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THE COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS FOR ON-TRACK MENTORING PROGRAMS
AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

By
Kayla M. Barbare

A Dissertation in Practice Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2023

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Kayla M. Barbare under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University College 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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Abstract

THE COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS FOR ON-TRACK MENTORING PROGRAMS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL. Barbare, Kayla M., 2023: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

Comparable to other schools in the local education agency, this mid-sized rural high school's On-Track program utilized early warning indicators to track the well-being of students and to determine what actions needed to occur to promote student success. Through various meetings, the mid-sized rural high school's On-Track stakeholders indicated areas for improvement, specifically in the area of communications. The On-Track program stakeholders expressed how they desired to improve stakeholder involvement and collaboration and enhance how program information is shared. The purpose of this study was to analyze the literature, theoretical frameworks, and data utilizing a mixed methodology approach in order to identify where communication efforts could be improved. The study embodies action research designed to address the question, "How can the On-Track program's communication outlets enhance program awareness, meet the communication needs of all stakeholders, and better all stakeholders' involvement?" This study is highly valuable to other high school level mentoring programs in need of enhanced communication efforts. The findings of this study are represented through a communications plan which can be modified to meet the unique communication needs of other high school level mentoring programs.

Keywords: communications plan, early warning indicators, engagement, interventions, invisible barriers, language barriers, mentoring programs, On-Track

program, positive relationships, scientific-based strategies, stakeholder involvement,
student success

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Project Purpose

The mid-sized rural high school is located in South Carolina. This mid-sized rural high school is one of 84 schools in the local education agency, which happens to be the largest school district in the state of South Carolina and the 44th largest district in the United States. The local education agency also accepts students from some other surrounding counties. The North Main Street site served as the main school building until 1998 when the mid-sized rural high school relocated to its current campus. Although the mid-sized rural high school is rich in tradition, history has proven that changes and advancements have progressively impacted the community-oriented school that strives to develop well-rounded citizens (Anonymous, personal communication, April 14, 2020).

The mid-sized rural high school's community is predominantly suburban with a diversity of inner-city and rural populations along with a small percentage of foreign exchange students. The school's ethnic breakdown as of the spring of 2021 was 32% Hispanic, 44.5% Caucasian, 21.5% African American, and the remaining 2% Asian, Native American, and Alaska Native (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020). The mid-sized rural high school serves 1,189 students in Grades 9-12 and has many international students enrolled due to an International Baccalaureate program that is offered through the school. Of those 1,189 students, 172 students are identified as special education, with learning disabilities being the largest group. As of the 2020-2021 school year, the poverty index at the mid-sized rural high school was 54.6%. Fifty-five percent of students are receiving free or reduced meals through their meal plans (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Additionally, the mid-sized rural high school currently has five administrators, 85 teachers and professional staff members, and 15 support staff members. There are four school counselors who are assigned to a specific grade level and who move forward with their grade level each year so they are able to work with the same group of students throughout their entire high school experience. The school counseling department also has a director of school counseling who is over the entire department and serves off-grade level students. Other professional staff members consist of an instructional coach, an instructional technology specialist, an IB coordinator, an athletic director, and two media specialists. The ethnic breakdown of the staff at this mid-sized rural high school consists of 81.5% Caucasian, 13.85% African American, and 1.5% Latino. Of the professional staff at the high school, 58% are female. Six teachers at the high school are National Board certified and over three fourths of the professional staff hold advanced degrees, while several others are currently pursuing advanced degrees. The average number of years teachers have spent teaching at the high school is 9, with 31 teachers having only ever taught at this specific school (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

The vision for the mid-sized rural high school's students is to graduate college and career ready, which is part of the school's G+ initiative. The second part of the school's vision is for students to be inspired to make a positive difference in society and be empowered to become lifelong learners. The high school's mission is to teach the whole child and provide students with an exceptional learning experience through the incorporation of innovative strategies, real-world relevance, and integrating technology (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

The purpose of this project was to assist the mid-sized rural high school's On-Track program in developing an action plan designed to improve stakeholder involvement and collaboration and enhance how program information is shared. This project specifically focused on the area of communications within the On-Track program, which involved staff members, students, and parents.

The high school's On-Track program desired to develop a better On-Track program that would act as an exemplar for other local education agencies to utilize as well. This program has had some success along the way but was in need of improvements in the area of communications. The organization has also struggled to get stakeholder involvement from parents and some students, so they worked to develop ways to satisfy this need. A crucial element in the success of this program is students having a positive relationship with an adult they trust and who will assist them in staying focused on their long-term goals and continued use of the strategies/interventions they have learned. It is difficult for students to overcome negative impressions or assumptions due to past behaviors. These students need understanding, supportive, and involved adults in their lives as they work to successfully re-integrate into the mainstream.

Project Qualification

While taking Strategic Leadership and Management of Global Change, an initial DEOL program course, I led a presentation at the mid-sized rural high school where I discussed the school's strengths and areas for growth in relation to change management. Through this project, I was able to receive insight and feedback from the school's director of school counseling who voiced a strong desire to enhance the On-Track program at the high school. The director of school counseling suggested that I work with

the On-Track program to evaluate the program, seek areas for growth, and help create a plan of action for growth. Being an educator and coach, I already had a passion for helping students become successful individuals inside and outside of the classroom, so I proposed this consultancy partnership to my instructor. My instructor approved my partnership with the On-Track program and thought I would be a valuable asset to this program due to my enthusiasm and passion for helping provide the best possible holistic learning environments in which students can mature and grow. Additionally, I went through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative program and received my certification so I was equipped to lead as an ethical consultant (see Appendix A). This program also educated me on how to be an excellent research investigator whose work is data-driven and thorough.

My project proposed a communications plan for the On-Track leaders to utilize with all involved stakeholders in order to enhance the overall communication methods of the program. This analysis was suggested by the director of school counseling and director of the On-Track program as she embodies a growth mindset and desired to enhance the On-Track program in order to effectively mentor at-risk students. It is important to note that the On-Track program is already doing an excellent job of helping at-risk students in the areas of grades, behavior, and attendance; however, the On-Track program leaders desired to enhance their means of communication and create even stronger relationships with the diverse stakeholders who represent the program. There was no resistance to this proposal as program leaders, teachers, students, and parents all sought to be invested in a great On-Track program that benefitted all stakeholders and helped students achieve success in the areas of academics, behavior, and attendance.

Project Complexity and Impact Assessment

Prior to starting a project, it was vital to identify the complexity and the anticipated impact of the project to determine if the desired results were worth the efforts required for the project. The goal of any project would be to pursue one that is not overly complex yet yields a high impact. Based on my project, the following matrices encapsulate the complexity assessment scores reflective of the project.

Project Complexity

Table 1

Project Complexity Matrix

Criteria	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4
Delivery Timescale (months)–10%	1-6	6-12	12-18	> 18
Stakeholders 20%	Internal and within single organizational area	Internal across more than one business area	Mainly external	Internal and external
Operational change 15%	Very minimal	Some new processes and possible some re-training	Significant restructure of processes and work areas	Major change/ large scale restructure, outsourcing
Contract complexity 20%	No new contracts Required	Single contract with known supplier	Multiple contracts with known suppliers	Contract(s) with new suppliers(s)
In-house expertise 20%	Have done this before many times	Have done this before once or twice	Have done similar before, but not the same	Have not done anything like this before
Dependencies 15%	Very minimal links with other projects	Links with other projects but little impact	Links with other projects upon which this project depends	Other projects depend upon this project

Determined by the Project Complexity Matrix, this project received a score of 12 of 24 points. One of the deciding factors for this score being fairly high was due to the

complexity of working with internal and external stakeholders to thoroughly conduct the project; however, the category of contract complexity will always receive a low score as there are no known contracts related to this type of project. Ultimately, the significance of this project pertained to identifying areas of communication where enhancements could be implemented by all stakeholders in order to yield positive change. This matrix indicated that the level of complexity for this project produced an average score.

Project Impact

Table 2

Project Impact Matrix

Criteria	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5
Strategic Contribution	None	Contributes indirectly to the org. mission	Contributes indirectly to >1 strategic themes	Contributes directly to 1 strategic theme	Contributes directly to >1 strategic theme	Very Significant strategic Impact
ROI	>5 years	4-5 years	3-4 years	2-3 years	1-2 years	<1 year
Operational Effectiveness	None	Improves work of a small group of staff < 6	Improves work of a large team of staff > 5	Improves work of whole Department	Some improvement across whole organization	Significant improvement across whole organization

Determined by the Project Impact Matrix, this project received a score of 14 of 24 points. This score is fairly high due to the project's ability to significantly impact the high school's overall strategic plan as well as produce a positive return on investment within a year of being implemented. Over time, the operational effectiveness score could increase as the strategies being implemented through this project could yield positive improvements across the entire organization. This matrix indicated that the level of impact for this project produced an above-average score. Five of the seven project charter segments are discussed below. The entire On-Track project charter can be observed in

Appendix B.

Project Charter Information

The project charter is the foundation of the action research process, and all the other project components rely on this basis. Much like the imagery of a house, a strong foundation will support the other components, both seen and unforeseen, that are associated with the project. The project charter acted as an informal agreement between the project stakeholders to commit their efforts towards a unified vision. The project charter also identified potential or present risks associated with the project during the initial planning phase so it could be concluded whether it was a project worth undertaking. This project charter will illustrate the projected methods, processes, and actions necessary for the high school's On-Track program to enhance its means of communication.

Section 1: General Project Information

This section of the project charter contains the most important aspects of the project such as the project title, project host(s), project sponsor, project manager, and a short description of the overall project. For this project, the project host was the director of school counseling at the high school. The project sponsor was Dr. Dale Lamb, Gardner-Webb University DEOL program department lead and the project manager was me, Kayla Barbare. The principal of the high school and the director of school counseling approved the exploration of this idea as they sought to enhance the On-Track program. The project charter described in Appendix A encompassed the important components of this proposal.

Section 2: Project Participants and Roles

The participants identified in this section denote the leaders who were in specific roles for the project. These roles consist of a director of On-Track and school counselor, high school assistant principals, an instructional coach, school counselors, a mental health counselor, an attendance interventionist, and a behavioral interventionist. All of these leaders work internally in the organization and interact with students, parents, and teachers involved in the On-Track program. During the initial meeting with these participants, it was evident that all members desired to improve their efforts in enhancing communications and building relationships with students and parents throughout the On-Track program. There was a sense of unity and pride in ensuring that positive changes continue to occur throughout the program in order to provide students and their parents with the best strategies and environment for them to thrive in.

Section 3: Stakeholders

The stakeholders acknowledged in this section represent the people who benefitted the most from the communication plans proposal such as On-Track students, teachers, and parents. These people were instrumental in helping create a positive change within the On-Track program as well because they are viewed as valued members of the On-Track team. If the stakeholders bought into the communications plan and truly evaluated the positive changes that would be implemented, the entire group would have a higher potential for success. Additionally, it was imperative that these identified stakeholders shared feedback with On-Track leaders and played an active role throughout the change initiative process so advancements could continue to be made for the betterment of all stakeholders.

Section 4: Project Purpose

This section of the project charter outlined the main objective of the project as well as provided details about the resources needed, deliverables that were be implemented, major known risks, project constraints, external dependencies, and the anticipated milestones that would be attained. One of the most important factors of this project was the potential result of eliminating invisible barriers such as the school building itself and building more intentional relationships with On-Track members. The high school is a community-based school that prides itself on its rich history and long-lasting traditions. Enhancing these relationships with On-Track members will strengthen the ties between the school and the surrounding community, which will allow for even more connections and collaborations to take place in the future. This project charter was originally developed in 2021 but due to the COVID-19 global pandemic that caused the high school to work virtually, many of these dates shifted forward in time. The project charter now represents objectives that will be met by the end of the 2023 school year and the end of the first semester of the 2024 school year. Additional time was given in this project timeline due to the school being out for summer break which is a time when students, teachers, and parents are not as involved in the On-Track process because school buildings are closed.

Section 5: Communication Strategy

This part of the project charter deals with how and when information was relayed to all involved stakeholders and project leaders. In addition to the weekly grade level On-Track meetings where status reports are shared, the project coordinator will be sharing whole group information and celebrations through the school's approved social media

sites. Moreover, specific individual information and progress reports will be shared with those specific students, their parents, and their teachers during their appointed meeting time. Furthermore, in order to eliminate language barriers, information will be shared with stakeholders based on their native language to ensure all information is fully understood and received. The On-track stakeholders sought to enhance their communication efforts and understand that some of these changes can be implemented now in order to kick-start the positive results of this communication plan proposal.

Project Objectives

Outline of Partnering Organization's Objectives

Objectives

Objective 1. The first objective of the On-Track program members was to create more of a social media presence through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the school's website to celebrate group successes/achievements, provide informational updates, and share important information. On-Track members identified that they could appeal to more of their users and surrounding community members through the use of social media platforms. This would also help promote a more positive perception of the On-Track program and create more awareness of the program overall. This objective was a major key in relaying important and appropriate information to external and internal stakeholders.

Objective 2. The On-Track members identified a huge disconnect with information that is shared with their non-English speaking stakeholders. When reflecting on school demographic data, they discovered that 32% of the high school's students were Hispanic or Latino, which means they needed to actively work to translate emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts in order to help eliminate existing language barriers. This change not only helped the students involved in the On-Track program better understand the information that is shared with them but will also allow their parents to be more informed about their child's progress or lack thereof.

Objective 3. On-Track leaders desired to provide stakeholders with information, updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports by way of email, phone calls, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs, or in-person. By using a diverse array of

communication modalities, the intention was to share pertinent information with stakeholders and appeal to everyone's personal communication means preference. The On-Track leadership team understood that not all parents were able to take calls during the day or even attend in-person meetings due to the demands and unique working hours of their jobs. Providing a broad spectrum of communication modalities allows all stakeholders to be informed despite any scheduling or timing conflicts that could be prevalent.

Objective 4. The On-Track program desired to work towards eliminating invisible barriers that could negatively impact the involvement and attendance of On-Track program stakeholders who might be intimidated by the physical school building due to negative personal past experiences. The idea was to create off-campus functions for stakeholders to attend and build positive relationships while in a less intimidating environment and then to gradually incorporate on-campus functions where stakeholders are welcomed into the school building. This would provide stakeholders with a less intimidating environment to attend gatherings at the start of the school year where they could make connections and build positive relationships with the stakeholders that they will be meeting with on school grounds in the future. It also allows On-Track stakeholders to make positive relational investments with students and parents at the start of the school year before potentially having to address areas of concern in the future.

Success Criteria

The stated goal of the On-Track program is to develop a school-based community collaboration where they correlate and utilize community interventions and resources to assist students in becoming high school graduates. Additionally, the On-Track program

has a goal of assisting students in learning strategies and interventions that will afford them the opportunity to experience postsecondary success. First, the high school's On-Track program utilizes a local education agency tracking system called GCSource to track the number of truancy referrals each year to assess if a student is attending school more frequently than the previous year. Secondly, GCSource is used to evaluate the number of referrals received per student to assess if there were improvements in student behavior. Moreover, GCSource is implemented to evaluate how many students were promoted to the next grade level and how many seniors graduated on time to indicate if specific strategies and interventions were working towards improving course performance. All these assessment methods provide the On-Track leadership team with tangible data that reflect whether or not the specific interventions and strategies that are being applied are producing the desired outcomes they are striving towards.

Risks

There were no major anticipated risks associated with the implementation of this communications plan proposal. However, there were concerns about COVID-19 causing school shutdowns which could prolong or interfere with the implementation of this plan. If this were to occur again, even with virtual sessions being offered, it may be difficult to get students and parents to attend virtual meetings via Zoom or Google Meet. Additionally, this could present a challenge as one of the main goals was to increase parent involvement within the On-Track program. This risk, while not currently affecting the high school, could pose a potential threat in the future should there be another COVID-19 outbreak.

Student's Personal Leadership Objectives

Objectives

Objective 1. My first objective in this project was to build collaborative relationships among On-Track stakeholders. Specifically, I wanted to model for On-Track members ways to enhance relationships between On-Track leaders, students, teachers, parents, and external community members so everyone involved feels equally appreciated for their program efforts and contributions. This allows for all involved members to actively participate in On-Track program functions, enables them to honestly provide feedback that is geared towards the betterment of the entire group, and creates a more family-like environment where everyone is focused on helping one another achieve a unified outcome.

Objective 2. My second objective associated with this project was to enhance and cultivate my understanding of and my effectiveness in conducting action research. As an educator, I have been a part of action research and have analyzed various research projects in the past but have never truly conducted my own action research. I have learned the value of collecting quantitative and qualitative data in order to receive a more holistic perspective on a subject that is being studied. This process has allowed me to make the most effective and scientific-based decisions as a leader that are backed by data. It has also taught me the value of always having a growth mindset and never settling for the status quo as the world around us is always evolving which means growth should always be taking place.

Objective 3. The third objective of this project was to expand my understanding of the best practices and methods utilized to increase communications within an

organization. It is important to observe other organizations that are successfully implementing communication methods in order to understand how those techniques could be adopted or enriched by the organization working to progress in that area. Being aware of the current best practices along with understanding the unique communication needs of an organization allows me to apply the best possible solutions that will bring about individual and whole group success.

Success Criteria

My personal success as a leader and consultant in this project was connected with the improvements the On-Track program experienced as a result of my action plan proposal and efforts. While it is ultimately up to the organization to adopt these changes and apply the new communication recommendations that are given, I also had to be effective in providing them with the best communication strategies and methods based on the action research that I conducted. Additionally, I had to be aware of the unique needs and challenges that faced the On-Track program in order to provide them with a tailored-made approach for improving their communications plan. I was expectant that the On-Track program would see positive results in the area of communications as they are already currently implementing some of the suggested recommendations and are looking to utilize the other long-term recommendations in due time. This shows that I was already effective in generating buy-in from On-Track stakeholders as they were quick to implement these communication strategies and methods.

Risks

Personally, the only recognizable risk that was linked to this project was desiring for the On-Track program to further advance its means of communications and being able

to make an even stronger impact on the students, teachers, and parents they serve. Being an educator, my heart yearns to see this goal accomplished as I deeply care for my own students, their parents, and my coworkers. This project was a bit more meaningful to me as I too desire to see these same objectives accomplished within all educational sectors. For this reason, it made me an excellent consultant for this project because I truly gave my best efforts in designing a great communications plan for the On-Track program.

Project Scope

Definitive Scope of Work

This project was designed to create a communications plan for the mid-sized rural high school's On-Track program. The On-Track program actively worked to increase their social media presence, eliminate language barriers, build positive relationships through eliminating invisible barriers, and share informational reminders, updates, and reminders across a plethora of communication modalities. An assessment tool that was created through the action research process of this project will be utilized by the On-Track program to measure their effectiveness in the area of communications in the years moving forward. There was no initial assessment tool that was designed to evaluate the program's communication and relationship-building aspects so the high school will be implementing this tool to compare their results to previous years. The On-Track program understands how vital it is to assess change initiatives and will utilize this assessment to help them monitor their progress moving forward because they genuinely desire to improve in the area of communications.

Project Benefits

The anticipation was that once this project was finalized, the On-Track program would enhance its ability to effectively communicate with all involved stakeholders.

Furthermore, the following benefits were also projected to occur:

- improved social media presence through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the high school's website
- elimination of existing language barriers
- shared information through various communication avenues

- standardized communications survey assessment tool for students, parents, and teachers
- enriched relationships among all involved On-Track stakeholders
- elimination of invisible barriers such as the physical school building

SMART Goals

The goals for this project were developed based on an appropriate, realistic, and achievable timeline in conjunction with the school year operating calendar. After discussion with the On-Track team, it was determined that the timeline for most of the goals to be accomplished would be by the end of the 2023 spring semester and during the 2023-2024 school year as schools are closed during the summer for summer break. This affords On-Track members to implement these changes within a 15-month period so their efforts could be assessed in a summative manner by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

The first objective of the On-Track program was to increase their social media presence from one post a quarter to two posts a quarter on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the high school's website as measured by the established frequency modeled by the local education agency's social media output by January 2023. It is important to note that due to the sensitivity and confidentiality surrounding On-Track program information, only whole group information, data, and celebrations will be shared through these social media outlets. This helped cultivate a more positive perception surrounding the On-Track program as well as shared positive information with all stakeholders and community members. Moreover, this allowed On-Track leaders to move towards appealing to 21st century citizens who are daily immersed in the digital age. The large-scale timeline of

these SMART goals is as follows:

Table 3

On-Track SMART Goals

SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely)	
Goal	Deadline
To increase social media presence from one post a quarter to two posts a quarter on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the high school's website as measured by the established frequency modeled by the local education agency's social media output.	May 2023
To consider language barriers in relation to translating information as measured by an increase from 25% to 50% in student and parent involvement/participation in the high school's On-Track program in two of four opportunities.	May 2023
To provide On-Track stakeholders with information, updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports by way of email, phone calls, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs, or when in-person by increasing monthly contact to biweekly contact as measured by On-Track contact logs.	January 2024
To develop positive relationships between students, parents, and faculty members by increasing positive encounters through On-Track block parties/celebrations/events from twice a year to once per quarter (four total) as measured by the high school's Google yearly calendar.	January 2024
To foster a positive student climate at the mid-sized rural high school as measured by a maximum of 5% increase on the School Climate Survey as measured by survey responses by August 2023.	May 2024

These goals were further developed and outlined at the micro-level in Table 4.

Table 4*On-Track Action Plan/Graphic Organizer*

Specific activity	Social Media Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and School Website	Eliminating Language Barriers: Translating information and utilizing interpreters during in-person meetings	Shared Information Through Various Avenues: Google Platforms, Emails, Phone Calls, and Printed Handouts	Building Relationships/Eliminating Invisible Barriers: Back to school block party (off-campus), meet and greet, celebration nights, and/or end-of year celebration
Timeline	2023-2024 School Year	2022-2023 School Year	2023-2024 School Year	2023-2024 School Year
Persons responsible	Lead Principal Administrative Team Instructional Technology Specialist On-Track Director 4 School Counselors	In House Interpreters	Administrative Team On-Track Director Behavioral Interventionist Attendance Interventionist School Counselors Staff Members Parents Students	On-Track Director Administrative Team Behavioral Interventionist School Counselor/Therapist On-Track Staff Members Lead Principal
Resources needed	HR Fiscal: \$42,515 Instructional Technology Specialist (zero years of experience and only a bachelor's degree)	HR Fiscal: Range from \$13.60/hour to \$35.40/hour depending on the person's degree level and areas of certification	HR Fiscal: No additional cost	HR Fiscal: \$1,300 (\$10 per plate) per event where food is provided for all stakeholders Seek local external community sponsors/donors, PTSA support, or fundraise for costs.
Formative assessment Method	Observation that the webmaster, administrators, and On-Track Director are updating the school website and social media platforms.	Translated documents, social media posts, and progress reports Meeting minutes indicating use of in-house interpreters and/or language line	Sharing information through Google Platforms about student progress with associated stakeholders, providing informational updates, recommendations for interventions to be utilized in school and at home, and	Meeting agenda and notes relating to event planning; including members (On-Track Staff members) involved in planning.

			questions and/or concerns.	
Summative assessment method	Observation notes, feedback, and input from On-Track stakeholders about social media presence and information.	Graph tracking use of interpreters and/or language line during On-Track meeting throughout the school year. This can be used to compare data over several school years. Track translated documents, social media posts, and progress reports to compare to previous documents.	On-Track leaders responding to their other stakeholders on threads, stating which interventions seem to be working with specific students, providing weekly updates on student performance, and answering questions/concerns posed by stakeholders.	Observation notes, feedback, and input from diverse On-Track stakeholders about community and school relations upon attending these events and throughout the school year.
Goal	To increase awareness about On-Track information, updates, successes, and events	To increase On-Track communications and provide an equitable experience to speakers of other languages	To provide On-Track stakeholders with collaborative platforms to share informational updates, bridge information gaps, and receive immediate and effective feedback on any stakeholder questions or concerns.	To build and sustain positive relationship while eliminating invisible barriers
Indicator of success	Feedback from diverse On-Track stakeholders about how informed they were about On-Track updates, successes, and events hosted at the high school or at off-campus venues.	Increased student, parent, and community member attendance of speakers of other languages at On-Track meetings and events.	Increased stakeholder awareness between diverse staff members, parents, and students pertaining to student performance and supports.	Increased student, parent, staff, and even community involvement in On-Track gatherings.

Disciplined Inquiry

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

As previously mentioned, the mid-sized rural high school is located in South Carolina. This mid-sized rural high school is one of 84 schools in the local education agency, which happens to be the largest school district in the state of South Carolina and the 44th largest district in the United States. The local education agency also accepts students from some other surrounding counties. The North Main Street site served as the main school building until 1998 when the mid-sized rural high school relocated to its current campus. Although the mid-sized rural high school is rich in tradition, history has proven that changes and advancements have progressively impacted the community-oriented school that strives to develop well-rounded citizens (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

The mid-sized rural high school's community is predominantly suburban with a diversity of inner-city and rural populations along with a small percentage of foreign exchange students. The school's ethnic breakdown as of the spring of 2021 was 32% Hispanic, 44.5% Caucasian, 21.5% African American, and the remaining 2% Asian, Native American, and Alaska Native. The mid-sized rural high school serves 1,189 students, Grades 9-12 and has many international students enrolled due to an International Baccalaureate program that is offered through the school. Of those 1,189 students, 172 students are identified as special education, with learning disabilities being the largest group. As of the 2020-2021 school year, the poverty index at the mid-sized rural high school was 54.6%. Fifty-five percent of students are receiving free or reduced

meals through their meal plans (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Additionally, the mid-sized rural high school currently has five administrators, 85 teachers and professional staff members, and 15 support staff members. There are four school counselors who are assigned to a specific grade level and who move forward with their grade level each year so they are able to work with the same group of students throughout their entire high school experience. The school counseling department also has a director of school counseling who is over the entire department and serves off-grade level students. Other professional staff members consist of an instructional coach, an instructional technology specialist, an IB coordinator, an athletic director, and two media specialists. The ethnic breakdown of the staff at this mid-sized rural high school consists of 81.5% Caucasian, 13.85% African American, and 1.5% Latino. Of the professional staff at the high school, 58% are female. Six teachers at the high school are National Board certified and over three fourths of the professional staff hold advanced degrees, while several others are currently pursuing advanced degrees. The average number of years teachers have spent teaching at the high school is 9, with 31 teachers having only ever taught at this specific school (Anonymous, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

The vision for the mid-sized rural high school's students is to graduate college and career ready which is part of the school's G+ initiative. The second part of the school's vision is for students to be inspired to make a positive difference in society and be empowered to become lifelong learners. The high school's mission is to teach the whole child and provide students with an exceptional learning experience through the

incorporation of innovative strategies, real-world relevance, and integrating technology.

For the purpose of my consultancy project, I partnered with the mid-sized rural high school's On-Track program to develop a communications plan. The On-Track program utilizes early warning indicators to track the well-being of students and to determine what actions need to occur to promote student success. On-Track staff members utilize scientific-based best practices in meeting protocols, collaboration, and informing the decision-making process through the use of data in order to best implement the most appropriate interventions. Through various meetings, On-Track stakeholders indicated areas for improvement specifically in communications. The On-Track program stakeholders expressed how they desired to improve stakeholder involvement and collaboration and enhance how program information is shared. My project specifically focused on the area of communications within the On-Track program, which encompasses staff members, students, and parents.

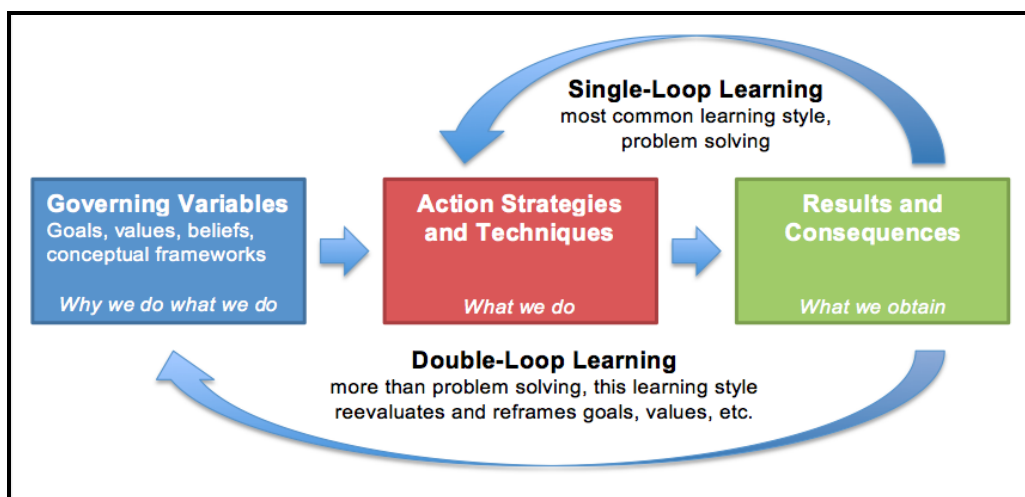
Theoretical Framework

Great leaders understand that transformation is key in order to obtain a new and innovative model of success; thus, in order for some type of change to occur, we must look deeper into the objectives that we have established or are attempting to strive towards. Leaders must recognize their own biases, perceptions, and assumptions with the purpose of attempting to see the world around them in a truer and more adaptable light. This is where Chris Argyris's Double-Loop Theory comes into play and provides a theoretical framework for how leaders must encourage their stakeholders to become transformational thinkers. Cartwright (2019) further explained this idea by stating, "Double-Loop Learning helps people acquire and integrate new information and develop

new skills, to question and possibly discard familiar and perhaps dysfunctional ways of thinking, feeling, and acting” (para. 6); therefore, it is not always the methods of reaching the desired objective that are causing stagnant or poor results but rather the objective itself that needs to be reconsidered and prioritized. Additionally, leaders must be willing to develop new ways of thinking and operating as times change with the awareness that their own perceptions, assumptions, and philosophies must adapt throughout this learning cycle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Argyris’s Double-Loop Theory



Note. To support the theoretical framework mentioned above I used Chris Argyris’s “Double loop learning & leadership development,” Invista Performance Solutions, 2016.

The world in which we live is ever-changing; as leaders, we must be prepared to adapt and acquire new skills to provide those around us with the most groundbreaking and cutting-edge learning experiences possible. Without this transformational mindset that Argyris highlights in his Double Loop Theory, our organizations and all of their stakeholders will never reach their full potential. Moreover, Argyris and Schon (1978)

endorsed a type of inquiry-based dialogue, where leaders question the validity of their fundamental leadership beliefs, philosophies, assumptions, and norms. This inquiry process affords leaders the opportunity to challenge their fundamental perceptions by way of questions to evaluate why they ever thought in a particular way to begin with and whether they can provide enough rationale to defend why that is the best methodology. If found to be no longer useful, the leader must adapt and change through this evolving process of trial and error with the willingness to expand their own depth of knowledge. Argyris and Schon expounded on this educational process by stating,

Good dialogue is not a matter of smoothness of operation or elimination of error. On the contrary, its goodness is inherent in the ways in which error is continually interpreted and corrected, in compatibility and incongruity are continually engaged, and conflict is continually confronted and resolved. (p. 146)

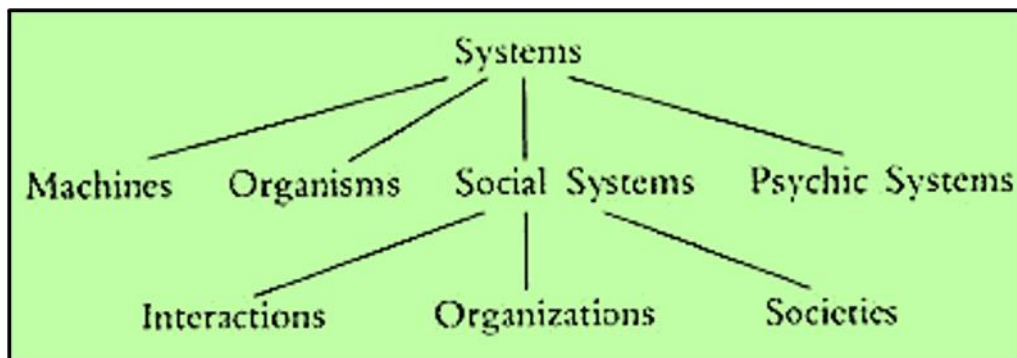
Furthermore, while change is certain, the same is true for obstacles and adversities to occur within the realm of leadership. It is not the absence of errors that makes leaders great; it is rather the presence of hardships that has the potential to sharpen and enhance the leader entirely.

As described by Luhmann (1995), a social system is any component such as an institution, agency, or group that collectively works in partnership to produce a whole entity (see Figure 2). These types of groups allow researchers to recognize relationships that cause people to be associated with one another, which impacts the whole overarching group that is being studied (Dale & Smith, 2013). It is important to note that homeostasis deals with how social systems desire to maintain a certain type of functionality because everyone involved knows their roles and desired outcomes. This does not mean that this

acquired state of being is positive or negative; it simply means that the social system has developed a certain pattern. In order for a new result or outcome to occur, the social system must be willing to collectively adopt a change in either their behavior, actions, or words. If the system is willing to change in some type of way, it is considered to be an open system; if it is unwilling to change, it is considered to be a closed system. Open systems tend to recognize the idea of “equifinality,” meaning they can develop their own unique methods of accomplishing a desired outcome. This means that there can be various ways for differing social systems to all obtain the same desired goal or objective while implementing their own methodology based on the specific set of needs and learning styles prevalent in the group (Dale & Smith, 2013).

Figure 2

Luhmann's Schema Illustrating the Key Components of His Social Systems Theory



Note. From Luhmann (1995, p. 2), using Luhmann’s Social Systems Theory, many organizations adapt to their environment through the utilization of this system.

Additionally, an important component of the Social Systems Theory is how it examines the ways a society adapts based on its surrounding environment by way of altering its structure, while still acknowledging that there are associations correlated with the social order of things. The Social Systems Theory identifies how multifarious social

evolution can be, which can deem it difficult to develop a societal change. However, since societies are so complex in nature, researchers and scientists can value the vast array of adaptive capabilities that social systems can exhibit (Valentinov, 2014).

Ultimately, this alludes that positive change can occur if that change is widely accepted, useful, and promoted by the vast majority of the social system. People involved in the social system must buy into the end goal in order for a desired change to be meaningful to them, and they understand how their unique role plays a vital part in the overall success of the entire group due to this suggested change.

Luhmann's (1995) Social System Theory describes how a group such as the On-Track program at the mid-sized rural high school is made up of diverse members who all come together due to a common cause. The overall goal of the On-Track program is to enhance student grades, behavior, and attendance by way of offering individualized strategies and interventions for at-risk students. Luhmann's Social Systems Theory indicates how while this specific society may be complex, it does have adaptive capabilities which could be implemented by the group in order for everyone to become more successful. Additionally, Argyris's Double-Loop Theory presents the need for the On-Track program to evaluate its objectives and even possibly do away with familiar or old methodology if it is no longer properly serving its purpose. This allows leaders within the On-Track program to question their assumptions, learn new information, obtain new skill sets, and provide an innovative program to at-risk students. Ultimately, when done correctly, this would allow On-Track program stakeholders to provide its students with the highest quality of individualized interventions, strategies, and supports to help them achieve success in their own identified area(s).

Hypothesis

The mid-sized rural high school's On-Track program is highly focused on helping students improve in the areas of attendance, behavior, and course performance by equipping students with the right strategies and interventions to apply in their daily lives. These scientific-based interventions and strategies are designed to help the student specifically based on their own personal struggles to get "on track" and immersed back into the mainstream so they can succeed and graduate high school on time. In order to effectively accomplish this goal, the high school's On-Track leadership team noticed a need for improved stakeholder involvement, enhancing how relationships are developed and sustained, and a necessity for information to be equitably shared across a diverse array of communication outlets. While certain aspects of communication were occurring within the program, the On-Track team believed that more could be done to maximize their communication efforts to enhance the experiences of all stakeholders even more. An enriched and improved communications plan will better develop relationships and how information is shared among all stakeholders within the high school's On-Track program.

Research Question

Throughout this research proposal, the following research question was answered: "How can the On-Track program's communication outlets enhance program awareness, meet the communication needs of all stakeholders, and better all stakeholders' involvement?"

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following publications include articles from scholarly journals, books, and digital resources that contain research related to the mid-sized rural high school's On-Track program needs. The publications provided research, outlines, interventions, and helpful strategies for improving mentor programs. These publications also discussed how communication can be thoroughly utilized among mentor-type programs to allow all involved parties to be more unified in their understanding and responsibilities of how to support students in need. In addition, the resources provided valuable insight into how to afford effective support to students with diverse learning needs, socioeconomic differences, and culturally diverse backgrounds. Overall, the literature review served as a guide toward building and sustaining an effective On-Track mentoring program that embodies an exceptional communications plan.

Boat et al. (2019) examined how self-efficacy, in mentors who are working with at-risk youth, may shift over time due to their personality traits, confidence in relationship building, and behavioral perceptions of mentees. Boat et al. expressed the importance of mentors first and foremost modeling how to effectively communicate with program stakeholders and how to develop positive relationships with others despite the presence of differences. Through a detailed study and latent class growth analysis to identify mentor subgroups with diverse self-efficacy trajectories, Boat et al. concluded that personality traits play a vital role in how mentors perceive their ability to effectively serve as mentors to at-risk youth. This also raises an important issue that should be

examined and evaluated through mentor training and recruitment programs that are looking to develop well-equipped and educated mentors. Through this article, Boat et al. increased awareness of how mentoring programs should better align mentors with mentees based on a specific criterion pertaining to both parties' personality traits, experiences, interests, and needs.

In 2011, a group of researchers from the University of Illinois, the University of Massachusetts, and the University of Louisville conducted a meta-analysis of 73 independent evaluations of mentoring programs for adolescents to assess the actual effectiveness of mentoring programs (DuBois et al., 2011). The study concluded that mentoring programs improve the behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains of young people overall. Researcher David DuBois of the University of Illinois also expounded on the importance of mentorship programs having accountability and communication fairly frequently with students involved in the program so they understand the adult mentors care for these children and want to equip them with the ability to be independently disciplined, and so students observe what constructive criticism and support sound like from an adult. However, two areas mentoring programs need to be cautious of when dealing with young youth are obesity and juvenile offending. The research team provided a strong argument that utilizing mentoring as an intervention strategy to help positively develop adolescents across multiple developmental areas does indeed provide youth with the best possible assistance in maturing holistically. It is also important to highlight that this research study expresses the need for mentoring programs to have individualistic approaches and strategies to utilize based on the demographics, socioeconomic statuses, cultural heritages, educational opportunities, and social norms

prevalent in their program and/or surrounding community (DuBois et al., 2011).

When examining great models of child mentorship and development programs that adjust accordingly to the changing world around them, the Turkish Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry developed communication modalities in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Ercan et al. (2020) created what is called E-mentoring, which is a type of electronic/online-mediated interaction between mentors and mentees that was in some cases more user-friendly than brick-and-mortar meetings. The electronic mentoring program held 100 small group e-meetings and 16 keynote e-presentations, and mentors held individual e-meetings with mentees for 1 hour on a weekly basis. Various advantages were highlighted through this E-mentoring program such as overcoming geographical distances, cost-effective meetings, flexibility in scheduling, and providing a diverse and equal mentoring opportunity for all involved participants. Ercan et al. provided valid benefits and strategies for mentoring programs to conduct e-meetings during situations and/or pandemics where brick-and-mortar sessions are unable to occur. This also offers a communication alternative to program stakeholders who are unable to meet in person and provides them with the opportunity to still be actively involved and receive all the necessary information from the mentorship program leaders (Ercan et al., 2020).

In 2020, a group of researchers from Colorado State University conducted a randomized controlled trial that was designed to assess the relative impact of embedding mentee-mentor matches in small groups on adolescent outcomes to evaluate where this effect was correlated by the quality of the mentoring program and quality of the mentoring relationships (Haddock et al., 2020). The trial was conducted on a site-based

program, which is a program that tends to have less difficulty in areas such as recruitment, retention, sustainability, and cost. The results from this trial concluded that the hypothesis that mentoring groups would have a stronger impact than individual one-on-one sessions was not supported by this trial. Additionally, the results yielded that mentor-mentee matches in a small group setting did not demonstrate any advantage or disadvantage correlated with higher benefits toward adolescent development. In essence, this trial showcased how one-on-one interactions between matched mentors and mentees can be just as effective as matched small group meetings (Haddock et al., 2020).

Little et al. (2010) conducted an ongoing research study that was created to better understand how gifted students are focused on in mentoring programs. It is imperative to understand that mentoring programs involve students of all intellectual levels and even the highest academic performing student might be in need of interventions in other developmental areas. Little et al. concluded that talented/gifted students who are involved in mentorship programs felt more supported by mentors who were friendly, engaging, and approachable as well as improved their research skills and job competence. These talented/gifted students also exhibited fewer disciplinary infractions as opposed to talented/gifted students who were not involved in a mentorship program. It is also important to note that talented/gifted students are often neglected in mentorship programs because while they may be in need of personal development, they do not always exhibit as many disciplinary issues as non-gifted/talented students. Little et al. found that based on this study, talented/gifted students desired to have the following attributes exist within their mentoring program:

- positive relationships with mentors
- mentor visibility and presence
- interpersonal interactions and approachability with mentor leaders
- long-lasting early impressions with mentor leaders
- consistency in perspective among mentor groups

When these attributes are embedded within a mentor program, the mentor leaders are better able to reach talented/gifted students who need mentorship and personal development. These students will also respond best when placed in an environment where they can be assured that these components are entrenched throughout the program in order to serve as an exemplar for the same attributes that would be desired to be developed and observed within the gifted/talented student (Little et al., 2010).

Maxwell (2008) discussed how success is not something that is individually obtained and how behind every great leader and/or person is a positively influential mentor. Maxwell provided a framework for how mentoring should be designed by pairing mentors with the right mentee, creating a safe environment in which all stakeholders thrive and prosper, educating people on how to become better versions of themselves, and most importantly, getting started on the mentoring journey. This book encourages leaders to build positive relationships, share life with a community of learners, lead by example, and create a legacy worth replicating. It also acts as a professional and personal development resource for anyone who is seeking to become more educated in the area of mentoring. An important factor in any type of mentoring program is actually starting the program and navigating what norms, policies, expectations, and goals are significant to the program based on its distinctive makeup. All

mentor programs need to know who they are and what they currently do so they can assess themselves and develop even better ways of operating and flourishing (Maxwell, 2008).

Osterling and Hines (2006) conducted a study that utilized quantitative and qualitative data from an Advocates to Successful Transition to Independence program to assess how impactful mentorship is to the lives of older adolescents who have been through the foster care system. Their research expressed the importance of finding the most appropriate and suitable strategies to utilize based on the individual child when working with older adolescent foster youth who have trauma, anxiety, depression, poor social skills, and even low self-esteem. The use of resilience research is implored by caring and supportive non-parental adults/mentors to help better develop the mental, social, spiritual, and even physical developmental domains of young adolescents. Osterling and Hines suggested that mentorship programs should focus on the nature of relationships with mentors, diverse changes that might occur during the mentorship process, preparation for mentees to experience independent living, and receiving recommendations from mentees and mentors on how to improve the overall mentoring program for the future (Osterling & Hines, 2006).

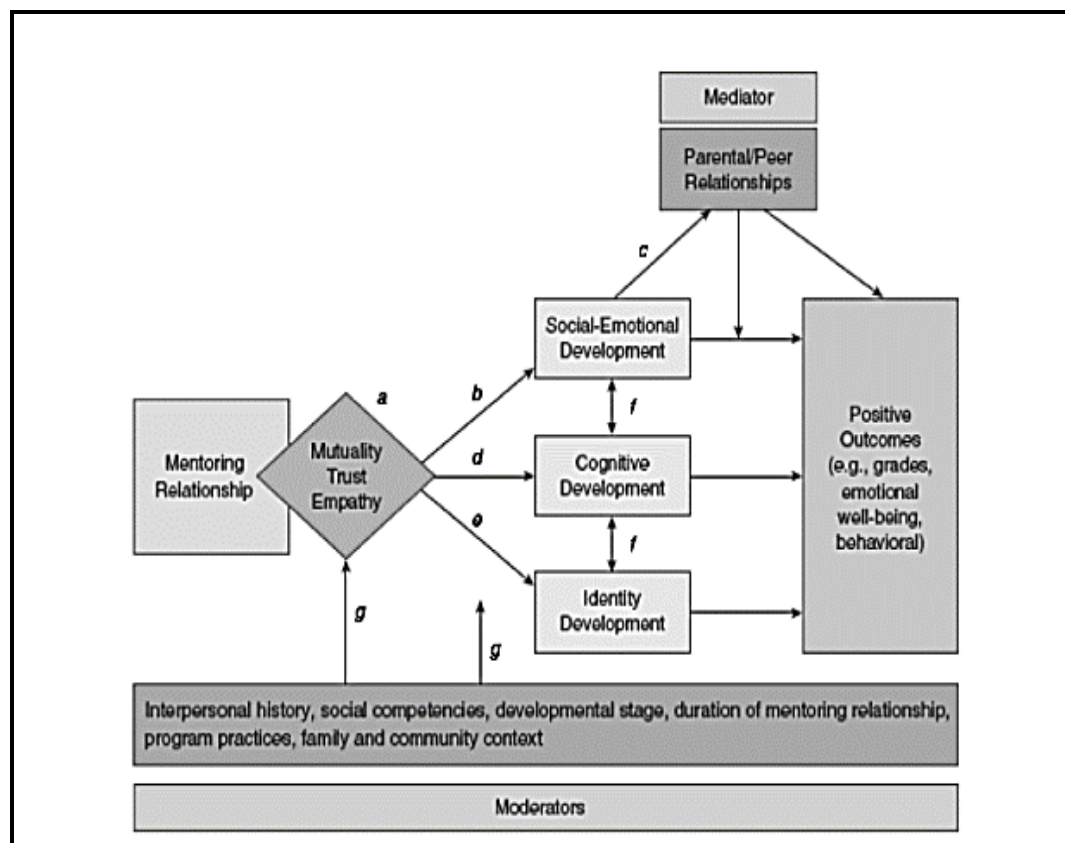
Rhodes et al. (2000) evaluated how mentorship programs, in conjunction with better parental involvement in the lives of adolescents, can lead to higher academic performance. Rhodes et al. indicated that students who had parental involvement and were involved in a mentoring program had fewer unexcused absences and had more confidence in their abilities academically. Moreover, the results of this research study describe the direct positive effects a mentoring program can provide for adolescents, such

as the importance of education, global self-worth, improved academic achievement, and goal setting/future planning. Rhodes et al. provided valid results for why it is important for mentoring programs to collaborate and communicate with their organization's parents to ensure everyone can collectively combine their efforts to assist their mentees in their developmental process.

Rhodes (2004) provided a well-researched and groundbreaking model for administrators, teachers, case workers, volunteers, and researchers to use within their mentoring programs and personal mentoring growth needs. Figure 3 illustrates Rhodes's idea of how mentoring programs should be constructed.

Figure 3

Rhodes's Model of Youth Mentoring



Note. This model of mentoring is utilized by some schools as a format for how to construct a mentoring program. *Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth* (Rhodes, 2004).

By applying this model, the developmental benefits mentees can receive from a high-quality mentorship program are positive relationships with non-parental adults, improved self-concept, enhanced academic performance, and better social skills. Conversely, Rhodes (2004) acknowledged the risks such as mentees giving up on mentorship programs remaining stagnant or performing worse than when starting the program, mentees losing trust in adult or authoritative figures, mentees feeling unworthy or incapable of progress, and mentees never experiencing positive and mature relationships with adult mentors that can occur if mentoring is unsuccessful or poorly implemented. These risks can happen if mentor/mentee matches are rushed too quickly, mentors lack preparation and understanding of how to be an effective mentor, and mentors neglect to give the appropriate time needs to consult with mentees. Rhodes emphasized the responsibility of mentors to be fully engaged and active in their roles, as it is vital to the development of their mentees. Furthermore, Rhodes exclaimed how children are better left alone than paired with someone who is not committed to their important mentorship role.

Spencer (2007) conducted an evaluation on a community-based one-to-one mentoring program, where it was addressed as to why mentor and mentee relationships ended early. She expounded on the idea that most studies seek the positive benefits mentoring programs can bring about yet neglect to discuss why mentorship relationships do not last or why they are ineffective. Spencer's study found that relationships did not

flourish due to mentor or mentee abandonment, a perceived lack of motivation from the mentee, unfulfilled expectations by both the mentor and mentee, poor relational skills, inability to bridge the gap among cultural divides, family interference, and poor organization support. She further explained that programs should emphasize addressing these issues with their stakeholders so everyone is fully aware of the responsibilities, expectations, rewards, and risks that could potentially occur. By being aware of these potential issues facing mentoring programs, they can best prepare for success by showcasing what negative behaviors, perceptions, and biases need to be eliminated or at least improved on in order for all parties to reap the positive benefits the program can produce (Spencer, 2007).

In conclusion, based on research and strategies obtained from the resources listed above, I found that the high school's On-Track program needs to incorporate ways for the program to share information and for mentors to create more visibility (Little et al., 2010). When discussing visibility, it would be beneficial for mentors to not only be seen during the school operating hours but also for mentors to attend their mentees' extracurricular events and external school-sponsored functions as a way to enhance their relationships with their mentees beyond the walls of the school building itself. Additionally, programs should strive to be more culturally responsive by considering familial expectations and cultural differences that contribute to student attitudes toward school and overall success (DuBois et al., 2011). The On-Track program must support all students since gifted and talented students and special needs students are often left out of mentoring programs because they are seen as already receiving specialized programs (Little et al., 2010). Furthermore, the program should attempt to create a unified group by

incorporating opportunities for collaboration among parents, students, teachers, administrators, and mentors (Rhodes et al., 2000). Lastly, the high school's On-Track program needs to incorporate multiple platforms for providing mentorship through in-person one-to-one sessions, small group sessions, and whole group sessions as well as virtual one-to-one sessions, small group sessions, and whole group sessions (Ercan et al., 2020).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Through my research study, I utilized explanatory mixed methodology in order to understand the significance of collecting and analyzing data based on the communication perspectives of diverse organizational stakeholders. It was imperative to employ quantitative and qualitative data to best articulate the strengths and the most pressing communication needs the On-Track program possesses. Through the process of analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data, I was able to identify the biggest communication challenges the On-Track program faced while offering the most appropriate recommendations for future implementation.

Quantitative Introduction

Surveys are utilized by leaders in all types of industries to best understand the desires of those whom they serve and have the potential to immensely guide the decision-making process of the group who distributed the survey (Draugalis et al., 2008). Quantitative data can be identified as research that explains occurrences or situations that are associated with numerical data in which researchers analyze by way of mathematical methods. Quantitative studies focus on the results, generalizations, estimations, and cause-effect relationships by way of deductive reasoning; qualitative studies focus on the processes, context, meanings, and interpretations through the use of inductive reasoning. Typically, researchers apply the method of statistics when sifting through quantitative data or survey results (Yilmaz, 2013). Researchers mostly utilize surveys for one of three particular reasons. First, they utilize surveys to describe the unique characteristics that are distinctive of a certain population. Secondly, they explain the reasons for a population's behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs. Thirdly, they utilize surveys to discover new content or

ideas in order to help guide the development of a new way of thinking, products, or services to be provided (Fink & Kosecoff, 1985). The overall purpose of research is to generate a reliable and valid assessment instrument that is free of bias and prejudice for the reason of collecting honest and sincere data from all respondents. In order to obtain a true depiction of the organization, institution, or group being evaluated, respondents must feel that their survey contributions are confidential to some degree, valued, accepted, and necessary for the overall appraisal of the organization. The data collected can afford researchers with discernment pertaining to the successes, needs, vulnerabilities, and perils that are prevalent within the organization, which should influence the future decision-making process and action plan (Blackstone, 2014).

The first step in a research project is forming a research question that has been thoroughly investigated through prior work whether that be by way of a literature review, examining research databases, or reflecting on other scholarly professional organizations. Based on the type of research that is being investigated, it is classified as either a descriptive or analytical survey (Draugalis et al., 2008). Descriptive surveys are challenged with the task of trying to document or process what is currently happening within the organization it is studying without assuming a hypothesis, meaning it explores the current conditions, attitudes, behaviors, inactions, and state of a particular organization. However, analytical surveys are different in how they strive to characterize and expound on why specific situations exist within an organization. This approach typically evaluates two or more variables to compare to the original hypothesis (Lehtonen & Pahkinen, 2004).

Next, there are various ethical considerations for researchers to be aware of, such as ensuring respondent privacy, informing respondents of any potential risks, receiving respondent consent, creating surveys that require minimal time and effort, being conscious of the level of sensitivity surrounding specific questions being posed, sequencing questions in a way that builds trust and dives deeper into the basis of the survey, and ensuring that questions can easily be read and comprehended by various participants (Reynolds et al., 2007). Once survey results have been collected, the researcher must thoroughly analyze all quantitative and qualitative data points without any bias and must review their work for any potential errors or discrepancies. The researcher must present the data as it is found to be and must determine if the correct statistical techniques were applied in order to identify the direct outcomes (Larossi, 2006). When analyzing quantitative data, researchers utilize statistical methods, such as percentages, means, medians, modes, variances, and standard deviations to best illustrate numerical data (Punch, 2003). Additionally, this entails that the researcher presents the quantitative and qualitative data to reviewers in a way that reflects the statistical analysis and how it compares to the originally stated hypotheses (Draugalis et al., 2008).

The purpose of the study is to assess the theoretical hypotheses by way of using instruments and sources that will provide authentic feedback and data points for me to identify if the hypothesis is accepted or rejected based on the conducted statistical analysis (Yilmaz, 2013). Surveys attempt to identify phenomena that occur in a given population and explore the possible reasonings and correlations that attribute to such occurrences. Moreover, surveys seek to better understand the demographic data, habitual patterns, societal norms, and respondent insights to best evaluate all data points and

produce research-based recommendations (Larossi, 2006). Since a census is the most time consuming and, in some cases, most expensive form of surveying a population, most researchers utilize a sample size to survey a group in order to receive authentic data that are representative of the entire group. Researchers implement what is known as a sample frame which indicates the characteristics, attributes, experiences, and interests of the whole group so a small sample size can be identified for research purposes (Draugalis et al., 2008). People who have given their consent to participate in a study need to be fully aware of the purpose of the study, the questions that will be asked, other participant expectations, possible incentives for participating, and how the results will be utilized. When all research participants are aware of the study's purpose, methods, and intended use, it creates a more cohesive bond between all members answering honestly with the hope of future advancement in mind. This helps ensure that the results and data received from the survey are accurate, trustworthy, and representative of the whole (Yilmaz, 2013). The larger the sample size, the least likely the data will possess sample errors. However, this does not mean that all surveys are reliable because the feedback obtained could vary based on the participants' recent experiences, disposition, attention, and personal motivations for answering honestly.

Validity deals with the degree to which an assessment instrument or tool measures what it was intended to measure within a given sample size (Sullivan, 2009).

Additionally, measurement error can be a result of an assessment instrument that is poorly designed. Measurement error is commonly known as the actual results presenting differing results than what is observed by the researcher (Draugalis et al., 2008). If a survey tool is deemed valid, the researcher can assume that it is reliable due to its ability

to measure what it is intended to measure, time and time again. According to Shadish et al. (2001), quantitative research validity is separated into four major groups: statistical conclusion validity, construct validity, internal validity, and external validity. A response rate can be identified as the number of responses divided by the number of authorized participants in a sample (Punch, 2003). For researchers, if there is a low response rate, there is a higher possibility of having response bias or nonresponse error. To increase the response rate, it is recommended that researchers pretest their surveys in order to ensure survey questions are clear, timely, and placed in a logical order to encourage participants to answer honestly (Draugalis et al., 2008). The researcher must also safeguard that questions are free of any biases or prejudices so participants feel safe when responding. A possible drawback of any study is if participants are unable to comprehend survey questions which could cause them to not respond, respond incorrectly, or even guess based on the context clues available to them (Larossi, 2006). Additionally, a researcher must be cognizant that in-person surveys or interviews that possess sensitive questions will result in more reserved and politically correct responses. Conversely, online surveys that do not record names or personal identification methods, might elicit more vulnerable, candid, and realistic responses (Yilmaz, 2013). The four most common survey methods are telephone surveys, mail-in surveys, online surveys, and interviews (Blackstone, 2014). When determining what the most appropriate survey method to use is, researchers must consider the amount of time, the cost, the objectives of the study, the desired sample size, the resources already available, required educational trainings in order to properly implement assessments, and any possible survey predispositions that exist (Draugalis et al., 2008). Surveys present an additional benefit by how the participants are often

representative and reflective of unique present-day occurrences which may not be illustrated by controlled research studies that occur in laboratories (Totten et al., 1999).

In conclusion, the most cost-effective and resourceful method of collecting research data is by way of electronic surveys. Researchers who employ validated survey tools can be assured that they will assess the components they are designed to assess (Punch, 2003). Transformative leaders who want progressive change desire to seek real feedback in order to identify their weak points and areas where they can strengthen their prior proficiencies even further. However, not all leaders are receptive to the facts quantitative surveys can produce because it reveals vulnerabilities and flaws that exist within their organization (Blackstone, 2014). Researchers who yearn to discover real results, create surveys that are carefully crafted and evaluated to ensure they will produce valid and reliable results. However, a valid instrument is only as good as the honesty and transparency of the study participant responses (Yilmaz, 2013). Researchers build a good rapport with survey participants by ensuring their confidentiality, expressing the objectives of the study, asking clear and easily comprehensible questions, explaining how the data results will be utilized, and thanking them for their efforts (Draugalis et al., 2008). All of these components allow researchers to develop great quantitative assessment tools and generate good rapport with participants with the purpose of acquiring valid and reliable data which will guide the future decision-making process.

Quantitative Analysis

In order to assess the communication needs within the high school's On-Track program, I developed a quantitative assessment tool through Qualtrics, which was a survey comprised of 10 questions. Of the 10 questions, four dealt with program

implementation, four reflected on program outcomes, and the final two questions were open-ended questions where participants were afforded the opportunity to voice their own personal insights and feedback. For Questions 1-8, survey participants answered questions utilizing a 4-point Likert scale where they indicated whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with each statement. I developed three versions of the same survey, which possessed identical questions yet phrased toward the specific population being surveyed. The three groups of survey participants were On-Track staff members (see Appendix C), students (see Appendix D), and parents (see Appendix E). It is important to note that the three groups previously listed are representative of all On-Track stakeholders and that all stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to participate in the research study. Participants agreed to a consent form before participating in the survey, and it was available for contributors to take for 15 days.

The group that was analyzed first was the On-Track staff members at the high school. These stakeholders play a major role in helping at-risk students achieve holistic success. The On-Track communications survey questions for this subpopulation are as follows:

Implementation.

1. I am provided with detailed information about the On-Track program when needed.
2. The On-Track program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
3. Language barriers do not exist between teachers, students, and parents.

4. The On-Track program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.

Outcomes.

5. My mentee was well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders, or through social media platforms.
6. My mentee and their parents felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives of the On-Track program.
7. On-Track members implemented progress monitoring systems which were used to share updated data with students and parents during meetings.
8. The level of communication provided through the On-Track program met my expectations.

Open-Ended Questions.

9. What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?
10. How could the On-Track program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?

The comprehensive quantitative summary analysis of this group is outlined in the Analysis and Recommendations Section of this dissertation, and the whole survey can be observed in Appendix C.

The next group that was analyzed were the On-Track students at the high school. These stakeholders are the at-risk students who are involved in the On-Track program who receive the necessary supports and interventions needed to assist them in the areas of

academics, behavior, and attendance. The On-Track communications survey questions for this subpopulation are as follows:

Implementation.

1. I am provided with detailed information about the On-Track program when needed.
2. The On-Track program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
3. Language barriers (Translating Spanish to English, German to English, etc.) do not exist between students, teachers, and parents.
4. The On-Track program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.

Outcomes.

5. I was well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders, or through social media platforms.
6. I felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) of the On-Track program.
7. My personal progress, weak points, and updated data drawn from progress monitoring systems were shared with me during meetings.
8. The level of communication provided through the On-Track program met my expectations.

Open-Ended Questions.

9. What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?

10. How could the On-Track program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?

The comprehensive quantitative summary analysis of this group is outlined in the Analysis and Recommendations Section of this dissertation, and the whole survey can be observed in Appendix D.

The third group that was analyzed were the On-Track parents of the at-risk students at the high school. These stakeholders have a tremendous impact on the lives of their students as they help encourage and enforce the same unified expectations that contribute to student success at home. The On-Track communications survey questions for this subpopulation are as follows:

Implementation.

1. I am provided with detailed information about the On-Track program when needed.
2. The On-Track program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
3. Language barriers (Translating Spanish to English, German to English, etc.) do not exist between students, teachers, and parents.
4. The On-Track program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.

Outcomes.

5. I was well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders, or through

social media platforms.

6. I felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) of the On-Track program.
7. My student's personal progress, weak points, and updated data drawn from progress monitoring systems were shared with me during meetings.
8. The level of communication provided through the On-Track program met my expectations.

Open-Ended Questions.

9. What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?
10. How could the On-Track program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?

The comprehensive quantitative summary analysis of this group is outlined in the Analysis and Recommendations Section of this dissertation, and the whole survey can be observed in Appendix E.

Qualitative Introduction

Qualitative assessments allow researchers to obtain data on diverse people, events, circumstances, interactions, and observed behaviors (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research uses the researcher as the main data collector through the use of evaluations such as observations, personal interviews, and focus groups (Tracy, 2010). Qualitative research also utilizes inductive reasoning, which drives the creation of a theory, versus quantitative research, which assesses a predetermined hypothesis. Interviews are the most common form of qualitative assessment and entail various open-ended questions that

allow the interviewee to share detailed information such as their demographics, knowledge, emotions, personal experiences, opinions, and even perceptions about life (Bauer & Gaskell, 2013). The researcher must ensure that their sample size is large enough for them to receive adequate data in order to add credibility and pull data that are representative of the whole group. The same size should be about 10% of the overall group; if 50 people participate in the study, five people should be interviewed (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

One important factor that interviewers must be aware of is their ability to build rapport with their participants so they can receive the most honest, sincere, and factual responses possible (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Building rapport with interviews can be accomplished by way of selecting comfortable seating, greeting participants as they arrive, offering snacks and beverages, exhibiting open communication, expressing the goal of the interview, reassuring interviewee confidentiality, framing the interview, and stating how the data obtained will be utilized moving forward (Patton, 2002).

Additionally, researchers must be sensitive of diverse cultures and understand that people may perceive interviews and the questions being asked in either positive or negative ways. Researchers must be cognizant of ethical issues such as unanticipated harm, protecting the feedback collected, and ensuring that information obtained is not misused. The interviewees must be made aware of any issues that could potentially bring about future distress and be reassured that their honest feedback will not be misrepresented or exploited (Bell et al., 2020). An interview is a qualitative evaluation tool where the researcher collects feedback data that is utilized to dive deeper into the research question in order to bring about enriched insights as to what is going on and what changes or

recommendations need to be suggested (Franzosi, 2009). Qualitative research has the ability to give a voice and insight to minority groups who may often be overlooked, misunderstood, or unheard (Bell et al., 2020).

The researcher's role is to prompt participants with questions that progressively become more in depth throughout the interview process in order to evaluate their personal experiences, behaviors, interactions, and routines (Creswell, 1998). The purpose of a qualitative interview is to obtain theoretical and conceptual knowledge by way of acquiring personal accounts of people's lives and diverse experiences (Tracy, 2010). However, qualitative research is sometimes seen as insignificant because scholars claim that quantitative data are scientifically based, whereas qualitative data are focused more on acquiring accounts of daily living by people of diverse opinions, beliefs, goals, needs, and cultural backgrounds (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative researchers pull from a much smaller sample size than other research methods which could possibly not be reflective of the entire population's perspectives. Conversely, qualitative research is much more prone to eliminate response bias because participants are encouraged to respond openly and truthfully, posed questions are always open-ended, human experiences are incorporated which leads to more accuracy, it permits detail-oriented data to be obtained, and it is flexible and not costly (Tracy, 2010).

In 1945, Paul Felix, known as the father of qualitative research, demonstrated how psychology had the means to provide a framework for researchers to observe and interpret human behavior. Felix acquainted people with how to host instructed interviews and group discussions as he strived to answer the "why" of human behaviors (Goodman & Liao, 2016). During the 1970s, quantitative research was deemed to be scientific and

verifiable which caused it to govern how research was conducted. Throughout the 1980s, qualitative research was identified as being a better method of explaining human behavior as a way for researchers to observe human behavior, ask open-ended questions, encouraged respondents to answer candidly, and predict future patterns or behaviors. This allowed researchers to identify the best interventions, recommendations, and strategies to suggest to the partnering organizations they were evaluating (Patton, 2002). By way of combining all these methods into a convincing account, it drives the decision-making process of organizations and proves how qualitative research methods are vital, valuable, essential, and informative.

When describing qualitative interviews, they are classified as being either unstructured, semi-structured, or structured. An unstructured interview is where the researcher asks questions on the spot versus having a set of predetermined questions to guide the interview. A semi-structured interview is where the researcher proposes a few predetermined questions while still asking a few on-the-spot questions. Lastly, a structured interview is where the researcher guides the interview through predetermined questions and asks all participants the same set of questions in the same order (Young et al., 2018). Interviews are often preferred over focus groups or whole group interviews because respondents are afforded the opportunity to speak openly without judgment from their peers, they are more prone to share their personal experiences in a one-to-one-type setting, and they are able to think independently which decreases any chance of their answers being skewed based on the discussion taking place in the group setting. A researcher may ask a broad version of the research question as the first guided question of the interview, but the interview questions should be limited to five to 10 questions as the

interviewee can offer enriched responses through the use of open-ended questions and to respect the time of the interviewee (Patton, 2002). The responses of participants should be similar and align to some degree as they are to be reflective of the overall research question (Bauer & Gaskell, 2013). A researcher must be conscious that qualitative data entail interview feedback, documenting data, data management, and data analysis. The researcher should be the one who is transcribing the information from the interview, and the researcher should have a clear focus on how to analyze all information in order to ensure a high level of consistency and overall quality (Franzosi, 2009).

In conclusion, research studies that incorporate mixed methodology generate more valuable and insightful data because various data points are taken into consideration (Young et al., 2018). It is vital for the researcher to have questions prepared for the interview with the research question in mind. While the questions posed should be open-ended, they should also not be too broad but rather specific towards what questions the researcher is attempting to answer. The same size should be 10% of the overall group and should consist of diverse members who are well representative of the entire group (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). A key to retrieving valid and reliable data is creating positive rapport with interviewees so they feel comfortable and safe sharing their own personal experiences, perspectives, and insights. The researcher must withhold quantitative data until the conclusion of the interview process so the interviewee does not feel defensive and so their feedback is not swayed based on the quantitative data that exist (Bauer & Gaskell, 2013). The researcher must be well prepared to conduct interviews so the time and efforts of the interviewee are well respected, and at the conclusion of the interview, all participants should be thanked for their contributions.

Qualitative Analysis

For the purpose of evaluating the communication needs within the On-Track program, I developed a qualitative assessment tool, which was an interview that was comprised of six questions. I developed three versions of the interview, which possessed identical questions yet phrased toward the specific population being interviewed. The three groups of interview participants were On-Track staff members (see Appendix F), students (see Appendix G), and parents (see Appendix H). The six questions reflected potential future recommendations based on the quantitative survey data that were collected and analyzed while affording interviewees the opportunity to expand on their own personal experiences and recommendations. The questions were focused on improving the On-Track communication areas such as social media; eliminating language barriers; sharing informational reminders, updates, and progress reports; and building relationships/eliminating invisible barriers. In order to randomize the interviewee selection, I sent out an email to staff members, students, and parents requesting participants who were willing to volunteer themselves to be interviewed. I selected the first two email respondents from each group as the interviewees and emailed each volunteer participant the survey data analysis document, the four identified themes based on the data, my recommendations, and the interview questions that would be posed in order for each volunteer to generate ideas and consider the recommendations before being interviewed. Additionally, I scheduled interviews with all six participants: two staff members, two students, and two parents.

The first group of interviewees were On-Track teachers who provided great feedback and insight from an internal perspective. The six interview questions that were

asked of this subpopulation are as follows:

1. Which virtual platforms do you think best communicate information with teachers (emails, phone blasts, Google Forms, Google Classroom, etc.)?
2. How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?
3. Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?
4. Would providing teachers with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?
5. If the On-Track members periodically checked in with teachers to give updates and receive feedback on students who are recommended to the On-Track team, would that improve relations between counselors/administrators and teachers? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?
6. If the On-Track program hosted a back-to-school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?

The responses and feedback received from the On-Track staff responses can be found in the Analysis and Recommendations Section of this dissertation, and the

complete On-Track staff interview questions document can be observed in Appendix F.

The next group of interviewees were On-Track students who shared their own personal experiences and reflections of being involved in the program. The six interview questions that were asked of this subpopulation are as follows:

1. Which social media platforms do you think best communicate information with students?
2. How can the social media platforms that are already being used be enhanced?
3. Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?
4. Would providing students with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?
5. If the On-Track members visited with students during lunches, in the hallways, and attended extracurricular events would that enhance relationships with students? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?
6. If the On-Track program hosted a back-to-school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies would that help you and your parents feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?

The responses and feedback received from the On-Track student responses can be found in the Analysis and Recommendations Section of this dissertation, and the complete On-Track student interview questions document can be observed in Appendix G.

The third group of interviewees were On-Track parents, who stated their own perspectives, experiences, and thoughts on the On-Track program. The six interview questions that were asked of this subpopulation are as follows:

1. Which social media platforms do you think best communicate information with parents (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, the school website, etc.)?
2. How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?
3. Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?
4. Would providing parents with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared or meet your needs?
5. What methods could the On-Track members use to periodically check in with parents to give updates and receive feedback on your child?
6. If the On-Track program hosted a back-to-school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help

you feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?

The responses and feedback received from the On-Track parent responses can be found in the Analysis and Recommendations Section of this dissertation, and the complete On-Track parent interview questions document can be observed in Appendix H.

Continuous Improvement Systems

Continuous Improvement Planning

One aspect the high school's leaders possess and demonstrate is embodying a growth mindset. This means that leaders are always looking for ways to expand and enhance their skills, practices, knowledge, and methodologies. They also are not afraid of constructive feedback or honesty as they know it will assist them in maturing their skill and abilities even more. Clemson University head football coach Dabo Swinney implements a very similar concept, what he calls "the windshield mentality," which illustrates how he is not focused on what has occurred in the past; his mind is focused on what is next. He encourages his players and coaches to learn from the past but not dwell on the past, as this will keep them sharp, execution-focused, and goal-driven (Given, 2017). The high school's On-Track program often refers to Coach Swinney's leadership advice when working with at-risk students but also to inspire the leaders of the program to always be looking for ways to improve the program as a whole. While working with the On-Track program leaders, it was evident that they desire positive change and are not fearful of honest feedback, as they know it will allow them to make improvements throughout the program. Their ultimate goal would be to create an On-Track program that is an exemplar for other local education agencies. The On-Track leadership team also implements Coach Swinney's well-known saying, "The only disability in life is a bad attitude" (Sanders, 2019, para. 1). This quote highlighted that negativity is the only true roadblock in life, and anyone can lead if they possess a positive mindset. While the On-Track program's main objective is to help at-risk students in the areas of academics, behavior, and attendance, they also want to exemplify the leadership styles they hope to

share with the students they encounter. On-Track leaders know that while these students are considered “at-risk,” they are still future leaders of America, and they want to equip them with the right mindsets for how to approach their professional and personal lives in the days ahead.

Through this report, the On-Track leadership team learned about their areas for improvement through student, teacher, and parent communications surveys and various interviews. The feedback collected from both of these assessment tools was then utilized to generate a communications plan that focused on implementing research-based recommendations designed to improve the program’s ability to effectively communicate with program stakeholders. The On-Track leadership team was welcoming of this constructive feedback as they were eager to bring about positive change in order to positively impact student success through the implementation of the program. As outlined in the Project Scope Section of this dissertation, the expectation was that upon finalizing this project, the On-Track program would improve its ability to effectively communicate with all involved stakeholders. The following benefits were also projected to occur:

- improved social media presence through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the high school’s website.
- elimination of existing language barriers
- shared information through various communication avenues
- standardized communications survey assessment tool for students, parents, and teachers
- enriched relationships among all involved On-Track stakeholders
- elimination of invisible barriers such as the physical school building

Continuous Improvement Actions

As stated in the prior section, the focus was to monitor and assess the On-Track program's progress in the area of communications. Once the On-Track program has implemented the suggested recommendations for at least a year, they will then utilize the student, teacher, and parent communications surveys to assess their progress in comparison to the previous year's data that were received. The On-Track leadership team is also encouraged to conduct individual interviews with representatives from each subpopulation group in order to receive even more thorough insight and feedback from stakeholder participants. This will allow the On-Track program leaders to determine if the recommendations they are implementing are yielding positive results in the area of communications and will provide them with feedback on communication areas that might still be lacking in some way. Table 3 reviews the program goals and timeline as previously mentioned in the Project Scope Section of this dissertation. Table 3 also outlines the detailed focus areas for the On-Track program leaders.

Continuous Improvement Feedback

A crucial element that will determine the On-Track program's success in the area of improving communications is receiving feedback from program stakeholders such as students, parents, and teachers. On-Track program leaders will use informal and formal assessments to monitor and assess their progress toward their communication goals. The main objective would be to find plausible ways to naturally incorporate these feedback tools into the program in order to receive valuable feedback. The following outlines the expected methodologies that will be utilized.

Formative Assessments

1. Student, teacher, and parent communications survey on the program's communication effectiveness (Baseline data).
2. Student, teacher, and parent involvement/participation in meetings, surveys, or program functions.

Summative Assessments

1. Student, teacher, and parent communication survey results on the progress of the program's communication plan implementation.
2. Feedback and data received from individual student, teacher, and parent interviews.

Continuous Improvement Implementation

The On-Track program communications plan represents necessary changes and practices that were implemented to improve overall communication and relationships that exist within the organization. While change can often be viewed as difficult or something that adds to the workload, the On-Track program leadership team was enthusiastic about making positive changes for the betterment of their student success, parent partnerships, and teacher involvement. Gordon (2015), a leadership consultant and well-known book author, stated that leadership is not about gaining power but rather empowering others. Leaders must use their power to build up others within their organization, establish a positive culture, and ensure that all stakeholders feel like appreciated experts within their realm of work. The On-Track team recognizes the need for students, parents, and teachers to all work together in order for the student to receive the necessary supports and accountability that is needed for student growth. Gordon also explained that great leaders

succeed because they bring out the best in others. Great leaders understand that they are only as great as the people working alongside them because each individual contributes to the overall team or organization. The On-Track leadership team desires to continually improve in the areas of communications and building relationships because they want all involved stakeholders to feel welcomed and needed as they possess valuable insight and knowledge that aid in helping students overcome their struggles in the areas of academics, behavior, and attendance. The On-Track team also understands that if all involved stakeholders contribute to the overall objectives of the specified at-risk student, the potential for success is much more likely as well as the likelihood that the newly learned behaviors or habits will be fully adopted by the student. With this in mind, the On-Track program can also utilize the annual school-wide South Carolina Student, Teacher, and Parent School Climate Survey to evaluate the progress of the program and receive feedback from all involved stakeholders. This would provide another assessment tool for the On-Track program to utilize while monitoring the program's improvements in the areas of communications.

Chapter 4: Results

Deliverables To Partnering Organization

This proposal reflects new changes and goals that were encouraged to be accomplished or enacted within a school year. It is important to note that due to the On-Track program being a public school program, the program is not utilized much during the summer months because of school being out. The following recommendations and action plan reflect the project deliverables that were given to the On-Track team.

Recommendations/Deliverables

After analyzing the data received from the quantitative communications survey and conducting qualitative interviews with a small subpopulation of volunteer students, staff members, and parents, the following On-Track communications recommendations were developed.

Improve Social Media Presence. On-Track members will utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and even the high school's website to celebrate group successes/achievements, provide informational updates, and share important information. This will enable the On-Track program to easily share information across multiple social media platforms in a way that is more appealing and up to date with the digital age in which students, staff members, and parents communicate with one another.

Eliminating Language Barriers. On-Track members will actively work to translate emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts in order to help eliminate existing language barriers. They will also ensure that an interpreter is present during in-person meetings to safeguard that all information and feedback is

accurately shared and received by all parties involved.

Shared Information Through Various Avenues. On-Track stakeholders will be provided with information, updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports by way of email, phone calls, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs, or in person. Information will be shared with involved stakeholders in a more unified fashion based on the students who are receiving On-Track interventions. This will allow everyone involved to be given information in a shared and equitable manner so everyone can collaborate their efforts towards helping students reach success.

Building Relationships/Eliminating Invisible Barriers. The On-Track program can host a back to school block party off-campus at the school's football stadium, the local city park, or the local lake where food, activities, and information will be provided. This will provide stakeholders with a less intimidating environment to attend at the start of the school year where they can make connections and build positive relationships with the stakeholders they will be meeting with on school grounds in the future. It also allows On-Track stakeholders to make positive relational investments with students and parents at the start of the school year before potentially having to address areas of concern in the future. Additionally, the On-Track program can host meet and greet nights, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies where they will invite all stakeholders to take part with the intention of improving connections and celebrating student successes. There will be more of a focus placed on giving out awards based on attendance, behavior/character, and overall improvement in the areas of academics versus high GPAs. Overall, this will provide students and parents with a positive encounter at the start of the school year and throughout the school year in order to build and sustain positive relationships

while eliminating possible invisible barriers with the On-Track program.

Communications Plan

Communications Plan Development

Due to the findings of this project, the actual recommendations developed based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis were a communications plan. This means that the findings were developed into a communications plan designed to improve the overall communications of the On-Track program. However, before reaching this point of the project, other vital communication steps had to occur to ensure that the On-Track program members were fully aware of all processes and methodologies that were taking place. Table 5 lists the events, participants, and timeline of communications that occurred leading up to the actual creation of the On-Track Communications Plan and Action Plan.

Table 5

Proposal Development Schedule

Event/Action	Participants	Timeline
Initial Debrief Meeting	Director of On-Track, Head Principal, School Counselors, School Administrative Team, & Project Consultant	January 2022
Program Focus Area Identified	Director of On-Track, Head Principal, School Counselors, School Administrative Team	January 2022
Meeting About Available Resources & Budgeting	Director of On-Track, Project Consultant, & Administrative Team	January 2022
3 Quantitative Surveys Developed (Students, Teachers, & Parents)	Director of On-Track, Project Consultant	January 2022
Principal Approval of Surveys	Head Principal, Project Consultant, & Director of School Counseling	January 2022
Consent Forms and Quantitative Surveys Distributed	On-Track Students, Parents, & Teachers	February 2022
Survey Window Closed & Survey Data Analyzed	Director of On-Track & Project Consultant	March 2022
Qualitative Interview Process with Representatives from each Subpopulation	Project Consultant & Subpopulation Volunteers	March 2022
Analysis of Data & Results	Project Consultant Director of School Counseling	April 2022
Creation of Communications Recommendations & Action Plan	Project Consultant	April 2022
Project Deliverables to On-Track Director	On-Track Director, Principal, & Project Consultant	April 2022
On-Track Meeting to Present Project Deliverables	On-Track Stakeholders, On-Track Director, Administrative Team, & Project Consultant	May 2022

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

A critical element of sustaining stakeholder engagement deals with building collaborative relationships. This pertains to organizational leaders and leadership teams enhancing relationships between managers, employees, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders so everyone involved feels equally appreciated for their contributions. This is one of the main goals of the On-Track program leaders as they look to enhance the relationships with all involved stakeholders. Leaders who facilitate building collaborative relationships give more responsibility and freedom for innovation to team members because they understand the value of combining the expertise and skills of many versus one or a few (Archer, 2013). This lessens the potential for conflict because the decision-making process is conducted in a consultative-type process where everyone is able to state their opinions, critiques, questions, and feedback. Stakeholders are generally more motivated to cooperate and work toward unified goals in these types of working environments because the leadership team is not utilizing their power in negative or false omniscient ways. Rather, the leadership team acts as a facilitator and guides the organization towards a team-based type of working culture (Dunne, 2019). The On-Track leaders endow others within the organization with a sense of value, knowledge, need, and demand as these stakeholders are considered to be vital contributors to the overall success of the students they serve.

Risks

Since my project deals with a public high school mentoring program (On-Track), there were no major risks to the high school pertaining to the implementation of the recommendations; however, there are other minor risks that could present issues that would negatively impact the success of the On-Track program should unforeseen circumstances arise or should the school not be able to meet on school grounds due to a pandemic of some sort.

Mitigation and Contingency

Table 6

On-Track Risk and Contingency Plan

Risk	Mitigation plan (how to avoid the risk happening)	Contingency plan (what to do if the risk occurs)	Impact (low, medium, or high)	Likelihood of occurrence (low, medium, or high)
COVID-19 school shutdown (no in-person mentoring)	If a virus breaks out have students socially distanced, utilize masks, sanitize all facilities, and implement safety protocols.	Train students on how to utilize Google Calendar to schedule meetings and ensure that they know how to log on to Google Meet/Zoom	Medium	Medium
Lack of parent involvement due to virtual school	Contact parents early during the pandemic and share information on how meetings and collaborative efforts will be conducted.	Train parents on how to utilize Google Calendar to schedule meetings and ensure that they know how to log on to Google Meet/Zoom	High	Medium
Students may not attend virtual mentoring sessions (Google Meet/Zoom)	Offer incentives for students who attend their On-Track meetings	Ensure that students agree to scheduled meeting times to make sure that they will be out of bed and available at the time of the meeting	Medium	Medium

Constraints

The main constraints of this project were a lack of stakeholder involvement due to COVID-19 concerns, brick and mortar school shutdowns, and other physical school setting restrictions. Additionally, there were prevalent language barriers due to 32% of the high school's students being Spanish or Latino speakers. However, this project was designed to help combat these constraints while working to improve stakeholder involvement and to provide stakeholders with information that is translated into their native language.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were developed regarding this specific project:

- The desire to create positive and impactful relationships among all stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents).
- All shared information will be translated into diverse languages to help eliminate potential language barriers for all involved stakeholders.
- A social media presence is needed by the On-Track program in order to appeal to and share updates with the 21st century digital citizens it serves.
- The elimination of invisible barriers such as the physical school building will help the On-Track leaders make positive investments in stakeholders who will then be more prone to attend school functions that are held on school grounds in the future.
- A unified group of stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents) will provide students with a student-centered mentoring program, where all involved strive

to help students overcome their struggles in the areas of academics, behavior, and attendance.

- A successful On-Track program will directly and positively impact the school and community as a whole as students are developing into productive members of society.

Budget

The funding aspect of this project looked a lot different than other projects, as much of the funding is already produced because On-Track leaders are paid professionals within the educational field and their work within the program is one of their paid responsibilities. Through my research, I have discovered that the main costs associated with the goals of this communications plan would be in the areas of hiring personnel, renting off-campus spaces for special events, and possibly covering the cost of food or activities at special events if enough community donations are not received. Every other financial aspect of the high school's On-Track program is already covered based on district-wide funding, so it would not be the responsibility of the On-Track program leaders.

Funding Assumptions

- All On-Track hosted events will be free of charge to all involved stakeholders.
- An instructional technology specialist will be paid for their duties of maintaining a social media presence, sharing updated information, and assisting with any virtual meeting issues that may arise.
- In-house interpreters will be paid to translate informational documents and serve as liaisons during On-Track meetings for non-English speakers.
- The On-Track program will work with partnering community organizations to receive food, drink, prizes, and other donations to utilize at special events.

Facility Costs

Since the On-Track program is a local education agency organization, the facility costs are already covered by the district. This means that the On-Track program does not

have to worry about utilizing classrooms, meeting rooms, or school grounds when hosting On-Track meetings or events. Almost all On-Track events occur during regular school operating hours, but for special informational or celebratory events that occur after school hours, the program would still strive to utilize a school-sponsored location or a community-sponsored location that would be free of charge.

Personnel Costs

The estimates outlined in Table 7 indicate the hourly rates and/or salary rates of hiring an instructional technology specialist and in-house interpreter. Both positions would be needed for full-time employment as On-Track meetings and functions occur on a daily basis.

Table 7

On-Track Budgeting Personnel Costs

On-Track Budget & Resources		
Title	Hourly Rate	Cost
Instructional Technology Specialist	\$29.22	42,515.00
In-House Interpreter or Bilingual Employee	\$13.60	25,000.00
Totals	42.82	\$ 67,515.00

Operational Costs

For this section, the operational costs are reflective of venue locations and food expenses that would be necessary for hosting celebratory or back to school block party events (see Table 8). However, it is important to note that the school has an off-campus football stadium that can be utilized for weather-permitting events. Additionally, the school has wonderful partnerships with community recreational centers, churches, and entertainment venues that offer their spaces free of charge for the school to host special

events to show their care for student success. The likelihood of having to cover operational costs would be extremely low, but it has been covered through this section to offer a more thorough representation of potential costs associated with this project.

Table 8

On-Track Budgeting Operational Costs

On-Track Budget & Resources		
Title	Hourly Rate	Cost
Local Venues (3 Hours)	\$200.00	\$600
Prizes/Giveaways		\$500
Food for Block Parties or Celebrations	\$0	1,300.00
Totals	200	\$ 2,400.00

Technology Costs

The high school's On-Track program is part of the local education agency's technology program, which has sufficient technology funds for technology devices and compensates information technology directors and experts. The local education agency is 1 to 1, meaning every student receives a personal Chromebook for them to use throughout their educational experience. This allows students to integrate 21st century technology skills into their learning and educates them on how to become proficient in technology. All teachers are also given a school-issued laptop which allows them to teach, work, and attend meetings virtually from anywhere (S. Pierce, personal communication, May 24, 2022). Throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic, students and teachers were able to utilize their devices to progress their educational learning experience, and the district provided students with hotspots for any houses that lacked Wi-Fi. As far as software and hardware, the district utilizes contracts with certain

companies that meet the demanding needs of the district. Once those contracts expire, companies submit sealed bids on software or products that would fit the needs of the district and the lowest bidder would win the contract for the set amount of time. The Education Technology Services (ETS) department deems when technology equipment is outdated and in need of updates or refreshes. Most technology is updated every 3 years such as employee laptops, student Chromebooks, and Promethean boards (Anonymous, personal communication, May 25, 2022).

Additionally, the district does include in the budget a place for maintenance repairs and technology updates. Those responsible for tending to repairs are the ETS department members who assist with basic repairs, Promethean board repairs, and Cell Tech Repair representatives who are contracted to repair student Chromebooks. Also, Lenovo representatives are contracted to assist with major laptop repairs for staff computers and laptops. Any financial decisions made about purchases/investments in technology, equipment, or infrastructure/personnel are made through the school board. Purchase request forms are sent to the district supervisor for approval to ensure all technical equipment is necessary and safe for use. ETS monitors are responsible for monitoring who has access or content as well as the security department. Each site/location has a technology asset coordinator who is in charge of keeping up with equipment and to whom it is issued at the time (Anonymous, personal communication, May 23, 2022).

Ultimately, the On-Track program is already equipped with the necessary technology that is needed to successfully conduct On-Track meetings, share organizational information, and effectively communicate with all stakeholders. This is

covered through the local education agency and is not an added expense or necessity of the On-Track program. In the wake of a potential school shutdown, the On-Track program is also already equipped to provide its stakeholders with technological resources by way of the district that would be needed to host virtual meetings such as Chromebooks and Wi-Fi.

Revenue Generation

The main objective of the On-Track program's communications plan would not be to generate revenue as it is not necessary in order to meet the needs of the program. However, the generous donations received from community partnering organizations add a tremendous amount of value to the On-Track program, help create buy-in, and allow it to exceed expectations. As previously discussed, partnering community organizations have already expressed a desire to provide food, drinks, and prizes to On-Track events. Many recreational and city park locations have also offered their entertainment spaces free of charge in order to offer supports in the efforts of helping at-risk youth. These amazing partnerships allow the On-Track program the potential to host off-campus events, and the partnering organizations are able to invest in the lives of students who could be future employees of their establishments.

Chapter 5: Results

Analysis and Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to expound upon the quantitative and qualitative results that were previously mentioned in the Disciplined Inquiry Section. There were three sets of surveys distributed to students, parents, and teachers who are all involved in the On-Track program. The set of 10 questions on each survey were the same questions, just phrased differently based on the subpopulation that was being surveyed. The surveys also included two open-ended questions that helped provide qualitative data and helped guide the qualitative interview process that later followed the surveying process. The interview process consisted of asking each subpopulation six questions based on the data received from the survey responses. The six interview questions were the same for each subpopulation group yet were phrased according to the subpopulation that was being interviewed.

Analysis and Results

Upon analysis of the quantitative survey results, I received 18 staff surveys, 16 student surveys, and six parent surveys. Salkind and Frey (2017) expressed that standard deviation establishes how dissimilar the scores are from the mean and expounded on the idea that if there is a low standard deviation, the survey responses are grouped near the mean. Moreover, standard deviations should be between -1, 0, and +1. When the standard deviation becomes closer to 1, it indicates that the responses were more spread out and different. The student survey results illustrate a range of standard deviations from the eight close-ended survey questions as being .58-.70. This indicates that the student population responses were grouped around the mean and their responses were more

closely aligned. However, the staff member population and the parent population both recorded a range of standard deviations from the eight close-ended survey questions as being .37-.94, which means these two populations had responses that were more spread out from the mean (see Appendix I). When reflecting on Salkind and Frey's definition of confidence interval standards, I utilized the confidence interval standard p value: $p < .05$, which means there is a 5% chance of error. All eight closed-ended questions on the On-Track student survey had a p value of less than .05, which indicates the research is valid with a chance of error of less than 5%. However, for the parent and staff member populations, some question responses were deemed not significant, and I wanted to be ethical in the disclosure of those findings (see Appendix J). I evaluated the non-responses on specific survey questions and placed them in the "strongly disagree" column, which would be considered the "worst case scenario" as my survey was worded in a positive manner, so I could best analyze the data. Through further investigation, I determined that the questions that were deemed not significant on the staff survey were all questions where the data represented a bimodal (50/50) split which represented two groups that were equally different in their responses. In an effort to combat this issue, I utilized the interview process to better question why respondents answered questions as they did in order to gain more insight into any disparities.

Moreover, of the collective 40 survey responses, I indicated the areas of strength the On-Track program possesses by identifying questions where survey participants responded with agree or strongly agree. I emphasized the following results, which yielded positive feedback on how the On-Track program is doing well in the area of communications.

Table 9*On-Track Communications Survey Results (Disagree & Strongly Disagree)*

Question	Student	Staff	Parent
1	4	5	2
2	2	10	4
3	4	16	5
4	1	5	0
5	5	9	4
6	3	5	1
7	4	7	2
8	4	7	5

Note. The color green represents where no respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the survey statement. The color yellow represents where under half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the survey statement. The color red represents where over half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the survey statement.

- 72.5% of survey responders agreed or strongly agreed that they are provided with detailed information about the On-Track program when needed.
- 85% of survey responders agreed or strongly agreed that the On-Track program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.
- 77.5% of survey responders agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) of the On-Track program.

- 67.5% of survey responders agreed or strongly agreed that On-Track members implemented progress monitoring systems that were used to share updated data with students and parents during meetings.

Collectively, the data responses represented strengths in communication in providing stakeholders with detailed information when needed; expressing high expectations for student performance; fostering positive relationships and atmospheres for all stakeholders; and utilizing progress monitoring systems to document, analyze, and evaluate student performance in the areas of grades, attendance, and behavior.

Conversely, I also identified four main areas of need that are represented in the following data (see Table 8), which reflected areas where the On-Track program needed to progress in certain areas of communication.

- 40% of survey responders disagreed or strongly disagreed that the On-Track program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
- 62.5% of survey responders disagreed or strongly disagreed that language barriers do not exist between students, teachers, and parents.
- 45% of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders, or social media platforms.
- 40% of survey responders disagreed or strongly disagreed that the level of communication provided through the On-Track program met their expectations.

When analyzing Open-Ended Survey Questions 9 and 10 (see Table 10), I documented the most prevalent and reoccurring responses among survey participants, which are outlined in Table 10 based on each identified population. The feedback listed in Table 10 provided me with a clearer understanding of the communication methods that are most effectively utilized by the On-Track program as well as stakeholder insights into how the On-Track members could better promote and share information with all stakeholders. These data, combined with the qualitative interview data, helped me develop better program recommendations and an action plan.

Table 10

On-Track Open-Ended Survey Responses

Question 9: What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?	
Student Response	Preferred to meet in person with On-Track members and stated that they appreciated phone calls sent home reminding them of important information or progress report updates.
Staff Response	Preferred email updates, shared Google files, and in-person follow-up meetings pertaining to specific students whom they teach.
Parent Response	Preferred email updates, informational phone calls, and meeting with their child and the On-Track members in person.
Question 10: How could the On-Track Program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?	
Student Response	Recommended utilizing social media more, sharing information through the daily announcements and printed reminders, and developing strong relationships with students.
Staff Response	Recommended involving staff members, parents, and students in On-Track meetings, creating a shared Google Drive, and providing teachers with progress reports on the students they teach.
Parent Response	Recommended promoting the program more through Facebook, phone blasts, emails, and printed documents that are sent home through students.

After completing the qualitative interview process, I analyzed all interview responses in order to develop the most appropriate recommendations and develop an

action plan for the On-Track program moving forward. The input from On-Track staff members, students, and parents supports the data analysis, as the recorded responses represented in show that some On-Track stakeholders feel that communication efforts are being effectively applied, while some indicated that further adjusts and considerations could be made to further support the communication needs of all involved. The names of interviewees have been altered for the purpose of maintaining confidentiality (see Table 11).

Table 11

On-Track Interview Responses

Interviewee: Staff Member A	Date: 4/6/22
Question	Response
1: Which virtual platforms do you think best communicate information with teachers (Emails, phone blasts, Google Forms, Google Classroom, etc.)?	“I think the best methods are emails, shared Google Docs and Google Forms. I also use Facebook which I would say that I look at about three times a week”.
2: How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?	“I think they are utilized well but could be used more consistently”.
3: Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?	“Yes, I think those methods would eliminate almost all of our problems. Also, Language Line translates multiple languages and is a great source. Additionally, it would help to have an interrupter present at functions and events”.
4: Would providing teachers with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared to better	“Yes. Having progress monitoring systems available where information is shared would allow teachers to be more aware, proactive, and involved”.

meet your needs?	
5: If the On-Track members periodically checked in with teachers to give updates and receive feedback on students who are recommended to the On-Track team, would that improve relations between counselors/administrators and teachers? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?	“Yes, teachers need updates and need to take part in any celebrations that occur. Having On-Track members meet with Freshman Academy or give progress reports during faculty meetings to create more awareness would be beneficial. Include parents in progress reports too”!
6: If the On-Track program hosted a back to school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?	“Possibly incorporate community mentors or see if community businesses would at least sponsor the functions and celebrations listed. They could host off-campus events at the high school football stadium, local city park, local lake, and even at some local businesses where partnerships could be developed. Make positive investments early on”!
Interviewee: Staff Member B	Date: 4/7/22
Question	Response
1: Which virtual platforms do you think best communicate information with teachers (Emails, phone blasts, Google Forms, Google Classroom, etc.)?	“Definitely emails. Announcements in google classroom, surveys through google forms, and other shared Google Docs”.
2: How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?	“ScreenCastify Videos-provides people with information from virtually anywhere and is always accessible”.
3: Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?	“Yes, translating those items is the BEST way to help eliminate language barriers. It might also help to have an interrupter present at open house or curriculum nights”.
4: Would providing teachers with	“All of those sound like great ideas.

<p>informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?</p>	<p>Maybe also have some kind of celebration activity involving the students who are making progress and showing growth and invite teachers to attend those gatherings”.</p>
<p>5: If the On-Track members periodically checked in with teachers to give updates and receive feedback on students who are recommended to the On-Track team, would that improve relations between counselors/administrators and teachers? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?</p>	<p>“That would definitely help to improve relations. There might could also be a Google document for each kid that all stakeholders have access to that could serve as a running log of progress/celebrations, etc.”.</p>
<p>6: If the On-Track program hosted a back to school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?</p>	<p>“Definitely! This sounds like a great way to celebrate the relationships with all stakeholders. I think it would also be neat to offer food and games/activities at these events to create a more welcoming atmosphere. It would probably help increase the attendance of stakeholders”.</p>
<p>Interviewee: Student A</p>	<p>Date: 4/7/22</p>
<p>Question</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>1: Which social media platforms do you think best communicate information with students?</p>	<p>“Twitter and Instagram are the best outlets for students, and maybe in the future, they could make a news broadcast on TikTok if that could get approved”.</p>
<p>2. How can the social media platforms that are already being used be enhanced?</p>	<p>“Provide more visuals and pictures with small important information versus long blurbs with no visuals”.</p>

3: Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?	“Yes, especially translating social posts for people of different languages because information can get lost or be fuzzy if it is not translated for Spanish speakers or their parents”.
4: Would providing students with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?	“Yes, having progress reports where parents have access to it versus a paper copy that could get lost by students would be good too”.
5: If the On-Track members visited with students during lunches, in the hallways, and attended extracurricular events would that enhance relationships with students? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?	“I like talking to them in the hallway because it builds a good bond. I also like seeing staff members at lunches or at my games because I enjoy their feedback after those events and knowing that they cared to come support”.
6: If the On-Track program hosted a back to school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies would that help you and your parents feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?	“Having something like an event at the football field where there is food and games and where everyone is able to connect with one another would be a lot of fun. Tailgating nights with food where students, parents, and staff members are all invited and get to hang out. That would let everybody get to know each other personalities and it would be less intimidating or nerve wracking”.
Interviewee: Student B	Date: 4/8/22
Question	Response
1: Which social media platforms do you think best communicate information with students?	“Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat are the best apps to communicate with students”.
2. How can the social media platforms that are already being	“I think they are pretty good already”.

used be enhanced?	
3: Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?	“Yes, texts with English and Spanish, voice calls, having English/Spanish social media posts, and announcements. Signing up for sports, clubs, and organizations-the information typically in English and people may miss out on opportunities to participate due to not understanding or knowing the information. Testing (SAT/ACT/WorkKeys)-explaining why you need to take it, the test information, and the benefits of signing up for it”.
4: Would providing students with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?	“Yes, because it helps us see where we are at, what goals are set, and what types of expectations there are for us”.
5: If the On-Track members visited with students during lunches, in the hallways, and attended extracurricular events would that enhance relationships with students? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?	“Yes, it shows kids that yall care and helps them see that it goes beyond the classroom”.
6: If the On-Track program hosted a back to school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies would that help you and your parents feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?	“Yes, I think that would help people connect more and create relationships where they are comfortable coming into the school building and helping everyone see that the faculty care about the lives of their students and even care about their futures”.

Interviewee: Parent A	Date: 4/6/22
Question	Response
1: Which social media platforms do you think best communicate information with parents (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, the school website, etc.)?	“Facebook and School Website. I check Facebook daily and the School Website at least once a week”.
2: How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?	“I think these platforms are already being used well and I enjoy pulling information from them”.
3: Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?	“Yes. Making Spanish versions of Google Classroom and Backpack would also be helpful and having interrupters present during in-person meetings/forums”.
4: Would providing parents with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared or meet your needs?	“I think all of those modalities would be beneficial in meeting the needs of parents and bridging the gap between information that could otherwise not be shared among everyone so that everyone can work together to best help the student”.
5: What methods could the On-Track members use to periodically check in with parents to give updates and receive feedback on your child?	“Sharing weekly or bi-weekly updates/notes with parents through email to help them understand their child’s progress or lack thereof. I also like the information phone calls that we receive weekly about school updates”.
6: If the On-Track program hosted a back to school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you	“I think that would be an excellent way to celebrate student progress and allow stakeholders to become more acquainted with one another with the intention of holistically developing the student. It would also prevent a negative attitude towards school employees when being contacted about negative incidents or student reports because they were able to

have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?	make positive connections at the start of the school year. It helps parents feel like true team members versus the school employees against the student and parent”.
Interviewee: Parent B	Date: 4/11/22
Question	Response
1: Which social media platforms do you think best communicate information with parents (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, the school website, etc.)?	“I would say that Facebook spreads the most information to parents my age. Checks Facebook about twice a week to see updates and reminders as well as the Parent Backpack”
2: How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?	“Being more consistent with posts and updating information on websites and social media pages”.
3: Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?	“Yes, translating would be great and would help mitigate language barriers so that everyone is given the same information. Especially translate social media. Informational nights where there is a translator or there are staggered times for information to be translated.”
4: Would providing parents with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track program? How else could information be shared or meet your needs?	“Yes, and I think it would help parents be more involved in their child’s school experience. It would create a more team-like atmosphere and I think more information would be better than not enough”.
5: What methods could the On-Track members use to periodically check in with parents to give updates and receive feedback on your child?	“Weekly newsletters or progress reports for parents to better understand how their child did on a weekly basis and help them make goals for the next week”.
6: If the On-Track program hosted a back to school block party, meet and greet nights with students and	“Yes, I think it creates a neutral ground and provides students and parents something to celebrate along their high

<p>parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?</p>	<p>school journey. Tailgating night where food is provided and parents, staff, and students can get to know one another and have positive encounters. Any type of community events that celebrate student successes. Creating more awards for improvement and character change versus so many GPA focuses”.</p>
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Recommendations

After analyzing the data received from the quantitative communications survey and conducting qualitative interviews with a small subpopulation of volunteer students, staff members, and parents, I developed the following On-Track communications recommendations.

Improve Social Media Presence

On-Track members will utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the high school's website to celebrate group successes/achievements, provide informational updates, and share important information. This will enable the On-Track program to easily share information across multiple social media platforms in a way that is more appealing and up to date with the digital age in which students, staff members, and parents communicate with one another. Action Steps:

- Step 1: Identify an internal team or recruit volunteers responsible for handling social media content.
- Step 2: Create a posting schedule for regular updates, achievement highlights, and informational content. Plan ahead for future content and important dates.
- Step 3: Develop content that is engaging and visually appealing, representative of the program's activities and successes.
- Step 4: Ensure that content is consistent across all platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, high school website).
- Step 5: Track engagement (likes, shares, comments) to assess effectiveness and adjust strategy as needed.

Eliminating Language Barriers

On-Track members will actively work to translate emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts in order to help eliminate existing language barriers. They will also ensure that an interpreter is present during in-person meetings to safeguard that all information and feedback is accurately shared and received by all parties involved. Action Steps:

- Step 1: Identify the primary languages spoken among participants and their families.
- Step 2: Seek volunteer translators or use software tools to translate all communications into these languages.
- Step 3: Ensure that an interpreter is present at meetings and events to assist in real-time translation.
- Step 4: Evaluate feedback from non-English speaking participants to continually improve communication efforts.

Shared Information Through Various Avenues

On-Track stakeholders will be provided with information, updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports by way of email, phone calls, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs, or in person. Information will be shared with involved stakeholders in a more unified fashion based on the students who are receiving On-Track interventions. This will allow everyone involved to be given information in a shared and equitable manner so everyone can collaborate their efforts toward helping students reach success. Action Steps:

- Step 1: Identify the best platforms for communication (email, phone, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs).
- Step 2: Assign responsibility for updating and disseminating information through these channels to a designated team member or volunteer.
- Step 3: Regularly share updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports through these channels.
- Step 4: Regularly request feedback to ensure the chosen platforms are effective and make adjustments as needed.

Building Relationships/Eliminating Invisible Barriers

The On-Track program can host a back to school block party off-campus at the school's football stadium, local city park, or local lake where food, activities, and information will be provided. This will provide stakeholders with a less intimidating environment to attend at the start of the school year where they can make connections and build positive relationships with the stakeholders they will be meeting with on school grounds in the future. It also allows On-Track stakeholders to make positive relational investments with students and parents at the start of the school year before potentially having to address areas of concern in the future. Additionally, the On-Track program can host meet and greet nights, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies where they will invite all stakeholders to take part with the intention of improving connections and celebrating student successes. There will be more of a focus placed on giving out awards based on attendance, behavior/character, and overall improvement in the areas of academics versus high GPAs. Overall, this will provide students and parents with a positive encounter at the start of the school year and throughout the school year in

order to build and sustain positive relationships while eliminating possible invisible barriers with the On-Track program. Action Steps:

- Step 1: Plan out-of-school events, such as a back-to-school block party, meet and greets, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies.
- Step 2: Coordinate logistics (venue, food, activities, information dissemination).
- Step 3: Communicate the event details to stakeholders through all available channels (emails, calls, social media, etc.).
- Step 4: Encourage participation from all stakeholders and ensure a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.
- Step 5: Regularly collect feedback from stakeholders to continually improve relationship-building efforts.

The success of the action plan should be evaluated through stakeholder feedback, social media engagement, participation at events, and overall student success. Adjustments can be made to the action plan based on this feedback and the evolving needs of the program and its stakeholders.

Reflection

Professional Learning

Upon reflection on this project, I have developed skills in the area of developing quantitative assessment tools that are valid and reliable, which allow me to collect and analyze data based on the population I am evaluating. I have also improved my ability to develop qualitative assessment tools, which allow me to expound on the data collected from the quantitative assessment tool so I can develop the most appropriate recommendations and future action plans for the organization based on the feedback I have received. I have learned the value of applying both quantitative and qualitative assessment tools when conducting research studies because together they allow the researcher to gain more insight into the strengths and areas of need that exist within an organization.

Additionally, through this project, I was able to increase my skill sets as a leader and am more informed on how genuine data should drive the decision-making process. I have developed a deeper appreciation for having a community of diverse people around me, whom I can learn from due to their unique skill sets, educational backgrounds, occupations, and personal experiences. Furthermore, I have personally learned how to push through during hard seasons of life, no matter how challenging the adversity may be, in order to allow God to fully equip me for how He will use me as a leader in the future. I am thankful for how this project has matured and advanced my knowledge and skills in my professional and personal life.

Personal Development

Upon reflecting on my personal most pressing needs, I discovered that my top

three leadership development needs are in the areas of prioritizing my own needs, not being overinvested/overly involved, and becoming a better delegator. While concentrating on prioritizing my own needs, my goal is to schedule at least 30 minutes of personal time each day where I can do something that I thoroughly enjoy. My desire is for this to be a positive change that I continue to use throughout my entire life to ensure that I do not deprive myself of considering my own needs and restoration time. This specific time can consist of going to the gym, taking a nap, doing a devotional, watching television, reading a book, going on a walk, playing a recreational sport, or hanging out with family and friends. This will allow me time to escape the daily stressors I endure and will give me additional time to refresh my mind. Not only will this time be beneficial, but also it will assure that I can be better equipped to tend to the needs of others. Moreover, it will help me approach each day with a clear mind and prevent me from becoming overwhelmed or burnt out.

In the area of being overinvested/overly involved, I have learned to respectfully decline any additional roles/tasks once I have already established my responsibility threshold. My focus is to choose a few roles that I am truly passionate about and work to eliminate any other extra roles to which I am tied. My objective has been to assess my role/responsibilities and only allow myself to be involved in three extra leadership/volunteer positions that are beyond my job requirements.

Moreover, in the area of improving my delegation skills, I learned to take a step back and allow others the space, time, and freedom to be creative in group projects. I have learned how to not do the grunt of the work and have improved on equally delegating tasks/assignments when working in collaborative environments. Regarding

delegation, my objective has been to equally divide all tasks that collectively make up a group project and entrust my teammates/group members to effectively complete their tasks.

Two leadership theories that resonate with my personal leadership style are servant leadership and transformational leadership. Dubrin (2016) explained,

A servant leader serves constituents by working on their behalf to help them achieve their goals, not the leader's own goals. The idea behind servant leadership, as formulated by Robert K. Greenleaf, is that leadership derives naturally from a commitment to service. (p. 148)

I consider myself to be a servant leader because I am committed to serving others and supporting them in their efforts to reach their own goals as well as the team's goals. My Christian faith also plays a significant role in why I possess servant leadership qualities because I even feel inclined to help others whom I know will never be able to return the favor, simply because I feel called to unconditionally love, care for, minister to, and lead others. In John 13:14-15, Jesus proclaims, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (*The Holy Bible: New International Version*, 1978/1983). In this passage, Jesus humbles himself as a servant and washes his disciple's feet as a way to demonstrate how leaders must be willing to first serve and do the "dirty work" to ensure one is cared for. Jesus was the epitome of a servant leader, and His model has spurred my heart to be a leader who is intentional in always remembering that without serving others, I cannot truly be equipped to lead. God has called us to

community, and I will only receive what is needed from others if I am doing my part to first pour into their lives and am personally setting a high standard for them to follow.

Researcher Bernard M. Bass developed a concept identifying that transformational leaders embody four factors: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation (charismatic leadership), and idealized influence (Burkus, 2020). Transformational leaders are innovative, optimistic, and inspired individuals who value the roles of others under their influence and want to collectively embark on an unforged path towards excellence. Northeastern University's Graduate Program Staff (2019) stated, "Transformational leaders have an innate ability to understand people, define each team member's goals and aspirations, and bring everybody together to make a difference" (para. 12).

Additionally, transformational leaders are considered visionaries who embody excellent communication skills, which allow them to articulate their ideas clearly and in a way that is inspiring to those around them. I aspire to be a transformational leader who is focused on serving others, leading by example, taking risks that have the potential to enhance the educational/working experiences of others, being fully committed to the objectives at hand, being proactive, upholding my responsibilities to the team/ organizations vision and mission, and inspiring others to be exceptional in all areas of their lives.

While I do have room for improvement as a leader, my results from the Strengths Based Leadership Assessment identified my top five leadership traits as being an achiever, focused, lifelong learner, responsible, and competitive. As an achiever, I acknowledge that I have stamina and am a hard worker, goal-oriented, and extremely

productive. I strive for excellence daily and attempt to inspire others to reach their own objectives while supporting them throughout the process. When it comes to being focused, I am an individual who plans for life but also can adapt based on any type of unforeseen circumstances. I tend to be more optimistic about life and focus on setting challenging yet obtainable goals. As a lifelong learner, I yearn to pursue knowledge, mature through experiences, become more well-rounded, and continually seek to enhance my strengths and weaknesses. In the area of responsibility, I know that I hold unswervingly to my values, beliefs, and philosophies about life. I take ownership of my roles and responsibilities to ensure that I am giving more than just the status quo. I also recognize that I must lead by example because I have others who observe my actions and words as well as look to me as a role model. Pertaining to being competitive, I possess high levels of perfectionism, make every effort to win, and am usually placed in leadership roles on teams or within organizations. Despite the fact that I am highly competitive, I recognize the value of a team and the significance of utilizing the ideas, perspectives, and experiences of others. I enjoy submerging myself in diversity to guarantee that I can better learn and grow holistically through the lives of others who are different than I am.

As a leader, I have been challenged to become more self-aware of my strengths and weaknesses to guarantee that I can recognize what changes I must make in my life in order to reach my full potential as a leader. I have learned that all leadership looks different in some facet because everyone is different and no one, specific leadership style can be fully replicated or duplicated. I am excited to continue to progress as a leader after honestly examining my own weaknesses and developing a plan of action to progress in

my weakest areas. Facing the facts of my own flaws and downfalls will allow me to become the best version of myself on a professional and personal level. I am not naive to the fact that I am a work in progress; however, my goal is to truly lead by example, which not only requires me to remain transparent about my own struggles as a leader, but most importantly, it requires me to be committed to a plan of improving those areas. Each step forward will ensure that I am continually in pursuit of becoming a great leader.

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Appendix A

CITI Program Certification

		Completion Date 15-Nov-2020 Expiration Date 15-Nov-2023 Record ID 39649231
This is to certify that:		
Kayla Barbare		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.
Graduate School of Education Research Investigators (Curriculum Group)		
Graduate School of Education Research Investigators (Course Learner Group)		
1 - Basic Course (Stage)		
Under requirements set by:		
Gardner-Webb University		
		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w5de81ddb-6721-444c-bb37-6b553de48f5a-39649231		

Appendix B

On-Track Project Charter

CONSULTANCY PROJECT CHARTER

1. General Project Information				
Project Title:	On-Track Program Communications Plan			
Project Host(s):	Director of On-Track			
Project Sponsor (GWU):	Dr. Dale Lamb			
Project Manager:	Kayla "Birdie" Barbare	Date:	1/17/2022	
Project Description	<p>The On-Track Program desires to develop a better On-Track Program that would act as an exemplar for other schools within its district to utilize as well. This program has had some success along the way but is in need of improvements in the area of communications. The organization has also struggled to get stakeholder involvement from parents and some students so they are working to develop ways to meet this need. A crucial element in the success of this program is students having a positive relationship with an adult that they trust, and who will assist them in staying focused on their long-term goals and continued use of the strategies/interventions they have learned. It is difficult for students to overcome negative impressions or assumptions due to past behaviors. These students need understanding, supportive, and involved adults in their life as they work to successfully re-integrate into the mainstream.</p>			
2. Project Participants and Roles (add or delete lines as needed)				
	Name	Role	Telephone	E-mail
Project Manager:	Kayla "Birdie" Barbare	Project Consultant	(864) 918-6511	kbarbare@greenville.k12.sc.us
Team Members:	Director of On-Track	School Counselor	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	School Assitant Principal	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	School Assitant Principal	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	School Assitant Principal	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	Instructional Coach/Teacher	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	School Counselor	N/A	N/A

	Team Member	School Counselor	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	School Counselor	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	School Counselor	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	Mental Health Counselor	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	Attendance Interventionist	N/A	N/A
	Team Member	Behavioral Interventionist	N/A	N/A
3. Stakeholders (e.g., those with a significant interest in or who will be significantly affected by this project)				
On-Track Director, school Administrative Team, school Counseling Department, school Behavioral Interventionist, school Mental Health Counselor, school Attendance Interventionist, school staff members, school at-risk students, and school parents.				
4. Project Purpose Statement				
Project Purpose Describe the need this project addresses				
Purpose: The On-Track program utilizes early warning indicators to track the well-being of students and to determine what actions need to occur to promote student success. On-Track staff members utilize scientific-based best practices in meeting protocols, collaboration, and informing the decision-making process through the use of data in order to best implement the most appropriate interventions.				
Resources Describe the resources made available by the project host for this project				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upstate Mentor - Mentor Upstate promotes the development of mentoring programs in schools and after school programs in upstate South Carolina and beyond, by recruiting and training mentors, providing resources and support to mentors, and enlisting community involvement. 2. Other Behavioral Interventionists- School Behavioral Interventionist collaborates with other School Behavioral Interventionists within the district to share knowledge, strategies, feedback, concerns, resources, and success stories with fellow colleagues. 				
Project Deliverables List the high-level "products" to be created (e.g., improved xxxx process, employee manual on yyyy)				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve Social Media Presence: On-Track members will utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and even the school's website to celebrate group successes/achievements, provide informational updates, and share important information. The cost of a salary based instructional technology specialist whom this responsibility would fall under would cost \$42,515 with zero years of experience and only a bachelor's degree. 2. Eliminating Language Barriers: On-Track members will actively work to translate emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts in order to help eliminate existing language barriers. The hourly rate for a school to hire on an interpreter would range from \$13.60/hour to \$35.40/hour depending on the person's degree level and areas of certification. 3. Shared Information Through Various Avenues: On-Track stakeholders will be provided with information, updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports by way of email, phone calls, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs, or when in-person. 4. Building Relationships/Eliminating Invisible Barriers: The On-Track Program can host a back to school block party off-campus at the school's football stadium, the local City Park, or local lake where food, activities, and information will be provided. The On-Track program would need financial support from the school's PTSA, community donors, or would need to fundraise around \$1,300 (\$10 per plate) per event where food is provided the cover the cost of feeding all stakeholders. 				

Project Milestones <i>Project significant accomplishments anticipated over the life of the project with estimated timeline</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased and enhanced academic, attendance, and behavioral performance among the lowest 10-15% of students who represent those three categories. 2. Increased number of mentor staff members at the School through the Freshman Academy. 3. Improved school climate at the high school as measured by responses/data from students, faculty members, and parents on the School Climate Survey. 	
Project SMART Objectives <i>Include 3 to 5</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase social media presence from 1 post a quarter to 2 posts a quarter on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the school's website as measured by the established frequency modeled by the local education agency's social media output by January 2023. 2. To consider language barriers in relation to translating information as measured by an increase from 25% to 50% in student and parent involvement/participation in the School's On-Track Program in 2 out of 4 opportunities by May 2023. 3. To provide On-Track stakeholders with information, updates, reminders, handouts, and progress reports by way of email, phone calls, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, Google Docs, or when in-person by increasing monthly contact to biweekly contact as measured by On-Track contact logs by January 2023. 4. To develop positive relationships between students, parents, and faculty members by increasing positive encounters through On-Track block parties/celebrations/events from twice year to once per quarter (4 total) as measured by the School's Google yearly calendar by June 2023. 5. To foster a positive student climate at the School as measured by a maximum of 5% increase on the School Climate Survey as measured by survey responses by August 2023. 	
Major Known Risks (including significant Assumptions) <i>Identify obstacles that may cause the project to fail.</i>	
Risk	Risk Rating (Hi, Med, Lo)
COVID-19 school shutdown (No in-person mentoring)	Medium
Lack of parent involvement	High
Students may not attend virtual mentoring sessions (Google Meet/Zoom)	Low
Constraints <i>List any conditions that may limit the project team's options with respect to resources, personnel, or schedule (e.g., predetermined budget or project end date, limit on number of staff that may be assigned to the project).</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of stakeholder involvement due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions. 2. Language barriers due to 32% of students being Spanish or Latin speakers. 	

External Dependencies Will project success depend on coordination of efforts between the project team and one or more other individuals or groups? Has everyone involved agreed to this interaction?

Yes, the School's On-Track Program pairs students with internal faculty members and with external mentor volunteers, who live within the school's surrounding community. After completing a brief training, application and background check, mentors visit with a student once a week during the student's lunch or breakfast at school. The school's On-Track Program selects the children that are need of extra support in the areas of academics, attendnace, and behavior and provide them with the necessary interventions and mentors. Additionally, the school's alumni and successful entrepreneurs, volunteer their time and efforts to mentor in-need students yearly.

All of the school's On-Track members have committed to the responsibilities and expectations listed below:

1. Advocates will meet with students on a consistent basis and maintain their relationship with their mentee.
2. Advocates will come to meetings prepared (review student data prior to the meeting).
3. Advvocates will keep conversations student-centered.
4. Advocates will engage in root cause analysis.
5. Advocates will engage in matching interventions to student needs.
6. Advocates will communicate with students and parents, according to your role.

5. Communication Strategy (specify how the project manager will communicate to the Host, Sponsor, Project Team members and Stakeholders, e.g., frequency of status reports, frequency of Project Team meetings, etc.

The project coordinator is in constant contact with all involved stakeholders to ensure that students are reciving the interventions and strtagies that they need in order to be successful. On-Track meetings occur every Tuesday morning (weekly) at the school where the team analyzes each grade level (9th-12th) to determine students who are at-risk, in need of additional supports, and students who have successful applied the intvernetions that wer estbalished for them. The project coordinator will utilize the school's social media accounts to share whole group On-Track Program information and updates with students, parents, teachers, and local community members. Additionally, once a month all stakeholders will meet to analyze the On-Track Program's status report and to communicate any feedback or concerns that may be important to the program's overall success.

6. Sign-off

	Name	Signature	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Project Host	Director of School Counseling	<i>Director of School Counseling</i>	1/17/2022
Project Sponsor	Dr. Dale Lamb		
Project Manager	Kayla "Birdie" Barbare	<i>Kayla M. Barbare</i>	1/17/2022

7. Notes

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Appendix C

On-Track Staff Communications Survey On-Track Communication Survey Questions-Staff Survey

Scale: 1-4 (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree)

Implementation

1. I am provided with detailed information about the On-Track Program when needed.
2. The On-Track Program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
3. Language barriers do not exist between teachers, students, and parents.
4. The On-Track Program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.

Outcomes

5. My mentee was well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders or through social media platforms.
6. My mentee and their parents felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives of the On-Track Program.
7. On-Track members implemented progress monitoring systems which were used to share updated data with students and parents during meetings.
8. The level of communication provided through the On-Track Program met my expectations.

Open-Ended Questions

9. What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?
10. How could the On-Track Program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?

Appendix D

On-Track Student Communications Survey

On-Track Communication Survey Questions-Student Survey

Scale: 1-4 (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree)

Implementation

1. I am provided with detailed information about the On-Track Program when needed.
2. The On-Track Program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
3. Language barriers (Translating Spanish to English, German to English, etc.) do not exist between students, teachers, and parents.
4. The On-Track Program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.

Outcomes

5. I was well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders or through social media platforms.
6. I felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) of the On-Track Program.
7. My personal progress, weak points, and updated data drawn from progress monitoring systems was shared with me during meetings.
8. The level of communication provided through the On-Track Program met my expectations.

Open-Ended Questions

9. What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?
10. How could the On-Track Program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?

Appendix E

On-Track Parent Communications Survey On-Track Communications Survey Questions-Parent Survey

Scale: 1-4 (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree)

Implementation

1. I am provided with detailed information about the On-Track Program when needed.
2. The On-Track Program is well promoted and shared through various communication platforms.
3. Language barriers (Translating Spanish to English, German to English, etc.) do not exist between students, teachers, and parents.
4. The On-Track Program communicates high expectations for student performance and success.

Outcomes

5. I was well informed about On-Track meetings and updates by way of email, phone calls, printed reminders, Google Classroom reminders or through social media platforms.
6. I felt welcomed and valued when communicating with representatives (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) of the On-Track Program.
7. My student's personal progress, weak points, and updated data drawn from progress monitoring systems was shared with me during meetings.
8. The level of communication provided through the On-Track Program met my expectations.

Open-Ended Questions

9. What On-Track communication method do you find the most effective?
10. How could the On-Track Program better promote and share updates with all stakeholder members (teachers, administrators, students, parents, school counselors, etc.)?

Appendix F

On-Track Staff Communications Interview Questions

Staff Interview Questions

1. Which virtual platforms do you think best communicates information with teachers (Emails, phone blasts, Google Forms, Google Classroom, etc.)?
2. How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?
3. Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?
4. Would providing teachers with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track Program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?
5. If the On-Track members periodically checked in with teachers to give updates and receive feedback on students who are recommended to the On-Track team, would that improve relations between counselors/administrators and teachers? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?
6. If the On-Track Program hosted a back-to-school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track Program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?

Appendix G

On-Track Student Communications Interview Questions

Student Interview Questions

1. Which social media platforms do you think best communicates information with students?
2. How can the social media platforms that are already being used be enhanced?
3. Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?
4. Would providing students with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track Program? How else could information be shared to better meet your needs?
5. If the On-Track members visited with students during lunches, in the hallways, and attended extracurricular events would that enhance relationships with students? What other ideas do you have for improving relationships with On-Track members?
6. If the On-Track Program hosted a back-to-school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies would that help you and your parents feel more connected with the On-Track Program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?

Appendix H

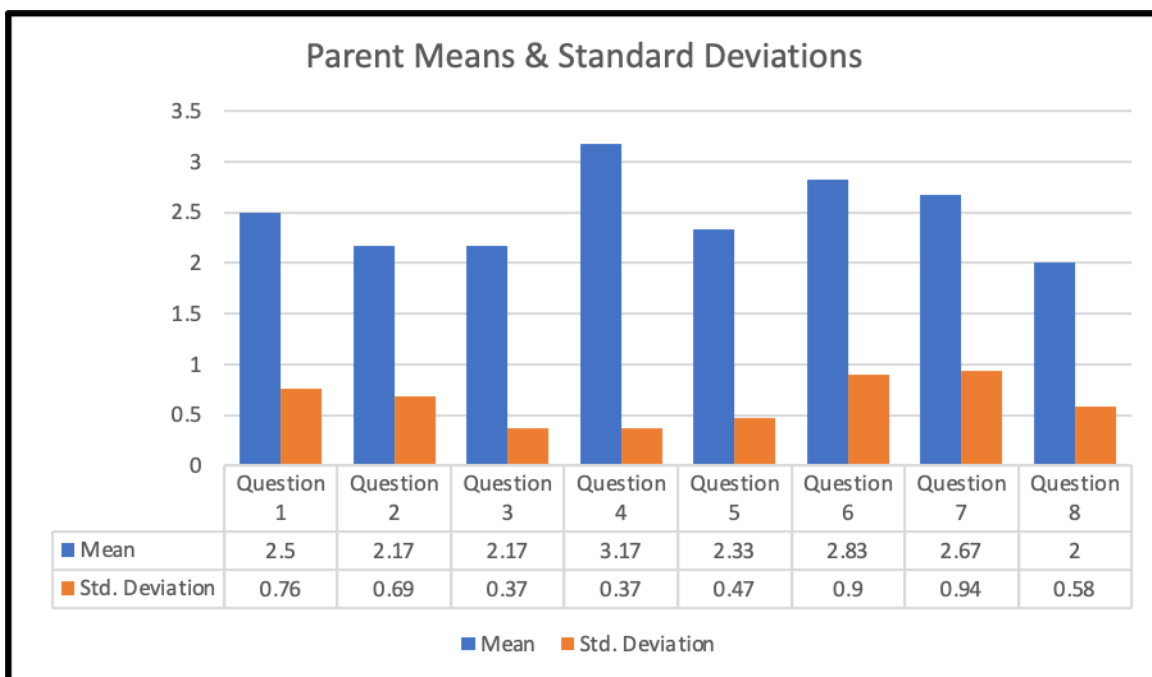
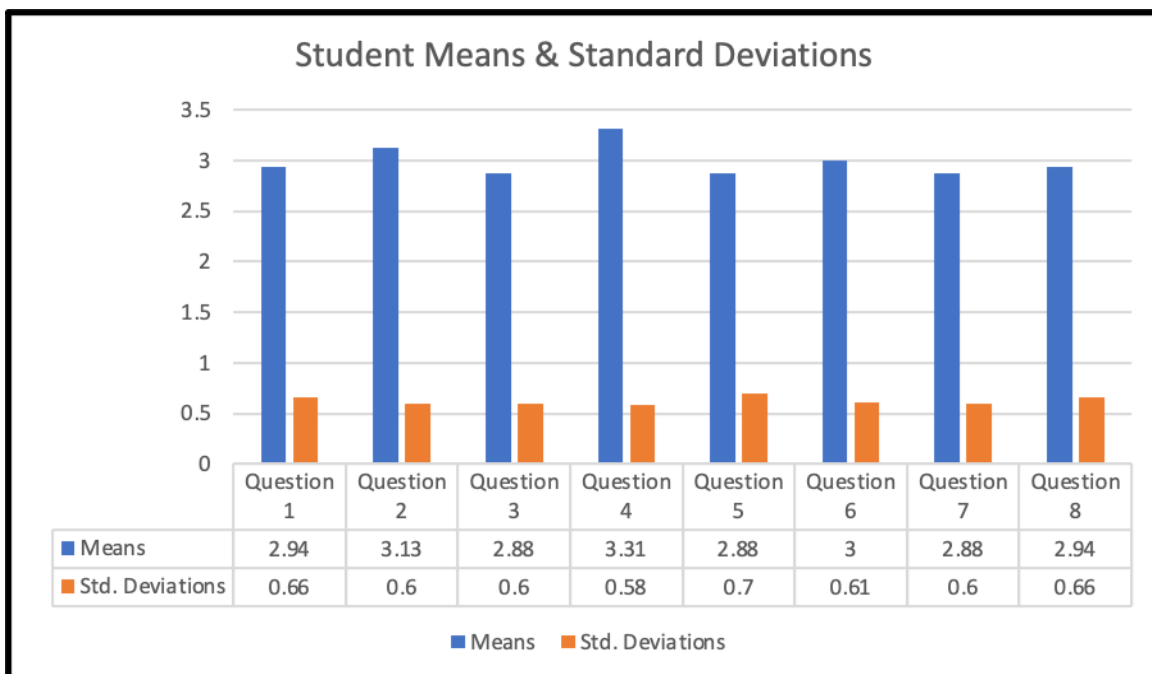
On-Track Parent Communications Interview Questions

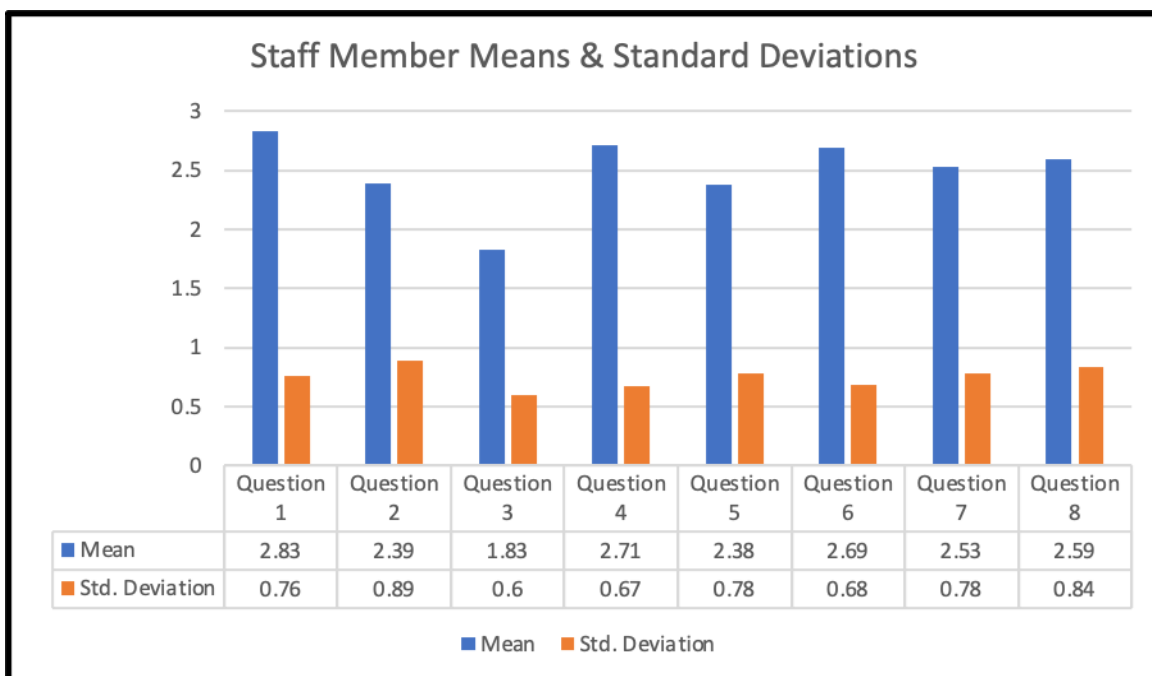
Parent Interview Questions

1. Which social media platforms do you think best communicates information with parents (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, the school website, etc.)?
2. How can the virtual platforms that are already being used be enhanced?
3. Do you think that translating emails, forms, phone calls, announcements, and social media posts would help eliminate language barriers? Do you see any other language barriers that exist?
4. Would providing parents with informational phone calls, email reminders, handouts, and progress reports (shared with all stakeholders) allow you to feel more updated with your participation within the On-Track Program? How else could information be shared or meet your needs?
5. What methods could the On-Track members use to periodically checked in with parents to give updates and receive feedback on your child?
6. If the On-Track Program hosted a back-to-school block party, meet and greet nights with students and parents, celebration nights, and end-of-the-year award ceremonies and invited all stakeholders to be involved, would that help you feel more connected with the On-Track Program? What other ideas do you have to improve relations and stakeholder involvement?

Appendix I

Means and Standard Deviation Values for Survey Results Per Subpopulation





Appendix J

On-Track Stakeholder Survey p-Value Results

P-Value				
Question	Students	Staff Members	Staff Member Non-Response	Parents
#1	.01476	.01857	All 18 Responded	.11161
#2	.00291	.28648	All 18 Responded	.34303
#3	.00291	.00155	All 18 Responded	.01005
#4	.00367	.0013	.00358	.01005
#5	.03673	.08966	.1978	.062
#6	.00367	.00367	.01857	.11161
#7	.00291	.02777	.05083	.57241
#8	.01476	.12052	.1979	.11161

Significant= $p < .05$ (Green), insignificant $p > .05$ (Red)