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An Examination of the Impact of a Middle School Transition Program on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation

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An Examination of the Impact of a Middle School Transition Program on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation

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This dissertation was submitted by Melissa West under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

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This case study addressed student academic intrinsic motivation during transition into middle school. The study examined one middle school that conducts a middle school transition program. The study collected data about student intrinsic motivation in reading, math, social studies, and science. The researcher explored procedures learned during the middle school transition program that students and teachers felt most directly impacted student intrinsic motivation.

This study was an extension of Sealy's (2012) dissertation about high school transition. The purpose of this study was to extend the generalization of the original study, build on previous research, and add related knowledge to the original study. This study contained both population and context-driven extensions and method and measurement-driven extensions. The research design remained the same as the original study.

A mixed-methods design was used involving quantitative data from the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory and examination of a transition graph. Qualitative data were collected from student focus groups, teacher interviews, and an administrator interview. Through analysis of data collected, student intrinsic motivation in core courses and general orientation to learning were examined.

For the study middle school, students showed the highest levels of intrinsic motivation in social studies partially because of challenging assignments. Math also had high academic intrinsic motivation levels. Reading had the lowest academic intrinsic motivation. Students did not find reading challenging and appeared oversaturated with reading at the elementary school level. One important factor for intrinsic motivation to learn subjects was the teacher.

When compared to the replicated study, middle school students showed more intrinsic motivation than high school students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

"The differences in the social and academic climates of elementary versus middle schools have been implicated as at least partially responsible for students' decline in motivation and achievement during early adolescence" (Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph, 2015, p. 21). Every young person can be successful, especially during the difficult middle school years when there is decreasing interest in school and almost no intrinsic motivation (Chung & McBride, 2015). A transition program that teaches students to effectively navigate processes can help students feel more successful and effective at the middle school level. Success and effectiveness help cultivate intrinsic motivation (Tileston, 2004). Transitions are especially challenging during adolescence when so many other elements of student lives are changing with puberty (Wilson, 2011). An orientation program is helpful when starting a new school. Making sure students are as successful as possible during the first few weeks of school is essential to setting a positive tone for the year (Stroud, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

"As early as 1966, researchers began to study what teachers believed to be a loss in academic achievement associated with the transition to junior high school" (Akos, Queen, & Lineberry, 2005, p. 45). In a study of 489 students transitioning from elementary school to junior high school, Finger and Silverman (as cited in Akos et al., 2005), observed a decrease in achievement that appeared to be linked to academic motivation. Research since that time has found that transition can affect academic achievement, self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation, school satisfaction, and grades (Akos et al., 2005).

Mullins and Irvin (as cited in Akos et al., 2005) concluded that student motivation and academic achievement in reading, math, social studies, and science decreased with the transition to middle school. Adolescents are not unmotivated. Adolescents are very motivated to do what they want to do and to avoid anything they do not want to do (Pickhardt, 2010); however, students in middle school become intellectually lazy (Danielson, 2006). By the time a student reaches adolescence, a student is not motivated the same way they were in elementary school. Middle school students lack the motivation regarding work, task completion, and ambition (Pickhardt, 2010). Parental academic hopes are not as important to a student at the middle school level (Pickhardt, 2010). Students may rebel during adolescence. Where once extrinsic motivation worked for school tasks, now it may not. When built, intrinsic motivation is stronger than extrinsic motivation. Creating self-interest can build intrinsic motivation (Pickhardt, 2010). "If students are motivated to learn the content in a given subject, their achievement will most likely be good" (Marzano, 2003, p.144).

The foundation for future academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development is set by a student's transition (Akos et al., 2005). A middle school transition program is important for several reasons. The first year of middle school sets the tone for the next step in the student's academic career. Sixth grade is a pivotal year, because it is the first year in middle school.

If the sixth-grade year is successful, the years to follow could have a better chance of being successful. Puberty is a major factor in poor transitions (Goldstein et al., 2015). Puberty is the maturation of a human's reproductive system (Akos et al., 2005). Puberty results in an increase in size, height, and weight; the production of body hair; and changes in voice (Akos et al., 2005). Social-emotional development is affected by

transition (Akos et al., 2005). Friendships affect how stressed a child feels and therefore affect the transition to middle school. Students who are in middle school need closer adult relationships (Goldstein et al., 2015). A strong parental relationship is a must in middle school. A strong relationship with teachers is also important. In middle schools, students have more teacher relationships to navigate. When students need closer relationships, they have more teachers instead of forming a few strong connections (Goldstein et al., 2015).

Behavioral development is affected by transition (Akos et al., 2005). School-related stress plays a major role in transition (Hudson, 2013). When students feel most self-conscious, middle schools increase competition (Goldstein et al., 2015). When students need autonomy, teachers institute more restrictions to help classroom procedures (Goldstein et al., 2015). Most of the time, sixth-grade students have come from various elementary schools around the county. Elementary school buildings tend to be smaller than middle school buildings (Akos et al., 2005). Many students from various elementary schools do not know each other upon entering the middle school level. These first few weeks of sixth grade is the first time students not only rotate teachers throughout the day but rotate all classes and activities. Students change core classes in middle school, usually in a small area, floor, or wing of the building; but students also must travel around the building for activities in other areas such as the library, cafeteria, or gymnasium (Akos et al., 2005). At the elementary level, students travel as a group to most places. One reason the transition period for middle school students is intimidating is that students travel on their own around the facilities.

A transition program could be the first step to raising student intrinsic motivation leading to a successful middle school academic career. There is a strong link between

student intrinsic motivation and academic success. Middle school students have many outside motivators such as friendships and puberty controlling much of their life during adolescence. School-related stress affects motivation and achievement (Hudson, 2013). Students become less motivated to achieve as they progress through school (Christopher, 2009). Middle school students have been motivated by extrinsic rewards in elementary school and are still expecting similar types of rewards. A student must place value on an extrinsic reward in order for it to motivate him or her (Christopher, 2009). An intrinsic motivator comes from within. It is a part of someone's nature. At the age when children have become accustomed to receiving extrinsic rewards, middle schools now expect a student to want to accomplish a task because the student desires to do so. When a student has that desire to succeed on activities at the middle school level, completion of tasks is more prevalent; therefore, most of the time, grades are better for a student who is intrinsically motivated. A middle school transition program teaches students processes such as consistent attendance, proper middle school behavior, preparedness for all classes, positive parent involvement, and how to have academic success. A transition program's goal is to make these processes develop into habits. Habits are things done repeatedly (Covey, 1998). These habits can lead to student success in the classroom. Student academic success can affect intrinsic motivation (Marzano, 2003). Research also shows that academic intrinsic motivation should be differentiated into core areas as well as a general orientation toward school learning (Gottfried, 1986). The need existed to explore a middle school transition program and its connection to student academic intrinsic motivation to learn in each core class and general orientation toward school learning. Middle schools can be proactive, using steps to minimize the problems associated with transition by devising programs at the middle level to ease the transition

from elementary school (Akos et al., 2005).

Extension of a Study

The conceptual framework for the methodology and research design for this study about transition and student academic intrinsic motivation came from Shirley C. Sealy's (2012) dissertation, *Impact of Freshman Academy Experiences on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation*. The researcher used a form of replication, extending the Sealy study on transition and student academic intrinsic motivation. Replication of a study means the researcher copied the original study in every way possible to see whether the same results could be found (Lund Research Ltd., 2012).

Sealy (2012) explored the transition of a group of ninth-grade students during their first year in an upstate South Carolina high school. The study focused on the students' levels of academic intrinsic motivation toward English, math, history, science, and their general orientation toward school learning. Academic intrinsic motivation was measured by a survey, Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI; Sealy, 2012). Sealy explored the freshman academy by using focus groups, interviews, and an examination of the freshman academy literature.

The research design for Sealy's (2012) study was a mixed method case study. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a program involving direct observation of the program being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the activities (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Sealy stated she used a case study because

> Studying the relationship between freshman academy experiences and students' academic intrinsic motivation is a complex process, and a suitable method for this type of exploration is case study methodology. According to Creswell (2005), case study methodology is appropriate when the researcher recognizes a complex

> problem requiring deep exploration. A key strength of the case study method involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. The researcher determines in advance what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data to answer the research questions. (p. 47)

Sealy (2012) used both quantitative data and qualitative data in the mixed-methods study. Student levels of academic intrinsic motivation toward English, math, history, science, and their general orientation toward school learning was measured by a quantitative survey, CAIMI (Sealy, 2012). Sealy gathered qualitative research about the freshman academy by conducting three student focus groups; four teacher interviews, one from each of the four subject areas; and an administrator interview. Sealy also conducted a review of the freshman academy's written descriptions.

Replication of a study can be a duplication study, a generalization study, or an extension study (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). To duplicate a study, the researcher uses the same research strategy, design, methodology, and data analysis technique (Lund Research Ltd., 2012); however, when replicating a study, it is appropriate to alter the original study to clarify existing results (Roberts, 2004). A generalization of a study looks at where the findings from the original study may hold across populations, settings, contexts, treatments, and time (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). An extension of a study has the same goals of the original study but has more freedom in terms of research strategies (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). When replicating a study, the researcher may alter variables, research questions, or research instruments (Roberts, 2004).

This study was an extension of Sealy's (2012) study on transition and student academic intrinsic motivation. This study had both population and context-driven extensions and method and measurement-driven extensions. This study explored a

different population by examining a transition program into middle school instead of high school. The population was the entire sixth-grade class at the study middle school in western North Carolina. Sealy's study examined a sampling of ninth-grade students during the first year of high school. This study analyzed the different setting of a small rural middle school in western North Carolina where the middle school transition program was implemented instead of the large rural upstate South Carolina high school in Sealy's study. The method and measurement-driven extension of the original study involved focus group and interview questions. The focus group and interview questions from Sealy's study were modified to fit the change in population and change in setting. The researcher also included a quantitative examination of the transition program graph.

The first justification for extending the Sealy (2012) study on a freshman academy and student academic intrinsic motivation was to test generalizability (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). Extending Sealy's study would help determine if the results held across a range of populations. Students entering adolescence may have a different perspective than older adolescents about transition. Academic intrinsic motivation is beginning in early adolescents and should be building in more mature adolescents. The difference in how younger adolescents versus older adolescents handle transition and academic intrinsic motivation tested generalizability.

Another justification for extending Sealy's (2012) study on transition and motivation was to build on previous research (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). Extending Sealy's study determined if settings were a factor in transition. Students entering middle school at the small rural study middle school in western North Carolina only filter from two elementary schools. Multiple middle schools filtered into Sealy's large rural upstate South Carolina high school. These different settings built on previous research.

Another justification for extending the *Impact of Freshman Academy Experiences on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation* was to relay related knowledge that may add greater understanding to the original study (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). CAIMI was originally developed for students in Grades 4-8 (Gottfried, 1986). Sealy (2012) used CAIMI with ninth-grade students in high school. The current study used this instrument with the intended audience of students in Grade 6. This study added information about middle schools such as the origin of middle schools, characteristics of middle schools, and characteristics of a middle school transition program. This study looked at characteristics of early adolescence and examined how the teacher/student coaching relationship affected student motivation. The generalization of study data, building on previous research, and adding related knowledge are the reasons the researcher chose to replicate by extension Sealy's original study.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework focuses on why a topic matters, why the methodology is valid, and why the research design is appropriate (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). The topic of transition matters because transition is a significant time in a student's life. Transition is moving from one level to the next (Akos et al., 2005). The conceptual framework of the topic of this study about transition and student academic intrinsic motivation begins with Akos et al.'s (2005) three categories of adolescent concerns during transition: academic concerns, procedural concerns, and social concerns. A middle school transition program trains sixth-grade students in middle school processes such as attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and academics. This procedural training during a transition program is completed to increase academic scores. Social concerns are a top priority for students, so teachers consider these anxieties during the transition program to

help sixth-grade students better adjust to middle school life. Skinner's (1974) theory affirmed training a student through the use of motivations will cause a student to perform an action repeatedly. When training students to follow classroom procedures, many times, teachers use extrinsic rewards. Students can move from being mostly extrinsically motivated to being less extrinsically motivated (Alderman, 2008). When extrinsic motivation is associated with improving and being successful, it strengthens intrinsic motivation (Alderman, 2008). A transition program is designed to use extrinsic rewards to motivate students to foster the procedural elements of navigating middle school. Achievement of processes should lead to academic success. If social concerns can be minimized, students can focus on the successes established with a middle school transition program. Students who are success-oriented are motivated by challenges (Marzano, 2003). Teaching procedures designed to make procedures into habits show small successes over and over and lead students to focus on success. Once a behavior is conditioned and success is shown, intrinsic motivation is born.

The second part of the conceptual framework for the topic of this study about a middle school transition program comes from the National Forum's Schools to Watch Initiative. The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform (NFAMGR) is a group of educators and organizations focused on the academic performance and healthy development of adolescents (NFAMGR, n.d.). The group won the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation Grant twice (NFAMGR, n.d.). The National Forum's Schools to Watch initiative is a model school identification and school improvement program concentrated on high-achieving middle schools (Simon, 2015). The National Forum's Schools to Watch Initiative has four criteria: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational arrangements (Simon,

2015). Organizational arrangement means a school establishes norms and procedures to make a student successful at the middle school level (Simon, 2015). The norms and procedures focused on by sixth-grade teachers through organizational arrangements help to alleviate student procedural concerns. Academic excellence directly correlates to an adolescent's academic concerns. Academic excellence comes through the instruction and support needed to be successful at the next level (Simon, 2015). Finally, social equity and developmental responsiveness correlate to a student's social concerns. Students must be supported socially and be held to high expectations (Simon, 2015). Table 1 shows the correlation between the middle school transition components of attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and academics, and the NFAMGR's Schools to Watch Program.

Table 1

Correlation of Transition Targets to Schools to Watch Criteria

School Transition Targets	STW Criteria	Method of Analysis
Attendance	Developmental Responsiveness	Schools create a personalized environment that supports each student's intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development. The school provides access to comprehensive services to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.
Behavior	Social Equity	To the fullest extent possible, all students participate in classes with high academic and behavioral expectations. The school rules are clear, fair, and consistently applied. The school's reward system is designed to value diversity, civility, and democratic citizenship.
Preparedness	Organizational Structure	High-performing schools establish norms, structures, and organizational arrangements to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence. They have a sense of purpose that drives every facet of practice and decision-making.
Parent Involvement	Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity, Organizational Structure, and Academic Excellence	Schools involve families in the education of their children. They welcome families, keep them well informed, and help them develop skills to support learning. These schools are deeply rooted in their communities.
Academics	Academic Excellence	High-performing schools with middle grades are academically excellent. They provide students with the curriculum, instruction, and support they need to meet rigorous academic standards. Students learn to understand important concepts, develop essential skills, and apply what they learn to real-world problems.

Program Evaluation

A program evaluation was completed on the middle school transition program in Fall 2016, after the formal transition program was completed for the school year (West, 2016). This program evaluation gathered data using three student surveys and a student focus group. One student survey was given on day 3 of the school year after students had been introduced to all middle school processes. The survey contained Likert scale items asking students to rate themselves from 1, not effective at all, to 5, very effective, on all the elements of middle school processes: attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and classroom academics. Each question on the survey also had a qualitative item after each Likert item asking students to "explain more." The second survey and the final survey were identical to the first survey. The second student survey was given to students at midterm of the first quarter, right before the transition program moved from teaching processes to having a 4-week contest to ascertain if processes have been ingrained in a student's day. The final survey and the student focus group were both held after the first quarter ended and the formal part of the transition program was complete (West, 2016).

Two parent surveys and a parent focus group were part of the program evaluation. Parents were surveyed at the beginning of the year and after the completion of the program. The parent survey for the transition program had similar items to the student survey. Each item addressed a process in the transition program: attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and classroom academics. Each item on the parent survey contained a Likert scale item asking parents to rate their students on middle school processes as 1, not effective at all, to 5, very effective. Each Likert item was followed by an "explain more" section (West, 2016).

During the program evaluation, the previous year's end-of-grade data were gathered and analyzed to determine classroom placement and student needs. Finally, teachers kept a running record, in the form of a graph, containing columns for each process and the names of each student who missed an aspect of a procedure during the day. Teachers used the graph to tally daily points for processes (West, 2016).

The program evaluation determined whether or not the transition program matched the needs of sixth-grade students. Aspects of the transition program such as determining needs of the upcoming class by completing a transition meeting with fifth-grade teachers were positive for sixth-grade transition proven by end-of-first-quarter grades. Only two of 74 students were failing three of four classes at the end of the first quarter (West, 2016). Scheduling remediation and enrichment classes proved to be positive as documented by the student focus group. During the focus group, one student commented that during remediation, the teacher reminded them to bring pencils to class. Another student added that the remediation teacher helped students go "through our notebooks, and stuff stayed there until the next day" (West, 2016, p. 38).

A running record of points was tallied on a transition program graph. Classes could earn up to 500 points per day for the use of correct procedures (West, 2016). Points for the transition program have declined the past 3 years (West, 2016). The program evaluation team investigated possible reasons for the declining points.

Sixth-grade parent involvement, as part of the transition program, was fostered through multiple meetings during the spring and summer before the school year began and in the fall during the first quarter of school. This was determined a strength for the transition program by the program evaluation committee (West, 2016).

Finally, the program evaluation researched student growth on procedures based

on student perceptions in the three student surveys (West, 2016). Even though students begin the sixth-grade year excited about a new school, many times students imagine processes will be the same at the middle school as processes at the elementary school. Students are held more responsible for processes at the middle school level. Once this responsibility was explained to students over the first 3 days of introduction to middle school, students took the first survey about how effective they were at middle school processes. Students ranked themselves as effective at almost all processes with an average of 48% of students saying they were mostly effective in every category of processes (West, 2016). Sixth-grade teachers explained that being very effective in a process meant that you almost never made a mistake with that procedure. An average of only 13% of sixth-grade students ranked themselves as very effective on every process (West, 2016). Throughout the transition program, the numbers in each category rose, suggesting students felt they were mastering processes (West, 2016).

With all of the evidence from the program evaluation conducted last year on the middle school transition program, the researcher wanted to explore other strategies needed to improve the program. At the end-of-the-year transition meeting with the fifth-grade lead teacher, motivation was highlighted as fifth-grade teachers' main concern with the upcoming class. After this transition meeting, the researcher began to pursue avenues to research student motivation.

Purpose of the Study

The current sixth grade at the study middle school struggles with motivation based on a meeting with the fifth-grade lead teacher on June 12, 2017, and subsequent email on June 22, 2017 (Appendix A). The lead teacher commented that students were capable of doing grade-level work but did not want to take the time to be academically

successful. "Rather, it was that students hadn't read carefully, didn't want to look back in the text for answers, didn't want to show their work, etc" (M.B., personal communication, June 22, 2017). Many of last year's fifth graders told their teachers that they did not want to or did not feel like looking back or showing their work. This resulted in lower than expected grades for last year's fifth graders.

The researcher collected quantitative data to compare to the qualitative information received from the fifth-grade team leader. The researcher examined cumulative folders from the fifth-grade team leader's school. The researcher collected fourth-grade fourth-quarter scores in each core area and fifth-grade fourth-quarter scores in each area to see if scores had decreased, increased, or stayed the same from the end of the year in fourth grade to the end of the year in fifth grade. Table 2 shows the percentage of students who made positive growth, no growth, or negative growth on core course grades from fourth grade to fifth grade.

Table 2

End-of-Year Growth from Fourth Grade to Fifth Grade

Core Class	Positive Growth	No Growth	Negative Growth
Reading	3 (5%)	28 (50%)	25 (45%)
Math	4 (7%)	31 (55%)	21 (38%)
Science	10 (18%)	23 (42%)	22 (40%)
Social Studies	6 (13%)	16 (34%)	25 (53%)

In reading, 28 (50%) students had the same end-of-year letter grade in fifth grade as they did in fourth grade, and 25 (45%) students dropped at least one letter grade from the end of the year in fourth grade until the end of the year in fifth grade. In math, 31 (55%) students in fifth grade had the same letter grade as they did at the end of fourth grade, and 21 (38%) fifth graders received at least one letter grade lower than they had the previous year. In science, 23 (42%) students had the same letter grade in fifth and

fourth grades at the end of the year. Twenty-two (40%) fifth graders dropped at least one letter grade during the fourth quarter in science from fourth grade to fifth grade; however, 10 (18%) students raised their science grade at least one letter grade from fourth grade to fifth grade. In social studies, 16 (34%) students had the same fourth-quarter grade in fourth and fifth grade. Twenty-five (53%) students dropped at least one letter grade from the end of fourth grade to the end of fifth grade in social studies, with three students dropping from an A in fourth grade to a D in fifth grade. The quantitative data supported the information from the fifth-grade team leader. In her email, the fifth-grade team leader lamented, "It seems as though the attitude among this group is that they are here because they have to be and because their parents make them rather than using school as an opportunity to make a better future for themselves."

The purpose of this case study was to examine the middle school transition program at a rural middle school in western North Carolina, chronicling the acquisition of processes. Since the researcher had already conducted a program evaluation on the middle school transition program, the need arose to explore student academic intrinsic motivation. The researcher explored student perceptions of this procurement of processes through the middle school transition program and the possibility of correlation with academic intrinsic motivation to learn reading, math, social studies, and science. It also gauged students' general orientation toward school learning. General orientation is the common guide to adjusting to one's learnings. In this case, the learning at the beginning of middle school in the sixth grade should help students adjust to life at the middle school level. This study also sought to determine teacher perceptions and an administrator's perceptions of how the program helped transition students from elementary school to middle school and examined if the middle school transition program paralleled student

motivation to learn.

The current middle school transition program at this middle school was revised and implemented in 2012 to strengthen the transition to middle school and ultimately increase the academic success of middle school students. The original middle school transition program started in 2000, but it was not until 2012 that the faculty began to use data-driven information and activities to improve classroom academics and school perceptions. In 2014, the transition program was updated to its current form including a parent involvement piece.

Research Questions

The following research questions were based on information that was gathered through CAIMI (Gottfried, 1986) and the qualitative and quantitative collection measures from Sealy's (2012) study. In order to complete a more thorough analysis of students' school activity, CAIMI examined student motivation toward classroom learning across all core areas and a general orientation toward school learning (Gottfried, 1986). In conjunction with the intrinsic motivation inventory, Sealy's study, and a review of the purpose of this case study, the following guiding research questions were posed.

1. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading?
2. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math?
3. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn social studies?
4. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science?

5. How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?

Summary

This dissertation presents a description of research that explored a middle school transition program and student academic intrinsic motivation in a rural western North Carolina middle school. Middle school students have many changes academically, procedurally, and socially. A transition program must acclimate a student to a new environment taking into consideration all of the changes in the evolution from elementary school to middle school such as puberty, new relationships, and declining motivation and focus on aspects that will lead to success. This transition program focused on the processes of attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and classroom academics to lead to success in the classroom. Classroom success should increase student intrinsic motivation. This dissertation focused on the belief that if a student feels successful in the processes of school, that belief will result in increased classroom motivation in reading, math, social studies, and science. That motivation was shown in student academic intrinsic motivation in core subjects and general orientation toward school.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature research associated with the history of middle schools, the characteristics of middle schools, characteristics of a middle school transition program, and characteristics of adolescents. It continues with the importance of student motivation based on teacher coaching and concludes with student intrinsic motivation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to fully understand the rise of middle schools' efforts to build a transition program and its impact on student academic intrinsic motivation, an examination of middle schools themselves is appropriate. This review of the literature deals with middle school issues spanning from the time of its conception.

Next, the literature review analyzes the characteristics of middle schools, a middle school transition program, and adolescents. Characteristics of middle schools are unique to the intermediate level. A middle school transition program is formed to specifically help adolescents adapt to the middle school environment. Adolescents have their own characteristics that students manage on a daily basis that help them or hinder them from navigating a middle school environment. Finally, this literature review examines how coaching by teachers affects middle school students' transition into a secondary level of education and student intrinsic motivation for success at that level.

History of Middle Schools

During the 19th century, schools were divided into elementary schools which consisted of the first eight grades and high school which contained the last four grades (Manning, 2000). Near the turn of the century, the first junior high school was established. The first 3-year junior high school encompassed Grades 7, 8, and 9 and was established in Columbus, Ohio, in 1909 (Manning, 2000). Moving Grades 7 and 8 out of elementary school allowed these students to be introduced to more topics at a high level and not delay progression while students were still in elementary schools (Manning, 2000). Junior high school began with the idea of being a miniature high school (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Students were even tracked like high school. Originally, the junior high focused on two categories of students, those going to college and those going into a trade

(Manning, 2000). By 1950, educators questioned whether junior high schools actually focused on what adolescents needed. That year, the Bay City, Michigan school system established the first middle school (Manning, 2000).

The beginning of the first middle school concept is attributed to William Alexander, chairman of the Department of Education at George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, at a conference at Cornell University in 1963 (Meyer, 2011). Alexander was scheduled to talk about dynamic junior high schools but instead focused on all the elements junior high schools did not have to meet the needs of adolescents such as more freedom to move and plan their own activities, more opportunities to develop new interests, and more focus on adolescent needs (Meyer, 2011). From Alexander's words, the idea to have middle schools be something more than an extended version of junior high schools developed. Middle schools were started to meet the development of adolescents, independence of adolescents, and needs of adolescents.

When first proposed, middle schools were meant to be a bridge from elementary school to high school (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Like the junior high schools before them, middle schools were seen as miniature high schools (Rettig & Canady, 2000), but middle schools were not created to be a place to hold students until they got through puberty (Meyer, 2011). Middle schools were created to fill the gap that junior high schools were not meeting, focusing on the needs of adolescents. Adolescents have special needs, such as the onset of puberty and a desire for independence, in which a middle school environment had to respond. Through the 1960s and 1970s, middle schools struggled with having an identity separate from junior high schools (Schaefer, Malu, & Yoon, 2016). Middle schools were created to meet the specific needs of adolescents, not to

have the same strict standards as junior high schools (Rettig & Canady, 2000). During the 1980s, middle schools developed interdisciplinary curriculum, team teaching, and advisor/advisee programs (Schaefer et al., 2016). During the 1990s, national policies encouraged more research about practices that were implemented at the beginning of the 2000s (Schaefer et al., 2016). In the 2010s, middle schools focused on the continuing development of adolescents and their needs (Schaefer et al., 2016).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (as cited in Rettig & Canady, 2000), in 1973, there were four junior high schools for every middle school; however, by 1993, the ratio was three to one in favor of middle schools. Middle schools grew out of a desire to specifically focus on adolescents and the characteristics middle schools needed to reach that group of students.

Characteristics of Middle Schools

Since its inception in the 1960s, middle schools have worked to design a space especially for adolescents. At the beginning of the implementation of middle schools, quite often middle schools were housed in buildings that used to be high schools (Rettig & Canady, 2000). These buildings had separate classrooms for each subject, a gymnasium, and other high school facilities. While these buildings were originally intended for high school students, this type of building catered to middle school students' need for independence. Middle school structures have become more focused on the needs of adolescents in the 2010s (Schaefer et al., 2016). Many times, middle schools today house all classes from the same grade level in the same area of the building with sixth-grade students having shorter distances to travel because of their unfamiliarity with the building.

When middle schools are clearly focused on students, they address specific

middle school issues through structural options and programs (Watson, 1999). Middle schools structure a student's day to make classroom academics and behavior more organized (Atwell, 1998). Most middle schools are scheduled on a modified block schedule similar to United States' high schools with the possible exception of a block for exploratory classes and physical education each day. The four-block schedule for high schools became popular in the 1990s (Rettig & Canady, 2000). During a high school block schedule, students meet daily for an average of 90 minutes for four courses (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Ninety-minute classes foster problem solving, allow time to develop higher order thinking skills, and encourage self-learning (Akos et al., 2005). A middle school modified block contains the four core classes: English/language arts/reading, math, social studies, and science. These middle school modified blocks can be the traditional hour and a half or, most of the time, shorter to incorporate a fifth class for exploring subjects outside the core classes or physical education. Besides the four core courses of English/language arts/reading, math, social studies, and science, middle schools incorporate exploratory courses (Rettig & Canady, 2000) and physical education. Exploratory classes and physical education classes can be shorter classes than core classes. Exploratory classes and physical education classes can split time during a class period in a block schedule. A fifth middle school block may be split into at least two 45-minute classes. One of those half classes would be physical education and a second half class of an exploratory subject such as art, music, Spanish, chorus, band, or technology. Another option used by many middle schools is to rotate days of the week for certain classes. Exploratory and physical education may be a complete class period and rotate days of the week when classes are held. These divided classes could give a middle school student as many as seven or eight daily changes.

Many middle schools build in a small amount of extra time for student needs or student choice. One student need may be academics. Middle schools may incorporate a remediation or enrichment period sometime throughout the day or a few days a week. Remedial intervention times were set up during a middle school day to better accommodate the implementation of new standards and the pressures of high stakes end-of-year testing (Rettig & Canady, 2000). To better meet adolescent needs and to prevent retention being the only option to help struggling learners, a remediation time was implemented during the school day in many middle schools (Rettig & Canady, 2000). A block set aside for extra academic help can also be used for enrichment for those students showing mastery in a timely manner (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Middle school should be organized and allow student choice to help students mature and take responsibility for their learning (Atwell, 1998). Some middle schools also use this small measure of time, usually about 30 minutes, to have a student-chosen reading period or homework time. This extra time can be placed anywhere during the school day; but for some middle schools, this extra period is incorporated into homeroom. This extra period can also include an advisory time unique to middle schools (Akos et al., 2005). Advisory periods consist of a one-on-one meeting between a student and an advising teacher to guide students through the transition to middle school. A teacher-based guidance program, like an advisory period, is important to the middle school environment (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Advising time can be spent monitoring academic achievement or fostering student motivation (Akos et al., 2005). Advisory periods are important to early adolescence because this small period of time each day allows a student to make a personal connection with at least one adult in the middle school building (Akos et al., 2005).

Interdisciplinary team teaching is an important part of the middle school experience (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Middle schools can operate in teams or not, depending on the size of the school. A small middle school may operate with only four teachers per grade level teaching the four core courses to all the students in that grade. Larger middle schools must operate in teacher teams that teach a portion of the group of students at a grade level. A middle school team may consist of two or three teachers who teach all of the core classes to a small group of students. In these interdisciplinary teams, two or three teachers work with the same set of students throughout the day (Akos et al., 2005). These two or three teachers get to know the middle school students on a more personal level instead of having middle school students spread out among four core teachers. A team of teachers has a common planning period to discuss student issues and concerns among their team, and they conduct parent conferences together (Akos et al., 2005). Berndt et al. (as cited in Akos et al., 2005) reported that self-esteem declined in traditional junior high schools but did not change in the transition from elementary school to junior high if the junior high school was set up in teacher teams (Akos et al., 2005). "Teaming increases student involvement and decreases disassociation with the school through smaller, more focused groupings" (Akos et al., 2005, p. 54). Regardless of teams, most middle school teachers specialize in one grade level and only have classes consisting of that grade level for the year. For example, most sixth-grade teachers only work with sixth-grade students, so they would be intimately involved in a middle school transition program.

Characteristics of a Middle School Transition Program

Middle school is the first time many students do not perform the way they have traditionally performed at the elementary level (Durant, 2010). Student academic

intrinsic motivation begins to decrease as students complete elementary school (Alderman, 2008). Middle school is a time when students usually move from a smaller, community elementary school to a bigger middle school made up of students from several different elementary schools. Most students have some type of stress associated with the move from elementary school to middle school (Goldstein et al., 2015) which affects student academic performance and motivation. Because of this shift in schools during the early stages of puberty, a middle school transition program is needed.

In a national sample of public school students, students whose schools had full middle school transition programs were less likely to drop out of school than those without transition programs (Akos et al., 2005). Organization of a middle school transition program should be centered around student concerns (Akos et al., 2005). If a transition program is based on student needs, students will be the driving force from the beginning of middle school. Students are more likely to be motivated if they are the driving force and involved from the beginning (Tileston, 2004).

A middle school transition program should be focused on the needs and concerns of all upcoming sixth graders and specific concerns of the incoming sixth-grade class. In a study, Arth (as cited in Akos et al., 2005) found worries that specifically address elements in the study middle school's transition program, such as the number one worry for a sixth grader was failure; the number four concern was being sent to the principal's office; and the number six concern was keeping up with assignments. Other concerns on the list of sixth-grade worries were drugs, giving presentations in class, being picked on, and unkind people (Arth, as cited in Akos et al., 2005). Many times, sixth graders say their number one worry is getting lost or not making it to class on time, followed by opening locks and lockers and bringing correct materials to class (Akos et al., 2005). All

of these concerns must be addressed in a transition program.

According to Weldy (as cited in Akos et al., 2005), one of the critical elements of a transition program is communication. The beginning of any middle school transition program is communication with all stakeholders: students, parents, former teachers, new teachers, the former school, and the new school (Akos et al., 2005). Before the school year begins, the middle school sixth-grade team should contact all incoming schools and give students a chance to familiarize themselves with middle school. One way to accommodate this step would be to conduct a visitation day by the receiving school. This type of visit would include an overview of the school and a student's day and an explanation of core academics and extracurricular activities (Schoolcounselingbyheart, 2012). A visit to the middle school by fifth-grade students will raise awareness of the organization which is essential for a smooth transition (Schoolcounselingbyheart, 2012). One possible activity for middle school transition used by many schools is an open house either in the spring or summer to orient incoming students to the school, create schedules and practice class changes, and issue locks/lockers (Akos et al., 2005). An open house gives stakeholders such as students and parents a chance to familiarize themselves with the new school (Akos et al., 2005). A parent night for incoming sixth graders is usually planned for the spring or summer before the new school year begins. A parent meeting is a good place to talk about school expectations and student responsibilities for the upcoming year (Akos et al., 2005). Finally, a teacher meeting between the previous school and the new school is essential to a successful transition (Akos et al., 2005). Elementary teachers should relay to middle school teachers information about upcoming student concerns and how those concerns may affect the upcoming year for an effective transition (Akos et al., 2005). According to Kagan and Neuman (as cited in Akos et al.,

2005), even though transition is significant, many schools only offer a single transition activity for incoming sixth graders. Before transition is expected to happen, schools should form a transition committee to begin planning multiple opportunities for transition activities (Akos et al., 2005) to address all aspects of new sixth graders. Other activities conducted before the school year begins could include newsletters, guidance counselor visits, and supply lists and schedules mailed to each student's home (Akos et al., 2005). The transition committee should also provide an informal occasion for parents to meet teachers such as an end-of-summer picnic (Akos et al., 2005). An informal picnic would make parents and students more open to asking questions and would give teachers an opportunity to make an initial contact with parents before the school year starts. Most schools complete transition activities right before the new school year starts or during the first few days of sixth grade. The adjustment phase for a transition from one school level to another can take up to a half of a year (Akos et al., 2005), so transition programs may need to extend further into the school year than just the first days. By establishing multiple transition activities and a timeline, stakeholders can discover critical information about middle school procedures (Akos et al., 2005).

A successful transition program that extends further into the year needs to include the three main categories of student concerns during transition which are academic concerns, procedural concerns, and social concerns (Akos et al., 2005). A transition program is a program to train incoming middle school students in all of the processes to be successful at the middle school level. Students must appropriately and effectively learn the processes (Whitaker, 2012). Research shows that the characteristics that promote successful transitions are problem solving such as maintaining high academics, coping abilities with the procedural aspects of the day such as dealing with attendance

responsibilities and classroom preparedness, and social skills such as controlling behavior and being consistent in relaying parent information and ensuring parent involvement (Akos et al., 2005). The middle school transition program at this western North Carolina middle school is built on the components of attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and classroom academics.

The middle school transition program at the study school was built upon the NFAMGR Schools to Watch program. The NFAMGR's Schools to Watch program establishes four criteria for schools: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational arrangements (Simon, 2015). Academic excellence comes through the instruction and support needed to be successful at the next level (Simon, 2015). Student academic concerns are heightened from elementary to middle school. Students must be held to high expectations academically and behaviorally (Simon, 2015). Social equity and developmental responsiveness correlate to a student's social concerns. Schools must be developmentally responsive to students by creating a personalized educational environment to support intellectual, social, and physical development (Simon, 2015). Social equity is an important concern for most middle school students and needs to be addressed. Organizational arrangement establishes norms and procedures in a school (Simon, 2015) to make a student successful during the first year in middle school. Student procedural concerns are minimized by norms and procedures. Organizational concerns such as procedures should be addressed by teachers during the first few days of a new school year to acclimate a student to the new grade level as quickly and smoothly as possible. The middle school transition at the study school focuses on the procedural concerns of attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and academics.

Attendance. For the transition program, attendance will be defined as the presence of a student in a class for the entire session without being tardy or leaving early. Schools that are developmentally responsible are conscious of the rare developmental challenges of young adolescents (Simon, 2015). High-performing schools provide support for student physical development along with social, emotional, and intellectual development (NFAMGR, n.d.). Students who were truant in elementary school become even more so after the transition to middle school (Akos et al., 2005). Attendance requires a student be healthy, but schools also want a student to desire to be present at school. Students are more likely to succeed in classroom academics when they attend school consistently (GreatSchools, 2016). Teachers cannot build skills and monitor progress if a large number of students are frequently absent. In a study by Wilson (2011), 39% of students stated that regular attendance and being on time to class were needed for success. In addition to falling behind in classroom academics, students who are not in school on a regular basis are more likely to get into trouble with law enforcement and cause problems in communities (GreatSchools, 2016).

Behavior. For the transition program, behavior will be defined as the lack of punishable offenses in the classroom. Jean Piaget's research shows that students move from a concrete operational stage to a formal operational stage between the ages of 7-11 (McLeod, 2015). Students who work in the concrete operational stage view the world as black and white (Akos et al., 2005). School operations and rules are seen as uniform and non-negotiable by a student in the concrete operational stage. Students who work in the formal operational stage, such as students beginning middle school, have more rational thoughts (Akos et al., 2005). Students explore the gray area between completely right and completely wrong during the formal operational stage; with this comes risk-taking

and rebellious activity (Akos et al., 2005). Students who were disruptive in elementary school tend to be even more disruptive after transition (Akos et al., 2005).

Good behavior by all students is the goal of the transition program. Great teachers focus on the expectations they have set for students, not the rules or the consequences (Whitaker, 2012). Teachers who have good behavior as an expectation generally receive good behavior from students (Whitaker, 2012). Socially equitable schools keep positive options open for students (NFAMGR, n.d.). Adolescents are volatile and question authority as part of their maturation (Atwell, 1998). Discipline takes time out of class. "A classroom that is chaotic as a result of poor management not only doesn't enhance achievement, it might even inhibit it" (Marzano, 2003, p. 88). Class management in middle school is important because middle school students view the classroom differently than they did in elementary school. As students progress through middle school, they do not consider school success a priority like they did in elementary school (Bowen, n.d.). For this reason, students are not as focused on academics, and other factors in a classroom become more of a priority. High-performing schools apply the rules fairly and consistently (NFAMGR, n.d.). Concrete thinkers do not think beyond the here and now. Many times, sixth graders do not realize the consequences of their actions (Bowen, n.d.). If teachers establish expectations positively at the beginning of the year, consistently reinforce the expectations, and focus on the future, a better progression will be made throughout the year (Whitaker, 2012).

In socially responsible schools, the entire school community knows each student well (NFAMGR, n.d.). Adolescents act out because they believe no one cares about them (Bowen, n.d.). Middle school students need a personal connection with someone in the school to alleviate the need for attention-seeking behaviors and to help with

organizational reminders such as being prepared for class.

Preparedness. For the transition program, preparedness will be defined as having all materials needed such as notebook, paper, and a sharpened pencil in each class every day. Schools with superior organizational structures establish norms to propel students forward academically (NFAMGR, n.d.). Morgan's (2006) machine metaphor is a great metaphor for a classroom. Each person has a specific task and a specific set of directions on how to perform that task. If that task is performed exactly as the directions state, the student will receive a good grade. The teachers see an orderly, efficient process designed to produce a specific product quickly and efficiently. The machine metaphor epitomizes productive processes (Morgan, 2006). Bringing materials to class is a class management issue for which all teachers need to plan. Procedures are a matter of training and so is bringing the correct materials. Teachers need to start the training for procedures and preparedness early in the school year, be consistent with the enforcement of procedures, and practice with students to make procedures and preparedness a habit. Sixth graders do not only need structure but also desire it in a new environment where they are unsure of expectations (Santmire, 1990).

Parent involvement. For the transition program, parent involvement will be defined as parent participation in transition and middle school activities. This includes participation in parent nights at the school. Parent involvement also includes parents being informed of students' middle school experiences by means of technology (Watson, 1999) such as computerized grades, an online homework calendar, and classroom websites. When parents are unsupportive of school activities, risk factors increase (Hansen, 2004), so teachers should strive to make parent communication a priority during transition; however, teacher efforts to get parents involved at the middle school level are

weaker than at the elementary level (Watson, 1999). Parent involvement during the transition period including participation in parent nights at the school helps to maintain parent involvement throughout middle school and positively affects student academic achievement (Akos et al., 2005). Parent involvement is the crux of every criterion for a high-performing middle school: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structure (Simon, 2015).

The greatest discrepancies between parental viewpoints and student viewpoints occur between Grades 5-8 (Akos et al., 2005). This discrepancy between parent and student viewpoints reflects an adolescent's aspiration for more independence (Akos et al., 2005). Parents are more concerned about social issues at the middle school level than academics (Akos et al., 2005). Parents often warn their students about bullying, fighting, and other societal issues associated with middle school (Akos et al., 2005).

Parents and students experience an increase in conflict and a decrease in closeness during early adolescence (Akos et al., 2005). "For younger students, the policies and practices for students structure not only the students' relationship with the school but that of their parents" (Danielson, 2006, p. 66). Many parents try to give students more freedom in middle school (Santmire, 1990). Actually, middle school students need much more support than people think. because so many factors affect a child's school experience (Santmire, 1990). "Successful students have at least one adult who cares about their personal success" (Akos et al., 2005, p. 3). One of the most important ways to know and help students is parent support. The National PTA Standards' (PTA, 2008) first standard is to welcome all families into the school community. Schools must actively seek ways to increase parental communication, especially with students whose parents tend to not be as active in schools, such as at-risk students (Hansen, 2004).

Standard Two of the National PTA Standards (2008) is the importance of regular communication about student learning. Getting the cooperation of parents is a positive for student academic careers. Continued parental involvement is essential for a successful transition into middle school and success beyond the first year of middle school (Akos et al., 2005). As strategies are put into place and used, if a school can get parent support for these practices, the strategies will be more effective (Hansen, 2004).

Classroom academics. For the transition program, classroom academics will be defined as completing all classwork and homework in a timely manner. "Children with higher levels of academic intrinsic motivation should experience task mastery and should therefore perceive that they are more competent in school learning than those with lower levels" (Dweck & Elliott, as cited in Gottfried, 1986, p. 13). During early adolescence, students grow cognitively from concrete thinkers to abstract thinkers (Simon, 2015). High-performing schools provide students with a challenging curriculum to aid student thinking (Simon, 2015). Teachers should create assignments, especially homework, that incite curiosity and have a sense of purpose (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995). This sense of purpose in activities may compensate for the change in rewards from elementary school to middle school. Skinner (1974) said people could be conditioned to perform tasks by giving them rewards; however, no matter how many rewards are given, students do not become intrinsically motivated to do homework (Christopher, 2009). In a Perceptions of Ninth Grade study, 33% of ninth graders responded that completing all homework and studying material for classes is important to high school transition success (Wilson, 2011). The middle school years are the first years when a student is more independent while working on homework. Good skills need to be taught at the beginning of middle school. The incompletion of homework affects classroom morale because

students cannot keep up with classroom work without the completion of the homework given which leads to lower grades and classroom disruptions (Christopher, 2009).

By middle school, students have been trained to expect an extrinsic reward for homework completion (Christopher, 2009). Students expect praise for completing homework or some other extrinsic motivator and wonder why they do not receive it when they get to middle school (Christopher, 2009). Teachers believe if they stop using extrinsic motivators, students will eventually stop doing homework (Christopher, 2009). Middle school teachers need to move from using extrinsic motivators such as rewards to less materialistic incentives. Rewards have commercial value and are expected by students, whereas incentives do not have material value and are celebrations of learning (Tileston, 2004). To move toward intrinsic motivation, students must believe that new learning is important and desire to be successful with the new learning (Tileston, 2004).

Students should see homework as a chance to advance something needed in the student's life, such as a relationship. Many times, the only relationship that is strengthened through homework is the teacher/student relationship, and that is not always a positive connection (Strong et al., 1995). If teachers assigned homework that requires students to gather knowledge for and from peers, it would strengthen relationships and give homework a sense of purpose (Strong et al., 1995). Teachers should choose homework and classwork intentionally to stimulate interest and intrinsic motivation for students to want to complete the material. Puberty is a great time to do meaningful activities in a classroom (Chung & McBride, 2015).

Characteristics of Adolescents

"Students experience more change between the ages of 10 and 14 than any other time in their lives" (Cromwell, as cited in Akos et al., 2005). Lipsitz (as, cited in Rettig

and Canady, 2000) stated that growth during middle school is matched only by growth from birth until 3 years of age. During adolescence, students must navigate puberty, social networks, autonomy, and school subjects (Chung & McBride, 2015). No two students experience middle school development at the same rate (Akos et al., 2005), so structure in other aspects of life is important during adolescent years.

The challenges of transitioning from elementary school to middle school can be narrowed down to two major issues: pubertal changes and school changes (Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford; Eccles et al., 1993, as cited in Akos et al., 2005). Puberty is a major factor in poor transitions (Goldstein et al., 2015). Puberty is caused by the production of sex hormones and the maturing of the reproductive organs (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Secondary sexual characteristics occur such as facial hair for boys and menstruation in girls (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Puberty typically occurs between 11 and 14 in girls and between 13 and 16 in boys (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). A middle school student's body is changing more rapidly than they can adjust. Middle school students have wide mood swings and emotions that reach extremes (Atwell, 1998). Moodiness occurs with puberty where students may go from excitement to anxiety to sadness in a brief amount of time (Akos et al., 2005). All of these changes make regular middle school hard for students (Santmire, 1990).

The simultaneous changes of puberty and school changes can be detrimental to a student's coping abilities (Akos et al., 2005). Students feel inadequate to handle the developments going on in their lives, and they become very self-critical (Santmire, 1990). The leap to middle school is filled with new experiences that cause stress in a sixth-grade student's life such as changing classes, remembering locker combinations and opening lockers, completing difficult homework, and making friends (Dove, n.d.). Adolescents

value friendships and social relationships more than school subjects (Atwell, 1998). Adolescents are social by nature and have a preoccupation with their peers (Atwell, 1998). Friendships established at the elementary level change or are dissolved, and new friendships must be established. Friendships affect how stressed a child feels and therefore affects the transition to middle school (Goldstein et al., 2015). Many problems middle school students face such as peer relationships, parent relationships, teacher relationships, and academics are seen as unsolvable if an adolescent comes under too much stress (Hudson, 2013).

During sixth grade, the parent/child relationship changes. The parent/child relationship in middle school looks very different from the parent/child relationship in elementary school. Many times, the parent is no longer watching over or sitting with the student while the student completes homework. Sixth grade is one of the first times students are more independent with homework and do not ask parents to double check work (Dove, n.d.). Parents who offer their child more opportunities to become autonomous help students learn to be independent (Dove, n.d.); however, parents cannot stop parenting during the middle school years. Parental support is one of the best ways to help students, especially at-risk students (Hansen, 2004). Parents setting clear expectations for their children give students a sense of security (Dove, n.d.).

Middle school students are both self-confident and self-doubting (Atwell, 1998). Middle school students are self-confident and excited about meeting the expectations of a new environment, but they are self-doubting about the specifics of transition and the social aspects of a new school. Self-consciousness during the transition to middle school can negatively affect self-esteem which continues through the adjustment period after transition (Akos et al., 2005). Students want to avoid looking dumb, so they pretend they

do not care about school (Blad, 2016). Apathy is an avoidance strategy that adolescents use to avert a situation where they may not succeed (Pickhardt, 2010). Students sometimes say they did not complete the homework because it sounds better than attempting to do the homework and not understanding it. Students avoid being vulnerable to try to learn the answer and possibly not being able to learn it (Blad, 2016). Lacking success during the transition period of middle school can trigger negative feelings toward school, teachers, friends, and themselves (Akos et al., 2005). Deep down, all students want to be successful (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999).

Adolescents can be successful during the difficult transition in middle school when there is decreasing interest in school, little to no intrinsic motivation, and declining self-esteem (Chung & McBride, 2015). It is hard for students to feel successful about their capabilities while negotiating a new school environment (Akos et al., 2005). Schools need to teach them to care about others, make good decisions, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors. The positive youth development structure says middle schools should focus on the seven Cs: competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, compassion, and contribution (Chung & McBride, 2015). These skills are best taught in multiple aspects of the student's school day (Chung & McBride, 2015) and throughout the school year.

Middle school students grow from egocentric moral reasoning to a more societal view, from a preconventional stage of development to a conventional stage of development (Akos et al., 2005). Sixth graders begin the school year at a preconventional, egocentric level of development, acting only in their best interest. As the sixth-grade year continues, students develop more conventional stages of reasoning, seeing things from more of a societal view. For example, a sixth grader may not show

his/her parent a midterm report to avoid punishment early in the school year; yet later in the year, that same student may show the parent the report card, knowing the parent will find out grades anyway and the punishment may be worse if the parent perceives the student was trying to hide the report card. Understanding the progression of adolescents from egocentric to having a wider worldview is something teachers work toward each day. The teacher/student relationship can help shape a student's growth of motivation.

Student Motivation affected by Teacher Coaching

Middle school students are a special group of individuals dealing with many unique problems. Therefore, it takes a group of teachers with a unique skillset to work with these unparalleled students. A middle school staff must lay the groundwork for middle school students to traverse the middle school path (Akos et al., 2005). Middle school teachers have an opportunity to positively affect adolescent development (Akos et al., 2005). According to the National Middle School Association, middle schools should have an adult advocate for every middle school student (Rettig & Canady, 2000). Teachers during the transition year teach more than just reading, math, social studies, and science. Sixth-grade teachers also equip students with the skills and motivation to continue through school (Akos et al., 2005). Teachers are the foundation of motivation (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999).

Students spend 7 or more hours each weekday at school, more waking hours than are spent at home with their family (Minkel, 2016) for 180 days of a school year. Teachers and students must establish a relationship first to facilitate growth during the school year (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999). It is important that the relationship between student and teacher be a reciprocal relationship where the student and teacher both have something of value to offer the other (Strong et al., 1995). It is important that a student

has a relationship with teachers for positive communication to be effective. Middle school teachers understand middle school students and teach in those ways to help students grow (Atwell, 1998). Wampler et al. (as cited in Akos et al., 2005) found more adults giving support to students resulted in higher grades during the sixth-grade year. Students must first have a relationship with the teacher and know they care in order for motivators to be fully effective (Christopher, 2009).

Great teachers concentrate on high expectations (Whitaker, 2012) and setting high standards for students. Sixth-grade teachers must convince students to not only participate in a transition program but to thrive during the program so all the processes will be learned and formed as habits. Great teachers establish clear procedures that will be maintained throughout a school year (Whitaker, 2012). Expectations are presented at the beginning of a school year and are consistently reinforced throughout the school year by great teachers (Whitaker, 2012). Teachers should focus on building up students through well-established and learned procedures. This strengthening of a student can change a student's point of view (Covey, 1998). Teachers can strengthen a student's motivation, but teachers cannot be motivated for their students. "What we can do is directly teach them skills that will help them to begin a task with energy and to complete it even when it becomes difficult" (Tileston, 2004, p. 2).

Enthusiastic teachers create a positive atmosphere in their classrooms (Whitaker, 2012). "Teacher enthusiasm is generally recognized as one of the most essential and desirable qualities and characteristics of effective teachers" (Zhang, 2014, p. 44). When teachers are excited about a program, students gain motivation for a new activity from teachers (Zhang, 2014). The first approach a teacher should take to building the foundation for effective motivation is to convey enjoyment (Scheidecker & Freeman,

1999). A ripple effect of enjoyment happens for the activities from the teachers to the students (Zhang, 2014). Student attitudes are different based on the teacher who is implementing the motivation if a positive relationship has been cultivated between teachers and students. Great teachers know that the students in their classrooms come first in whatever program or activity they choose to participate (Whitaker, 2012).

Students who are taught with a higher level of teacher enthusiasm report higher intrinsic motivation (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2010). Any task that can be taught in a game format raises student intrinsic motivation (Covington, as cited in Marzano, 2003). Instructional games are intrinsically motivating to students (Engle & Ochoa, as cited in Marzano, 2003). Any strategy a teacher can take to make a student feel academically successful is a benefit to the student during the difficult adolescent years. Successes academically and socially build self-esteem across the transition years (Akos et al., 2005). Teacher motivation can lead to changes in student behaviors, student emotional engagement, and student intrinsic motivation (Zhang, 2014).

Student Intrinsic Motivation

American psychologist Abraham Maslow said that motivation is based on people pursuing change through personal growth (McLeod, 2016). Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs which consists of food and water on the lowest level, personal safety on level two, the need to belong on the third level, the need of self-respect and respecting others on level four, and the need for personal fulfillment on the fifth and highest level (Marzano, 2003).

To evoke motivation, teachers "must engage in tasks that address Maslow's fifth category (of needs)—self actualization" (Marzano, 2003, p.150). Once processes have been taught and made habits, for self-actualization, teachers must convince students to

have a goal to achieve in the classroom. "Academic intrinsic motivation is defined as enjoyment of school learning characterized by an orientation toward mastery, curiosity, persistence, task endogeny, and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (Gottfried, 1985, p. 632).

Csikszentmihalyi (as cited in Marzano, 2003) identified four criteria for self-actualization: set clear goals that are meaningful, become immersed in accomplishing them, make changes when necessary, and always remember the end goal. The four factors of setting goals, accomplishing goals, changing goals, and remembering goals can be seen in the journey from a transition program to higher academic intrinsic motivation in classrooms. Students have goals for the transition program of good attendance, good behavior, preparedness for class, parent involvement, and strong academic results. When students begin to see success in the procedures of a new school, students need to begin to transfer the goal-setting technique to the classroom. "If students are motivated to learn the content in a given subject, their achievement in that subject will most likely be good" (Marzano, 2003, p. 144). Setting classroom goals of good attendance, good behavior, preparedness for class, parent involvement, and strong academic results will be highly meaningful for students, because these goals will directly affect classroom grades and ultimately student intrinsic motivation. Students with higher academic intrinsic motivation have a tendency to function more effectively in middle school (Gottfried, 1986). Once students know processes that will aid in success, students should become focused on achieving goals (Csikszentmihalyi, as cited in Marzano, 2003). Students need to continue to improve processes during and after the transition program and make changes to achieve classroom goals. Finally, students should enjoy the accomplishment of learning the processes for middle school success but remember that academic intrinsic

motivation is the ultimate goal in core classes (Csikszentmihalyi, as cited in Marzano, 2003).

In CAIMI, Gottfried (1986) stated that item construction was based on the definition of academic intrinsic motivation. Gottfried (1985) defined academic intrinsic motivation as involving the "enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation; curiosity; persistence; task-endogeny; and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (p. 632).

Mastery. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), mastery of a subject means possession of great skill. Teaching should be based on mastery (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999). Teachers and students must work together in order for learners to master materials (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999). Teachers must deliberately plan activities to engage students to be successful. Students must be optimistic, set a plan of action, and work toward the plan of action to be successful (Carter, 2010). Repeated successes build intrinsic motivation.

Even though teachers want students to be intrinsically motivated, most classroom activities are not intrinsically motivating (Alderman, 2008). Most teachers rely on extrinsic motivators to propel mastery of concepts (Alderman, 2008).

> Children with higher academic intrinsic motivation tend to have significantly higher school achievement on standardized tests, better grades, more favorable perceptions of their academic competence, lower school anxiety, lower extrinsic orientations to school learning (i.e. less desire to do school work predominantly to receive external rewards), and tend to be perceived by their teachers as more intrinsically motivated. (Gottfried, 1985a, as cited in Gottfried, 1986, p. 4)

Extrinsic motivation can work in a classroom but not for mastery (Raffini, 1996).

Extrinsic rewards fail to do anything that has to do with long-lasting learning (Strong et al., 1995). Students can move from mostly extrinsically motivated to less extrinsically motivated depending on how much the reward motivates the student compared to how much the student determines his/her own actions (Alderman, 2008). Teachers need to stabilize the use of extrinsic motivators to advance student academic engagement while promoting the application of intrinsic motivation (Alderman, 2008). Teachers should gradually fade out extrinsic rewards and encourage intrinsic incentives (Tileston, 2004). Several actions by teachers can help students increase intrinsic motivation to work toward mastery including setting goals, establishing a focus on tasks, and leading students to see tasks as attainable (Alderman, 2008).

The more teachers manipulate learning with rewards and punishments, the less students will master the learning (Raffini, 1996). Student focus will be on the punishment or the reward rather than the value of learning the concept. In the quest for the reward, students will find the shortest book to read or write the shortest paper to obtain the prize (Raffini, 1996). There is no intrinsic pleasure in a task completed for an extrinsic reward. Mastery of an activity requires hard work in task completion that is repeated and habit forming. In order for mastery to occur, teachers must find engaging activities that spark curiosity.

Curiosity. Curiosity is the desire to know or interest leading to inquiry (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Curiosity is born from a task that is both unresolved and manageable (Strong et al., 1995). An engaging activity that has not been solved but can be solved sparks curiosity for students. Covington (as cited in Marzano, 2003) said teachers should give students activities that are engaging. Students need a sense of purpose (Strong et al., 1995). A task that needs a solution gives a sense of purpose for

students. Tasks should be manageable challenges that arouse curiosity and contain circumstances where students can use their progressing abilities (Marzano, 2003). Students need work that promotes their autonomy and enables them to be who they are (Strong et al., 1995). Work must arouse curiosity in students to be seen as worthwhile and to encourage persistence in solving the task.

Persistence. Persistence is being inclined to go on resolutely in spite of opposition in a course (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Many psychologists believe that students are intrinsically motivated to persist and master challenges (Raffini, 1996). Students will spend hours attempting to conquer a challenge. Teachers must engage students with a challenge that, though difficult, is still within a learner's capabilities if the student is persistent. When a task is engaging, it draws interest. If the challenge is too difficult, students will quit until they develop the skills necessary to master it. If the task is not engaging or is seen as too easy, students will abandon the activity in favor of a true challenge. Students are engaged by success, curiosity, and originality (Strong et al., 1995). Activities where a student shows success, exercises that arouse curiosity, and tasks that have originality encourage persistence with challenges. "The desire to seek and to conquer challenges is at the core of intrinsic motivation in the classroom" (Raffini, 1996, p. 3). Persistence leading to student intrinsic motivation is important for academic engagement (Alderman, 2008).

Task-endogeny. Task-endogeny means to grow from within about something that has to be done (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Marzano, Jensen, Sylwester, and others (as cited in Tileston, 2004) posited that learning does not begin with the cognitive system of the brain; learning begins in the self-system of the brain. The self-system decides whether the task is worthy of attention (Tileston, 2004). Beginning a task and completing

it is innate in the self-system (Tileston, 2004). Students must grow with a feeling of inner competence about completing a task. This endogeny is satisfied when students believe they are good at something. The feeling of success leads to optimism about tasks (Sagor, 2003). Students must see that their presence at school and their participation in an activity make a difference to someone or for something, leading to optimism (Sagor, 2003). When a student has task-endogeny and is optimistic, learning difficult tasks can be accomplished.

Learning of difficult tasks. Using Merriam-Webster (n.d.) definitions, learning of difficult tasks means skills acquired by the instruction of an assigned hard-to-understand piece of work. Students are either success oriented or failure avoidant (Marzano, 2003). Success-oriented students are motivated by challenges (Marzano, 2003). When students are intrinsically motivated, they face challenges and are excited about success (Strong et al., 1995). Middle school students must develop a mindset of success to learn difficult tasks (Carter, 2010). The ingredients in a mindset of success are optimism, a plan of action, and follow-through (Carter, 2010). When faced with challenging tasks, a student must feel positive that they can accomplish the task, set a plan to complete the task, and finish the task set before them (Carter, 2010).

Failure-avoidant students develop handicapping strategies to ensure they fail for reasons other than ability (Marzano, 2003). Many times, students will not attempt an assignment because it is better for a student to say he/she did not try than to say he/she did not have the academic capabilities to complete it (Blad, 2016).

Through examining the five elements of CAIMI (mastery, curiosity, persistence, task-endogeny, and learning difficult tasks), the researcher can gauge student academic intrinsic motivation.

Summary

Raffini (1996) defined intrinsic motivation as "choosing to do an activity for no compelling reason, beyond the satisfaction derived from the activity itself – it's what motivates us to do something when we don't have to do anything" (p. 3). This literature review examined the progression of middle school education in light of how the parts of that evolution affected student intrinsic motivation. It began with the history of middle schools, characteristics of middle schools, and characteristics of a middle school transition program. When exploring the characteristics of a middle school transition program, the researcher focused on the elements of the transition program at the study middle school: attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, and classroom academics. The literature review continued with characteristics of adolescents and how teacher coaching affects student motivation. Finally, the literature review concludes with student intrinsic motivation and features the five elements used in the item construction for CAIMI: mastery, curiosity, persistence, task-endogeny, and learning of difficult tasks (Gottfried, 1986).

The following chapter focuses on the methodology used in this case study about student transition and academic intrinsic motivation. The methodology is introduced by disclosing participants and research design. The research questions, instruments, and data collection methods are examined. Finally, delimitations, limitations, data analysis, and survey results are explained. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology that was utilized in the case study for the transition program and academic intrinsic motivation at a small rural middle school in western North Carolina. This study replicated by extension Sealy's (2012) dissertation, *Impact of Freshman Academy Experiences on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation*. Sealy's study was a mixed method case study. The researcher used a mixed method case study to examine the possible impact of a middle school transition program on student academic intrinsic motivation. Case study research is done when the study is a contemporary phenomenon, the researcher has little control over behavioral events, and the main research questions are how or why (Yin, 2014). The researcher copied the original work in every way possible while using population and context-driven extensions and method and measurement-driven extensions (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). The population extension involved using sixth graders instead of high school freshmen in Sealy's study. The context extension involved using a small rural middle school instead of Sealy's large rural high school. The method and measurement extensions included minor changes in the focus group and interview questions using middle school terminology instead of high school terminology and the inclusion of a quantitative examination of the transition program graph. This methodology was used to address the following five research questions.

1. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading?
2. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math?
3. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic

motivation to learn social studies?

4. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science?
5. How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?

This chapter outlines the research design of this study. The chapter presents the participants, research design, research questions, instruments, procedures, data collection, data analysis, and survey results.

Overview

When attempting to examine a middle school transition program and student intrinsic motivation, there are many variables to study including the students' varying degrees of academic intrinsic motivation, the students' response to the transition program's training processes, and student perceptions of those processes that have impacted student academic intrinsic motivation toward reading, math, science, social studies, and general school learning. In order to examine the transition program used by the sixth grade at this rural western North Carolina middle school, a mixed methodology case study was conducted. Quantitative data were collected using CAIMI (Gottfried, 1985). CAIMI asked questions that investigated student intrinsic motivation toward reading, math, science, social studies, and general school motivation. Qualitative data were collected via three student focus groups; four teacher interviews, one with each core sixth-grade teacher including the reading teacher, the math teacher, the social studies teacher, and the science teacher; and one interview with an administrator, the lead teacher who has participated in the transition program. The researcher also examined the transition program graph of acquisition of processes.

CAIMI gave quantitative data about student academic intrinsic motivation, followed by qualitative data through the three student focus groups. The teacher interviews gave the researcher information about student academic intrinsic motivation from someone other than the students themselves. The administrator interview gave an outside perspective of the same group of students to triangulate the data. The investigation of the transition program graph was informative about procurement of processes to connect student actual acquisition of needed operations to student perceptions about academic intrinsic motivation. "A case study inquiry relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needed to converge in triangulating fashion" (Yin, 2014, p. 17).

Participants

The focus of this dissertation was a middle school located in western North Carolina. The middle school is 6 miles from the South Carolina line. The school has 55.21% of students on free or reduced lunch. All students receive free "Universal Breakfast" because of low socioeconomic status. The middle school is comprised of Grades 6-8. All sixth-grade classes are held on the bottom floor. Seventh-grade classes are on the middle floor. Eighth-grade classes are on the top floor of the three-story building. The middle school is housed in the same building as the high school (Grades 9-12), requiring most support services such as the media center and cafeteria to be shared.

The target population for the transition program was sixth-grade students at the middle school. There were 86 sixth-grade students at the beginning of this school year for the transition program. The school's total population is 245 students. CAIMI was administered to 57 students. Sixty-seven students returned permission slips to participate in the study. Six of the permission slips checked "My child and I agree that he/she may

NOT participate in the research study." Sixty-one students' parents gave permission for the students to participate in the study. Four students were absent from the administration of CAIMI, which left 57 students taking the survey. Of the 57 surveys, five were unusable because all of the questions were not completed on the survey. Therefore, 52 surveys were used in the examination of survey data. Fifty-two surveys of the 86 sixth-grade students or 60% of student surveys were examined.

The teachers involved in this study were the sixth-grade core teachers who work with each student one period a day every day and the middle school lead teacher who works directly with sixth-grade teachers. The lead teacher was a sixth-grade teacher who implemented the transition program and now works with students to acclimate sixth graders to a new school environment.

Transition activities began in the spring before students entered sixth grade this year. The formal transition program began the week before school started with a cookout and informational meeting. The transition program activities ended after the first quarter of sixth grade. The data were collected October 27, 2017 through November 10, 2017, at the end of the first quarter of the sixth-grade year after the completion of the middle school transition program.

Research Design

The research design of a study is the "logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions" (Yin, 2014, p. 28). The research relating to the sixth-grade transition program was a mixed methodology case study. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a program (Creswell, 2014). A case study involves direct observation of the program being studied and interviews of the people involved in the activities (Yin, 2014). A case study provided a

thorough understanding of this program and the information needed to understand why the program succeeded, failed, or had mixed results (Green et al., 2015). This was a study in which the quantitative data were collected through the use of CAIMI (Gottfried, 1985). The study included qualitative data collected through three focus groups of sixth-grade students; four core teacher interviews; and an interview with an administrator, the lead teacher, to triangulate the data. The study also included an examination of the transition program graph. The researcher studied a single group of students, the sixth-grade students at the study middle school, at the end of the first quarter of sixth grade after completing the transition program. One rationale for using a single case study was to study a common case of a normal situation because of the lessons and contribution of knowledge the case may provide about social processes (Yin, 2014). This study was a one-shot case study which involved a program followed by a measure (Creswell, 2014). The measure used for this case study was CAIMI.

A case study examines a specific case, focusing on the implementation and results (Yin, 2014). This mixed-methods study addressed intrinsic motivation of sixth-grade students after the completion of a middle school transition program. A convergent mixed-methods design was used. In this type of design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged. "Mixed methods designs capitalize on the strengths of each method used while attempting to reduce each method's weaknesses" (Green et al., 2015, p. 509). A mixed-methods study collects a richer and stronger display of evidence than can be gathered by a single method (Yin, 2014). A mixed method limits the generalness of a qualitative approach and the limited depth of understanding of a quantitative approach (Green et al., 2015). In this study, a student inventory was used to test the theory of intrinsic motivation. The prediction of this study

was that a middle school transition program would positively influence the addition of middle school processes as shown in the transition program graph. The success of transition would be displayed by the intrinsic motivation of sixth-grade students at the middle school in the areas of reading, math, social studies, science, and general orientation toward school. The focus groups and interviews explored the transition program and intrinsic motivation of sixth-grade students at the middle school. The reason for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data was to compare and integrate main findings from the student inventory with perspectives of program stakeholders.

Triangulation seeks convergence of findings (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The triangulation for this study consisted of CAIMI, the focus groups, the interviews, and the examination of the transition program graph. CAIMI provided the quantitative data measuring student levels of intrinsic motivation; and results were reported as raw scores, *t* scores, and national percentiles (Gottfried, 1986). A student profile report form, provided with CAIMI, allowed a visual comparison of motivational strengths across scales.

The student focus groups provided qualitative data. This was a replication extension study using the same research methods as the original study. Therefore, the focus group questions and the interview questions were replicated from Sealy's (2012) study about student academic intrinsic motivation. Questions 1, 2, and 3 focused on the procedural middle school transition program. Questions 4, 5, and 6 focused on academic intrinsic motivation. Questions 7, 8, and 9 gathered information about social aspects of transition including the relationships built between student and teachers. The student focus group questions were

1. Do you know that you are participating in a middle school transition program

this year? If so, how did you know?

2. Do you think your school experiences this year have been different than those experiences of students who were not a part of a middle school transition program? If so, how?
3. Do you believe the middle school transition program has helped you transition from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways? (To help you answer, think about the following changes you may have encountered this year when you entered middle school: changes in academics/course requirements/ changes in school procedures/ rules, and/or changes in the social/friends aspect.)
4. Tell me what subject(s) you'd like to learn more about. Why do you want to learn more about this/these subject(s)? Can you give me an example from this school year?
5. Tell me about a challenging task that you've done this year. Did you want to quit or stick with it? Explain.
6. In general, what has motivated you this year about your school learning?
7. Do you believe that the adults in the middle school transition program care about you, the students? Can you give me examples of why or why not?
8. Do you think your middle school transition teachers work together to plan their lessons? If so, how do you know?
9. Do you think your middle school transition teachers talk to each other about you, their students? If so, in what way(s)?

The core teacher interview questions were modeled after Sealy's (2012) study with modifications based on the change in setting from high school in Sealy's study to

middle school. The first part of the questions focused on the transition program. These teachers planned and implemented the transition program. They had the most insight into what the transition program looked like and what was most important about a transition program. The interviews provided insight into transitioning to middle school academically, procedurally, and socially. Question 6 focused on what teachers do in their classroom to impact student motivation. Each core teacher spoke to student motivation for their subject and overall motivational changes. The final questions helped the researcher compare middle school transition programs to sixth grades without a transition component. The core teacher interview questions were

1. Please share your understandings of a middle school transition program.
2. Describe the sixth-grade transition program at this school.
3. Do you think this transition program helps students transition academically from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
4. Do you think this transition program helps students transition procedurally from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
5. Do you think this transition program helps students transition socially from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
6. Describe what you do as a teacher to impact student motivation to learn your subject matter (include how you get your students to stick with the learning and not give up, especially with difficult or challenging tasks/ assignments).
7. As a teacher in this middle school transition program, how does what you do differ from what other teachers do in classrooms?
8. Did you receive or participate in professional learning to support you in teaching in this middle school transition program? If so, please describe.

The administrator interview provided qualitative data about the middle school transition program. The administrator interview was conducted with a former sixth-grade teacher who is now the middle school lead teacher. The lead teacher helped implement the middle school transition program as a sixth-grade teacher and now aids teachers in acclimating students to middle school experiences. The administrator interview questions were similar to the core teacher interview questions and were modeled after the administrator interview questions in Sealy's (2012) study. The last administrator question in Sealy's study was, "As a freshman academy administrator, how is what you do different from that of a non-freshman academy administrator?" That question was omitted from the current study since there was no area of the sixth grade that did not conduct the middle school transition program; therefore, the question involving being a middle school administrator without a middle school transition program would not apply. The administrator interview questions were

1. Please share your understanding of a middle school transition program.
2. Describe the middle school transition program of this school; include the history of its development if possible.
3. Do you think this transition program helps students transition academically from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
4. Do you think this transition program helps students transition procedurally from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
5. Do you think this transition program helps students transition socially from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
6. Describe what the teachers in the middle school transition program do to impact their students' motivation to learn "their" subject? (Include what they

do to get their students to stick with the learning and not give up, especially with difficult or challenging tasks/ assignments.)

Finally, the researcher quantitatively examined the transition program graph with the assistance of the sixth-grade teachers. This graph was created and updated by core teachers during the last half of the transition program. Teachers recorded students who did not follow one of the specific processes in attendance, behavior, preparedness, parent involvement, or academics for the day. The processes were taught the first half of the first quarter. The last half of the first quarter, the transition program was a contest to see which homeroom could follow the most processes correctly. Points were awarded daily to determine a winner at the end of the quarter. This document was used to triangulate the data between teaching middle school processes during a middle school transition program and student perceptions of academic intrinsic motivation.

Research Questions

CAIMI differentiates motivation from achievement and ability (Gottfried, 1986). Motivation is defined as the enjoyment of school learning (Gottfried, 1985a, as cited in Gottfried, 1986). Motivation is characterized by an orientation toward mastery, curiosity, persistence, and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks (Gottfried, 1985a, as cited in Gottfried, 1986). This case study focused on the outcome of student intrinsic motivation in the four core classes and a general orientation toward school learning. CAIMI, the three sixth-grade focus groups, the sixth-grade teacher interviews, the lead teacher interview, and the examination of the transition program graph were the collections of data which helped the researcher address the following research questions.

1. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading?

2. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math?
3. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn social studies?
4. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science?
5. How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?

Instruments

Table 3

Alignment of Research Questions with Research Methods

Research Question	Tools/Instruments	Data collected	Method of Analysis
RQ1. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn Reading?	CAIMI	Quantitative	Description of statistics using CAIMI manual, percentage, *t* scores
	Student Focus Groups	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 2,3,4,5, & 6
	Teacher Interviews	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7
RQ2. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn Math?	CAIMI	Quantitative	Description of statistics using CAIMI manual, percentage, *t* scores
	Student Focus Groups	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6
	Teacher Interviews	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7
RQ3. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn Science?	CAIMI	Quantitative	Description of statistics using CAIMI manual, percentage, *t* scores
	Student Focus Groups	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6
	Teacher Interviews	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7

(continued)

Research Question	Tools/Instruments	Data collected	Method of Analysis
RQ4. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn Social Studies?	CAIMI	Quantitative	Description of statistics using CAIMI manual, percentage, *t* scores
	Student Focus Groups	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6
	Teacher Interviews	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7
RQ5. How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?	CAIMI	Quantitative	Description of statistics using CAIMI manual, percentage, *t* scores
	Student Focus Groups	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 1, 6, 7, 8, & 9
	Teacher Interviews	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8
	Administration Interview	Qualitative	Transcription analysis and categorization of Questions 3, 4, 5, & 6
	Examination of Transition Graph	Qualitative	Categorization of processes and points

There were four types of data collection tools used in this study as seen in Table 3: CAIMI survey of sixth-grade students, three focus groups with a sampling of sixth-grade students in each group, interviews with sixth-grade core teachers and an administrator, and an examination of the transition program graph. The research questions were answered by collecting data with CAIMI. CAIMI was developed by Adele E. Gottfried to measure motivation for learning in general and across specific learning areas for ages 9-14 (Therapro, n.d.). This instrument is published by Psychological Assessment Resources and was purchased by the researcher. The administration of CAIMI took 30 minutes at the study school. CAIMI provided information to use while planning instruction to stimulate motivation in weak areas and

promote intrinsic motivation in strong areas (Therapro, n.d.). There were 44 questions with 122 survey items, 26 items in each subject area and 18 items about general orientation (Sealy, 2012). "CAIMI items measure enjoyment of learning, an orientation toward mastery, curiosity, persistence, and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (Sealy, 2012, p. 56). A Likert scale was used for each item ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Gottfried, 1986).

CAIMI was constructed based on the idea that motivation can be evident in general orientation to school and also in individual subjects (Gottfried, 1985). The school curriculum was divided into four core areas, so studying motivation from all four core areas had important implications (Gottfried, 1986). Gottfried (1986) developed CAIMI based on theories of intrinsic motivation. "Item construction therefore focused on a concept of academic intrinsic motivation as involving enjoyment of school learning characterized by an orientation toward mastery; curiosity; persistence; task-endogeny; and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (Berlyne, 1971; Brophy, 1983; Deci, 1978; Gottfried, 1985a; Harter, 1981; Maw, 1971; Nicholls, 1983; Pittman, Boggiano, & Ruble, 1983, as cited in Gottfried, 1986, p. 11). Three studies of the initial CAIMI were conducted (Gottfried, 1986). During the first study, 60 items were written and 38 items were retained, seven in each of the core categories and 10 in the general category, based on positive item-total correlation (Gottfried, 1986). The goal of the second study was to increase reliability (Gottfried, 1986). Reliability "indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects" (Gibbs, as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 201). More items were written for the second study of CAIMI, 19 new items in each core area and eight in the general category (Gottfried, 1986). All 122 items in the second study proved reliable and were retained for the final

version of CAIMI (Gottfried, 1986). The third study of CAIMI showed the same results of reliability as the second study, with item-total correlations for the three studies falling between .30 and .82 (Gottfried, 1986).

Test reliability for CAIMI was substantial, with internal consistency and test-retest reliability having been established (Gottfried, 1986). Internal consistency was established with a coefficient alpha computed for each scale indicating item homogeneity within the scales (Gottfried, 1986). Test-retest reliability was established from a random sampling of subjects over a 2-month period (Gottfried, 1986). The coefficients for Study 1 ranged from .66 to .76 when df=83 and p<.01, and the coefficients for Study 2 ranged from .69 to .75 when df=136 and p<.01 (Gottfried, 1986). Coefficients were consistent across sex, race, and grade for both consistency and test-retest in CAIMI; therefore, these variables were not separated in CAIMI results (Gottfried, 1986).

Validity ensures a researcher has checked the accuracy of the findings using certain techniques (Gibbs, as cited in Creswell, 2014). The validity of CAIMI has been established by basing the original inventory on a theoretical foundation of academic intrinsic motivation and constructing items to reflect this foundation (Gottfried, 1986). The outline of CAIMI, item selection, and item retention were based on repeated testing and subscale homogeneity criteria (Gottfried, 1986). Correlations and confirmation of the hypothesis indicate that CAIMI is a valid measure of student academic intrinsic motivation (Gottfried, 1986).

From a theoretical expectation of CAIMI, the following hypotheses were supported: academic intrinsic motivation is positively associated with school achievement; academic intrinsic motivation is negatively associated with academic anxiety; academic intrinsic motivation is positively related to student perceptions of their

academic competence; academic intrinsic motivation is positively associated to teacher perceptions of student academic intrinsic motivation; and higher academic intrinsic motivation is linked with lower extrinsic orientation (Gottfried, 1986).

The research questions were also answered qualitatively through the use of a focus group with sixth-grade students, individual interviews with the sixth-grade core teachers, and an interview with an administrator who has been involved in the transition program. The research questions have the quantitative analysis of the transition program graph to triangulate data. The student focus group elaborated on student perceptions of academic intrinsic motivation in each core area and association of motivation with the transition program. Extending Sealy's (2012) study on motivation, the researcher used revised editions of Sealy's focus group questions. Each focus group question was reworded to specify a middle school transition instead of a freshman academy.

The teacher and administrator interviews added general understanding about transition from elementary to middle school, transition academically, procedurally, and socially. Akos et al. (2005) stated that the three student transition concerns were academic concerns, procedural concerns, and social concerns. The interviews also added general understanding about student intrinsic motivation in the core classes of reading, math, social studies, science, and general orientation toward school. Sealy's (2012) dissertation on freshman academy experiences provided the basis for the interview questions. When extending a study, research methods may be modified based on setting (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). The interview questions were altered from Sealy's original study on freshman academies to focus on the middle school transition program at the study school.

The quantitative examination of the transition program graph triangulated the data

by exploring daily points gained by students for understanding and using middle school processes compared to student perceptions about academic intrinsic motivation.

Data Collection

The researcher began by obtaining written permission from the school principal to complete this study. The researcher used the incoming sixth-grade class for the 2017-2018 school year. These students were given a consent form for themselves and their parents in order to ensure they were allowed to participate in all facets of the study. Confidentiality was maintained at all times for students and teachers in the study to gather honest and accurate responses concerning the transition program and academic intrinsic motivation toward reading, math, science, social studies, and school in general. Study participants were informed that they may opt out at any time during the process (Appendix B). The researcher collected consent from staff members participating in the interviews via staff permission letters.

The researcher administered CAIMI to 57 sixth graders who had permission slips and were present on the day of CAIMI. Four students were absent on the survey day. Six students turned in forms with the no participation option chosen. The other 18 did not return the consent form. The researcher purchased two CAIMI kits which contain 75 inventories and 75 student profiles. There was no need to use random sampling to narrow the study population to 75. Five of the surveys were unusable because the student missed a question, so 52 surveys were used to collect data.

CAIMI was developed to measure academic intrinsic motivation in students from the upper elementary through junior high school (Sealy, 2012). School curriculums are organized into subject areas, so CAIMI measured motivation specific to each core area and a general orientation to school (Sealy, 2012).

Using the CAIMI manual, the survey was administered and information collected about academic intrinsic motivation as it directly relates to reading, math, social studies, science, and school in general. CAIMI was administered to all 57 students at the same time and in the same place to control for the variable of time and administration. The researcher used the debriefing statement and CAIMI manual to administer the inventory in the school cafeteria at the beginning of the day on November 1, 2017, 2 days after the beginning of the second quarter. The school cafeteria was used to accommodate all students at the same time. The survey took approximately 30 minutes. Following CAIMI directions and for the purpose of this study, CAIMI results were not reported individually. The scores were used to determine average results for the participant group of sixth graders who took CAIMI.

The surveys were scored using the CAIMI manual. Numerical ratings were assigned to each Likert scale item using arrows located in scoring boxes to determine ascension or descension of numbers. Once the numerical rating was obtained, it was recorded in the scoring box. There was one column of ratings for each core class (reading, math, social studies, and science). Once the ratings were recorded, each column was totaled. The total raw score was determined for each column, and these numbers were recorded in the profile report form in the row entitled "Raw Scores" (Gottfried, 1986).

Percentiles and Normalized T Scores for CAIMI Scales: Elementary School Norms (Grades 4-6), Table A2 in the CAIMI manual, was used to convert raw scores into *t* scores and percentiles (Gottfried, 1986). The table for elementary school was chosen because it included sixth grade. The scores were interpreted using raw scores, *t* scores, and percentiles. These scores allowed the researcher to determine student levels of

academic intrinsic motivation relative to the normative group across CAIMI scales. *T* scores and percentiles were compiled by using raw scores and finding the corresponding *t* score and percentile in the CAIMI manual. *T* scores were compared to see if they were significantly different from each other (Urdan, 2010). The scores were interpreted using the directions on CAIMI Profile Report Form. Following the directions in CAIMI Profile Report Form, lines were drawn to determine motivational bands (Gottfried, 1986). These bands were used to examine the comparison of motivational strength across the scales (Gottfried, 1986).

The researcher conducted all the focus groups and interview sessions. Each session was digitally recorded. Google Voice Typing was used to transcribe the focus group sessions and interviews so that all responses could be accurately and thoroughly examined. Transcription data from the focus groups and interviews were analyzed. Each focus group question and interview question was documented on paper for themes and patterns about teacher perceptions of response to the transition program and intrinsic motivation. Each response was categorized. The researcher used an a priori categorization method using Akos et al.'s (2005) three categories of adolescent concerns during transition from the conceptual framework: academic concerns, procedural concerns, and social concerns.

The three focus groups were conducted on the same day as CAIMI was administered. The students selected for the focus groups were randomly selected. The researcher obtained class lists from the science teacher. The students on the class lists were numbered 1-20 (more or less depending on class size). The students chosen for the focus group were students whose numbers were multiples of three. For example, on the class lists, students numbered 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 were chosen for the focus group.

Focus groups are face-to-face interactions that build on group interaction (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Small groups help stimulate group interaction to reveal in-depth information (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Student Focus Group 1 contained six students; Focus Group 2 contained six students; Focus Group 3 contained five students, for a total of 17 student participants.

The teachers selected for the interviews were the four core teachers of the sixth-grade students. These four teachers work with the sixth-grade students on a daily basis, one period a day in a core subject. These sixth-grade teachers differ in the subjects they teach, but all teachers teach all sixth-grade students in some capacity. The teachers teach them four periods a day, observe them in the hallway during breaks, eat lunch with them, and monitor their progress throughout the year. The administrator/lead teacher who worked with the sixth-grade students the first quarter of the school year was chosen to interview. The researcher conducted the interview sessions.

The interview questions were open-ended prompts extending Sealy's (2012) study using the middle school transition program as a starting point. The primary goal of the interviews was to determine from the teachers and administrator the change in students academically, procedurally, and socially. An interview is for obtaining a differing perspective by gathering exploration and clarification (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011).

The transition program graph was examined quantitatively. Daily points were compared from the beginning of the contest portion of the transition program, throughout the contest, and to the end of the contest. The contest portion of the transition program began at midterm of the first quarter after all processes were taught and practiced. The contest portion ended at the end of the first quarter. The transition program contest lasted 5 weeks. The researcher looked for trends in points such as an increase in points from the

beginning of the contest to the end, signifying the acquisition of procedures.

Delimitations

Delimitations are forces that a researcher can control which define the parameters of the study. The researcher studied the middle school transition program at the study school and student academic intrinsic motivation after the completion of the transition program. This study sought to correlate the effects of a middle school transition program to student academic intrinsic motivation. This study did not compare student academic intrinsic motivation to other factors such as academic achievement.

Limitations

Limitations are forces that the researcher cannot control. Limitations place restrictions on the methodology. It is necessary for the researcher to recognize that the research results in this study are only applicable to the particular middle school studied in western North Carolina. No generalizations can be made with regard to the wider educational community.

Data Analysis

Using the CAIMI manual that was purchased with CAIMI profile forms and test booklets, data were analyzed. All responses to the focus group questions and interview questions were transcribed on paper and analyzed. The transition program graph was printed and analyzed.

Quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis was collected from CAIMI. After students completed the 122-item survey (Gottfried, 1986), data were analyzed as an entire sixth-grade group and not as individual students. Individual subject results were reported and analyzed as raw scores, *t* scores, and percentiles (Gottfried, 1986). To explore group scores, subscore raw frequency results were gathered and displayed in a histogram for

each core subject and orientation to school in general. Results were indicated by the mean (average) CAIMI raw score and corresponding standard deviations. The standard deviation showed how much variation exists from the mean.

The transition program graph was printed and analyzed quantitatively by averaging the number of points the sixth grade received each week. The researcher looked for trends to further analyze the effect of the procurement of procedures for sixth-grade students during the transition program. Trends included but were not limited to an increase in points each day/week, a decrease in points, or a fluctuation of points depending on the day/week.

Qualitative analysis. Qualitative data were gathered from three focus groups of sixth-grade students and five interviews with sixth-grade core teachers and the lead teacher. Qualitative data rely on text data (Creswell, 2014). Each focus group and interview was digitally taped and typed by Google Voice Type. The transcription was used for text data. The transcriptions were analyzed and interpreted by the researcher for emergent themes and patterns. The focus group answers and the interview answers were analyzed separately then analyzed together to establish themes and patterns. Themes were built from the bottom up by organizing the data into progressively more abstract units until the researcher had a comprehensive set of themes (Creswell, 2014). The researcher determined that the interview data could be coded using themes similar to the focus group. Once themes were established, data were reexamined with the established themes (Creswell, 2014). This organization of themes was then studied for patterns.

Survey Results

The research results were shared with the sixth-grade team at the study middle school in western North Carolina in order to improve the middle school transition

program. The results were also shared with that school's leadership team and administration.

Summary

This research was an extension of Sealy's (2012) mixed methods case study on transition and student academic intrinsic motivation. This case study examined a transition program in one middle school in western North Carolina. This study had the same goals as the original study but extended research strategies (Lund Research Ltd., 2012) about transition and its effect on student academic intrinsic motivation. A program evaluation was conducted on the middle school transition program which measured progress made throughout the program about the acquisition of processes. After examination by the researcher, it was determined that student academic intrinsic motivation was the concept that needed the most focused attention. Using Sealy's research methods, a survey, three focus groups, and five interviews reflected what the respondents chose to reveal. Examination of the transition program graph reflected procurement of processes.

After examination by the researcher, it was determined that student academic intrinsic motivation was the concept that needed the most focused attention. The purpose of this research study was to determine perceived intrinsic motivation of sixth graders to aid with success at the middle school level during the transition program at the middle school. The research examined components of the transition program; student academic intrinsic motivation for success academically, procedurally, and socially at the middle school level; and perceived intrinsic motivation in each core class. Chapter 4 analyzes data and displays results.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

During a transition teacher's meeting between fifth- and sixth-grade teachers in Spring 2017, it was discovered that the incoming sixth-grade class lacked motivation based on fifth-grade teacher analysis. This perception was confirmed by quantitative data indicating a lack of academic growth from fourth-grade to fifth-grade years. Sixth grade at the study school had a transition program already in place to increase success at the middle school level. A program evaluation had taken place on the transition program, so the researcher investigated student academic intrinsic motivation in reading, math, social studies, science, and general orientation to school learning in conjunction with the transition program and the incoming sixth-grade class. This study sought to determine the perceptions of sixth-grade students about the transition program into middle school and how those transition experiences impacted their academic intrinsic motivation.

Overview

This chapter defines the purpose of this study and its research questions. The chapter includes a disaggregation of quantitative and qualitative research methods: CAIMI; a transition graph; three focus groups; four core teacher interviews; and an administrator interview. The chapter provides an analysis of the data collected and presents results from the five research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the information presented.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this mixed methods research study about middle school transition programs and student academic intrinsic motivation was to investigate the effectiveness of the middle school transition program in sixth grade at a rural western North Carolina middle school on student academic intrinsic motivation in each of the four core classes:

reading, math, social studies, and science as well as general orientation toward school learning. During the first semester of the school year, August-October 2017, 86 sixth graders participated in a middle school transition program called Survivor. Each year this program is adapted to the set of incoming students to specifically meet the needs of incoming sixth graders. It is important to examine the effectiveness of this program; therefore, this study investigated the success of this transition program on student intrinsic motivation.

Research Questions

To evaluate the middle school transition program, the researcher used the following research questions.

1. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading?
2. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math?
3. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn social studies?
4. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science?
5. How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?

The research questions were answered by a mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods for this study were a survey, CAIMI, and an examination of the transition graph compiled by sixth-grade teachers during the transition program. The qualitative methods for this study were three

student focus groups, four core teacher interviews, and an administrator interview. These research questions and methods were replicated from a study of high school transition by Shirley C. Sealy (2012), *Impact of Freshman Academy Experiences on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation*.

Study

All sixth graders at the study school participated in the transition program called Survivor, encouraging students to "survive" the first year of middle school. The Survivor transition program is a plan to train all sixth graders in processes that will make them successful in middle school. One current sixth grader at the study school wrote an article for the local newspaper explaining the transition to middle school. In the article, she stated, "As you enter middle school, you have to make sure you as a student understand the tools needed for success and also the extra tools available for your success" (Tinsley, 2017, p. 5B).

The current sixth-grade class contains 86 students, 46 male students and 40 female students. Ninety-two percent of sixth-grade students are Caucasian, 6% Hispanic, and 2% American Indian. Six students are identified as academically/intellectually gifted, and 10 students participate in the special education program. The fifth-grade lead teacher identified this group as lacking motivation. The lead teacher commented that students did not want to take the time to be academically successful. The lead teacher continued by stating that students told her that they did not want to look back in the text for answers and did not want to show their work. This lack of motivation resulted in lower than expected classroom grades for last year's fifth graders.

The transition program began in the spring with a middle school visit by all upcoming sixth graders and a teachers' transition meeting. At the end of the summer,

upcoming sixth-grade families were invited to a cookout where middle school processes were introduced. Students were taught procedures at the beginning of the school year and practiced processes throughout the beginning of the first quarter. From midterm until the end of the first quarter, students participated in the contest portion of the Survivor transition program.

At the end of the first quarter, 57 students took CAIMI. Three student focus groups were held. Sixth-grade core teachers and an administrator were interviewed. Finally, an examination of the Survivor transition graph was conducted.

Once the student surveys were administered and the results collected, the data were entered into the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) and into an Excel spreadsheet to calculate multiple measures. Measures were analyzed to establish statistical themes in order to more fully understand common themes.

CAIMI

CAIMI was administered by the researcher on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 8:00 a.m. CAIMI was administered to 57 sixth-grade students. Sixty-one students had signed consent forms (Appendix B) to take CAIMI, but four students were absent from administration. The survey was administered in the school cafeteria to accommodate all 57 students at once. Five surveys were not complete, so there were 52 usable inventories.

Following directions in the CAIMI manual (Gottfried, 1986), raw scores were determined by adding points assigned to Likert scale items. *T* scores and percentages were determined using Table A2: *Percentiles and Normalized T Scores for CAIMI Scales: Elementary School Norms (Grades 4-6)* in the CAIMI manual (Gottfried, 1986). Table A2, the elementary table, was used because it specifically mentioned sixth grade. The standard error of measure was gathered from Table A4: *Standard Errors of*

Measurement for CAIMI Scales in the CAIMI manual (Gottfried, 1986). Bands were plotted using *t* scores, then adding and subtracting the standard error of measure from each plotted *t* score. The upper line was placed at the number obtained after the standard deviation had been added to the *t* score. The lower line was placed at the number obtained after the standard deviation had been subtracted from the *t* score. The banded area was shaded to display intervals. Bands were used to compare motivational strength across the profile scale. Bands that overlapped showed scales that did not differ beyond chance expectation. Motivation for these scales was considered to be within the same range across scales. Bands that did not overlap represent a difference in motivation among students. CAIMI publishers denied permission to show the banded areas, but the numerical results are provided in Table 4. Table 4 displays the number of students with confidence intervals that overlap. The difference in scores for these scales does not differ beyond chance fluctuation. This table also shows the number of students with bands that did not overlap. The difference in scores for these scales identifies a difference in motivation in that core subject in comparison with other core subject areas.

Table 4

Overlapping Motivation Scores

Subject	Differences in Motivation	N	Lower Motivation	Higher Motivation
Reading	Due to chance fluctuations	46		
	Not due to chance	6	5	1
Math	Due to chance fluctuations	43		
	Not due to chance	9	4	5
Social Studies	Due to chance fluctuations	38		
	Not due to chance	14	1	13
Science	Due to chance fluctuations	46		
	Not due to chance	6	2	4
General	Due to chance fluctuations	45		
Orientation	Not due to chance	7	5	2

Of the 52 students taking CAIMI, 46 students in reading had similar motivation to other subjects. Six students showed a difference in motivation in reading compared with other core subjects or general orientation to learning. Of those six reading students, five students' motivation was lower in reading than other subjects. One student's motivation was higher in reading than other subjects. This compares closely to general orientation to learning. Seven students' motivation levels were not due to chance. Five students had lower motivation toward general orientation to learning compared to core subjects. Two students had higher motivation toward general orientation to learning compared to core subjects.

In social studies, 38 students had a similar motivation in that subject as they did in other core areas, and 14 students had a different motivation level for social studies not due to chance. Of those 14 students with a different motivation level for social studies,

13 had a higher motivation level than other categories. Only one student had lower motivation in social studies than in other subjects.

Students having multiple differences in motivation were then identified. Table 5 shows these results.

Table 5

Different Motivation Scores

Number of Significantly Different Scores	Frequency	Percent
None	25	48
1	15	29
2	9	17
3	3	6

Of the 52 CAIMI surveys, 25 (48%) had no significantly different scores, or motivational level, in core subjects and general orientation toward learning. Fifteen surveys (29%) had only one core subject that showed a difference in scores not due to chance compared to the other core subjects and general orientation to school learning. Nine surveys showed a difference in motivation levels in two categories. Only three surveys showed a difference in three different subjects. Seventeen percent of students had two differences in scores and 6% showed three differences in scores for a total of 23% of students having more than one subject with a different motivation level. No surveys showed a different motivation level for all five categories.

Table 6 shows the cross-tabulation of motivation scores, which allowed the researcher to identify the core areas that showed the greatest differences for student academic intrinsic motivation.

Table 6

Cross-Tabulation of Motivation Scores

Subject	Difference in Motivation	Number of Significantly Different Scores None	1	2	3
Reading	Chance	46			
	Not Chance	0	2	3	1
Math	Chance	43			
	Not Chance	0	2	4	3
Social Studies	Chance	38			
	Not Chance	0	5	7	2
Science	Chance	46			
	Not Chance	0	1	3	2
General Orientation	Chance	45			
	Not Chance	0	5	1	1

As shown in Table 6, reading had 46 students with only chance fluctuations in motivational differences. Two students only had one difference not due to chance in reading. Three students had differences in motivation in reading and one other subject. One student had motivational differences in three areas, reading and two other categories.

Social studies had the most differences in motivation due to chance with 14 students ranking social studies differently than other core subjects. Of those 14, five students only had a difference in motivation in social studies. Seven students had a difference in motivation in social studies and one other subject. Two students had motivational differences in three different areas, social studies and two other categories. As previously stated, 13 of the 14 students with differences not due to chance ranked social studies above other core areas.

Table 7 shows measures of central tendency: range, mean, median, and mode. This chart also shows *t* scores and percentiles which were obtained from Table A2:

Percentiles and Normalized T Scores for CAIMI Scales: Elementary School Norms (Grades 4-6) in the CAIMI manual (Gottfried, 1986). Finally, this chart shows minimum scores, maximum scores, and standard deviation.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for CAIMI Raw Scores

Subject	Number	Mini-mum Score	Maxi-mum Score	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode	*T* Score	Percent
Reading	52	39	119	80	84	17.620	86	85, 90, 97, 102, 104	43	23
Math	52	43	123	80	102	18.104	97	93	49	48
Social Studies	52	47	120	73	93	17.983	95	93	51	52
Science	52	61	118	57	84	14.070	95	87, 89, 102	43	24
General	52	35	84	49	71.5	10.777	64	61, 62, 63	50	50

The highest core subject raw score mean for CAIMI was math with an average of 102. Math had a minimum score of 43 and a maximum score of 123, for a range of 80. Math also had the highest median, or middle, score of 97.

The second highest core subject raw score mean was 93 in social studies. A 93 raw score correlates to a *t* score of 51 and a percentage of 52. *T* scores and percentiles allowed the researcher to determine a student's level of academic intrinsic motivation relative to the normative group. Social studies had the highest *t* score and percentage of all core subjects and general orientation toward learning. Sixth-grade students at the study school rated social studies higher than 52% of the normative group. Social studies

had the second highest raw score median of 95, the second highest minimum score of 47, and the second highest maximum score of 120. The range for social studies was 73.

Reading and science both had an 84 raw score mean average. Science had the smallest range of 57 with a minimum score of 61 and a maximum score of 118. The median score in science was 95. Three modes, or numbers that show up most frequently for science, were 87, 89, and 107. Each mode was displayed three times in the science data. Science had a *t* score of 43 and a percentage of 24.

Reading had the lowest minimum score of 39. Reading also had the most raw score modes with five numbers being displayed three times each in the disaggregation: 85, 90, 97, 102, and 104. The mean score of 84 in reading correlated to a *t* score of 43 and a percent of 23, the lowest percentage of all core subjects and general orientation toward learning. Sixth-grade students at the study school rated reading higher than only 23% of all students.

Overall, general orientation toward school learning had lower raw score numbers than core subjects with a mean of 71.5; however, the raw score mean of 71.5 correlated to a *t* score of 50 and a percentage of 50, the second highest on the table. The modes of general orientation towards school learning were 61, 62, and 63, three numbers in succession. Each number was displayed four times in the general data.

The highest standard deviation was in math. Students generally scored within 18.104 points from the mean. This deviation was similar to social studies and reading. Social studies had a standard deviation of 17.983, and reading had a standard deviation of 17.620. The lowest standard deviation in a core subject was science with a standard deviation of 14.070. This standard deviation signifies that science scores were closer to the mean than scores in other subjects. The lowest standard deviation was in general

orientation toward learning. General orientation toward learning had three modes of 61, 62, and 63, and the majority of student scores were in the 60s. The standard deviation for general orientation was 10.777.

Table 8 shows the correlations among core subjects and general orientation to learning between the CAIMI raw scores. A Pearson two-tailed coefficient correlation was performed by a professional statistician. A Pearson correlation is a number that describes the strength of a relationship between two variables. CAIMI raw scores in one core subject were compared to CAIMI raw scores in another core area. The closer the number is to 0 in the Pearson correlation, the weaker the correlation. The closer the number is to 1 in the Pearson correlation, the stronger the correlation between the variables, or subjects.

Table 8

Correlations between CAIMI Raw Scores

Subjects	Reading	Math	Social Studies	Science	General
Reading	1				
Math	0.4841628813	1			
Social Studies	0.5718675199	0.54114884	1		
Science	0.410044191	0.2055538808	0.2271085436	1	
General	0.5579088236	0.64330388	0.6194729471	0.3750853422	1

All correlations between core subjects in CAIMI raw scores were positive. The strongest correlation between core subjects was between reading and social studies. The correlation between reading and social studies was 0.5718675199 which means there is a 57% likelihood that a student who has intrinsic motivation in reading will also have

intrinsic motivation in social studies. There was also a 0.54114884 correlation between math and social studies. The lowest correlation between subjects was between math and science with only a 0.2055538808 correlation.

The core subject that had the highest correlation between a subject and general orientation toward school learning was math. If a student was intrinsically motivated by math, he/she has a 64% probability of being intrinsically motivated by school in general. Another subject that had a high correlation to general orientation toward school learning was social studies with a 0.6194729471 correlation. The lowest correlation to general orientation to school learning was science with a 0.3750853422 correlation.

Transition Graph

During the first half of first quarter, sixth-grade teachers taught middle school processes such as new attendance policies, class preparedness, homework and classwork processes, and behavior. During the second half of first quarter, a contest was held between the four first periods in sixth grade to see which group had achieved the processes with the most fidelity. These processes were tracked on a transition graph (Appendix C). The transition graph was completed by the sixth-grade teachers each day. Each category of processes was worth between 50-100 points. Classes could earn up to 500 points per day if all processes were completed correctly. Students did not earn points for that process if the process was not completed by all students in that class. For example, if a student forgot his/her pencil, his/her class did not get the 100 points for preparedness that day. The transition graph was examined quantitatively daily and weekly by the researcher. Table 9 examines daily point averages in comparison with previous years of the Survivor transition program.

Table 9

Survivor Daily Point Averages

Survivor Year	Daily Point Average
2013	325
2014	313
2015	235
2016	217
2017	365

One explanation for the lower point totals in 2015 and 2016 was a rotating schedule. During the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the study middle school used a rotating schedule. During this schedule, students started with first period on Week 1, then progressed through second period, third period, and finally fourth period. On Week 2, students started with second period, then progressed through third period, fourth period, and ended the day with first period. Week 3 began with third period, and Week 4 began with fourth period. The first year of the rotating schedule, teachers noticed that students did not seem as motivated about the Survivor transition program and were not as prepared for class, as shown in daily point totals. During a grade-level meeting, teachers discussed that in previous years, the first period teacher would always have "their team" during first period at the beginning of the day. The first period teacher could encourage students to leave the classroom with the correct notebook, a pencil, and chrome book. When first period teachers started with other classes, they did not have that personal connection with their first period students to motivate them to "win lots of points" during the day. During the 2017-2018 school year, the study school reverted back to a traditional schedule where first period was held first thing each morning. Schedule change could be one of the factors in a +148 point difference in daily averages from last year to this year.

Another reason for the higher points this year was a policy change about homework at the study school. One of the core teachers made the comment,

> One of the biggest factors that led to the kids having more points this year was Mr. C made it very clear that we did not want to penalize quite as rough and hard on homework, so I feel like I didn't take as many points this year if they did not have their homework turned in because I'm in that mentality of letting homework be a practice where it's not quite as much of an expectation.

Homework was worth 100 points per day on the transition graph. Not penalizing students for homework would result in a +100 point change in daily point averages.

Table 10

Percentage of Completion of Procedures on Transition Graph

Week	Attendance %	Preparedness %	Homework %	Behavior %
Week 1	40	20	80	20
Week 2	20	20	80	0
Week 3	0	20	100	40
Week 4	0	20	100	40
Week 5	20	20	100	40

When comparing weekly completion in learning procedures, the biggest growth was in the homework category. Eighty percent of students completed all homework on Week 1 and Week 2; however, 100% of students completed homework on Weeks 3, 4, and 5. This may be due to student learning processes, but this also may be due to teachers being more lenient on homework because of the new homework policy.

One category that did not have any change was preparedness. Each first period group only had 1 day per week, for each of the 5 weeks, where all students brought all materials to each class.

Behavior showed positive growth. During Week 1, 20% of the week, or 1 day,

showed no behavior problems; however, eight students had discipline issues that week. During Week 2, one student each day had a discipline issue which resulted in 0% of days with no behavior problems; however, in Week 2, only five students had behavior problems compared to eight students during Week 1. During the last weeks of the transition program, positive behavior was shown 40% of the week, with 2 days each week with no discipline issues.

The worst statistics on the transition graph were shown in attendance. Week 1, 40% of the days of the week had perfect attendance. Week 2, 20%, only 1 day, of the week had perfect attendance. At least one student was absent each day for the rest of the Survivor transition program until the last day. Six students, the most on the graph, were absent on Thursday, October 5 and Friday, October 13.

Table 11

Daily Averages by Week

Week	Daily Average
1	377
2	343
3	386
4	353
5	320

During the contest portion of the Survivor transition program, students started strong with an average of 377 points per day, the second highest during the entire contest. The highest daily average was during Week 3. The lowest average was during the last week of the contest. The finale contest and celebration, Survivor Day, was held at the end of Week 5. The daily average for the entire contest was 365, the highest daily average since the inception of the current form of the program in 2013.

Focus Groups

There were three focus groups for this study. The three focus groups were held on the same day as CAIMI was administered. Each focus group was conducted in the sixth-grade workroom on the same floor as all sixth-grade core classes. The science classroom is across the hall from the workroom. It was determined that students would be chosen from the science classes. Focus Group 1 consisted of six students from the science teacher's first period. Each group was randomly chosen by numbering each science student roster and choosing each student who was a multiple of three. Students numbered 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 21 were chosen to participate in the focus group. If any of those students did not have permission to participate in the focus group, he/she did not participate. One student, Student 6, did not have permission to participate in the study in science first period. The other six students, Students 3, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 21, had permission to participate in the study. The group consisted of five girls and one boy. First period science is comprised of the high-achieving students. This group was very talkative, and the boy, even though he did not talk as much as the five girls, did not seem uncomfortable in a group with five girls. As soon as this focus group learned why they were in the conference room, they immediately began to give suggestions to improve sixth grade at the study school. While the researcher was completing the debriefing statement (Appendix D), one student interrupted by saying, "Oh yes, we need more independent reading time." Other students agreed and began to make a list of all the activities that needed improvement before the researcher asked the first question.

Second period science had the smallest number of students with permission slips to participate in the study, so the sixth-grade teachers suggested using third and fourth periods instead of second and third periods. Focus Group 2 consisted of three girls and

three boys from third period science. Everyone chosen to engage in the focus group had permission to participate. Since there were only 20 students in third period science, the group contained only six students. This group seemed the most confused about the transition program and gave short incomplete answers.

Focus Group 3 consisted of five students from fourth period science, three girls and two boys. Student 3 and Student 6 did not have permission to participate in the study, so this group only had five participants. This group gave complete answers but did not volunteer extra information as the first focus group did.

Each focus group was digitally taped and transcribed. The transcription was coded using an a priori categorization from the conceptual framework. Akos et al.'s (2005) three adolescent concerns were part of the basis for the conceptual framework of this study and a base concept for the transition program. The researcher determined that responses would be evaluated in relation to these three student concerns. Responses were printed and cut apart. Responses were then divided into the three student concern categories. The researcher then took each column of responses and disaggregated each of the three student concern categories into more specific concepts by redistributing the cut strips of responses. The results of this coding method are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Focus Group Themes and Classification

Akos et al.'s (2005) Three Adolescent Concerns	Identified Themes	Percentage of responses
Academic	Reading	4
	Math	8.6
	Social Studies	30.4
	Science	13
	Other Classes	4
	Homework	4
	Fifth-Grade Comparison	17.3
	The future after high school	17.3
Procedural	Responsibility	58
	Freedom	42
Social – Students	Comfort	66.6
	Friends	25
	Excitement about school	8.3
Social – Teachers	Working Together	42.8
	Positivity	35.7
	Academic Encouragement	21.4

The researcher disaggregated academic responses by core subject first since students had been surveyed using core subjects. In conjunction with the CAIMI quantitative data about student academic intrinsic motivation, the focus group mentioned social studies most often, 30.4%. Many students spoke of how concerned they were about learning states and capitals, but many students went on to explain that the social studies teacher had helped them through the process of learning the concept. Reading was only mentioned once during the actual focus group questions. Several students mentioned needing more independent reading time before the actual focus group began, but only one student mentioned the subject of reading after the focus group started, and that student was not in the focus group that listed more independent reading time as a

concern.

One student mentioned a physical education class. Several students spoke about academic endeavors outside of the sixth grade. Students compared sixth-grade experiences to activities completed in fifth grade 17.3% of the time. Students spoke of future academic pursuits 17.3% of the time when talking about academics.

As the researcher coded procedural statements, these comments fell into two categories, responsibility (58%) and freedom (42%). One student volunteered,

> I feel like we have more chances to learn how to take care of ourselves, take care of our own schedule, make sure we have the right stuff, pencils and stuff which I think is because of Survivor because I think Survivor has helped you gain that responsibility, because like they will take Survivor points.

Students spoke of the many freedoms that students have at middle school especially the freedom to talk. One student commented, "Especially when you walk in first thing in the morning, you have a lot more freedom whereas you couldn't talk to each other unless it was a recess or lunch" when at the elementary school.

When coding social data, the researcher noticed that students spoke about relationships with peers but also relationships with teachers. The researcher decided to separate this data into two categories: social concerns with other students and social concerns with teachers. When social concerns were mentioned by students, 66.6% of students expressed gladness about feeling comfortable at the study middle school. One student proclaimed, "I feel more at home." Another student expressed, "You know what I love? I love the fact that you take care of each other this first quarter cause not everybody makes an easy transition."

When speaking of teachers, students appreciated them working together, their

positivity, and the academic encouragement teachers gave to students. When talking about the reading teacher, one student stated, “she is like whichever class gets 20 dojo points will get a surprise, and we work for dojo points.” One student pointed out that the math teacher “is amazing. She does a great job. She makes it like it’s okay to mess up.” Speaking of the social studies teacher, one student commented, “He's awesome funny, so that’s made me want to start paying attention.” One student asserted that science was her favorite subject this year because the teacher did an experiment with them. She said, “This was really cool to touch and feel stuff,” instead of just watching a video about it.

To begin the focus group with a broad focus, the researcher began with general questions about the transition program, then moved to more specific questions about student motivation. The researcher concluded with three questions about transition program teachers.

The researcher began the focus group with three questions designed to determine a student’s level of understanding of the transition program.

1. Do you know that you are participating in a middle school transition program this year? If so, how did you know?
2. Do you think your school experiences this year have been different than those experiences of students who were not a part of a middle school transition program? If so, how?
3. Do you believe the middle school transition program has helped you transition from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways? (To help you answer, think about the following changes you may have encountered this year when you entered middle school: changes in academics/course requirements/changes in school procedures/rules, and/or changes in the

social/friends aspect.)

When asked the first question about knowing that you are participating in a transition program, no students in Focus Group 1 needed any explanation or examples of what the researcher was discussing. Focus Group 1 laughed and began to talk at once as soon as the question was asked. One student said the teachers could not stop talking about it. Another student added, "They would say, 'We're gonna take Survivor points away.'" Focus Group 3 said they heard their teachers talk about Survivor multiple times. One student in Focus Group 2 started the conversation with, "I didn't know we were in a transition program." All students in Focus Group 2 agreed that they did not know they were involved in a transition program. The researcher continued by giving examples of the many activities in the Survivor transition program. At that point, students nodded their heads showing understanding.

When asked Question 2, Focus Group 1 compared beginning of the year experiences at the study school to those at the other middle school in the county. One student stated,

> I know a lot of people who go to other schools. They weren't quite as excited as us. They were all like (student made a sad face), and we were all like talking about school. They didn't feel as excited about it. (Personal communication, November 1, 2017)

One student in Focus Group 3, speaking of middle school, expressed, "I feel more at home." Focus Group 3 opined that they did a lot of review of fifth-grade curriculum at the beginning of the year.

Students declared that they felt the transition program helped with moving from elementary school to middle school in Question 3. One student volunteered, "Yes,

definitely. I think it has really helped us with prioritizing because if we understand that Survivor is going to take points away, I'll be like I am not going to do that." Most students focused on the social aspect with one student divulging, "In elementary school, I didn't have many friends or opportunities to have friends, and now I have like a lot of different friends." Another student interjected, "It helped me talk to more people. It helped me talk to more people because like you would talk to people about how many points you had. I think it has really helped us talk to each other."

The researcher continued the focus group by concentrating on motivation with Questions 4, 5, and 6.

4. Tell me what subject(s) you'd like to learn more about. Why do you want to learn more about this/these subject(s)? Can you give me an example from this school year?
5. Tell me about a challenging task that you've done this year. Did you want to quit or stick with it? Explain.
6. In general, what has motivated you this year about your school learning?

For Question 4, students mentioned all four core subjects. No one mentioned any exploratory classes, physical education, or any other classes. The disaggregation is illustrated in the following figure.

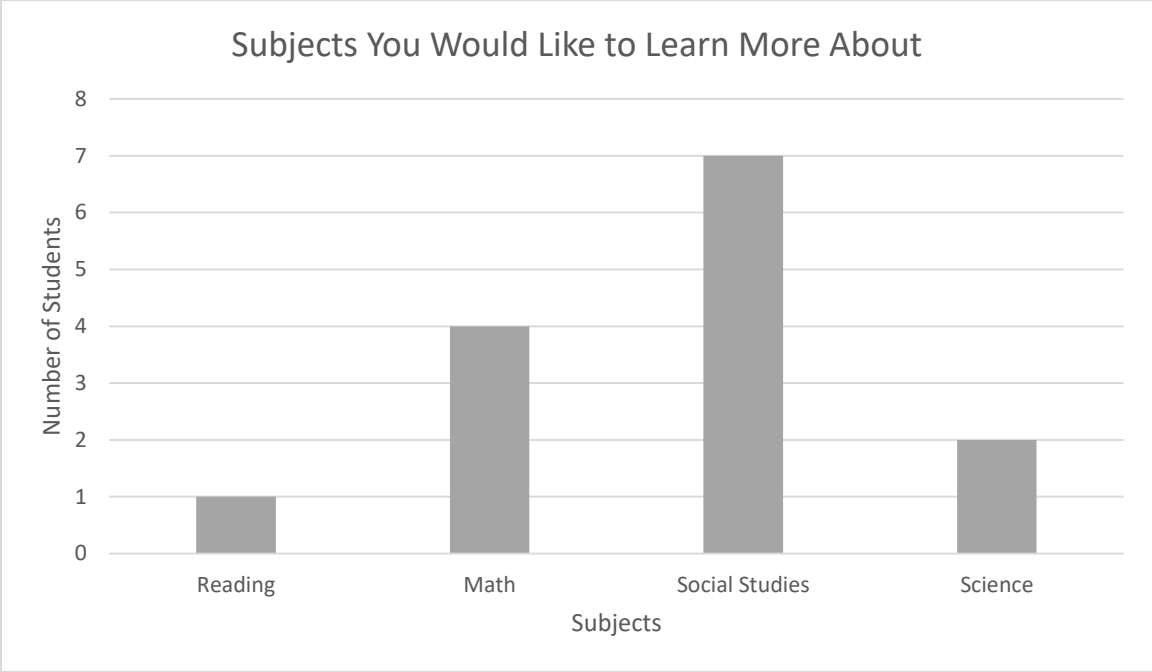

Figure 1. *S*ubjects You Would Like to Learn More About.

One student specifically mentioned that she would like to learn more about reading. Two students said they would like to learn more about science, and four students said they would like to learn more about math. Seven different students mentioned that they would like to know more about social studies. This corresponds to CAIMI data. Social studies had the second highest mean average (93) of the four core classes and the highest *t* score (51) and percentile (52). One student explained, "I like social studies because in elementary we didn't learn that much but in middle school, we learn a lot, and I really love social studies." During one of the teacher interviews, the reading teacher commented that she felt social studies would be a motivating subject for students because students received almost no social studies classes at elementary school because it was the only subject not tested in fifth grade.

For Question 5, students had many more varied responses than just core classes.

The answers are displayed in Figure 2.

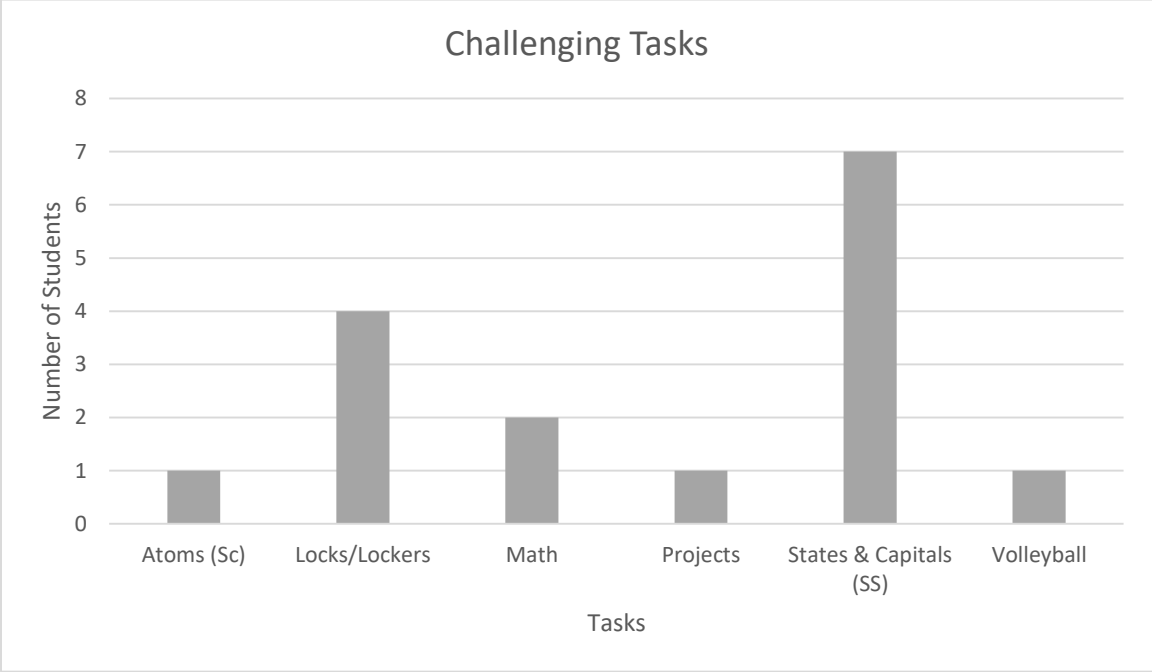

Figure 2. A Task that Students found Challenging.

Seven students felt like learning capitals of states in social studies was a challenging task that they wanted to quit, but they were glad that they did not quit. One student commented,

> States and capitals. I forgot to study, and I thought I got them wrong and then, I said, I was like man, I probably did horrible on this, and I see my grade, and I was like halfway. I wanted to quit halfway, but then, it got me determined to study and work harder. (Personal communication, November 1, 2017)

Four students mentioned locks and lockers were hard for them the first few days of school. Two students were concerned about learning math concepts. One student commented that learning about atoms in science was challenging, and one student mentioned projects were more difficult this year. One female lamented that she felt like

she could not learn how to play volleyball in physical education class. She said that when students were told that they were not going to play anymore, she was glad.

At first, Focus Group 2 could not think of anything that motivated them for Question 6. With Focus Groups 1 and 3, several themes emerged which are displayed in Figure 3.

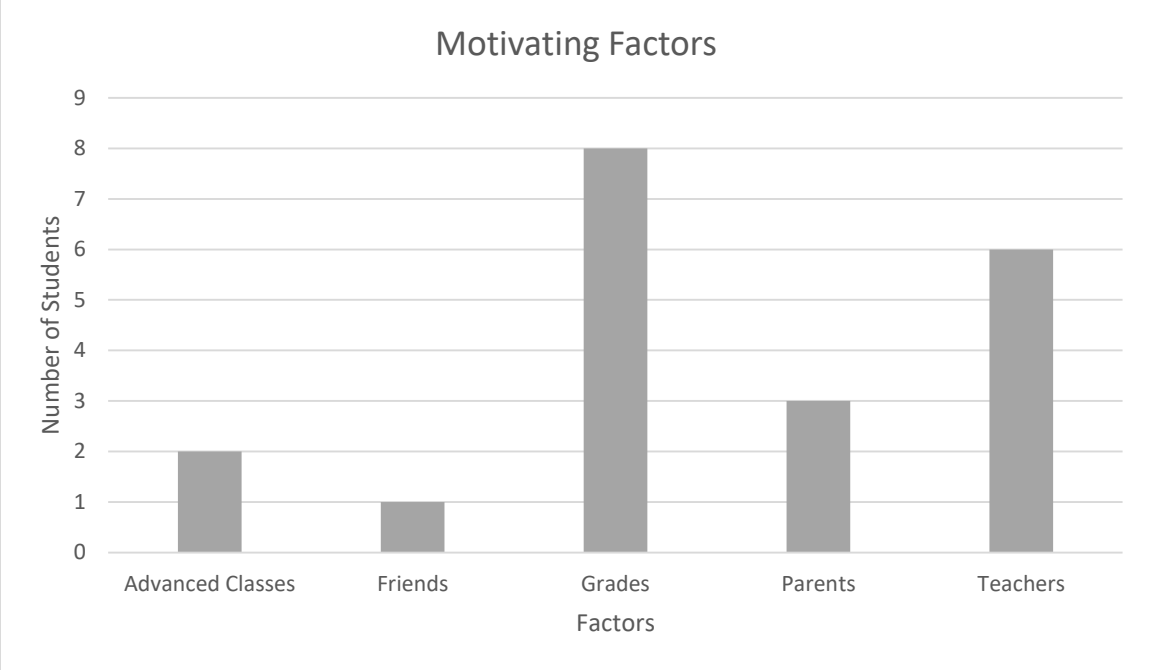

Figure 3. Motivating Factors about School Learning.

According to the focus groups, grades were the most motivating factor with eight students mentioning something about grades. Three students also mentioned that parents pushed them to make good grades. One student added, "My mom because she keeps on encouraging me every single day and then I always want to get good grades to make her proud of me." Teachers had the second highest response rate with six students saying teachers encouraged them. One part of the conversation proceeded like this:

Student 1: I think teachers because our teachers are constantly pushing us to do

more and to do better and be better, and that is something we are not used to doing.

Student 2: Our teachers help us with our work because in elementary school, it wasn't nearly as hard or as challenging, and they would teach it to you, give you assignments, and then you move on. In sixth grade, they teach it to you. You have some assignments. You have a quiz. You have a test. Then, you do a project. Then, they bring it back. (Personal communication, November 1, 2017)

Advanced classes were mentioned twice in Focus Group 1. They also mentioned that they appreciated leveled classes so they could learn at their own pace. One person in Focus Group 3 offered that friends were also a motivating factor.

Teachers and students must establish a relationship first to facilitate growth during the school year (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999). Middle school teachers have an opportunity to positively affect adolescent development (Akos et al., 2005). Questions 7, 8, and 9 focus on teachers' effect on students during the transition program.

7. Do you believe that the adults in the middle school transition program care about you, the students? Can you give me examples of why or why not?
8. Do you think your middle school transition teachers work together to plan their lessons? If so, how do you know?
9. Do you think your middle school transition teachers talk to each other about you, their students? If so, in what way(s)?

For Question 7, all of the students felt that their teachers cared about them. One student stated, "Our teachers are always constantly reminding us of ways we can get better like Survivor and all this stuff." Another student added, "I feel like they're always there even when they don't have to be."

Students felt that teachers worked together to plan Survivor and to plan student activities. For Question 8, all three focus groups laughed about how many times teachers would come in and out of other teachers' classrooms. One student summarized the conversation by saying, "You can definitely tell that they work together. They are never in their own classroom."

Students continued discussing how teachers talk about them, the students, in Question 9. Students mentioned that teachers would tell them when another teacher was talking about them. One student explained, "It wasn't a bad thing. It was like a good thing about you, how they care about you and want to see you succeed."

Table 13

Focus Group Intrinsic Motivation per Core Subject

Subjects	Extra Effort Given by Students
Reading	24%
Math	65%
Social Studies	59%
Science	41%

During the focus group, the highest percentage of students saying they gave extra effort, above and beyond the normal effort in a class, was in math. Eleven of the 17 students, 65%, in the three focus groups said they gave extra effort in math. Each of those students commented that they did not feel they had to give extra effort in that class but wanted to give extra effort in math class.

During the focus group, 59% or 10 students said that they gave extra effort in social studies. Seven students said they wanted to give extra effort to the subject. Three students said they felt like they had to give extra effort to do well in social studies class. During teacher interviews, one teacher mentioned that students seemed to like social

studies this year, and one possible explanation may be there is less emphasis given to social studies at the elementary level because it is the only subject not tested. The teacher continued by saying, "So, this is really the first-year students have had social studies." This was corroborated by a student in the focus group when she said, "I like social studies because in elementary, we didn't learn that much but in middle school, we learn a lot, and I really love social studies."

Only four students said they gave extra effort in reading. Reading also had the lowest mean raw score on CAIMI of 84.

Interviews

Four core teachers work with sixth-grade students. Each sixth-grade teacher teaches all sixth-grade students. The sixth-grade students have all core classes from 8:00 a.m.-1:10 p.m. each day on a single hallway with four classroom doors, one for each core subject. Sixth-grade students go to exploratory classes and physical education at the end of the day in various parts of the school building.

The math teacher has been teaching for 30 years; however, this is her first year teaching sixth grade. She began her teaching career in high school, moved to eighth grade in 2000, and will retire at the end of this year, her only year teaching sixth grade. The reading teacher has taught for 15 years. She moved from fifth grade at an elementary school to sixth grade 4 years ago. The social studies teacher has taught for 14 years. He began his career at the high school level but has been teaching at the middle school level for 4 years. This is his first year in sixth grade. The science teacher has only taught sixth grade at the study school. He has been teaching for 10 years.

The administrator interview was with the lead teacher at the study middle school. This lead teacher was a sixth-grade teacher before becoming an administrator. She was

very familiar with the original transition program implemented at the study middle school. Now, she works closely with teachers and curriculum.

Teachers and the lead teacher have an average of 18.4 years of experience with an average of 6.6 years of experience in sixth grade.

Table 14

Description of Teachers Interviewed

Teacher	Gender	Total Years of Experience	Years at this School	Years in Sixth Grade
Reading	F	15	4	4
Math	F	30	17	1
Social Studies	M	14	4	1
Science	M	10	10	10
Lead Teacher	F	23	17	17

The researcher digitally taped and transcribed all responses. Responses were then coded by sorting and categorizing each comment. Responses from the focus groups were coded using an a priori method, looking for Akos et al.'s (2005) three adolescent concerns. After coding interview responses, the researcher realized that responses about the transition program could also be categorized using Akos et al.'s adolescent concerns. The transition program was designed to meet the three student concerns of academics, procedures, and social concerns, so a disaggregation of this type would be appropriate.

Table 15

Interview Themes and Classification

Alignment with Akos et al.'s (2005) Three Student Concerns	Identified Theme	Percentage of Responses
Academic	Meeting student needs	4
	Teacher's Common Goals	11.7
	Transition meeting with Fifth-Grade Teachers	4
Procedural	Class Dojo	7.8
	Learning Procedures	11.7
	Survivor Transition Program	4
Social	Differences between elementary and middle school	5.8
	End-of-Summer Cookout	5.8
	Student Confidence	13.7
Academic and Social	Relationship with Parents	9.8
Academic, Procedural, and Social	Communication	4
	Teamwork	17.6

Teachers felt that teamwork among the four core teachers and all ancillary teachers was most important to the success of sixth graders during the transition program with the idea of teamwork being mentioned in 17.6% of responses. Having planning meetings each day together during the first quarter helped teachers share goals and develop team goals. Teachers felt that all teachers having common goals was important to student success. Common goals were said in 11.7% of responses.

With 13.7% of responses, student confidence was considered second most important to a successful transition. Teachers mentioned phrases such as making students "more independent," becoming more "self-reliant," students to "not be afraid," and students having "confidence in knowledge." In order for students to be confident about middle school, students must learn middle school procedures. Learning procedures

was pointed out in 11.7% of all responses.

Four interviews were conducted with the four sixth-grade core teachers. The teacher interviews used a similar format as the focus group questions with questions at the beginning and one question at the end to determine understanding. Questions 3, 4, and 5 focused on the three adolescent concerns from Akos et al. (2005) in the conceptual framework. Questions 6 and 7 focus on teacher coaching for the transition program.

1. Please share your understandings of a middle school transition program.
2. Describe the sixth-grade transition program at this school.

Multiple teachers stressed that the Survivor transition program is not just a program to teach procedures, but it also helped students with social, emotional, and educational needs. One teacher pointed out, "The purpose of a middle school transition program is to improve students' confidence and maturity."

The four core teachers relayed the different parts of the transition program including the meeting with fifth-grade teachers, the end-of-summer cookout, teaching procedures the first few weeks of school, and the Survivor contest at the end of the first quarter.

3. Do you think this transition program helps students transition academically from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
4. Do you think this transition program helps students transition procedurally from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
5. Do you think this transition program helps students transition socially from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?

"Before we started doing the transition program, students would just come in, and it is a big shock for them from elementary to middle school," one teacher voiced.

Teachers spoke about the importance of inviting parents into the school and working with parents to make students academically successful. Teachers emphasized how all teachers must have the same set of procedures for students to be successful in the middle school. One teacher lamented, "The social aspect, in my opinion, is probably one of the most challenging parts of helping a transition." Interestingly, all four of the core teachers mentioned working as a team as part of his/her answer to Question 5. Teachers must work as a team, communicating all major and minor details of student needs, to meet all adolescent concerns.

6. Describe what you do as a teacher to impact student motivation to learn your subject matter (include how you get your students to stick with the learning and not give up, especially with difficult or challenging tasks/ assignments).
7. As a teacher in this middle school transition program, how does what you do differ from what other teachers do in classrooms?

One of the teachers who was new to sixth grade this year opined, "The first nine weeks is huge because there's so many changes going on." Teachers explained that the training the first few weeks of the sixth grade is essential because of the "big, big difference from elementary school level."

All of the core teachers emphasized the importance of helping students have "a positive experience in the classroom." One teacher stated,

> It is imperative for the teacher to be passionate about what they are teaching. If the teacher is passionate then students will notice and buy into what the teacher is doing. Lack of passion and true heartfelt love of the subject sets both the teacher and the student up for failure. (S.H., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

8. Did you receive or participate in professional learning to support you in

teaching in this middle school transition program? If so, please describe.

Teachers did not receive formal training for the Survivor program, but as one teacher clarified, “The idea of Survivor: outwit, outplay, outlast, the elements there, it does require some training.” One teacher said he received “informal training from my peers.” All core teachers spoke of meeting on a daily basis to keep open communication, set common goals, and meet student needs. One teacher summed up the training meetings, “We work hard to make this a positive experience with all of our sixth graders.”

The administrator questions followed a similar format as the focus group and interview questions, beginning with the administrator’s understanding of the transition program, Questions 1 and 2, continuing with adolescent concerns from the conceptual framework, Questions 3, 4, and 5, and concluding with a focus on the teachers in the transition program, Question 6.

1. Please share your understanding of a middle school transition program.
2. Describe the middle school transition program of this school; include the history of its development if possible.

During the administrator interview, the lead teacher reflected on all the elements of a transition program. The administrator began by explaining,

> Sixth grade is almost like starting kindergarten all over again. Middle School students need to build confidence in their knowledge and understanding of policies procedures and strategies that they'll need to be successful as they move from one educational setting to another. (R.W., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

She continued by listing multiple parts of the transition program at the study school such

as the spring visit to elementary schools from the guidance counselor, the middle school visit by fifth graders, and the end-of-summer cookout. The administrator stated, "The sixth-grade team of teachers met with our feeder elementary schools in the spring." This meeting had multiple purposes. One purpose was to get an overall understanding of the incoming sixth grade. The other purpose was to schedule classes. One of the focus groups mentioned that they thought scheduling classes based on ability was better in middle school. The conversation progressed like this.

> Student 1: I think in elementary school, since there was one teacher all day to one set class, that way the teacher's focus was divided, and it wasn't equal focus on each student's needs and how they had to learn, so it was kind of harder for the students who had to find other ways to learn.
>
> Student 2: If the teacher was helping one student individually, there is a class over here. They were helping this one student and the rest of the class was just sitting there.
>
> Student 3: And the teacher really didn't pay any attention to any of the others.
>
> Student 2: At the middle school, they focus on everyone at once.
>
> Student 1: They kind of section you off by your class by the way you are. That way teachers can focus on the whole class because they are pretty much the same. (Personal communication, November 1, 2017)

Even though students did not mention motivation, the students agreed that they enjoyed the middle school schedule.

3. Do you think this transition program helps students transition academically from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
4. Do you think this transition program helps students transition procedurally

from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?

5. Do you think this transition program helps students transition socially from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?

When speaking of academics, the administrator articulated, "We emphasize to students and families that we will work closely with them to build each student's capacity to take ownership of his or her learning." This theme was reiterated in the focus groups when several students stated that grades were a motivating factor for them because grades were important to their parents. The parent of the student who wrote the newspaper article added her thoughts to her daughter's article, "As a parent of a sixth grader, I feel all the emotions and responsibilities are very high the first few weeks as the students and parents adjust to the changes" (Tinsley, 2017, p. 5B).

Another major part of the transition process is teachers. When addressing procedures, the administrator observed, "The sixth-grade team is adept in modifying expectations and procedures to best fit the needs of the current grade level so this procedure is always changing and evolving."

As far as socially, the administrator lamented,

> I do believe that our former process of hosting the sixth-grade academy prior to the first week of school was a more in-depth interaction time to socialize with students from other schools and teachers. It just gave students more time to get to know each other especially those students from different feeder schools.

Focus Group 1 also lamented this fact. One student noted,

> I feel like it would have been a little more helpful if we had met each other at a couple more dances or something like that. Because the first day of school, everyone was like, everyone wasn't talking to each other. That way we would

talk to each other.

6. Describe what the teachers in the middle school transition program do to impact their students' motivation to learn "their" subject? (Include what they do to get their students to stick with the learning and not give up, especially with difficult or challenging tasks/ assignments.)

The administrator stated teachers at the study middle school work hard to help students grow academically, socially, and emotionally. She went on to say that teachers teach students accountability and responsibility for learning and "to take tiger pride in completing work with a focus on quality of work."

Research Question 1

How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading? Reading received the lowest scores overall. The least number of students in the focus groups strived to put extra effort into reading. Only 24% of students in the focus groups stated they put extra effort into reading.

The CAIMI subscale raw scores frequency results for reading are displayed as a histogram.

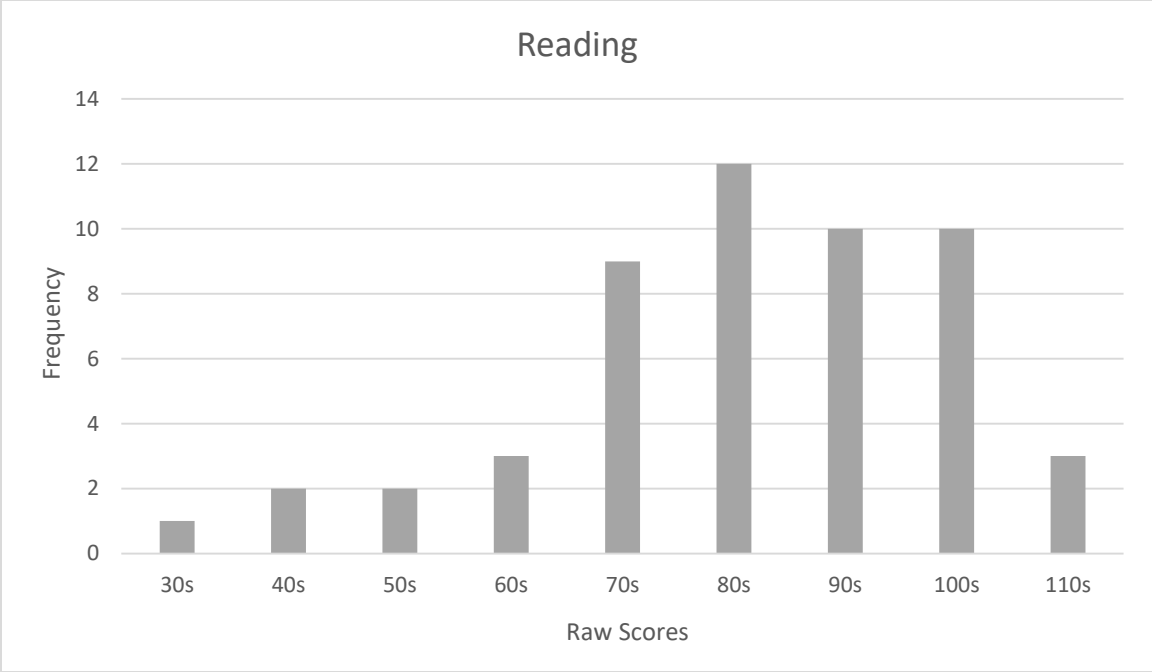

Figure 4. Reading CAIMI Raw Scores.

The minimum value for reading raw scores was 39. There was only one student who rated reading in the 30s. The maximum raw score for reading was 119 with three students scoring in the 110s. The majority of students (12) rated reading raw scores in the 80s. The modes of the reading scores were 85, 90, 97, 102, and 104. These five scores were each on the set of data three times. The reading raw score's mean was 84 which corresponded to a *t* score of 43 and percentile of 23. These scores were the lowest among all the core subjects and general orientation to learning on CAIMI at the study middle school. A percentile of 23 meant that sixth-grade students at the study school rated reading higher than only 23% of the normative group.

Another telling statistic for reading was the fact that only 4% of focus group responses about academics involved reading. Four percent was the lowest percentage in the classification of academics. Four percent of students spoke about reading, other

classes, and homework.

When examining bands of motivational scores, reading had six differences in motivation that were not due to chance, meaning the reading band did not overlap with any other score on the profile report form. One of these six differences in motivation was higher than the majority of the scores on the profile. Five of the scores were lower, meaning, out of the six differences in motivation bands, five of those students had lower motivation in reading than the majority of core subjects on the profile.

Finally, the reading teacher even spoke of the fact that reading was not motivating for students in sixth grade because at the elementary school, reading was the biggest focus. "They really don't have anything in elementary except reading anymore," lamented the reading teacher. At both of the study elementary schools, the fifth grades use a reading program called Reading 3-D. Reading 3-D requires teachers to keep constant running records, therefore assessments are completed weekly. This takes a lot of a fifth-grade student's academic day. Because of this push for reading data, the sixth-grade reading teacher felt students were "tired of reading by the time they reached middle school."

Table 16

Factors that Increase and Decrease Motivation in Reading

Increased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses	Decreased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses
Independent reading	82%	Scoot Pad	100%
Teacher lets you read your own books	35%	Stations	53%

Students stated that they enjoyed the fact that the teacher allowed them to choose their own independent reading materials but wanted more independent reading time at

school. During the three student focus groups, students revealed that the most motivating factor they wish they had during reading class was more independent reading time. Fourteen of the 17 students in the three student focus groups said they would be more motivated in reading class if they had more independent reading time. During Focus Group 1, students began to talk about having more independent reading time before the researcher completed the debriefing statement. Another factor students revealed motivated them was that the teacher lets them choose their own books to read. Students revealed that their sixth-grade teacher allowed them to read whatever they wanted to for independent reading which for 35% of students was a motivating factor.

Students in the three focus groups revealed that Scoot Pad, a new computer program that the sixth-grade reading teacher started using this year, actually decreased their motivation to want to do reading activities. All 17 students expressed dislike for Scoot Pad. Fifty-three percent of students also said they did not like stations, where students have three or four groups that they rotate through during the reading period.

Research Question 2

How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math? Math received the highest raw scores overall. Sixty-five percent of students in the focus groups stated they put extra effort into math.

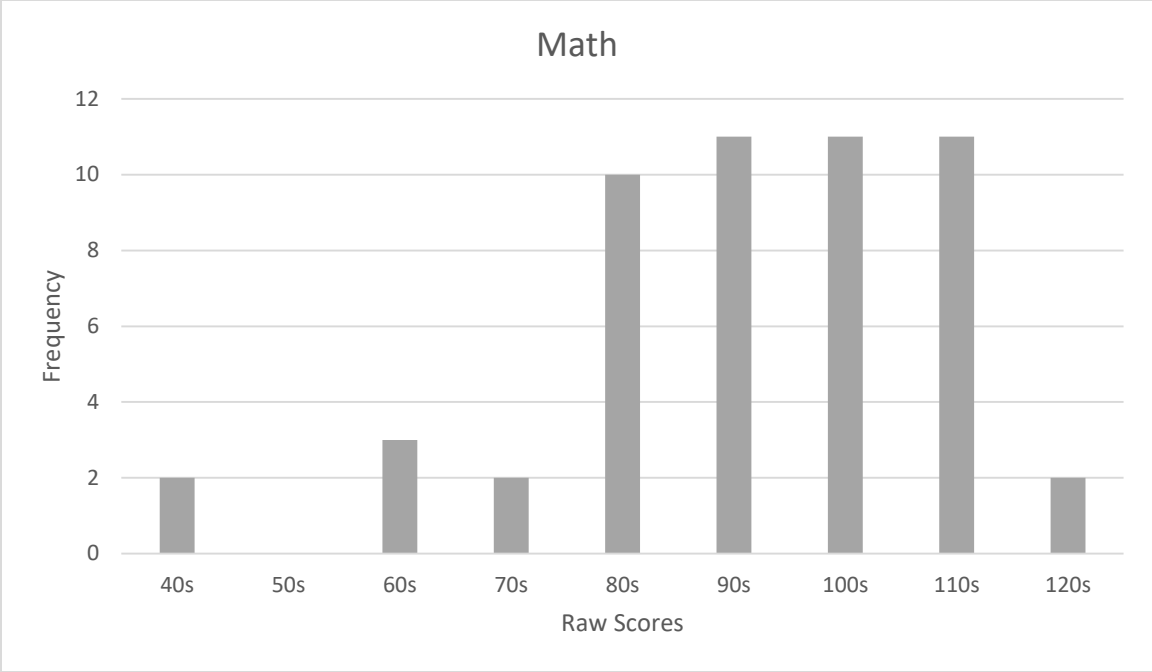

Figure 5. Math CAIMI Raw Scores.

Eleven students rated math raw scores in the 90s; 11 students rated math raw scores in the 100s; and 11 students rated math raw scores in the 110s. Ten students rated math raw scores in the 80s. The math raw score mean was 102. A raw score of 102 corresponds to a *t* score of 49 and a percentage of 48, the third highest of all *t* scores and percentages. Math *t* scores and percentages placed behind social studies and general orientation to school learning, respectively.

Two students rated math raw scores in the 40s: 43 and 49. There were no math raw score ratings in the 50s. Two raw scores for math were in the 120s.

Forty-three student profile forms reported that students had the same motivation in math that they did in at least one other subject. For nine students, motivation in math was different than in other subjects. Five of those students had higher motivation, and four students had lower motivation in math when compared to other subjects.

During the student focus group, students referred to something about math 8.6% of the time when they were talking about academics. Math was third of the four core subjects in percentage of responses. Social studies and science ranked ahead of math, and reading ranked below math.

Students spoke highly of the math teacher during the focus group. One student commented, "I love math this year. The teacher is amazing. She does a great job. She makes it like it's okay to mess up." Another student commented that the math teacher shows multiple ways to solve a problem, "then she kind of lets you figure out your way."

Table 17

Factors that Increase and Decrease Motivation in Math

Increased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses	Decreased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses
IXL	100%	Lesson too fast paced	100%
Partner Work	35%	Moby Max	61%

Math students enjoy the IXL computer program they use to master concepts each week. All 17 students said IXL was a motivating factor in math class. Students commented that the math teacher lets them sit where they wanted, but they completed activities independently. Thirty-five percent of students revealed that they would be more motivated if they could complete some assignments with a partner.

All of the students in all three focus groups shared that they felt math lessons were too fast-paced. One student said, "I wish she explained in more detail and didn't talk too fast." This is the first year for the math teacher in a grade as low as sixth grade. She began her teaching career in high school and has taught eighth grade since 2000. According to the math teacher, she has heard and understands student concerns and has made a conscientious effort to make math more understandable.

Sixty-one percent of students in the focus groups stated that the Moby Max computer program was a factor that decreased motivation. Moby Max is a math program that customizes lessons for each student depending on how each student scores on progress monitoring. Even though technology is normally seen as a motivating factor for middle school students, both Scoot Pad in reading and Moby Max in math were not motivating for sixth-grade students.

Research Question 3

How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn social studies?

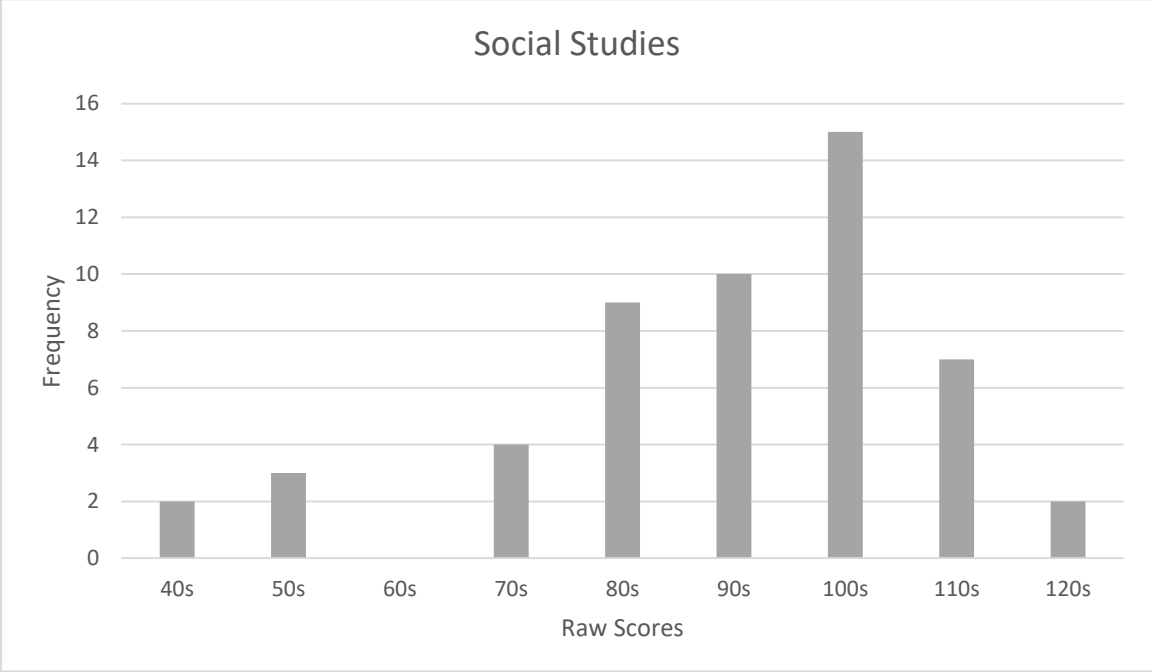

Figure 6. Social Studies CAIMI Raw Scores.

Fifteen students rated social studies raw scores in the 100s. Two students rated social studies in the 40s: 47 and 48. Two students rated social studies at 120. There were no raw scores for social studies in the 60s. The mean average of social studies raw scores

was 93. A raw score average of 93 equates to a *t* score of 51 and a percentage of 52. A *t* score of 51 and a percentage of 52 were the highest scores given by sixth-grade students at the study middle school. Sixth-grade students at the study middle school rated social studies above 52% of the CAIMI normative group.

When examining motivational bands on the profile report form, social studies had 14 student reports where social studies had significantly different scores than the other subjects. Of the 14 motivational differences in social studies, 13 of those scores showed students with higher motivational levels in social studies than in other subjects.

Social studies was mentioned 30.4% of the time while students were discussing academics in the student focus group, the most of any core subject. Students seemed very concerned about learning all 50 states and their capitals but were happy that the social studies teacher was supportive of this endeavor. One student acknowledged that the social studies teacher helped him "and then I got the hang of it."

One student offered, "I really like history, just history, not social studies, not geography. I think we are going to learn about that in the second quarter. I just want to learn about history." The reading teacher commented that students did not get to study social studies at the fifth grade because it was not a tested subject. The reading teacher taught fifth grade for 15 years before she became a sixth-grade teacher. She surmised that students were probably more motivated by social studies in the middle school because it was a relatively new topic for them.

This is the first year in sixth grade for the social studies teacher. The male social studies teacher stands 6'5" and has a large beard. One teacher commented that students find the social studies teacher funny. In the focus group, one student stated, "He's awesome funny, so that's made me want to start paying attention."

Table 18

Factors that Increase and Decrease Motivation in Social Studies

Increased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses	Decreased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses
Projects	100%	Book activities	100%
More hands-on learning	71%		

Students in social studies class are motivated by projects. One hundred percent of students in the three focus groups revealed that projects were motivating, and 71% of students specifically mentioned they would like more hands-on learning. Students did not like activities from the textbook. All students stated bookwork caused a decrease in their motivation. One student said, "Anytime we have a sub in any class, they give us too much bookwork."

Research Question 4

How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science?

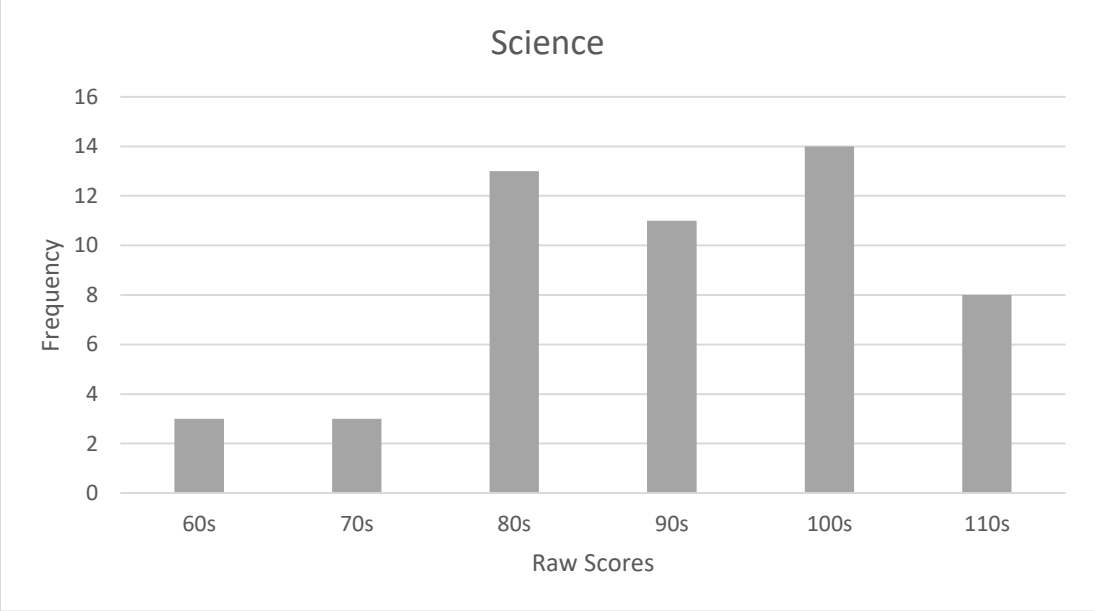

Figure 7. Science CAIMI Raw Scores.

Science had a minimum score of 61 with three scores in the 60s. Science had a maximum score of 118 with eight scores in the 110s. The most science raw scores were in the 100s with 14 scores in that column, and 13 students ranked science in the 80s. The mean average for raw scores in science was 84 which translated to a *t* score of 43 and a percentage of 24. Twenty-four percent was the second lowest percentage, ranking one percentage point higher than reading.

Science had a similar motivation level with at least one other subject on 46 student profile forms. For six students, motivation in science was different than other subjects. Four of those six students had a higher motivational level in science, and two had a lower motivational level compared with other subjects.

Thirteen percent of responses when students were discussing academics during the focus group were about science. One student declared, "I've never really gotten interested in science, and like I'm a lot more interested in it this year."

Table 19

Factors that Increase and Decrease Motivation in Science

Increased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses	Decreased Motivation Factors	% of Student Responses
Projects	100%	Worksheets	71%
Labs	47%	Taking Notes	71%

Students in the focus groups revealed that they like projects in both social studies and science. Activities that decreased motivation were worksheets and taking notes. Both of these activities were mentioned by 12 of the students as tasks they did not enjoy in science class. Forty-seven percent of students in the three focus groups said they would like to do more labs in science class. When talking about labs, one student stated, "We have only had one, but I would like to do more."

Research Question 5

How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?

> Becoming a middle schooler is a challenging but fun transition. You must be able to change the ways you prioritize, think and plan your daily routine. Having more freedom, meeting new students, as well as feeling more independent allows you to have a fresh new start at a new school. I always look at the bright side of things and middle school is defiantly [*sic*] something I call fun! (Tinsley, 2017, p. 5B)

The student who wrote the newspaper article seems to be expressing the general feelings of most of the sixth graders in the study school.

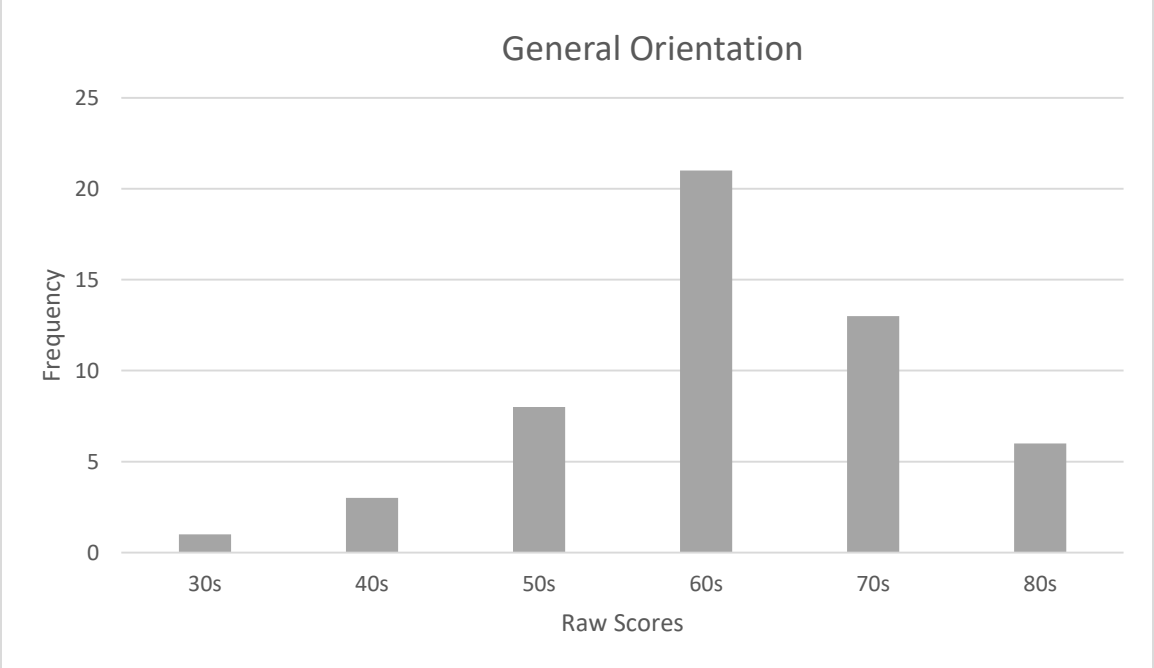

Figure 8. General Orientation to School CAIMI Raw Scores.

Concerning general orientation toward school learning, 21 students ranked it in the 60s on CAIMI. The mode of this group of data was 61, 62, and 63, with each score

shown four times in the data. The mean average for the raw scores representing general orientation to learning was 71.5, with a minimum score of 35 and a maximum score of 84. The mean of 71.5 corresponded to a *t* score of 50 and a percentage of 50. General orientation toward learning was second only to social studies on the descriptive statistics for CAIMI.

Forty-five students had a motivational level in general orientation toward learning similar to at least one other subject. Seven students' bands of motivational learning for general orientation did not overlap any other subject. Two of those students ranked general orientation higher than the majority of other subjects. Five of those students ranked general orientation lower than the majority of other subjects.

When comparing points on the Survivor transition graph, recording completion of procedures, this year's sixth grade scored the highest average that has been recorded since the inception of the latest version of the Survivor transition program. This year's class daily point average was 365. In 2013, the daily class average was 325, this was the next highest score compared to this year's score. For the past 2 years, points have declined. In 2015, the daily average was 235; and in 2016, the daily point average was only 217. This year's class completed the daily processes necessary to be successful at sixth-grade level at a higher rate than all classes for the past 5 years. Percentages in homework and behavior improved throughout the 5 weeks of the Survivor contest portion of the transition program. In preparedness, students remained stable, with 20% of days of the week having all students completely prepared for class. Attendance fluctuated and showed a decline as the transition program progressed.

When comparing daily averages by week, during Week 1, students averaged 377 points per day. Students had the highest averages during Week 3 when the daily average

was 386. The other daily averages were 343, 353, and 320 in Weeks 2, 4, and 5, respectively. All of these averages except 320 were higher than the total averages from any year of the Survivor transition program since 2013. General orientation toward learning may be improved when processes for school success are mastered.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect a middle school transition program had on student academic intrinsic motivation. The participants were sixth-grade students, sixth-grade core teachers, and a lead teacher at the study school. Results were gathered through quantitative methods using a survey and an examination of the transition graph. Results were gathered qualitatively by using three focus groups, four teacher interviews, and an administrator interview with the lead teacher. A further discussion of these results is presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

Motivation is an inducement to act in a certain way. To evoke motivation, Marzano (2003) said teachers must address Maslow's fifth level of need, self-actualization. Once processes have been taught for success, teachers must convince students to have a goal to achieve in the classroom for self-actualization. Processes for success should be taught each year, but especially during the years when a student transitions to a new level of education. Great teachers establish clear procedures that will be maintained throughout a school year (Whitaker, 2012). Once the processes have been mastered in a transition program, that should add to academic success. "Academic intrinsic motivation is defined as enjoyment of school learning" (Gottfried, 1985, p. 632). Academic success in the core classes through procurement of processes should lead to an enjoyment of school learning and academic intrinsic motivation.

This was a mixed-method case study of the middle school transition program and its association with student intrinsic motivation in the areas of reading, math, social studies, and science. A case study is a comprehensive analysis of a program involving direct observation of the processes being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the activities (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

This study was replicated by extension from a study about transition to high school and student academic intrinsic motivation by Sealy (2012). The first justification for extending the Sealy study was to test generalizability (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). Extending Sealy's study would help determine if the results held across a range of populations from high school students to middle school students. Another justification for extending Sealy's study on transition and motivation was to build on previous

research (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). Extending Sealy's study determined if settings were a factor in transition. Another justification for the extension of Sealy's study was to relay related knowledge that may add greater understanding to the original study (Lund Research Ltd., 2012). Sealy used CAIMI (Gottfried, 1986) with ninth-grade students in high school. The current study used this instrument with the intended audience of students in Grade 6. This study added a middle school piece about transition and intrinsic motivation to Sealy's study about high schools and student academic intrinsic motivation.

This chapter presents an overview of the study, the research questions, and the summary of results. The summaries of results were divided using the conceptual framework, the transition program, and student academic intrinsic motivation. The conceptual framework was used to present summary results based on academic, procedural, and social concerns. A summary of the research question results follows the transition results and intrinsic motivation results. The chapter is completed with sections containing a conclusion, limitations, recommendations for further research, and a summary.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a middle school transition program on sixth-grade students in a small rural western North Carolina middle school. The study middle school had 248 students. Each grade level had its own floor for core classes in a three-story building with exploratory classrooms and physical education classrooms shared with the high school that was housed in the same building. Each grade level had four core teachers, one for each subject (reading, math, social studies, and science) who taught all students in that grade.

This study used mixed-methods research with both quantitative and qualitative

analysis. The purpose of using a mixed-methods approach was to triangulate data to increase validity by using multiple constructs in different ways (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). The quantitative data consisted of a student survey, CAIMI (Gottfried, 1986), and a transition graph completed by sixth-grade teachers throughout the transition program. The reason for using quantitative data was to obtain statistics through a student survey and to obtain a numerical analysis of the progression of learning middle school processes through a transition graph. The qualitative data consisted of three student focus groups, four teacher interviews, and an administrator interview with the study school's lead teacher. The reason for using qualitative data was to obtain multiple perspectives from students, teachers, and an administrator to organize themes about motivation and a middle school transition program.

The researcher began by administering CAIMI to 57 current sixth graders at the study middle school. Fifty-two of the surveys were complete and usable. These data provided quantitative raw scale scores for motivation to learn reading, math, social studies, science, and general orientation toward learning. Raw scores were analyzed by minimum score, maximum score, range, mean, standard deviation, median, and mode. Raw scores were used to obtain corresponding *t* scores and percentages. *T* scores were used to investigate the comparison of motivational strength across the core areas and to determine if differences were due to chance fluctuations or to actual motivational differences across the five scales.

To strengthen data triangulation for validity and reliability, the researcher conducted three student focus groups, four core teacher interviews, and an administrator interview. The three student focus groups contained 17 students, six students each in two of the groups and five students in a third group. The four teacher interviews were with

the four sixth-grade teachers who teach the four core subjects to all sixth-grade students each day. The administrator interview was completed with the lead teacher at the middle school who used to teach sixth grade and is now in charge of sixth-grade curriculum. Each focus group and interview was digitally recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes. Individual responses were coded using the conceptual framework of Akos et al.'s (2005) three adolescent concerns: academic, procedural, and social concerns. Those themes were distributed into smaller classifications.

To complete the triangulation of data, the researcher examined the transition graph. This graph is completed each day by sixth-grade teachers. The transition graph shows daily points equating to mastery of middle school procedures.

Research Questions

Replicating by extension Sealy's (2012) study, the researcher used the following research questions.

1. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading?
2. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math?
3. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn social studies?
4. How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science?
5. How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning?

The results are discussed using the conceptual framework from Akos et al. (2005)

first. Results continue with the specifics of the transition program and student academic intrinsic motivation. Finally, the results address the four core areas and general orientation to learning in the research questions.

These findings represent results from CAIMI, three student focus groups, four core teacher interviews, an administrator interview, and an examination of the transition graph. The summaries represent all quantitative findings from surveys and the transition graph and all qualitative findings from students, teachers, and the lead teacher. These findings will address the perceived impact of the middle school transition program on student academic intrinsic motivation to learn reading, math, social studies, science, and general orientation to learning. The researcher will produce recommendations to enhance student intrinsic motivation based on these findings.

Summary of Academic, Procedural, and Social Results

Students, teachers, and the lead teacher all agreed that the transition program eased the academic, procedural, and social transitions to middle school. For academics, eight students in the focus group revealed that grades were a motivating factor for them. One student affirmed, “I also wanted to get the presidential academic award.” One student revealed that a parent told her, “If you keep making these grades then you'll be able to get farther.” When asked what has motivated you this year about your school learning, another student disclosed, “Grades, because if I don’t get good grades, I will get stuff taken away at home.”

All four core teachers answered “yes” when asked if the transition program helped students academically. One teacher confided,

> Before we started doing the transition program, students would just come in, and it is a big shock for them from elementary to middle school. They're used to

> things being a lot more spoon-fed to them, and in middle school, it's a lot more independent, and we are challenging them to grow as individuals, and the transition program really helps them get squared away and realize what they need to do to be successful academically. (D.M., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

Another teacher added,

> I do believe that this program benefits the academic performance of students. Elementary schools do not provide the same freedoms that middle school inherently provide at this level. Students need to be taught the skills that will make them successful not only in middle school but also as adults. For example, time management and responsibility are two important skills that most sixth graders do not have a grasp on. Everything was planned for them in elementary schools. Now we expect them to become more self-reliant and advocate for themselves. (S.H., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

The administrator discussed various ways the study school's transition program affects academics. She articulated, "We emphasize to students and families that we will work closely with them to build each student's capacity to take ownership of his or her learning." She continued by discussing the various meetings that are held with new middle school parents. During these meetings, sixth-grade teachers show parents how to access Parent Portal, the grades program, and Class Dojo, the behavior and communication program.

Two of the teachers made statements that epitomize the first quarter of academics at the study school. One teacher acknowledged, "I notice in my room they have been more motivated to get their work done correctly, and they participate a lot more" because

of the transition program. The other teacher disclosed, "We were just talking about our benchmark data, and we have several success stories." Teachers remarked several times about students having more motivation because of the transition program. Because of the qualitative data, it appears the majority of the students have grown academically.

The researcher decided to see if academic quantitative data matched qualitative data. The researcher compared first-quarter grades in the four core classes with fourth-quarter grades from fifth grade. Table 20 shows this data.

Table 20

Grade Comparison from Fifth Grade to Sixth Grade

Core Class	Positive Growth	No Growth	Negative Growth
Reading	30 (37%)	29 (35.8%)	22 (27.16%)
Math	36 (43.9%)	36 (43.9%)	10 (12.19%)
Social Studies	5 (6.6%)	23 (30.6%)	47 (62.6%)
Science	12 (14.2%)	35 (41.6%)	37 (44%)

According to Table 20, in every category except social studies, the majority of student grades in each subject stayed the same or increased from fifth grade to sixth grade, supporting the qualitative data about academics. Math had the highest amount of positive growth, meaning students had a higher final grade for the first quarter of math in sixth grade than they did in the last quarter of fifth grade. Math had a positive growth of 43.9%. Reading had positive growth for 37% of sixth graders. Social studies had the lowest growth with only five students (6.6%) scoring higher in social studies this year than last year. When combining positive growth with no growth, reading, math, and science had the majority of students performing as well, if not better, this year than last year. Positive growth was not prevalent from fourth grade to fifth grade with the current sixth-grade group. Social studies showed 13% of students with positive growth, 34%

with no growth, and 53% with negative growth from fourth grade to fifth grade. This year, social studies results showed 62.6% of students scoring lower during the first quarter of sixth grade than they did in fifth grade.

The first 9 weeks of each school year, the middle school transition program focuses on teaching the procedures to make students successful. When asked if the middle school transition program helped transition from elementary to middle school, students declared they felt the transition program helped them. One student volunteered, "Yes, definitely. I think it has really helped us with prioritizing because if we understand that Survivor is going to take points away, I'll be like I am not going to do that." Once the researcher reviewed the different activities that are involved in the transition program, 100% of students said it helped them start the year by learning the correct procedures.

Four students mentioned that locks and lockers were challenging tasks for them this year. The lead teacher reiterated, "One of the biggest challenges procedurally for incoming students is learning to deal with a lock or the procedures for opening and closing the locks." The transition program has a component where teachers spend 1 day, each class period, showing students how to open locks and lockers and allowing them time to practice the skill. The next day, one teacher has locker races to help students become more proficient at opening a combination lock and opening his/her locker.

Teachers agreed that the transition program helped students transition procedurally more than any other category. During interviews, teachers spoke about learning procedures 11.7% of the time. The math teacher had never taught sixth grade before this year. She said she did not realize how much training was completed with sixth graders during the first few weeks of school. She commented, "The first six weeks are crucial in how they learn the new ways of what they need to organize." The lead

teacher proclaimed, “Even though our transition program begins in the spring, I would say that the procedural process is most evident the first few weeks of school and is very evident for the majority of the sixth-grade school year.”

Teachers emphasized how all teachers must have the same set of procedures for students to be successful in the middle school. When talking about procedures, teachers mentioned Class Dojo 7.8% and the transition program 4%. One teacher stated,

> Transition is really needed from elementary school to being at a bigger school, so it is a necessity that they learn the procedures and how to be successful because it is the basic training ground for the rest of their school and career: middle school, high school, and then on to college.

The lead teacher disclosed, “To communicate with teachers, the Class Dojo program is implemented . . . and it's also strengthened each student's ability to become an independent successful learner at the middle school level.”

According to the data, learning procedures is the most important aspect of the middle school transition program. Students also said that the transition program helped them socially. Several students mentioned that the transition program helped them talk to more people as the first quarter progressed. One student’s comment encompassed several students’ feelings when she said, “It helped me talk to more people. It helped me talk to more people because like you would talk to people about how many points you had. I think it has really helped us talk to each other” (Personal communication, November 1, 2017). One student confided, “In elementary school, I didn’t have many friends or opportunities to have friends, and now I have like a lot of different friends.” Another student divulged, “Like in elementary school, I was really shy before I got to know you and because of that, I didn’t get to know very many people.” Speaking of his elementary

school class, another student added, “Yeah, it really helped us, because we were so small that we would, like she said, not talk to people because there was only like sixteen or seventeen of us in the whole class.”

In many ways, the teachers agreed with the students. The teachers mentioned student confidence as a result of the transition program in 13.7% of their responses. Teachers and students both agreed that the end-of-summer cookout was a good way to meet students from the other elementary school; however, one student’s suggestion sparked a conversation that proceeded like this.

> Student 1: I feel like it would have been a little more helpful if we had met each other at a couple more dances or something like that. Because the first day of school everyone was like everyone wasn’t talking to each other. That way we would talk to each other.
>
> Student 2: I’m with her because everyone wouldn’t actually talk to each other.
>
> Student 3: I think it would be nice because we would have to talk to each other. It would make it easier to talk to each other [on the first day of school] (personal communication, November 1, 2017).

The lead teacher also had the suggestion,

> I do believe that our former process of hosting the sixth-grade academy prior to the first week of school was a more in-depth interaction time to socialize with students from other schools and teachers. It just gave students more time to get to know each other, especially those students from different feeder schools. (R.W., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

Because of this qualitative data, the researcher would recommend that the study school reinstate the sixth-grade academy at the end of the summer. Both students,

teachers, and the lead teacher agree that activities completed before the school year begins help students transition socially. Not only does a sixth-grade academy give students an opportunity to meet each other, but it also helps procedurally. One of the activities completed at the sixth-grade academy each year was allowing students time to work with locks and lockers. Locks and lockers are primary concerns for the majority of incoming sixth-grade students. The academy would give students time to learn an important procedure, working with locks and lockers, before the stressful first few days of school.

The teachers mentioned the differences between elementary school and middle school during 5.8% of their responses. The one drawback to this year's class, teachers said, was the immaturity. Teachers commented that several students were still having trouble with the maturity that was expected in middle school. Because of these statements, the data show that socially, the transition program helped some students, but some students still need more time to mature.

The researcher coded the focus group responses into two categories: social with students and social with teachers. The students had a lot to say about their teachers. Teachers were seen as a motivating factor in the middle school 30% of the time, second only to grades and twice as much as parents. Students commented how excited the teachers would get over a transition activity and how competitive the teachers were about the activity. Any strategy a teacher can take to make a student feel successful is a benefit to the student during middle school years. Academic and social success builds self-esteem across the transition years (Akos et al., 2005). Teacher motivation about a topic such as the transition program can lead to changes in student behaviors, student emotional engagement, and student intrinsic motivation (Zhang, 2014).

Summary of Transition Results

During Focus Group 1, when asked if the students knew they were participating in a transition program, the students laughed; and one student commented that the teachers "couldn't stop talking about it." The quantitative data from the transition graph overwhelmingly indicates that the transition program was successful this year. Sixth-grade processes are taught the first half of the first quarter. The second half of the first quarter, classes have a contest to see which class has learned processes with fidelity. This year, during the contest portion of the transition program, students accumulated more points per day than any other year since the reconfiguration of the program in 2013. Students this year averaged 365 points per day versus 325 points per day, the second highest average, in 2013. Students scored an average of 40 points higher this year than in years past, and over 100 points higher than the classes in the past 2 years with averages of 235 in 2015 and 217 in 2016.

Data showed that students did not grow in procuring processes as the transition program advanced. The daily average of points during the first week was 377. One of the goals of the program is to have students gain more points each week, proving they understand and complete processes better as the school year progresses. The second week of the transition contest, students averaged 343 points per day. By Week 3, students averaged 386 points per day, the highest average of the contest. Point averages began to decline after Week 3. During Week 4, students averaged 353; and during Week 5 students averaged 320 points per day, the lowest average of the transition contest.

One of the biggest successes in learning procedures during the transition program was in the category of homework. Students began by having 80% of all classes turn in homework the first 2 weeks. The last 3 weeks, students accomplished 100% of classes

turning in homework every day. One teacher mentioned that the principal had changed the policy about homework in the study school this year, stating, "We did not want to penalize quite as rough and hard on homework." This new policy may account for higher points accumulated in the category of homework each day.

Two categories that did not grow during the contest were preparedness and attendance. Preparedness stayed at 20% each week for the entire 5-week contest, which means at least 1 day per week, at least one student in one class was not completely prepared for class. Most of the students whose names appeared on the transition graph had some infraction involving their Chromebook. Several students forgot Chromebooks at home, but most students did not have Chromebooks charged for class first thing in the morning. Sixth grade is the first year students are allowed to take Chromebooks home to complete homework. Students are unaccustomed to Chromebook procedures. Sixth-grade students need and desire structure especially in a new setting such as a middle school where they are unsure of expectations (Santmire, 1990). The researcher would recommend that sixth-grade teachers review Chromebook procedures more carefully and review procedures daily for the first week or more of school to make sure students are completing all necessary procedures for Chromebooks. A nightly Chromebook checklist with items such as charging Chromebook or putting Chromebook in the case would also be helpful for the first weeks of school. Also, Class Dojo is used by all students, parents, and teachers as a communication tool. Teachers could put an announcement on Class Dojo each night for the first week of school to remind students to charge Chromebooks.

Procedures for attendance are very different from elementary school to middle school. At the elementary school, if students are present for a half day, students are counted present for the entire day. For example, at an elementary school, if a student

leaves at 11:30 a.m., they are counted as having attended school for the entire day. If a student leaves middle school at 11:30 a.m., that student will miss the last three classes of the day. Leaving early will result in one absence in each of three classes. For this reason, attendance is always a hard procedure in which to train students. Students who were truant in elementary school typically become even more so after transitioning to middle school (Akos et al. 2005). Attendance requires a student be healthy, but schools also want a student to desire to be present at school. Students are more likely to succeed in classroom academics when they attend school consistently (GreatSchools, 2016). Not only do students need to be trained about attendance, but more importantly, parents need to be trained about attendance. Each year, during the end-of-summer cookout, teachers review the attendance policy with parents. Parents must also sign the school handbook the first week of school which has the attendance policy highlighted. Once again, the researcher would recommend reviewing the attendance policy daily with students during the first week of school or more and place information about the school attendance policy on Class Dojo each night during the first week of school.

Summary of Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation Results

There is a variety of motivating factors for students. One important factor for motivation to learn specific core subjects was the teacher. Teachers are the foundation of motivation (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999). Teachers were seen by 30% of students as a primary source of a student's motivation to learn. Teachers at the beginning of middle school are equipping students with motivation and skills to continue through school (Akos et al., 2005). Sixth-grade students shared that funny teachers who make learning interesting motivated them to want to do well in that class. Students also shared that they appreciated teachers who cared about them and understood when a student was

struggling. Students acknowledged that they appreciated teachers who explained directions slowly or explained multiple ways to solve problems. The focus groups of students mentioned that teachers who took the time to help were a motivating factor for them. During the focus group, one student commented, "Our teachers help us with our work because in elementary school it wasn't nearly as hard or as challenging." Teacher motivation techniques such as fun lesson plans were more motivating than bookwork or worksheets. The students felt that their teachers worked together to plan lessons and to discuss students. When talking about teachers, 42.8% of the time student responses contained the idea of teachers working together.

Students see teachers as helping them grow as middle school students. One student confided, "So I feel like now that the teachers are just constantly reminding you about ways you can get better or Survivor or dojo points." Another student added, "Our teachers are always constantly reminding us of ways we can get better like Survivor and all this stuff." One student summed up teachers by stating, "The teachers do expect you to act like middle schoolers."

When specifically addressing factors that increase and decrease motivation, students overwhelmingly said bookwork was their least favorite activity. One student revealed that many teachers leave book activities as lesson plans when there is a substitute teacher in the class. Seventy-one percent of student responses mentioned either worksheets or notetaking as activities that did not motivate them. Another factor that decreased motivation was computer programs that reinforced daily lessons such as Scoot Pad (100%) in reading and reinforced student levels such as Moby Max (61%) in math. Worksheets and notetaking were also demotivating for students.

Interestingly, one computer program, IXL, had 100% of students agree that it was

motivating. IXL is a math program for computation practice. Students liked the repetition of information and striving to make a better grade as each problem is completed. Another motivating factor according to 100% of the students in the focus group was projects. Students said they were motivated by projects in social studies and science classes.

Grades were seen by students as the biggest motivating factor with 40% of students stating grades affect their motivation in some way. Three students noted that parents insisted upon good grades. Interestingly, when asked how the transition program helps students transition from elementary school to middle school, none of the core teachers nor the lead teacher mentioned the word "grades." Teachers spoke about procedures taught to perform better academically such as time management and prioritizing responsibilities, strategies to become better students, and setting personal goals; but teachers did not focus on grades.

After finding out that grades were the number one motivator of sixth-grade students, the researcher suggested to the sixth-grade teachers to strive to make students as successful as possible during the second quarter of sixth grade. The researcher conveyed to teachers to make sure they gave directions slowly and carefully, consistently reminding students of information and due dates. Teachers were encouraged to pay special attention to students who were not as successful during the first quarter to make sure work was being completed on time and correctly. This advice was also adopted by the seventh-grade team at the study school. As one teacher responded, "It will not work for every student, but if we show students we are trying to make them as successful as possible, it may motivate them to try harder." The researcher would recommend that teachers examine using a special grade policy the first quarter of sixth grade next year,

focusing on making sure no student fails a class, if possible. Success during the first quarter of middle school, such as no failing grades, would motivate students to work harder as the year progresses, especially after the first quarter when activities increase in complexity.

Summary of Research Question Results

Question 1: How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn reading? CAIMI data indicated that among the study group, reading had the lowest motivational scores. Reading motivation on CAIMI was the lowest of the four core subjects. Reading's raw score mean average was 84. An 84 raw score in reading corresponds to a *t* score of 43 and a percentile of 23, the lowest scores of all the categories on CAIMI. The minimum value for reading raw scores was 39, the lowest score of the four subjects. The median of reading raw scores was 86, the lowest median score of the core courses.

When examining motivational bands, reading scored the same as at least one other subject on 46 of the surveys. On six of the surveys, reading's motivational bands were different than other categories. Five of those six surveys scored reading significantly lower than other subjects. Only 24% of students said they gave extra effort in reading compared to 41%, 59%, and 65% extra effort given in science, social studies, and math, respectively.

During the focus groups, only 4% of student responses involved reading. Only one student said she would like to learn more about reading. During the first student focus group, before the researcher completed the debriefing statement, students began to say the thing they wanted to change about sixth grade was to have more independent reading time. Students explained that the reading teacher allowed them to choose their

own books, which was motivating for them, but they wanted more independent reading time scheduled during the school day. The reading teacher addressed this as one of her motivational strategies. She stated that she would "give them books and other reading material on the things that they are interested in."

Interestingly, reading was the only subject not mentioned as having a challenging task. According to research, having challenging tasks is part of intrinsic motivation. In science, one student said learning about atoms was a challenging task. In social studies, seven students mentioned learning states and capitals was a challenging task. Two students stated that learning new math concepts was a challenging task, but no one mentioned anything about reading being challenging. One of the parts to Gottfried's (1985) definition of academic intrinsic motivation involved "the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks" (p. 632). Marzano (2003) offered that success-oriented students are motivated by challenges. Strong et al. (1995) added that students who are intrinsically motivated face challenges with excitement about succeeding at the task.

The reading teacher opined, "I try to encourage students by giving them their personal goals and . . . give them the feedback they need to help to continue their own goals and improving skills." Csikszentmihalyi (as cited in Marzano, 2003) identified four criteria for reaching the fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-actualization: set clear goals that are meaningful; become immersed in accomplishing them; make changes when necessary; and always remember the end goal. The reading teacher helped students identify personal goals to motivate them to persist and master challenges. Many psychologists believe that students are intrinsically motivated when striving to master challenges (Raffini, 1996).

There is a delicate balance between striving to help students succeed in a new

environment and also challenging students to boost intrinsic motivation. The reading teacher begins the year with a novel trilogy called *Island: Survival* to complement the transition program. The novel parallels many of the challenges of facing a new environment, similar to the challenges of facing a new school; however, the novel trilogy is written on a fourth-grade level. The sixth-grade teachers like the novel trilogy because it matches the transition program, but it may not be challenging enough for sixth graders. If the reading teacher began the year with a more difficult novel to challenge students, it may discourage some students because the difficulty level is too hard. The researcher would suggest to the reading teacher to complement *Island: Survival* with short stories on a higher reading level such as nonfiction stories or articles about survival. A short story or article will be a high enough reading level to challenge students but will be short enough to not discourage a student.

The data show that reading has the lowest motivational level for middle school sixth-grade students. The reading teacher felt like reading was a hard subject in which to motivate students because of the "huge reading push" at the elementary school. The researcher contacted the lead teacher at the elementary school to obtain more qualitative data to verify the reading teacher's thoughts (Appendix E). The lead teacher confirmed that every grade level has a 90-minute uninterrupted block of time for reading. In addition to the 90 minutes, kindergarten and second grade have an additional 30 minutes of reading instruction and practice. First grade has an additional 45 minutes of reading instruction and practice. According to this data, students may be oversaturated with reading by the time they reach middle school. Sixth-grade teachers begin the school year with a novel trilogy that corresponds with activities students complete in all four core classes to complement the transition program. The researcher agrees with this strategy.

Students must see activities as important to their daily lives in order to increase intrinsic motivation (Christopher, 2009).

Question 2: How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn math? Math had the highest raw score mean average of all of the categories of CAIMI with 102. This resulted in a *t* score of 49 and a percentage of 48, the third highest *t* score and percentage with social studies and general orientation finishing first and second, respectively. Math had 43 student surveys with motivational bands within the chance fluctuation level and nine student surveys with higher or lower motivational levels. Five of the nine students had a higher motivational band than the majority of other subjects and four students with a lower motivational band than the majority of other subjects.

The second highest percentage of students in the focus group (23.5%) said they would like to learn more about math; however, 11.7% of students interjected that math was a challenging task for them. Sixty-five percent of students said they gave extra effort to math. Each of those students divulged that they gave extra effort in math not because they had to but because they wanted to give extra effort.

During the focus group, students spoke about math 8.6% of the time when they were talking about academics, the third most of all the core classes with social studies (30.4%) and science (13%) ahead of math; however, when students spoke about math, it was always positive with positive comments about the subject and the teacher. One student asserted, “The teacher is amazing. She does a great job.”

The math teacher said that she tries to set a positive tone first thing every day by standing at the door and saying, “Good Morning. I hope you have a good day.” Whitaker (2012) stated that enthusiastic teachers create a positive atmosphere in their

classrooms. The math teacher said she tries to improve motivation by providing "a variety of ability level activities or ability level group activities." Using a variety of teaching strategies such as instructional games raises intrinsic motivation (Engle & Ochoa, as cited in Marzano, 2003). The findings reveal that math is a motivating subject, in part because of the teacher and the way she teaches.

Question 3: How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn social studies? CAIMI data indicated that among the sixth-grade study group, social studies had the highest *t* score, 51, and percentage, 52. Social studies had 38 student surveys that had only chance fluctuations in the motivational bands. Social studies had 14 student surveys where motivational bands were significantly different. Of those 14, 13 of the social studies scores were higher than the majority of the other categories. Thirteen students ranked social studies as being more motivational than the other subjects. Five of the 14 students only had significant differences in motivation in social studies and no other subject.

Besides general orientation to learning, social studies had the highest correlation between it and reading and math, according to the Pearson two-tailed coefficient correlation. Social studies and reading had a correlation of 0.5718675199 which means there is a 57% likelihood that a student who has intrinsic motivation in social studies will also have intrinsic motivation in reading. Social studies and math had a 0.54114884 correlation. Social studies had a lower correlation with science of only 0.2271085436, meaning social studies was not as good a predictor of science motivation. Social studies also had a high correlation with general orientation to learning. High motivation in social studies correlates to general orientation toward school learning 61.9% of the time.

Focus group students mentioned social studies 30.4% of the time while discussing

academics, the highest percentage of any of the academic topics. The high percentage for social studies may have been because of a quiz they recently took on the 50 states and capitals. Forty-one percent of students said that learning state capitals was a challenging task for them; however, seven of the 17 focus group students (41%) mentioned they would like to learn more about social studies.

Fifty-nine percent of focus group students replied that they give extra effort in social studies. Seven students said they wanted to give extra effort to the subject, and three students said they felt like they had to give extra effort to do well in social studies class. One teacher commented that social studies has less emphasis in elementary school, especially in fifth grade where there is a reading, math, and science end-of-grade test.

One teacher relayed that the students find the social studies teacher funny. A student commented, "He is awesome funny, so that's made me want to start paying attention." When asked what he does to motivate students to learn his subject, the social studies teacher replied,

> Passion is what I use to teach social studies. It is imperative for the teacher to be passionate about what they are teaching. If the teacher is passionate then students will notice and buy into what the teacher is doing. Lack of passion and true heartfelt love of the subject sets both the teacher and the student for failure. (S.H., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

The findings reveal that the majority of students are motivated by social studies, and it is at least in part due to the social studies teacher. These findings are supported by earlier research by Zhang (2014), who found that if a teacher is excited about a program, students gain motivation from the teacher, and teacher enthusiasm is a characteristic of effective teachers. Patrick et al. (2010) added that students who are taught with a higher

level of teacher enthusiasm report higher intrinsic motivation. Finally, Marzano (2003) added that "If students are motivated to learn the content in a given subject, their achievement in that subject will most likely be good" (p. 144). This statement was proven by one student who opined about learning states and capitals that, "I wanted to quit halfway, but then, it got me determined to study and work harder." When students are intrinsically motivated, they face challenges and are excited about success (Strong et al., 1995).

When comparing grades from social studies this year in sixth grade to the grades from social studies last year in fifth grade, 62.6% of students had a lower grade in sixth grade. The lead teacher from one of the elementary schools provided the researcher with an elementary schedule (Appendix E). The schedule revealed that time for social studies and science may be less than 45 minutes per day. When comparing this quantitative data to the qualitative data provided by the reading teacher about how social studies is not emphasized at the elementary school and the daily schedule provided by the lead teacher at one of the elementary schools, social studies may not have had adequate time to gather accurate grades for the subject in fifth grade.

Question 4: How does a middle school transition program impact student intrinsic motivation to learn science? The mean average of the raw scores on CAIMI for science was 84. A mean of 84 in science corresponds to a *t* score of 43 and a percentile of 24. Of the four core scores, science ranked third. Science also had the lowest standard deviation (14.070) of the core subjects, so science scores were the closest to the mean throughout the survey. Science had the highest correlation to reading on the Pearson two-tailed coefficient table with a correlation of 0.410044191. The correlations to social studies and math were 22% and 20.5%, respectively.

During the student focus group, science was mentioned 13%, the third most of the four core classes. Only two students said they would like to know more about science during the focus group. Forty-one percent of students said they give extra effort in science class. Students reported that they had only completed one science lab this year even though 47% of students said labs would increase their motivation. When talking about labs, one student stated, "We have only had one, but I would like to do more." Seventy-one percent of students said decreasing motivational factors were worksheets and taking notes. The science teacher revealed that a lot of the first part of the year is spent taking notes so students will be more prepared for labs as the school year progresses.

The science teacher has been in sixth grade at the middle school his entire 10-year teaching career. When asked about motivation in his classroom, he replied,

> I try to get them to realize it's okay to be wrong as long as they're trying and not to be afraid to give an answer because it's not bad to fail sometimes, and I think that's a big hurdle for them to jump over.

According to the data, student motivation in science is less than in social studies and math. One of the reasons science motivation is lower than social studies and math motivation may be because of all the preparation work that must be done, such as notetaking, in order to be prepared for lab work.

Question 5: How does a middle school transition program impact student general orientation toward school learning? General orientation to learning had a raw score mean of 71.5 which corresponds to a *t* score of 50 and a percentage of 50. This *t* score and percentage were the second highest on the CAIMI profile report, second only to social studies. In the Pearson two-tailed coefficient correlation, general orientation to

learning compared most closely to motivation to math with a 0.64330388 correspondence and to social studies with a 0.6194729471 correspondence. Social studies and math were the two most motivating core subjects, according to CAIMI.

Students reported the highest motivating factors for them were grades, teachers, and parents. Forty percent of focus group students reported that grades were a motivating factor for them. Thirty percent of students reported that teachers were a motivating factor for them. Fifteen percent of students reported that parents were a motivating factor for them.

Conclusions

According to the data, of the four core subjects, social studies provides the most motivation for sixth-grade students at the study middle school. Students are motivated in social studies class because of challenging assignments such as memorizing states and capitals. According to Strong et al. (1995), students need assignments that incite curiosity. Students need to see activities as achievable challenges. High-performing schools provide students with challenges to aid student thinking (Simon, 2015).

Social studies was a motivating class for students this year in part because they did not encounter a true social studies class at the elementary school level. This lack of social studies activities at the elementary school level may be the reason why social studies is a class in which students want to give extra effort. Most people find engaging work to be work that stimulates their curiosity, permits them to express their creativity, and fosters positive relationships with others and work at which they are good (Strong et al., 1995).

Because most student grades were lower in sixth-grade social studies than in fifth-grade social studies, motivation does not necessarily translate into greater academic

success; however, greater motivation can translate into better grades, such as in math class.

Math also had high motivational levels for the study school. Math had high motivational levels because the teacher used repetition of concepts in class and the teacher was seen as approachable and listened to student concerns about learning and adapted lessons accordingly.

The math teacher used a repetitive program called IXL to teach math concepts. Students in the sixth grade are near the end of moving from a concrete operational stage to a formal operational stage (McLeod, 2015). Students at this age need the repetition of standard concepts such as multiplication tables but also desire more abstract problems. Teachers need a good balance of practice items that help students feel comfortable as they complete the tasks and problems that will require a student to think beyond his/her normal level of engagement. “Children with higher levels of academic intrinsic motivation should experience task mastery and should therefore perceive that they are more competent in school learning than those with lower levels” (Dweck & Elliott, as cited in Gottfried, 1986, p. 13).

According to student focus group data, students view their math teacher as a person who tries to help alleviate misunderstandings. The math teacher also revealed that she listens to their concerns about math assignments. Students revealed in the focus group that they found their social studies teacher funny. The social studies teacher explained that he tries to show his students his passion for history, so they will develop a passion for history. These pieces of data are important for student intrinsic motivation. There is no replacement for a teacher making a connection with students in a classroom. One of the NFAMGR’s (n.d.) Schools to Watch criteria is developmental responsiveness.

Developmental responsiveness involves supporting each student intellectually, ethically, socially, and physically as they develop (NFAMGR, n.d.). The classroom teacher is the best person to cultivate the kind of relationship with students that can identify needs in these areas. A teacher/student relationship is important because students spend 8 hours a day with teachers. If a positive relationship has been developed, student attitudes will be more positive toward the task. Zhang (2014) revealed that students gain motivation from their teachers. Teachers should take steps to build the foundation of motivation in their students to help students discover the joy of learning (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999).

Teachers who challenge students, give students new and unique curriculum, excite students to want to give extra effort, listen and respond to student concerns, and make a personal connection with students, help to foster motivation in classrooms.

Comparison to the Replicated Study

The researcher presented the data to a group of high school teachers. One of those teachers has taught for 40 years. The teacher group was glad that teachers set the example for motivation in their classrooms but did not think these data translated to high school students in the same manner as they did with middle school students. The researcher then compared the study results with the original study, *Impact of Freshman Academy Experiences on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation* (Sealy, 2012).

When examining CAIMI results overall, high school academic intrinsic motivation levels were lower than middle school intrinsic motivation levels. With the high school students at the original study school, the highest CAIMI percentage of motivation was in English at 38% (Sealy, 2012). The highest percentage in the middle school study was 52% in social studies. Middle school students also showed motivational levels of 50% in general orientation towards learning and 48% in math.

Science and reading had percentages of 24 and 23, respectively.

High school history showed an 18% motivation level in Sealy's (2012) study. Science and math each had 15% motivation in the high school study (Sealy, 2012). Both studies showed the benefits of a transition program. Sealy's study showed that the freshman academy helped ease high school students into ninth grade academically, procedurally, and socially. From the transition graph daily point totals, the current study showed that by focusing on the needs of the upcoming class, a middle school transition program teaches procedures that help students become successful. The current group of sixth-grade students scored more than 100 points better than the 2 previous years' sixth-grade groups.

Finally, in the high school study, Sealy (2012) stated, "Students also clearly pointed out that their teachers directly impacted their intrinsic motivation to learn" (p. 184). The high school focus groups did have some improvements needed for teachers but overall commented that teachers did affect their motivation. According to qualitative data in the replicated study, teacher enthusiasm led students to a higher level of academic intrinsic motivation in the core middle school classes at the study school.

Limitations

There were several limitations which may have affected this study. The findings from this research study were only applicable to the specific study school. No generalizations can be made regarding the other middle schools or the wider educational community. In addition to this limitation, until this year, the researcher had been a member of the sixth-grade team since its inclusion in the study middle school. The researcher has a close working relationship with two of the sixth-grade teachers and has worked in the same school with the other two sixth-grade teachers for several years. The

researcher also worked with the lead teacher when the lead teacher was a sixth-grade teacher. Because of these relationships, teachers in the interviews may have responded in ways that they perceived to be more helpful to the researcher and the study school.

Recommendations for Schools and Future Studies

The researcher proposes the following recommendations to the transition program teachers, administrators, and school. These recommendations could also be used for future studies.

First, use CAIMI as a pretest and a posttest to compare data showing growth of motivation throughout the transition program. Administer CAIMI at the beginning of the school year to determine a pretest raw score mean, *t* score, and percentile in each category. Use these scores to develop a plan to increase motivation throughout the program. Use scores to conference with students and to help students set personal goals which is a step toward greater motivation using Maslow's fifth level of needs-self-actualization (Marzano, 2003). Continue advisor/advisee conferences throughout the transition program. Finally, administer CAIMI again at the end of the first quarter when all of the transition program activities are completed. This second administration will give the teachers a postscore to compare growth from the beginning of the transition program until the completion of transition activities. This growth score can then be used to develop a plan for the rest of the year.

Another future study would be to compare student academic intrinsic motivation to grades. Using student grades in fifth grade to get a baseline, a researcher could compare the rise or fall in grades to motivational bands in each core subject. These grades may be from the first quarter of fifth grade to compare to first quarter of sixth grade, or grades may be gathered from the last quarter of fifth grade to compare how

students ended the previous year to motivation at the beginning of the sixth-grade year. Teachers may also use the final averages for students from fifth grade to get an overall sense of a student's fifth-grade year to compare to how a student begins the sixth-grade year. A researcher could use these grades along with CAIMI motivational bands to develop a list of core areas to target with each student throughout the transitional program. The researcher could use these grades and CAIMI results to develop a plan for the rest of the year after the completion of the transition program.

For future studies, the researcher recommends addressing gender when compared to the procurement of processes during a transition program or motivation levels when beginning middle school. In a 1989 study, Vallerand et al. found that females showed higher levels of intrinsic motivation to know and to experience stimulation (Vallerand, 1992). Males showed higher levels of amotivation, not perceiving connections between actions and outcomes (Vallerand, 1992). Thibert and Karsenti (1996) found there are gender differences in motivation throughout all levels of schooling. Thibert and Karsenti ascertained that starting in sixth grade, females are more self-determined than males. The diversification of boys and girls would increase the scope of the study. Boerma, Mol, and Jolles (2015) found that girls' reading motivation is increased based on teacher perceptions. Motivation levels could also be studied in subjects other than core areas.

The researcher also recommends that further research of intrinsic motivation be broadened to include other subjects. The original study only included the core subjects of reading, math, social studies, science, and general orientation to learning. An extension of this study could also include the effects of a middle school transition program and student academic intrinsic motivation on career and technical classes, fine arts classes, and physical education. Arts-based education can have a great effect on motivation and

self-confidence because these classes give students a place to express and share their work (Moorefield-Lang, 2010). Physical education classes often see higher motivation levels if students see the activities as beneficial (Ntoumanis, 2001). A study about career and technical classes, fine arts classes, and physical education classes may see higher motivational levels because students view these classes as advantageous to their future.

Summary

A transition program does take some time to get set up and to figure out what you are doing; but in the long run, it definitely makes things easier in your classroom, especially

> When you have four or five other teachers that are teaching the same thing in each of their classes as well to getting kids not hearing five separate messages, but all the same message, and then that helps them figure out what needs to be done to be successful individuals at the middle school level. (D.M., personal communication, October 27, 2017)

This quote by the core teacher who has taught sixth grade the longest encompasses the reasons for providing a transition program at the middle school level. The study school tries to improve the transition program each year to help sixth-grade students be more academically successful. This study showed that understanding and learning processes help students with transition. With the results of this study, the transition program can now address student academic intrinsic motivation also which should increase student enjoyment of learning. Teachers learned which computer programs did not motivate students, so they will not be implemented next year. Teachers learned textbook activities did not motivate students; so next year, textbook activities will be updated to provide more interaction and less question and answer items. One sixth-

grade teacher suggested another alternative for textbook lessons would be to pair textbook activities with a meaningful hands-on activity in the classroom. Finally, teachers learned that the enthusiasm they bring to assignments helps build student academic intrinsic motivation. The transitional years are difficult for students for many reasons. Educators should strive to make these years of change successful in every way possible.

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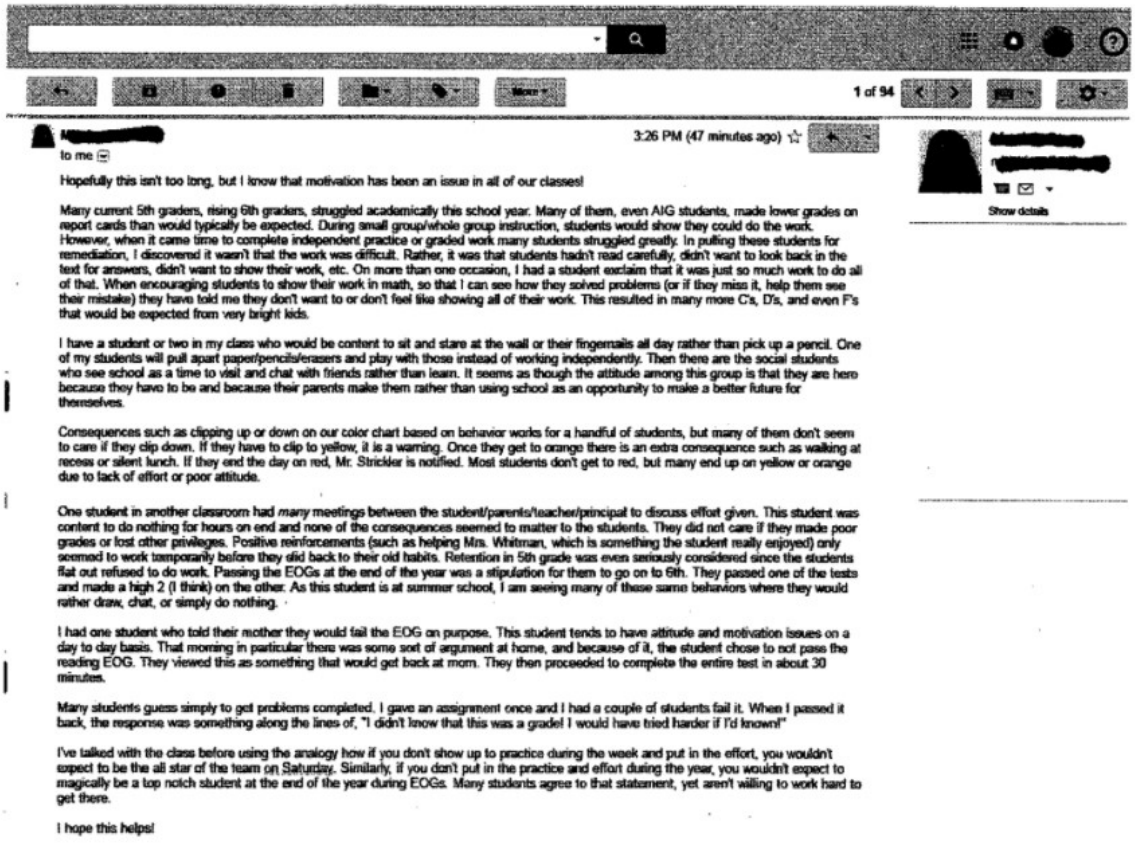
Appendix A

Email from Fifth-Grade Team Leader



1 of 94

[redacted]

3:26 PM (47 minutes ago)

to me

Hopefully this isn't too long, but I know that motivation has been an issue in all of our classes!

Many current 5th graders, rising 6th graders, struggled academically this school year. Many of them, even AIG students, made lower grades on report cards than would typically be expected. During small group/whole group instruction, students would show they could do the work. However, when it came time to complete independent practice or graded work many students struggled greatly. In pulling these students for remediation, I discovered it wasn't that the work was difficult. Rather, it was that students hadn't read carefully, didn't want to look back in the text for answers, didn't want to show their work, etc. On more than one occasion, I had a student exclaim that it was just so much work to do all of that. When encouraging students to show their work in math, so that I can see how they solved problems (or if they miss it, help them see their mistake) they have told me they don't want to or don't feel like showing all of their work. This resulted in many more C's, D's, and even F's that would be expected from very bright kids.

I have a student or two in my class who would be content to sit and stare at the wall or their fingernails all day rather than pick up a pencil. One of my students will pull apart paper/pencils/erasers and play with those instead of working independently. Then there are the social students who see school as a time to visit and chat with friends rather than learn. It seems as though the attitude among this group is that they are here because they have to be and because their parents make them rather than using school as an opportunity to make a better future for themselves.

Consequences such as clipping up or down on our color chart based on behavior works for a handful of students, but many of them don't seem to care if they clip down. If they have to clip to yellow, it is a warning. Once they get to orange there is an extra consequence such as walking at recess or silent lunch. If they end the day on red, Mr. Strickler is notified. Most students don't get to red, but many end up on yellow or orange due to lack of effort or poor attitude.

One student in another classroom had *many* meetings between the student/parents/teacher/principal to discuss effort given. This student was content to do nothing for hours on end and none of the consequences seemed to matter to the students. They did not care if they made poor grades or lost other privileges. Positive reinforcements (such as helping Mrs. Whitman, which is something the student really enjoyed) only seemed to work temporarily before they slid back to their old habits. Retention in 5th grade was even seriously considered since the students flat out refused to do work. Passing the EOGs at the end of the year was a *stipulation* for them to go on to 6th. They passed one of the tests and made a high 2 (I think) on the other. As this student is at summer school, I am seeing many of these same behaviors where they would rather draw, chat, or simply do nothing.

I had one student who told their mother they would fail the EOG on purpose. This student tends to have attitude and motivation issues on a day to day basis. That morning in particular there was some sort of argument at home, and because of it, the student chose to not pass the reading EOG. They viewed this as something that would get back at mom. They then proceeded to complete the entire test in about 30 minutes.

Many students guess simply to get problems completed. I gave an assignment once and I had a couple of students fail it. When I passed it back, the response was something along the lines of, "I didn't know that this was a grade! I would have tried harder if I'd known!"

I've talked with the class before using the analogy how if you don't show up to practice during the week and put in the effort, you wouldn't expect to be the all star of the team on Saturday. Similarly, if you don't put in the practice and effort during the year, you wouldn't expect to magically be a top notch student at the end of the year during EOGs. Many students agree to that statement, yet aren't willing to work hard to get there.

I hope this helps!

[redacted]

Show details

Appendix B

Consent Forms

Gardner-Webb University IRB
Parent and Student Informed Consent Form

Title of Study
An Examination of the Impact of a Middle School Transition Program on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation

Researcher
Missy West, seventh grade teacher at [redacted], Ed C&I Doctoral Candidate, Gardner-Webb University

Purpose

The purpose of the research study is to examine how a transition program that teaches procedures may lead to academic success which increases academic intrinsic motivation in the four core classes and toward school in general.

Procedure

My study will consist of a student survey, the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI) (Gottfried, 1985) and three student focus groups. Students will be asked to complete the 44 question CAIMI survey. Each focus group will be digitally taped and transcribed. My study does not involve deception.

Time Required

It is anticipated that the study will require about 30 minutes of a student's time for the survey. If the student is chosen for the focus group, that will also require about 30 additional minutes of a student's time.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. The parent or the student has the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. The student also has the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. If the parent or the student choose to withdraw, the parent or student may request that any data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identified state.

Confidentiality

_1. Data will be collected through a student survey. Students will be given the CAIMI at the same time in the same place administered by the researcher. Students will bubble in responses so handwriting cannot be analyzed. All surveys will be stacked together as surveys are collected so there is no way to differentiate students. Individual results will not be reported.

Data will be collected through three student focus groups. All information collected will be completely confidential. No student names or information will be collected or used for this study other than to state permission. No student names or information will be used in the research report.

_2. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked classroom at the study school.

_3. Data will be shredded at the conclusion of the study. Digital tapes will be deleted at the conclusion of the study.

Risks

Some of the student survey or focus group questions may trigger stress. The guidance counselor will be introduced and on-hand to discuss thoughts and feelings with any student needing or asking for assistance throughout the survey or focus group.

The guidance counselor, [redacted], may be contacted at [redacted] ext. [redacted]

Benefits

The study may help RMS to understand how to increase student academic intrinsic motivation through the transition program and the procurement of procedures.

Payment

No payment or incentives will be used during the study.

Right to Withdraw From the Study

The parent or the student has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

How to Withdraw From the Study

If the student wants to withdraw from the survey, the student should tell me they wish to stop. If the student wishes to withdraw from the focus group, the student should tell me to stop the group. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If the parent or student would like to withdraw after materials have been submitted, please contact Missy West at PO Box [redacted].

If you have questions about the study, contact the following individuals.

Missy West, [redacted] ext. [redacted], mwest@tcsnc.org

GWU Faculty Advisor: Dr. [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]@gardner-webb.edu

Department Education Curriculum & Instruction, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC

Voluntary Consent by Participant

Please respond to this letter by checking one or two the following options and signing:

_____ My child and I agree that he/she may participate in the research study SURVEY.

_____ My child and I agree that he/she may participate in the research study FOCUS GROUP if chosen. I understand that this focus group may be audio recorded for purposes of accuracy. The digital recording will be transcribed and deleted.

_____ My child and I agree that he/she may NOT participate in the research study.

Parent Signature _____ Date

_____

Student Signature _____ Date

_____

Thank you for your time.

Gardner-Webb University IRB
Teacher and Administrator Informed Consent Form

Title of Study
An Examination of the Impact of a Middle School Transition Program on Student Academic Intrinsic Motivation

Researcher
Melissa West, seventh grade teacher at [redacted], Ed C&I Doctoral Candidate, Gardner-Webb University

Purpose

The purpose of the research study is to examine how a transition program that teaches procedures may lead to academic success which increases academic intrinsic motivation in the four core classes and toward school in general.

Procedure

My study will consist of a student survey, the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI) (Gottfried, 1985), three student focus groups, and interviews of four core teachers and one administrator. Each interview will be audio taped and transcribed. My study does not involve deception.

Time Required

It is anticipated that the study will require about 30 minutes of your time.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identified state.

Confidentiality

_1. Data will be collected through five teacher/administrator interviews. All information collected will be completely confidential. No teacher names or information will be collected or used for this study other than to state permission. No teacher names or information will be used in the research report.

_2. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked classroom at the study school.

_3. Data will be shredded at the conclusion of the study. Audio tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Risks

There are no anticipated risk or benefits for adults.

Payment

No payment or incentives will be used during the study.

Right to Withdraw From the Study

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

How to Withdraw From the Study

If you want to withdraw from the study, tell me to stop the interview. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact Missy West at PO Box [redacted].

If you have questions about the study, contact the following individuals.

Researcher's Name Melissa West
Researcher Telephone Number [redacted] ext [redacted]
Researcher Email Address [redacted]
Faculty Advisor Name Dr. [redacted]
Department Education Curriculum & Instruction
Gardner-Webb University
Boiling Springs, NC 28017
Faculty Advisor Telephone Number [redacted]
Faculty Advisor Email Address [redacted]@gardner-webb.edu

Voluntary Consent by Participant

Please respond to this letter by signing one of the following options.

_____I agree to participate in the study and the interview session. I understand that this interview may be audio recorded for purposes of accuracy. The audio recording will be transcribed and destroyed.

_____ I do not agree to participate in the study and interview session.

_____ Date: _____

Participant Printed Name

_____ Date: _____

Participant Signature

You will receive a copy of this form for your records. Thank you for your time.

Appendix C

Survivor Transition Graph

0	Attendance/ Absences (100pts)	Tardies/Early Dismissal (50pts)	All Materials/ Not Prepared (100pts)	No HW/ CW (100pts)	Leaving Class (50pts)	No LD, ISS, OSS (100pts/day, +500 bonus/week)	Bonus Points	Total Points
9/25/2017	CH, HA, CA, BI		AN, KA		BR, BI, AN, TN, MR, AU	ML		M- 350/ G -250/ C-400
9/26/2017	BL, LO, NC, LK		WY- CB Not Charge, ET- No Charge, NT- No Charge, AL- No CB			ML, KA, WI- sent to BB		G~400/ C- 300, M- 500
9/27/2017		MC, AL, BL				BL and NT sent to the black bench.		G~350/ C- 400, M- 500
9/28/2017	OL	CA, MR	CO- No Pencil, CY- No Pencil		CO, CR			G~500/ C-350, M- 250
9/29/2017		CA, KA, ML	OL, CO, KE, MD, DN, EM, LO	LO	CJ, OL, CO, KE, MD, DN, EM, LO	MR, CA		G~400/ C- 500, M- 200
10/2/2017	KF, AL, HN	CA, OL, AL	MO- CB Charge, TA, MD, HM, FI, GR, RY, AU, MO, CA, CO		EM, CR	GB, ML		G~150, M - 350, C- 250
10/3/2017	AL, AD	KS, TN, FI (Late to M), EM (Late to M)	AN, NK (no cb)	HH,ML, KV, BW, OL	WY,MR,	CJ (Lying)		G~300/ C- 300, M- 250
10/4/2017						JS(ISS)		G-400/ C- 500, M- 500
10/5/2017	KF, CO, HH, AU, ML, MR,	OL	M 1st- CB not charged, AL		CO/EM /TN	MD		C- 450/ G~400, M- 250

10/6/2017	AU, MOET, CO, JF	SS, OL	FI-Locker, TS-Locker, MR, TN		MR, CF, AE, WY, CO, CA, DM, LG	MD	M+500 No LD/ISS	C-(+500) 1000/ G~ 350, M200
10/9/2017	KE, KY, GR, ML	CH, CO, SS	JS, GB, HP, RY, AL, EB, AL, AD		DT, MR		G/50 pts	G~500, M 200 C- 450
10/10/2017	ML					BN sent to black bench		Morgan-400 / Green~ 400 Cook-500
10/11/2017	ML		DN (CB not charged)			BN sent to black bench		M- 300/ G 400 C- 500
10/12/2017	ML, CA	DM	BW(CB not charged), CO- no pencil, AU- no lab papers, AN, KA, HP, DM, AN, TN			BN ISS		M- 300 C- 450 G 250
10/13/2017	AU, LG, BL, MK, KY, KS	ML	MO		WM		M-BOnus 500 no ISS/LD for the week C-500	M- 400 C- 900 G 350
10/16/2017	CA, HH, ML, EM, BK		CO, BL, AN		BR, BD, MR, GB, AN, BL	BL, AL, OV		M- 200 C- 500 G 250
10/17/2017	BK		AN, GB		AN			M- 500 C- 400 G -350
10/18/2017	BK, KY							M-400 C- 500 G-350

10/19/2017	AL, AW		EB, JD, ML, AN		CR, BR,CO, CF	CO	M-500, H-600, G-400, C-400	M - 250 C- 750 (including bonus points) G-700
10/20/2017	CN, CR, TN, AL		TS, AU, JF, EI, M 1st		GT, AM, CJ, JF	CB	M 325, C 325, G 275, H 200 C- no LD bonus (500)	M- 400 C- 1025 G350
10/23/2017	MRM, AD	PR	LK, BR			CO		G350 C 500, M 300
10/24/2017	MRM, AW, PF, ML	EB, AL, PF, ML, RY,	MR		RY, SS, EM, CR, BR	CO, MR, AU, MD		C- 350, M- 100
10/25/2017						CO	M- 50	

Appendix D

Focus Group and Interview Questions

Student Focus Group Questions

1. Do you know that you are participating in a middle school transition program this year? If so, how did you know?

Debrief continued: "The middle school transition program had lots of activities such as teaching the procedures to be successful in middle school, the transition graph that your teachers filled out every period, contests throughout the quarter, and of course, Survivor Day."

2. Do you think your school experiences this year have been different than those experiences of students who were not a part of a middle school transition program? If so, how?

3. Do you believe the middle school transition program has helped you transition from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways? (To help you answer, think about the following changes you may have encountered this year when you entered middle school: changes in academics/ course requirements/ changes in school procedures/ rules, and/or changes in the social/friends aspect.)

4. Tell me what subject(s) you'd like to learn more about. Why do you want to learn more about this/these subject(s)? Can you give me an example from this school year?

5. Tell me about a challenging task that you've done this year. Did you want to quit or stick with it? Explain.

6. In general, what has motivated you this year about your school learning?

7. Do you believe that the adults in the middle school transition program care about you, the students? Can you give me examples of why or why not?

8. Do you think your middle school transition teachers work together to plan their lessons? If so, how do you know?

9. Do you think your middle school transition teachers talk to each other about you, their students? If so, in what way(s)?

Teacher/Administrator Interview Debrief:

"Today, I will ask you a series of questions about the middle school transition program at this school as part of a research study I am conducting. You may skip any question that causes you discomfort. You may opt out of this study at any time during the research process. Participation in this study is

voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, your data which has been collected will be destroyed unless it is in a de-identified state. All information collected will be completely confidential. No teacher names or information will be collected or used for this study other than to state permission. No teacher names or information will be used in the research report. If you want to withdraw from the study, tell me to stop the interview. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact Missy West at PO Box 1084, Rosman NC. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Please share your understandings of a middle school transition program.
2. Describe the sixth-grade transition program at this school.
3. Do you think this transition program helps students transition academically from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
4. Do you think this transition program helps students transition procedurally from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
5. Do you think this transition program helps students transition socially from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
6. Describe what you do as a teacher to impact student motivation to learn your subject matter (include how you get your students to stick with the learning and not give up, especially with difficult or challenging tasks/ assignments).
7. As a teacher in this middle school transition program, how does what you do differ from what other teachers do in classrooms?
8. Did you receive or participate in professional learning to support you in teaching in this middle school transition program? If so, please describe.

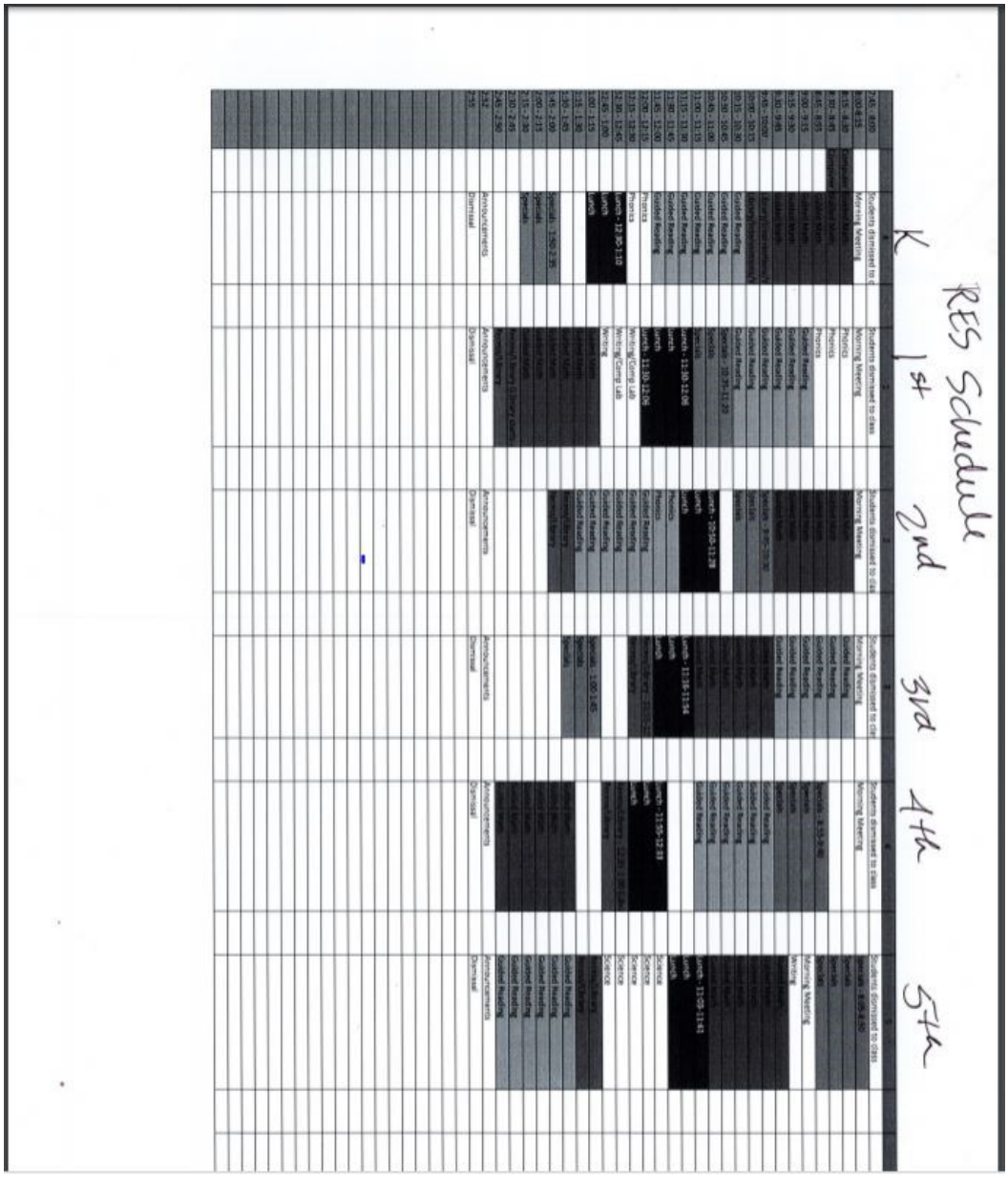
Administrator Interview Questions

1. Please share your understanding of a middle school transition program.
2. Describe the middle school transition program of this school; include the history of its development if possible.

3. Do you think this transition program helps students transition academically from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
4. Do you think this transition program helps students transition procedurally from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
5. Do you think this transition program helps students transition socially from elementary school to middle school? If so, in what ways?
6. Describe what the teachers in the middle school transition program do to impact their students' motivation to learn "their" subject? (Include what they do to get their students to stick with the learning and not give up, especially with difficult or challenging tasks/ assignments.)

Appendix E

Example of an Elementary School Schedule


RES Schedule
K
1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th