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### Supporting Self-Efficacy Through After-School Programming

Rene' J. Alford

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# **Consultancy Project Executive Summary**

Organization: Gardner-Webb University School of Education

Project Title: SUPPORTING SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Candidate: Rene' J. Alford

Consultancy Coach: Dr. Jeffrey Hamilton

Defense Date: July 06, 2020

Authorized By: Ms. Lisa Spalding, Partnering School Principal

## Approval

This consultancy project was submitted by Rene' J. Alford under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Dr. Jeffrey Hamilton, Faculty Advisor  
Gardner-Webb University

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Date

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Ms. Lisa Spalding, Site Advisor  
Partnering School Principal

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Date

## **Acknowledgements**

This journey has been one of my greatest challenges but also one of my greatest accomplishments. I feel that I am ending this program much stronger than I began and have grown both personally and professionally over these last 3 years.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their ongoing support and patience. The frequent conversations about the work I was doing were always met with love and a listening ear. Encouragement was never lacking, and their pride was evident. I am truly grateful to them for always believing in me.

When I was searching for a doctoral program, I knew a cohort feature was a must. The relationships I have gained from my cohort have been some of the most impactful experiences of these last 3 years. Mary Affee, Pamela Lucas, Carly Pearce, Silje Storstrand, and Theodore Thomas, you all have become like family to me. I am so grateful for your support and the friendships we have gained as we navigated this program.

Last, I have to thank the DEOL faculty I have come to know. I have never met a faculty who cares for students as my instructors do. Each one took the time to get to know me as a person, not just a student. Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Balls have become like mentors to me, and I am so grateful to know they are in my corner.

## **Abstract**

### **SUPPORTING SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMING.**

Alford, Rene' J., 2020, Consultancy Project, Gardner-Webb University.

Over the years, much attention has come to the disproportionate achievement of minority students versus their other race peers. Although many initiatives have been implemented across the nation to address the achievement gap, our school systems still show a considerable difference in student achievement, specifically between White and Black subgroups. Although varying from school district to school district, White students across the country continue to score almost two grade levels higher than Black students on average (Barshay, 2019). To address this issue, school systems are realigning professional development practices to reflect more culturally responsive instruction, moving to a mentality that equity does not mean equal, and seeking out opportunities to establish partnerships and engage communities in an attempt to close the gap. This Consultancy Project was designed to create a partnership with an elementary school in Cary, North Carolina to address the ongoing achievement gap of the school's African American students. It was adapted to support a specific node of students who were bused to the school from a Raleigh based neighborhood but were reassigned to another school, thus shifting the focus of the project to enhancing the programing of an existing after-school program implemented by Community in Schools (CIS). The project goals, strategies, and programming will be addressed throughout this executive summary.

*Keywords:* achievement gap, racial achievement, Black-White gab, culturally responsive instruction, educational equity

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Purpose

Part of a public school system in North Carolina, the elementary school I initially partnered with operates on a multi-track year-round calendar. The school has served Pre-K through fifth-grade students and families in the community for the last 14 years.

The school currently serves a diverse population of students within the community and has approximately 24% of students who receive free or reduced lunch. Compared to other neighboring elementary schools, this school is average in comparison (state designated B letter grade) as measured by the NC End-of-Grade tests. Although historical data indicate these students are making about average year-over-year academic improvements, the school continues to yield a large achievement gap between students in the Black subgroup as compared to their White and other race peers. Data from 2017-2018 show a 49% difference in proficiency between White and Black students and a 28% difference in proficiency between Hispanic and Black students. Students in the Black subgroup make up most students scoring levels 1 and 2 on the assessment.

Targeting the achievement of the aforementioned group of students at the partnering school, the initial scope of this project focused on three broad areas: the implementation of intentional practices centered on staffing and the master schedule, purposeful professional development geared towards culturally responsive instructional practices, and strengthening the school's family/community outreach. The Consultancy Project focus was then further narrowed to exclusively focus on community outreach and targeted a specific group of students who lived in the Heritage Park Community in Raleigh, NC who currently attended the school. Largely subsidized housing, Heritage Park is a predominantly African American community that is currently supported by the Community in Schools (CIS) program. The goal was to enhance the existing after-school program by creating a process that worked on increasing student concepts of self-efficacy and determine whether this would translate into the school setting.

To address this challenge, this Consultancy Project worked collaboratively with the school principal, CIS, and an independent counselor to develop a social-processing group within the existing after-school program in the Heritage Park Community. The goal was to provide supplemental support to students which focused on building self-efficacy to support students in their academic and life settings.

### Technical Terms and Definitions

- **Self-efficacy.** An individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments

(Bandura,1994).

- **Social-processing group.** A small group of students, facilitated by a therapist or intern, in which social modeling and mastery experiences are used to guide student self-perceptions.
- **Achievement gap.** Refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students.
- **Heritage Park.** A 122-unit affordable housing community in Raleigh, NC.
- **CIS.** A community-based organization that supports students in the partnering school district.

## 1.2 Associated Documents

- Partnering Elementary School 3-year End-of-Grade Data by Subgroup (See Appendix A).
- Example Social-Processing Group Consent form (See Appendix B).
- Pre/Post Group Assessment Questions (See Appendix C).
- Stakeholder Feedback Survey (See Appendix D)
- Literature Review (See Appendix E).

## 1.3 Project Plan Maintenance

The partnership for this Consultancy Project began in the spring of 2018, with Milestones 1-4 to be addressed during the summer months to coincide with the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Ms. Lisa Spalding, the partnering school principal, served as the supervisor of this project through its conclusion. A change in the Gardner-Webb University DEOL faculty advisor resulted in the project going in a different, more narrowed direction than originally planned. Although Ms. Spalding remained the project supervisor, a new partnering organization (CIS) was established to support the implementation of a social-processing group within their already existing after-school program with a dual goal of targeting student self-efficacy concepts and program enhancement. Dr. Jeffrey Hamilton, current project advisor, reviewed goals and initiatives as well as provided ongoing feedback to ensure satisfactory progress towards DEOL requirements was being made. The social-processing group was initially piloted during an after-school program facilitated by CIS at the Heritage Park neighborhood community center in Raleigh over a 2-week period in April 2019. The program was then implemented into the summer program through CIS.

## 2 Project Scope

### 2.1 Outline of Partnering Organization's Objectives

#### 2.1.1 Objectives

- Implementation of social-processing groups based on The Amandla Group™ model within an already existing after-school program with the goal of helping diverse students reach their potential in school, home, and their community and being facilitated by mental health counselor/counselors-in-training. CIS benefits from a free partnership that augments the program at the Heritage Park Community Center
- Align with the mission of CIS to support students in the partnering school district.

#### 2.1.2 Success Criteria

The success of this project was measured in two areas: an increase in student self-efficacy concepts and buy-in/interest from the CIS staff to continue the social-processing groups within their after-school program after the 2-week pilot program and then the month-long summer program.

#### 2.1.3 Risks

The risks to CIS to allow the implementation of a social-processing group into their already existing after-school program at Heritage Park was extremely low as it required no additional overhead to allow the Consultancy Project team to work with the students. Any involved programming cost would be at my expense.

### 2.2 Outline of Student's Objectives

#### 2.2.1 Objectives

**Initial Objective:** To examine the achievement gap at the partnering school and to assist the school in increasing achievement levels of students in the Black subgroup. The goal was to assist the principal with the development of an action plan to increase achievement in the aforementioned subgroup which focused on examining instructional practices, professional development, and community/family engagement opportunities.

**Adapted Objective:** Establish a partnership with CIS after-school program to support a node of minority students who attended the partnering elementary school. The goal was to focus on the social/behavior development of students and determine a potential connection to student performance in their academic setting. This entailed securing the help of a former school counselor and licensed Raleigh area counselor to develop a proposal for (and run) the social-processing groups, facilitate

communication with CIS staff, monitor the implementation of the groups, and work with the school principal to track student progress in the school setting.

**Final Objective:** Focusing exclusively on program enhancement, the goal was to generate buy-in from the CIS staff to generate interest in a long-term partnership to support their existing after-school program through the implementation of a 2-week pilot social-processing group (see adapted objective) with hopes of gaining permission to conduct the group through the summer.

### 2.2.2 Success Criteria

The success of the project was measured by an increased sense of self-efficacy concepts in participating students as a result of the social-processing group and the interest in an ongoing partnership with CIS to conduct the groups as part of their after-school program.

### 2.2.3 Risks

The major risk associated with this project is the inability to track student progress at the school due to reassignment. Other risks included limited buy-in from CIS staff, inconsistent student attendance/participation in the social-processing group, counselors unable to facilitate the groups, and post-group data not showing self-efficacy gains.

## 2.3 Definitive Scope Statement

This project was responsible for planning and implementing a social-processing group that would augment the academically focused after-school program currently established in the Heritage Park neighborhood through the CIS program. I was responsible for the following planning and action items:

- Maintaining communication with the partnering school principal to establish the initial partnership with CIS at Heritage Park.
- Collaborating with the licensed counselor to determine project outline and proposal to CIS.
- Facilitating communication between all stakeholders to plan/implement program schedule.
- Develop a parent consent form (see Appendix B) and organize initial meet and greet.
- Identify pre/post-assessment measures to gauge the impact of the social-processing group (see Appendix C).
- Create feedback surveys for stakeholders to provide ideas for program improvement (see Appendix D)

### 3 Deliverables

#### 3.1 To Partnering Organization

**Table 1**

*Deliverables to CIS*

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Establish partnership with independent counselor to develop a social-processing group program, identify participating team members, develop the assessment plan	January-April 2019
Initial Meeting w/ CIS staff to propose social-processing group integration into the after-school program at Heritage Park	April 2019
Counselor team meet & greet at Heritage Park Community Center, distribute parent consent forms	April 25, 2019
Initial pilot social-processing group program	April 29, 2019-May 9, 2019
Weekly stakeholder updates via email	April-May 2019
Solicit feedback from CIS staff re: social-processing group implementation	May 2019
Assess program success, plan logistics for implementation in the CIS summer program, update/distribute parent consent forms	June 2019
Implementation of summer social-processing group	July 2019
Assess program effectiveness, solicit feedback from CIS staff, team debrief to determine next steps for the upcoming school year	August 2019

#### 3.2 From Student

I agreed to serve as the liaison between the counseling team and the CIS staff to ensure effective communication and all stakeholders were provided updated information throughout the partnership. It was also requested that I honored

existing program planning already implemented in the after-school program and integrate the social-processing groups on days/times identified by the CIS staff.

## **4 Project Approach**

### **4.1 Project Lifecycle Processes**

This project was the result of the continued evolution of the initial Consultancy Project based on the feedback of the new consultancy supervisor to narrow the scope of the program and focus on one of the initially identified three broad areas. Wanting to stay aligned to the original concern of the achievement gap at the partnering elementary school, the decision was made to take advantage of the already existing relationship between the school and the CIS after-school program at Heritage Park Community Center. Although that node of students ended up being reassigned to another school, I had already established relationships with the CIS staff, thus allowing the scope to be further narrowed to the implementation of the social-processing groups that would augment the current after-school program. Once approved, the project was split into two phases with a projected third phase. Phases 1 and 2 consisted of a 2-week pilot of the social-processing groups which generated interested to run the group during the CIS summer program. Phase 3 was projected for the 2019-2020 school year in the same capacity. From the initial implementation of the social-processing group in April 2019, ongoing feedback was solicited from the CIS staff and counselors to determine program effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. The program concluded in August 2019 with Phase 3 unable to be implemented due to a cease in communication with the CIS staff. Reasons for this was unknown; however, assumptions are discussed later in this document.

### **4.2 Project Management Processes**

Throughout the duration of the project, I was the liaison for all communication with stakeholders. This included all planning meetings and updates to CIS staff and the project team via email. Ongoing communication was maintained with the project supervisor to provide updates and generate ideas to mitigate potential challenges. Counselors/counselors-in-training were responsible for running the social-processing group, collecting data in the form of field notes and pre/post group assessments, and tracking student attendance. Stakeholder feedback was solicited formally after the 2-week pilot program and again after the summer program. Informal feedback via face-to-face sessions or email was considered throughout the program.

### **4.3 Project Support Processes**

I was present for all initial planning meetings and feedback sessions. Although not always physically present during the times the social-processing groups were conducted, I was always available via phone or email to mitigate issues or field questions. The counselor/counselors-in-training were given autonomy to determine how the groups were run based on emerging themes that arose during the sessions. Any deviations to the group schedule was always done with the approval of the CIS staff.

## **4.4 Organization**

### **4.4.1 Project Team**

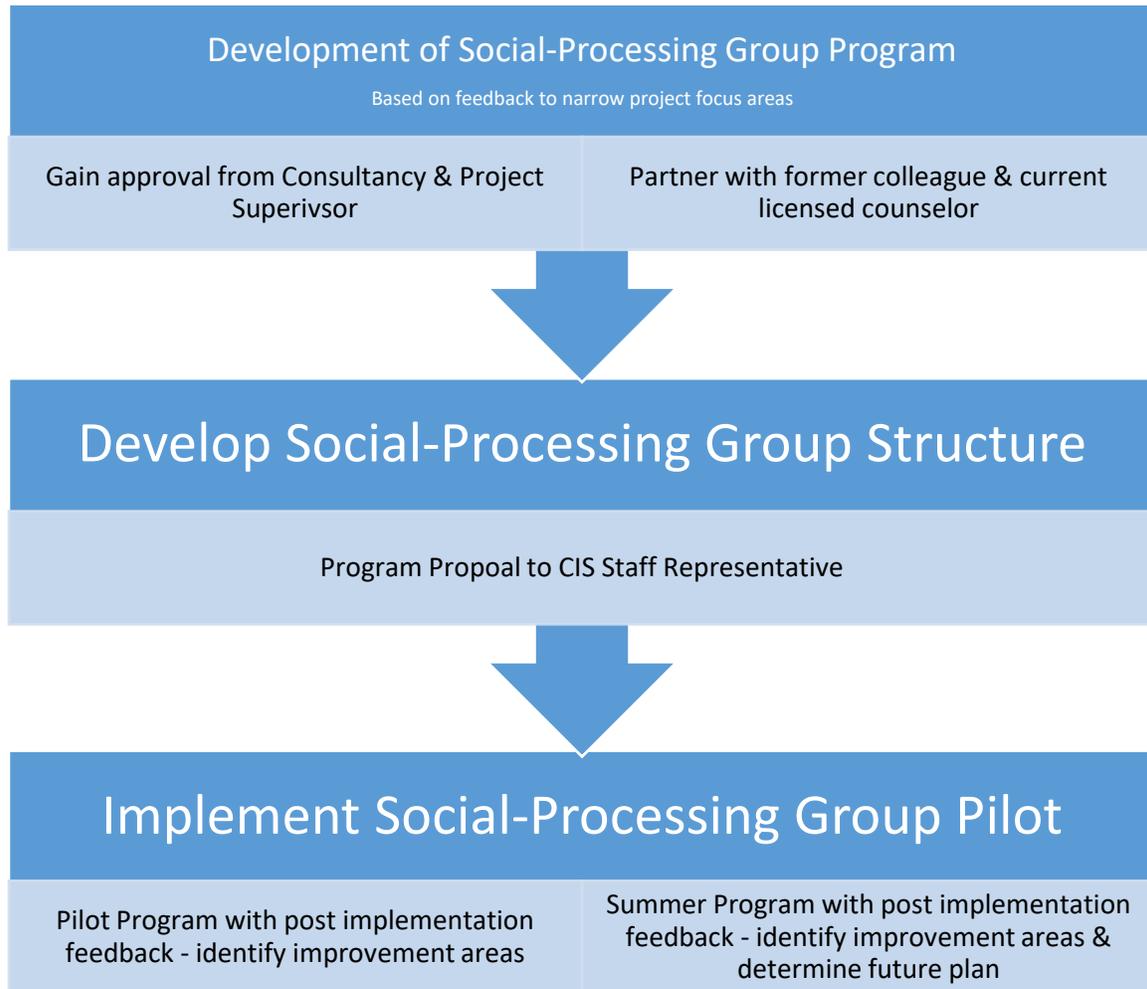
The stakeholders involved in this project including the following:

- Doctoral Candidate
- Project Supervisor
- DEOL Consultancy Supervisor
- Independent Counselor
- Counselors-in-Training
- CIS Staff
- Participating Students

#### 4.4.2 Mapping Between Organization and Student

**Figure 1**

*Social-Processing Group Organizational Map*



## 5 Communications Plan

**Table 2**

*Stakeholder Communication Plan*

What	When	How	Responsible	Audiences	
<p><b>Initial Pilot Program - 2 weeks</b></p> <p>Data from the pilot program will be utilized to determine if CIS feels there is value-added benefit to their existing programs &amp; determine interest to embed the social processing group into the CIS summer program at Heritage Park Community Center</p>	<p>April 29, 2019-May 9, 2019</p> <p>CIS Summer Program - July 8, 2019-August 1, 2019</p>	<p>During the established after-school CIS program, academically focused small groups (based on the Amandla Group model) will be facilitated by a certified therapist &amp; his interns</p> <p>Goal is to determine if this would be a value-added piece to enhance the CIS programs currently in place</p>	<p>Rene' Alford-program implementation /coordination</p> <p>Independent Counselor</p> <p>Counselors-in-Training</p>	<p>CIS Staff - Facility supervisors at Heritage Park Community Center</p>	<p>Heritage Park students participating in CIS program -social processing group participation is voluntary -parent consent required</p>
<p><b>Project Plan</b></p>	<p>Student small groups will run from 5:30-6:00pm, Mondays-Thursdays from 4/29-5/9</p>	<p>Participating students will complete a pre/post assessment targeting self-efficacy concepts</p> <p>Data will be used in conjunction w/survey data completed by CIS staff to determine a desire for a more comprehensive social processing group to enhance the summer program provided by CIS</p>	<p>Counselor/CITs -pre/post assessments -facilitation of small groups</p> <p>Alford -Analyze data -Administer CIS staff survey -Organize data -Coordinate debrief to review information &amp; determine next steps</p>		
<p><b>Team Meetings</b></p>	<p>4/18/19 -Initial planning</p>	<p>Face-to-face formal at CIS facility</p>	<p>Alford</p>		

	<p>meeting @ 4:00pm -CIS staff &amp; Alford/ Counselor team</p> <p>Weekly updates throughout the program duration</p>	<p>Email will be utilized for ongoing communication/updates</p>			
<b>Project Status Report</b>	6/5/19	<p>Conference call @ 9:30 -CIS &amp; Alford/Counselor -Review data -Next steps</p>	Alford		
<b>Next Steps</b>	6/5/19	<p>CIS agrees to the implementation of the social processing group during the summer program at Heritage Park</p>	Alford Counselor/CITs		
<b>Social Processing Group Summer Program</b>	7/8/19-8/1/19	<p>Groups run Tuesdays &amp; Wednesdays from 11:00-12:00 -Hardy/Intern will facilitate groups in the same format as the pilot program -Data collection will be in the same format as the pilot program</p>	Counselor/CITs		
<b>Project Conclusion</b>	<p>8/1/19 will conclude the work at Heritage Park Community Center</p> <p>Team will debrief in the following weeks to review data, determine program effectiveness, &amp; potential next steps</p>	<p>Data for face-to-face debrief TBA -CIS , Alford/Counselor</p>	Alford		

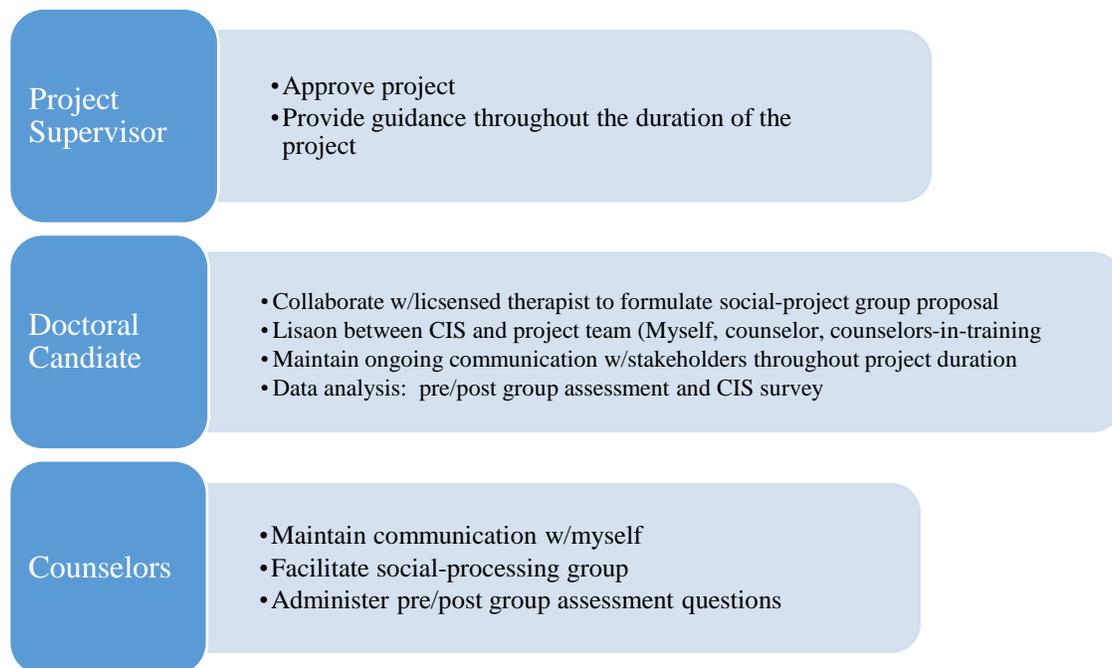
## 6 Work Plan

### 6.1 Work Breakdown Structure

Also see Section 5: Communications Plan

**Figure 2**

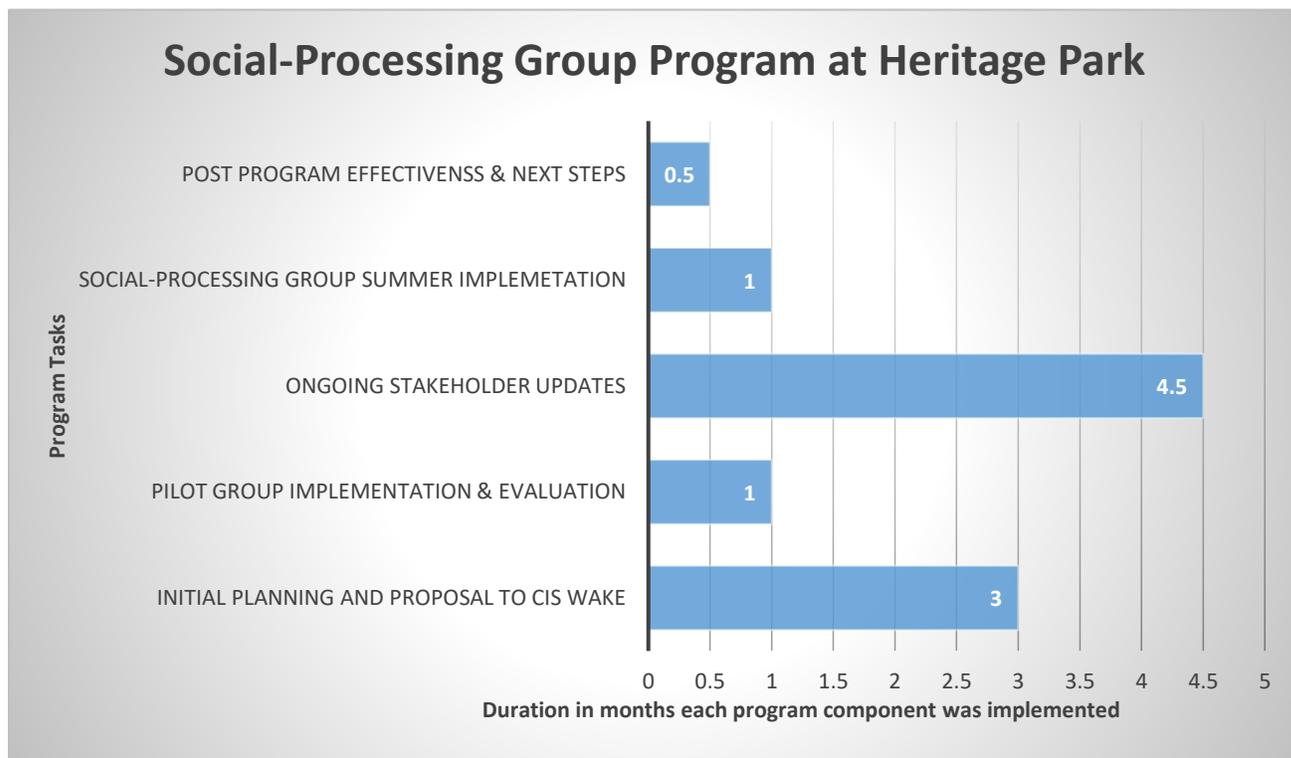
*Social-Processing Group Work Structure*



## 6.2 Resources

**Figure 3**

*Implementation of Program Components*



**Table 3**

*Social-Processing Group Resources with Identified Project Team Members*

Program Resources	Responsible Stakeholder
Use of Community Center at Heritage Park	CIS Staff
Pre/Post Group Assessments	Alford
Parent Consent Forms	Alford
Student Snacks	Alford
Field Notes	Counselor/Counselors-in-Training

## 7 Milestones

It is important to note that the project team was unable to complete the final implementation of the social-processing group due to severed communication with the CIS staff. The goal was to embed the group into the after-school program at Heritage Park for the 2019-2020 school year allowing the team to collect ongoing data regarding the impact of self-efficacy on student perceptions of themselves in their academic setting and daily lives.

**Table 4**

*Consultancy Project Milestones*

<b>Milestone Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Forecast date</b>
1	Initial Partnership w/project supervisor	Feb, 2018
2	Initial Project SMART Goal development	May, 2018
3	Development of Initial Project Scope	May, 2018
4	Initial Summary of Benefits	July, 2018
5	Initial Risk Assessment	October, 2018
6	Project Revision, New Goals Developed	January, 2019
7	Planning/Development of Social-Processing Group Program	Jan-April, 2019
8	Two-Week Pilot Program Implemented	April, 2019
9	Program Evaluation/Stakeholder Feedback	May, 2019
10	Social-Processing Group Summer Implementation	July, 2019
11	Program Evaluation/Stakeholder Feedback	August, 2019
12	Social-Processing Group Program Goal: 2019-2020 school year	Not Implemented
13	Executive Summary	May, 2020

## 8 Metrics and Results

While using a mixed method approach to collect data for this project, the qualitative data were most heavily referred to as the team evaluated overall program effectiveness for future implementation.

At the conclusion of the 2-week pilot program, students were administered a post group assessment in which their perception of self-efficacy was measured against the same questions students answered on the first day of the group (Appendix D).

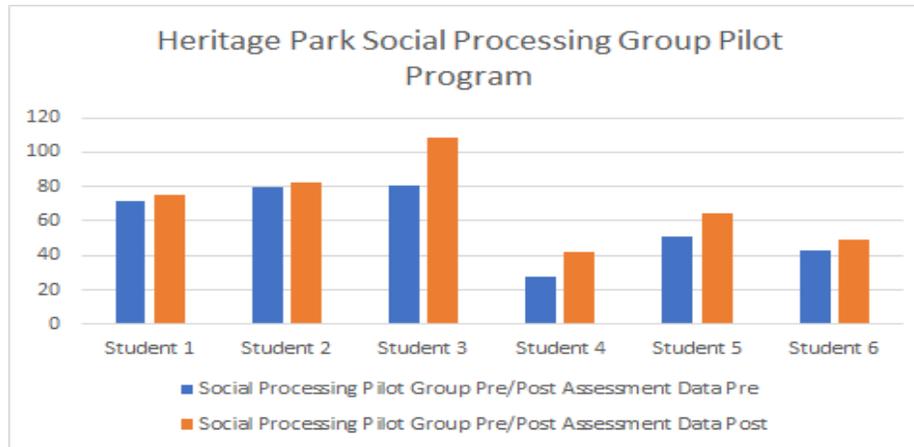
Geared towards fostering positive and supportive peer relationships to help kids increase personal and academic success, the project team developed the following hypothesis:

*An increase in self-efficacy gains will be evident among group participants in as early as 2 weeks through program implementation.*

The 2-week pilot program ran from April 29, 2019 through May 1, 2019. The participating students were administered a 24-question self-efficacy questionnaire by Muris (2001) that was obtained from Rand Education and Labor. The questionnaire was utilized in a pre/post-assessment format at the onset and conclusion of the social-processing group. Although 12 students participated in the program, only the data from the six students who had consistent attendance were evaluated. All six showed gains in self-efficacy over the 2-week period. For both the pre- and post-assessment, questions were read aloud to ensure that reading comprehension did not skew the results. Students had to reflect on each question and determine how proficient they were on each statement using a 1-5 scale, with a score of 1 indicating “not at all” and a score of 5 indicating “very well.” Total self-efficacy scores were obtained by summing scores across all items, with 24 as the lowest score and 120 the highest. Higher scores indicated higher concepts of self-efficacy. Figure 4 indicates the results of the six students who regularly attended the pilot program.

**Figure 4**

*Pilot Social-Processing Group Pre- and Post-Assessment Data*



At the conclusion of the pilot program, CIS staff were given a 3-question paper/pencil survey to generate feedback to support a potential summer program. They were asked to respond if they thought the pilot program was beneficial to the CIS program at Heritage Park, why/why not, and provide suggestions for program improvement to be considered in a future social-processing group program. Three staff members completed the survey. These were the individuals who were on site at Heritage Park and facilitated the after-school program. All felt the pilot program was successful even though only six students maintained consistent attendance. All three surveys indicated the small group discussion in a risk-free environment as a positive experience for the students based on their observations of body language and participation. A suggestion of refined communication going into the summer program was indicated as a need. Staff at the Heritage Park site indicated they were not always aware of what was going on as they were not included on the email communication with the CIS representative, myself, and counselor.

The second social-processing group was conducted from July 8, 2019 through August 1, 2019. The pre/post-assessment was shorted from the initial 24 questions to the following 10 questions based on therapist feedback regarding the length of time it took to administer (Muris, 2001):

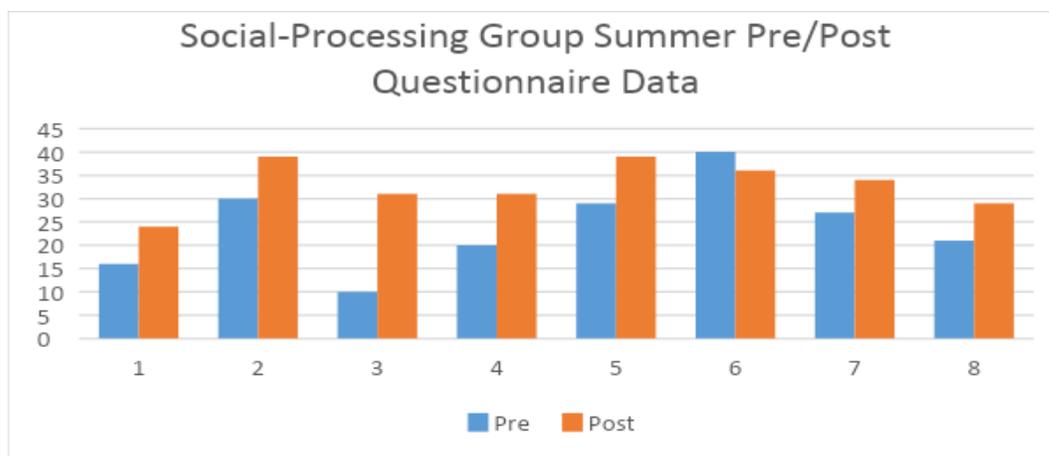
1. How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on schoolwork?
2. How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?
3. How well can you become friends with other children?
4. How well do you succeed in finishing all your homework every day?
5. How well can you tell other children that they are doing something that you don't like?
6. How well can you give yourself a pep-talk when you feel low?

7. How well do you succeed in understanding all subjects in school?
8. How well can you tell a friend that you do not feel well?
9. How well do you succeed in staying friends with other children?
10. How well do you succeed in passing a test?

Of the 10 questions, five focused on academic self-efficacy, three focused on social self-efficacy, and two focused on emotional self-efficacy. Pre/post-questionnaire data from the eight participating students were as follows:

**Figure 5**

*Summer Social-Processing Group Pre- and Post-Assessment Data*

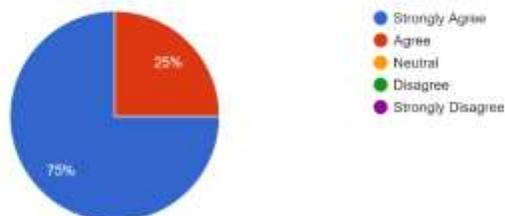


Data from seven of the eight participating students indicated an increased sense of self-efficacy concepts at the end of the social-processing group, so we were just shy of our goal of all students making gains. Further disaggregation of the data indicated that most of the gains seemed to be in the areas of social and emotional self-efficacy concepts.

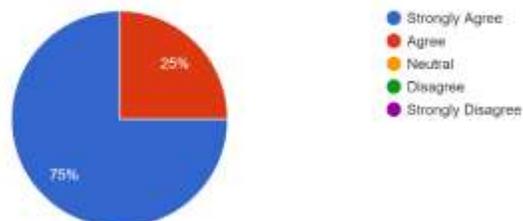
A 5-question survey was administered to participating therapists and CIS staff to solicit feedback about the program. Two of the questions were presented in a strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree format; and three were open-ended responses. Responses from the first two survey questions were as follows.

**Figure 6***Project Stakeholder Question One*

To the best of your knowledge, students were engaged and participatory in the Social Processing Group sessions.  
4 responses

**Figure 7***Project Stakeholder Question Two*

To the best of your knowledge, students enjoyed participating in the Social Processing Group.  
4 responses



The open-ended responses asked participants to state, in their opinion, what was most successful about the program, what aspects would they recommend changing, and is the social-processing group something they would want to implement in the future. These questions only generated four responses, and it is unknown if they were from the counselors or from the CIS staff. The responses were largely positive in terms of what was successful, highlighting opportunities for students to express themselves in a safe environment. Areas for improvement included opportunities to group students closer in age, overall communication between all stakeholders, and more flexibility for recruiting and scheduling. Regarding future program implementation, three of the four responses enthusiastically stated they would love to continue the program; however, one response stated they would consider it based on a review (and adjustments) to the implementation process (See Appendix D).

## 9 Risks, Constraints, Assumptions

### 9.1 Risks

The project risks identified below are related specifically to the more narrowed scope of the project which focused on the implementation of the social-processing group during the CIS after-school program at Heritage Park.

**Table 5**

*Consultancy Project Risk Assessment*

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Mitigation Plan (what to do to avoid the risk occurring)</b>	<b>Contingency Plan (what to do if the risk occurs)</b>	<b>Impact (what the impact will be to the project if the risk occurs)</b>	<b>Likelihood of occurrence (e.g., %, or high/medium/low)</b>
Ability to track student self-efficacy data and teacher perception due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Reassignment</li> <li>• Families moving</li> <li>• School choice options</li> </ul>	There is no way to mitigate changes to student assignment or families' personal circumstances.	The focus of the social-processing group would have to be focused away from the connection to the students' academic setting and rather exclusively focus on the enhancement of the current after-school program.	Medium	High
Students participating in the social-processing group do not show increased perceptions of self-efficacy at the end of the group	Administer per/post group assessments in a read aloud format to remove students' reading level as a barrier  Provide opportunities for students to unpack the	Include the opportunity to debrief with students after group completion to attempt to gain a more in depth understanding	Low	Medium

	questions to ensure full understanding of meaning.			
Counselors schedules not aligning with permitted group times	Have counselors present in all planning conversations and group proposals to ensure schedules align w/their availability		High	Low
CIS Staff not approving the integration of the social-processing group into their existing after-school program	Maintain thorough communication w/all stakeholders through initial pilot program & summer program  Generate feedback from CIS Staff to target program enhancement		High	Medium

## 9.2 Constraints

The primary constraint this project was operating under was the buy-in from the CIS staff. The initial Consultancy Project focus did not as heavily emphasize this partnership as it was not the sole component of the Consultancy Project at its onset. Once the scope was narrowed to the integration of a social-processing group into CIS's existing after-school program, the project team experienced some difficulty with the initial planning meeting and buy-in among the other stakeholders. The project team also had to work within the boundaries established by the CIS staff, including date spans to implement the social-processing groups and time/day the groups could occur.

## 9.3 Assumptions

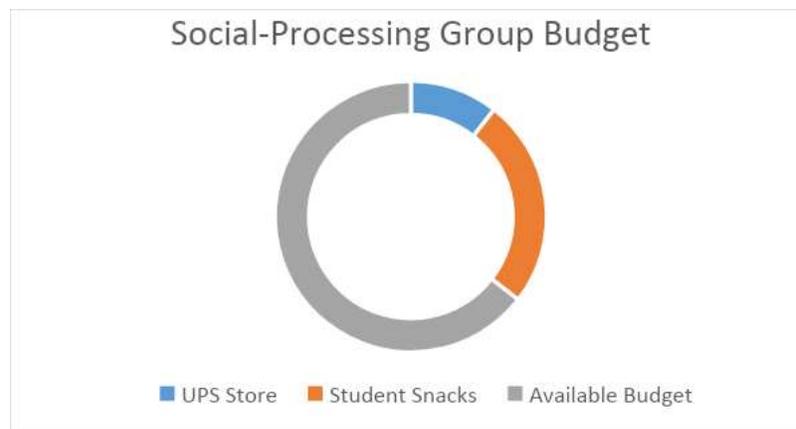
The primary assumption was that all participating stakeholders would have a similar view of how incorporating a social-processing group would enhance the existing after-school program since there was no risk involved to the after-school program. All services were voluntary by the counselors/counselors-in-training.

## 10 Financial Plan

There were no significant costs required to complete this Consultancy Project. Services provided by the counselor/counselors-in-trainings were done on a volunteer basis. CIS already had an existing after-school program at the Heritage Park Community Center; therefore, there was no additional overhead as the social-processing group pilot and summer programs were implemented during the already established dates/times. Limited supplies were required to run the social-processing group. I budgeted \$200, which is highlighted below.

### Figure 8

*Project Budget Expenditures*



As Figure 8 indicates, the project was well within the budget allotment and less than half of the allotted budget was used. Purchased items included student snacks and copies of parent consent forms and pre/post group assessments.

## 11 Quality Assurance Plan

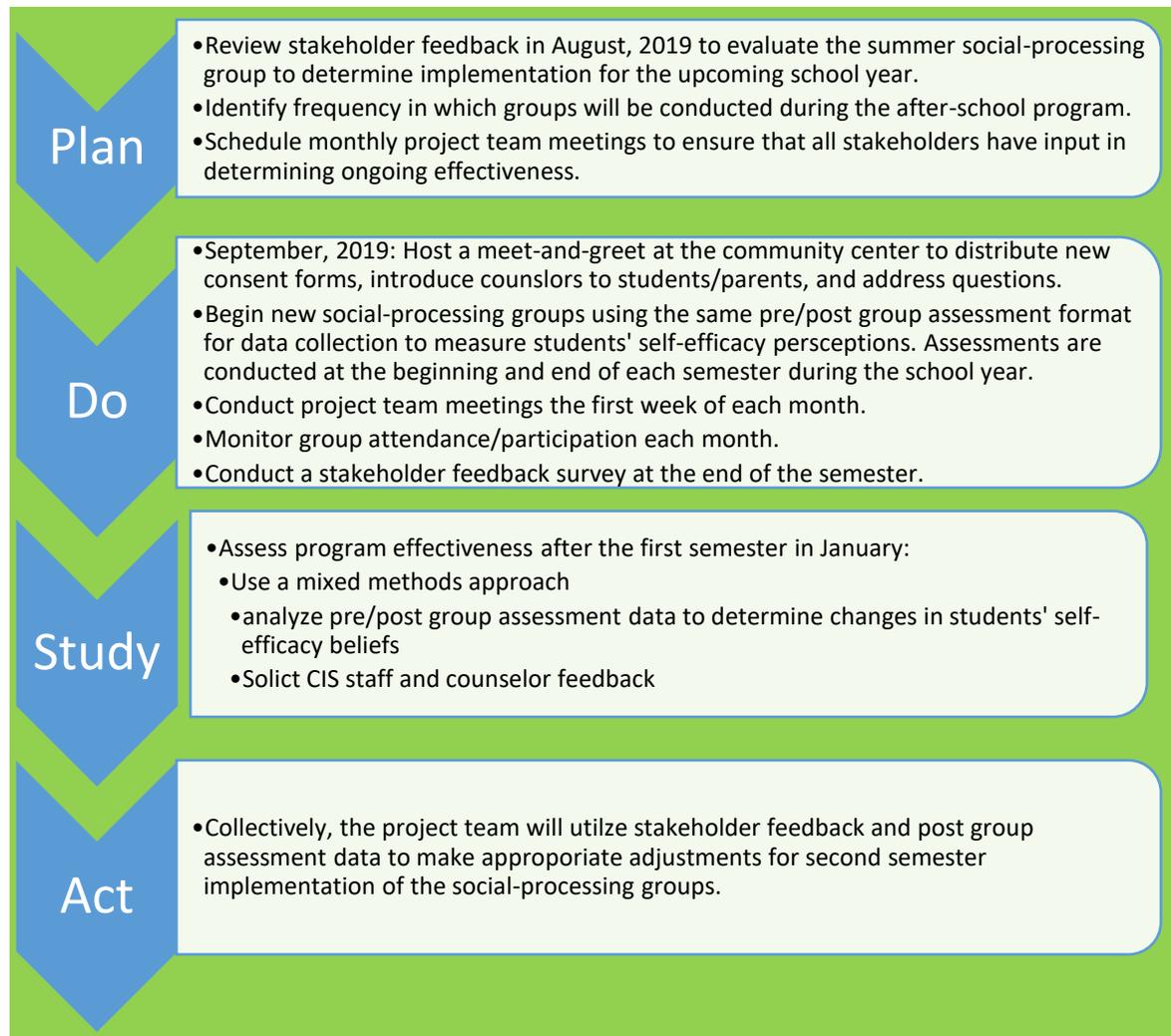
To measure the overall effectiveness of the social-processing groups and monitor project progress, I utilized the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle popularized by Deming (1993). Figure 9 highlights the first PDCA cycle from the project's onset. This process is also summarized in Section 8 of this document, Metrics and Results.

**Figure 9**

*PDCA 1*



The team's plan was to further debrief in the second week of August with the CIS staff as we were interested in continued work with their after-school program at Heritage Park utilizing the following PDCA cycle.

**Figure 10***PDCA 2*

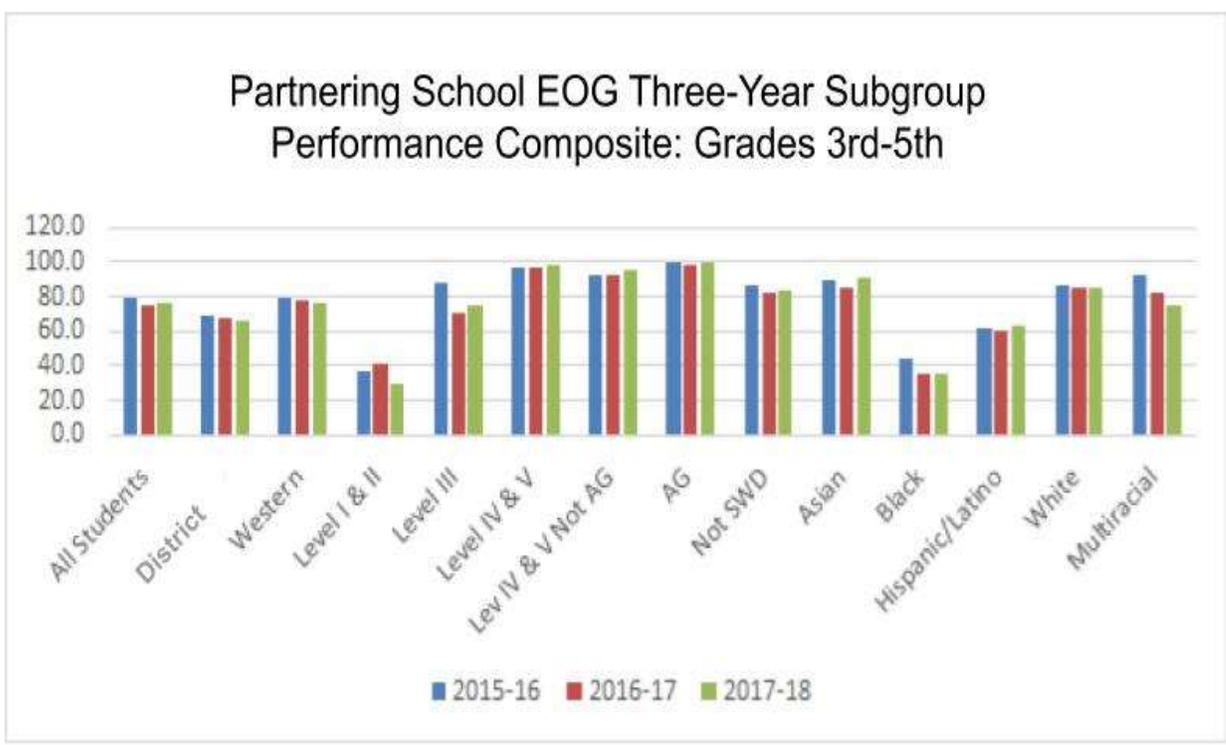
We felt like it was a win-win situation for all stakeholders. The counselor was volunteering his services or allowing his interns to work towards required hours; therefore, there was little to no cost on our end to implement the program. What little budget the program required was in the form of copies of consent forms, snacks for students which were optional, and materials that the counselor/interns may want to use outside of what was available at the community center. Because CIS was already running an after-school program at the community center, there would be no additional overhead cost for them to allow our group as part of their program; however, there was no more communication from them after the conclusion of the summer social-processing group.

although my team felt like the implementation of the social-processing group was a success, we were disappointed not to have further communication with the CIS staff, thus eliminating the opportunity to continue running the group during the 2019-2020 school as indicated in the above PDCA cycle. I based the cease in communication from the CIS representative based on the following assumptions:

- During the initial planning with the independent counselor, a long-term goal of eventually using the social-processing group as an opportunity to begin to further develop his practice by moving towards billable hours through Medicaid. We discussed that this would not be a topic of discussion until after full program implementation; however, it was later brought to my attention that this was mentioned in an email between the independent counselor and the CIS representative without my knowledge. It is assumed that there may have been a breach of trust with CIS as our initial proposal stated that our program was a free service.
- There was an ongoing communication breakdown between the project team, the CIS representative, and the staff at the community center. The community center staff seemed very interested in our program but expressed frustration about communication aspects as we moved through the initial pilot program and into the summer program. It is assumed that this contributed to a lack of interest in continuing the program.
- It is unclear as to whether there was clear understanding of the purpose of the program by the CIS staff. It is assumed that the staff may have been under the impression that program requirements were satisfied at the conclusion of the summer program.

### Appendix A

#### North Carolina End-of-Grade Performance Composite Data by Subgroup Partnering Elementary School 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students



## Appendix B

### Social-Processing Group Consent Form

June 24, 2019

Dear Parent(s), Guardian(s):

We are offering a program in your child's Communities in Schools site at Heritage Park during the summer session. This social processing group pilot program is based on the socio-process group model, The Amandla Group™, a program that has been successfully implemented in schools from elementary through university, with the goal of helping diverse students reach their potential in school, at home, and in their community.

This program will start on July 9<sup>th</sup> and will run Tuesdays-Thursdays through the duration of the summer program. The goal will be to augment the academically focused programming students receive through CIS, using designated time for small group discussion sessions, facilitated by mental health counselors/counselors-in-training. Group discussion time will be incorporated into the existing CIS programming and will be scheduled for 11:00am-12:00pm each day. Group discussion sessions will provide an open, supportive environment for dialogue amongst school-aged participants, geared towards fostering positive and supportive peer relationships to help students increase personal and academic success.

Group participation is voluntary, but students must return their parental consent response form to join the group discussions. We are also asked that parents of participating students attend one session on July 16<sup>th</sup> to learn more about the program. The time for that session is TBD. For more information on the program, you may also contact René Alford at XXXXXX.

\*Please have your child return the completed response form to  
CIS at Heritage Park by **July 8th**

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#### RESPONSE FORM

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like my child to participate in The Amandla Group™ pilot program through Communities in Schools at Heritage Park. (Please initial)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will participate in the parent session on July 16<sup>th</sup> (Please initial)

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Social-Processing Group Pre/Post Program Assessments

#### Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C)

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very well
1. How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on schoolwork?	<input type="radio"/>				
2. How well can you express your opinions when other classmates disagree with you?	<input type="radio"/>				
3. How well do you succeed in cheering yourself up when an unpleasant event has happened?	<input type="radio"/>				
4. How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?	<input type="radio"/>				
5. How well do you succeed in becoming calm again when you are very scared?	<input type="radio"/>				
6. How well can you become friends with other children?	<input type="radio"/>				
7. How well can you study a chapter for a test?	<input type="radio"/>				
8. How well can you have a chat with an unfamiliar person?	<input type="radio"/>				
9. How well can you prevent to become nervous?	<input type="radio"/>				
10. How well do you succeed in finishing all your homework every day?	<input type="radio"/>				
11. How well can you work in harmony with your classmates?	<input type="radio"/>				
12. How well can you control your feelings?	<input type="radio"/>				
13. How well can you pay attention during every class?	<input type="radio"/>				
14. How well can you tell other children that they are doing something that you don't like?	<input type="radio"/>				
15. How well can you give yourself a pep-talk when you feel low?	<input type="radio"/>				
16. How well do you succeed in understanding all subjects in school?	<input type="radio"/>				
17. How well can you tell a funny event to a group of children?	<input type="radio"/>				
18. How well can you tell a friend that you don't feel well?	<input type="radio"/>				
19. How well do you succeed in satisfying your parents with your schoolwork?	<input type="radio"/>				
20. How well do you succeed in staying friends with other children?	<input type="radio"/>				
21. How well do you succeed in suppressing unpleasant thoughts?	<input type="radio"/>				
22. How well do you succeed in passing a test?	<input type="radio"/>				
23. How well do you succeed in preventing quarrels with other children?	<input type="radio"/>				
24. How well do you succeed in not worrying about things that might happen?	<input type="radio"/>				

#### Scoring

A total self-efficacy score can be obtained by summing across all items.  
 Items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, and 22 = Academic self-efficacy

## Social Processing Group – Heritage Park Self-Efficacy Questionnaire – Post

Please answer the following questions based on how you feel after participating in the Social Processing Group. A response of 1 would mean you don't feel like you do that particular task well at all. Answering 2 would indicate that you feel you could learn to do it. A response of 3 means that you feel that you sometimes do the task well. 4 would indicate that you feel that you do the task well consistently and 5 means that you are very confident in the task. There is no wrong response!

	<b>1 – Not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5- Very well</b>
How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on work?					
How well can you become friend with other children?					
How well can you tell other children they are doing something that you don't like?					
How well can you tell a friend that you don't feel well?					
How well do you succeed in staying friends with other children?					
How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?					
How well do you succeed in finishing all of your homework every day?					
How well do you succeed in understanding all subjects in school?					
How well do you succeed in passing a test?					
How well can you give yourself a pep talk when you feel low?					

## Appendix D

### Heritage Park Social-Processing Group Stakeholder Feedback Survey

5/13/2020

Heritage Park Social Processing Group - Feedback Survey

## Heritage Park Social Processing Group - Feedback Survey

Hello! In an effort to examine overall effectiveness of the Social Processing Group conducted during the summer program at Heritage Park I would love your feedback! The survey is 5 questions and responses are completely anonymous. Thank you in advance! I'm so grateful for your support! - Rene'

1. To the best of your knowledge, students were engaged and participatory in the Social Processing Group sessions.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2. To the best of your knowledge, students enjoyed participating in the Social Processing Group.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5/13/2020

Heritage Park Social Processing Group - Feedback Survey

3. In your opinion, what do you feel was the most successful about the program?

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4. In your opinion, what aspects would you change about the program for improvement?

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5. Is the Social Processing Group program something you'd want to implement in the future? Why/Why not?

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## **Appendix E**

### **Literature Review**

Part of a North Carolina public school system, the partnering elementary school referenced in this Consultancy Project is a multi-track year-round calendar school. Located in Cary, North Carolina, the school has served prekindergarten through fifth-grade students and families in the community for the last 14 years. Currently, the school serves a diverse population of students within the community and has approximately 24% of students who receive free or reduced lunch.

Aligning to school district's vision, which states that all students will be prepared to reach their full potential and lead productive lives in a complex and changing world, the partnering school has aligned school improvement practices and focus areas that are supportive of district goals and initiatives. Compared to other elementary schools in Cary, North Carolina, the school is average in comparison (state designated B letter grade) as measured by the North Carolina End-of-Grade tests. Although historical data indicate that overall, the students at the school are making about average year-over-year academic improvements, the school continues to yield a large achievement gap between students in the Black subgroup as compared to their White and other race peers. Data from 2017-2018 show a 49% difference in proficiency between White and Black students and a 28% difference in proficiency between Hispanic and Black students. Students in the Black subgroup also make up most students scoring levels 1 and 2 on the assessment.

The goal of this literature review is to identify specific best practices to increase student achievement in minority subgroups. Fifteen articles were reviewed that identified best practices, largely from education-based platforms that examine current and past

trends in public education. There will be some overlapping references to poverty statistics, specifically when referencing equitable practices and resources as studies have shown that socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity are connected (American Psychological Association, 2017).

### **Culturally Responsive Instructional Practices**

Just as important as teaching specifically instructional standards, today's public school teachers are tasked with relating that content to the varied backgrounds of the students in their class. An article published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) discussed the importance of relating instructional content to students' own diverse backgrounds to be effective in multicultural classrooms (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). The article went on to define a model of culturally responsive teaching as "a pedagogy that crosses disciplines and cultures to engage learners while respecting their cultural integrity. It accommodates the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student's cultural identity" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 1). Similarly, the Center for Law and Social Policy, a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit agency that focuses on advancing racial equity, discussed the importance of culturally responsive instructional practices specially designed to support African American youth: "It is especially critical for adults supporting the holistic development of African American youth to understand this concept. Good multicultural teaching honors the country's diverse cultural and ethnic experiences, contributions, and identities" (Bird, 2014, p. 4).

In an article from the Thomas Fordham Institute, Kim (2016) discussed the importance of intentional practices in diversifying material and working to counteract

negative stereotypes (p. 4). She also discussed the impact of stereotypes regarding racial groups and academic achievement: “A large, growing body of research has demonstrated how teacher expectations can reinforce the notion that White and Asian students will outperform their Black and Hispanic classmates” (Kim, 2016, p. 2).

Acknowledging stereotypes and implicit bias is an important prerequisite that educators need to identify prior to being able to plan instruction that is culturally relevant. Wlodkowski and Ginseberg (1995) did not dive in the acknowledgement of an individual’s own implicit biases as they relate to addressing culturally responsive instructional practices; however, Bird’s (2014) work did. “Improving the cultural awareness and competence of teachers as a means of breaking down prior biases is a critical first step” (Bird, 2014, p. 5). Krasnoff (2016) of The Region X Equity Assistance Center at Education Northwest discussed specific culturally responsive instructional practices. Citing research from the Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement Program, Krasnoff highlighted 27 practices including welcoming students by name as they enter the classroom; ensuring bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials, and other visuals in the classroom reflect students’ racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds; and using students’ real life experiences to connect school to learning.

It was important that the relevance of culturally responsive instructional practices was considered as I worked with the principal of the partnering elementary school to evaluate current practices within the building as well as examine staff perceptions of culturally responsive instruction to determine specific goals that the school can implement to address the achievement of students in the Black subgroup.

## **Equitable Practices and Resources**

Barth (2016) referenced *Brown v. Board of Education* as an obvious victory in the civil rights movement in which the United States Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to segregate public educational systems based on race; however, the publication went on to discuss the continued importance of addressing issues of equity as it related to student achievement. Data provided by the Civil Rights Project in 2012 indicated that “the typical Black student, for example, attends a school with a two-thirds poverty rate” (Barth, 2016, p. 3). Barth also highlighted data provided by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development in 2008 that compared students in poverty to their peers: “In the U.S. today, our poorest students are nearly four times as likely to fail in math than their wealthiest peers” (Barth, 2016, p. 3). Recommendations to address equity issues include funding, access to good teachers, high-level curriculum, and intentional discipline policies.

Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.) identified the need to focus on equitable practices to close the achievement gap, including access to high-level curriculum, distribution of materials, and specific programs tailored to the needs of individual schools/districts. The need for stronger funding systems was discussed; however here, specific student progress was identified as a result of these systems including an increased high school graduation rate of traditionally underserved students and a decreased rate of high school dropouts with the greatest gains in minority subgroups (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

In an article focusing on closing the achievement gap, Hancock (2001) looked at equity through the lens of the characteristics of specific teachers to whom students are

exposed. Unlike the aforementioned publication from the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.) that broadly focused on funding systems, Hancock focused on the implications of minority students as related to access to quality teachers, specifically the notion that students in schools that have high free and/or reduced lunch rates are more likely to be taught by teachers who meet the minimum requirements of their state, as often these schools are not attracting the top teachers when individual schools are responsible for hiring. Barth (2016) also echoed the impact teachers have on student learning. She referenced work from the Center for Public Education that discussed the impact teachers have on student learning and how teacher quality is higher than any other factor in terms of closing achievement gaps (Barth, 2016). Barth defined effective teachers as “teachers whose impact on student learning is above the average” (p. 5) and noted that these teachers are disproportionately found in more affluent school populations.

This research was especially important as I worked with the partnering school principal to evaluate various building resources, including the allocation of specific funds, supplies, and human capital to determine if the school’s underperforming students have access to appropriate supports and high-quality teachers.

### **Community Engagement**

Many public school districts are now focusing on community engagement strategies as an intervention to support their neediest students. These interventions can include wraparound services supporting the whole child and family, access to early intervention programs, after-school programming, and supports to parents to reduce student absenteeism (Garcia & Weiss, 2017). Garcia and Weiss (2017) identified 12 case studies in which either part of or the entire school district participated in a whole-child

initiative that connected community partnerships to school programming to support low-income families. Garcia and Weiss concluded that interventions through these partnerships were critical in addressing the educational gaps among various subgroups.

Kamm (2018) connected the importance of early intervention and access to high-quality preschool programs and the establishment of community partnerships to specifically support struggling students. Similar to Garcia and Weiss (2017), Kamm connected family engagement to student achievement but went on to outline the elements of a comprehensive family engagement program and strategies that schools can use to specifically support minority students including the encouragement of parent volunteers, a strong Parent Teacher Student Organization, communication with families in their home language, training to support parents, and mentor type community partnerships.

The evaluation of existing community engagement programs at the partnering school was especially important in determining which programs could be further enhanced to ensure that the neediest students are being supported.

### **Summary**

The achievement gap between African American students and their same age peers continues to a glaring issue in public education. Directed by Sonia Lowman, the 2017 Netflix documentary *Teach Us All* highlighted how educational inequities still exist in our school system, despite being 60 years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* victory; and similar issues are still major topics of public school systems to date. Chen (2017) centered on the notion that public schools were resegregating. Chen discussed how our nation's schools are backsliding towards segregation. Chen cited an audit conducted by the Government Accountability Office on educational segregation patterns

that highlighted the growth in the countries segregated schools. Chen defined segregated schools as “having three-quarters of their students in poverty and of Black and Latino decent” (p. 1).

The purpose of this literature review was to identify practices necessary to close the achievement gap and specifically examine culturally responsive instructional practices, equity, and community engagement. The reviewed literature produced consistent themes in the three areas and suggests that there will be a continued disparity in achievement for students of color if stakeholders are not strategic in embedding these practices into school systems.

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