program. The results of this study will be useful to assist educators who are continually looking for ways to increase student motivation, improve academics, and create an environment where students feel connected to their school.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and the Social Identity and Social Self Theories (J. Vandenburgh, Personal Communication, December 13, 2015). As schools continue to work towards a model that improves student connection and engagement with their schools, the use of the PLUS Program can be invaluable towards this end. Furthermore, adult connections with students, in and out of the classroom, can be beneficial. Students also spend a large amount of their time with peers.

Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) believed adolescents are social beings and will follow what others are doing. Therefore, a positive modeling of strong peer influences and behavior is necessary. An individual's social connection with peers influences his or her development. These are individuals who also impact, both in a negative and positive manner, students. The PLUS Program provides activities and mentoring opportunities from adults and peers that address a school's climate and the level of student engagement to provide positive experiences for students.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura was trying to determine if the violence that children observe on television, in movies, and in video games lead to aggressive behavior ("Social Cognitive Theory," 2013). Vandenburgh stated that he saw a connection with his students and what they observed, adding that Bandura's research really related to his research and the development of the PLUS Program; a clear correlation was seen (J. Vandenburgh, Personal Communication, December 13, 2016).

The impact of violence on children. Questions regarding exposure to violence and its relation to students'/children's behavior have long been an area of great interest. Bandura led an experiment to determine how children behave through aggressive observation. One of the experiments that Bandura conducted was called the Bobo Doll experiment. The Bobo Doll experiment took place in 1961 with the objective of trying to add credibility to Bandura's theory that all human behavior is learned through social imitation and by copying what is observed, instead of inherited through genetic factors (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961). For over 40 years, Bandura's findings have been questioned and debated. Even today, many in the field have continued to express concerns that revolve around the theory that an individual's social interactions and influences impact the growth and development of his or her personality and morality. There is more research that connects television violence, computer games violence, and the lack of role models as contributing reasons for a breakdown in society, increasing tendencies towards violence (Shuttleworth, 2015).

Bobo doll predictions. Bandura had some predictions about the outcomes of the Bobo Doll experiment, fitting with his views on the theories of social learning (Shuttleworth, 2015). Bandura believed that adults have an emotional impact on children's behavior. When adults behaved in a positive and/or negative manner, the impact on children was high. This behavior could be exaggerated, making it appealing to children, which led to them mimicking and replicating the behavior in a similar fashion. Furthermore, the behavior was displayed when the contributing adult was no longer in the presence of the child. On the other hand, it was noted that children who were exposed to adults that did not display aggressive behavior did not show any aggression in their interactions even when the adult was not present. Additionally, these children were less aggressive in all of their interactions. This added to the theory that children

mimic the displayed behavior and interactions they have with adults around them (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961).

Another element of Bandura's research was associated with the gender of the adult. Boys were more likely to mimic the behavior of males versus the behavior of females. Similarly, female children were more likely to copy the behavior of females versus males. This reinforced the belief that there is a high likelihood children's behaviors are related to gender. The research showed that males had a higher probability of being more aggressive than females.

Bobo doll experiment. For the Bobo experiment, Bandura selected children from the Stanford Nursery School. The students ranged in age from three to six years with the average being four years. To ensure the validity of his research, he selected 36 boys and 36 girls. The control group, which would not see an adult role model at all, consisted of 24 children, 12 boys, and 12 girls. The second group, which would be exposed to an adult showing aggressive tendencies, was also made up of 24 children of either gender. Both of the resulting groups of 12 were further divided; half were tested with a female role model and half with a male role model. The third group was structured in the same way as the second—the only difference being that they would be exposed to a passive adult (Shuttleworth, 2015). An experiment by McLeod (2011), as shown in Figure 1, was used in which the independent variable (type of model) was manipulated in three conditions: an aggressive model shown to 24 children, a non-aggressive model shown to 24 children, and no model shown (control condition) to 24 children.

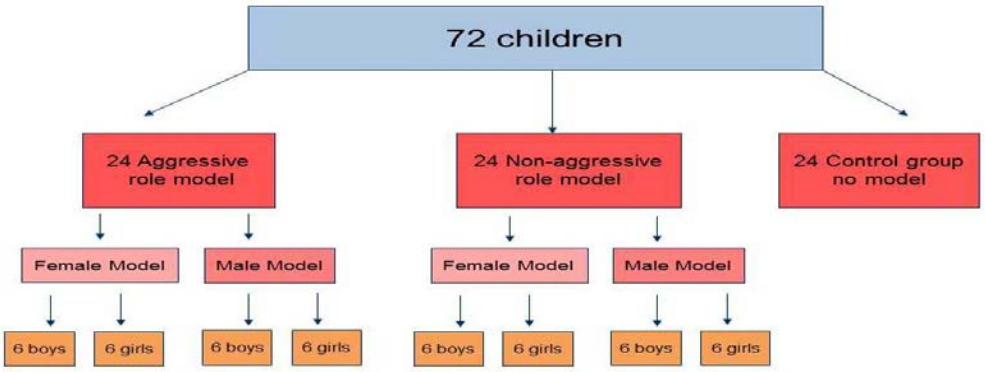

Figure 1. Three Condition Model (McLeod, 2011)

The experiment was administered in three stages; modeling, aggression arousal, and testing for delayed imitation. During the first stage, children were placed in a room where they were provided toys, pictures, and potato prints. All participating children were alone and were provided 10 minutes to play with the toys and prints. In another portion of the experiment, 24 children (12 boys and 12 girls) were asked to view a male or female playing aggressively with a doll called the "Bobo doll." These children were exposed to adults physically attacking the Bobo doll. Some of the adults used a hammer, while others threw the doll in the air, shouting "Pow" or "Boom." The experiment also used 24 other children (12 boys and 12 girls) to view nonaggressive behavior. These children were placed in a room that was calm, quiet, and soothing. In most cases, the students played with other available toys in the room and completely ignored the Bobo Doll. The last group of children (12 boys and 12 girls) was not provided any modeling by adults, either female or male. They were the control group in the experiment (McLeod, 2011).

During the second stage, all three groups of students were only exposed to mild aggression arousal. Each of the participants was again placed in a room individually. This time, they were exposed to eye-catching toys. During the session, all children were informed that the experimenter had saved the best toys for last, providing them the best available toys. During the

final stage, which tested for delayed imitation, the experimenter had a room next door which had both aggressive and non-aggressive toys. This time, each child was provided 20 minutes to interact with the toys. Their behaviors were being monitored and recorded through a one-way mirror. The monitoring was done in intervals of five seconds, which provided 240 responses that would be used to determine the outcomes (McLeod, 2011).

The conclusion of the experiment showed that children who were previously exposed to aggressive behavior displayed a higher probability of being aggressive as compared to children who were not exposed to aggression. Both female and male children showed aggression if they had been exposed to aggressive behavior, especially if their model was male. In the case of female children observing another female being aggressive, they tended to be verbally abusive versus physically abusive. Boys tended to be more aggressive than girls regardless of the aggression they are exposed to (McLeod, 2011).

There is a high possibility that individuals will, at later times, imitate whatever they observe, which is related to behavior. Bandura concluded that children observe the people around them. He added that they behave in various ways that mimic adult behavior, both good and bad. Children are surrounded by influential models in their life, such as their parents and family, characters on children's TV, friends within their circle, and teachers at school, (McLeod, 2011). Children also pay attention to the adult behaviors that surround them. For example, if an adult is constantly yelling, the child has a high probability of copying their behavior. It is also believed that regardless of behavior being gender appropriate or not, behavior will be minimized. This process will lead to an increase in the likelihood that a child will mimic a behavior that society sees as appropriate, irrespective of the child's sex (McLeod, 2011).

McLeod (2011) purported that, most of the time, the initial response from a child would be to imitate those people they view as similar to themselves. Subsequently, a child will find it easier to identify and mimic the behavior displayed by an individual of the same sex. Next, individuals who interact with the kids often respond to the behavior in a positive or negative manner. It is important to note that when a child's behavior receives praise, the likelihood of the behavior to continue increases exponentially. If a parent sees a little boy consoling his teddy bear and says "what a kind boy you are," this is rewarding for the child and makes it more likely that he will repeat the behavior. His behavior has been reinforced (i.e., strengthened).

Finally, children will also consider what happens to other people when they decide whether or not to imitate someone's actions. A child can learn by observing what consequences another person's behavior, such as a younger or older sibling, receives for a particular behavior. If the behavior is rewarded, they are more likely to repeat the same action themselves. This practice is known as vicarious reinforcement (McLeod, 2011). This is related to specific models demonstrating that behaviors, even negative behaviors, are seen as rewarding. Throughout a child's life, they will have some individuals that they will identify with. These may be people in their immediate world, such as parents, older siblings, friends, or even fantasy characters or people in the media. The motivation to identify with a particular model is that they have a quality which the individual would like to possess (McLeod, 2011).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory has focused more on the meanings associated with being a member of a social category. Identity is theorized as a set of internal meanings attached to roles that an individual occupies in a social structure (Burke & Stets, 2009). The Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel. It has been seen as Tajfel's greatest contribution to the

world of psychology (McLeod, 2008). This theory examines how individuals view themselves based on interactions associated with different groups of people. The argument builds on the conjecture that people hold multiple social roles, adding that positional designations may involve behavioral expectations. As an individual, it is understood that we reflect society's complex and multi-layered structure which is known to be made up of multiple identities (Serpe & Stryker, 2011).

George Mead and Social Identity Theory. Similar to Tajfel's work, Mead's contributions are also vital to a shared, present-day interactionist understanding. Mead theorized that the relationship between society and oneself is mutually connected, maintaining that both self and society are developed from our interactions in society. Mead also emphasizes that this feature is unique in that a person can view itself as an object. This perspective also allows itself to take the standpoint and views of others (Mead, 1934).

The self develops through impulsive processes that can be understood as an essential social structure. Mead's interpretation of the relationship of a stable self to behavior has an impact on how interactionists theorize the relationship between self and behavior, viewing both as inherently tied to one another and the societal context, adding that society shapes an individual (Mead, 1934).

There is concrete understanding of the way society and the individual reflects on a configuration that is significant to the structural identity theory and behavior. To begin, there are patterns in our society that reflect an individual's role, which is based on social relationships and network ties. Next, people hold various social functions or positional labels that are linked to certain behavioral expectations, which can be understood and comprised of different identities or role-identities (Serpe & Stryker, 2011).

Social structures, along with multiple role occupancies, pose challenges for the prediction of role-related behavior or performance (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Stryker and colleagues address these problems with the development of key concepts that circle the structural identity theory. They identified three fundamental character concepts, commitment, and salience identity.

Fundamental characters. Commitment is characterized as the association an individual has with their constant daily activities (Becker, 1964, 1960). Structural identity theory represents the connections between a person and their network of connections/ties (Stets & Serpe, 2013). Commitment has two dimensions that look for connections to the individual's social role. The first dimension, interactional commitment, is a well-established measure that has been used to determine if identity salience has been confirmed. The model has a goal of understanding how the individual's network is constructed. It is impacted by measuring the amount of time an individual spends doing things with other people. Another goal is to determine how many people, from a social relationships perspective, are associated with having a specified identity. Ultimately, they are trying to ascertain the quality of these relationships (Serpe & Stryker,1987).

Scholars that have researched identity traditions have stated that there are different meanings and placement for individuals. Some identities are conceptualized—with others more or less significant and meaningful. Some of the identities are less likely to be activated in certain social situations (Burke & Stets, 2009; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980). Consequently, many scholars have made attempts to contextualize identities as they relate to each other. Furthermore, identities are believed to be organized in a hierarchically-based identity salience. Identity salience refers to the chance that a particular status will be summoned during different situations in a given context (Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). It is

important to note that the more salient an identity, there is an increased chance within an individual's salience hierarchy that the identity will be stronger in any situation. In some cases, more than one identity can be invoked.

There are also situations that are not structurally isolated, so it is likely that in these cases more than one identity will be raised. In these scenarios, the sets have impacted each other's relationships. However, the identity's position in the salience hierarchy will be the predictor of behavior, especially when more than one identity arises due to conflicting expectations (Stryker, 1980).

Three mental processes. In 1979, Tajfel and Turner presented three mental processes associated with the Social Identity Theory that assisted with the evaluation of others as *us* or *them*. They take the following order (McLeod, 2008), as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Tajfel and Turner, "Three Mental Processes"

The social categorization element refers to the manner in which objects are categorized for identifying purposes. In an educational setting, we ask teachers, counselors, and administrators to examine and classify individuals. When these people are placed into these categories, it tells us specifics roles and responsibilities that they have. The process of categorizing each other allows us an opportunity to identify where we fit, and to which group we belong. Next, the social identification helps an individual immerse his or herself in the group that he or she identifies with. For example, if you are in the category of "principal," you will

follow certain norms that identify with other principals. This will also shape your beliefs about yourself and the bond you have with this group. In the final stage, social comparison, once an individual identifies with a particular group, he or she begins to compare his or her group with another group, adding competition between the different groups (McLeod, 2008).

Contradictions to Social Identity Theory. There have been contradictions to Social Identity Theory, which is based on positive grouping comparisons, but has not taken into account that there is a need for positive relationships between the group and the strength of identification to the level of in-group biases (Brown, 2000). Brown adds that there are psychological studies that have investigated and found minimal supporting correlations with Social Identity Theory.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to measure the impact the PLUS Program had from the perspective of adults (teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff). It determined if there was validity to the alignment of the PLUS Program, using data to catapult school-wide efforts in addressing school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring when all adults on a school campus and students work collaboratively. This involved analyzing PLUS survey data that lead to student and adult activities implemented schoolwide. To explore the PLUS Program at two large elementary schools and two large comprehensive high schools, this study asked and answered the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the PLUS Program impact the school climate?
2. To what extent does the PLUS Program impact student engagement on campus?
3. To what extent does the PLUS Program promote student mentoring on campus?

Limitations

The strength of having all schools in a district involved is also a form of design weakness since it eliminated possible control schools.

Delimitations

Gender, ethnicity, age, and socio-economic status were not taken into consideration when conducting the study.

Definitions

Academic Forums: These forums are used as tool for self-discovery. In this forum, participants go through a variety of activities that focus on their individual strengths and weaknesses and how they impact academic success.

Advisor: The staff member who coordinates all PLUS Program activities.

Student Facilitator: The PLUS team member who leads the forum activities.

Cross Age Mentoring: Represents using older students to facilitate and mentor younger students.

Lunchtime Activities: Team-building activities used to engage students during the lunch hour (Vandenburgh, 2010). *PLUS Program Development* (Book 1).

Direction Survey: Name of the student survey used in PLUS to collect student data.

PLUS Team: A team of students which represents a variety of backgrounds and whose members work together in implementing activities to develop understanding, connections, identity, and purpose among students, staff, and the community.

PLUS Forums: PLUS Forums are implemented by the PLUS team and are designed to develop understanding among the participants. This activity is performed at the high school,

middle school, and elementary levels. The PLUS Forums are also utilized for staff development and new teacher training.

Summary

In Chapter One, the improvement of school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring was reviewed. The PLUS Program may assist students to feel connected to their school, motivating them to be successful, both emotionally and academically. The perception of adults utilizing the PLUS Program may benefit the students and adults using the program across the district. It will help bring added elements that can enhance adult comprehension about the program, along with the importance of adult participation. Chapter Two is a review of the literature.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A school's climate reflects how attentive the school is to the needs of its students. Students must always feel safe and supported, both academically and emotionally. It is also important for all students to feel a sense of belonging, including respect, encouragement, and trust. Adults on a school's campus must maintain a caring atmosphere.

History of School Climate

Hoy (2008) identified school climate as the atmosphere, tone, community, ethos, ideology, or milieu of a school. The climate of a school speaks to how someone feels about the school, along with the people who are major stakeholders. In April 2007, the National Center for Learning, Education Commission of the States, and the National School Climate Center for Social and Emotional Education came to a consensus on the following four areas of a school function related to school climate: (a) physical safety, (b) relationships of those in the school environment, including faculty, students, and parents, (c) teaching and learning methods, and (d) the actual physical environment of the school (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009).

At the conclusion of the collaborative meeting between the organizations above, it was identified that there is a discrepancy between current experimental research on positive school climates and what is being done at this time in schools, the state, and federal education areas. The meeting concluded that there is an immediate need to develop a school's learning climate. One way is through activities and programs that enhance student engagement. This extends to colleges and universities where teachers are educated. They overwhelmingly agreed that the "gap between school climate research, policy, practice, and teacher education is socially unjust and a violation of children's human rights" (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009).

Defining School Climate

The interest around school climate and student behavior dates back 100 years (Perry, 1908). However, it was not scientifically researched until the 1950s when organizational research was developed. There were many elements that were researched; however, one of the first attempts to find connections between climate and organizations came when March and Simon (1958) looked into the influences an organization had in areas of productivity, morale, and turnover (March & Simon, 1958). This research expanded well into the 1960s and 1970s where there was a study that tried to identify correlations between ethnicity and socioeconomics of individuals (Coleman et al., 1966; McDill, Meyers & Riugsby, 1967).

It was not until the 1970s that researchers started to take an interest in the education system, looking at climate and the association it has with student outcomes. In 1978, Brookover and his colleagues identified climate as a set of expectations and norms that determined that school climate has a link to different outcomes for students. They went on to say that the way students feel about their school and the experience really affects their success, regardless of their ethnicity, economic status, or other contributing factors (Stockard & Mayberry, 1992).

Griffith (1995) found that students can be greatly impacted depending on their classroom and its location. They added that the teacher can also influence how the student feels about themselves, the classroom, and their school. These variables have direct impact on the climate, especially when students leave the room feeling a lack of connection in a location where they should be able to connect in a secure location.

Zullig, Koopman, Patton and Ubbes (2010) identified different domains along with variations linked to school climate. Domain one was order, safety, and discipline. This domain had elements associated with how students felt about safety. It highlighted the respect they have

for peers and authority and fair treatment as important origins of climate. The next domain, academic outcomes, revolved around the need to have academic success with a sense of accomplishment. Domain three discussed social relationships, which looked at the relationships students have with their teachers and colleagues. Next, they looked at school facilities. In this domain, they determined that students can be affected by the climate of the classroom, the setup of the classroom, and the overall appearance of the school. Finally, they discussed school connectedness, looking for the overall feelings of the school, and whether or not the students felt heard and valued.

School climate also refers to the emotional atmosphere that is generated around people. Some people refer to climate as the *content* of school. It also involves the perception of stakeholders in regard to the fairness, openness, friendliness, ethos of caring, and the degree to which students feel welcome. School climate also includes the level of orderliness of the school and the degree of satisfaction experienced within its organization (Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 1999).

How to Measure School Climate

According to the Center for Social and Emotional Education, there has been research during the past 30 years that has demonstrated the need for students to be in a positive and inclusive learning climate. There is a large body of research that has said a sustainable and positive school climate will promote students' academic achievement. The research has also stated that a positive school climate is very healthy for students in schools. Another positive

note related to school climate is connected to teacher retention, which also improved and promoted student success (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009).

There are many ways that a school can measure school climate: through parent meetings, school leadership meetings, forums, etc. The school can also have interviews with staff members and students. A school's climate can be evaluated using a survey. According to ASCD.org, a survey should be developed in a scientifically sound manner. ASCD.org also identified two all-inclusive ways to do so: (a) it is important to have student and parent input, and (b) having a process that will give a clear picture that identifies teaching and student learning. This could include, but is not limited to, student experiences at their school. There are different surveys that address a school's climate; the survey that is selected should be appropriately reviewed and selected ("Now What?" 2015).

The majority of researchers at the National School Climate Council (2007) agree that there are four major factors that shape school climate: safety, relationships, teaching, and learning, and the institutional environment. The Center for Social and Emotional Education has developed a School Climate Inventory as a survey instrument that a school and/or district can use to help measure the success in each of the factors.

Figures 3 through 6 list dimensions of school climate as well as indicators and examples of survey items from the inventory ("Now What?" 2015). Figure 3, Safety Dimension, includes the areas of school climate related to Safety: rules and norms, physical safety, and social/emotional security.

Safety

1. Rules and norms	Schools need to have a handbook that provides graduated sanctions for inappropriate behaviors. This guide is provided to families and discussed with students to ensure that rules and expectations are clearly understood. There are sections that discuss the importance of not participating in physical violence and/or verbal abuse of any kind.
2. Physical safety	Schools have an obligation to ensure the physical safety of all students and adults on their campus.
3. Social and emotional security	Schools need to make sure that students feel safe and that they are not harassed, discriminated against, or verbally attacked. These are all indicators of bullying, which include name-calling, verbal attacks, and exclusion based on gender, race, and beliefs.

Figure 3: Safety Dimension

Figure 4, Teaching and Learning Dimension, provides information on support for learning and social and civic learning, both of which are critical to school climate.

1. Support for learning	Schools need to ensure that teachers on their campuses display supportive practices and offer feedback to students. They must also create an environment where students can learn at a high level, making them college and career ready. This can include a curriculum that involves taking risks, challenging personal limits, and paying attention to areas of need.
2. Social and civic learning	Schools need to ensure that students have opportunities to learn about social and civic skills. This can be accomplished through programs designed to teach about conflict resolution as well as effective listening and reflective skills.

Figure 4. Teaching and Learning Dimension

Finally, Figure 5, Interpersonal Relationships Dimension, gives a guideline for supporting school climate by respect for diversity, social support for both students and adults,

and collaborative opportunities. These social supports include programs that encourage peer socialization and emotional development.

The School Climate Inventory supports community development at a school site. Kohn (1996) describes caring community as "…a place in which students feel cared about and are

1. Respect for diversity	Schools must ensure that there is a tier level of mutual respect on campus. This model should include the following elements: Student-to-student respect Adult-to-student respect Adult-to-adult respect
2. Social support—adults	Schools must provide adult collaborative opportunities with the goal of developing trusting relationships. This process will help facilitate dialogue that revolves around high expectations and success for students.
3. Social support—students	Schools must ensure that there are programs that encourage peer-to-peer social and emotional development. This can next extend to academic and personal support. One example could be the development of a friendship club.

Figure 5. Interpersonal Relationships Dimension

encouraged to care about each other and they experience a sense of being valued and respected; the students matter to one another and to the teacher" (p. 101). By measuring the factors shared in Figures 3 through 6, a school site can determine if its location is an effective and safe climate for all to learn.

1. School connectedness/ engagement	Schools must have a way of identifying positive behavior on campus. This will provide opportunities for students and their families to feel a sense of belonging to the school, contributing positive interactions between parents and their school.
2. Physical surroundings	Schools must provide a clean and welcoming campus. When students see a clean and appealing campus, they will feel better about their school. This includes current instructional materials and updated computers and infrastructure.

Adapted from *The 12 Dimensions of School Climate Measured* by Center for Social and Emotional Education, n.d., New York: Author. Copyright by Center for Social and Emotional Education.
Available: www.csee.net/climate/pdfNew/dimensions_chart_pagebars.pdf.
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Figure 6. Institutional Environment Dimension

History of Student Engagement

John Dewey was a pioneer in the area of student engagement. He believed that in order for education to be effective for students, schools have to provide an environment where students can learn from the past and previous experiences and knowledge (Dewey, 1897). However, Alexander Astin (1985, 1993) developed the college engagement theory, which involves the connection between student success and its association with student engagement and involvement. His theory consisted of five hypotheses. The first required students to be invested physically and mentally in their school and education. The next stated that students have different levels of engagement and investment. The third was identified as quantitative (the amount of time and energy invested) and qualitative (the quality of the participation). The next element investigated the amount and quality of learning. Finally, the promotion of student

engagement and involvement was an important factor that was used to measure the success of educational practices and policies.

Different Elements of Student Engagement

Students engage in a variety of ways and by different degrees in an educational setting, such as by paying attention, showing optimism, and expressing interest in the subject material. When these elements are present, they serve as a motivator for social and academic progression. The concept of student engagement follows the belief that it can help students be more motivated, inspired, and academically successful. This is a stark difference from students who are disengaged, bored, and/or unhappy (Concepts, 2013).

For youth, school is a central part of daily life. Most students have breakfast and lunch at their school, especially those living in poverty. For students who stay in after school programs, school becomes a second home. That said, school is viewed as an essential component for success for students, especially from a long-term perspective. Their success can be measured through student engagement and participation in school. Students who are successful tend to have good relationships with teachers, staff members, and peers (Willms, 2003). Students who are engaged feel a sense of belonging in their school. They feel connected and know there are support systems in place.

However, there are many youths that do not share a sense of belonging to their school, staff, or peers. They also do not believe that they will benefit from academic success in the future. This belief and attitude may result in their becoming disaffected from school (Willms, 2003). Most of these students have a high probability of slowly withdrawing from school. This may include school-wide activities, clubs, etc. In some cases, these students turn towards a disruptive behavior, displaying a negative attitude towards teachers and other students. One of

the biggest challenges facing teachers and school administrators is finding the formula that will help youths who are disengaged from school.

The term *engagement* refers to a way in which students can relate and accept events that take place in their school, both good and bad. It also extends to elements that do not always directly relate to academics. There is, however, a component that measures if a student feels connected to the schools. Students tend to struggle more when they do not feel a sense of belonging or connectedness to their school, leading to dropping out, academic struggles, and withdrawn behavior (Willms, 2003).

There are psychological components that emphasize students' sense of belonging or attachment to school. These feelings are associated with being accepted and respected by their peers and by others in their school. Another psychological component is related to whether or not a student sees the value that success in school could have for them. They must believe that education will benefit them from a personal and economic perspective (Willms, 2003).

History of Student Mentoring

Peer mentoring is defined as processes through which a more experienced individual encourages and assists a less qualified individual to develop his or her potential within a shared area of interest. The resulting relationship is a reciprocal one in that both individuals in the partnership have an opportunity for growth and development. Peers are individuals who share some common characteristics, attributes, or circumstances. These may relate to age, ability, interests, etc. Peer mentors are individuals who have more experience within that common area along with additional training in how to assist another in acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be more successful (Gillman, 2000).

Mentoring has been enthusiastically received as a way to address the needs and concerns of students because it has the benefits of providing students with peer mentoring that will provide and support guidance (Alberta Mentoring Partnership, 2015). Even though high school-aged mentors were not a common element in the past, this has been changing with the increasing demand for cross-age mentors, especially from middle school to high school (Herrera, Kauh, Cooney, Grossman & McMaken, 2008).

Peer Mentoring and the Impact on Academics

Peer mentoring programs offer students a connection to the school, providing positive outcomes for the mentees. According to DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine (2011), school mentoring programs have been proven to increase student attitudes in the areas of reading and mathematics, especially once students were placed into a student mentoring program. DuBois's research went on to conclude that attendance for these students increased, reducing both tardiness discipline incidences.

Peer mentoring has become a popular and efficient manner of providing guidance and support for students, especially for those students in need. There has been, in recent years, an increase in youth mentoring which has expanded from small youth intervention programs to a cornerstone youth service that is being implemented in schools, community centers, faith institutions, school-to-work programs, and a wide variety of other youth-serving institutions (Education Northwest, 2015).

Mentoring can have an invaluable impact on students of all ages. Some of the most important components related to mentoring include preparation, design, and rollout methods used to guide and support all mentees. For this reason, it is essential that all mentoring programs are vetted correctly, ensuring that steps are taken ahead of time to eliminate and minimize roadblocks that may occur during the duration of the program. There is research that discusses the negative impact related to mentoring programs that are not properly developed, being a deterrent to the mentee and the program. All of these negative experiences can have harmful impacts on students (Education Northwest, 2015).

Peer mentoring programs are greatly instrumental and, with the assistance from effective models like PLUS, can further incorporate mentoring opportunities into the programs. Another

important component needed is a way to develop a continuum of mentoring services to students, such as those in grades seven through twelve. It has the potential to evolve into a school-based model in contrast to the current, community-based sorts. The program would operate on the school campus. Whether this results in a school-community partnership or develops as a stand-alone school service, school-based mentoring programs are usually housed at the school site, with adults and youth meeting in various campus locations so the program can make use of school facilities and administrative space. This model allows mentors to meet with mentees for the duration of the school year. However, there is compelling recent evidence that programs should make every effort to extend mentoring relationships throughout the summer months and across grades to improve the outcomes for youth (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman & McMaken, 2007).

School-Based Mentoring Programs

Youth are referred by teachers, counselors, and other school staff. While some programs do allow parents to request a mentor, most school-based programs are built around the concept of school personnel initiating youth participation in the program. School-based mentoring is neither a simple tutoring program nor something as unstructured as community-based mentoring. Most school-based programs reside somewhere in-between these two models. Mentoring matches are encouraged to view the development of a trusting, mutually satisfying relationship as the primary goal of their time spent together. And, because of the campus setting and the inherent connection to academics and the school itself, these matches are more structured than those typically found in purely community-based models. Restricted to the campus setting, matches are encouraged to engage in some structured activities, often around classroom- or homework-related topics (Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011).

Mentoring Programs for At-Risk Students

The University of Minnesota conducted a study that had a primary goal of determining if mentoring programs were a positive intervention for the student, especially those at-risk. The study was trying to determine if there were any potential advantages when these students received one-on-one services. It was also established that mentoring is a resource that can be used to help students with low self-esteem, making positive peer and family collaboration an essential component that can assist these individuals with many elements of their life, including promoting a positive environment in their school. The research also concluded that when students are involved in a school-based mentoring environment, there can be beneficial outcomes. There are many school systems across the United States that fear anti-social behavior can result in major problems for these students. Some of the effects can be related to teacher and peer rejection, attendance problems, and issues associated with academics that can lead to students dropping out of school (Cornerstone, 2015).

Mentor and Mentee Relationships

The University of Minnesota's study also determined that a mentor/mentee relationship can be a reciprocated endeavor. The experience can be advantageous for the mentor, which can result in positive experiences on both ends (Crawford, J 2009). It is also important that in order for the mentor/mentee process to be successful, there must be consistency if the process is going to provide positive results. It is also recommended that sessions be conducted at least weekly. The weekly sessions can assist with the validity of the relationship, which can result in a positive and successful mentoring program (Converse, Lignugaris/Kraft, 2008).

Another critical element related to the mentor/mentee program is ensuring that there is appropriate training for the mentors. The training must include the methodology piece that can assist and support peer mentors. Training should also support inclusion of all students in the mentoring program(s) (Crawford, 2009). There is a belief that allowing student mentors to be involved in the process of making decisions will help build a stronger mentorship program because they will feel more invested in it. When students were allowed the opportunity to give input and feedback on the creation of mentoring programs, it added ownership, excitement, and pride for this accomplishment (Crawford, 2009).

Diversity and Mentoring Programs

Another important element is having a diverse group of student mentors. This will provide added talents and skills that the mentors may bring with them, which can enhance the program by connecting mentors with students and their interests. All mentors have something to offer to a mentoring program, and they should not be discouraged from being a mentor because they might not have strong, contributing skills (Crawford, 2009). It is also important to not exclude students with disabilities from mentoring opportunities. They, too, can provide support that many others may not be able to offer (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Spencer & Fontana, 2003).

There is evidence found in research related to cross-age mentoring (Cassinerio & Lane-Garon, 2006) concluding that successful mentoring programs that are matched with students in the "at-risk" category can make a beneficial difference with appropriate cross-age mentors. These are also students who come from low-income homes, are new to the United States, and who oftentimes struggle with behavioral issues. There is also a notable correlation with students

who become dropouts and those who feel disconnected from school (Kominski, Jamieson & Martinez, 2001).

History and Origin of the PLUS Program

Peer Leaders Uniting Students was a vision that evolved into a program that creator John Vandenburgh had when he was a teacher. Vandenburgh began his career as an educator in a high school located in Southern California. His hard work was recognized when he was honored in 2002 as one of the California League of High Schools' Educators of the Year. According to Boostcollaborative.com (2015), Vandenburgh's career transitioned into a focus on building safe school climates across schools in his district, leading him to become a District Safe Schools Administrator. He also served on the Gang Task Force for the California Department of Education. In this capacity, he assisted with the development of the Getting Results Update on Gang Violence for schools in California. In 2007, he received the Anada Guruge Lifetime Commitment Award for the Stop the Violence, Increase the Peace Foundation based in Los Angeles, California. He currently serves as the Vice President of the California School Resource Officers Association (CSROA) and is an active member of the Southern California Regional Violence Prevention Coalition (BoostCollaborative, 2015).

Who is John Vandenburgh?

Vandenburgh is a nationally recognized speaker, who is a trainer on violence prevention and youth development approaches in education. He has presented for the California Department of Homeland Security, California Attorney General Summit, and the National Youth at Risk Conference on Youth Leadership on the subjects of development of safe schools, gang prevention, and using strategies to develop a positive school climate (BoostCollaborative, 2015). His work has gained momentum and attention, both nationally and internationally, with his PLUS Program as an innovative method and strategy for addressing and improving student climate, student engagement, and student mentoring.

When Vandenburgh was a teacher in Southern Riverside, California in 2000, he saw the need to address the White Supremacy issue that was plaguing his school and community. In his school, the White Supremacy group was "running the school" and hate crimes/racial tensions were on the rise, affecting both the school and the community (Vandenburgh, 2016).

What is the PLUS Program?

PLUS is a program that was developed with the motto: "kids taking care of kids." The program is designed for students to help each other become connected to their school, its staff, and the community. Vandenburgh realized during his years as a teacher, that there were challenges carried to the school from the community that were being felt on the entire school campus. He saw the need to understand gangs, so he began studying them. He discovered that gangs were the foundation for many youth who were feeling lonely, lost, and disconnected from their schools (Arellano, 2015). These students were looking for a way to connect and feel popular while searching for sustainability. He determined that students joined gangs because they lacked a sense of belonging from their own families, which the gang was able to provide. Vandenburgh used his research to create the PLUS Program with the goal of duplicating the connectedness these students felt for the gangs. The PLUS Program works to provide a positive environment where students take care of each other.

The Safe School Initiative (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum & Modzeleski, 2002), as outlined by the Department of Education and Secret Service, stated that a mechanism needs to be in place to develop and sustain a safe school environment. The PLUS Program is one such mechanism that works to build student connections, gather data on the campus climate, and have a team of students and staff plan activities according to the data findings. It is a replicable model that is currently used at all grade levels.

To address this growing problem, he created a student forum on campus. The selection process focused on getting students that represented a diverse cross section of all the subgroups, clicks, gangs, etc. on campus. Vandenburgh identified the following steps to his initial process:

1. Bring a group of identified students from a cross section of the school together for a schoolwide forum.
2. Explain the process to the students, letting them know that they are peer leaders who will be representatives of the process and provide forums and activities schoolwide.
3. Vandenburgh, along with the students, named this program "PLUS" (Peer Leaders Uniting Students).
4. Vandenburgh worked with the school and district to acquire funding and purchase t-shirts. The t-shirts had a positive impact in that they gave peer leaders a sense of belonging.
5. The peer leaders and Vandenburgh set up monthly forums. They also created a survey that was used to determine areas that required attention on campus. These surveys were administered regularly to assess progress (Vandenburgh, 2016).

PLUS Across California

Currently, the PLUS Program has grown to over 54 schools in Northern and Southern California and across the nation. There are PLUS Programs in Hemet Unified School District, Carlsbad Unified School District, Palm Springs Unified School District, and it has partnerships with the San Diego and Stanislaus County Offices of Education (Peer Leaders Uniting Students, n.d.). The PLUS Program has a mission of connecting students to their colleagues, teachers and staff members, administrators, and members of the community. It started as a 9th through 12th grade programs and has extended to grades 7-12, building a continuum of support services.

Student PLUS leaders conduct monthly forums designed to assist other students with issues on campus and to build relationships with peers. Their goal is to help make every student on their campus feel connected to the school, peers, or staff members (Peer Leaders Uniting Students, n.d.). This program was adopted by many schools and includes a leadership component within the course. The program has its members participate in community service and leadership activities such as food, toy, and clothing drives; campus beautification; anti-bullying assemblies and forums; peer-to-peer mentoring; and fundraisers.

PLUS Captures Opportunities

The activities outlined in the PLUS Program give schools a formal process to capture the positive influence of peers, to impact the social norms of the student community, and to change behavior to create a safe school climate. To further the cross-age mentoring approach, the kindergarten through eighth grade school PLUS Teams work with the students in kindergarten through fifth grade to deliver lessons and activities that build trust, providing strategies to address day-to-day barriers. PLUS is a process and, over time, students who first experienced the Program in kindergarten through fifth grade will hear the same common language in grades sixth through eighth and then in grades ninth through twelfth (Vandenburgh, 2016).

The primary concept behind PLUS is that students participate in a youth leadership model using Direction Surveys throughout the year. The data from the Direction Survey yields ideas for the youth leadership to determine the calendar of activities and events to be implemented by student leadership (“Peer Leaders,” 2017). It empowers students to be leaders.

Summary

The primary purpose of this chapter was to explore the historical literature related to school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. These three areas are crucial to

successful implementation of the PLUS Program. The origination of the PLUS Program and Vandenburg's initial steps for implementation were described. These historical perspectives and the beginning of PLUS are critical to this study, as the researcher will examine several schools in the year-three implementation phase of PLUS. This process will be described in chapter three.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness and adult perception of the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program in kindergarten through eighth grade and sixth through twelfth grade schools by assessing school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. The researcher used quantitative and qualitative measurement instruments. The researcher administered a survey that was provided to teachers, counselors, administrators, support staff, and PLUS advisors. The survey was followed by interviews using questions related to survey responses.

Participants

This study focused on the implementation of the PLUS Program at two large elementary schools and two large comprehensive high schools in a Northern California urban school district. The two elementary schools' enrollment for the most recent school year was estimated at 1,400 students. The high schools' enrollment for the most recent school year was estimated at 3,800 students. At the time of the study, the participating elementary schools both served students from kindergarten to eighth grade; one of the high schools served students from sixth to twelfth grade, and one high school served students from ninth to twelfth grade.

A survey was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the PLUS Program as perceived by adults. It was conducted at two kindergarten through eighth schools, and two high schools. The survey and interviews were conducted between August 2016 and October 2016. There were 139 adult participants (teachers, counselors, administrators, and PLUS advisors) who completed the survey, and seven of those adults were interviewed.

Sampling Procedures

In this study, the purpose was to investigate the impact the PLUS Program has on a school's climate, student engagement, and mentoring for students. Currently, the schools use student PLUS survey data that is only viewed by the PLUS leadership team and advisor. The individuals in this study provide services and work directly with students in elementary, middle, and high schools in a Northern California school district. Participants were selected using criteria that were inclusive, providing all participants an opportunity to participate or not. All schools that participated in the survey and interviews have current PLUS Programs that were established two to three years ago.

The researcher attended staff meetings for all four of the participating schools. The research topic was presented along with information related to the study on the PLUS Program. The researcher provided a document that indicated that participants' names would not be collected and would remain confidential. The document also explained the risks involved in participating in the study. After the information and directions were provided, the researcher left the area so that participants did not feel pressure to participate if they did not wish to complete the survey. Two school staff members handed out the survey and participating document and collected the completed surveys. The following day, the researcher returned to collect all documents.

Instrumentation

The researcher used quantitative and qualitative measurement tools to determine the program's impact on students, teachers, counselors, and school leaders. An initial survey was provided, followed by in-depth interviews.

The initial survey consisted of fifteen questions regarding the effectiveness of the PLUS Program. The survey asked questions regarding the quality of the PLUS Program on the participant's home school campus (see Appendix A). Participants were asked to select responses that best describe their perceptions regarding each question using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *strongly disagree,* and 4 = *disagree*, 5 = *neither agree nor disagree*). Some of the questions used a separate set of responses (*1= frequently, 2=occasionally, 3=rarely, 4=never, 5= I do not know).* The survey was administered at two K-8 schools, and two high schools in Northern California. The researcher surveyed 130 adult participants who work with elementary, middle, and high school students.

The survey was broken into three factors. The first factor, the impact the PLUS Program has on school climate, requested the participant to answer questions such as, "How often are PLUS survey results being used to drive student morale and climate on campus?" and, "Do you feel that the PLUS Program improves school climate?" The second factor measured the impact PLUS Program has on student engagement by asking questions such as, "Do you believe that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement?" and, "Do you feel that it is important for teachers and students to interact with PLUS students?" The third factor helped to uncover the impact the PLUS Program has on student mentoring by asking, "Do you view PLUS students as strong role models and mentors?" and, "Do you believe that the PLUS Program promotes student mentoring on campus?" The same survey was given to all four schools.

The researcher's committee chairperson and selected district administrators reviewed the survey to enhance validity. Additionally, a pilot group of dissertation peers took the survey and provided feedback on survey questions and general administration guidelines. The survey was submitted for review to the District's Research & Accountability Review Panel for approval.

The survey was also submitted to Concordia University Irvine's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. The researcher validated the survey by acquiring feedback from Vandenburgh (the creator of the PLUS Program), colleagues in the doctorate program, and a dissertation professor. A pilot of the survey was administered at a local school to make adjustments and to ensure consistency.

Setting

The research was conducted in a Northern California school district with a total enrollment of approximately 40,057 students. The demographics of the district are as follows: Hispanic/Latino (63.3%, *n* = 25,317), African American (11%, *n* = 4,412), Asian (9.3%, *n* = 3,731), Caucasian (6.7%, *n* = 2,712), Filipino (4.3%, *n* = 1,720), American Indian or Alaska Native (2.5%, *n* = 986), two or more races (2.2%, *n* = 865), Pacific Islander (0.5% *n* = 209), and number not reported (0.2%, *n* = 105). The district has approximately 85% of students who are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. They also have 28% of students who are considered English Learners. Finally, 9.8% of their students qualify to receive Special Education services (California Department of Education [CDE], 2015).

The sample population consisted of 128 teachers, seven counselors, eight administrators, one PLUS advisor, and one support staff member from two kindergarten to eighth grade schools and two high schools. The two participating K-8 schools are "feeder schools" for the identified high schools. Feeder schools are defined as schools that have the majority of their students attend their local high school. According to Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine, (2011), peer mentoring programs that serve youth with greater risk factors tend to produce stronger program effects. The research settings chosen for this proposal fit this criteria

based on the environmental risk factors associated with schools with high levels of socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

District PLUS Program implementation. During the 2015-2016 school year, the district had four comprehensive high schools start their third year of PLUS Program implementation. It also had thirty-nine of their kindergarten through eighth grade schools implement their second year of program expansion. The district has a PLUS coordinator, with a PLUS advisor at each of the schools to oversee the facilitation, expansion, and ongoing activities and surveys of the program across the district (See Appendix B for Organizational Chart).

During the duration of the grant, it was highlighted that students who were harassed or bullied had increased by 3% at High School #1 and 4% at High School #2, resulting in 30% and 38% of students, respectively, being bullied. High School #3 reported a 6% decline from 35% to 29%. During this same period, more than two thirds of the students reported that they did not feel connected to the school. Given these findings, it was important for the schools to continue identifying new and innovative ways of addressing how the students feel.

PLUS advisors. In spring of 2013, the district had a team of 28 staff members representing the four high schools that were trained in the elements of the PLUS Program. In the fall of the same year, as a result of a grant award from the California Endowment Center, over 100 staff members from all 39 K-8 schools went through the PLUS Program training. Every high school identified a PLUS coordinator, along with a coordinator for all of the 39 kindergarten through eighth grade schools who became the point of contact for the implementation of the PLUS Program at their school site. A stakeholders' network was also developed, which led to the identification of 40 community partners, including law enforcement, parents, after school programs, and mental health providers. The stakeholders' network received

training in the elements of the PLUS Program. In the fall of 2014, a district administrator was hired to oversee the PLUS Program development and serve as the lead in program implementation. During the month of January 2015, all students and staff in sixth through eighth grades received a one-hour workshop on the elements of the PLUS Program and the opportunities for participation throughout the school year. The district has an organization chart identifying the makeup of the PLUS Program across the district (Figure 2).

All PLUS advisors at the four comprehensive high schools receive a stipend, along with a budget, which enables them to meet with their students for planning and data analysis during lunchtime, after school, and during breaks. The high school PLUS advisors work directly with the cohort of kindergarten through eighth grade PLUS advisors that feed into their specific high school site. The high school PLUS advisor working with their cohort of kindergarten through eighth grade PLUS advisors organized and implemented elements of the PLUS Program that included cross-age mentoring, data gathering, and transition-specific activities for students in the kindergarten through eighth grade schools (Figure 7).

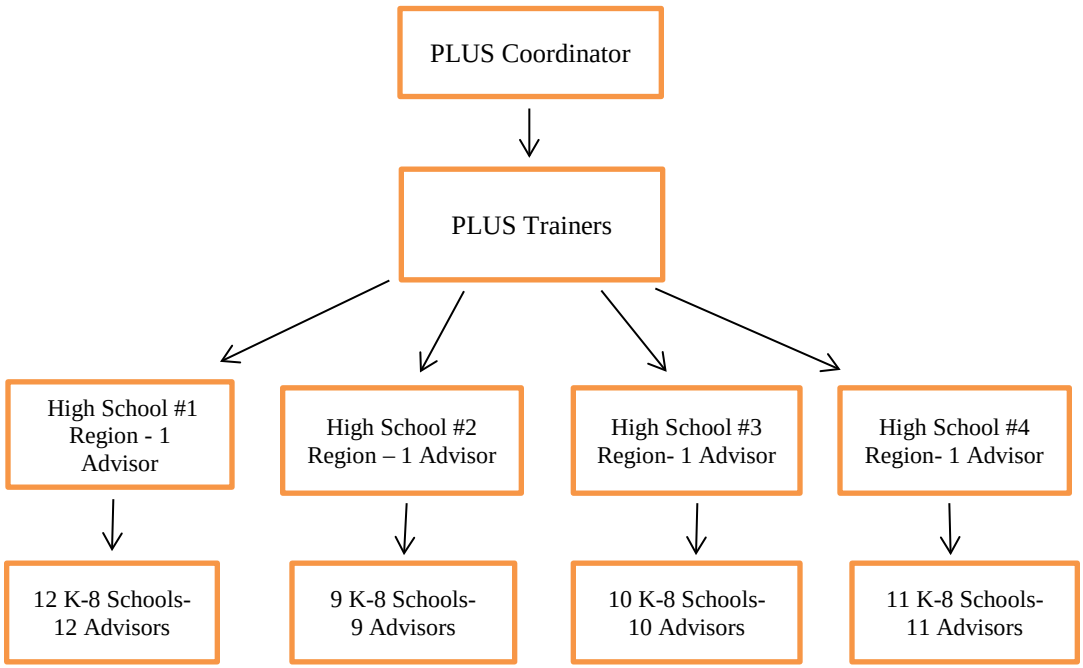


Figure 7. District PLUS Organizational Chart

Student-Led Forums

Every PLUS team across the school district conducts monthly student lead forums. These forums are attended by a cross section of students across the campus. It is important that the attending students represent a diverse cross section to ensure that there is an impact on the school as a whole. The variety of activities provided during the monthly forums are selected from the PLUS Program manual: *Establishing a Commitment to Actions, Identity, and Purpose.* The forums are designed to develop opportunities for students to connect with each other and to build relationships on campus. The PLUS leaders go through a cycle of discussions that lend to the opportunity to foster positive and impactful social development. PLUS leaders follow the next steps:

1. Identify the critical issues impacting the campus.
2. Discuss how the critical issues impact students on the campus.
3. Identify what can be done to address the issues on campus.

This opportunity to connect with peers by discussing issues that affect their campus is essential in the development of healthy students (Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur, 2002).

On average, there are normally 30 to 40 students invited to attend the forum. The attending students always represent all subgroups and social groups on the campus. Every month, there is a new set of participating students invited to attend. This practice ensures that the forums are provided to as many students as possible. At the high school level, the forums usually run about 2.5 hours, and at the kindergarten through eighth grade level they usually run one to two hours. The PLUS Program forums provide opportunities to collect qualitative data.

The data is gathered through the conversations that take place during the small and large group discussions. The data is analyzed to find common themes and patterns within the responses. The responses provide information that is valuable for schools, especially when they are addressing the climate of the school, which provides the next steps that can be taken to implement strategies that address areas that need to be tackled.

Strengths

Involving every school in the district in the program is a definite strength. The PLUS Program model, building student connections, gathering data on the campus climate, and having students and staff work together to plan leadership activities, was a nice model. The incorporation of spatial information—where PLUS events/activities occur—was a very positive addition to this research. Gathering data from Stockton via the California Healthy Kids Survey was instrumental in comparing data from this district with others in the state, nation, and internationally. However, it would be worth adding additional grades and/or years to enhance the evaluation. The research plan was to make use of tested instruments to measure school climate, student engagement, and leadership. Furthermore, it was the plan of the researcher to make use of multiple data sources and variables to measure success in the schools that have the PLUS Program, adding the adult perspective and involvement.

Data Analysis

A survey was issued to 139 educators. Next, the researcher analyzed the results using a quantitative method. It was followed up with interviews (qualitative data) to assist the researcher in explaining the quantitative data in greater detail (Figure 8).

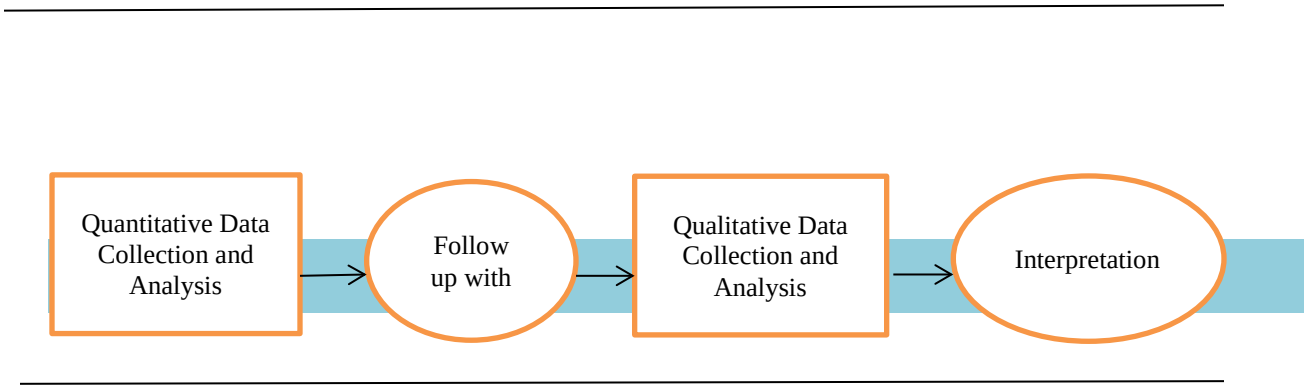


Figure 8: Explanatory Sequential; QUAN-qual (primarily quantitative)

Quantitative Analysis

The researcher collected, via survey, responses that were multiple-choice questions related to the PLUS Program in the areas of school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. Demographic information was also collected from all entrants to acquire participation data. The researcher next analyzed the data comparing percentages of responses based on the five point Likert Scale. These responses were used to create questions for the qualitative data collection and analysis.

Grounded Theory

The grounded theory is defined as a qualitative research approach that was developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s. The research begins by raising reproductive questions that help guide the researcher. However, the questions are not intended to become static or confining. During the process, the researcher will gather data and theoretical concepts that are identified.

Next, there are links that are developed during the gathering of data ("Qualitative Approaches," 2017).

There are several key analytical strategies that the researcher can use. Coding is a common process that helps categorize the data by looking for implications. Next, there is *Memoing*, which is the process of recording elements discovered by the researcher, which evolve through the study. Finally, a researcher could use integrative diagrams to bring all the results together and to clarify the data ("Qualitative Approaches," 2017).

It is not uncommon for the researcher to find new links per the observations and studies, which can shift during the data collection and interpretation phase of the study. It is important to note that grounded theory does not always have a clear endpoint; it could go on indefinitely and usually ends when the researcher decides to stop ("Qualitative Approaches," 2017).

Qualitative Analysis

The researcher took the responses from the survey and created interview questions to incorporate the qualitative analysis of the research. The seven participants were asked questions that provided them an opportunity to elaborate on the PLUS Program, providing examples, perspective, and recommendations. The coding took place in several phases to ensure a more thorough analysis. First, specific answers and keywords from the interview questions were word processed. Then, using NVivo, the text was inserted to code all responses. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis computer software program. It is designed for researchers who perform qualitative research to help dive deeper into levels of analysis on small or large amounts of data ("What is NVivo?", 2017).

Next, the responses were grouped into categories: similarities and trends emerging. A thematic analysis was used to identify patterns across the data set. Discovering themes is the

primary basis for qualitative research. The themes provided an expression for data analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). As themes emerged, implications for practice were suggested. Member-checking by faculty advisors was used to ensure validity. This process of using the quantitative results to inform the qualitative work is termed a QUAN-qual (Primarily qualitative) design (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation was used for corroboration of data. The data progression is elaborated in chapters four and five.

Ethical Compliance

The researcher was an administrator in the district location of the investigation. For this reason, the interviews had to be conducted by another person to ensure ethicality.

Narrative Structure

The study's original intention was to conduct phenomenological research, the phenomenon being the impact of PLUS on school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. However, during the coding phase, as the themes emerged, it became clear that the study was a grounded theory approach. The "theory" discovered related to adult professional development.

Summary

This chapter discussed the mixed method design used for the current study, outlining the procedure for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data and responses. It discussed the participants of the study, sampling procedures, instrumentation, setting, and data collection and analyses. It also included vital information on the district and schools being used for the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

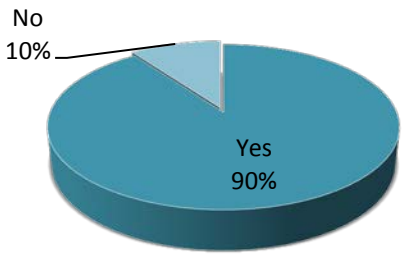
The purpose of this study was to acquire adult perception of the PLUS Program and the impact on school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. Chapter four provides an analysis of the survey conducted with teachers, counselors, administrators, PLUS advisors, and classified staff members as well as data from qualitative interviews. This chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the responses to fifteen survey questions and seven interviews.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

The study consisted of 136 adult participants: 128 teachers, eight school administrators, seven counselors, one Peer Leaders Uniting Students advisor, and one campus security monitor. For the first survey question, the researcher asked if the respondents were aware of the PLUS Program. Of the 137 adult participants, 123 (90%) of the participants were aware of the PLUS Program. Ten percent stated they were not aware of the program.

Table 4.1

Question 1: Are You Aware of the PLUS Program



n=137

Next, the survey asked if the PLUS Program existed on their school campuses. From 136 adult participants, 84 (62%) strongly agreed that the PLUS Program exists on their campus, 38

(28%) agreed, one (0%) strongly disagreed, and 13 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Question 2: Do You Know If the PLUS Program Exists on Your Campus?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
84 (62%)	38 (28%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (10%)

n=136

The survey then asked how often the PLUS survey results were being used to drive student morale and climate on campus. This question had 138 responses; nine respondents (7%) marked that they *frequently* believed the PLUS survey results were being used to drive student morale and climate on campus, 27 (20%) marked *occasionally*, 13 (9%) marked *rarely*, seven (5%) marked *never*, and a surprising 82 (60%) indicated that they did not know (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Question 3: How Often is the PLUS Survey Being Used to Drive Morale and Climate on Campus?

Frequently	*Occasionally*	*Rarely*	*Never*	*I do not know*
9 (7%)	27 (20%)	13 (9%)	7 (5%)	82 (60%)

n=138

The survey also included a question designed to determine if participants noticed the impact the PLUS Program has had on their school's climate. Responses from139 adult

participants concluded that 15 (11%) agreed that they have noticed the impact the PLUS Program has had as it relates to school climate, 75 (54%) agreed, seven (5%) strongly disagreed, 11 (8%) disagreed, and 31 (22%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.4). There is a clear indication that staff noticed the impact the program made on students at or before the time of the study.

Table 4.4

Question 4: Do You Notice the Impact the PLUS Program Has Had, as It Relates to School Climate?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
15 (11%)	75 (54%)	7 (5%)	11 (8%)	31 (22%)

n=139

This question helped the researcher determine if there was evidence that the PLUS Program improved a school's climate. When the 140 adult participants were asked if the PLUS Program improves school climate, 27 (19%) strongly agreed that it does, 55 (39%) agreed, three (2%) strongly disagreed, 7 (5%) disagreed, and 48 (34%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Question 5: Do You Feel That the PLUS Program Improves School Climate?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
27 (19%)	55 (39%)	3 (2%)	7 (5%)	48 (34%)

n=140

In the next section, the survey asked if the adult participants believed that the PLUS Program promoted student engagement. There were 135 adult participants who answered this question; 21 (16%) strongly agreed that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement, 71 (53%) agreed, four (4%) strongly disagreed, six (4%) disagreed, and 33 (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.6). These results indicate that the adult participants see the value of student engagement, and they believe it is working on their school campus.

Table 4.6

Question 6: Do You Believe the PLUS Program Promotes Student Engagement?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
21 (16%)	71 (53%)	4 (4%)	6 (4%)	33 (24%)

n=135

The question, '"How often do you see PLUS students engaging other students on campus—during a rally or lunchtime activity?"' helped the researcher determine how attuned the staff was to on-campus activities. Of 136 adult participants, 12 (9%) indicated that they frequently see the PLUS students engaging other students on campus, 49 (36%) marked

occasionally, 25 (18%) marked *rarely*, 12 (9%) marked *never*, and 38 (28%) indicated that they did not know.

Table 4.7

Question: How Often Do You See the PLUS Student Engaging Other Students on Campus During a Rally or Lunchtime Activity?

Frequently	*Occasionally*	*Rarely*	*Never*	*I do not know*
12 (9%)	49 (36%)	25 (18%)	12 (9%)	38 (28%)

n=136

The researcher asked adult participants if they feel that it is important for teachers and students to interact with PLUS students. Of 130 adult participants, 46 (35%) strongly agreed that it is important for teachers and students to interact with PLUS students, 61 (47%) agreed, one (1%) strongly disagreed, three (2%) disagreed, and 19 (15%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Question 8: Do You Feel That It Is Important for Teachers and Students to Interact with PLUS Students?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree or disagree*
46 (35%)	61 (47%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	19 (15%)

n=130

To determine the importance of staff support towards the PLUS Program on the school campus, the participants were asked, ‘“Do you believe that staff (teachers, counselors, administrators) support the PLUS Program?”’ The results showed that 21 of the adults (16%) strongly agreed with this, 68 (50%) agreed, one (1%) strongly disagreed, eight (6%) disagreed, and 37 (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Question 9: Do You Believe That Staffs (Teachers, Counselors, Administrators) Support the PLUS Program?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree or disagree*
21 (16%)	68 (50%)	1 (1%)	8 (6%)	37 (27%)

n=135

The researcher inquired if the participants believe that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement on campus; 19 (14%) strongly agreed with this, 66 (49%) agreed, one (1%) strongly disagreed, 11 (8%) disagreed, and 37 (28%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

Question 10: Do You Believe That the PLUS Program Promotes Student Engagement on Campus?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree or disagree*
19 (14%)	66 (49%)	1 (1%)	11 (8%)	37 (28%)

n=143

Question 11 helped the researcher conclude if the PLUS Program promotes student mentoring. Through 137 adult participants, 23 (17%) strongly agreed that the PLUS Program promotes mentoring in students, 67 (49%) agreed, two (1%) strongly disagreed, 13 (9%) disagreed, and 32 (23%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11

Question 11: Do You Believe That the PLUS Program Promotes Mentoring in Students?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
23 (17%)	67 (49%)	2 (1%)	13 (9%)	32 (23%)

n=137

The researcher inquired about whether or not participants viewed PLUS students as strong role models and mentors. Of 137 adult participants, 13 (11%) strongly agreed, 47 (41%) agreed, three (3%) strongly disagreed, 12 (10%) disagreed, and 41 (35%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12

Question 12: Do You View PLUS Students as Strong Role Models and Mentors?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
13 (11%)	47 (41%)	3 (3%)	12 (10%)	41 (35%)

n=116

Part of the researcher's study was to determine if adult participants believe that mentoring is an important component of the PLUS Program at their school. Out of 135 adult participants, four (3%) of the participants did not believe that mentoring is an important component of the PLUS Program, 42 (31%) did not know, and 89 (66%) believed that it is very important (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13

Question 13: Do You Believe that Mentoring is an Important Component of the PLUS Program?

Not important	*I do not know*	*Very important*
4 (3%)	42 (31%)	89 (66%)

n=135

The researcher asked 134 adult participants if they viewed the PLUS Program as significant. Fifty-nine adult participants (44%) strongly believe that it is important for parents, students, teachers, counselors, and administrators to understand the significance of having the PLUS Program on campus, 55 (41%) agreed, two (1%) strongly disagreed, 0 (0%) disagreed, and 18 (13%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14

Question 14: Do You Believe That It is Important for Parents, Students, Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators to Understand the Significance of Having the PLUS Program on Campus?

Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*
59 (44%)	55 (41%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	18 (13%)

n=134

Interview Results and Responses

All results from the interviews conducted with counselors, administrators, and PLUS advisors were transcribed and analyzed using the NVivo 11 software. Next, the interviews were coded and analyzed, which opened the door for the researcher to discover themes running consistently through the results of the study. To ensure validity, the interviews were not conducted by the researcher. A district employee in the research office, where the study was conducted, interviewed all participants. The interviewer connected with all adult participants and recorded, with the participants' permission, all interviews. The recordings were provided to the researcher who transcribed them for this study.

The interviewer asked, '"How could the PLUS survey results be used to drive student morale and the climate on a school campus?"' The seven participants provided a variety of different responses to this answer, all of which follow in Table 4.15:

Table 4.15

Interview Question 1: How Could PLUS Survey Results be Used to Drive Student Morale and Climate on a School Campus?

Participant 1	Address student concerns. Students may not be vocal in general. Provide problems that need to be addressed. Put effort into steering your school climate.
Participant 2	We use the PLUS survey, aligning it with the PBIS through the MTSS and the grant Project Prevent. The results are used to provide services. Example: if it's about smoking, we provide this information to the service providers, bringing in Point Break's Women's Center.
Participant 3	Sharing the data with the students, staff, school, administration, acting upon the information that the data is providing. If we could address the concerns, faculty could work with the PLUS Program to help correct and mitigate the concerns. This could be by increasing activities during, before, and or after school.
Participant 4	We share the survey results with the PLUS team, administration, and their team. We did very well with our 7th and 8th graders. We share this success with the PLUS team and leadership teams. These students next go into the classes and share the results and do activities with students. We can use these survey results to let the kids know our strengths and what needs improvement.
Participant 5	The survey results can give information about how student are feeling and the needs on your campus and which direction the PLUS leadership can go. It can also help the site leadership know which direction they need to go in. The results will be used to identify needs and the implementation of programs to address the needs.
Participant 6	Definitely. How do we not know what's going on in our schools? We know what we want the results to be, but what about the students? We want to know what the students are thinking; their feedback is so important to us. This information will help us calibrate all of our action plans. We will use all of the information to implement programs to address the morale and climate on campus. It is not a top down; it is also decisions that are made school wide, involving everyone on campus.
Participant 7	There are a lot of students with different types of personalities, so it is important to find what they have in common. The survey addresses

	some of their emotional or things that they feel will provide more fun and connection to school and their future goals. The PLUS brings kids together, inviting students who normally would not feel connected to school. This also transfers into their way of life. I love this program.

n=7

The second interview question asked the interviewees to consider how they could help PLUS students become strong role models and mentors on campus.

Table 4.16

Interview Question 2: How Could We Help PLUS Students be Viewed as Strong Role Models and Mentors on a School Campus?

Participant 1	Play a leadership role. Special events, leading—outside of school events, jog-a-thon, feet-on-the-ground activity on Fridays, working with PTSA. Combining leadership and the PLUS Program.
Participant 2	Culture activities, adding assemblies, conflict mediation, peer mentors and restorative justice with PLUS students leading the way. SUSD PD is also bringing in Crime Stopper program, adding presentations from the SUSD PD department, to our PLUS students. Our PLUS students are also involved in Student Activities class. This year we are building it at 9th and 10th grade. For the first time, thanks to PLUS, we have taken it all the way down to our 6th,7th, and 8th grade IB students.
Participant 3	Have school wide assemblies, school wide events, focusing on the culture building. Example: pull out certain classes, giving examples of good behavior. Use the PLUS leaders as role models and an example for other students to view.
Participant 4	Weekly, they come with the PLUS shirts or sweaters; we have PLUS meetings every week, and they are very visible. They must apply and students see them as role models, and through their work with their PLUS buddies, they choose a PLUS buddy every month and they mentor that student, bringing them to the PLUS forums at the end of the month when the forums are held. They are each getting to know

	seven to eight students "PLUS Buddies" pretty well. At the end of the year we invite all buddies to a year-end activity. Plus leaders are in grades seven and eight, and they work with PLUS buddies that range from grade three through grade six. Very limited number of PLUS buddies in grade six, focusing on the fourth graders at this time.
Participant 5	Allowing them to take more leadership roles, being more visible, and having more forums. They can also adopt a class, lead conflict resolution, finding different ways to do lessons with students. Having positive interactions.
Participant 6	Number one, on our campus we have a PLUS class. This class is being guided through the teacher, empowering them to go outside of the classroom and spreading the class goals. It can be done through a rally, assembly, or off-campus activity.
Participant 7	This is a bit tricky. The kids who are already very active and positive can help, but more importantly, we want to target the students who are not connected. So, bringing students who are disconnected can also have a major impact, especially because they can connect with students who are alone, depressed, or not interacting. What I noticed in schools is that teachers only go towards the students who want to be leaders, not tapping into students that do not normally. In order to promote, it will take time, but they have to gather the students who need it, not only the students who do not need extra support.

The researcher asked the participants in question three, "'Do you believe that mentoring is an important component of the PLUS Program, why or why not?"' The participants provided the following answers (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17

Interview Question 3: Do You Believe that Mentoring is an Important Component of the PLUS Program, Why or Why Not?

Participant 1	Absolutely. PLUS students should be in a role model capacity, behaving and fulfilling the role modeling to the younger kids. Study buddy groups, especially on a social level, can positively influence the campus and culture. Getting the student body, giving the younger kids a person, a student, who can listen and mentor them. Young students have a hard time communicating with adults.
Participant 2	I have seen the mentoring piece of the PLUS Program and it has an advantage, especially with freshman, coming from the 8th grade to help transition them to the high school. Hearing it from their peers versus adults has really provided assistance for the students from a peer perspective. Really helps the school culture.
Participant 3	I believe it is a major component because that is the goal of the PLUS Program: building trust in the mentor to guide and/or explain the situation—providing a person they can connect with.
Participant 4	Mentoring is an important component. And there are major changes, which has made a huge difference. We focus on the importance of making a huge difference in the life of their buddy. At the end of the year, their buddies should see them as a role model. This is a relationship that grows over the year.
Participant 5	Yes, mentoring from adults to students and peer-to-peer, both same age and younger, has an impact. It helps to create a culture, especially on a K-8 campus, with more opportunities to help younger students. Our K-8 schools provide a unique opportunity that a regular middle school cannot do so easily.
Participant 6	Yes, definitely, it is very important. We do need student mentors. We cannot just rely on adults. Students know students better than adults in some cases. It also builds their leadership skills, helping in their future careers.
Participant 7	The PLUS Program has helped students have more pride, making them feel better about themselves. Mentoring is good for everything you do

in this world. Having someone there to encourage you, help you when you are struggling, or like cheerleaders, it is wonderful.

The participants provided the following answers to Question 4 (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18

Interview Question 4: To What Extent Does the PLUS Program Impact your School's Climate?

Participant 1	Not as much as I would like at this point, but it has the potential. Example: merging Leadership and PLUS together. There is a great potential.
Participant 2	During the past two-and-a-half years, I have noticed the impact on the school and the culture. Being recognized by the school district and articles in the newspaper really helps send the positive message about PLUS. There is pride on campus, especially through the PLUS Forums, which is creating a strong school culture. On Thursday, all students wear their PLUS t-shirts, giving them an impact. During lunch, the PLUS students go out and connect with students that are lonely, with no friends, helping them feel that people care about them. Our PLUS Program is being recognized by other students as positive. Our PLUS students have pride because they are part of the PLUS Program.
Participant 3	It's all about involvement. I see people be a part of the PLUS Program, so they tend to go in the direction, especially if they see the positive behavior coming out of it.
Participant 4	We are really stressing respect and inclusion during our forums and through activities on campus. This could be during lunch, recess, class time, etc. Through activities, we ensure that they are activities that help build trust, respect, and inclusion. I have noticed the change throughout the campus, especially on the survey results.
Participant 5	Our leadership students conduct forums, reinforcing our PBIS model, establishing a positive culture on campus. They model good behavior to the younger students and are having a strong impact. The younger students are mimicking the positive behavior, which is better than mimicking negative behavior.

Participant 6	It has been a great impact on our campus. We see a change in attitude becoming a major contributor to a positive climate. When adults are not around, PLUS students have a positive influence on other students. Also, with the identification of who are the PLUS students, this has enhanced the mentoring piece. The program has also had a major impact on the troubled student, making them a new person.
Participant 7	In the schools that I have been at, for example, it was wonderful with activities during lunch, etc. At the K-8 School, the PLUS kids would help with homework; they had a buddy system and continued to tutor during class. The 7th and 8th graders felt like adults.

Student engagement is a critical topic of exploration. In question 5, the participants were asked, **'**"To what extent does the PLUS Program impact student engagement on your school campus?"' (Table 4.19)

Table 4.19

Interview Question 5: To What Extent Does the PLUS Program Impact Student Engagement on your School Campus?

Participant 1	Pretty extensively. The forums impact the culture on the school.
Participant 2	We talk about this as a school. Students are recommended by the teacher, administration, and women's center to attend the forum, seeing the need for them to get involved on campus. It is also an opportunity to help new students—students who have social issues. It really helps.
Participant 3	It's a direct link of making students aware of activities that are available for students. It can also be impacted by what the student's needs are. Because of the shift of the dynamics, there has been a bigger impact. The biggest change is associated with the addition of the PLUS class, providing a bigger impact on campus. There is also community outreach from our PLUS students, both on and off campus.
Participant 4	I am always looking at ways we can improve our current activities. One thought was to do more during recess time, which might be the next step. At our school, we have a lot of activities. Our leadership and PLUS students partner on activities, organizing activities on campus.

Participant 5	It goes back to the culture, making a place where kids want to be. You really are establishing the expectation that is clear. The culture of the school is very important. If students do not feel like they are being bullied and that their teacher cares about them, they are going to learn. Also, if they have a peer that they can connect with, this can help prevent frustration.
Participant 6	So far, the data from the surveys has helped the culture and climate, but we still do not have solid information regarding engagement at our school. This is one of our areas that we need to enhance and continue to work and build. We need to promote a climate of engagement. We want to make sure that we can see more questions regarding instruction and the PLUS Program.
Participant 7	The kids that are in PLUS promote, even without knowing it. In classrooms, I have seen PLUS kids interacting more, participating and they don't realize they are doing it. They encourage students to do better and ask for help when they need it. They wear their PLUS t-shirts and the smaller kids will ask what the PLUS Program is.

Question 6 (Table 4.20) asks, "To what extent does the PLUS Program promote student mentoring on your school campus?"

Table 4.20

Interview Question 6: To What Extent Does the PLUS Program Promote Student Mentoring on your School Campus?

Participant 1	Very much, especially through the PLUS forums because they get to the root of any problems the students may be having at the time of the forum, impacting the rest of the school.
Participant 2	This is the biggest part of the PLUS Program as role models. It is also important for them to know that they do not stop being in the program only during the class, but that it extends into all activities and interactions on campus. We have ongoing training throughout the year. It is also a way to expand by adding more students; they can recommend the next generation of PLUS.

Participant 3	Especially with the older kids, they inspire the younger students on campus. Since our PLUS Program is also in our feeder schools, this makes for a great connection and mentor model. You can easily see the positive effects the older PLUS students are having on the younger students on campus.
Participant 4	We are encouraging our PLUS leaders to be mentors to seven or eight students each throughout the year, ending with a huge unity day at the end of the year. We have a zone day, which includes our feeder high school and surrounding zone schools. The students who are mentored by PLUS leaders are invited to this event. We teach, in the PLUS Program, how to be a role model. They are not only told to be a role model; we teach the skills needed to be role models with the hope that smaller students will also be role models. We make a big deal about the PLUS leaders picking their buddies. They look for kids who are outsiders and who may be struggling.
Participant 5	I think I kind of answered it in a previous question. They do peer mentoring through the forums. They can be adopting kids, always doing our best to create positive behavior. We also have AVID and STEM programs/classes that are also impacting our school culture, but the PLUS Program has helped enhance the culture on campus.
Participant 6	Quite a bit on our campus. We see it in other clubs, in sports, so I do not know if I can contribute it directly to PLUS, but you could see the common behaviors that are similar to PLUS.
Participant 7	I do not know—I am new to my school; I have only been there for less than three weeks. In my other schools, it has had a great impact. In my other schools, that impact the PLUS Program has promoted the program. 8th grade students go to high school asking if they can continue to be a part of the PLUS Program.

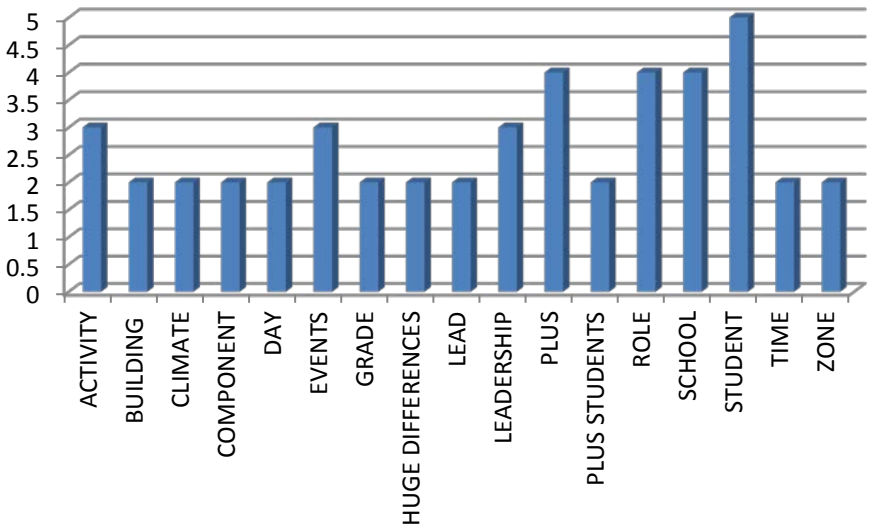
All participants used common keywords during their responses that emphasized specific elements throughout their interview session (Table 4.21). These keywords included “PLUS,” “leadership,” “school,” and “activity,” which suggested that the participants see the value of the PLUS Program. Looking further at the responses, the researcher concluded that there is a need for more staff training and collaboration. As indicated in Table 4.21, the wellbeing of their

students was paramount to the survey participants. Specifically, these adults were focused on the school and the role PLUS plays in supporting the school climate through student-lead activities and events.

Table 4.21

Similar Keywords During their Responses that Placed Emphasis on Specific Elements Throughout their Interview Session

Responses from Adult Participants



The survey responses were then used to develop the interview questions.

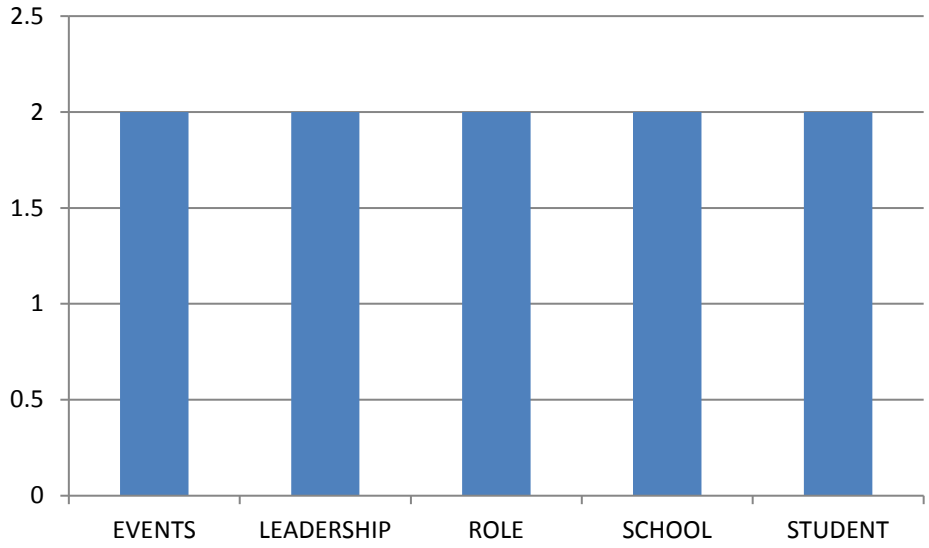
	Participant One's Responses
Question 1	Address student concern. Students may not be vocal in general. Provide problems that need to be addressed. Put effort into steering your school climate.
Question 2	Play a leadership role. Special events, leading—outside of school events, jog-a-thon, feet-on-the-ground activity on Fridays, working with PTSA. Combining leadership and PLUS Program.
Question 3	Absolutely, PLUS students should be in a role model capacity. Behaving and fulfilling the role—modeling to the younger kids.

	Study buddy groups, especially on a social level, can positively influence the campus and culture. Getting the student body, giving the younger kids a person—a student—who can listen and mentor them. Young students have a hard time communicating with adults.
Question 4	Not as much as I would like at this point, but it has the potential. Example: merging Leadership and PLUS together. There is a great potential.
Question 5	Pretty extensively, through the forums, impacting the culture on the school.
Question 6	Very much, especially through the PLUS forums because they get to the root of any problems the students may be having at the time of the forum, impacting the rest of the school.

Participant One mentioned "leadership," "events," "role," "school," and "students" very frequently. This participant sees the value in PLUS student role models and views them as leaders on campus, which impact students and their environment (Table 4.22).

Table 4.22

Participant One Referenced Key Terms



Participant Two's Responses

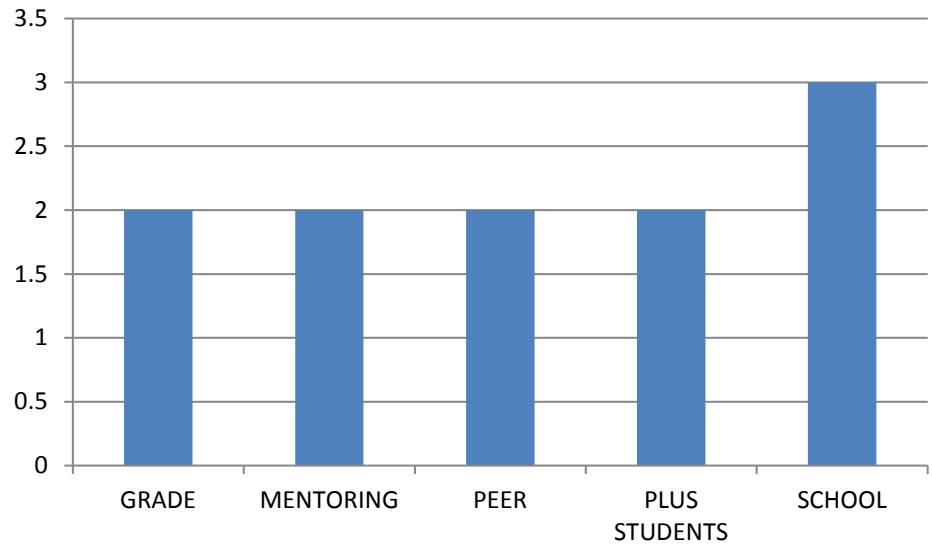
Question 1	We use the PLUS survey, aligning it with the PBIS through the MTSS and the grant Project Prevent. The results are used to provide services. For example: if it's about smoking, we provide this information to the service providers, bringing in Point Break's Women's Center.
Question 2	Culture activities, adding assemblies, conflict mediation, peer mentors, and restorative justice with PLUS students leading the way. SUSD PD is also bringing in the Crime Stopper Program, adding presentations from the SUSD PD dept. to our PLUS students. Our PLUS students are also involved in Student Activities classes. This year, we are building it at 9th and 10th grade. For the first time, thanks to PLUS, we have taken it all the way down to our 6th,7th, and 8th grade IB students.
Question 3	I have seen the mentoring piece of the PLUS Program and an advantage, especially with freshman coming from the 8th grade, is helping them transition to the high school. Hearing it from their peers versus adults has really provided assistance for the students from a peer perspective. It really helps the school culture.
Question 4	During the past two-and-a-half years, I have noticed the impact on the school and the culture. Being recognized by the school district and articles in the newspaper really helps send a positive message about PLUS. There is pride on campus, especially through the PLUS Forums, which is creating a strong school culture. On Thursday, all students wear their PLUS t-shirts, giving them an impact. During lunch, the PLUS students go out and connect with students who are lonely and have no friends, helping them feel that people care about them. Our PLUS Program is being recognized by other students as a positive thing. Our PLUS students have pride because they are part of the PLUS Program.
Question 5	We talk about this as a school. Students are recommended by the teacher, administration, and women's center to attend the forum, seeing the need for them to get involved on campus. It is also an opportunity to help new students and students who have social issues. It really helps.
Question 6	This is the biggest part of the PLUS Program as role models. It is also important for them to know that they do not stop being in the program only during the class, but that it extends into all activities and interactions on campus. We have ongoing training throughout

> the year. It is also a way to expand and add more students; they can recommend the next generation of PLUS.

Participant Two provided several responses that placed emphasis on specific keywords throughout the interview session (Table 4.23). These words were "peer," "mentoring," "school," and "PLUS students." Looking at previous responses, the researcher found correlations between all participants in that they all see the value of mentoring provided through the PLUS Program. Looking further at the responses—listed below—it helped identify the need for more staff training and collaboration

Table 4.23

Participant Two Referenced Areas



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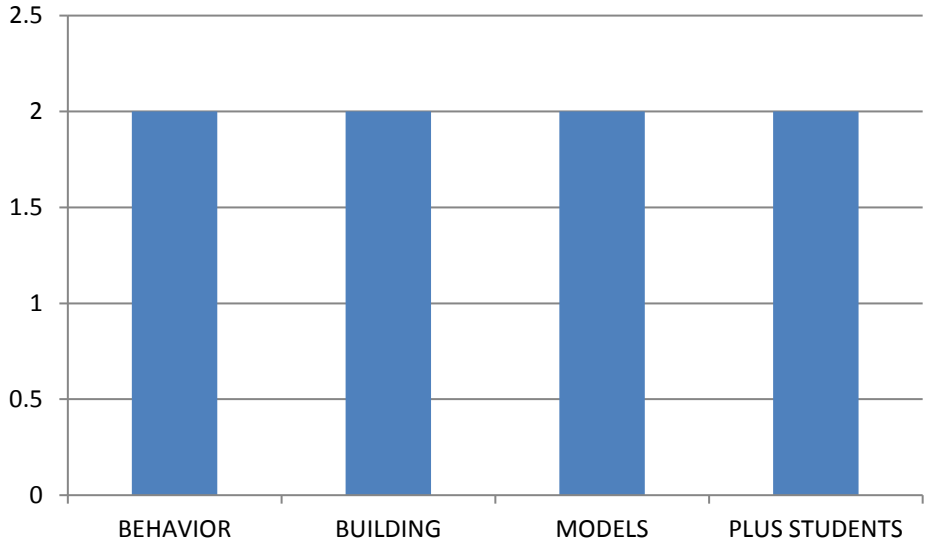
Participant Three gave the following responses for the interview questions.

	Participant Three's Responses
Question 1	Sharing the data with the students, staff, school, and administration and acting upon the information that the data is providing. If we could address the concerns, faculty could work with the PLUS Program to help correct and mitigate the concerns. This could be by increasing activities during, before, and/or after school.
Question 2	Have schoolwide assemblies and schoolwide events focusing on culture-building. Example: pull out certain classes, giving examples of good behavior. Use the PLUS leaders as role models and an example for other students to view.
Question 3	I believe it is a major component because that is the goal of the PLUS Program: building trust in the mentor to guide and/or explain the situation while providing a person they can connect with.
Question 4	It's all about involvement. I see people be a part of the PLUS Program, so they tend to go in that direction, especially if they see the positive behavior coming out of it.
Question 5	It's a direct link of making students aware of the activities that are available for them. It can also be impacted by what the students' needs are. Because of the shift in dynamics, there has been a bigger impact. The biggest change is associated with the addition of the PLUS class, providing a bigger impact on campus. There is also community outreach from our PLUS students, both on and off campus.
Question 6	Especially with the older kids, they inspire the younger students on campus. Since our PLUS Program is also in our feeder schools, this makes for a great connection and mentor model. You can easily see the positive effects the older PLUS students are having on the younger students on campus.

Table 4.24 presents this participant's most frequently used keywords. The table identifies "behavior," "building," "models," and "PLUS students." This participant also emphasized the importance of older students being good role models for younger peers. Another focus was the need for PLUS data to be shared with staff to further collaborative opportunities.

Table 4.24

Participant Three Common and Most Frequently Referenced Words



Participant Four gave the following responses for the interview questions.

Participant Four's Responses

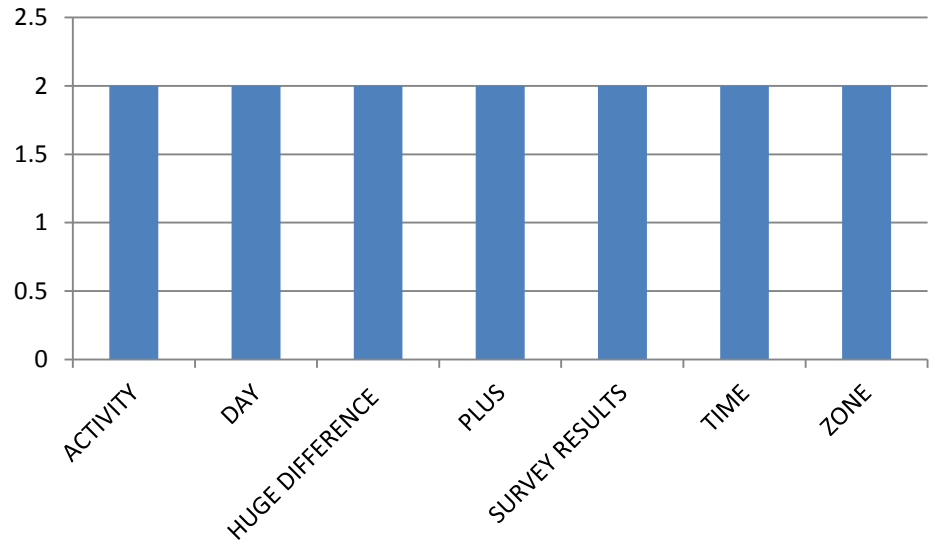
Question 1	We share the survey results with the PLUS team, administration, and their team. We did very well with our 7th and 8th graders. We share this success with the PLUS team and leadership teams. These students next go into the classes and share the results and do activities with other students. We can use these survey results to let the kids know what our strengths are and what needs improvement.
Question 2	Weekly, they come with the PLUS shirts or sweaters. We have PLUS meetings every week, and they are very visible. They must apply and students see them as role models, and through their work with their PLUS buddies, they choose a PLUS buddy every month and they mentor that student, bringing them to the PLUS forums at the end of the month when the forums are held. They are each getting to know seven to eight students/"PLUS Buddies" pretty well. At the end of the year, we invite all buddies to a year-end activity. Plus leaders are in grades 7 and 8 and they work with PLUS buddies that range from grade 3 through grade 6. There is a very limited number of PLUS buddies in grade 6 focusing on the 4th graders at this time.

Question 3	Mentoring is an important component, and there are major changes that have made a huge difference. We focus on the importance of making a huge difference in the lives of their buddies. At the end of the year, their buddies should see them as role models. This is a relationship that grows over the year.
Question 4	We are really stressing respect and inclusion during our forums and through activities on campus. This could be during lunch, recess, class time, etc. We ensure that they are activities that help build trust, respect, and inclusion. I have noticed the change throughout the campus, especially on the survey results.
Question 5	I am always looking at ways we can improve our current activities. One thought was to do more during recess time, which might be the next step. At our school, we have a lot of activities. Our leadership and PLUS students partner on activities to organize them on campus.
Question 6	We are encouraging our PLUS leaders to be mentors to seven or eight students each throughout the year, ending with a huge unity day at the end of the year. We have a zone day, which includes our feeder high school and surrounding zone schools. The students who are mentored by PLUS leaders are invited to this event. We teach, in the PLUS Program, how to be a role model. They are not only told to be a role model; we teach the skills needed to be role models with the hope that smaller students will also be role models. We make a big deal about the PLUS leaders picking their buddies. They look for kids who are outsiders and who may be struggling.

The results on Table 4.25 displayed seven keywords: “activity,” “day,” “huge differences,” “PLUS,” “survey results,” “time,” and “zone.” All keywords were weighted equally. After reviewing the responses, the researcher identified mentoring and the sharing of PLUS survey data as important elements emphasized by the participant.

Table 4.25

Participant Four Referenced Key Terms



Participant Five gave the following responses for the interview questions.

	Participant Five's Responses
Question 1	The survey results can give information about how students are feeling and the needs on your campus and which direction the PLUS leadership can go. It can also help the site leadership know which direction they need to go in. The results will be used to identify needs and the implementation of programs to address the needs.
Question 2	Allowing them to take more leadership roles, being more visible, and having more forums. They can also adopt a class, lead conflict resolution, and find different ways to do lessons with students. Having positive interactions.
Question 3	Yes, mentoring from adults to students and peer-to-peer, both same age and younger, have an impact. It helps to create a culture, especially on a K-8 campus, with more opportunities to help younger students. Our K-8 schools provide a unique opportunity that a regular middle school cannot do so easily.
Question 4	Our leadership students conduct forums, reinforcing our PBIS model and establishing a positive culture on campus. They model good behavior to the younger students and are having a strong impact. The

younger students are mimicking the positive behavior, which is better than mimicking negative behavior.

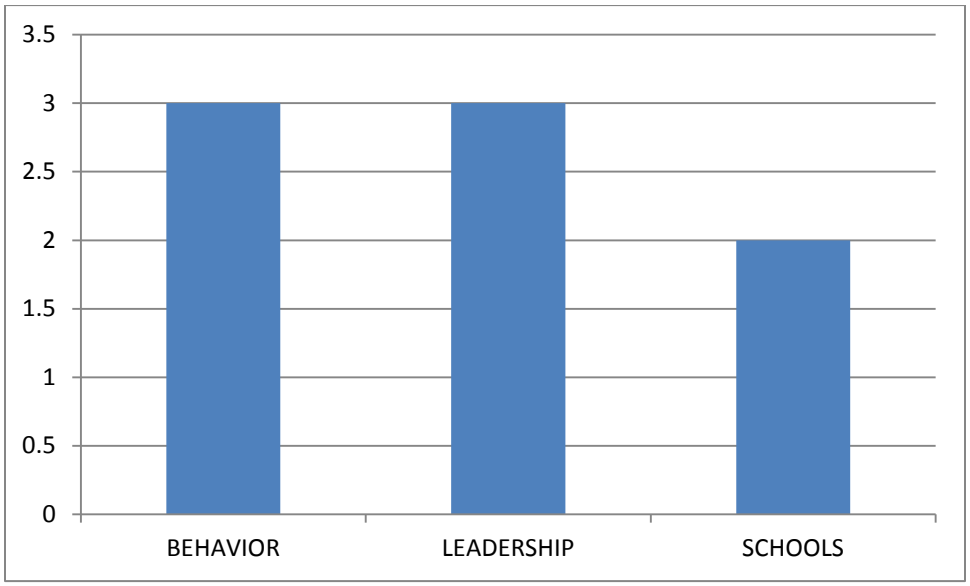
Question 5 — It goes back to the culture, making a place where kids want to be. You really are establishing the expectation that is clear. The culture of the school is very important. If students do not feel like they are being bullied and that their teachers care about them, they are going to learn. Also, if they have a peer that they can connect with, this can help prevent frustration.

Question 6 — I think I kind of answered it in a previous question. They do peer mentoring through the forums. They can be adopting kids, always doing our best to create positive behavior. We also have AVID and STEM programs/classes that are also impacting our school culture, but the PLUS Program has helped enhance the culture on campus.

In the above responses, Participant Five used the keywords "behavior," "leadership," and "schools" frequently (Table 4.26). The participant also referenced the importance of using PLUS survey data to help direct the school and its PLUS Program. The results should also be shared with school administration to assist them with corrective steps, activities, and strategies.

Table 4.26

Participant Five Referenced Key Terms



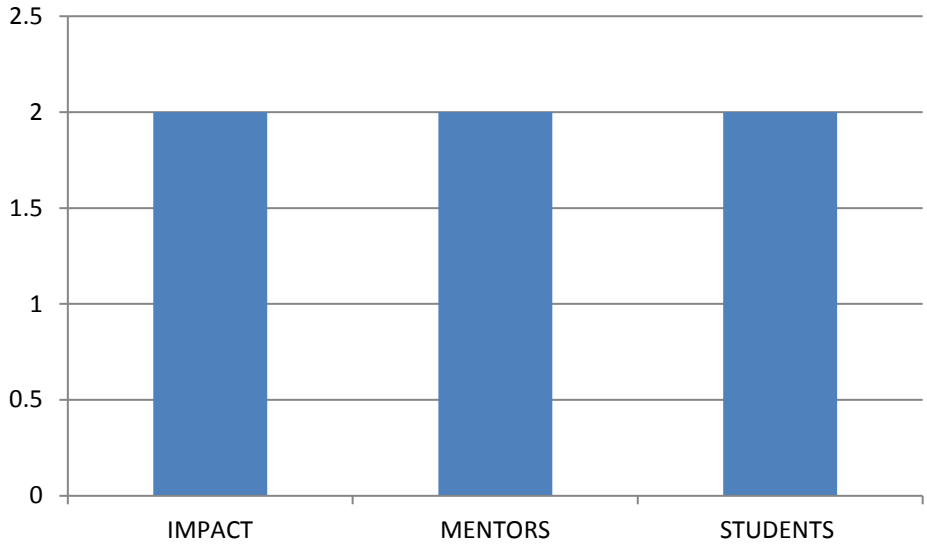
Participant Six gave the following responses for the interview questions.

	Participant Six's Responses
Question 1	Definitely. How do we not know what's going on in our schools? We know what we want the results to be, but what about the students? We want to know what the students are thinking; their feedback is so important to us. This information will help us calibrate all of our action plans. We will use all of the information to implement programs to address the morale and climate on campus. It is not a top down; it is also decisions that are made schoolwide, involving everyone on campus.
Question 2	Number one: on our campus, we have a PLUS class. This class is being guided through the teacher, empowering them to go outside of the classroom and spread the class goals. It can be done through a rally, assembly, or off-campus activity.
Question 3	Yes, definitely—it is very important. We do need student mentors. We cannot just rely on adults; students know students better than adults in some cases. It also builds their leadership skills, helping with their future careers.
Question 4	It has been a great impact on our campus. We see changes in attitude becoming major contributors to a positive climate. When adults are not around, PLUS students have a positive influence on other students. Also, with the identification of who the PLUS students are, this has enhanced the mentoring piece. The program has also had a major impact on the troubled student, making them a new person.
Question 5	So far, the data from the surveys has helped the culture and climate, but we still do not have solid information regarding engagement at our school. This is one of our areas that we need to enhance and continue to work and build. We need to promote a climate of engagement. We want to make sure that we can see more questions regarding instruction and the PLUS Program.
Question 6	Quite a bit on our campus. We see it in other clubs, in sports, so I do not know if I can contribute it directly to PLUS, but you could see the common behaviors that are similar to PLUS.

The following provides the percentage breakdown for the responses from Participant 6 (Table 4.27):

Table 4.27

Participant Six Referenced Key Terms



Participant Seven gave the following responses for the interview questions.

	Participant Seven's Responses
Question 1	There are a lot of students with different types of personalities, so it is important to find what they have in common. The survey addresses some of their emotional concerns or things that they feel will provide more fun and connection to school and their future goals. The PLUS brings kids together, inviting students who normally would not feel connected to school. This also transfers into their way of life. I love this program.
Question 2	This is a bit tricky. The kids who are already very active and positive can help, but more importantly, we want to target the students who are not connected. So, bringing students who are disconnected can also have a major impact, especially because they can connect with students who are alone, depressed, or not interacting. What I noticed

	in schools is that teachers only go towards the students who want to be leaders—not tapping into the students who do not normally. In order to promote, it will take time, but they have to gather the students who need it, not only the students who do not need extra support.
Question 3	The PLUS Program has helped students have more pride, making them feel better about themselves. Mentoring is good for everything you do in this world. Having someone there to encourage you, help you when you are struggling, or be like your cheerleaders is wonderful.
Question 4	In the schools that I have been at—for example, Franklin—it was wonderful with activities during lunch, etc. At the K-8 School, the PLUS kids would help with homework; they had a buddy system and continued to tutor during class. The 7th and 8th graders felt like adults.
Question 5	The kids who are in PLUS promote, even without knowing it. In classrooms, I have seen PLUS kids interacting and participating more and they don't realize they are doing it. They encourage students to do better and ask for help when they need it. They wear their PLUS t-shirts and the smaller kids will ask what the PLUS Program is.
Question 6	I do not know. I am new to my school; I have only been there for less than three weeks. In my other schools, it has been a great impact. In my other schools, that impact the PLUS Program has promoted the program. 8th grade students go to high school asking if they can continue to be a part of the PLUS Program.

Demographic Information

From 137 adult participants, 120 (88%) were teachers, eight (6%) were administrators, seven (5%) were counselors, one (0.5%) was a PLUS Coordinator, and one (0.5%) was a Campus Security Monitor (Table 4.28).

Table 4.28

Educational Position of Participants

Teacher	Administrator	Counselor	Plus Coordinator	Campus Security Monitor
120 (88%)	8 (6%)	7 (5%)	1 (.05%)	1 (.05%)

n=137

The survey had 138 adult participants; 53 (38%) were males and 85 (62%) were females (Table 4.29).

Table 4.29

Gender of Participants

Male	Female
53 (38%)	85 (62%)

n=138

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness and adult perception of the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program in K-8 schools, assessing school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. This chapter presents a discussion of results, conclusions, and implications, as well as recommendations for further study.

Summary of the Study

The following three research questions steered the design of this study:

1. To what extent does the PLUS Program impact school climate?
2. To what extent does the PLUS Program impact student engagement?
3. What impact did does the PLUS Program promote student mentoring on campus?

Research Question One

Research question one asked, "To what extent does the PLUS Program impact school climate?" The first survey question examined the impact the PLUS Program has on school climate. Of 137 participants, 123 (90%) reported on the survey that they were aware their campus had a PLUS Program. Ten percent stated they were not aware of the program (Table 4.2). This is a strong indicator that the program was visible on campus at the time of the study. However, it is concerning that 10% were not aware of the program. Staff felt strongly about the program, but also hoped they could learn more about how to contribute.

Next, the participants were asked if they knew whether or not the PLUS Program exists on their campuses. From 136 adult participants, 84 (62%) strongly agreed that the PLUS Program exists on their campus, 38 (28%) agreed, one (0%) strongly disagreed, and 13 (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.3). Similar to the previous question, the staff hopes that in

the future they will have more opportunities to participate and acquire more information regarding the program and its benefits.

In an effort to determine if the PLUS survey results are being used on campus, the researcher asked about this process. This question had 138 responses; nine respondents (7%) believed that the PLUS survey results were *frequently* used to drive student morale and climate on campus, 27 (20%) believed they were used *occasionally*, 13 (9%) believed they were *rarely* used, seven (5%) believed they were *never* used, and a surprising 82 (60%) did not know (Table 4.4). It was evident from the survey that, at the time of the study, the staff did not have sufficient knowledge about the PLUS surveys or its impact.

The data analysis indicates that the PLUS Program provides a unique avenue for the climate of a school, impact on student engagement, and student mentoring. Ninety percent of the participants reported that they believe the PLUS Program promotes mentoring in students. One of the participants stated, "Yes, definitely. It is very important; we do need student mentors. We cannot just rely on adults. Students know students better than adults in some cases. It also builds their leadership skills, helping in their future careers."

The survey also provided a common range of 52% to 69% for those who believe the PLUS Program has an impact on a school's climate, but who also know that more can be done. One participant stated the following with regards to school climate: "it has the potential to address student concerns. Some students are not vocal in general, which does not allow opportunity for problems to be addressed. The school needs to put efforts into steering their school climate."

Participants also felt that the PLUS Program has promoted student engagement, but not as much as it potentially could with staff (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.).

The results of the study verify the importance of what Hoy (2008) stated: that school climate is the atmosphere, tone, community, ethos, ideology, or milieu of the school. The district in this study should work to provide a sense of safety, orderliness, and a high degree of satisfaction among all stakeholders (Olweus, Limber, S. & Mihalic, 1999; Zullig, Koopman, Patton & Ubbes, 2010). This is evidenced by the comment "needs to put effort into steering their school climate." It is clear that those who took the survey wanted to see the program continued and to use the information in a way that will build and enhance the program. As one participant commented,

> …this information will help us calibrate all of our action plans. We will use all of the information to implement programs to address the morale and climate on campus. It is not a top down; it is also decisions that are made schoolwide, involving everyone on campus.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked, "To what extent does the PLUS Program impact student engagement?" To measure student engagement, the survey included questions that asked about how PLUS students interact with other students on campus. Other questions asked if the adults believe that the staff supported the program on their campus and see the value of student engagement with both students and adults. The conclusion was clear that individuals surveyed and interviewed see the value of the program, but that there is a need for more exposure about the program to adults. As noted in Chapter Four, 135 participants were asked if they believe that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement. Twenty-one (16%) strongly agreed that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement, 71 (53%) agreed, four (4%) strongly disagreed,

six (4%) disagreed, and 33 (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 4.6). The participants saw the value of student engagement, and they believed it was working on their school campuses.

The interviews yielded differences in opinion related to engagement. One participant stated that,

> So far, the data from the surveys has helped the culture and climate, but we still do not have solid information regarding engagement at our school. This is one of our areas that we need to enhance and continue to work on and build. We need to promote a climate of engagement. We want to make sure that we can see more questions regarding instruction and the PLUS Program.

A colleague shared a different opinion:

> The kids that are in PLUS promote, even without knowing it. In classrooms, I have seen PLUS kids interacting and participating more and they don't realize they are doing it. They encourage students to do better and ask for help when they need it. They wear their PLUS t-shirts and the smaller kids will ask what the PLUS Program is.

The results confirm what Willms (2003) stated: that students who are engaged feel a sense of belonging in school. The district involved in this study seeks to support students in connecting and feeling comfortable at school. As Toshalis (2016) stated, to get behind our students, we need to show them—not merely tell them—that we care (p. 16).

Research Question Three

Research question three was "What impact does the PLUS Program have in promoting student mentoring on campus?" Participants provided high marks in the areas of PLUS students being viewed as mentors; they agreed that PLUS students are strong mentors and are an important component of the program.

After the surveys were completed, six interview questions were developed to continue gathering information. A non-biased individual interviewed seven school counselors and administrators. The following are the interview questions:

1. How could PLUS survey results be used to drive student morale and climate on a school campus?
2. How could we help PLUS students be viewed as strong role models and mentors on a school campus?
3. Do you believe that mentoring is an important component of the PLUS Program? Why or why not?
4. To what extent does the PLUS Program impact your school's climate?
5. To what extent does the PLUS Program impact student engagement on your school campus?
6. To what extent does the PLUS Program promote student mentoring on your school campus?

The interviews provided evidence that using the results from PLUS surveys can be beneficial. When the PLUS survey results are aligned with PBIS through the Multi-Tier System of Support, it adds a layer intervention for staff on campus. Furthermore, sharing the survey results with staff and providing them an opportunity to act upon the information can also enhance efforts and areas that can be addressed from a greater perspective. For example, one participant stated,

> The survey results can give information about how students are feeling and the needs on your campus and which direction the PLUS leadership can go. It can also help the site

leadership know which direction they need to go in. The results will be used to identify needs and the implementation of programs to address the needs.

When faculty are provided the opportunity to address the concerns, they can work collaboratively with the PLUS Program to help correct and mitigate concerns. This could be accomplished by increasing activities during, before, and/or after school. It could also assist with addressing student concerns that relate to classroom/instructional time. One of the interviewees stated something that the researcher thought was powerful:

> What I noticed in schools in that teachers only go towards the students who want to be leaders, not tapping into students that normally do not. In order to promote, it will take time, but they have to gather the students who need it, not only the students that do not need extra support.

This statement reinforces the need for staff to be better informed about the PLUS Program. The program is designed to help all students, especially those that would not normally want to step out of their comfort zone. The researcher will address this endeavor in the professional development to ensure that the staff sees the value of students considering other strategies.

One of the interviewees shared that their school's PLUS team had shared survey results with school administration and staff. PLUS students went into classrooms and shared the results. They also took advantage of visiting the classroom by doing activities with students. The survey results were used to let students know what their schools' strengths were and what needed to be improved.

Most of the interviewees shared a common belief that it is important to know what is going on in their schools. They know what they want the results to be, but what about the students? They want to know what students are thinking. Student feedback is important and can

be used to help calibrate all action plans that are developed from the PLUS survey. They should use all of the information to implement programs to address the morale and climate on campus. It cannot be a top-down philosophy; it must be a schoolwide decision.

The researcher was interested in determining if the PLUS Program makes a positive impact on students, the community, and the adults who interact with students on a day-to-day basis. This interaction can be a simple conversation in the hallway, during passing period, during lunch, or on their way into school. During the study, the researcher interacted with teachers, administrators, counselors, campus security monitors, and PLUS advisors.

Recently, the researcher had an opportunity to meet with John Vandenburgh, PLUS creator, and Jillian Glende, district wide PLUS Coordinator (J. Vandenburgh, Personal Communication, December 13, 2016). The meeting was set up to discuss the development of a professional development for staff members. The goals—taking into account results and input from surveys and interviews—are to better educate staff members and make them collaborative members of the PLUS Program. The researcher concluded that even though the PLUS Program is proving to be effective for students, it could benefit from having well-informed adults, which is contrary to what is currently in place.

In order for the PLUS Program to be successful in addressing school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring, schools need to provide opportunities for students and staff members to work together and build meaningful relationships.

The first element that must be addressed concerns how the PLUS Program can benefit teachers, administrators, and counselors. According to Herrera, Kauh, Cooney, Grossman, and McMaken (2008), there is sufficient evidence and benefits that reinforce positive outcomes for students and faculty when school-based mentoring programs are implemented. The research also

concluded that there is a potential for an increase in academic performance, with significant improvements in science and written and oral language in particular. There is also a reduction in school suspensions, expulsions, fights, and disciplinary referrals. The research also indicates that youth participating in school-based mentoring programs are more likely than non-mentored peers to have a non-parental adult whom "they look up to and talk to about personal problems, who cares about what happens to them and influences the choices they make" (Herrera, Kauh, Cooney, Grossman, & McMaken, 2008).

It is essential to provide the preceding information to school staffs so they can judge the effectiveness of the PLUS Program for themselves. For this reason, the researcher has created a professional development session to provide additional support. The complete presentation for the proposed development is in Appendix B.

Another idea that came from the surveys and interviews concerned the potential that cross-age mentoring could have for a school. There were several suggestions regarding a buddy system to address the cross-age mentoring aspect of the PLUS Program. Cross-age peer mentoring programs are a popular choice for educators looking for ways to enhance youth development that creates positive outcomes for students (Garringer & MacRae, 2008).

The PLUS Program provides opportunities for older students to work with and mentor younger children in a more organized environment. This can benefit schools in several ways (Garringer & MacRae, 2008), most immediately by increasing learning opportunities for mentors and mentees. This aspect is garnering the attention of schools and districts working diligently to support students, especially those districts with limited financial and community resources. The mentoring piece can be extended into the classroom, providing teachers with another opportunity to connect with student mentors and better enable cross-age mentoring during instructional time.

The professional development will also discuss different components in the PLUS Program as it relates to the recruitment of mentors. The PLUS Program requires fewer resources for recruiting mentors than most other organizations. It recruits from student populations within participating schools, which makes it easier to fill PLUS mentoring spots. Since the PLUS Program will be based at the schools themselves, it will require fewer financial resources for recruiting staff or using the facilities.

Staff concerns were also discussed during the interview portion of the research. In the district where this research was conducted, they use the professional learning community (PLC) model to address academic, attendance, and disciplinary concerns. It will be imperative to add PLUS survey results to review and identify areas in need of improvement and to discuss activities that staff can participate in.

A professional learning community (PLC) is a collaborative group of educators that meets on a regular basis. They share ideas and work diligently to improve pedagogical instruction, student performance, and to review attendance and discipline (Dufour, 2004). The PLC model could be one way to review PLUS survey data and address any concerns that staff members might have. Historically, the PLC model was designed to focus on the academic piece, but it can also expand into different areas of data.

Data from the PLUS student survey has the potential to alter how staff members view students, making them more than just their wards to imprint knowledge upon. For example, one of the questions on the student survey asks how closely connected the students feel to the faculty. I have seen cases where 10% of the students responded that they do not feel connected. If their schools' staff knew that, they could work together to provide more opportunities for students to form closer connections with them. This could be accomplished through activities such as

students-versus-faculty baseball/softball games, classroom lectures that allow students to lead the discussions, and visiting various community sites. Teachers could also have lunch with the students or join them for recess. It is important for staff members to leave the comfort of their classrooms or offices and interact with the students in their element.

PLUS data can also be shared with staff members during department meetings, staff meetings, and grade level meetings. Many schools have already designated these times to discuss academics, attendance, discipline, and PLUS survey data. It will be vital to provide a professional development that teaches staff how to view data, identify areas of need, develop an action plan with a timeline, and have a progressive monitoring model in place.

For data to be used effectively, it will be essential for the school's principal, his administration, school counselor/s, overall school staff, PLUS students, and PLUS advisors to collaborate and lead the conversation. There are important components that the PLUS Program can help assist by using the regularly administered surveys' results to identify what is working and what is not on a school campus. For the process to not be compromised, it is important that all communication is provided adequately and distortion-free, traveling directly to and from staff and students. The data must be used in a manner that allows schools to be innovative, inventive, diverse, creative, and bold. Staff must have autonomy that allows them to maintain principles and objectives regardless of or in conjunction with external demands. They must be able to solve problems in an effortless and efficient manner. These steps can increase the likelihood that issues will be successfully resolved and lead to a problem-solving model to be maintained and/or strengthened.

Every six to eight weeks, students in classrooms go online and take the PLUS survey. The results of the survey are used to develop goals and activities to address the culture, climate,

and any concerns on campus. The results are currently reviewed by the PLUS team and their PLUS advisor.

However, the researcher concluded that results from the survey were rarely shared with the school's staff. Unless the school administration asks to see the results, they do not review the data either. Moving forward, the researcher's recommendation would be to include the staff in the survey process. Another strategy would include the opportunity for adults to participate in PLUS forums with the students so they could help add questions to the survey and recommend goals to collaborate on with them.

The first step in assisting a school with this endeavor is encouraging the school to evaluate their current PLUS Program, identifying such things as what the school has done with the PLUS Program, what they are currently doing, and how the school can be further supported.

Next, the school will be able to use other data to help address the climate and culture on campus. They can use school discipline data to look for trends; they can also use attendance data to identify particular reasons for high absenteeism. Reviewing this data with staff can help develop questions that can be added to the PLUS survey to see if there are any activities that can be used to address these areas of concern. For example, the data could show that students do not feel connected to the staff and that they believe that teachers act too quickly to kick them out of class. Being aware of this can help the staff make the necessary adjustments to resolve these problems.

It will also be necessary to develop a plan with goals and a correlating timeline with progressive monitoring.

Implications

The survey and interviews brought some concerns to light. It was cited that PLUS surveys are conducted regularly, but that results are not being shared with the faculty. If the staff had the opportunity to view results, it could increase the school's climate, student engagement, and mentoring on campus because staff members would be able to contribute and have direct impact on the efforts of the program. Many participants stated that they rarely saw results—if ever—or did not know about the surveys. Participants also shared that they do see PLUS students mentoring and engaging with other students on campus, such as during rallies and lunchtime activities, but that they do not know when or how often these activities are held. It was determined that adults were collaborating with students to identify issues on a limited basis, but often not long enough to solve them.

Afterwards, the researcher concluded that there was a big gap between student and staff involvement in the PLUS surveys and forums. This gap would require a professional development to encourage adult participation in the PLUS Program.

Through this examination, the researcher has concluded that it is essential to have adults interact with PLUS survey results. When adults are exposed to the results, they become part of the solution, rather than passive observers. This component has the potential to greatly benefit a school's environment, helping the climate, culture, and mentoring process—all elements integrated in the PLUS Program. For staff to participate with this endeavor, professional development will be necessary.

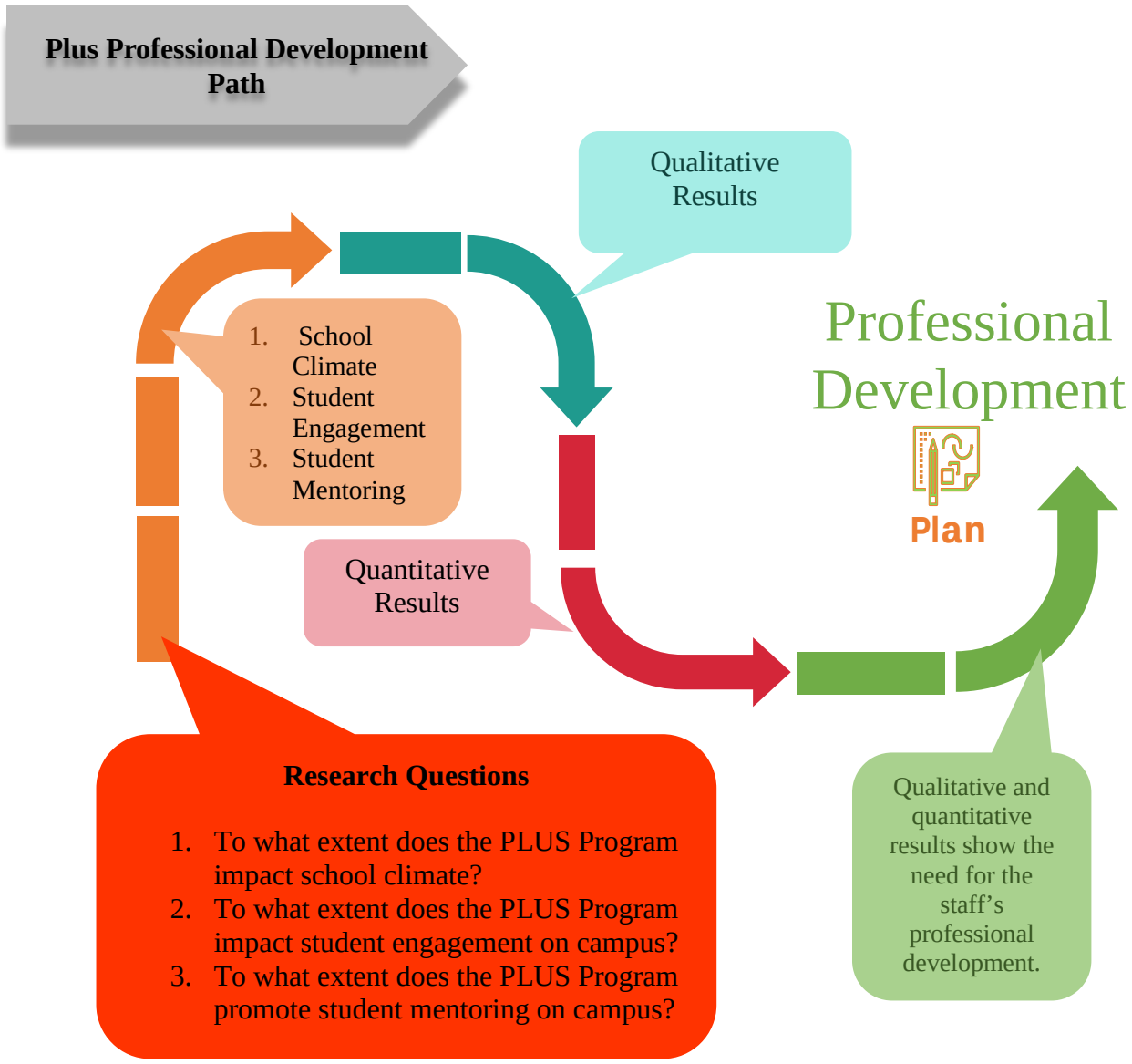


Figure 9. Plus Program: The Impact on School Climate, Student Engagement, and Student Mentoring

The professional development will be provided via a PowerPoint presentation that the researcher has developed collaboratively with a district PLUS coordinator. The material could be presented during a staff meeting, during regularly scheduled planning time, during a grade

level meeting, or during professional learning community (PLC) time if the school or district decides to collaborate.

There are several components covered in the researcher's presentation. The objectives are to answer questions related to the PLUS Program, to provide opportunities to explain the rules and expectations of the program, and to allow for participants to join in a forum, review data, and develop solutions to problems.

The goal is to move away from the staff having only partial knowledge of PLUS, to using PLUS as a tool to change their school in a positive manner. Staff will learn about the many components of the peer-to-peer model, such as students working collaboratively to develop a safe school, which could make more progress if the faculty becomes more involved. In this program, students take responsibility and ownership, which should be a shared vision. When students feel connected, they are less likely to participate in risky behavior. There is a simple formula for success in all this: connected students + safe schools + student engagement = success for a school.

Another important component that will be provided in the PowerPoint (Appendix B: PLUS Professional Development PowerPoint) is the connection the PLUS Program has with the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The MTSS was previously known as Response to Intervention (RTI), which was a system designed to better assist students who were receiving special education services. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a model that has direct and consistent relationship with the MTSS model and its core principles. It offers a variety of interventions that can be systemically applied to assist schools with the development of behavior problems (MTSS, 2016). RTI was so successful that, once it changed to MTSS, it was extended into the general education area. MTSS is a system that provides high-quality

instruction with interventions that will assist students as necessary. It includes frequent monitoring to make adjustments in case progress is not made. It will also allow for changes in the student's instruction or goals (PBIS, 2016).

There are similarities between MTSS and PLUS. They both have a leadership component, along with an identified team. The model is successful when it has support and consensus, good communication, and ongoing professional development. It must also have a culture that empowers individuals to work collaboratively to help students and their schools. It must also include initial training, support with the implementation, monitoring with fidelity, and ongoing support. All of these components need the full support of the faculty—and parents as often as possible—to ensure that the communication is ongoing and informative.

The professional development will begin by identifying the 5 Ws of the PLUS Program. Who: We are the PLUS Team. PLUS stands for "Peer Leaders Uniting Students." What: We come together to have fun through activities that create conversation. Where: Schools have a PLUS team that leads forums on their campuses. When: We do these forums once a month at our school. Why: Each one of us brings a separate story to the table; hopefully today, we can develop an understanding and respect for each other's stories.

There will also be emphasis placed on the different tiers that provide strategies and activities. In tier one, there are areas that provide schoolwide activities, such as PLUS student-led forums, assemblies, new student orientations, student data, etc. It will also highlight monthly themes and activities, including community services, colleges and careers, unity, and student voice: "What do we stand for?" Tier two dives into peer-to-peer mentoring, conflict mediation, academic goal-setting, restorative practices, tutoring support, attendance monitoring, wellness centers, and referrals to other resources.

Staff members will also go through the process that PLUS students and advisors go through when data is collected from the surveys. At the beginning of the presentation, all staff members will take a sample survey. After the survey is finished, the results will be used to identify key issues to be discussed and prioritized. These steps will be followed with activities that focus on culture, bonding, unity, and climate. It is paramount that all staff members play an essential role with the activities that are selected during the prioritization of goals. These are activities that will easily extend into the classrooms.

Another great activity that will be included is called "Back in the Day." This will be an opportunity for students to break the ice with their colleagues and to make new friends. For this activity, PLUS students and faculty will all stand and introduce themselves and then answer one of the following questions:

1. Back in the day, what was your favorite cartoon?
2. Back in the day, what was your favorite recess activity?

The goal is to see how many folks have a "me too" moment when they share something that is common. This activity is important because it will provide staff and students the opportunity to learn something new about someone from a different generation. Also, these moments build trust, which allows them to build connections with each other.

Finally, the staff and participating PLUS students will analyze the current PLUS survey data and discuss what they can do about the issues at school. The top three issues will be selected, and solutions will be developed collaboratively.

This PowerPoint was created because the surveys and interviews concluded that adults knew about the PLUS Program, but lacked essential knowledge about the student survey and, by extension, the collaboration opportunities to address the problems on campus. Staff members

have expressed positive reception towards the PLUS Program and also desire to better understand how it works so they can help make it more successful.

In recent years, districts have started using the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) as their model to increase student achievement and engagement and to address behavior, climate, mentoring, engagement, discipline, etc. This model is also designed to work with teachers, students, and parents at a lower level, getting ahead of problems before they escalate in severity. MTSS is a framework that can provide behavioral and academic support for students (Levy, 2016). This makes the PLUS Program an ideal partner with this system where students and staff members work collaboratively to address issues on small and large scales. The professional development will provide the opportunity for staff to see how it is embedded in tiers one and two. Tier one has areas that will assist with schoolwide activities, inspire monthly themes, and provide opportunities for youth leadership training (Figure 10). Drawing from experience, the researcher developed the concepts in the visual provided in Figure 10. It is suggested that schoolwide activities include student-led forums, assemblies, family days, classroom presentations, teacher in-services, and/or community service. Monthly themes with activities can be created to benefit the school's website. These may include "See Something, Say Something—Kids Taking Care of Kids," college and career awareness, acts of kindness, unity, and "#schooleveryday." Additionally, in tier one, there will be youth leadership training programs that include PLUS Summits, wellness conferences, leadership development activities, Friday Night Live and Club Live, and/or staff development. It is suggested that the staff development includes students and adults training together.

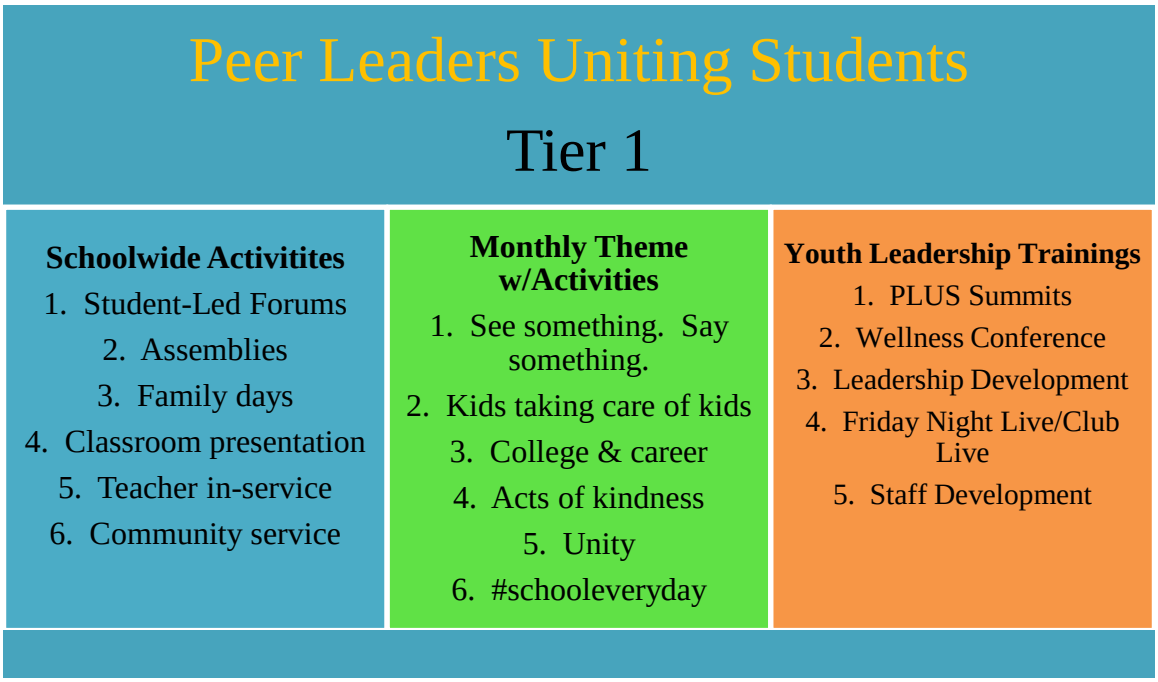


Figure 10. Peer Leaders Uniting Students Tier 1

Tier two dives deeper and allows for analysis of peer-to-peer mentoring, conflict resolution and restorative practices, academic goal setting, etc. The MTSS model veers away from the traditional service model and moves into a level of support that has instructional and flexible support for students. From an academic perspective, this model allows for matching opportunities to complement the needs that students have. As seen in Figure 11, this can include more intensive support with resources specific to individual students (Levy, 2016).

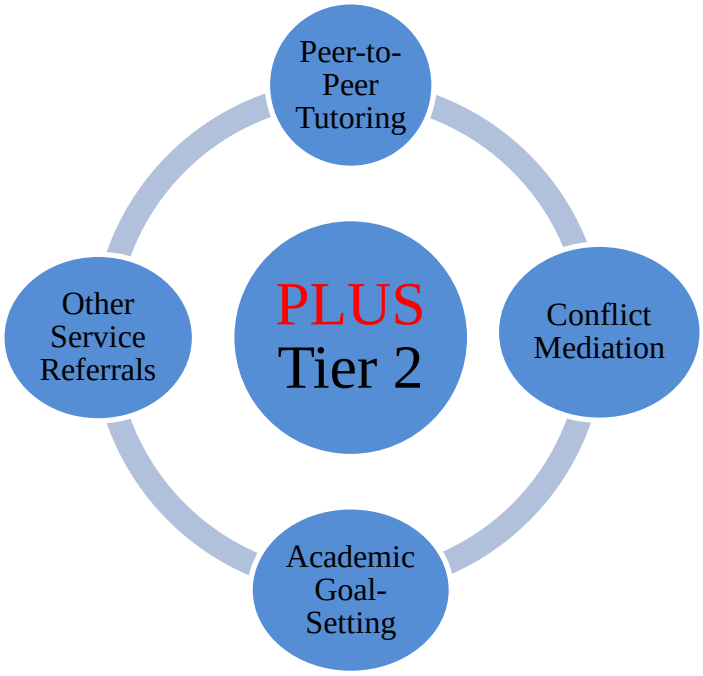


Figure 11. PLUS Tier 2

The Benefits of the PLUS Program in the Classroom

The researcher concluded that the PLUS Program has many beneficial strategies to implement into the classroom. Many of the respondents believed that, by being more informed of the survey results, they can take the necessary steps with their students to make a positive difference. For example, college and career preparedness is an important subject in high schools and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). There could be a question on the PLUS survey related to students' knowledge about college and career readiness. Once the responses are accrued, the school can determine if this is a topic deserving of further discussion. Other topics to consider may be bullying, student engagement, the overall culture of the school, etc.

Recommendations for Further Study

The researcher was contacted by a high school to share his survey results with their staff via a presentation. This presentation was used to provide professional development related to the PLUS Program. Next, the researcher reached out to the PLUS advisor and asked if the survey results and complementary PowerPoint were effective. The advisor said that the data was useful and very well received by staff.

The researcher will provide his survey results and professional development PowerPoint to the district where the study was conducted. The goal is to use the presentation to provide professional development, assist schools with the benefits of training adults with the PLUS Program, and to enhance the school's climate, culture, and mentoring systems. Further research is recommended to determine if there is growth after the professional development. Next year, after more schools have received the researcher's training, he will provide his survey again to see if adult involvement has improved.

The researcher will also present his survey results and professional development plan during the next Safe Schools Summit in July.

Conclusion

Overall, this study has found that the PLUS Program is an immense benefit to a school's climate, student engagement, and mentoring systems. Today's schools have greater tasks and responsibilities than they used to, and with higher demands on them and their students—such as being expected to increase curriculum rigor to meet the Common Core State Standards Initiative, continuous technological changes, and having students college- and career-ready—it would be horribly detrimental to leave PLUS as just another forgotten item on their to-do lists. It needs to be presented as a collaborative model that will benefit students, teachers, staff members, the community, and their schools.

Summary

The study was conducted to determine the effectiveness and adult awareness of the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program in K-8 and high schools by assessing school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring. A survey and subsequent interviews were used to analyze how well adults understood this movement. The results concluded that, even though the program has been remarkably beneficial for students, it was missing the adult component. Adults knew about the program, but they had limited knowledge of its process and benefits. It was evident that staff needed to play a bigger role with the program and that schools needed to do a better job arranging their staff members' involvement.

As schools continue to work towards a model that enhances the way students feel about their educations, the PLUS Program has the potential to liven the process. More importantly, the findings highlight the importance of adult contributions to the PLUS Program to make it more effective. Through professional development for staff members, schools will continue to improve in terms of climate, student engagement, and student mentoring.

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APPENDIX A

PLUS Survey

The Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program measures the impact on school climate, student engagement, and student mentoring.

The following information will be used to describe characteristics of the PLUS Program in a summary form. The information provided is confidential. **PLEASE ANSWER ALL ITEMS.**

Factor #1: Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program—Impact on School Climate

Question	Response
Are you aware of the PLUS Program?	Yes No
Do you know if the PLUS Program exists on your campus?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
How often are PLUS survey results being used to drive student morale and climate on campus?	Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never I do not know
Have you noticed the impact the PLUS Program has had as it relates to school climate?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Do you feel that the PLUS Program improves school climate?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

Factor #2: Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program—Impact on Student Engagement

Question	Response
Do you believe that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
How often do you see PLUS students engaging other students on campus, such as during a rally or lunchtime activity?	Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never I do not know
Do you feel that it is important for teachers and students to interact with PLUS students?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Do you believe that staff members (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) support the PLUS Program?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Do you believe that the PLUS Program promotes student engagement on campus?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

Factor #3: Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Program—Impact on Student Mentoring

Question	Response
Do you believe that the PLUS Program promotes mentoring among students?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Do you view PLUS students as strong role models and mentors?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Do you believe that mentoring is an important component of the PLUS Program?	Not important I do not know Very important

Do you believe that it is important for parents, students, teachers, counselors, and administrators to understand the significance of having the PLUS Program on campus?	Strongly agree Agree Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Do you believe that the PLUS Program promotes student mentoring on campus?	Teacher Parents Students Administrators All of the above I do not know

Demographic Information

Question	Response
Please indicate your position.	Teacher Administrator Counselor PLUS Coordinator Other_____ (Please Specify)
Please indicate your gender.	Female Male

APPENDIX B

PLUS Professional Development PowerPoint

These are copies of the exact slides from the professional development.

How should we use PLUS data?

Moving from "Just knowing about PLUS" to Using PLUS to change a School!

PLUS
PEERLEADERSUNITINGSTUDENTS

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop you should be prepared to:

1. Answers questions related to the PLUS program.
2. You will know the rules and Expectations for the PLUS program and forums.
3. You will participate in a forum, review data, and develop solutions to concerns.

PLUS is a Peer-to-Peer student leadership model

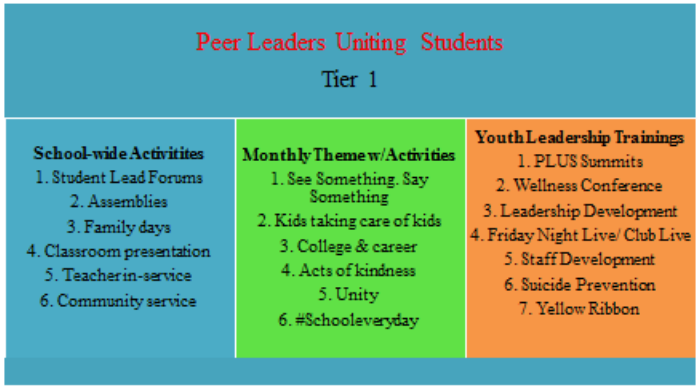
Students work collaboratively to develop safe schools.

In this program students take ownership and help connect peers to their campus.

When students feel connected, they are less likely to participate in risky behavior.

Connected Students + Safe School + Student Engagement = Success

PLUS supports MTSS: Multi Tiered Systems of Support



MTSS – Tier 2

PLUS Process

- Survey: Identifies Needs
- Forum: Discusses Needs
- Student Activities: School Spirit/Bonding/uniting, Lunch time inclusion activities.
- Extends into the classroom with assistance from teachers and staff members.
- Cross age Mentoring

School Climate

- Climate refers to the emotional atmosphere we generate around us; some people refer to climate as the "context" of school.
- Climate involves the perception of stakeholders concerning the fairness, openness, friendliness, the ethos of caring, and sense of welcome of the school.
- Climate includes the level of orderliness of the school and the degree of satisfaction experienced within its organization.

Olweus, D., Limber, S. & Mihalic, S.F. (1999). Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

School Culture

- A way of organizing and running a school. It begins with shared norms, beliefs, values, and goals and results in agreed upon processes and procedures that produce consistency in practice.
- A single school culture results in consistency of both adult and student practices related to:
  - Behavior
  - Achievement
  - Climate

PLUS Survey Data

1. Data Review, build action plan, providing an eight week cycle.
2. Provides the opportunity to Identify indicators and data gathered procedures to contribute to assessment and ongoing evaluation.
3. Surveys give the pulse of the campus and/or classroom.
4. Monitoring is important.

PLUS and the Steps

The next slides will take us through a mini PLUS forum

The 5 Ws of PLUS

Who: We are the PLUS Team. PLUS stands for Peer Leaders Uniting Students.

What: We come together to have fun through activities that create conversation.

Where: Schools have a PLUS team who leads forums at their schools.

When: We do these Forums once a month at our school

Why: Each one of us brings a separate story to the table, hopefully today we can develop an understanding for each other's stories and maybe respect for each other will develop.

(2 Minutes)

Rules & Expectations

As we engage in the forum today there are a few ground rules we need to be aware of:

#1 – There is to be no side-talking in here. With so many people in one room at one time it will be hard to hear across the room. If we are all side-talking to one and another we might miss someone saying something that is important. We are hear to listen to each other today.

#2 – We will get your attention throughout the day by a strategy we use called – Clap Once, Clap Twice. When you hear a Peer Leader state "clap once, clap twice", you clap with them once and then twice. After the 2nd clap that means we need to be quiet and there is to be no talking. Let's try...Peer Leaders Clap Once.....Clap Twice.

#3 - Honesty. We need to be honest today. Make sure that any conversations and thoughts that are brought out today are true and honest.

Rules & Expectations

#4 – In being Honest with each other we also need to be respectful. Respect the comments and thoughts of each of us in here. You may not like what you hear from some people, but we must try to understand what experiences that person has had in their life to make them say that.

#5 – There will not be any physical or verbal violence. Verbal violence means no foul language, put downs or arguments. Were not here to make anybody feel less of a person, we are here to listen to each other. If you do get emotional over some topics and your emotions get angry, please get up and go talk to an advisor or a PLUS team member.

#6 – Everybody needs to keep an open mind today. We need to try to develop an understanding for each other. If we go into this forum without trying to understand each other and the issues at hand, we are going to get nowhere.

Any Questions?

Back in the Day

1. Stand up & Introduce Yourself
2. Tell us something you enjoyed back in the day.

Example:

What was your favorite cartoon back in the day?

OR

What was your favorite recess activity back in the day?

Back in the Day (Reflection)

- How many of you had a "me too" moment when you shared something in common?
- Why is this activity important?
  - We learned something new about someone else
  - "Me too" moments build trust- and trust allows us to build deeper connections with others

Survey Results

APPLICATION: pg. 37 (book 2)

Survey Results

When you walked in, you were handed a sample survey. We are now going to review a few of the results.

- 1. (reflection)
- 2. (reflection)
- 3. (reflection)

- What do you think about these results? Are they positive? Or negative? Can we do anything about these?

NEXT: We are going to get into small groups. Your leader will lead you through these concerns and you will brainstorm solutions to these concerns.

  - PLUS Leader (Select a staff member to lead) please go to your groups
  - Participants please look for your assigned group.

Small Group Activity

1. Identify the top issues from the survey to talk about in your group
2. Write these issues on separate bags
3. Each participant will have scratch paper and a pencil
4. Participants are to answer the question: "how does the issue impact you or our campus?"
5. Participants put their comments into the appropriate bags anonymously (NO NAMES)
6. Staff leader picks which topic to address and reads all comments in the bag before discussion begins
7. Discussion takes on two strands
   - *What were some of the comments in the bag that you would like to discuss?*
   - *What can we do about this issue on our campus and in our community?*

Small Group Activity

Discussion: What can we do about this issue at our school?

Issues	Solution for the issue
1.	
2.	
3.	

1. Student led solutions for student issues
2. Adult led solutions for adult issues

Large Group Share-out

- Top Concern/s
- Why is it important?
- Solution/s

Commitment

Will you commit to working collaboratively with students on the solutions we came up with today?

Questions

APPENDIX C

National Institute of Health (NIH) Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Reyes Gauna** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/04/2016.

Certification Number: 2048695.

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval

On Jun 09, 2016 @ 10:40 am Michael Schulteis wrote:
Ticket closed: Approved
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IRVINE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROTOCOL REVIEW
IRB Protocol Number: 2725
IRB Approval Date: 5/19/2016
Reyes Gauna,
Congratulations! Your research proposal has been approved by Concordia University-Irvine's IRB. Work on the thesis research indicated within the initial e-mail may begin. This approval is for a period of one year from the date of this e-mail correspondence and will require continuation approval if the research project extends beyond a year.
If you make significant changes to the protocol during the approval period, you must submit a revised proposal to CUI's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please write your IRB protocol # and "EDD IRB Application Addendum" in the subject line of any future correspondence.
If you have any questions regarding the IRB's decision, please contact me by replying to this e-mail or by phone at 949-214-3351.
Kind Regards,
Michael W. Schulteis, Sc.Ed.D.
EDD IRB Reviewer

On Jun 09, 2016 @ 10:40 am your ticket was marked as closed,

This means your request was considered resolved. If it has not beeen resolved to your satisfaction, simply reply to this message to automatically reopen your ticket.

Please do not reply to this email unless your issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction. Any reply to this message will automatically reopen your ticket.