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THE IMPACT OF AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING ON ELEMENTARY STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT: A PROGRAM EVALUATION

Robert S. Tomic

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirement of

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

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

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

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

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

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

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this program evaluation is to evaluate an after-school elementary tutoring program to determine the impact it has on student achievement. The study is a mixed-method approach with both quantitative and qualitative data that include the following: teacher surveys, teacher interviews, pre- and post-student achievement data, student attendance, and a reflective journal based off observations. Findings and recommendations for tutoring programs include the following: establish a skill focus in math or reading to help remediate core skills, group students in each grade level according to skill deficiencies, conduct pre- and post-assessment to confirm growth and or additional supports, and institute a consistent weekly schedule along with monitoring attendance. Additional findings included the positive rapport building that occurred between staff and students during the tutoring sessions and the need for a weekly after-school homework club to offer a support system that might not be available at home. Selecting staff that have a high level of expertise in the specific subject (i.e., English Language Arts or Math) for tutoring would benefit all stakeholders, as would providing a time and place for teachers to collaborate on best practices.

PREFACE: LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED

The program evaluation process should be a continual cycle for all educational leaders. We need accountability for all our programs and should seek to improve them on an annual basis. This evaluation process should always involve, at least in some capacity, collaboration with staff who are involved with the program. Their feedback and ideas are invaluable in assisting in the improvement process. This becomes even more important when program accountability and cost-cutting measures are at an all-time high for many school districts across the state of Illinois. A tutoring program at the intermediate elementary level is an excellent example of a program that is an additional cost to a district, and as such requires justification. Additionally, when federal Title I money is being used to support the program, there has to be a system of checks and balances to ensure both that the students who qualify for extra supports are receiving them and that the service provided reflects the need. Accomplishing both these goals is a prerequisite for making sure a service is appropriate and effective.

Evaluating an after-school tutoring program requires a big-picture perspective on the entire instructional program in a building. For example, the after-school program should not be supplementing something that should be occurring during the day, such as differentiated instruction or curriculum coverage. The tutoring program should be an additional support for students who need skill remediation after receiving the best service possible during the school day. Another perspective that needs to be highlighted involves the differences between working with staff during the day and working with staff after school hours. The after-school program is not during contracted teacher hours. Teachers are not required to tutor after school, so there is a recruiting process needed.

Time and compensation are key elements in this process. The teachers who volunteer to be part of the tutoring program are typically very committed and bring another level of investment. One of the first challenges in establishing an excellent program can be simply ensuring that there are enough instructors to conduct it.

Some of the essential components for an effective tutoring program are pre- and post-assessments to gauge a student's growth. This guides the instructor and places a focus on the student's deficiency. Implementing a consistent weekly schedule for tutoring and ensuring a high attendance rate are both critical pieces that need to be established. The instructor teaching the specific subject must be highly qualified and possess superior acumen, especially in regard to differentiation and remediation strategies. Additionally, weekly homework help can prove beneficial for students that might not have the support needed at home.

The other element that I was not aware of was the rapport building that occurred during tutoring. With small instructor-to-student ratios, the instructors had the opportunity to build excellent relationships with the students. As a result, the level of investment and on-task engagement by the student was extremely high and quite different than during the school day. This would also positively impact the students' confidence levels as they began to improve their skills and were given a "vote of confidence" by the teacher. This is the qualitative data component that I never anticipated but became very aware of when observing the tutoring sessions.

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate an after school-tutoring program and assess its impact on student achievement. The program takes place at Yorktown Elementary School, located in south suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. The school serves grades four through six and is part of Yorktown School District. I have been building principal of Yorktown Elementary for the past seven years. Since 2008, there have been various academic intervention programs instituted at Yorktown School to help underperforming students.

The focus for the after-school tutoring program is to help students with reading and math deficiencies. The need for remediation was based on data analysis that identified students not making yearly benchmark assessment goals as monitored throughout the school year in the following assessments: Illinois Standard Achievement Test, AIMSweb, and Terra Nova. An additional group of students identified for after-school tutoring are those with individual educational plans (IEPs). During grade-level team meetings at the beginning of the school year, the administration and the teachers would discuss the guidelines for after-school tutoring that included the following: student selection, curriculum focus, and overall expectations of the program. A copy of the Yorktown School tutoring guidelines is attached as Appendix A.

Both student selection and student progress for the after-school tutoring program are monitored through two building-wide documents: the “Yorktown Watch List” (created by teachers) and “individual classroom data sheets.” The former includes baseline data points from a number of measurements. First is the AIMSweb program, an

online assessment of reading and math that is taken three times during the school year (in fall, winter, and spring). The reading component assesses fluency and comprehension, while the math section assesses the students in computation and problem solving. Second is the Terra Nova assessment, a nationally norm-referenced exam that is diagnostic in nature. The Terra Nova assessment uses spring scores from the student's previous school year and grade level for baseline data. From this assessment, students are compared nationally and then given specific information on strengths and weaknesses in math and reading skills. The students then completed the Terra Nova assessment in the winter and spring in the current school year to determine growth. Third is the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT), which measures students' knowledge on grade-level math and reading state standards. Like the Terra Nova assessment, the ISAT assessment uses the spring scores from the student's previous school year and grade level for its baseline data. For the 2014–2015 school year, the State of Illinois has adapted a new end-of-year assessment called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). The PARCC assesses the students on the state standards and were administered to the students during two separate occasions. Performance Based Assessment (PBA) was taken in March following 70% of curriculum coverage, and End of Year (EOY) assessment was taken in early May when 90% of curriculum is covered.

Students who score in the warning category in two or more of these assessments at the beginning of the school year are placed on the Yorktown Watch Lists for the duration of the school year. Throughout the year, additional data points are entered during winter and spring benchmarks to determine student growth. Administrators, teachers, and support staff use the Yorktown Watch List as a tool to track progress, along

with students' classroom grades, to recommend programming options. The classroom data sheets include the same data points as the Yorktown Watch List. The only difference is that the sheets include students in a given homeroom classroom, as opposed to all students who have scored in the warning level on the assessments mentioned in the previous paragraph. This classroom document allows teachers to monitor progress being made by all students in their homeroom classrooms.

The curriculum focus for the after-school tutoring program varies from each teacher and grade level. The established tutoring guidelines are discussed at the beginning of the year, and teachers work within those expectations. From this point, it is the teacher's responsibility to select the students for after-school tutoring and then determine the curriculum and instructional focus. The teachers utilize the established tutoring guidelines (Appendix A) to assist in confirming the curricular and instructional focus. Collaborating with other staff and the administration to make decisions and confirm each student's after-school tutoring program is highly encouraged through this process.

The purpose of this program evaluation is to determine the impact that after-school tutoring has on student achievement. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program and confirm its strengths and weaknesses. Those evaluations can drive improvements to help provide better service to students in the tutoring program. This process would also include establishing strong checks and balances through consistent monitoring by school administration and collaboration in planning and instruction by staff.

Rationale

The after-school program has varied over the years, with modifications in assessments, curriculum focus, teacher participation, and how students are monitored and rotated in the program throughout the school year. Each teacher and grade level has initiated specific variations on the program and particular group of students. With all of these variations over the years, it has been difficult to confirm the overall effect and value of the after-school program and determine how to best serve the students. To do so, there needs to be a system set in place that has more focus, structure, and consistency to maximize the benefits for all students and determine what program improvements should be made. The importance of program improvement has become even more critical with the newly adopted Common Core State Standards.

This past year, the State of Illinois and much of the United States went through a significant curriculum transition with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. The former state standards lent particular focus to recall and memory, while the Common Core State Standards focus on key skills and the metacognition process. “The Common Core’s higher standards and emphasis on applying knowledge to real world situations will better prepare Illinois students for the challenges facing them after high school graduation” (“New Illinois,” n.d.). The after-school tutoring program needs to reflect the skill focus and the metacognition process that the Common Core State Standards demand.

Due to current statewide budgetary constraints in Illinois, the need to justify expenditures on all programs is the norm. This study has not only evaluated the current after-school program but has also helped modify and validate the need for it. A service

that helps all students throughout the day and after school is certainly necessary. Having all programs interface with each other via objectives and action plans creates a more coordinated process that enables all students to have their needs met more efficiently. The goal is to provide as much small-group and individual instruction as possible to reach the goal of having all students reach the mastery level.

Goals

The primary goal of evaluating this program is to confirm that after-school tutoring is positively impacting student achievement. Whether the student has math, reading, or specific skill deficiencies, it must be confirmed that the program provides a benefit. Data collected should determine if there is any positive effect on grades, standardized assessments, and skill proficiencies with students participating in this program. Another goal is to ensure the staff understands the expectation placed on them and that there is adequate support to help them fulfill those expectations. Providing teachers with the support they need through training, guidance, and collaboration should provide the best opportunity for them to be successful with their students.

Research Questions

The primary question that drove this study is, “How does the after-school tutoring program impact student achievement?” Addressing this primary question provided a big-picture perspective on the program as a whole. It also uncovered the program’s particular strengths and weaknesses, which dictated what needed to be changed and improved upon.

The secondary questions are as follows:

1. What is the curricular focus during after-school tutoring: time on task or specific skill deficiencies?

2. How is student progress measured in after-school tutoring?
3. What instructional strategies are incorporated?
4. When and how often are the students being tutored on a weekly basis? What is the attendance rate for students and staff?
5. What are the perceptions of the teachers on the purpose and effectiveness of the program?

The secondary questions highlight some of the key elements of the primary question.

These questions served as a sound base for analyzing the after-school program in detail.

SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The research involved in after-school tutoring programs has become a larger point of discussion and analysis in the past 10 to 15 years with the inception of state standards, high-stakes testing, and considerable financial investments by local, state, and federal governments. The focus of this literature review entails several key components of after-school tutoring along with the current evolution of political influences through legislation and financial commitment. The main purpose is to outline key pieces of after-school tutoring programs that have proven pivotal in having a positive impact on student learning.

There are three topics discussed in this literature review. The first topic highlights the critical tangible components of an effective tutoring program. This consists of the following: curriculum focus, measuring growth, instructional strategies, student selection, and attendance and scheduling. The second topic discusses the essential human elements that are important to an after school-tutoring program: the instructor, training, and rapport. The discussion in the third topic centers on the political and financial influences on tutoring and public education in two parts: No Child Left Behind and Title I, and high-stakes testing and adequate yearly progress. Each plays a role in how tutoring has evolved and how certain characteristics have improved over time.

Programmatic Elements of Tutoring

Curriculum Focus

The curricular focus for after-school tutoring programs in the last several decades has been on two core subjects: math and reading. Reading, of course, impacts every subject, while mathematical concepts and skills can be found from an application standpoint in most curriculums. The focus for early elementary education is based on first learning to read and then, beginning in the fourth grade, reading to learn. A goal for a literacy-focused after-school program is the following: “Improve student ability to read and comprehend the school-selected social studies curriculum and textbooks” (Saddler & Staulters, 2008, p. 204).

The focus on state assessments provides an additional reason for math and reading focus during after-school tutoring. Much of the research on tutoring since the inception of No Child Left Behind has focused on reading, mathematics, and state assessments (Ascher & Carol, 2006). High-stakes testing is essentially a reality for all public schools. The focus on after-school tutoring and making annual yearly progress (AYP) has resulted in a “narrowed educational agenda into students’ out of school hours” (Ascher & Carol, 2006, p. 204). There’s certainly an argument for making AYP and high-stakes testing dictate after-school curriculum focus; however, reading and mathematics are two foundational subjects that impact all other core academic subjects. There has definitely been a reading and math focus in the Yorktown Elementary after-school tutoring program. The rationale for this is the following: focusing on skill deficiencies in math and reading leads to a positive impact on students’ grades and the various standardized assessments they are required to complete.

Another focus during after-school tutoring is the emphasis on homework help. The premise of homework focus is more time on task with the specific lesson from a given day or week. Additionally, after-school homework help gives students the support they might not have when they're home. "This type of learning environment allows for students' individual needs and goals to be met as they do their own lessons with the help of the tutor" (Harper & Anglin, 2010, p. 15). There are also hybrid versions that combine two or more of these focuses to create a tutoring program. An example of this is "strategic tutoring," in which students receive assistance on homework as well as skill or academic deficiencies (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumacker, 2001, p. 173). Time would be split between the homework help and skill deficiency focus during the tutoring session.

Measuring Growth

Effectiveness is key for any program. Measuring growth is the way to determine that effectiveness. Measuring growth can be done in a variety of ways and is dependent on subject, focus, duration and repetition of sessions, grade level, and the overall goal of the program. Some examples of measuring growth can stem from informal and formal assessments, summative and performance assessments, and classroom grades.

Sanderson's (2003) research on a Title I program called T.O.A.S.T. (Title One After School Tutorial) utilized both "formal and informal" assessments (p. 4). The informal assessment piece was "teachers observing students' reading behaviors and use of reading strategies" along with "noting changes in students' self-esteem and risk taking in regards to reading (Sanders, 2003, p. 4). Hock et al. (2001) showed that the improvement of grades as a result of "improving quiz and test performance" was directly correlated with

“strategic tutoring” (p. 178). Strategic tutoring emphasizes both homework and skill deficiency assistance (Hock et al., 2001). In a study focusing on mathematics and university students tutoring elementary students, there was a local pre- and post-assessment given to determine baseline data and growth (Baker, Rieg, & Clendaniel, 2006). In another study that focused on homework assistance during after-school tutoring, students’ grades and performance on reading tests were used as some of the elements used to measure the program’s positive impact (Harper & Anglin, 2010).

Student Selection Process

One of the key motivations in the curricular focus for today’s after-school programs is the influence of state testing and making adequate yearly progress (AYP). “Students who scored in the near-passing range on either the language arts or mathematics aspect of a standardized test at the end of seventh grade were recruited to receive tutoring in either language arts or mathematics” (Henderson & Rothman, 2011, p. 1). Another focus and option for students during after-school tutoring is the need for help with their homework. Harper and Anglin (2010) reported that when disadvantaged students received assistance with their homework during after-school tutoring, core academic skills and confidence levels improved. Schools that are designated as Title I buildings need to also provide additional support for students who do not meet requirements for core grade-level skills. The selection process in a program called T.O.A.S.T. (Title One After School Tutorial) gave “struggling readers extra practice and instruction in acquiring literacy skills” (Sanderson, 2003, p. 1). Selecting students can vary depending on daily classroom need, performance on standardized assessments, and services that need to be provided based on state or federal law such as Title I.

Attendance and Scheduling

Regular attendance and adequate scheduling are key ingredients for successful programs. Hock et al. (2001) reported that student achievement can most accurately be measured when there is consistent and regular attendance in an after-school program. “A review of 27 studies of after-school programs demonstrated a relationship between attendance rate and positive student outcomes” (McComb & Scott-Little, 2003). Small groups allow for more individual attention and give the teacher the opportunity to “evaluate a student’s strengths and weaknesses and keep close track of their progress made over time” (Sanderson, 2003, p. 2). Small-group work proves beneficial in many ways and needs to be a primary factor in the organization process of after-school tutoring.

Instructional Strategies

What makes after-school tutoring an ideal teaching environment is the low teacher-student ratio during each session. It opens the possibility of digging deeper with core skills, having a clearer understanding of student needs and deficiencies, and individualizing the focus for each student and small group. Peterson (2005) reinforced the point that after-school tutors have a great opportunity to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of all children. Teacher can focus a range of questions and activities from all levels of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (2009), which consists of four levels of complexity: comprehension, application, strategic thinking, and evaluation. After-school tutoring typically focuses on remediating deficiencies but it can also be a time for enrichment. Additionally, the students have many opportunities to initiate and ask questions, express themselves, and have rich discussions with their teachers.

Another element of instructional focus in after-school tutoring programs is the opportunity for students to practice and demonstrate what they know. This can be done through independent and guided work, student presentations, and the utilization of different learning styles. Another key factor is considering the new Common Core State Standards and the level of complexity when it comes to the types of questions that the students will experience. Students need to be exposed to strategic thinking and authentic questions instead of just memorization and recall. This not only prepares the students for performance-based assessments but also gives them the opportunity to experience and demonstrate their metacognition process.

There must be a connection between what's covered, from a curriculum and skill standpoint, during the school day and what's covered in the after-school tutoring program. There needs to be a level of continuity and consistency to ensure that the curriculum and critical skills are reinforced. Henderson and Rothman (2011) reported "staffing after-school programs with regular school-day teachers is an efficient method to ensure alignment of the after-school curriculum with the school curriculum" (p.2). The focus can differ in situations in which student have specific needs with the instructional strategies that are incorporated. In an after-school program in Texas, Castillo and Winchester (2003) reported that the coordinator needed to have more "creative and fresh lessons" to bolster the attendance and make it more meaningful for the students (p. 70). The after-school tutoring program with small groups of students provides an excellent opportunity to attempt different strategies tailored to specific student needs.

Human Elements of Tutoring

Instructors

Having your own teachers tutor their own students certainly presents an advantage as far as knowledge and rapport are concerned. Fashola (1998) reported that “Content taught during the after-school period must be taught by qualified instructors who are familiar with and can be held accountable for student outcomes” (p.49). Familiarity with your students’ abilities and academic needs would be an obvious advantage during after-school tutoring. Additionally, it is essential that the teacher incorporates “learning activities that are effectively designed and implemented (Catapano & Sherman, 2011, p.4). This is where goals and guidelines should be communicated to staff along with appropriate professional development opportunities.

Tutor Training

“Tutoring training is an essential component of any effective after-school program” (Fashola, 1998) and is “directly related to fidelity of implementation” (Henderson & Rothman, 2011, p. 4). Hock et al. (2001) reported that an integral part of the tutoring program is the need to provide professional development for all tutoring teachers. Specifically, tutoring training should focus on instructional strategies, ways to manage students who exhibit different types of behaviors, and the importance of understanding and being consistent with the program goals (Jitendra, Rodriguez, Kanive, Huang, Church, Corroy, & Zaslofsky, 2013). Tutor training establishes the foundation for a comprehensive after-school tutoring program. Building productive relationships and having a positive influence over the student further adds to that foundation.

Rapport

Building and sustaining positive relationships with students is a critical component in education. Doing so establishes trust and a line of communication, which are key pieces in working with students to help rectify deficiencies and achieve personal goals. Other studies have reported that positive relationships between the “tutor-tutee” have resulted in positive gains (Klem & Connell, 2004). During tutoring sessions, the small teacher-student ratio allows for a higher level of commitment between the teacher and student, which results in a more supportive and productive environment (Sanderson, 2003). Another study indicated that having an understanding of the student’s culture also helped in creating a big-picture perspective with that student (Nelson-Royes, 2013, p. 48). Understanding the culture a student is raised in can help a teacher to adjust to the outside influences on the student and make relevant connections with them. Additionally, teachers who are culturally aware can make programming decisions that embrace the positive aspects of the student’s culture. This naturally leads to a more connected learning experience for the student. Conversely, understanding the negative aspects a culture may have on student learning can allow for teacher intervention. Castillo and Winchester (2003) reported, “Most teachers found that the added time with their students helped them learn more about their students’ lives” (p. 69). From a practitioner’s standpoint, this opens the door to being more diagnostic in your approach and having a better understanding of your students’ needs.

Political and Financial Influences

No Child Left Behind & Title I

One of the catalysts behind after-school tutoring is legislation, particularly in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. No Child Left Behind is federal legislation that was enacted in 2002 to embody the following goals: “To ensure that children in every classroom enjoy the benefits of well-prepared teacher research-based curriculum and safe learning environments” (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). Schools that receive Title I funds need to have a minimum of “40% of their students to be enrolled in the free and reduced lunch programs” (Malburg, 2014). The Title I funds are used for various facets of education, such as professional development needs for staff and parents, textbooks and materials, and other means of student support. After-school tutoring could be categorized under the student support category of supplemental instruction (Marlburg, 2014). “According to the U.S. Department of Education, Title I funds typically support supplemental instruction in reading and math and reach over six million elementary students annually” (Marlburg, 2014).

High-Stakes Testing & Adequate Yearly Progress

The State of Illinois has recently adopted the Common Core State Standards to replace the Illinois State Standards. Schools in Illinois have students complete an annual state assessment, formerly called the Illinois State Achievement Test, to gauge their knowledge and growth on the standards. The State of Illinois has adopted a new assessment for the 2014–2015 school year called Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Students complete two PARCC

assessments: the Performance Based Assessment, which occurs in March, and the End of Year Assessment at the end of April. Public schools in the state of Illinois need to make adequate yearly progress as a “minimum level of improvement” that needs to be achieved annually on the state assessment (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). Not making adequate yearly progress over time brings an immense level of pressure on school districts that may result in “Title I Corrective Action: supplemental educational services (SES), offering school choice, and restructuring” (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). After-school tutoring has become not only a support system for students to correct deficiencies, but also a test prep course to improve their abilities to score higher on the state assessments.

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

The study is a mixed-method approach with both quantitative and qualitative data collected. A survey was administered online to the teachers via SurveyMonkey. This survey helped focus participants on the various aspects of the tutoring program and helped encourage a dialogue for input. The survey provided an idea of participants' overall perception of the after-school program, along with feedback on the established research questions.

Teachers participating in the interview groups were determined following the completion of the survey. The surveys and interviews were separated into two groups: (1) teachers that were participating in after-school tutoring, and (2) teachers that are not participating in after-school tutoring. This provided for different perspectives and viewpoints depending on whether teachers were involved with after-school tutoring.

Student baseline achievement data was retrieved from two documents: Yorktown Watch Lists (created by teachers) and classroom grades. The after-school tutoring sessions began during the week of October 15 in the 2014–2015 school year. After-school tutoring sessions were observed by the building principal on a weekly basis, and those observations were documented in a reflective journal. Focus was placed on the curriculum covered, assessments given, instructional strategies used, and level of student/teacher engagement. Additionally, attendance for both teachers and students was monitored and documented.

Participants

Participants in this study are teachers from Yorktown Elementary school. Approximately 30 teachers were asked to complete an online survey through SurveyMonkey. The teachers interviewed were those who volunteered and committed to being stakeholders of the study. It was made clear to the teachers that this is a volunteer program. These teachers who formed the group of stakeholders were key players in providing critical feedback on the overall effectiveness of the after-school tutoring program.

Data Gathering Techniques

Data was gathered through teacher surveys, teacher interview groups, the researcher's personal journal reflections, achievement data, and student attendance. The following paragraphs will briefly describe each data component, with the teacher surveys being the initial piece completed.

Teacher Survey

The initial data collected was an online survey that was completed by the teachers on SurveyMonkey at the beginning of the 2014–2015 school year. The teachers were categorized into two different groups: those who participated in after-school tutoring and those who did not. The purpose of dividing the two groups was to see if there were different perceptions and viewpoints regarding the tutoring program. The teachers who were not participating in after-school tutoring completed one additional question about whether they would like to participate as an instructor in the tutoring program.

The total number of teachers that completed the survey was 31. There was a nearly even split between the two groups: 15 teachers who participated in the after-school

tutoring program and 16 teachers that did not participate in the after-school tutoring program. The purpose of the survey was to attain general and specific feedback as it related to the research questions. The survey results also helped to frame additional questions for the small group interview phase.

Teacher Interviews

Teachers completed the survey and then volunteers were selected to be a part of the interview process, which consisted of speaking with teachers in small groups. Audio from these interviews was recorded. The interview questions were extensions of the survey questions and were dictated by the results of the survey. Teachers expanded on their responses to the survey questions and discussed if there were any trends that occurred that needed clarification. Teachers are important stakeholders responsible for daily activity in the classroom, which makes their feedback critical. Additionally, the collaboration through the interviewing process brings it to a more in-depth level. Like the survey, there were two interview groups: teachers who are participating as after-school tutors and teachers who are not.

The interview group that was not participating in after-school tutoring consisted of the following staff members:

Teacher 1: Reading specialist

Teacher 2: Fourth-grade teacher

Teacher 3: Art teacher

Teacher 4: Speech pathologist

The group that participated in the after-school tutoring program and the interview process consisted of the following staff members:

Teacher 5: Sixth-grade teacher

Teacher 6: Fourth- and fifth-grade resource teacher

Teacher 7: Fourth-grade teacher

Teacher 8: Fourth-grade teacher

Reflective Journal

The purpose of the reflective journal was for the building principal to observe and monitor what actually happens in the classroom during the tutoring sessions. This was an important part of the process in determining the impact the program had on student achievement. The focus of the reflective journal was on the secondary research questions: curricular focus, assessments, instructional strategies, rapport, and student and teacher engagement.

Achievement Data

Yorktown Watch List.

Student achievement data that were collected and analyzed came from Yorktown Watch Lists (created by teachers) and individual student grades. The achievement data in the Yorktown Watch Lists included AIMSweb benchmarking and the Terra Nova assessments from spring of the previous year and the winter assessment in January of 2015 respectively. The students' grades during the current school year were analyzed to determine growth. Utilizing three assessment pieces helped validate the growth for each child that participated in the tutoring program.

AIMSweb.

What we specifically looked at on the Yorktown Watch List is the growth students made in the AIMSweb assessment from the fall benchmark to the winter

benchmark. The students completed the AIMSweb reading and math assessments during January 5–30, 2015.

Terra Nova.

The second assessment that was analyzed for this program evaluation to determine growth was the Terra Nova assessment. The Terra Nova assessment is a nationally norm-referenced exam that is diagnostic in nature. This assessment compared the students nationally and gave them specific information on strengths and weaknesses in math and reading skills. The baseline data for the Terra Nova assessment was the spring test of the previous school year; this was compared with how the students performed on the following Terra Nova assessment taken during January 12–23, 2015.

Student Grades.

The third data point used to measure student growth was students' specific grades and percentages in one or both of reading or math, depending on their deficiencies. The timelines to determine growth in grading were the following: Final first-quarter grades as of October 31, 2014 compared to the final of second-quarter grades as of January 23, 2015. Tutoring officially began during the week of October 15 of the 2014 school year, which coincided with the grading timeline.

The three data sources that were used to determine student achievement offer a variety of growth models and measures. Those used in previous research have varied from informal observation to objective assessments, grades, pre- and post-testing, and standardized assessments.

For example, Sanderson's (2003) research on a Title I program called T.O.A.S.T. utilized both "formal and informal" assessments (p.4). The informal assessment piece

was “teachers observing students’ reading behaviors and use of reading strategies” (Sanders, 2003, p. 4). Hock et al. (2001) showed that grades improving as a result of “improving quiz and test performance” was a direct correlation with “strategic tutoring” (p. 178). Strategic tutoring emphasizes both homework and skill deficiency assistance (Hock et al., 2001). In a study focusing on mathematics and university tutors with elementary students, there was a local pre- and post-assessment given to determine baseline data and growth (Baker, Rieg, & Clendaniel, 2006).

Student Attendance

Attendance rates for both teachers and students play a major role in determining effectiveness of the after-school tutoring program. During this study, the Yorktown Elementary School tutoring teachers kept track of weekly attendance for all of their students participating in tutoring to ensure that student achievement could be accurately measured (Hock et al., 2001). Teachers also completed an attendance sheet for the tutoring sessions on a weekly basis. This included the number of days that the student was being tutored on a weekly basis.

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis of the data was ongoing throughout the entire study. The initial survey that staff completed was a combination of responses and ratings. The interview questions with the specific stakeholders were an extension of the survey questions and responses. The collection of student achievement data and attendance rates followed, along with completion of a reflective journal. The format of the data is presented on schematics along with narrative interpretations.

Teacher Survey

The purpose of the survey was to attain general and specific feedback from teachers on the after-school-tutoring program. When reviewing the results the goal was to investigate and determine any specific initial themes. This lent itself to digging deeper in the interview stage with the teachers. The initial review of the survey followed the “open codes” process in which “you read the data with no preconceived idea as to what is important and start to open code ideas that come to mind” (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Depending on my findings, I would then attempt to code by using the “selective coding” process: “The researcher starts coding with specific themes or ideas in mind and then sorts the data according to these preselected categories” (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008, p.89). When coding the responses, the secondary research questions and the themes from the literature review of this program evaluation were incorporated to formulate the categories. Additionally, the surveys completed by the two teaching groups were remained separated and then compared. The two groups were differentiated according to whether or not the teachers participated in after-school tutoring.

Teacher Interview

The interview groups were also established by using the same format, with the teachers who were not participating in after-school tutoring as one interview group and the teachers who were as another. Group interview participants were determined by their responses to the final survey question, which asked if they were willing to commit to participating in interviews. There were four teachers from each group that volunteered to participate in the group interviews, for a total of eight. Interview questions were established and then additional ones were incorporated following the results of the

survey. The audio of both small-group interview sessions was recorded and transcribed to determine themes, consistencies, and comparison of the two teaching groups.

Reflective Journal

A reflective journal was utilized to document the building principal's personal observations of the tutoring sessions. The purpose was to generate patterns or consistencies that might correlate with what the stakeholders confirmed through survey results and interviews, and to personally observe what the students were experiencing. This information was invaluable as I began to process and determine the program's impact on student achievement. Focus was placed on the secondary research questions with regard to curriculum, assessments, instructional strategies, and level of student and teacher engagement. Each grade level was observed on a weekly basis, and those observations were recorded in notes.

Achievement Data

There were three main data points used to confirm the growth that students are making while participating in after school-tutoring program. The three data points are the following: first, the Terra Nova assessment from the spring of last school year and the winter Terra Nova assessment taken in January 2015; second, the AIMSweb assessment in math and reading, with the comparison between the fall benchmark and the Winter benchmark; third, the students' personal classroom grades, which were monitored and documented from first-quarter final grades to the second-quarter final grades that were confirmed at the end of January 2015.

Data points were arranged on a spreadsheet and compared to gauge the progress made by each student. The spreadsheets were divided amongst the three grade levels

(fourth, fifth, and sixth grade) and between the two core subject matters focused on during after-school tutoring: math and reading. Separating the data in this fashion helped highlight different ideas or themes that are occurring in the different categories.

Student Attendance

Student attendance and frequency of tutoring sessions per week were documented on a spreadsheet and compared to the student's progress made with their academic data points. Utilizing attendance data confirmed if there's a lack of consistency in the program.

SECTION FOUR: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate an after-school tutoring program and assess its impact on student achievement. The secondary questions focus on the following aspects of after-school tutoring: curriculum, measurements of student growth, instructional strategies, scheduling and attendance, and teachers' perceptions on the purpose and effectiveness of the program. The program evaluation was designed to collect data to answer these questions and provide a basis for evaluating the program's effectiveness.

The data collection for this study involved a mixed-method approach with both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was collected through teacher surveys and figures on both academic performance and student attendance. The qualitative data collected came from group interviews and a reflective journal that noted personal observations of tutoring sessions.

The first part of the findings section describes and discusses the results of the survey and compare the results of each teaching group. The format displays responses from both survey groups per question and then highlight similarities and differences in their responses. In each table, the results show the response percentage and the response count per question. The response count shows the number of teachers that selected that specific response.

Teacher Surveys

Surveys were completed at Yorktown Elementary School during the October staff meeting. Both non-tutoring and tutoring teachers completed the survey at the same time in the technology room. A total of 31 teachers completed the survey.

Table 1
Tutoring experience

1. Have you ever tutored in the after-school tutoring program at Yorktown Elementary School?

Teachers Not Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Yes | 37.5% | 6 |
| No | 62.75% | 10 |

Teachers Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 93.3% | 14 |
| No | 6.7% | 1 |

Of the teachers currently not participating in the tutoring program, 6 out of the 16 teachers said that they have participated in the Yorktown Elementary School tutoring program at some point. For the teachers who are currently participating in the after-school tutoring program, 14 out of the 15 said they have participated in the Yorktown Elementary School tutoring program before this current school year. The purpose of dividing the two groups of teachers is to determine any significant differences or perceptions that the teachers might have depending on their involvement (or lack thereof) in the tutoring program.

Table 2
Years tutoring

2. If so, how many years?

Teachers Not Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response Count |
|----------------|----------------|
| | 7 |

Teachers Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response Count |
|----------------|----------------|
| | 14 |

The second question asked the teachers how many years of experience they had participating in the Yorktown Elementary School tutoring program. Among the teachers who were not currently participating in the tutoring program, seven responded that they had done so for one to five years. Among the teachers who were participating in the after-school program, 14 out of the 15 reported a range of 1 to 12 years' experience doing so, with the median years being 4 years. The vast years of experience from both groups of teachers should provide realistic and pertinent feedback on the current status and recommendations for the tutoring program.

Table 3
The focus of tutoring

3. Rank these elements from low (1) to high (5) in order of importance for the after-school tutoring programs.

Teachers Not Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Ranking Average |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Skill deficiencies | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 4.38 |
| Homework | 0 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 3.38 |
| Test preparation | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 3.13 |
| Research based strategies | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2.26 |
| Other | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1.88 |

Teachers Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Ranking Average |
|---------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|-----------------|
| Skill deficiencies | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 4.92 |
| Homework | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2.31 |
| Test preparation | 0 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 3.00 |
| Research based strategies | 0 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3.31 |
| Other | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1.46 |

Item number three asked the teachers to rank the following elements in order of importance for the after-school tutoring program: skill deficiencies, homework, test preparation, research based strategies, and other. This question highlights one of the secondary research questions that focuses on the curriculum aspect of the after-school tutoring program. Both groups of teachers had elements that they ranked the same, while others were slightly different. With both teaching groups, skill deficiencies are ranked as

the most important curriculum element for after-school tutoring, with a 4.38 average ranking from non-tutoring participants and an average of 4.92 from tutoring participants. The other common rank between both groups involved the test preparation element. Test preparation was selected as the third-most important focus for after-school tutoring with a 3.13 ranking among the non-tutoring participants and a 3.00 with the tutoring participants. The final element that was common between both teaching groups was the “other” category, which both groups ranked as least important. The other category required an alternative focus for after-school tutoring that the teachers needed to highlight. The four other elements that were already listed proved sufficient for majority of the teachers. The two elements that were ranked differently between the groups were research-based strategies and homework. The teachers participating in the tutoring program ranked research-based strategies as the second-most important tutoring focus at an average of 3.31. The teachers not participating in the tutoring program selected homework as their second-most important element, with an average ranking of 3.38.

The results for item 3 reinforced what the teachers feel should be the main focus for after-school tutoring: skill deficiencies. Test preparation is in the top three for both teaching groups, which is not a surprise because of the emphasis on standardized assessments. It was intriguing how the non-tutoring group ranked homework second and the tutoring group ranked research-based strategies as their second-highest priority. There was one comment from the teachers in the tutoring program that involved incorporating a two-tier program for students in tutoring. “One should work on skills and getting rid of their deficiencies. Once the skills have been mastered, then more high-level concepts with those skills need to be introduced and worked on.” The mindset here is to remediate,

then offer enrichment for students to ideally gain mastery of that specific skill. Teachers who are not participating in the tutoring program offered several comments to consider for after-school tutoring: “Assessing the learning style of student, I feel many students need help organizing their materials (classwork, homework, etc.), and the student’s overall ability to function in the classroom should also be considered when being selected for tutoring.” Understanding a student’s learning style is an important element when planning for instructional strategies and the use of different types of student resources. The organization piece stems from focusing on students’ executive skills to ensure they stay on track. The comment on overall ability to function in the classroom during the day needs to be looked into a little further to confirm the meaning and rationale.

Table 4
Monitoring student progress

4. Select the one best method in monitoring student progress throughout the tutoring sessions.

Teachers Not Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|--|------------|----------------|
| Classroom Grades | 21.4% | 3 |
| Local Assessments (Story Town & Everyday Math) | 28.6% | 4 |
| Standardized Tests (Terra Nova, PARCC) | 7.1% | 1 |
| Formative Assessment (AIMSweb & Study Island) | 42.9% | 6 |

Teachers Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|--|------------|----------------|
| Classroom Grades | 33.3% | 5 |
| Local Assessments (Story Town & Everyday Math) | 13.3% | 2 |
| Standardized Tests (Terra Nova, PARCC) | 6.7% | 1 |
| Formative Assessment (AIMSweb & Study Island) | 46.7% | 7 |

Item number four asked teachers to select the best method for monitoring student progress throughout the tutoring sessions. Both non-participating (42.9%) and participating (46.7%) teachers selected the formative assessment option as most effective means of monitoring student progress. The formative assessments included both AIMSweb and Study Island as the method of measuring growth. Both are online programs that have the ability to measure progress being made on specific skills in either math or reading. The following is my conclusion on why formative assessments ranked highest: the specificity in both programs with regard to skill focus, the practicality of testing, and question structure, along with instant generation and tracking of student progress. A comment from one of the teachers not participating in the program was the following: “The progress monitoring should identify the student’s exact areas of weaknesses and strengths.” This teacher is referencing one aspect of the AIMSweb program that allows teachers and students to monitor progress being made in specific skills over time.

Where the two teaching groups differ slightly is their ranking of the second-best way to monitor student progress. Local assessments (28.6%) received the second-most responses from the non-tutoring group. Local assessments derive from our actual curriculum textbook series in math and reading. The non-tutoring group’s third choice

was classroom grades, with 21.4% selecting this option. Teachers who are participating in after-school tutoring differed with their second- and third-highest ranks methods for monitoring student progress. The second-highest percentage was classroom grades, which was selected by 33.3% of the participating teachers. This high rating was expected due to teachers tutoring their own students during after-school tutoring. As a result, they can incorporate assessments during the school day to essentially monitor their student's growth and incorporate the results in their classroom grades. The third-highest percentage from the participating teachers was local assessments, at only 13.3%.

The unexpected response in question number four was how low all teachers rated standardized assessments to best monitor student growth and progress. Fewer than 10% of the teachers in both groups selected this option, with participating teachers at 7.1% and non-participating teachers at 6.6%. The actual number of respondents who selected this option is only two. This speaks volumes for how the teachers as a group value standardized assessments as a tool for measuring progress in after-school tutoring. Another factor is the timing of the standardized assessments: the frequency and the turnaround of receiving the results is not advantageous to monitoring student progress throughout tutoring sessions. Standardized assessments can be used as a big-picture perspective or as one element of growth overtime.

Table 5
Recommended tutoring sessions per week

5. How often do you think students should participate in after-school tutoring during the week?

Teachers Not Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| At least once a week | 6.25% | 1 |
| At least two times a week | 56.25% | 9 |
| At least three times a week | 31.25% | 5 |
| At least four times a week | 6/25% | 1 |

Teachers Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| At least once a week | 13.3% | 2 |
| At least two times a week | 46.7% | 7 |
| At least three times a week | 33.3% | 5 |
| At least four times a week | 6.7% | 1 |

The responses for question five from both teaching groups were comparable for almost every option. A total 56.25% of the teachers in the non-participating responded that students need tutoring at least two times of a week, while 46.7% of the participating had the same response. The second-highest response for each teaching group was in favor of three tutoring sessions a week. Both rates between the two groups for this response were a little over 30%, with the same quantity of teachers for each group (5) selecting that option. Findings show that 80% of all teachers agree that tutoring sessions should be a minimum of two to three sessions per week. There were several comments by both teaching groups that confirmed that the “number of times per week is dependent on the needs of each student.

Table 6
Is the tutoring program effective?

6. Do you agree? Our after-school tutoring program is effective in helping to increase student achievement.

Teachers Not Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | 0 |
| Disagree | 25.0% | 4 |
| Agree | 75.0% | 12 |
| Strongly Agree | | 0 |

Teachers Participating in Tutoring Program

| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | 0 |
| Disagree | 25.0% | 4 |
| Agree | 75.0% | 12 |
| Strongly Agree | | 0 |

In question number six, both groups of teachers responded favorably to the after-school tutoring program’s capacity to increase student achievement. Three-quarters of the teachers not participating agreed and of teachers participating, 66.7% agreed and 20% strongly agreed. There were six teachers in total that disagreed with the statement that the after-school tutoring program is effective in helping increase student achievement. The non-participating teachers commented by stating that achievement is dependent on “student motivation and [the] effort put in by the student to improve their skill base.” One of the participating teachers made the comment that tutoring gives “the teacher time to get to know the students and really focus on direct instruction.” The remainder of the after-school tutoring survey was answered in narrative form.

7. What are we doing well in the after-school tutoring program?

For question seven, the teachers were asked to give feedback on what they thought was working well in the after-school tutoring program. For the teachers that are not participating in the tutoring program, the following was highlighted:

- Conveniently accessible to students and families by offering an activity bus for transportation
- Targeting specific deficits in student academics
- Considering students who appear on the Yorktown Watch List
- Allowing teachers to determine which students would benefit from tutoring
- Providing extra support to those students in need of remediation

When looking at the comments, some of the items that are not always considered but were emphasized in the responses included communication with parents and students as well as transportation. Assisting students with specific skill deficits and utilizing the Yorktown Watch List to select the students was not an unexpected response; however, it did validate how students are systematically selected through the Yorktown School. Another point that I found interesting is respondents' strong emphasis on teachers' selection of the students that participate in after-school tutoring.

The teachers that are participating in after-school tutoring had some similar comments for what was working well in the program. The following are some of the comments:

- Providing opportunities for students to improve their skills in specific areas
- Providing for small-group instruction
- Identifying the students that need to be tutored
- Focusing on skills
- Looking at deficient areas in math and reading based off current AIMSweb results
- Helping students feel comfortable and successful in areas that are challenging for them
- Collaborating with colleagues on students' strengths and weaknesses
- Identifying children who need help working with small groups

The comments by the participating teachers highlighted the importance of “helping students with specific skill deficiencies, how students are identified, and small group instruction.” Additionally, the team approach used with teacher collaboration in “identifying student needs” is supported at the Yorktown School.

8. What can we do better in our after-school tutoring program?

The responses to question eight regarding what could be done to improve the after-school tutoring program brought some constructive and interesting feedback. There were several comments from teachers who are not participating in the after-school tutoring program that focused on the students, including the “need to take advantage of the program” and “encouraging them to attend.” There was another comment that focused on the program and how staff were utilized: “utilizing teacher strengths in a specific subject to support students or giving the student a teacher with different instructional strategies to help them with their deficiency.” Another comment highlighted “students receiving support outside of their homeroom classroom teacher” for after-school tutoring. There were a couple of comments that focused on curriculum by supporting “homework help” as the primary purpose for the after-school tutoring program. Additional comments from the teachers not participating in the after-school tutoring program were the following:

Gifted student population should be able to receive tutoring support if needed, we should keep to our selection criteria for tutoring and not allow parental requests for students to be tutored, and tutoring should be about not only independent work, but also allow for conversation between student and teacher.

The comment about having teachers focus on their curricular strengths and grouping students according to need has always been a consideration, but is dependent on teacher availability.

The teachers who are participating in the tutoring program gave the following comments for what can be done better in the after-school tutoring program:

- Monitor attendance more closely
- Check for possible scheduling conflicts with the other after-school activities such as band, choir, and student council
- Having one uniform curriculum or guide that everyone is using
- Group students by deficiencies and use the programs we already have along with teachers that are experts in that specific skill
- Collaborate with teachers on different programs and on student data
- Increasing pay for after-school tutoring to get more teachers involved
- Get more teachers to tutor and choose the right focus for tutoring
- Stick to criteria for being in tutoring and not allowing parents to insist on inclusion
- Structuring the program even more

Some of the more prominent suggestions involved monitoring attendance, navigating scheduling conflicts, obtaining more teacher participation, grouping students by need and expertise, and maintaining consistent curriculum focus across grade levels.

Summary of Survey Findings

The survey results confirm the following positions that the Yorktown Elementary staff possesses on the after-school tutoring program:

Focus on Skill Deficiencies

The majority of the Yorktown staff firmly believes that the primary focus for after-school tutoring should be on student skill deficiencies. Test preparation is ranked third for both teaching groups.

Formative Assessments to Monitor Progress

Utilizing formative assessments to monitor students' progress during tutoring was the highest-ranking item selected by the staff. Classroom grades and using local assessments were close second and third choices.

Two to Three Weekly Tutoring Sessions

When analyzing the number of weekly sessions a student should attend for after-school tutoring, more than half the teachers selected two times a week and another third selected three times a week. The majority of staff feel that students should be attending tutoring a minimum of two to three times a week.

Positive Impact on Student Achievement

Eighty percent of the staff agree that the after-school tutoring program is effective in helping increase student achievement.

Things Being Done Well

Some of the points both groups listed as things the after-school program is doing well include the following:

- Skill focus approach
- Small group setting
- How we identify students
- Helping students feel more comfortable
- Conveniently accessible
- Transportation provided for students

Areas for Improvement

Some things that we can do a better job of in our after-school tutoring program brought up by both teaching groups include the following:

- Monitoring attendance
- Navigating scheduling conflicts with other activities
- Grouping students and teachers by need and expertise
- The need for more tutors and an increase in hourly compensation
- Homework club focus
- Students receiving instruction from someone outside of their homeroom teacher
- Enrichment should be an option for after-school tutoring.

Student Achievement Data

Student achievement data collected included math and reading in homeroom grades, Terra Nova assessment from spring of the previous school year to the winter of current school year, AIMSweb benchmark results, and the students' overall tutoring attendance. Student attendance was monitored and collected for this study from the week of October 7, 2014 to the week of January 20, 2015. Each student's personal attendance percentage is documented in tables 13 through 18, with the percentages (along with the quantity of tutoring sessions per tutoring teacher) naturally varying per student. Tutoring sessions per week varied per instructor with the average sessions per week ranging from one to three. This involved a total of 12 school weeks that the students could have received tutoring. Additionally, the tables (13–18) also include math and reading individual student results and average percentages per grade level (fourth, fifth, and sixth grades).

Table 7
Results of fourth-grade reading tutoring program on student achievement

| Student ID# | Change in Reading % Grade from Q1 to Q2 2014–2015 | Change in 2014 Terra Nova Reading Scores from Spring to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Reading Score from Fall To Winter | Tutoring Attendance Days Present | Tutoring Attendance Days Absent | Tutoring Attendance % |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4-3 | - | - | + | 4 | 14 | 22% |
| 4-5 | + | + | + | 15 | 0 | 100% |
| 4-7 | + | - | + | 7 | 12 | 37% |
| 4-8 | + | - | + | 12 | 3 | 80% |
| 4-9 | + | - | + | 6 | 9 | 40% |
| 4-10 | + | - | + | 17 | 2 | 89% |
| 4-11 | + | + | + | 11 | 8 | 58% |
| 4-12 | - | - | + | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| 4-13 | + | - | + | | | |
| 4-15 | + | - | + | 11 | 4 | 73% |
| 4-16 | + | - | + | 13 | 6 | 68% |
| % of Students Showing Gains | 82% | 18% | 100% | | | 63% |

Note: + = Gain - = No Gain or Loss Y = Yes N = No

There were 11 fourth-grade students who received tutoring in reading. The first academic data points that were reviewed are the first- and second-quarter grades in reading. Positive gains for student grades were based on an increase in their overall percentage from final first-quarter grades to final second-quarter grades. There was some excellent growth in this area, with 9 out of 11 students (82%) improving their grade percentage in reading. The AIMSweb program was taken online in September and in January and assessed the students in reading fluency. Positive gains were measured by making some type of improvement when comparing their fall score to their winter

benchmark score. In reading fluency, the fourth grade had a 100% improvement, with all 11 students making gains.

The Terra Nova assessment is a nationally norm-referenced exam with positive gains being measured by some type of improvement from students' spring scores from the previous school year to their winter scores of the current school year. The specific data used to measure growth is the students' Norm Curve Equivalent percentage (NCE). Only 2 out of the 11 (18%) fourth-grade students made gains in the Terra Nova reading assessment. Given that the Terra Nova results are considerably lower than the other academic data points, it bears mentioning that the Terra Nova assessment is the only data point that encompasses a student's previous year (i.e., third-grade spring assessment) results. An additional point is the third- to fourth-grade drop in performance assessments that occurs not just locally but statewide.

The attendance varies among the fourth-graders when comparing the actual number of tutoring sessions and the average attendance rate. The number of sessions range from only 2 to up to 19 tutoring sessions over a 12-week period. The average attendance percentage for this entire group was 63%. Another point that can be drawn is that since the fourth-grade students made considerable progress in both their reading grades and on their AIMSweb benchmarks, the tutoring teachers did not have as many tutoring sessions as the other grade levels. This could have negatively impacted how the students performed on the Terra Nova Reading assessment.

Table 8
Results of fourth-grade math tutoring program on student achievement

| Student ID# | Change in Math % Grade from Q1 to Q2 2014–2015 | Change in 2014 Terra Nova Math Scores from Spring to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Math CAP Score from Fall to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Math Computation Score from Fall to Winter | Tutoring Attendance Days Present | Tutoring Attendance Days Absent | Tutoring Attendance % |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4-3 | - | - | + | + | 12 | 7 | 63% |
| 4-4 | - | - | + | + | 7 | 1 | 88% |
| 4-6 | - | - | + | + | 8 | 0 | 100% |
| 4-7 | + | - | + | + | 12 | 7 | 63% |
| 4-14 | + | - | + | + | 1 | 18 | 5% |
| 4-17 | - | - | - | + | 8 | 0 | 100% |
| 4-18 | - | - | + | + | 13 | 6 | 68% |
| % of Students Showing Gains | 29% | 0% | 86% | 100% | | | 61% |

Note: + = Gain - = No Gain or Loss Y = Yes N = No

There were seven fourth-grade students receiving tutoring for mathematics. Of that group, only two (29%) improved from their final first-quarter grades to the final second-quarter grades. In the AIMSweb cap assessment that measures mathematic computation performance, six out of the seven (86%) students improved their score from fall to winter. In the math problem-solving section on the AIMSweb assessment, 100% of students improved from the fall to winter assessment. Similar to with reading, the Terra Nova assessment is the lowest performance indicator for these fourth-graders, with none of the students improving on the test that was given in the spring of their third-grade year compared to the one given in the winter of their fourth-grade year. The average attendance for students being tutored in fourth-grade math was 61%, with the tutoring sessions ranging from 8 to 19 sessions over a 12-week period.

It does not appear that the students who had more tutoring sessions available to them took advantage of those sessions or demonstrated more growth than the other students with fewer tutoring sessions. There was one student (4-17) who attended only one tutoring session, and that student made growth in three of the four performance data points. The AIMSweb assessment demonstrated positive growth with both of these assessments' (CAP & Computation) baseline scores being established in the current grade level. The Terra Nova assessment, a much more comprehensive measure, showed no growth using the previous year's spring results as the baseline, with only two grades improving between the seven students.

Table 9

Results of fifth-grade reading tutoring program on student achievement

| Student ID# | Change in Reading% Grade from Q1 to Q2 2014-2015 | Change in 2014 Terra Nova Reading Scores from Spring to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Reading Score from Fall to Winter | Tutoring Attendance Days Present | Tutoring Attendance Days Absent | Tutoring Attendance % |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 5-4 | - | + | + | 30 | 5 | 86% |
| 5-5 | + | - | + | 16 | 1 | 94% |
| 5-8 | - | + | + | 11 | 6 | 65% |
| 5-9 | - | + | - | 9 | 26 | 26% |
| 5-12 | - | + | + | 35 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-14 | - | - | + | 21 | 13 | 62% |
| 5-19 | + | - | + | 23 | 10 | 70% |
| 5-20 | - | + | + | 17 | 2 | 89% |
| 5-24 | + | + | + | 10 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-25 | - | - | + | 13 | 1 | 93% |
| 5-26 | + | - | + | 13 | 6 | 68% |
| 5-28 | - | - | + | 10 | 5 | 67% |
| 5-29 | - | - | + | 12 | 2 | 86% |
| 5-30 | - | - | + | 31 | 2 | 94% |
| 5-32 | + | + | + | 7 | 7 | 50% |
| 5-34 | + | - | + | 25 | 2 | 93% |
| 5-35 | + | - | + | 26 | 1 | 96% |
| 5-36 | - | - | + | 13 | 4 | 76% |
| % of Students Showing Gains | 33% | 44% | 89% | | | 79% |

Note: + = Gain - = No Gain or Loss Y = Yes N = No

There were 18 fifth-grade students who received tutoring in reading over the course of 12 weeks, with the average attendance being 79%. This is the highest average

attendance between the three grade levels, and this group had anywhere from 10 to 35 tutoring sessions. The fifth graders showed growth in all three categories, with a 33% increase in reading grades, 44% increase in their Terra Nova assessment, and an 89% increase in the AIMSweb reading fluency assessment. The Terra Nova assessment is from the previous year, but it is conducted within the same building so students changing buildings is not possible cause of the increase. The grade increase of 33% is one of the lowest building-wide, but the AIMSweb result (89%) is a strong indicator of improvement.

Table 10
Fifth-grade math tutoring program on student achievement

| Student ID# | Change in Math% Grade from Q1 To Q2 2014-2015 | Change in 2014 Terra Nova Math Scores from Spring to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Math CAP Score from Fall To Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Math Computation Score from Fall to Winter | Tutoring Attendance Days Present | Tutoring Attendance Days Absent | Tutoring Attendance % |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 5-4 | + | - | - | + | 27 | 8 | 77% |
| 5-5 | - | - | + | + | 11 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-6 | - | + | + | + | 4 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-7 | - | - | + | - | 14 | 1 | 93% |
| 5-9 | + | + | + | + | 8 | 8 | 50% |
| 5-10 | - | - | + | + | 4 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-11 | - | - | - | + | 4 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-12 | + | - | + | + | 35 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-13 | + | + | + | + | 10 | 1 | 91% |
| 5-14 | + | - | + | - | 22 | 13 | 63% |
| 5-16 | - | + | + | - | 6 | 9 | 40% |
| 5-17 | - | + | + | + | 14 | 1 | 93% |
| 5-19 | - | - | + | + | 22 | 11 | 67% |
| 5-21 | - | - | + | - | 11 | 0 | 100% |
| 5-22 | - | + | + | - | 3 | 1 | 75% |
| 5-26 | + | - | + | + | 29 | 4 | 88% |
| 5-27 | - | + | - | - | 10 | 5 | 67% |
| 5-29 | - | - | - | - | 4 | 11 | 27% |
| 5-30 | + | - | + | - | 31 | 2 | 94% |
| 5-31 | - | - | + | + | 9 | 2 | 82% |
| 5-36 | + | + | + | + | 5 | 6 | 45% |
| % of Students Showing Gains | 38% | 38% | 81% | 62% | | | 77% |

Note: + = Gain - = No Gain or Loss Y = Yes N = No

The fifth-grade math tutoring attendance numbers are favorable, with the average attendance percentage at 77%. The number of tutoring sessions ranged from only 4 sessions up to 35 sessions. All four categories saw increases, with both grade improvement and increases in Terra Nova scores at 38% (8 out of 21). In addition, the AIMSweb computation saw an increase of 62% (13 out of 21), and the AIMSweb CAP had a strong increase of 81% (17 out of 21). The increase in the Terra Nova results could possibly be attributed to the fact that students do not change buildings between the fourth and fifth grades. Additionally, the fifth-grade math tutoring group is both the largest and has one of the highest attendance rates (77%).

Table 11
Results of sixth-grade reading tutoring program on student achievement

| Student ID# | Change in Reading % Grade from Q1 To Q2 2014-2015 | Change in 2014 Terra Nova Reading Scores from Spring to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Reading Score from Fall to Winter | Tutoring Attendance Days Present | Tutoring Attendance Days Absent | Tutoring Attendance % |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6-1 | + | + | + | 10 | 18 | 36% |
| 6-2 | - | - | + | 13 | 21 | 38% |
| 6-3 | + | + | + | 3 | 0 | 100% |
| 6-4 | + | - | + | 25 | 9 | 74% |
| 6-5 | - | - | + | 29 | 5 | 85% |
| 6-7 | - | + | + | 13 | 19 | 41% |
| 6-10 | + | + | + | 6 | 22 | 21% |
| 6-11 | - | - | + | 29 | 5 | 85% |
| 6-13 | - | - | + | 2 | 1 | 67% |
| 6-16 | - | + | + | 15 | 13 | 54% |
| 6-18 | + | + | - | 16 | 12 | 57% |
| 6-20 | - | + | + | 3 | 0 | 100% |
| % of Students Showing Gains | 42% | 32% | 92% | | | 57% |

Note: + = Gain - = No Gain or Loss Y = Yes N = No

A total of 12 sixth-grade students participated in the reading tutoring program. Their overall attendance was 57%, with the number of tutoring sessions ranging from 3 to 24. The percentage of students who were successful in improving their reading grade between the first and second quarters was 42% (5 out of 12). Much larger were the 92% (11 out of 12) of the students who made progress in the AIMSweb reading fluency assessment. On the Terra Nova assessment, 58% (7 out of 12) of the students made progress from their benchmark assessment. Even though attendance was the lowest out

all the tutoring groups (57%), the sixth-grade reading group made the best progress on the Terra Nova reading assessment.

Table 12
Results of sixth-grade math and reading tutoring program on student achievement

| Student ID# | Change in Math % Grade from Q1 To Q2 2014-2015 | Change in 2014 Terra Nova Math Scores from Spring to Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Math CAP Score from Fall To Winter | Change in 2014 AIMSweb Math Computation Score from Fall to Winter | Tutoring Attendance Days Present | Tutoring Attendance Days Absent | Tutoring Attendance % |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6-1 | - | - | + | + | 3 | 16 | 16% |
| 6-2 | + | - | + | + | 10 | 10 | 50% |
| 6-4 | + | - | + | - | 20 | 0 | 100% |
| 6-5 | - | + | - | - | 24 | 1 | 96% |
| 6-7 | + | - | - | - | 11 | 9 | 55% |
| 6-11 | + | - | + | - | 24 | 1 | 96% |
| 6-12 | + | + | + | + | 3 | 16 | 16% |
| 6-14 | - | - | + | + | 6 | 13 | 32% |
| 6-15 | + | - | + | + | 18 | 1 | 95% |
| 6-16 | - | - | + | + | 1 | 18 | 5% |
| 6-17 | - | - | + | + | 5 | 14 | 26% |
| 6-18 | + | - | + | + | 18 | 1 | 95% |
| 6-19 | - | - | - | + | 6 | 13 | 32% |
| % of Students Showing Gains | 54% | 15% | 77% | 69% | | | 57% |

Note: + = Gain - = No Gain or Loss Y = Yes N = No

A total of 13 students participated in the math tutoring group at the sixth-grade level. Average attendance was 57%, with a minimum number of 19 sessions and a total of 25 over the 12-week period. Among this group of students, 54% improved their grades from the first to the second quarter. Only 15% of the sixth-graders improved on the Terra Nova assessment, but there was positive growth in both the AIMSweb Cap (77%) and computation (69%) assessments.

Summary

The attendance average per grade level varied: 78% for fourth grade, 78% for fifth grade, and 57% (the lowest average) for sixth grade. Tutoring sessions per week varied per instructor, with the average between one and three sessions per week. There were also several instructors who only had three to five sessions of tutoring for the entire 12 weeks of this study. The lack of consistency between the grade levels with regard to student percentage averages and the quantity of sessions makes it difficult to isolate which variables most affect student achievement. In studies by both Hock et al. (2001) and McComb and Scott-Little (2003), the authors reinforce the existence of a strong connection to student attendance and the impact tutoring can have on student achievement.

When comparing the different data points used to measure student growth, the Terra Nova scores showed the least amount of gain. The average in the tutoring program for the Terra Nova assessment is 29%, with the math score (18%) being substantially lower than the reading score (40%). In the entire tutoring program, 45% of all students improved their grade percentage (either math, reading, or both) from the first to the second quarter. A vast majority (93%) of all students in the tutoring program made positive gains in the fluency assessment in the AIMSweb, and 80% of all math tutoring students improved their scores from fall to winter in the AIMSweb Cap assessment that measures problem solving. In the math computation section on the AIMSweb assessment, 71% of all students improved from the fall to winter benchmarks.

The main discrepancy between the Terra Nova assessment and the grading and AIMSweb data points is the baseline data used for the former which comes from the

previous school year. All data points used for Grading and AIMSweb are from the current grade level and school year for each student. Using baseline data from the current school year needs to be a strong consideration for why the improvement level was significantly higher with student grades and AIMSweb data points than with the Terra Nova results.

Teacher Interviews

There were four consistent themes that came out of the interview sessions with both groups:

1. Specific student skill deficiencies should be the focus of after-school tutoring.
2. Monitoring students' progress should be determined by individual teachers and incorporate a variety of local assessments.
3. Staff perceptions on positive things that are occurring and recommendations for revisions in the after-school tutoring program.
4. The selection process for students in the after-school program.

In addition to similar questions asked of both teaching groups, other questions were added following the survey results. The interview questions are attached as appendices D and E.

Theme 1: Specific Student Skill Deficiencies Should be the Focus of After-School Tutoring

The first theme centers around one of the core secondary research questions for this program evaluation. What is the curricular focus for after-school tutoring? Focusing on specific student skill deficiencies was an overwhelming choice for the staff, as all of the teachers concurred on this point. The example:

- Teacher 5: In the sixth grade I think the goal for tutoring should be shoring up that base of the pyramid for all the higher-level learning that's going to be coming. We do have kids who have gaps because of the way that they've come to us, and we're trying to fill those in, but I think the goal is to fill up the gaps, get the base of the pyramid and then start going with the more challenging stuff. Homework, as it relates to improving classroom performance, is important, but I believe using research-based strategies to increase skill deficits is the most important purpose.
- Teacher 1: I believe that skill deficits need to be addressed the strongest. The purpose of having tutoring would be to try to bring up levels and try to create as level of a playing field as possible during the school day, so addressing skill deficits.
- Teacher 2: I think skill deficits are the most important aspect to work in tutoring, because I think it will translate over to the classroom and to homework. Hopefully, ideally, you don't have to specifically target a homework assignment, but the skill needed to complete that assignment at home, or in another setting, where you're not wasting time just working on things that are meant to be worked on out of school.
- I think that tutoring is exactly that; bringing the kid up to speed with the rest of the kids, and that also helps with other aspects of the classroom, like behavior management, because if the student is at par with everybody else, then they shouldn't feel lost and have any reason to be disruptive or off-task, because they're focused on what everybody else is focused on, because they're understanding what everybody else is learning.
- Teacher 3: I agree. I'd say the same as far as the skills that they are lacking. I believe that students should have a chance to fix any of those skills before they go on to the next level, because they're going to need that skill to move on. Actually, finding out which skills are their weaknesses, and then using those with their strengths, will make a big difference.

My initial assumption was that skill deficiencies were going to be the highest rated element, but I did not imagine a 90% confidence level from all teachers based off the two interview group responses and question number three on the staff survey (appendices B and C). This is a positive response from the standpoint that the majority of staff agree on what the focus should be for after-school tutoring. As a result, when revisions to the current program are made, the process will be much smoother due to the

common vision. Sanderson (2004) also reported, “tutors identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student’s pre-reading/reading performance and encourage the continuation of productive pre-reading/reading behaviors” (p. 2). This reinforces the importance of focusing on student’ deficiencies in critical foundational skills during after-school tutoring.

The teachers’ primary choice for after-school tutoring is skill deficiencies, but the following points were also reinforced as critical pieces that result from this focus: “filling in the gaps to the base of the pyramid” and “creating a level playing field.” Additionally, teachers emphasized how shoring up these skills “will translate over to the classroom and to homework” and “help them with their classroom management and focus.” Once again, these are excellent and valid points that the teachers are pointing out in their comments. There is a positive domino effect, often a profound one, from focusing on foundational skills, in that doing so can improve a student’s overall performance and achievement in other subjects. This is seen in the comment below:

Teacher 4: I think the most important purpose of the tutoring, which the other teachers have already outlined, is to have some kind of cushion or some kind of support system for the students to have, just in case they don’t have anyone at home who can help them, or they don’t have the confidence level to get the help they need throughout the day. Every person learns differently, and every child has a different learning strategy, and tutoring, from what I assume, is smaller groups, and so it’s nice for them to get that almost one-on-one instruction and be able to feel like, “I’m not the only one that’s having difficulty in this area, and I have someone that I can confidently say will help me, and bring me up to speed with everyone else, and is a good support system for me.

Theme 2: Monitoring Students Progress Should Be Determined by Individual Teachers and Incorporate a Variety of Local Assessments

The interview responses for the progress-monitoring question were not as consistent as they were in the survey results. The choices were more spread out, with different opinions and ideas about the best methods for measuring student growth during tutoring. Before answering this question, teachers from both groups reviewed and discussed the results of this specific survey question. Afterward, they were asked what they felt was the best way to monitor student progress during tutoring. The response from the tutoring teachers was the following:

- Teacher 6: You can make an assessment out of anything. I have a student that her goal was to correctly read short vowel sounds so I've typed up a list of long and short vowel sounds. After we worked on it for a couple weeks, I gave her a list and she read them off to me correctly, so I'm making it assessment on anything.
- Teacher 8: From what I see it's mainly local assessments for someone in class, quick things that they used to struggle in at the beginning of the year, they no longer struggle. The student in tutoring, they're better at it, yeah, local assessments.”
- Speaker 1: Okay. What kind of local assessments?
- Teacher 8: Like a math quiz, math quizzes, little, short assessments that focus on what we're doing.
- Speaker 1: Okay, so it's just from our curriculum such as everyday math.
- Teacher 8: Yeah.
- Teacher 5: Just like Teacher 6 said, "You can make an assessment out of almost anything." A quick five minutes of skill and drill shows you if they got it. It doesn't have to be something written.
- Teacher 7: Again, if it was an assessment, it would be something very short and I think it could be something that doesn't necessarily have to be written. It could be something just an oral assessment of whatever the activity might be that could show you.

During this discussion, the tutoring teachers concurred that the best way to measure a student's progress is through informal assessments or "quick checks" that do not necessarily need to be written. This position for monitoring student progress would fall under the "local assessments" option on the teacher survey. When reviewing the survey results from the teachers participating in the tutoring program, only two teachers selected the local assessments option. A possible rationale for the difference in opinion with some of the teachers is that when they completed the survey, the tutoring program had not technically begun. The interview process, by contrast, was facilitated when the tutoring program was already in session, so their perspective changed. This could be due to their having a pragmatic mindset.

For the teachers not participating in the tutoring program, when asked specifically for their opinion on the best method for monitoring student progress, the following was said:

- Teacher 4: I also feel that kids should have the opportunity to show what they've learned in other modalities. Not necessarily just on a paper, but for example, if they've mastered the spelling words, and they really know the true meaning of it, can they make a project that depicts that they know the meaning of those spelling words?
- Teacher 2: If we're working on one skill for a few weeks in tutoring, and then we move on, we should come back to that skill again at some point and see, has the student mastered that skill? Again, they might not be getting that right on the test, but they might look really good on the paper. I know that Study Island can break down the types of questions, and what the questions target. Yes, you'll see if they're building that skill, but I think it's got to be like its own class. Tutoring should be treated like a class, and it should be cumulative, towards the end, to see, have they gone from here to here? Have they mastered the things we're working on for months at a time?
- Teacher 1: We have some capability with using Study Island to make skills specific as we go. As we progress, are we making, as a progress monitoring point,

for AIMSweb and Study Island, we can use that. I think it's a combination of assessments for different needs. The progress monitoring part, that we can use the AIMSweb and Study Island as we go, weekly, and then maybe Terra Nova, because there's more steps to that, more options to take that. PARCC is not as vital, because it's that one-time, end of the year. It's hard to, there's not really a growth model involved in that.

Teacher 3: Study Island ... I like Study Island. I haven't seen the Study Island data in a long time, but what I like about Study Island is because the students are so comfortable with it now, it doesn't feel as though it's a standardized test for them. When they're on the computer, and they're taking the tests, they're comfortable. You're actually going to see what they know and what they don't know.

I don't feel as though the students look at this as, "Oh, this is going to be a grade for me," or "This is going to affect my overall score like ISAT would." When they take AIMSweb, it's a different feeling for them. Also, they have the computer part that's tied into the game, so they can relax and play the computer game. It's really natural, and because it's in a natural experience for them, I think you get more information on how well they actually know the skills you taught.

The teachers who are not participating in the after-school tutoring program had a different position on measuring growth. Three of them selected formative assessments as the most effective way to measure student growth. Specifically, they highlighted the use of Study Island and AIMSweb as excellent ways in tracking student progress with a skill deficiency. Doing so allows for timely objective documentation of student progress, as both Study Island and AIMSweb are online programs that collect and house the student data over time.

One of the other teachers reinforced the option of different "learning modalities" in demonstrating student progress. This gives you a portfolio with which to demonstrate the level of student learning taking place. The main difference between the two interview groups involves the objectivity and the documentation of student progress. In another study, Saddler and Staulters (2008) both "believed that it was essential for our tutors to

record the progress of their students” (p. 205). Without documenting student progress at some level, the focus during the tutoring sessions might not be as calculated.

Theme 3: Staff Perceptions on Positive Things That Are Occurring and Recommendations for Revisions in The After-School Tutoring Program

This theme encompasses two perspectives on the current tutoring program and also involves one of the secondary research questions specifically: What are the perceptions of the teachers on the purpose and effectiveness of the program? Because they are the ones in the classroom on a daily basis, teachers’ perspectives play a significant role in evaluating the program’s all-around effectiveness. The following are responses from teachers participating in the tutoring program regarding what’s working:

Teacher 5: I feel what is working this year in the tutoring program is finding out what the deficiencies are in their skills and honing in on that and drilling them and practicing with them and walking them through it and seeing them progress nicely from one week to the next. They're starting to respond more to that concept and just working at their deficiencies as opposed to working on homework like it used to be.

Teacher 6: I already focus on student deficiencies because as a special education teacher, I have their goals and we continue to work on their goals. It's great because there's more progress because I have extra time to work with them on their goals.

Teacher 7: To reiterate what teacher 5 has said, I believe that working on the children's deficiencies as well as whether it might be the focus skill that we're currently involved in. If they're not understanding something, that's the time that I take during tutoring time to go back over and review, so I'm finding that the deficiencies as well as a focus skill within the reading lock and I'm tutoring actually for two days that's reading and math, so I can pinpoint those areas at that time.

Teacher 8: I feel what's working for me is the number of students, the small group setting is more intimate, more one on one, I could really hone on exactly what's going on with each individual student.

Three of the four teachers reinforced a common theme throughout this evaluation: the focus on student skill deficiencies for after-school tutoring. Teacher 8 highlighted another positive point that's been brought up throughout the interview process and the survey results, and that is the ability to work both individually and in small groups to determine students' needs. Both of these perspectives have been duly noted throughout the program evaluations. Tutoring teachers said the following about aspects of the program that are not working:

Teacher 6: I think what we need to make available is all the interventions that are working throughout the building. Especially the one for tutoring and collaborating with other teachers to see what they're doing per grade level.

Teacher 5: If we can get more of the technologies like the tablets and stuff where we can get online applications, where they can do some things as well, not just Study Island because Study Island is kind of a bad connotation because these kids have been doing it for years. By the way, if you get a little fun game like an iPad that they can do reinforce what they're doing. I think that's another positive change because then it's including the technology and other things that make it more exciting.

Teacher 6: I have websites that I use that I will put the skill specifically to set a task for the child so that they can continue to work on that. It's like either games or work.

Teacher 7: I know that currently we've got two teachers at the fourth-grade level who are tutoring, but I think that you can pull from ... I don't know if there's other ... The other two teachers that they have specific children if they want to be included, I don't know if that would increase our load too much, but if there's one or two that wanted to join in I don't know, it's a question.

There are different perspectives brought to the table with the recommended revisions of the tutoring program. An excellent point was brought up by teacher 6, collaborating with other teachers that are tutoring after school and discussing what is working and what's not working. The dialogue and collaboration amongst these teachers are consistent during the planning stage of tutoring but during tutoring I'm not sure how often this actually occurs. Two teachers brought up the accessibility to technology that would expand the learning experience for students. This is a valid point due to the fact that there are technologies located in the

building that can be utilized for after-school tutoring. The planning component is missing and the lack of collaborating with others to determine the availability of resources such as Promethean boards. Teacher number 7 brings up the point of not having more staff volunteers in after-school tutoring to assist in the program. This has always been a paid volunteer program with all teachers and it's definitely a consideration for ways to improve the program.

The teachers who are not participating in the after-school tutoring program provided the following comments on aspects of the program that could use improvement:

- Teacher 2: I'm looking at question nine of the survey. It says, "What can we do better in our after-school tutoring program?" I answered that we should group the students together with similar deficits, which I think we kind of do, but that in order to prepare these lessons, target these specific needs of the students, that different students might need to be put together from different classes, with different teachers that are very good at teaching that skill.
- Teacher 4: I agree. I wish there was more flexibility in the program in that, maybe like a hybrid between a tutoring and a homework program, where even if there was a kid who doesn't have a good foundation, for example with their basic math facts ... That happens, because if they don't know their multiplication, then you know that they're going to struggle with their division, but they've managed to get through geometry, because they're really good at angles. All of these are tied in. They're all skills that they need.
- Teacher 1: I feel comfortable saying this, because we're the non-tutoring teacher group here, but it would take a lot more planning among the tutors, and it would take a lot more preparation, weeks ahead of time, to know that we're going to be working on this. You can't fly by the seat of your pants and say, "Today I'm going to work on this. Who do you got that needs this help?" That's chaotic. It's going to take a lot more planning, so those teachers are going to have to put in a little more extra time, a little more co-planning. "Next week, I'm working on these skills. Who do you have that needs this help?"
- Teacher 3: I was going to ... I'm in agreement with teacher 2, which I agree that I think teachers work really well when they feel very comfortable with what they're teaching. It's just like a specialist; if you specialize in art, then you feel very comfortable going forth and teaching whatever skill that you're looking for the student to learn. If you focus on the teachers that

are comfortable with that skill, and they're teaching that specialty or that skill set, then that's what you focus on.

The teachers who are not participating in the after-school tutoring program offer some intriguing and constructive feedback on the revisions that could be made to the tutoring program to make it more effective. Teacher number 2 highlights the practice of grouping students with specific skill deficiencies together and then having an instructor who is highly qualified in that specific skill teach that group; teacher 3 echoes deploying instructors this way. Teacher number 1 reinforces the level of planning and collaboration required to group and organize throughout a grade level, while acknowledging that doing so could make the program more effective and cohesive. Teacher 4 highlights a hybrid version of tutoring that includes the option of attending a specific homework help session. The one common point between the two teaching groups is the need to collaborate more when the tutoring sessions are up and running during the school year. While this sounds like a simple enough solution, time to meet is limited during the school day. This type of collaboration is usually done after school hours in non-compensated time.

Theme 4: The Selection Process for Students in the After-School Program

Selecting students for after-school tutoring is a critical step in making sure children who need additional help receive it. Appendix A briefly describes how part of selection process for after-school tutoring involves utilizing the Yorktown Watch List. The following are comments from tutoring teachers on how students should be selected for tutoring.

Teacher 5: That's actually a hard one because a lot of people will be like, it should be like off AIMSweb or off of what they did on Study Island. I personally

think it's teacher recommendation because the teachers can have that pulse of what the kids are doing and see. Yeah, you can have somebody who could sit there and guess really well or guess poorly or not care, so I think it should be a teacher recommendation.

Teacher 6: I think it should be a combination of AIMSweb and anything that they're doing in the classroom such as their behavior.

Teacher 7: I think AIMSweb and a combination of teacher recommendation.

Teacher 8: I'm agreeing with the other teachers because I've noticed as well this year I have a student he does or performed well on the ISAT and but in the classroom he was struggling and some students test well, but then in the classroom they just can't get that to work, so yes, I agree that teacher recommendation needs to play a role.

The teachers who are tutoring after school confirm that they need to use a combination of teacher recommendation and the analysis of student data. The one real interesting point brought up here, which has also been raised in other discussions, is the need to evaluate classroom behavior as an additional criterion for determining the need for after-school tutoring. Some believe that if a student is not behaving during the day, then that student should not be given the extra attention in an after-school tutoring program. Some of the teachers who do not participate in the after-school program have expressed this concern. This should be looked at carefully so as not to be confused with students who act up because they cannot keep up with everyone else in their classroom. Teacher 3 reinforced and brought up an excellent point that tutoring time can present another opportunity for an instructor to diagnose a student's deficiencies in a smaller setting. Teacher 1 reinforced an all-around approach of student selection by not only looking at the data, but also by observing their learning styles and helping students with the highest needs.

Teacher 1: I think whatever selection process is used, it needs to be dealing with the student with the highest needs, and availability has to be considered.

Learning style needs to be considered, how they're performing, whether in class or on standardized assessments, or how they're developing, so progress monitoring assessments are also a key piece of that information.

Teacher 2: I think that, just as teacher 1 said, that you need to keep the students that are in most need of this program, but you have to look at it from a holistic point of view; is the student giving his best effort in class? Are they receiving low grades because they just don't try, and they're not capable? I think it should be reserved for the students who are giving their all, yet they're still finding it hard to perform at the level expected of them, because you see this a lot in school, that the grades are low but the kid is very capable.

It is almost unfair to give time to that student, who is not giving time back. You respect them, they respect you, and they give their best effort, you'll give your best effort."

Teacher 3: I'm in agreement to a certain point as far as the tutoring. I think that students that are very, very low, definitely they need that help and assistance, but I believe that a lot of students are on that bubble. They're right there, and they're just missing that skill that they need to push them forward, so they can really soar.

They may be considered average students in some ways, because of their grades or how they're testing, but there are a lot of times that you can find skills that they're lacking in the classroom, that you may not be able to help in a classroom setting. If they are able to have more tutoring, to figure out what is it that they're having a problem with ... Processing information, or understanding different math skills. I think it keeps them from falling back.

Teacher 4: I don't know what the criterion is for selecting the students, but of course your judgment. If you see a child struggling, and you know from prior experience this child is just so much lower than their peers, and needs help in many areas, definitely put them as a priority on your list. If there are some of those kids who are just holding on, and you know that they ... Just with some extra attention, some extra support, they can really excel, like some of what my colleagues had mentioned.

Summary

The following themes emerged from the group interviews:

1. Specific student skill deficiencies should be the focus of after-school tutoring: assist students in foundational skills to “level the playing field” and give them confidence to be successful during the school day.
2. The methods for monitoring students’ progress should be determined by individual teachers and incorporate a variety of local assessments: Teachers that are participating in tutoring prioritize “quick checks” and students demonstrating their knowledge during tutoring. The non-tutoring teachers favor formative assessments through the daily curriculum and tracking students’ progress through benchmarking assessments such as AIMSweb. The important piece here is that a variety of methods can be used by individual teachers to gauge and determine growth.
3. Staff perceptions on positive things that are occurring and recommendations for revisions in the after-school tutoring program: The focus on skill deficits and providing assistance in a smaller setting are serious positives for the after-school tutoring program. Recommendations for improvement involve access to all technology in the building and a variety of online games, more time to collaborate with tutoring teachers for planning and sharing, and grouping students for after-school tutoring by specific skills.
4. The selection process for students in the after-school program: The focus on selecting students should involve teacher recommendation, reviewing student performance data, and being cognizant of the student’s effort and behavior throughout the school day and how that might impact the tutoring session.

Reflective Journal

The reflective journal is a personal account of what I observed during the tutoring session of the current school year. The observations took place from the middle of October, when the tutoring session began, up to the last school week of November. During a typical observation, I would sit in the classroom where the students were participating in tutoring and record notes on my laptop of what I observed. There were times when I asked the teacher or students what they were doing and why, and other times just took a seat and began to take notes on what I observed. This section consists of the following themes I highlighted during my observations: curriculum, instructional strategies, and student and staff engagement.

Theme 1: Math and Reading Curriculum Focus

The curriculum covered throughout the building varied on a daily basis depending on what class I was observing. The one consistent factor amongst all the tutoring sessions was that the focus was on math or reading skills. The following briefly highlights what staff used as their curriculum at each grade level and subject.

All tutoring teachers utilized a variety of English Language Arts materials for the reading instruction with their students. The instructors utilized their specific grade-level novels that they have designated for each quarter of the school year. Another reading resource that was utilized by all grade levels was the “leveled readers” that each teacher possesses from our Storytown reading curriculum series. The Storytown reading text and the student consumables were also used to have students read short stories and complete corresponding questions by providing written responses. The Study Island online resource was used in several ways: staff would utilize short passages with an emphasis on

one of the reading strategies (e.g., fluency and comprehension) and literacy-focused skills (e.g., main idea, theme, character traits). The AIMSweb online site was utilized specifically for fluency. This assessment involved having students read a timed passage and document their results in the progress-monitoring portion of AIMSweb. There were also some basic intervention remedial materials that were used to assist students on letter pronunciation and forming words. Another other online program that focuses on remedial literacy skills, called Fastforward, is specifically used by our special education students.

The math curriculum utilized by all three grade levels contained a number of different resources. One part of the curriculum is the Everyday Math series, which includes student text, student consumables, and related games. The online site Study Island was another resource used either on computers or with hard copy documents. There are also some basic intervention-level math resources, such as math fact cards, that are incorporated by staff as needed.

Theme 2: Instructional Strategies and Tutoring Session Structures

The instructional strategies observed varied between teachers and grade levels. There were some common strategies utilized in fifth grade due to the team-teaching organization established during the day. Other than fifth grade, each teacher around the building incorporated his or her own style or method in facilitating a tutoring session. A good portion of the time during math sessions involved students working independently and then sharing their responses to fellow students and the instructor through a worksheet, a personal small white board, or a large classroom white board. Students were expected to share their work and then explain how they solved the problem. There were sessions in which students used a computer to work on an assigned Study Island session

while the instructor assisted students individually. Observations also included a teacher using math fact cards and other Everyday math game manipulatives that involved auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning. These activities used lower-level questions that focused on basic understanding and comprehension of mathematical facts.

In one session, a fifth-grade teacher worked with a group of gifted students on the main skill of the week. A common practice in her sessions involved having the students explain what they should have done differently to come up with the correct response. In another fifth-grade class, one teacher employed the strategy of peer teaching. So, while one student teaches another by reviewing specific steps on how to determine a geometric angle, the teacher works with two other students on the same process.

Two teachers in the fifth-grade wing use a team-teaching approach to tutoring. Each one focuses on either reading or math the students rotate with the other teacher halfway through the session. One unique strategy they use involves having the one teacher lead the session so the other teacher can observe. Quite often you see students read aloud in a small group with a teacher facilitating. The instructor will periodically stop the reader to assist with word pronunciation, define a word, emphasize the skill for the week (e.g., theme or character trait), or discuss a comprehension question. Another strategy is having students complete written responses instead of verbally explaining their position on a question. These written responses require the students to support their answers with evidence from the text. These last two scenarios are used quite often due to all the key writing, reading, and comprehension strategies that are emphasized. At the sixth-grade level there are two instructors who utilize game cards that emphasize comprehension skills, such as “main idea.” Students read a brief passage from a card,

after which each student selects their main idea and uses evidence to support their response.

Theme 3: Student and Teacher Engagement Levels

Student and teacher engagement was closely observed to determine the level of involvement. All students whom I observed participating in the tutoring program were completely engaged with what their teacher asked them to do. Most of the time the teachers were not only involved, but were also prepared for the students during tutoring. The other observation was that the relationship between staff and students was much more relaxed, respectful, and cooperative. It truly felt that the students were appreciative of the extra help they were receiving, and, perhaps as a result, the teachers were much more relaxed. Some staff members provided snacks for the students, which definitely helps with switching gears from the day program to the after-school tutoring program.

SECTION FIVE: JUDGEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The primary question driving this study is: How does the after-school tutoring program impact student achievement? Addressing this primary question provides a big-picture perspective on the program as a whole. The secondary questions are the following:

1. What is the curricular focus during after-school tutoring?
2. How is student progress measured in after-school tutoring?
3. What instructional strategies are incorporated?
4. When and how often are the students being tutored on a weekly basis?
5. What is the attendance rate for students and staff?
6. What are the perceptions of the teachers on the purpose and effectiveness of the program?

All of these secondary questions are pieces to the puzzle in confirming the current program's effect on student achievement.

Judgment

The curriculum focus in the after-school tutoring program is predominantly student skill deficiencies in math and reading. This is based on the teacher surveys, in which about 90% of the staff selected student deficiencies as the highest priority for the program. During the teacher interviews, the staff concurred with this choice. From my personal observations in the classroom, the instructors followed through on focusing on skill deficiencies. Some instructors would also incorporate the current lesson or a skill of the week when necessary.

Trying to find the best method of measuring student progress during after-school tutoring resulted in a range of responses and positions. The surveys declared that formative assessments, classroom grades, and local assessments—in that order—were the best options for accomplishing this. The interview groups' positions included preference for subjective informal assessments by each individual teacher, to projects and the use of formative assessments. During my personal observations, I did not witness any written or documented assessments other than informal assessments.

The instructional strategies incorporated in the tutoring sessions involved small-group and individual instruction, independent work, question-and-answer sessions, and a high level of engagement from both students and instructors. Instructors employed a variety of strategies that were specific to the student's skill deficiencies and learning styles. The most significant surprise I found was the level of comfort by both students and teachers, which allowed for safe and constructive discussions. The students in the after-school tutoring program feel safe to make mistakes and take chances with their responses, which is a positive sign for learning.

The overall perception of the tutoring program from the teaching staff is favorable, with about an 80% approval rate on the teaching surveys. The responses from the teacher interviews were also positive and offered constructive feedback. During my observations, my impressions of the staff were extremely positive, as they appeared purposeful when working with the students. One very positive point is that the majority of the staff have the same mindset in that they believe skill deficiencies should be the main focus for the after-school tutoring program. The element that is not as consistent across the board is the way to measure student progress. This secondary research question

needs to be looked at deeper to determine a consistent and accurate way to measure student growth.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations made to improve the overall after-school tutoring program at Yorktown Elementary School:

1. Developing and confirming the method to measure student progress is the most important decision to be made. The bottom line is that having a chosen system in place helps determine what has an impact on student learning. The benchmark assessments and grades still need to be analyzed, but there need to be progress made on a bimonthly or monthly basis.
2. Group students across a grade level with similar needs, and partner these students with teachers who have a strong background in that subject and skill. For this to work, we would need more teachers to volunteer to tutor after school so grade-level planning can take place.
3. Incorporate two sessions a week per grade level that focus on only homework help. All students have different support systems at home, and having the option of seeking additional help would be beneficial for students whose support systems are lacking. Additionally, it would be beneficial to solicit assistance from the local university and request students majoring in education to volunteer in the homework tutoring sessions.
4. Facilitate a level of communication and collaboration among the teachers who are tutoring so they can share their ideas, effective practices, and resources in use.

Consistent collaboration only helps to inspire different ideas on how to help all students.

5. A minimum of two tutoring sessions per week should be established for each student in the tutoring program to allow for consistency and reliability of effective tutoring practices.
6. Administer pre- and post-test assessments to determine strengths and weaknesses for each individual student, and measure growth over a period of time. The Terra Nova assessment was used as one of the student data points to determine growth. This was the only student data point utilized that included measuring growth from the previous school year. Consider the significant number of variables that can impact student performance—changing curriculum, different class settings, instructional nuances, and possibly a different buildings. The recommendation would be to use the current year’s assessments for both pre- and post-assessments to determine growth.

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APPENDIX A

Yorktown Elementary School Tutoring Guidelines

1. Identify students that need assistance:
 - a) Yorktown Watch List in reading and math
 - b) Special education students
2. Special education students should be tutored (confirm with administration for students that have special transportation).
3. Tutoring should focus on the specific deficiency as it correlates with the weekly curricular focus. Assessments should be given to track the student's progress (Study Island probes, AIMSweb progress monitoring, Storytown intervention material, Everyday Math curriculum).
4. Progress is monitored individually with the classroom data sheets, Yorktown Watch Lists, progress monitoring, and weekly classroom performance.
5. Building letter and grade-level permission sheet is given to parents for confirmation and permission to attend the tutoring program.
6. The instructor should engage all students the entire time during tutoring.

APPENDIX B

Yorktown Elementary School Tutoring Survey
Not Participating in After-School Tutoring

1. Have you ever tutored in the after-school tutoring program at Yorktown Elementary School?

 Yes
 No
2. If so, how many years? _____
3. Rank these elements from low (1) to high (5) in order of importance for the after-school tutoring programs.
 Skill deficiencies
 Homework
 Test preparation
 Research based Strategies
 Other _____

Comment Box:

4. Select the one best method in monitoring student progress throughout the tutoring sessions.

 Classroom Grades
 Local assessments (Story Town & Everyday Math)
 Standardized tests (Terra Nova, PARCC)
 Formative Assessment (AIMSweb & Study Island)

Comment Box:

5. How often do you think students should participate in after-school tutoring during the week?
- At least once a week
 - At least two times a week
 - At least three times a week
 - At least four times a week

Comment:

6. Do you agree? After-school tutoring program is effective in helping to increase student achievement.
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

Comment Box:

7. What are we doing well in our after-school tutoring program?

Comment Box:

8. What can we do better in our after-school tutoring program?

Comment Box:

9. Do you want to participate in the after-school tutoring program as an instructor?

Comment Box:

10. What is your role at Yorktown Elementary School?

- Specialist
- Homeroom teacher
- Administration

Would you like to participate in an interview/small group discussion concerning the after school-tutoring program? If so, please respond accordingly.

Yes No

If yes then record your name:

Name - _____

APPENDIX C

Yorktown Elementary School Tutoring Survey Participating in After-School Tutoring

1. Have you ever tutored in the after-school tutoring program at Yorktown Elementary School?
 - Yes
 - No
2. If so, how many years? _____
3. Rank these elements from low (1) to high (5) in order of importance for the after-school tutoring programs.
 - Skill deficiencies
 - Homework
 - Test preparation
 - Research-based strategies
 - Other _____

Comment Box:
4. Select the one best method in monitoring student progress throughout the tutoring sessions.
 - Classroom Grades
 - Local assessments (Story Town & Everyday Math)
 - Standardized tests (Terra Nova, PARCC)
 - Formative Assessment (AIMSweb & Study Island)

Comment Box:
5. How often do you think students should participate in after-school tutoring during the week?
 - At least once a week
 - At least two times a week
 - At least three times a week

- At least four times a week

Comment:

6. Do you agree? Our after-school tutoring program is effective in helping to increase student achievement.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Comment Box:

7. What are we doing well in our after-school tutoring program?

Comment Box:

8. What can we do better in our after-school tutoring program?

Comment Box:

9. What is your role at Yorktown Elementary School?

- Specialist
- Homeroom teacher
- Administration

Would you like to participate in an interview/small group discussion concerning the after school-tutoring program? If so, please respond accordingly.

Yes No

If yes then record your name:

Name - _____

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Teachers Who are Tutoring

1. What's working in the tutoring program?
2. What might need to be changed?
3. Do you see any connection between after-school tutoring and what goes on in the classroom?
4. What should the purpose be in after-school tutoring and why?
5. How should students be selected for tutoring and why?
6. Question number 5 on the tutoring survey asked to select the best method in monitoring student progress throughout the tutoring sessions? After reviewing the rank order from highest to lowest, staff was asked to comment on the results.
What is the best way to show growth during tutoring?

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions for Teachers Who are not Currently Tutoring

1. Generally speaking, what should the purpose be and why?
2. How should students be selected for tutoring and why?
3. Is there some reason that you're not participating?
4. Question number 3 on the tutoring survey asked to rank the curriculum elements from most to least important. Skill deficiencies were the highest rated element. What did you select and why?
5. Question number 5 on the tutoring survey asked to select the best method in monitoring student progress throughout the tutoring sessions? After reviewing the rank order from highest to lowest, staff was asked to comment on the results. What is the best way to show growth during tutoring?
6. Question number 9 on the tutoring survey asked what we can do better in our after-school program. What do you think? Elaborate?