

THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL, ACADEMIC, AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS OF AN ACHIEVABLE DREAM ON STUDENTS DURING THEIR
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Amy L. Runge

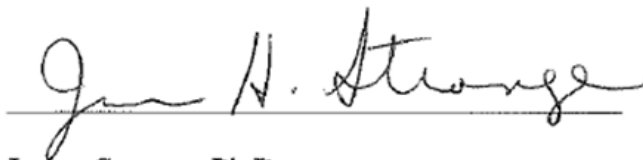
April 2016

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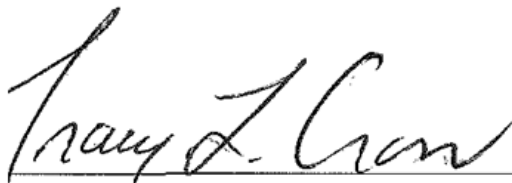
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Madison Francis Runge. Madison, may you always grow up understanding the value of education, develop a life-long love of learning, and never be afraid of a challenge. Thank you for your ability to make me laugh, play, enjoy life, and not take everything so seriously. You bring me so much joy, and your zest for life is inspiring. I love you.

Thank you to my husband, Brian, for his patience in this process. Thank you to my mother, Frankie W. Lawrence (my editor throughout my college career), who has taught me persistence, patience, and dedication take you far in life. You were my rock, and you were my constant cheerleader. I could not do this without you. Thank you to my father, the late George F. Lawrence, for introducing me to The College of William & Mary at such a young age. You were always my strength, and you taught me to never take no for an answer. Thank you to my brother, Scotty Lawrence, for reading my papers and offering advice and making me laugh throughout every endeavor and obstacle.

I would like to thank Cyndy Hall and Lee Vreeland. Thank you, Cyndy for great advice and words of wisdom to keep me going. Thank you for introducing me to your father, Dr. Ken Hall. He opened my eyes to the world of education. Thank you, Lee for being a great friend and signing up for every class with me. Our long car rides, our study sessions, and our last push to finish will be engrained in my mind forever. I'm glad it was with you. We did it.

Finally, thank you An Achievable Dream for allowing me time to work on this degree and being so flexible during critical times.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special acknowledgements to Dr. James Stronge, my dissertation committee chair, for taking time out of his busy days, including weekends and evenings, to provide valuable feedback and assistance. Special thanks to my dissertation committee members Dr. Christopher Gareis and Dr. Tracy Cross for providing guidance and valuable assistance through this process. Thank you Wendy Pearson for always being so personable and going the extra mile to help schedule classes and being so dedicated during my years at William & Mary. Thank you, Jess Hensch, for leading me to the finish line with your dissertation skills during crunch time.

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ABSTRACT

This evaluation case study explores the impact of the An Achievable Dream social, academic, and moral program on college student's performance in college. Through this study, the researcher was able to provide insight on college student and college student advocates perceptions of An Achievable Dream's social, academic, and moral program's impact on these college students' college experience. Triangulation of data involved using college student advocate's interviews, college student's surveys, and additional artifacts (grade point averages and data regarding length of time college student advocates have been working with the students). Five themes emerged as significant in describing the college student performance at college. First, in the areas of social skills, respect and active, were viewed as characteristics of the students who were seen as performing favorably. Second, in the areas of academic skills, growth and excel were words repeated when describing the students who were performing favorably. Third, respect and strong character were vocabulary used in the interview responses to describe college students who prevailed even during challenging times. Additional qualitative and quantitative research should further explore the effectiveness of the holistic approach to preparing K-12 students for college success.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Our nation continues to wage campaigns against the nearly insurmountable challenges many students face on a daily basis. To fully comprehend the obstacles associated with achieving success in post-secondary education and in career aspirations, one must first understand the students' radically diverse social economic statuses, family dynamics, educational experiences and resources, parental education levels, and future expectations. "Changes in racial/ethnic composition, immigration, family composition, and age structure are linked to rising income inequality, but they are not the primary or root causes. Increasingly, education separates those at the top from those at the bottom" (Mather & Jarosz, 2014, p. 12). As research efforts are continued, an alarming amount of evidence is produced that links poverty to educational achievements.

Rising poverty levels have reduced opportunities for millions of children compared with previous generations. Today, children who are born to families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution have a 36 percent chance of remaining stuck in that same income quintile when they reach adulthood. For African American children born in the bottom income quintile, the figure is 51 percent.

(Mather & Jarosz, 2014, p. 3)

One also must understand that through these differences come a number of barriers that can be overcome only if the right focus is implemented and practiced.

To improve students' processing capacity, you must give them support as you challenge them. Every successful school intervention for low-SES kids features some variation on the theme of rebuilding the operating system and honing the fewest processes that matter most to the learning process. Such interventions enrich students. (Jensen, 2009, p. 56)

Only then can you integrate educational components to assist students in their quests for success.

Within a system that does not offer additional intervention to ensure the success of students with multiple risk factors, a generation of students completely unprepared to be successful in their adult endeavors is finally being recognized as a national crisis. In an effort to overcome this crisis, the evolution of teaching the whole child has now become the basis for ensuring that our national educational goals are met.

We have now moved into an era of college readiness, where a broad range of actors—the Obama administration, multi-state collaboratives, local policymakers, major foundations, researchers, and community-based organization—have reached considerable agreement that ensuring that all young people are prepared to succeed in college, whether or not they decide to pursue that path, is a key strategy for the United States to remain globally competitive. There is also emerging research literature that recognizes that solid academic preparation, while necessary, is not sufficient to succeed in college. Both academic tenacity and college knowledge arm students with the “soft” skills necessary to understand the process for accessing higher education and the cognitive and meta-cognitive

strategies, like persistence, that allow students to succeed in the college environment. (Mishook, 2012, p. 2)

This push is two-fold. First, our academic system is under attack both internally and externally. Internally there are tremendous pressures placed on the educators to close the achievement gap, while externally, organizations and businesses are also pressuring school districts to produce better prepared, globally competitive students.

Our nation's business community has raised the bar regarding expectations that are being placed upon the 21st Century learner.

America's students are facing increasing competition for meaningful employment from candidates around the world as more people in more countries are becoming more highly educated. At the same time, employers' expectations for the level of education and training needed for entry level jobs have increased (VDOE, 2010, p. 3).

A mastery of social skills, as well as a mastery of knowledge, has now become the task assigned to K-12 educators. Second, there is a louder cry to provide students who are labeled as "at-risk" (those who carry social risk factors) with skills to close the gap on areas of social competency. These social risk factors come in a variety of forms and have been ultimately determined by society. To illustrate, certain social risk factors can hold a child back from being productive and successful in future endeavors. Growing up in a single family home or a grandparent run household are just a few of the variables held by society deemed at risk. "This is about holding ourselves accountable at every level for ensuring that all children—and especially those most at risk—have the opportunity to succeed and compete" ("New flexibility," 2010, para.12). However, recognizing this

urgency to prepare students for post-secondary achievement (whether college or career) and implementing what is required to get students to this high bar that has been set by our economic needs and college expectations are two separate conundrums. However, understanding the tools to prepare students and helping students reach the high bar necessary for success will only be achieved if educators are able to identify and implement attributes that lead to success. For instance, “Self-direction, collaboration, creativity, and innovation have now become the drivers of student success” (Groff, 2013, p. 1). As qualified by the evaluation completed The College of William and Mary evaluation team (McLaughlin, Stronge, Grant, Ward, Williams, Trump, 2010), providing students with the building blocks, those driven by social and moral components, will directly impact students who do not bring these critical skills to the table. For students it is important that they have a connection to a new concept. “Exposure to varied examples before their understanding of a concept becomes more abstract and they can successfully apply that understanding to novel situations” (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009, p. 17). In other words, introducing students at an early age to situations that they may encounter later in life (building a foundation) allows students time to apply the concepts over time.

Program Description

In 1992, Walter Segaloff, a renowned business owner, entrepreneur, and community advocate, decided it was time to act as the change agent for students impacted by poverty and potential crime-laden areas. His focus was to reach students throughout Newport News, Virginia. The city of Newport News is part of the peninsula community on the east coast of Virginia. “The Newport News Public Schools division educates approximately 29,400 children. Broken down into subgroups, there are approximately

15,883 black students, 7,545 white students, and 3,752 Hispanic students” (AAD, 2015a)

After years of recognizing the shortcomings of potential employees interviewing for positions in his businesses, Walter Segaloff realized that academics, alone, was not serving young minds as they prepared for the workforce. Young employees were not ready for the responsibilities of employment (neither socially, morally nor professionally) as many came to work late, could not address a community with diverse views, and had difficulty upholding the standards of how to succeed in business. Consequently, individuals were fired and the interview process began again (AAD, 2015a).

Walter Segaloff’s determination to develop a program to target children with the highest risk factors (impoverishment, living in areas of depression, and having association with family members who had criminal backgrounds) became his obsession. His ultimate goal was to implement a culture of change while focusing on academics, the social and moral components dictated by society’s code of conduct, building relationships within the community, and establishing the understanding that all students can be successful. To accomplish this goal, Walter Segaloff wanted to stress the importance of academia coupled with multifaceted experiences that included field trips, introduction to tennis and sportsmanship, and the surrounding professionals who could spend additional time assisting students who struggled academically. These were the keys to “building a dam in an effort to prevent children from being carried away with the flow toward failure” (AAD, 2015a, p. 3).

As the community and business leaders throughout the city and abroad united in support, a partnership developed between Walter Segaloff and Newport News Public Schools. In 1994 an “extended day” was implemented for all students in grades 3-5 at

Dunbar-Erwin Elementary School located in the East End of Newport News, Virginia. The extended day provided an extra two hours to enhance the learning environment by introducing students to those concepts of the SAME (social, academic, and moral education) model. The additional hours enabled educators to provide opportunities for students to develop in many other areas (morals, ethics, etiquette, conflict resolution, healthy living, and financial know-how). And in 1995 An Achievable Dream added grades 6-8 at Dunbar-Erwin (AAD, 2015a).

After grade eight, students of An Achievable Dream spread out to the five Newport News high schools. Although the students left with a variety of social skills necessary to sustain life as high school students, those skills were not always enough, as examined in the evaluation completed by The College of William and Mary Education Department (McLaughlin, Stronge, Grant, Ward, Williams, & Trump, 2004). Returning back into an environment laden with other students without the same social, academic, and moral skills proved to be counterproductive. The An Achievable Dream students were left to survive on their own (without the safety nets they were accustomed to when they were younger. Prior to entering high school, students were closely monitored. House calls (to include phone calls and home visits) were made immediately upon neglect of the school's attendance policy. During that time, students had strong personal relationships with staff members due to the strong emphasis on family and parent/teacher policies of the program. In addition, students relished their individual accomplishments as the school rallied around all students to perform beyond their own expectations. Unfortunately, this ended as the students entered high school (students left An Achievable Dream and entered their zoned high schools in Newport News). There was no prior knowledge of the

student's background, no commitment to the student's accomplishments, and little understanding of the student's ability to excel with influence. The large student numbers at the high schools prevented teachers and staff from having the same relationships with which An Achievable Dream students had grown accustomed. It became evident that it was imperative to oversee each student's development from beginning to end. In 2007, An Achievable Dream Middle and High School opened, located on Marshall Avenue in Newport News, Virginia. Each year between the years 2007 and 2011 grades were added to complete the new school (AAD, 2015b).

Dropout rates, pregnancy, lack of academic ambition, and loss of direction continued to plague the students who matriculated to the high schools throughout the city. However, the dismal attrition rates were about to change, and a solidifying factor occurred. In 2011, the first graduating class of An Achievable Dream Middle and High School walked across the stage and receive diplomas. This class represented a 100 percent graduation rate. This was not just a huge achievement for the city, but one for the nation as well. "The nation's high school graduation rate is approaching 75 percent, its highest rate in 40 years" (Ebner, 2013, p. 1). This 100% graduation rate continued for the 2012, 2013 and the 2014 An Achievable Dream classes. There were numerous accolades recognizing the significant variables that enabled the students to attain such high achievements. Relationship building between school and family, continued support for students transitioning from middle school into high school, continued encouragement from staff members helping students succeed in Honors and Advanced Placement course work, and additional assistance for students ensuring that graduation credentials were met

were all highly relevant contributors toward the success of An Achievable Dream as it continues to meet the demands of a population of students deemed at risk.

Twenty years after the beginning of An Achievable Dream program, two more paths for this program have begun to take shape. An Achievable Dream has now expanded to a second city, Virginia Beach, Virginia, and although the program takes on a different shape, with a slightly different focus, the main premise will stay true to the course, teaching holistically and educating the whole child. In addition, as students enter post-secondary academic institutions, An Achievable Dream has begun to develop an extensive program to provide further collegiate services to all of their graduates. This assistance is individualized and has taken many forms. A dedicated staff member of An Achievable Dream has been assigned to work with these graduates to ensure that academic, matriculation, financial, and housing assistance are all provided when the need arises.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this evaluation study is to determine whether the current social, academic, and moral components emphasized and taught at An Achievable Dream provide the students entering post-secondary education with useful tools to adapt, persist, and succeed. The results of the study will be used to determine if the content of the curriculum should be changed to better assist students transitioning to college.

Evaluation Questions

This program evaluation is designed to answer three questions. These questions relate directly to the students' and stakeholders' perceptions of the student's growth and success in college.

1. Do key college student advocates believe student graduates from An Achievable Dream meet the SAME (social, academic, and moral education) expectations to be successful in college?
2. Do students believe their needs were met by the social, academic, and moral underpinnings of the program while attending An Achievable Dream?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluations of the An Achievable Dream program's goals based on (a) academic progress in college; (b) how comfortable students felt during their experiences at college; and (c) students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff?

Program Evaluation Model

The skills acquired by the students from the SAME Framework Curriculum will be reviewed using the CIPP Model, with specific focus on evaluating process (program) and product (outcome) elements of the program. Context and input elements will be discussed in Chapter 2, but will not be part of the evaluation process. Graduates of An Achievable Dream and identified college student partners will be surveyed.

The CIPP Model was formulated by Daniel Stufflebeam and his colleagues to show how evaluation could contribute to the decision-making process in program management. CIPP is an acronym for the four types of educational evaluation included in the model: Context evaluation, Input evaluation, Process evaluation, and Product evaluation. "This type of evaluation is tied to a different set of decisions that must be made in planning and operating a program" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 561).

The approaches are designed to provide “arm’s length” evaluations of programs.

When evaluators work more closely with the staff of on-going programs or programs under development, they usually become interested in how they can personally contribute to the process of program management and program development. (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 561)

Through prior program evaluations by the College of William & Mary Education Department (McLaughlin, Stronge, Grant, Ward, Williams, & Trump, 2010), a problem has been identified and input about this on-going national concern illustrates how critical a social, academic, and moral program is for students. In addition, through product evaluation, a determination of program goal achievement will be analyzed.

Focus of the Evaluation

The evaluation focuses on the process and product outcome of the program’s social, academic, and moral curriculum. I will gather feedback from an identified group of students and key college partners in an effort to “determine the extent to which the goals of the program have been achieved” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 262). In particular, I will seek to gain student perceptions regarding how prepared they were for the rigors of college. In addition, I will seek to gain information about student overall academic success from identified college partners.

Evaluation Audiences

The evaluation findings will provide evidence-based information for the purpose of program designer decision-making. The audience most interested in the data obtained and analyzed will be the Vice President of Academics and Student Affairs and the Director of Operations and Student Affairs for An Achievable Dream. These individuals

have the most decision-making authority for this social and moral program content. Program leaders may use evaluation findings to inform program decisions such as continuation of current practice or modification of current practice. Such findings may lead to discussions among corporate partners and college partners to determine the next steps for implementing changes to current practices.

Significance of the Study

Today, earning a high school diploma is no longer a feat that places high school graduates in an optimal position.

The stakes could not be higher. The United States faces the challenges of adapting to the demands of a globalized economy. Jobs have become more specialized and more driven by technology, requiring higher levels of education and training than in the past; research shows that about two-thirds of new jobs require some postsecondary education.(ACT, 2015, p. 3)

However, being accepted into college is still just the beginning of a long endurance struggle to earn a college degree. Students continuously will be challenged by academics, moral fortitude, and ethical decision making, and only those who have tools to overcome obstacles will reach their intended goals.

Attrition rates as high as 20% are common during the freshman year alone. The transition to college is marked by complex challenges in emotional, social, and academic adjustment. Some students find ways to make this transition constructively and adapt to college, whereas others feel overwhelmed and unable to effectively meet the demands of their new roles. (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994, p. 281)

A college student is exposed to many decision-making crossroads—attending parties, completing assignments, joining clubs and campus organizations, and attending class. The more exposure and practice a student has to situations that will be challenging, the better chance the student has to succeed. Eric Jensen’s research (2010) provides evidence that students need exposure to real life scenario’s to eliminate stress levels and anxiety in preparation for future endeavors.

The significance of this study is to gather much needed data necessary for An Achievable Dream stakeholders to make decisions regarding the content of the social, academic, and moral program for the students preparing for post-secondary academia. These stakeholders are comprised of the An Achievable Dream, Inc., Directors, Vice Presidents, and the President. These individuals work together to make decisions about future educational interests for student growth. Decisions will be made to revisit current teachings and if necessary research new ways to provide students with the tools deemed critical for enduring the struggles college students face. As often is typical with a program evaluation, the significance of the study is grounded more in pragmatic and contextual issues rather than more academic significance.

Definitions of Key Terms

Academic Outcomes:

Term to determine perception of success to include GPA and credit accumulation.

An Achievable Dream:

The An Achievable Dream program began as a summer education and tennis program. It developed into a comprehensive K-12 program partnering with Newport

News Public Schools. The program targets an “at-risk” population throughout the entirety of Newport News, VA.

College Student Advocates:

Individuals positioned at each of the five partnership colleges to help guide and assist An Achievable Dream students to becoming college graduates. These individuals are employed by the colleges. These individuals hold varying positions at the college; however, they each play a significant standardized role for the An Achievable Dream graduates attending the college.

Moral Outcomes:

Degree to which students have adopted a moral belief system consistent with the An Achievable Dream mission.

Partnership Colleges:

An Achievable Dream has five partnership schools, including Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Virginia, Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and Virginia Military Institute. Each of the five schools has a unique method of partnering with An Achievable Dream, and all have an identified staff member employed by the colleges to mentor, assist, and provide on-going support to An Achievable Dream graduates (identified as the college student advocates). Additionally, each of the five colleges provides a financial package to assist with tuition.

SAME Curriculum (Social, Academic, and Moral Education) – Implemented in all three schools, at all grade levels. Students learn important skills through a specialized curriculum that includes ethics, etiquette, peaceful conflict resolution, healthy living, financial know-how, and standard business language.

Social Outcomes:

This is how people interact with one another. The component combines teacher and student social responsibilities, to include:

- Adhering to standards of conduct that creates a safe and orderly environment.
- Contributing to school culture.
- Speaking Green – Term used in SAME for standard business language.

Staff and students adhere by the good practices at the school. Role modeling and practice provide an environment full of respect, safety, and structure for learning to take place.

CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature associated with the topic of the importance of providing students a social, academic, and moral education will be coupled with literature to support what helps students successfully complete college. In this chapter, I explore the extensive array of data pertaining to this topic.

The chapter contains four sections. The first section is an overview of the current state of implementation of An Achievable Dream's social, academic, and moral education program. The second section describes how other schools implement similar safeguards for students to grow into college and career-ready citizens. The third section addresses the current state of inequality in the United States. Finally, the fourth section discusses college readiness initiatives and the importance of fixing this problem.

The education focus 20 years ago was to ensure that students earned a high school diploma. Programs were implemented during grammar school years to prepare students for the rigors of graduating from high school and finding work in the industry field. In today's market, a high school diploma is not enough to compete for many jobs.

The earnings gap between young adults with and without bachelor's degrees has stretched to its widest level in nearly half a century. It is a sign of the growing value of a college education despite rising tuition costs. Young adult with just a high-school diploma earned 62 percent of the typical salary of college graduates. That is down from 81 percent in 1965, the earliest year for which comparable data are available. (Yen, 2014, para. 1)

The educational focus is now looking beyond the high school diploma. A post-secondary degree has now become a minimum qualification requirement for most corporations. Preparing young adults for the endurance that seeking a higher degree mandates is now deemed a necessity.

According to statistics on average annual salary, individuals who attend college earn more as a result of their higher levels of education. In fact, college graduates earn more than twice as much as high school graduates. Some studies have found that college graduates with a bachelor's degree earn 80% more per year than those with only a high school degree. (College Board, 2015)

Current Perspective

An Achievable Dream operates the An Achievable Dream Academy (K-5) and An Achievable Dream Middle/High School (6-12) in Newport News, VA; for the 2014-2015 academic school year, the total population of the K-12 program was 1,236 students (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2015). During this same year, Seatack An Achievable Dream in Virginia Beach, VA, had 242 students in grades K-3. The majority of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches; approximately 98% are minority students; 83% are from single-parent homes; and 9% are from no-parent homes

(VDOE, 2015). Most of the students accepted into the program will stay in the program until they complete Grade 12; a student will only be asked to leave the program if he/she does not meet the obligations of the parent/students contract, and less than 1% of the students are deselected from the program each year.

An Achievable Dream (2015a) implements a holistic approach to education referred to as SAME. It is the philosophy of An Achievable Dream that education reform movements in the past have been unsuccessful in changing student outcomes because they have been focused on changing school culture but not the rigor of standards, alignment of curriculum, or instructional strategies (Berger, 2010). Efforts that stop at spelling out the rules of behavior, that are addressing the social component, are not enough; attention must also be paid to the moral element (Berger, 2010). Until students internalize values like respect, compassion and discipline, even the most detailed code of conduct will remain external to them and school will remain dependent on surveillance and sanctions, benign or totalitarian, for enforcement (Berger, 2010).

The An Achievable Dream's social, academic, and moral education program aims to directly affect and meet the needs of every student preparing for post-secondary education. However, are the components having lasting effects on college success?

Having the skills and knowledge to enter and succeed in a post-secondary institution is now the standard to which our young people are being held, and where the opportunities for economic growth lie in the future. Thus, we have now moved into an era of college readiness, where a broad range of actors--the Obama administration, multi-state collaborators, local policymakers, major foundations, researchers, and community-based organization--have reached considerable

agreement that ensuring all young people are prepared to succeed in college.

Whether or not they decide to pursue that path is a key strategy for the United States to remain globally competitive. (Mishook, 2012, p. 2)

The Virginia Standards of Learning, as well as the other set of standards outlined by the states across the nation, have imposed guidelines and expectations dictating how much a student should know at points in their learning career. An Achievable Dream implements the identical standards while adding other tools to assess lifelong learning successes. Years before, there was a push from the states to ensure that schools produced students who were college, career, and citizen ready. These skills were an essential part of an overall philosophy that students needed these skills in order to be successful during their grade-level years and be prepared for post-high school endeavors.

The Social, Academic, Moral, Education framework model was incorporated into the An Achievable Dream education model in 1998. The three components consist of the following attributes.

Social Component

- Setting standards of conduct that create a safe, orderly environment.
- Getting teachers to work together to improve schools.
- Fostering a school culture that breeds responsibility.

Academic Component

- Aligning curriculum with standards and assessments.
- Using achievement data to tailor instruction to student's needs.
- Selecting effective instructional methods and schedules.

Moral Component

- Institutionalizing high expectations of students and teachers.
- Teaching character education and resolution.
- Adding the missing link that values students' need to be good citizens.
- Forging the vision and values that inspire teachers.

The above key program attributes remain an integral part of the students' daily activities.

The following programs are scheduled for all students during the year beginning in second and third grade:

Speaking Green

Students learn why speaking a standard business language (one that represents money) is important when communicating with individuals on interviews, on jobs, with the public, addressing teachers or staff members, and anyone with whom they may formally encounter. Students practice code switching from how they may talk in different arenas such as a basketball court, a tennis court, or on a football field versus talking to a police officer about directions to a particular destination or asking a teacher for assistance on an assignment.

Etiquette

Students are taught the proper way to use eating utensils at a five- course table setting. Young men practice opening the door and pulling out a chair for young ladies. In addition, students learn how to set a table, which utensil to use during the different courses, how to eat soup, and how to ask for additional menu items from a waiter. This

course is followed a cumulating activity where students go to a restaurant where they apply their new knowledge.

Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Many students of poverty face situations where violence becomes their means of handling a misunderstanding or a disagreement. Although there is no way to eliminate how some issues are handled after school as a means of survival, An Achievable Dream strives to provide students with tools to overcome most issues that may arise among their peers during the course of the day. Conflict Resolution strategies have proven to provide students with the challenges of saving face or “punking out” during moments of high anxiety. Each student has an identified staff member (mentor) with whom they have become close and feels a sense of ease where they can go to calm down. Or a student may use a certain key phrase they may use with their teacher to indicate a problem is about to occur and an intervention is necessary. These strategies become important factors in creating a culture of trust and safety. Police officers, sheriffs, juvenile detention agents, community leaders, and staff members talk to students about the importance of making good decisions and the ramifications of making poor decisions.

Healthy Living

Students are taught the importance of eating a nutritional diet and getting enough sleep before coming to learn.

Financial Know How

The foundation of basic knowledge about financial services, saving, investing, and credit are introduced to all students in grades K-12. Activities include learning about money basics for K-2 (identifying money, value of money, and the first steps towards

financial literacy; to activities of grades 3-5) distinguishing between wants and needs, tracking expenses, and saving money; learning about balancing financial needs and wants in grades 6-8; high school activities that include financial concepts used in real life examples and exposure to banking partners and access.

Ethics

Making the right decision when no one is looking. Students begin to think about their actions based on whether they would do something if someone was there to see, or not.

In addition to the social, academic, and moral program, students at An Achievable Dream are exposed to multiple career partners. Local corporations throughout Newport News, Virginia, have partnered with An Achievable Dream to provide financial assistance and corporate know-how for the students in grades 6-12. W. M. Jordan, Riverside Hospital, Northrop Grumman Newport News Shipbuilding, Jefferson Labs, and Smithfield Foods work with every student, in a weekly rotation, to help instill the skills an individual would need to enter the workforce. Understanding dress expectations, language expectations, timeliness, teamwork, and educational expectations are just a few of the topics reviewed each year. This program is called What It Takes.

An Achievable Dream's ultimate mission is to address the skills, traits, and characteristics children need for school readiness and success in life. However creating a culture rich in the concepts of Speaking Green, Etiquette, Peaceful Conflict Resolution, Healthy Living, and Financial Know-How does not directly relate to the knowledge required for national standardized testing, they are tools necessary to make good decisions to prevent loss of time during an instructional day. These SAME skills create a

platform for introducing students to the qualities associated with what it takes to succeed in all aspects of life. Success becomes bigger than test scores. Once a student completes the program, he/she is eligible to receive an annual scholarship from the An Achievable Dream foundation of \$2000 per year (AAD, 2015b). This scholarship can be used for college or for other career enhancing training.

A Review of Programs Similar to An Achievable Dream

The An Achievable Dream program is unique; however, there are other schools in the country that also build into their program a social and moral component. KIPP Academy and Success Academy are two schools who share a similar belief system in teaching the whole child, much like An Achievable Dream. Although there are differences among the schools, a strong character education program is shared by all.

Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP).

The KIPP Academies launched its first school in Houston, Texas, in 1995. What started as a formal proposal to the Houston district officials to launch a self-contained program for fifth graders stressing high expectations, hard work, classes from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, half-day classes on Saturdays, and parent and student contracts; turned into the large education organization we know today. KIPP schools emphasized the “explicit and sustained commitments by students, teachers, and parents” (Leschly, 2003, p.7). The KIPP schools answered the problem of tough discipline with strong positive incentives such as field trip opportunities, sporting events, and historical site visits.

KIPP is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public charter schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for

success in college and in life. There are currently 125 KIPP schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 41,000 students. KIPP builds a partnership among parents, students, and teachers that puts learning first. By providing committed educators (those dedicated to the education profession to do whatever it takes to help students succeed, those who have a belief system that all students can learn, and those who commit themselves to working long hours and more and a five-day week), more time in school learning, and a strong culture of achievement, KIPP is helping all students climb the mountain to and through college. Every day, KIPP students across the nation are proving that demographics do not define destiny. More than 87% of their students are from low-income families and eligible for the federal free or reduced-price meals program, and 95% are African American or Latino. Nationally, more than 90% of KIPP middle school students have graduated high school, and more than 80% of KIPP alumni have gone on to college (KIPP, 2013).

KIPP schools share a core set of operating principles known as the Five Pillars. These pillars are as follows:

High Expectations

KIPP schools have clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on the students' backgrounds. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior (KIPP, 2013).

Choice and Commitment

Students, their parents, and the faculty of each KIPP school choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend a KIPP school. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success (KIPP, 2013).

More Time

KIPP schools know that there are no shortcuts when it comes to success in academics and life. With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular experiences (KIPP, 2013).

Power to Lead

The principals of KIPP schools are effective academic and organizational leaders who understand that great schools require great leaders. They have control over their school budgets and personnel. They are free to swiftly move dollars or make staffing changes, allowing them maximum effectiveness in helping students learn (KIPP, 2013).

KIPP not only supports students on their journeys to college, but also supports them while they work towards college graduation. KIPP counselors visit students on their college campuses, as well as keep in touch via email and phone. Counselors discuss academic progress, financial aid, social pressures, and internship and career options. During holidays and breaks, KIPP hosts events for “KIPPsters” while they are back in their hometowns. At graduation, KIPP students reflect on their hard work and often credit their teachers and KIPP counselors for their support. In addition to the rigorous academic

prep, KIPP offers a range of services and implements them in unique ways based on local student needs (KIPP, 2013).

KIPP believes close partnerships with higher education institutions are key opportunities for continued progress and learning. Their ultimate goal is to identify strategies that can be implemented by educational institutions to help close the achievement gap for all first-generation students and students of color. A KIPP College Partnership allows KIPP and institutions of higher education to do the following:

- Identify, through reflection together, areas where they can each strengthen our support around college readiness, matriculation, and graduation, and commit to implement these strategies.
- Take a leadership role in identifying organizational structures and supports to improve persistence and graduation rates for KIPP and other first-generation students.
- Use teachings to inform a long-term scalable model for college access and completion that others can replicate (KIPP, 2013).

KIPP has a foundation that oversees grants and expansion into new regions and new schools within the region. Each region has its own board, provides its own fundraising, and does not receive funds from the foundation. Each region pays the foundation a 1% licensing fee. Lisa Margosian, Chief Programming Officer, provided the organizational chart for the foundation and KIPP Lynn, a region in Massachusetts.

Success Academy Charter School.

Success Academy Charter School was founded in 2006, in Harlem, New York. It began as a kindergarten through first grade school housing 165 students. In 2015, the

Success Academy Charter School has grown into 34 schools primarily serving poor, mostly Black and Hispanic students. There are 24 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 3 high schools. The concept of Success Academy Charter Schools comes from a deep understanding that all students can succeed. Over 11,000 students are now being served by these schools, teaching critical thinking, problem-solving, academic unity, public speaking across all content areas, with a huge concentration on honors and STEM diplomas. In addition, the Success Academy Charter Schools partner with various colleges to help ensure a “best fit” for students continuing on an academic path after graduation. Success at the Success Academy Charter Schools comes in many forms. To comply with state expectations, students from the academy far exceeded the goals.

Last year, 29 percent of New York City kids were considered proficient in English and 35 percent in math on the state’s challenging Common Core-aligned exams. For Success students, the proficiency rates were 64 percent in English and an astonishing 94 percent in math. Success students in the city’s poorest communities outperformed kids in the wealthiest suburbs. If the network were a single school, it would rank in the top 1 percent of the state’s 3,560 schools in math and top 3 percent in English. (Sahm, 2015, para. 2)

The success of the Success Academy Charter School’s scores, student progress, and teacher retention is attributed to a strong curriculum focusing on student motivation, teacher motivation, student choice (whether they want to stay at the school or move on to another academic setting), and a strong emphasis on experimental learning. Participation in units covering historical perspectives on landmarks (e.g., the Brooklyn Bridge) provides students with real life understanding and cultural exposure. In addition,

participation in clubs (e.g., chess clubs), Saturday School remediation, and top-notch professional development for teachers instills an underlying message to everyone involved that learning matters.

KIPP Compared to An Achievable Dream.

KIPP and Success Academy Charter School's each have similar attributes compared to An Achievable Dream. Like Success Academy, An Achievable Dream is a comprehensive K-12 public school program for minority youth from economically and socially disadvantaged households. Of the nearly 70,000 KIPP students across the country, 58% are African American, 38% are Latino, 1% are Asian, 2% are Caucasian, and 1% are categorized as other. Similarly, the Success Academy was represented by 71% African American enrollment, 22% Hispanic, and 6% of the school population were considered Asian, White, or Other. Eighty-one percent of the students enrolled in Success Academy Charter Schools were considered disadvantaged (Suny, 2015). In addition, all three of the educational organizations provide the instructional and support elements common to most schools, including curriculum, student services, basic staffing, transportation, food service, and maintenance (AAD, 2015b). All three educational organizations raise additional funds for programming and they operate all of the additional components that contribute significantly to the program's effectiveness: the extended day, longer school year, curriculum enrichments, technology, parent involvement, and program evaluation (AAD, 2015a). KIPP's belief in developing a student's character is similar to that of An Achievable Dream.

“KIPP's longstanding motto—Work hard. Be nice.—isn't just a tagline. Since

KIPP's beginning in 1994, the development of character has been as important to

us as the teaching of rigorous academic skills. We believe both are essential to the success of our students in college and life, and a wide body of research proves it” (Kipp, 2013).

Finally, each of the three schools has a contract for parents, students, and the organization to sign and abide to. This contract states that students will follow the rules and guidelines set by the organization to target academic success and behavioral management, parents will follow the guidelines regulating support to their child and support for decisions made at the school level, and the organization will ensure that best practices are implemented to ensure academic success. Other success factors at these schools are the following: An Achievable Dream has been in existence for 23 years, established in 2 districts, and has 3 schools. Graduates of An Achievable Dream receive \$2,000 for academic use for approximately four years (sometimes longer). The annual cost per student in K-12 is \$2,200 per student. An Achievable Dream has a 100% on-time graduation rate (with more than 80% of the students receiving Advanced Diplomas from 2012-1015). KIPP Academies boast an 85% graduation rate and the incremental cost per student is \$6,500 more than what local school districts receive. The Success Academy Charter Schools have a graduation rate of 44% and an increasing cost per student of \$2,000 (NYC Schools, 2015).

An Achievable Dream Evaluation History

The An Achievable Dream program’s continuous push to become more rigorous, effective, and student driven led to the decision to seek outside evaluator assistance. The College of William and Mary’s Education Department team of highly qualified staff members worked together on two separate evaluations. The results were positive, but

each time led the organization to make changes for the betterment of the organization as a whole.

In 2004, the first evaluation was conducted. During this time there were only students occupying grades K-8. The results concluded that students and parents were satisfied with instruction, teacher effectiveness, and communication throughout the building. Areas of concern centered around staff morale (namely the long hours of the day), community outreach, and student behavior.

In 2010, a second evaluation was conducted to assess teacher and administrator effectiveness, student achievement and behavior, parent satisfaction, and graduate perceptions. In summary, the evaluators deemed the An Achievable Dream had a positive environment, closing the academic and social gap. Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction with the outcome; however, there were targeted areas of improvement.

The Current State of Inequality in the U.S.

The U.S. has gone through multiple educational reforms in an effort to meet the needs of the growing nation. Changes in economics, changes in population, changes in state standards, and changes in the development of educational resources to close a gap (that continues to widen) have been the trend in our nation from year to year. When the nation was exposed to the ideas and revelations in *A Nation at Risk*, more than just educators began to take notice and react to the contents of this explicit document. “Public education was marooned on a rising tide of mediocrity” (Perkins, Hodge, Hamrick, & Coleman, 2004, p. 5). Unfortunately, billions of dollars later and almost four decades later little has changed to create reform policies that hit the mark.

Today's reform policies have now been massaged to mandate that schools, nationwide, make strides forward to close the education gap among our students who are in schools that have a bounty of resources and our students who are in areas of poverty and decimation. However, no matter what changes are made, what is implemented, or what is authorized by federal guidelines, without a more creative curriculum (one that involves teaching how to succeed through social and moral competencies) the gap will never close.

Unless this gap is closed, it will act as a wedge, fracturing our society and economy. If large numbers of young people enter adulthood lacking the tools education confers, the nation loses economic productivity and its edge in global competition and will be saddled with higher demands for costly criminal justice and social services. (Perkins et al., 2004, p. 15)

There has been much debate regarding the ideals behind the mission of the current national reform. Challenging only the academics and the ability of the staff to provide a rigorous instruction is, by far, missing the mark on the other variables that need to be addressed before academic success changes course. These efforts are only partial ingredients to the recipe of student academic success, "Learning takes place within a web of expectations, beliefs, goals, culture, personalities, roles, resources, and time. Children's maturation levels, inherent abilities, and the variables of health, nutrition, and family influence add complexity to the web" (Perkins et al., 2004, p. 16). In the event that any one of these parts is absent or flawed, the system becomes compromised, and learning suffers. With these ingredients, Eric Jensen (2013) would add vocabulary, effort

and energy, relationships, and stress level. Trying to figure out which factors are more influential and significant is difficult.

- Vocabulary is vital for a child's learning, memory, and cognition.
- Effort and energy is a direct correlation with engagement or disengagement.

Becoming excited about learning, being challenged, and working harder to reach the next level is a practiced skill. When a student has never been challenged or has never had the desire to win (because he does not know what that looks like) he is less likely to try again, harder.

- Relationships and stress are key to a student of poverty. "When a child's early experiences are chaotic, or if at least one parent is absent, the child's developing brain often becomes insecure and stressed. This insecurity is more pronounced among children living in poverty" (Jensen, 2013, p. 15).

Transforming schools to accommodate for all of the many factors associated with teaching the whole child is costly and must be strategic. Without the skills developed under such guidance, student success in the transition to college becomes yet another area where the educational gap has become transparent.

The academic record of students who live in poverty is not good. In the United States, if you are poor, your odds of graduating are lower than are those of a middle-income student. If you are also Hispanic or black, your odds just dropped again. (Jensen, 2013, p. 1)

There are dismal statistics that encompass our current state of affairs. Half of all poor students of color drop out of school. Seventy percent of all children who do not graduate from high school have spent at least a year living in poverty. In 2009, the dropout rate of

students living in low income families was about five times greater than the rate of students from high-income families (7.4% versus 1.4%). (Jensen, 2013)

Students of poverty, as I have stated above, need additional resources and time for educators to fill the gaps associated with those factors related to being impoverished (vocabulary building, relationship building and trust, and academic remediation).

However, how can educators do this at the same rate and financial cost as a student from a more affluent school or school district? There is continued discussion surrounding the need for closing the gap, but without closing the financial gap associated with educational resources, education will continue to lag behind.

Ushomirsky and Williams (2015) found that “nationally, funding inequities are devastatingly large. The highest poverty districts in our country receive about \$1,200 less per student than the lowest poverty districts. The differences are even larger—roughly \$2,000 per student—between districts serving the most students of color and those serving the fewest.”

This study is important because it demonstrates the importance of students receiving a strong foundation of educational tools, especially students of poverty, in order to forge ahead in their quest for post-secondary degrees. The study was an analysis of state funding across the United States. Data on each district’s state and local revenues per student for the years from 2010 to 2012 were obtained. In addition, data on the percent of children in poverty for each district and data on the percent of students of color for each district was analyzed. The results indicated

to close achievement gaps, schools need funding that is equitable—funding that accounts for the fact that it simply costs more to educate low-income students,

many of whom start school academically behind their more affluent peers.

Beyond standard curricula, these schools may need, for example, materials to help build vocabulary and background knowledge, extra learning time, or liaisons with outside service providers, such as the healthcare or foster care systems.

(Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015, p. 4)

Furthermore, this study is another qualifier to the understandings that despite inequitable funding and acknowledgements regarding how unlawful it is to have such disparities throughout our nation, too many states continue to spend less on the education of our low-income students. The disparities among the classes should not be a surprise even when a student transitions to college. The same academic effects continue to emerge.

College Readiness - Our New Nation At Risk

While educational concerns over ensuring that K-12 students are receiving proper instruction and are prepared to take state tests are still lingering throughout the nation, a new concern has come to the surface—ensuring students are properly prepared to make the transition to post-secondary institutes. Poverty and inequality levels are dependent on where you live. Levels of income inequality are higher in California and parts of the Northeast and South, and these levels are lower in the Midwest states. “In 2013, only eight states had Gini indices higher than the national average—California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and New York—but over one-third of the U.S. population (36 percent) lived in these eight states” (Mather & Jorosz, 2014, p. 3). Understanding how this affects students on all levels is imperative when attempting to

provide programs to offset the issues associated with family income levels and college attendance.

In the United States, more than six out of every 10 jobs require some post-secondary education and training. Although there are many jobs that do not require college degrees, with increasing globalization in a knowledge-based economy, the demand for highly educated and skilled workers in the United States will only continue to grow. (Mather & Jorosz, 2014, p. 12)

College enrollment and college retention rates have declined and will continue to decline due to high costs of attendance.

College and career readiness for high school students has now become one of the growing concerns of federal agencies, college administrators, school boards, and organizations dedicated to the growth and equality of our nation's academic success.

One of the biggest challenges that must be addressed through college and career readiness reform is the grave disparity in preparation for certain racial and ethnic sub-groups, as well as low-income and first-generation college students. In particular, African American students are far less likely to be ready for college, with those in high-poverty schools being the least prepared. (ACT, 2013, p. 3)

The measurement of this phenomenon is a mix of various testing agents: SAT scores, Advanced Placement course exams, graduation rates, and high school exit exams. However, most recently, a new set of data is included in the previously collected numbers. Colleges are analyzing data associated with retention rates, these include drop-out rates, end of course success, financial aid approvals, and other factors associated with student success.

Previous discussions regarding college readiness for African American students was centered on the core understanding of students of poverty. Unfortunately, more resources must be invested to better understand this growing issue.

Research and data on disparities in high school policy and practice elevate an issue that is often ignored or discounted in education reform discussions. Far too frequently, African American students are thought to be unfit for college and directed to low-wage work or trade schools following high school completion. However, the primary reason these students lag behind their peers is that their schools provide inadequate courses, resources, and supports. Better understanding the differences in what low-minority and high-minority schools offer to students can provide a foundation for reforms that yield more college-ready students from all racial backgrounds. (Bryant, 2015, p. 2)

Defining what makes a student successful at the college level necessitates the need to understand that academics are a piece of the college puzzle, but only one piece. Adapting to the culture in college, utilizing strong study habits, and understanding where to access support are all key components to having academic success. It is imperative to ensure that students, especially students from high-minority schools (or high-minority school districts), provide students with these college readiness skills. “African American students are less likely to succeed in college because the high schools they attend do not properly prepare them. Generally, high-minority schools, particular those with significant numbers of low-income students, are lacking in several ways” (Bryant, 2015, p. 15). High-minority schools often have novice teachers, fewer high-level mathematics and

science courses, and lack of school counselors. Each of these variables play a role in explaining why some students leave high school unprepared for future study.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

In 1988, the American Council on Education and the Education Commission of the States published a report on minority participation in post-secondary education. The report included seven strategies to improve the success rate of minority students in college, one of which was to “improve coordination and cooperation among all levels and systems” (American Council on Education and the Education Commission of the States, 1988, p. 28). Similarly, in its reform efforts during the 1990s, the American Association for Higher Education supported collaborative efforts between high schools and colleges (Cureo, 2005). In recent years, programs of study have been developed where colleges and universities provide the local school divisions with sequential courses of study within broad career areas that students should take in high school (U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2012). These partnerships have caused the rigor, relevance, and engagement of the high school curriculum to be increased and promoted awareness for parents and students that there can be a gap between the high school and college curriculums (U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2012).

Although Virginia has established the Standards of Learning to ensure curriculum alignment in grades K-12 and developed the College and Career Readiness Initiative to assist in the transition from secondary education to post-secondary education, there still remains a gap between a student’s success in high school and in college. An Achievable Dream’s partnership’s with Virginia Polytechnic Institute, The University of Virginia,

Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, and Virginia Military Institute provides feedback regarding success; however, no current data are available regarding factors attributed to the success or failure of a student. Very little data is available to determine whether KIPP Academies or the Success Academy Charter Schools are providing the essential ingredients for student success in college due to the broad range of components that are integrated into each of the programs.

Demographics do not have to determine academic outcomes. The examination of the obstacles associated with student development, if the students come from poverty settings, is integral in understanding what tools need to be taught and practiced to overcome the impact of such limitations that poverty has on children. Implementing programs early in a child's development to offset these predictors of academic failure can build a strong defense for future endeavors. Again, demographics do not have to determine academic outcomes; however, the obstacles associated with student development (if they come from poverty) are ones that have shown to be an influential indicator.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this program evaluation study was to assess the efficacy of selected input and process variables on the implementation of the An Achievable Dream SAME Framework. Chapter 3 includes a detailed discussion on the program evaluation questions, study participants, as well as data collection instruments, procedures, and analysis. This chapter also outlines the program evaluation plan and adherence to professional program evaluation standards.

Evaluation Questions

The program evaluation was designed to answer three questions. These questions relate directly to how well the social and moral components translate to student preparation in the college setting.

1. Do key college student advocates believe student graduates from An Achievable Dream meet the SAME (social, academic and moral education) expectations to be successful in college?
2. Do students believe their needs were met by the social, academic, and moral underpinnings of the program while attending An Achievable Dream?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluations of the An Achievable Dream program's goals based on (a) academic progress in college; (b) how comfortable students felt during their experiences at college; and (c) students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff?

Participants

I invited a group of 40 An Achievable Dream graduates from the Newport News, Virginia, Public Schools to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary; however, the aim of the program evaluation was to secure a high participant response rate to gather sufficient data to answer evaluation questions. The study included both male and female students who currently attend college for more than one year to more than four years. The population of students was chosen from the following high school graduating classes: 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. This purposeful sampling was intended to provide sufficient data to understand the social, academic, and moral progression in college of each of the student participants.

The identified college student advocates were comprised of five individuals located at three of the five partnership colleges of An Achievable Dream. Each of these individuals were in specific leadership positions at the colleges and have worked with the partnership between their individual college and An Achievable Dream for many years. These colleges include Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Data Sources

The program evaluation includes the use of three data methods: 1) a student survey, 2) an individual college student advocate interview, and 3) selected extant documents. I used a mixed methods strategy to gather feedback regarding student graduate success. In the mixed methods study, as the researcher, I gathered both quantitative and qualitative data during the same collection phase. The quantitative method, a paper-based survey, served as the primary data collection method in this

program evaluation. The qualitative methods, which included an interview protocol consisting of seven open-ended questions for identified college advocates served as a data source to provide support for data collected via the survey. The interviews will yield qualitative data on student social, academic, and moral success. In the concurrent embedded strategy the “researcher is drawn on breadth of generalization offered by quantitative research with depth of detailed understanding offered by qualitative method” (Terrell, 2011, p. 273). I analyzed results from the data sources after the data collection phase. The three data sources were used to triangulate evidence regarding findings for the program evaluation research questions.

Student Survey

A survey was distributed to 40 students who represent a purposeful, stratified sample of students who graduated from An Achievable Dream High School between the years 2012 and 2015 (10 students from each graduation year). The survey included 10 forced-choice items with responses in a Likert-type scale format designed to gather feedback on the topic of interest. The survey asked participants to respond to each item as to whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or No Opinion/I Don’t Know. The points on the scale are the following: 4 = SA (Strongly agree), 3 = A (Agree), 2 = D (Disagree), 1 = SD (Strongly disagree), N/A= (Not Applicable).

To improve the reliability and validity of the survey results, I followed the survey protocol consistently with all survey respondents. The student respondents all received the same survey and were given ample time to complete the questions. Respondents were asked to complete the survey without distraction and without assistance. Clarification of researcher bias provided the reader with information as to how the researcher interpreted

the findings. Information regarding potential bias in this study was provided, and information on the evaluator's background provides readers with an open account of qualities and characteristics that may influence result interpretations. Full disclosure of findings and reports to An Achievable Dream's administration will also safeguard against invalid reporting and communication. Also, to control for any personal bias I used member checking (the participants can review survey findings). Journaling was used as a reflective tool as participants moved through the process that provided for bias control.

Student survey protocol. I administered the surveys using a structured survey protocol, to gain feedback on topics of academic, social, and moral engagement and success of An Achievable Dream students and how prepared they felt during their college years.. The survey protocol provided directions for the researcher on survey procedures as well as the 10 questions used in the survey. Survey responses were collected and recorded. The survey administrator also made sure the subject's responses were completed in entirety.

Table of specifications. The Table of Specifications illustrated the strong relationship between the survey questions that the student answered to the evaluation questions presented to be proved. The students were provided the opportunity to answer strategically specific questions pertaining to their experiences obtained during their years at An Achievable Dream.

Table 1

A List of the Student Survey Questions as Related to the Three Program Evaluation Questions

Survey Question	Question Text	Evaluation Question
Question 1	An Achievable Dream provided you with the tools to prepare you to achieve academically in college.	Q1, Q2
Question 2	An Achievable Dream provided you with strategies to support good study skills at college.	Q1, Q2
Question 3	The courses you took at An Achievable Dream prepared you for courses and content taken at college.	Q2
Question 4	An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with college staff (i.e. Financial Aid Department, Student Accounts, etc.).	Q1
Question 5	An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with other students.	Q1
Question 6	An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating with professors.	Q1
Question 7	College and campus life offers many social opportunities. An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helped you make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations.	Q1
Question 8	An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make decisions regarding treating others with respect.	Q1
Question 9	An Achievable Dream encouraged you to seek academic assistance when necessary.	Q1, Q2
Question 10	An Achievable Dream was consistent in the encouraging students to join organizations/volunteer opportunities.	Q1, Q2

Individual College Student Advocate Interviews.

Individual interviews with identified college student advocates were employed to generate in-depth insight on the study questions. Face-to-face interviews were well suited for the evaluation because these interviews allowed (a) an exploration of attitudes, values, and beliefs; (b) the observation of non-verbal cues to respondent's answers on sensitive issues; (c) comparability of responses since all questions will be answered by each respondent; and (d) responses free of assistance or sway by other study participants from among those that volunteered to participate in an interview. I used purposeful sampling to select five individual college student advocates from three of the partnership colleges that provided personalized assistance specifically to the students from An Achievable Dream. Using a criterion based on the number of students attending the partnership schools, the five individuals represented the college with the largest number of An Achievable Dream graduates in attendance. This provided sufficient information to draw conclusions regarding the college student advocates. Selected individuals participated in face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 20 minutes each.

College student advocate interview protocol. I conducted the interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol to gain in-depth feedback on topics of academic, social, and moral engagement and success of An Achievable Dream students. A copy of the interview protocol is located in Appendix C. The interview protocol provided directions for the interviewer on interview procedures as well as the six questions and possible follow-up prompts that were used in the interviews. Interview responses were audio recorded. The interviewer also made handwritten notes on the interview subject's responses.

Interviewer's instructions. The interviewer greeted the interview subject and made efforts to put the college student advocate at ease before beginning the interview. The interviewer then provided the college student advocate with the consent form and allowed time for the individual to read, ask questions, and sign the form. The copy of the interview consent form is located in Appendix B. The introductory script contained in the interview protocol (Appendix C) will be read. The script explains the purpose of the interview. The six main interview questions and one question for respondents to add information not discussed were read out loud. Clarification for any of the six questions could have been made by asking the question in a different way, but only if the college student advocate requested clarification or if the interviewer determined a need to probe or clarify the initial response. The interviewer could have prompted this individual to expand on an idea using one of the following prompts: (a) What observations have you made in this regard, (b) What experiences have you had with this type of situation, or (c) How might this affect a student? Following the question and answer period, the interviewer thanked the interview subject for his/her time spent in participating in the study.

The interview questions. Appendix A contains a list of the interview questions and shows how each of the interview questions related to the three evaluation questions. Interview questions number one and two contain information pertinent to the student's social abilities. Question three and four pertained to the academic performance of the college students. Question five and six pertain to the moral code of standards the students were perceived to have. Finally, question seven was an open-ended question that allowed

the respondent to provide additional content according to his or her own perceptions not covered by the first six questions.

The second and third interview questions are both open-ended, focusing on how a student from An Achievable Dream uses skills thought to be developed in high school. The identified student advocate is familiar with the social and moral program emphasized at An Achievable Dream; therefore, these types of questions would be considered pertinent, even without further explanation. Conflict Resolution, Speaking Green, and the What It Takes curriculum were all underpinnings in these questions. Responses may shed light on areas of weakness that could have been addressed at the high school level.

Interview question number five provided the respondent with the opportunity to apply his or her own opinion to a student's ability to succeed and possible reasons why a student would not be successful. These answers also helped to measure student growth.

Reliability and validity of the interview and survey protocol. Several strategies improved reliability and validity of the interview and survey results. I followed the protocol consistently with all respondents. The respondents all received the same questions and were given ample time to complete each question. Clarification of researcher bias provided the reader with information as to how the researchers interpreted the findings (Creswell, 2009). Information concerning potential bias in this study is provided under the heading Potential for Bias. In order to ensure the validity of the interview and survey process, I made sure the interview and survey measured what it is supposed to measure, and three aspects of validity were evaluated: 1) the extent to which the interview and survey was related to the subjects, 2) the extent to which the interview and survey minimized the omission of relevant information (i.e., why the interview

questions and survey statements were relevant), and 3) the extent to which the interview prevented irrelevant information from entering the process. All three of the aspects were closely monitored. The questions were created by using the An Achievable Dream SAME Framework Model key concepts.

Information on the evaluator's background provided readers with an open account of qualities and characteristics that may influence study interpretations. This is important to any study but critical to establishing validity of qualitative studies where researchers play a more subjective role than quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). Full disclosure of findings and reports were given to An Achievable Dream's administration to safeguard against invalid reporting and communication.

Interview protocol review and validation. The following information provided the proposed procedure for the individual interview protocol review will take place process. A thorough review of all of the instructions regarding the interview process as well as the interview questions was performed. Securing a quiet room to conduct the interview was vital to ensure no disturbances. Before conducting the interview, a clear introduction was established as interview candidates arrived for the interview. As respondents answered the interview questions, the researcher recorded remarks in the space immediately following the question on the interview form. Responses were accurately documented, and a tape recording of the interview was made for further review, if necessary. Additional information about a particular question or scenario was answered using the same language for each respondent.

Data Collection

Survey Data Collection Procedures

A representative of An Achievable Dream reviewed the evaluation tools prior to beginning data collection. I distributed the data collection tools and utilize electronic communications such as emails and texts to secure agreement for the sample selection, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis strategies prior to implementing the study. I emailed a letter to the An Achievable Dream Vice President of Student Affairs. This email included (a) the purpose of the study, (b) an invitation to participate, (c) a consent agreement, and (d) a copy of the survey. A copy of the survey invitation and consent for participation is located in Appendix E. I sent out a reminder email each week for three weeks until the close of the survey period to encourage student participation. The survey remained open for three weeks.

Interview Data Collection Procedures

I served as the interviewer for the individual interviews with identified college partner advocates. I sent a letter via email to each of the selected interview subjects to (a) identify the selected participants, (b) provide my contact information and instructions for coordinating the interview, and (c) a copy of the consent form that describes the parameters of the interview. As needed, I followed-up with telephone calls to secure participation and make arrangements for conducting the interviews.

Data Analysis

The use of three data collection instruments (the student survey, the college student advocate interviews, and the collected artifacts) provided both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. The mixed methods approach provided more in-depth

answers to the evaluation questions than would occur using only one method alone.

Using the mixed method model, I collected data from both the survey and interviews during the data collection phase; I administered the survey first, collect artifacts, and proceed with the interviews. I analyzed data from all three sources during the same data analysis phase.

Analysis of Student Surveys

I used constant comparative analysis and thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the survey items. Constant comparative analysis is an emergent categorizing strategy that identifies similarities and differences among data, and then allows for coding and sorting the data into appropriate categories (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Thematic analysis is explicitly and implicitly much a part of many other qualitative analysis methods. The data was collected, disaggregated, compared, conceptualized, and examined closely so that themed patterns could be identified to capture the fullness of the participants' perceptions.

Analysis of Interview Responses

I analyzed interview responses using codes and emergent themes. Responses were audiotaped as well as documented on the interview protocol form as handwritten notes. I recorded the responses following the interviews using computer-based word processing software. I numbered each line of the transcript for ease of reference during the analysis process. Once each of the five interview response sets were organized and prepared for analysis, I read through all of the data to “gain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p.185). I coded the data using the major ideas of the study. The SAME ideals were the codes for understanding the degree of

adjustments. I analyzed the data for emergent themes. Finally, I interpreted the meaning of the data, seeking lessons learned from the interviews, as well as explored how the data explained or supported the data collected from the survey.

Table 2 provides a summary of the data sources and data analysis techniques associated with each of the guiding evaluation questions.

Table 2

Evaluation Question Analysis

Evaluation Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis
1. Do key college student advocates believe student graduates from An Achievable Dream meet the SAME (social, academic, and moral) expectations to be successful in college?	College student advocate interviews artifacts to include student GPA and course completion data.	Thematic analysis
2. Do students believe their needs were met by the social and moral underpinnings of the program while attending An Achievable Dream program?	Student survey, artifacts	Thematic analysis
3. What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of key college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluations of the An Achievable Dream program's goals based on (a) academic progress in college; (b) how comfortable students felt during their experiences at college; and (c) students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff?	College student advocate interviews student surveys	Thematic analysis

Limitations

The college student advocates have known the oldest college students for four years and the youngest college students for as long as a semester. Thus, the college student advocates had limited understanding of the younger students. In addition, the students who were taking the survey had the same varying degree of awareness. The sample of students that the survey and interview encompassed is enrolled in college. Students were all in good standing, which limited how much difficulty was apparent at the time that the survey was completed. In addition, the relationships that the students continue to have with teachers, staff members, and friends at An Achievable Dream limited the degree of discontent with the program and the possible outcome of the survey.

Delimitations

To define the parameters of the study the survey participation was limited to an intact group of students who graduated from An Achievable Dream High School between the years 2012-2015. The interview participation was limited to the identified staff members from the partnership colleges (college student advocates). The college student advocates perceptions were limited to the amount of time they spent with the college students. Findings were based on the number of returned surveys from the students. It was possible that the voluntary nature of participation may have yielded a greater number of respondents who had positive reflections about their high school experiences and were doing well in college at the time of the evaluation period. In addition, the number of returned surveys and the value of the interview responses influenced the level of confidence with which the evaluator drew conclusions from the findings about the whole group. The five individual interviews provided feedback on unique observances and

provided qualitative data to support survey results; however, these results do not represent the entire group of graduates.

The limited focus of this study provided valuable insights for program decision-makings within An Achievable Dream. The insights were also valuable to educational organizations in other school districts.

Assumptions

Both the student participants and college student advocates responded to the survey and interview, respectively, with accuracy and honesty. The student participants did not share questions with other students taking the survey. The interviewer did not steer answers in a particular direction so not to compromise the accuracy and meaning of the data. The interviewer asked each of the college student advocates the same questions to ensure a valid response.

Potential for Bias

There were three areas for potential bias in this study. First, the nature of past professional relationships between the interview participants and students created a familiarity that could have affected evaluator objectivity. Second, the closeness of the participants to the subject of interest in the study may have reflected a skewed result due to the buy-in of the material taught to the students for so many years. Third, this plan included actions that reduced and/or eliminated bias in the two areas. I permitted An Achievable Dream to have access to all study instruments and results. Next, I triangulated my data collection method to reduce student bias in self-reporting. The students who may have overrated themselves had to be compared to the college student advocates' interview statements that may have told a different story.

While not a specific limitation, it should be noted that as a member of the An Achievable Dream team, I conducted the study. I worked closely with the student graduates on a daily basis, and I worked with the college student advocates in the same capacity. To minimize the unintended effects of bias, I created journal entries to take note of questionable behaviors of participants that raised concern. In addition, I used member-checking to improve the accuracy and credibility of the study as well as collegial oversight. I had a colleague review my procedure and journal notes.

Adherence to Professional Evaluation Standards

This evaluation plan adhered to *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2011) in the four areas of propriety, utility, feasibility, and accuracy.

Propriety

I remained open and responsive to the stakeholders' needs and concerns in an effort to ensure a smooth and effective evaluation process. Regularly scheduled program leader meetings were an opportunity to clarify facts, and processes, and addressed stakeholder needs. Review and approval of the plan, methodology, and data collection instruments were by the assigned dissertation committee. The College of William and Mary's School of Education Internal Review Committee and the An Achievable Dream administrating staff leaders ensured a full measure of protection to participants.

Utility

My education coursework, professional experience, and respect as a professional establish a firm foundation for conducting an effective and credible evaluation. My professional familiarity with the An Achievable Dream program and stakeholders helped

in (a) creating a trusting environment for gathering information during individual interviews, and (b) communicating the practical use of the results.

Stakeholders were included throughout the study. To ensure program leader support and ownership, the plan provides for regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the status of the evaluation and to ensure findings and recommendations from the study provided relevant data for sound program decision-making both at the administration level and at the classroom level. Program leaders determine “how” the data is ultimately used. Useful findings and recommendations do not necessarily guarantee use of that information. The evaluation will foster an ongoing dialogue that may benefit teachers an ongoing dialogue that may benefit students at many levels.

Feasibility

This evaluation used procedures and resources familiar to participants. Students will receive the survey in the mail. Included in the package was a self-addressed stamped envelope. I had the ability to pick the completed surveys up or they could have been mailed to (or emailed) me directly. Interviews were scheduled to accommodate the college student advocates schedule.

Accuracy

To ensure accuracy, evaluators used valid and reliable triangulated methodologies that provided useful data for practical program decision-making on the use of student growth data in teacher evaluation. I was committed to clearly documenting all communications and judgments. Multiple communication approaches strengthened valid reporting practices. Full disclosure of findings and reports to the School Division’s

Department of Research and Planning also safeguarded against invalid reporting and communication.

Ethical Considerations

This program evaluation research proposal was submitted, reviewed, and approved by The College of William and Mary's School of Education Internal Review Committee per the requirements established by the university and according to 45 CFR 46, of the Code of Federal Regulations. Additionally, I submitted the proposal to the An Achievable Dream Vice President of Academics and Student Services for review and approval before proceeding with the program evaluation.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this evaluation research study was to gather data regarding the SAME program at An Achievable Dream. The evaluation data will serve as a guide to improve current practices and provide tools to prepare students to be successful in post-secondary academics. For this study, the three research questions to be evaluated were as follows:

1. Do key student advocates believe student graduates from An Achievable Dream meet the SAME (social, academic, and moral education) expectations to be successful in college?
2. Do students believe their needs were met by the social, academic, and moral underpinnings of the program while attending An Achievable Dream?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluations of the An Achievable Dream program's goals based on (a) academic progress in college; (b) how comfortable students felt during their experiences at college, and (c) students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff?

The intent of the evaluation research questions was to ascertain the perceptions of the selected students and the college student advocates who have been identified by the colleges (Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, University of Virginia, James Madison University, and

Virginia Military Institute) to work with the An Achievable Dream graduates throughout their college careers. The survey consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions for the students to answer. The interview consisted of seven questions presented orally. In this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative findings are presented.

An Achievable Dream's K-12 program in Newport News, Virginia, enrolls students from throughout the Newport News Public School district. All students who graduate from An Achievable Dream have been a part of the program for at least 10 years. Students generally enter the program in the third grade, yet some students even began in kindergarten. This means that students have received the social, academic, and moral education program for at least 10 years or longer.

Demographic Information

I used interviews and the survey to gather data on the residual effect of the K-12 social, academic, and moral program on students who have matriculated in college. The sample size for this study was 40 college students and five college student advocates. I sent out 60 surveys to current college students who graduated from An Achievable Dream High School, and 40 students replied (a 66.66% response rate). In addition, five college student advocates from three of An Achievable Dream's partnership colleges (Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute) were sent requests for interviews. All five college student advocates agreed to participate. To protect the identities of the study participants, names and specific titles were eliminated from the data.

The survey participants were all An Achievable Dream graduates and are now full-time college students. Ten of the college students graduated from An Achievable

Dream in 2012, 10 graduated in 2013, 10 graduated in 2014, and 10 graduated in 2015.

At the time of the study these students were college seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshmen. The college student advocates who participated in the interviews were from three of An Achievable Dream's partnership schools. Two of the college student advocates work at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech), two work at Old Dominion University, and one works at Norfolk State University. The college student advocates hold varying professional positions in their respective universities. All of these individuals play significant roles in the partnership dynamics with An Achievable Dream and job responsibilities that include providing support for college student success. Table 3 shows high school graduation year, number of students who completed the survey, and colleges they attend.

Table 3

Summary of Student Survey Participants and Colleges Attended

High School Graduation Year	Virginia Tech Participants	Old Dominion University Participants	Norfolk State University Participants	Other Colleges/ Universities Participants
2012	3	3	2	2
2013	1	4	3	2
2014	2	3	3	2
2015	2	4	2	2
Totals	8	14	10	8

Findings for Evaluation Question 1:

Do key student advocates believe student graduates from An Achievable Dream meet the SAME (social, academic, and moral education) expectations to be successful in college?

The purpose of the interviews was to analyze and collect data pertaining to the perceptions of the college student advocates who work directly with the college students from An Achievable Dream. The interview participants were advised that their input was needed to determine the effectiveness of the social, academic, and moral program's influence on current college students' performance. They were encouraged to provide their true input and make any comments and recommendations to assist in student success.

Additional anecdotal notes were taken during the interviews to capture other details as to how the interviewees reacted to questions as they were asked. The purpose of taking these notes was to capture the participants' reactions to the interview questions. These reactions (pausing, careful consideration for word choice, and voice levels that fluctuate depending on passion of subject) are useful in analyzing specific responses. Additionally, taking notes pertaining to questions I had to repeat, clarify, or probe for clear responses will be useful for future research, particularly when developing questions. The interviews took place over a four-day period in March 2016. Seven questions were asked relating to the perceived impact of the social, academic, and moral components taught to all An Achievable Dream students prior to high school graduation. Each social, academic, and moral component had a positive and negative element. This provided a way to gather responses (both positive and negative) to strengthen the potential reliability of the data collection. Additionally, question seven provided opportunities to identify concerns or confirmations to the success of the students through an open-ended response.

The interview conducted with the five college student advocates centered directly on the students who attend their respective colleges. Seven questions were asked. The

findings related to the research question emerged into three separate categories. Two questions related to the students' social abilities, two questions related to the students' academic performance, and two questions related to the perception of the students' moral aptitude.

The data generated through the interviews were coupled with additional artifacts and interview journal notes. Artifacts consisted of data regarding the number of years the college student advocates have been working with the students, the role that each individual plays in the college student's life, and college student grade point averages. The number of years the college student advocates have been working in that position may determine the impact and relationship they have with the college students. The students may feel more apt to open up and ask for assistance with someone they have been working with longer. The role the college student advocate has can be different at each school. It is important to understand this role when analyzing the responses. Grade point averages are essential to determining the value of the responses. For instance, if the responses indicate that the students are doing everything they need to do, but the grade point averages are low, then there is a conflict.

Social

The social skills of the students were explored during the interview to better understand how socially adjusted the An Achievable Dream students are when they enter college. The college student advocates were asked: *Would you consider the An Achievable Dream student socially adjusted (respectful, coming to class on time, participating in clubs/extracurricular activities)?*

Having the ability to socially adjust to a new environment is an extremely critical character trait necessary in order to be successful on a college campus. The college student advocates work with the An Achievable Dream students in many capacities. The students report directly to the college student advocates for financial needs, academic concerns, and other questions pertaining to life on campus. It is therefore understandable that the college student advocates learn a great deal about each of the college students from the An Achievable Dream cohorts. The college student advocates spoke about the social behaviors they witnessed, describing the students in such ways as, “Respectful, soft spoken, appreciative” (Interview 1). When this question was presented to Interview 1, it was answered slowly and affirmatively. Interview 1 took his time to say that the students are sometimes soft spoken. When I probed this question a little further to have Interview 1 explain, they simply remarked that the students may sometimes be a little shy at first. However, Interview 1 reiterated how respectful and polite each of the An Achievable students are each and every time they have been around him.

In Interview 2, the participant spoke about the ways in which students engage on campus:

We have many students active on campus. Lots of social clubs, and it has been important to be a well-rounded student in order to feel a sense of belonging. The An Achievable Dream students are involved in many clubs and I see them participating around campus. I also found jobs for a few of the students who inquired. It was great initiative on their part. (Interview 2)

Initially, when this interview question was asked to Interview 2, I was skeptical of the answer due to the vagueness of the response. I thought that Interview 2 was incorporating

the definition of what it means to be social on campus and the opportunities the college has for students who want to be social. However, it was clear by the end of the conversation that Interview 2 was impressed by the initiatives of the students.

Interview 3 provided more information about the students' social involvement by saying, "Yes, In fact, we have specific clubs geared for An Achievable Dream students that other students now want to join" (Interview 3). Interview 3 is from one of the larger schools with which An Achievable Dream has a partnership. The college student advocate has required the students to take part in a bi-quarterly luncheon. This college has a period of the day each week when students are not scheduled for class. This allows time for advising, clubs, study labs, and other types of organized activities to take place without course conflicts. The luncheons are mandatory, but are always worth being there. During each meeting, a delegate from the college is asked to be the speaker. The students end up meeting someone in every department, even including the college president, throughout the year. Students that were not graduates from An Achievable Dream have inquired how to become part of the unique group.

Interview 4 was quick to acknowledge that he is not privy to all of the activities and clubs in which the students may or may not be involved. However, he was certain that the An Achievable Dream students were present to all of the required activities that he set up. He also added that he was aware of some of the activities the students participated in because he was there and saw them. For example, he mentioned seeing students at concerts, special events, and organized freshman events.

Three out the five responses (60%) reflected the club and activities participation. When asked to respond to being timely to class, the college student advocates could not

Speak directly about this particular occurrence. The general response was that the professor would not necessarily report this tardiness to anyone other than the student. Grades would most likely reflect such behaviors, and so far this has not been an issue.

Additionally, the college student advocates spoke about seeing An Achievable Dream students mingling with other groups on campus, branching out from their own group. The following statements capture these observations:

It is great to see the students make friends outside the group they initially began with upon entrance into the college. I was afraid that socially they would not reach out to make new friends, so it has been wonderful to see these new friendships develop among the students. (Interview 1)

Each year roughly five to six An Achievable Dream students enter the college where Interview 1 is employed. The An Achievable Dream students ask to be roommates, they commute back and forth to college together, and they have known each other for 10 years. It is natural that they initially rely on each other for support. Interview 1 responded that he was thankful that they socially reached out beyond their comfort zone and made new friends.

Interview 4 has provided many opportunities for the An Achievable Dream students to take part in some of the larger scale events. He commented that he would never just hand out an opportunity; the students must come to him and ask.

I have had the opportunity to be a part of some of the major social events on campus (concerts, guest speakers, things of that sort). I am always taken aback when one of the An Achievable Dream students eagerly asks if they can be

involved behind the scenes (setting up, staging, concessions). That is such an amazing quality to have. (Interview 4)

He remarked that he believes in initiative. The ability to be a self-motivator and to be resourceful are character traits that are key to college and career success. The above responses from two of the college student advocates most definitely reflect the social characteristics that the An Achievable Dream program aims to achieve. “It is easy to understand what the social environment is: how people relate to others. By extension and, more importantly, it is how members of the school community treat others they encounter in the world beyond the classroom” (Ailes, Alvarado, Amundson, Spencer, Wheeler, 2004, p. 25). An Achievable Dream’s social component strives to get students to understand the importance of positive interactions with peers and adults, volunteer experiences, and joining organizations.

Although there was a positive perception of the An Achievable Dream students exhibiting strong social skills, there was also an incident that was revealed through the interviews that raised questions. One of the students had an altercation with a fellow student in their residence hall. The consequence for such an action was temporary dismissal. The An Achievable Dream program promotes peaceful conflict resolution. Resolving arguments and discourse in a peaceful manner for young adults is difficult, but vital in the world today. Table 4 shows how the college student advocates responded to the social adjustments of the students with the emerging themes.

Table 4

Summary College Student Advocate Responses to Social Adjustments with Emerging Themes

Interview Question	College Student Advocate	Response	Emerging Themes	Responded with Theme
Would you consider the An Achievable Dream student socially adjusted (respectful, coming to class on time participating in clubs/ extra-curricular activities)?	Interview 1	Respectful, soft spoken, appreciative are the words that come to mind.	Respectful, Active	Yes, Respectful
	Interview 2	Yes, we have many students active on campus. Lots of social clubs, and it has been important to be a well-rounded student in order to feel a sense of belonging.		Yes, Active
	Interview 3	Yes, In fact, we have specific clubs geared for An Achievable Dream students that other students now want to join.		Yes, Active
	Interview 4	I can only answer regarding the activities that I am involved in, but the bulk have participated. They do.		Yes, Respectful & Active
	Interview 5	Absolutely! The students are always respectful of my time, and are always prompt when I call them to meet.		

Academics

The second category that was analyzed was the amount of academic growth a student showed. There was no time limit placed on the concept of this growth, so it was up to the college student advocate to answer this question based on how it was perceived. They were asked: *Have the An Achievable Dream students shown growth in academic achievement (GPA, credits earned, etc.)?*

In discussing the academic framework, each college has set its own standards and expectations as to what are defined as academically successful. In addition, the federal government also has a set of standards that students must meet in order to continue to receive federal aid. This is a mathematical formula based on the number of credits a student takes and the number of courses passed. Many colleges use this calculation as a basis for their own decisions as to how much aid a student should receive. It is extremely important that the An Achievable Dream student meet these standards due to the strong need for financial assistance. Therefore, not only is it important to perform well for intrinsic purposes, but it is mandatory to meet certain standards dictated through federal mandates. As prepared by the United States Department of Education, to ensure satisfactory academic progress “you have to make good grades, complete enough classes (credits, hours, etc.), to keep moving towards successfully completing your degree or certificate in a time period that is acceptable to your school” (United States Department of Education, 2012). Therefore, it is vital to ensure that the An Achievable Dream students make use of strategies to perform successfully in college.

The college student advocates shared their views on whether the students have shown growth over the year(s). For example, Interview 1 said, “Yes, once they are here, they start pulling through. There is growth each time I see them.” I analyzed the first quote as vague and lacking real substance. Probing deeper into the meaning of “once they are here,” it was discovered that the college student advocate meant that the students sometimes get off to a slow start. Once the students become acclimated to the environment and acquainted with the various resources available, they start showing real academic strength and their grades improve.

I probed a little deeper on this question to understand what type of growth Interview 1 saw. Interview 1 described observing more lab use towards the later part of the semester, as well as a better ability to manage time.

Another participant shared views in regards to students’ academic growth:

I have been working with the kids over three years. The students have very good GPA’s, they are excelling, and we have multiple services to assist when they need it. (Interview 3)

Interview 3 was quick to refer to the students’ GPAs. He knew each and every student’s semester GPA, as it is one of the requirements of the partnership. He commented that when students know that you know where they stand academically, there is a better chance that they will raise their expectations to meet yours. He said he was quick to offer services when a student was in need.

Interview 4 further commented on students’ academic achievement, “I feel they have excelled in a lot of areas in academic success. A lot are above average. The bulk of the students have done well” (Interview 4). Analysis shows the mean GPA at Virginia

Polytechnic Institute is over 3.0 for An Achievable Dream graduates. Due to the nature of the partnership and scholarship at VPI, students are competing to keep their scholarships from year-to-year.

The interview with college student advocate, Interview 5, was refreshing. He explained,

We have never had An Achievable Dream student fail academically. When they had setbacks, they were able to get the help they needed to get back into good academic standing. However, this only happened a few times. Interview 5

The response was reflective of the students' ability to succeed even when at first there was doubt. When I asked Interview 5 to elaborate on the setbacks, he responded that there are always those times where you need a little extra assistance. Once you have it, everything else falls into place.

Although the An Achievable Students are succeeding academically, it is not always easy.

You have about 50% that meet the college standards during the first semester (their pace). Adjusting that pace and understanding the differences between high school and college sometimes takes that extra bit of time.

(Interview 2)

Interview 2 stated that 50% of the students met the standards working at their original pace and 50% did not meet the requirements. Again, I had to probe a little deeper to ask if he was directly referring to students in general or the students from An Achievable Dream. This answer was never really clarified. He made clear that many students needed extra time to adjust to the quick pace of college and the academic rigor.

Overall, the three college student advocates (60%) agreed that the An Achievable Dream students have shown growth academically. Through their responses, using descriptive analysis, I uncovered the following emergent themes, which are also shown in Table 7: “growth each time I see them,” “they are excelling,” “I feel they have excelled.”

When discussing interview question number 1 with the advocates, it was apparent that they were excited by the students’ progress throughout the years. However, there were a few students that did have difficulty upholding the academic expectations of the school and did not show the anticipated growth necessary. As Interview 3 explained:

Only a couple of students had to go on SAP (Satisfactory Academic Plan) where they needed help. Sometimes they were just overwhelmed or decided to take on a job in addition to the stress of a new setting. Once they get settled, they are fine. Some have fallen below the academic standard. However, working with me, the advisors from their department major, and the various study labs we have set up has proven to provide them with what it takes to be successful. (Interview 3)

Interview 3 works in the college financial aid office. His position is to help the An Achievable Dream students with finding additional financial assistance, work with the students to find academic resources if necessary, and connect students with other departments, particularly to advisors. This individual is critical to the success of the students due to the nature of his position. He is first to know if trouble lies ahead.

Although the students did not initially perform to the college expectations, there was growth shown once the student was assisted. Some started out challenged, but worked hard to get to what is expected from them by the college. They have not, as a whole, shown a lack of accomplishment. (Interview 2)

This growth was measured by the performance of the student after he or she performed poorly. In the first case, the student fell below satisfactory academic guidelines of the college. Once the student developed a plan to increase his or her GPA, the student was able to focus on a target and pulled through.

Unfortunately, there were cases in which the student could not make the necessary changes to meet the academic challenges of college. The following statement by college student advocate Interview 1 represents this finding:

Some did not apply themselves well at first. They tend to sway. It's very few that I deal with that are not able to overcome the challenges, but there have been a few. Usually when this has occurred there have been extraneous circumstances associated with the failure. The example that I'm thinking of had more to do with the inability of the student to feel comfortable in such a large school setting. This pressure took a toll on this young lady academically. (Interview 1)

Interview 4 combined the academic accomplishment to the social ability (inability to feel comfortable). This is a phenomenon that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

"Sometimes when a student fails it is the first time that they had to make changes on their own in order to turn circumstances around. I am here to help and to guide, but I cannot make every decision for them (nor am I around them enough to do that). The student's growth comes from failing and then making the appropriate accommodations to pull themselves back up to academic satisfaction. This is growth."

The following quote referred to a student at one of our longest standing partnership schools. According to the college student advocate, this particular student showed signs of culture shock from the beginning.

We had one incident in the 5 years that I have been working with the Dreamers. A student became desperate to make a grade. I could already tell he was culturally shocked by the size of the campus and the pressures associated with campus life. It was only a matter of time. He had to be brought in front of the student ethics committee in which he was suspended. This student has since returned and is doing better than ever. Sometimes you have to take two steps back before you can move forward. This student grew. He matured emotionally and academically. The growth process went hand-in-hand. (Interview 3)

The response from Interview 3 was heartfelt. He told the story of the young man above with sensitivity and understanding for the desperation of the student. He explained that the students are pressured by everyone, such as parents, outside family members, sometimes alumni, and other individuals who push the student until the student will do just about anything to ensure success. This too was a combination of academic and moral fortitude.

From these interviews with the college student advocates, it was apparent that the definition of academic growth varied from one interview participant to another. For example, one interview participant described the growth as maturation from the time the student entered the college to how they are performing today. Another interview participant commented that students were excelling, which is a form of growth. Additionally, one interview participant spoke of students adjusting to the differences

between high school rigor and college rigor. Once a student becomes accustomed to college expectations, they begin to take on more challenges and more difficult coursework. The understanding of growth was consistent throughout all of the interviews, yet the idea of when the growth was recognized varied in responses. In other words, some students maintained a strong academic mindset beginning the first day of school, while others struggled initially but were able to find the resources to make the necessary changes. Table 5 shows a summary of the college student advocates' responses to whether the college students have shown growth in academic achievement.

Table 5

Summary of College Student Responses to Growth of Academic Achievement and Emerging Themes

Interview Question	College Student Advocate	Response	Emerging Themes	Responded with Theme
Have the An Achievable Dream students shown growth in academic achievement (GPA, Credits earned, etc.)?	Interview 1	Yes, once they are here, they start pulling through. There is growth each time I see them.	Growth, Excel	Yes, Growth
	Interview 2	I think they have. I have been working with the kids over three years. The students have very good GPS's, they are excelling, and we have multiple services to assist when they need it.		Yes, Growth
	Interview 3	I feel they have excelled in a lot of areas in academic		Yes, Excel

	success. The bulk of the students have done well.	No
Interview 4	Without a doubt. We have never had an An Achievable Dream student fail academically. When they had set backs, they were able to get the help they needed to get back into good academic standing.	Yes, Growth
Interview 5	However, this only happened a few times. I think so. You have about 50% that meet the college standards during the first semester (their pace). Adjusting that pace and understanding the differences between high school and college sometimes takes that extra bit of time. So, for the most part, yes.	

A general theme that emerged from the college student advocate interviews was “growth.” Academic growth and adjustment is a concept that is challenged by many scholars due to the vagueness of what actually determines growth. Studying harder, maturing socially, and having the ability to adjust to new environments are some variables that are directly related to academic accomplishment. Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) explained,

The broader concept of academic adjustment involves more than simply a student's scholarly potential. Motivation to learn, taking action to meet academic demands, a clear sense of purpose, and general satisfaction with the academic environment are also important components of academic adjustment. (p. 281)

Academic growth in this evaluation is determined by the college student advocates' long-term experiences with college students. An Achievable Dream relies heavily on their ability to determine which student is in need of assistance and which are excelling on their own. Each student is different, and each student has individual needs.

In reviewing the artifacts and data (the grade point averages, the college expectations for new students, and the number of years the college student advocates have been working with the college students) that I collected, there were several variables that may have had an effect on the responses. One such variable is the college where the college student advocates are working versus where the college students attend. Different colleges have different services and expectations for the students to participate in order to get the whole experience. While one college requires the An Achievable Dream students to attend a Summer Academy prior to entering in the fall semester, another college encourages, but does not require, participation in a two-day orientation. Differences like these may have skewed responses from college to college. Attending a four week college orientation, such as the one VPI students are required to attend, enables students to become acclimated to the new learning environment, meet fellow students, and adjust to new teaching styles and requirements. This is in comparison to a student whose first day on campus is with thousands of other students checking in for the year. Some may describe this as overwhelming.

Moral

The moral component is another piece of the puzzle that is taught to the An Achievable Dream students through a variety of methods. It is the code of ethics, the principle of fairness, and the value system that individuals establish for themselves. The interview question posed to the college student advocates was: *Is it perceived that the An Achievable Dream students exhibits the moral codes of conduct compared with the college's expectations (i.e. plagiarism, adhering to school policies, and code of ethics)?*

Responses to this interview question from the college student advocates were complimentary and qualifying of the students' actions at college. For example, one stated, "I haven't heard anything negative, and I would be the first person someone would call. The students are very respectful, very well-mannered. Their level of respect surpasses most of our other students" (Interview 1). Interview 1 responded that he would be the first person to call if there was an issue with one of the An Achievable Dream students. This statement is strong, because the college where Interview 1 is employed is large. For the college student advocate to be confident enough to know that he would get a call of this caliber shows me that this person and this partnership is strong. Interview 1 responded that the respect observed surpasses most of the other students.

Another favorable remark attesting to the moral aptitude of the An Achievable Dream graduates came from Interview 2:

The aid that is provided usually helps ensure that students stay with the expectations of the college. However, even with these expectations, students tend to break rules and push limits. The An Achievable Dream students have not wavered in their behavior.

Interview 2 was candid throughout the entire interview. The An Achievable Dream graduates understand that breaking a rule could mean losing outside funding for college. There is no gray area in the partnership agreement when it comes to a student being removed from college based on behavior. The student is no longer eligible to receive scholarships.

Interview 3 gave further positive affirmations, saying, “The students are respectful, full of college spirit, and always ready to lend a hand.” This was followed up by stories of spirit week. He commented that not only did many of the college students from An Achievable Dream participate, but some won a few of the contest categories. He mentioned that he sent pictures of such events to An Achievable Dream for keepsakes.

We are very excited about this partnership. Our institution is always seeking students that are not only academically sound but possess strong, positive character traits. When the kids look good, we look good. Keep sending them to us! (Interview 4)

Meeting with the students on a regular basis, I believe, has helped them understand that we are a team. Being part of a team means looking out for each other. This characteristic is one we wish we could duplicate for all of our students. We have established a brotherhood. In fact, I have tried to make the meetings that we have an official club. The students are wonderful, they are determined, and they are individuals that my staff would look to hire. Having the closeness with the university aids in the development of pride for the college and internal pride. The students understand that if they do something uncharacteristic from the college expectations or the group’s expectations, we will all be disappointed. I

think at this age that is enough pressure for students making good decisions.

(Interview 5)

Interview 5 describes the partnership resources and abundance of opportunities. Leaving the An Achievable Dream program and entering the college program above appears to be a smooth transition. The college has offered many opportunities to grow socially, academically, and morally.

I found through analysis these five responses indicate that An Achievable Dream graduates have strong character and respect for others. Two of the five responses (40%) emphasized the students displaying strong character traits, and two of the five responses (40%) emphasized students displaying respect for others (Table 9). It was perceived by the college student advocates that the An Achievable Dream students exhibit the moral codes of conduct compared with the college's expectations. The responses were favorable, noting that the students were well-mannered, motivated to make good decisions, active in activities that involve others, abide by schools rules, and always willing to lend a hand. These moral characteristics and expectations are some that can be applied to any situation and application. "The educational system must prepare individuals to progress in each of these arenas of life. Therefore, character development must be seen as an organic process in the development of the material/physical, human/psychological, and spiritual/transcendental aspects of human being" (Huitt, 2004, p. 8).

Table 6 shows the college student advocates responses to the interview questions addressing moral development in students and the themes associated with each response.

Table 6

Summary of College Student Advocates Responses to Moral Interview Questions and Emerging Themes

Interview Question	College Student Advocate	Response	Emerging Themes	Responded with Theme
Is it perceived that the An Achievable Dream students exhibits the moral codes of conduct compared with the college's expectations (i.e. plagiarism, adhering to school policies, and code of ethics)?	Interview 1	I haven't heard anything negative, and I would be the first person someone would call. The students are very respectful. Very well-mannered. Their level of respect surpasses most of our other students.	Respectful, Positive character traits	Yes, respectful
	Interview 2	The aid that is provided usually helps ensure that students stay with the expectations of the college. However, even with these expectations, students tend to break rules and push limits. The An Achievable Dream students have not wavered in their behavior.		Yes
	Interview 3	Definitely. The students are respectful, full of college spirit, and always ready to lend a hand.		Yes, Respectful
	Interview 4	We are very excited		Yes, Positive

	about this partnership. Our institution is always seeking students that are not only academically sound but possess strong, positive character traits. When the kids look good, we look good. Keep sending them to us!	character traits
Interview 5	Most definitely. The students possess a strong character. A few of the students are so interested in fundraisers and helping others that I can't keep up. I am encouraging the girls to join sororities since this is a big part of their community service.	Yes, Strong character

These assertions are affirmations that An Achievable Dream students are making good impressions and good decisions, and that they are continuing to extend their learning throughout their college endeavors. Two themes emerged from the interview responses: strong character and respect. Respect was a social theme as well. There is truly a lot of crossover when it comes to social and moral values, and respect is definitely one of those character traits that can fit in either category.

One college student advocate provided the following response after responding positively to the initial question. This reference was contradictory the above responses.

There was one incident that I recall. The student was brought in front of the college's ethics committee. He was found guilty. The student was expelled from the college for one year. This student is back and doing better than ever.

Sometimes it takes a reality check. (Interview 3)

This particular incident was large in scale and, therefore, one that people will not forget.

Summary of Findings for Question 1

In addressing the evaluation question, there is significant data to conclude that the An Achievable Dream students are believed to be meeting the SAME (social, academic, and moral education) expectations to be successful in college. The data indicate the following:

- Socially, five college student advocates answered interview question 1 and 2. Four of the responses were affirmative (80%) in that they would consider the An Achievable Dream student socially adjusted. The following summarizes key ideas:
 - Respectful, appreciative.
 - Yes, clubs are geared towards the An Achievable Dream students and others want to join.
 - Yes, the bulk have participated.
 - It's been wonderful to see new friendship develop.
- Socially, one college student advocate answered with a reason of why it is important to join.
- Academically, five college student advocates answered the interview question pertaining to academic growth. Three of the five responses were affirmative

(60%) in that the An Achievable Dream students have shown growth. The following summarizes the key ideas:

- Yes, there is growth each time I see them.
 - They gave good grade point averages, they are excelling.
 - A lot are above average. The bulk have done well.
- Academically, two college student advocates (40%) answered that although they observed growth, it was only after they saw a decline in student development. In addition, one response was analyzed as being unclear on who did well and who did not.
- The interview question pertaining to moral was answered by all five college student advocates. All five answered positively to the perception that the An Achievable Dream students exhibits the moral codes of conduct compared to the expectations of the college. These responses are summarized below:
 - Students are respectful and very well-mannered. The respect surpasses most of our other students.
 - Students have never wavered in their behavior.
 - Definitely, students are respectful, full of college spirit, and always ready to lend a hand.
 - Excited, positive character traits, keep sending them.
 - Wonderful, determined, hireable.
- The college student advocates did not remark negatively when asked about the students' moral codes of conduct.

It is important to note that with all of the partnership schools (ODU, VPI, UVA, NSU, VMI, and JMU) there is a great deal of emphasis placed on camaraderie, teamwork, mentorship, and ethical developmental skills. Each year, the college student advocates work with the staff at An Achievable Dream to determine a schedule of meetings, dates for whole student gatherings, and celebrations. This will include mandated workshops that involve meeting support staff within the college, special guests, and leadership opportunities. If a student does not attend, a meeting is scheduled to discuss reasons why and how to change this in the future. However, what one school can manage financially, another one may not. There is variation throughout the partnership services. Students attending schools that are not part of the partnership do not receive the same services; therefore, there may not be the same student outcome.

The bottom line in analyzing the individual responses pertaining to the evaluation question is that college dynamics, college philosophies, college size, and college environments are all different, and emerging a common theme that comprises all students and their performances in general is difficult. Each of the interviewed college student advocates are coming from three different college settings. An Achievable Dream works closely with each of its' partnership schools in an effort to ensure consistency of resources for the college students.

Findings for Evaluation Question 2:

Do students believe their needs were met by the social, academic, and moral underpinnings of the program while attending An Achievable Dream?

The survey was distributed to 40 An Achievable Dream High School graduates who were attending college at the time of the survey administration. The student survey

yielded a 66.66% response rate, as 40 students responded. The open-ended responses of this research study were analyzed and are presented in this section. The survey responses were entered into Qualtrics. Results of the survey were exported to Excel and descriptive graphing was created to show the response data (see Appendix G). The Likert Scale responses ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.' Students could also choose to answer 'no response.' The responses to Evaluation Question 2 are described here under the three themes: social, academic, and moral.

Social

The indicators for Evaluation Question 2 were Likert Scale survey statements 4, 5, 6, and 10, which directly referenced communication with people on campus (administrative staff, students, and professors) and the joining of organizations. One of the major factors that determine success in college, especially in the first year, is emotional stability. When students have difficulty making friends, struggling to feel part of something larger, and experiencing something other than what was described as being the best years of their life (experiencing fear, instead), it can turn into feeling disheartened and futile (Heffernan, 2015). The four statements presented to the students were created to determine the sense of comfort or anxiety that may have developed upon admittance to the school.

Effective communication is essential for students entering a setting where there is a need for strong independence and self-confidence. Fostering good communication skills enables students to work with the varying departments necessary to pay tuition, seek additional financial resources through major degree programs, proactively seek academic assistance when necessary, make friends and work in study groups, and work with

professors throughout the semester to ensure success. The students responded to the following statements with a 95% “strongly agree” and “agree” rate. Thirty-seven out of 40 students responded that they do believe An Achievable Dream prepared them for communicating effectively to navigate their college experience. Table 7 is a breakdown of each of the statements associated with the social framework.

Table 7

Summary of Student Survey Results Responses Related to Social Performance

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Standard Deviation
4. An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with college staff (i.e. financial aid department, student accounts, etc.).	16 41%	21 53%	1 2%	1 2%	1 2%	.66
5. An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with other students.	17 43%	18 46%	3 7%	1 2%	1 2%	.73
6. An Achievable Dream prepares you for communicating with professors.	14 35%	22 56%	3 7%	0	1 2%	.60
10. An Achievable Dream was consistent in encouraging	12 30%	23 58%	3 7%	1 2%	1 2%	.68

*students to join
organizations/
volunteer
opportunities.*

Although the results of the above statements were strongly reflective of the students believing that their needs were met, three students responded negatively. Students' responses for survey question 4 consisted of one strongly disagree, one disagree, and one chose not to respond, equating to a 4% disapproval rate. Responses for question 5 consisted of one strongly disagree, three disagree, and one no response, yielding a 9% disapproval rate. Question 6 had three disagree responses, which is a 7% disapproval result. Question 10 had three disagree and one strongly disagree result, equating to a 9% disapproval rate.

Academic

Indicators for Evaluation Question 2 were Likert Scale survey statements 1, 2, and 3. These survey statements captured how academically prepared students felt entering college (academic achievement, strategies to support good study skills, and previous coursework to prepare to college coursework). The high school-college disconnect in academic expectations and academic performance is clearly reflected by the number of college students enrolled in remedial classes and the number for course failures during the first semester (Smith & Wertlieb, 2005). The three survey statements were created to target student perceptions of preparedness and achievement. The survey responses were entered into Qualtrics, and results were exported to Excel. Descriptive graphing was created to show the response data (see Appendix G). The Likert Scale responses ranged

from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Students could choose to answer “no response.”

Table 8 shows the strong response rate for student perceptions regarding how academically prepared students believe they feel at college.

Table 8

Summary of Student Survey Results Related to Academic Performance.

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Standard Deviation
1. An Achievable Dream provided you with the tools to prepare you to achieve academically in college.	28 70%	12 30%	0	0	0	.46
2. An Achievable Dream provided you with strategies to support good study skills at college.	23 58%	15 37%	2 5%	0	0	.57
3. The courses you took at An Achievable Dream prepared you for courses and content taken at college.	15 37%	23 58%	2 5%	0	0	.57

For a student to believe that their academic needs were met in preparation to go to college, students would have to be confident enough with their academic progress or

have a strong sense of self-reflection to determine if they were unprepared and not working to their potential while at college. Incidentally, the survey results indicated a high degree of satisfaction with student preparation. The students indicated that they believe they had the tools for being prepared to achieve academically (70% strongly agreed, 30% agreed). This calculation meant that 100% of the students surveyed indicated that they believed they were prepared academically. This first question was answered by every student. No one choose to not respond, and no one answered with disagree or strongly disagree response.

The second survey statement regarding good study skills was answered by every student (40 responses). Fifty-eight percent of the students believed that An Achievable Dream provided them with strategies to support good study skills at college, and 37% of students agreed. Additionally, two students disagreed with this statement.

The third statement pertaining to course and content preparation was answered by all 40 students. Thirty-eight percent of the students responded strongly agree, 58% responded agree, and 5% responded disagree. An Achievable Dream teaches only honors course (instead of standard coursework) and advanced placement course selection available for student enrollment. Both of these types of courses are weighted. Students do not have the opportunity to take standard level coursework, and advance placement courses are encouraged for all students in grades 9-12. Honors and advanced placement courses are encouraged for many reasons. These courses are weighted which means a grade of a C and quickly turn into a B (depending on the numerical score for the honors course). Also, colleges encourage students to take advanced placement courses in order to

compete with other students from around the globe for admittance to competitive colleges.

Moral

Indicators for Evaluation question two were Likert Scale survey statements 7 and 8. These survey statements reflect the moral component taught through the An Achievable Dream SAME program. Following rules and regulations and treating others with respect is the focus of these statements. Students responded with 100% participation on both statements.

Survey statement 7 had a 47% strongly agree response and a 50% agree response. This was almost a perfect split between strongly agree and agree (19 responses for strongly agree and 20 responses for agree). One student responded that they disagreed that An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations.

Survey statement 8 pertains to treating others with respect. Sixty percent of students responded that they strongly agree the An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make good decisions regarding treating others with respect, and 40% of students responded that they agree with this statement. This, again, accounted for 100% of the student responses, as no one responded with disagree or strongly disagree. Table 9 illustrates a breakdown of these results.

Table 9

Summary of Student Survey Results Related to Moral Aptitudes

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Standard Deviation
7. College and campus life offers many social opportunities. An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations.	19 47%	20 50%	1 3%	0	0	.55
8. An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make decisions regarding treating others with respect.	24 60%	16 40%	0	0	0	.50

In summary, the second evaluation question sought to identify whether An Achievable Dream graduates believed their needs were met by the social, academic, and moral underpinning of the program. The student survey indicated that a high percentage of students believe their needs were met as indicated by responses of agree and strongly agree. However, it is important to note that in several instances, one or more students indicated disagreement. Thus, there is evidence of some variability in students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the SAME program in terms of college outcomes. There are some areas for improvement in order for students to believe they are more prepared for college expectations.

Findings for Evaluation Question 3:

What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluation of the An Achievable Dream program's goals based on (a) academic progress in college; (b) how comfortable students felt during their experience at college; and (c) students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff?

The third evaluation question sought to identify the similarities and differences in the perception of the An Achievable Dream's program based on the interviews of the college student advocates and the college students who were surveyed. There were quite a few similarities and very few differences regarding their perceptions of the An Achievable Dream program's goals. The indicator similarities and differences of each of the categories are separated by mode of evaluation study (interview and survey).

Academic Progress in College

The similarities of the college student advocates and student perceptions of the An Achievable Dream academic program based on academic progress in college indicated the following:

- All five college student advocates interviews indicated that students were being prepared academically.
- The three survey statements (1, 2, and 3) directly relating to the students' perceptions of whether the An Achievable Dream program met their needs indicated a high percentage of students answering favorably.
 - Question 1 resulted in 100% of students responding strongly agree and agree.

- Question 2 resulted in 95% of students responding strongly agree and agree.
- Question 3 resulted in 95% of students responding strongly agree and agree.

The differences between the college student advocates and the students' perceptions of the An Achievable Dream academic program meeting the students' needs were the following:

- Where all of the college student advocates believed that the students' needs were being met by the An Achievable Dream's program, four students felt their needs were not met. Four students responded unfavorably to the questions relating to academics (two students responded that they disagreed that An Achievable Dream provided them strategies to support good study skills at college, and two students disagreed that the An Achievable Dream prepared them of courses and content taken at college). In analyzing the surveys, there were only two students that responded with disagree or strongly agree in more than one area.

Tables 10 & 11 show the comparison of similarities and differences between the interview and survey responses.

Table 10

Comparison of Similarities Between Interview and Survey Responses

Evaluation Question: What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluation of the An Achievable Dream Program's goals based on the following:	College Student Advocate Interview Responses	Student Survey Responses
Academic Progress in School,	There is growth each time. Good GPA's. They are excelling.	Believed prepared academically Strongly Agree/Agree (40) 100% Believed had strategies to support good study skills Strongly Agree/Agree (38) 95% Believed high school courses and prepared you for college Strongly Agree/Agree (38) 95%
How comfortable students felt during their experiences at college,	Involved in social clubs, well-rounded. Participates in activities. Respectful, prompt, well-mannered.	Feel encouraged to join organizations Strongly Agree/Agree (35) 89% Believed moral component helped make good decisions to follow rules Strongly Agree/Agree

		(39) 97%
		Believed moral component helped make good decisions to treat others with respect Strongly Agree/Agree (40) 100%
Students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff.	Well-Mannered. Respectful.	Communicating Effectively with Admin. Staff 37 Students Strongly Agree/Agree (37) 94%
		Communicating Effectively with other students. Strongly Agree/Agree (35) 87%
		Communicating Effectively with Professors. Strongly Agree/Agree (36) 90%

Table 11

Comparison of Differences Between Interview and Survey Responses

Evaluation	College Student	Student Survey Responses
Question: What are the similarities and differences in the perceptions of college student advocates and the perceptions of students in their evaluation of the An Achievable Dream Program's goals based on the	Advocate Interview Responses	

following:		
Academic Progress in School	Some students performed poorly at first but were able to turn it around.	Believed had strategies to support good study skills Disagree (2) 5%
	Students were reported to have to go on SAP.	Believed high school courses and prepared you for college Disagree (2) 5%
How comfortable students felt during their experiences at college,	Felt that students took chances, started making friends outside original circle, joined clubs and organizations.	Feel encouraged to join organizations Disagree (1) 2%
Students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff.	Well-mannered, respectful	Communicating Effectively with Admin. Staff 37 Students Strongly Strongly Disagree/Disagree (2) 4%
		Communicating Effectively with other students. Strongly Disagree/Disagree (4) 9%
		Communicating Effectively with Professors. Strongly Disagree/Disagree (4) 9%

How comfortable students felt during their experiences at college. The similarities of the college student advocates interview data and the college students' survey data all reflected the social indicators. The following data reflect this interpretation:

- Four of the college student advocates interviews (question 3 and 4) were favorable, all indicating that the students displayed respect, volunteered for campus activities, participated in group organizations, and showed interest in clubs.
- The student survey questions 7 & 8 provided data to answer the question regarding how comfortable students felt during their experiences at college.
 - Question 7 and 8 pertained to good decision making in social event setting and treating others with respect. Students responded favorably to these indicators (question 7 had a 98% agreement rate and question 8 had a 100% agreement rate)

The differences in the college student advocate perceptions and the student perceptions regarding how comfortable the students felt during their experience at college were the following:

- College student advocates responded that students were quiet, and at one time there was concern that the students would not reach beyond the friends that were part of their high school crowd. In addition, there was an individual situation where a student had an altercation with a peer.
- One incident regarding a physical altercation was mentioned by the college student advocates. This would be characterized as a situation where the student did not make a good decision.
- The student survey statement results indicated that one student (3%) did not believe that an Achievable Dream's program help them make good decision, and 4 students (11%) indicated that An Achievable Dream was not consistent in

encouraging students to join organizations/volunteer opportunities. This could stem from a variety of reasons. Was the student comfortably active at An Achievable Dream and then had difficulty in college? Was the college environment overwhelming for the student? These factors could be critical to the student's behavior. Also, the college student advocates are not around the students each and every day. The responses given by the college student advocates could be surface only, and the student is under the radar when around these individuals.

- There is a contradiction to the responses of the college student advocates who responded that the students are involved with specific clubs geared toward An Achievable Dream, that the An Achievable Dream students have volunteered to be part of campus social events, and that many students were active on campus.

Students' ability to communicate effectively with college staff. The following data reflect the similarities among the college student advocates interview data and the college student survey data:

- All five college student advocates perceived that the An Achievable Dream students were respectful and self-motivated.
- The student indicated for the effective communication indicators were analyzed from questions 4, 5, and 6.
 - Question 4 pertained to effective communication with college staff. This survey statement indicated a 94% favorable response rate.
 - Question 5 pertained to effective communication with other students. This survey statement indicated a 89% favorable response rate.

- Question 6 pertained to effective communication with professors. This survey statement indicated a 91% favorable response rate.

The differences in the perceptions of the college student advocates and the college student were the following:

- Although there was significant similarities between the college student advocate data and the college students survey data, there was an incident that was described by one of college student advocates as being severe and worthy of extreme circumstances. This was an outlier.
- 100% of the college student advocates indicated that students were perceived to be comfortable talking to college administration, professors, and other students on campus. However, the college students answered this differently. Twenty-five percent of the students (combined responses) indicated that they did not feel comfortable.

The interviews and the surveys conducted with this unique group of individuals provided a comprehensive description of student behavior and academic success as well as an understanding of how students of An Achievable Dream perceive the value of their grade school education and how it has made a difference (or not) in their college endeavors.

It is difficult to determine if the students from An Achievable Dream are getting exactly what they need socially, academically, and morally from the sample of students in this study. Forty students completed the survey. Five college student advocates completed the interviews, but all of the students who completed the survey are not attending the partnership colleges. The colleges they attend do not have an individual looking after them on a daily basis. Understanding what behaviors the students possess at

these other schools would only be determined by looking at grades and incidents, if any. It is reasonable to say that determining the reasons why students are successful or not successful can be captured by the partnership colleges only, at this time. The students from other colleges can only be tracked by grades to determine success.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided a descriptive analysis of two data sources—an interview with five college student advocates and a survey completed by current college students who graduated from An Achievable Dream. These findings were used to inform the three evaluation questions. It was evident that college student advocates perceived the college students to be utilizing the social, academic, and moral values taught at An Achievable Dream. Socially, the students were perceived as being respectful and active. Specific examples observed were student participation in clubs and activities, volunteering for special campus activities, and positive interactions with fellow students. Academically, the students were perceived as showing growth and excelling in coursework. There was a separation of those students who have performed well from the start and continue to excel from those students who may have struggled at first but were able to pull themselves together and get back on track. Morally, students were perceived as being respectful and displaying strong character. Students were observed volunteering, showing school spirit, respecting themselves and others, and following the rules of the college. There were specific incidents in which these moral values were compromised; however, in the two cases mentioned, the students were able to show remorse and returned to the college for new beginnings. It is also evident that college students responded favorably to believing that their needs were met by the An Achievable Dream's social, academic, and moral

underpinnings of the program while in attendance. Socially, students responded that they were prepared to effectively communicate with administrative staff, other students, and professors (94%, 89%, and 91% respectively). Academically, students responded favorably to having the tools to prepare them to achieve, to having the strategies to support good study skills at college, and were prepared for the courses and content taken at college (100%, 95%, and 95% respectively). Morally, students responded favorably to An Achievable Dream helping them make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations and helping make good decisions regarding treating others with respect (97% and 100% respectively). Chapter 5 will discuss these findings, including the implications of successes and challenges with teaching of the social, academic, and moral program. Documents such as grade point averages spreadsheets and college advocate job descriptions (which are different at every school) will be discussed. Additionally, implications for changing current practices to target specific needs of the students will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this mixed-method evaluation study was to explore and analyze the reflections of the college student advocates and the college students who graduated from An Achievable Dream. These participants provided data regarding the An Achievable Dream's social, academic, and moral program that is implemented at the K-12 levels in Newport News, Virginia. The study sought to identify areas of success and challenges that high school graduates attending college may have encountered. Examining the successes and difficulties are the first steps to targeting the needs to be focused on in earlier years of education. Findings from the study and recommendations for the program are provided in this chapter.

Lack of adequate research in determining the tools high school students need to positively affect their college outcomes is a growing national concern. For many years, the United States has been compared to other countries educationally. Mathematics and science were a great concern, now the focus is on graduation rates. Although there are many reasons for the differences (U.S. laws protect the education of all students, not just selected children as others countries have been accused of) the fact remains that the United States must continue to address current practices in hopes to compete internationally.

We used to lead the world in high school graduation rates; we are now 16th. The most recent scores from the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) show that U.S. 15-year-olds rank 24th of 30 developed countries in mathematics, 17th in science, and 17th in reading.....ACT has found that only 25 percent of the 1.3 million American students who took the ACT in 2007 are ready for entry-level college courses in English, mathematics, social science, and natural science. Furthermore, 20 percent are not prepared for college coursework in any of the four subject areas. (ACT, 2008, p. 3)

School districts across the country are recognizing the immediate need to implement programs to assist high school graduates in their quest for post-secondary education. This is a direct response to college and university initiatives to ensure that students have services at the varying institutes to assist in academics and in acclimating to the new environment.

Every year in the United States, nearly 60% of first-year college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not prepared for post-secondary studies. This gap between college eligibility and college readiness has attracted much more attention in the last decade, yet it continues to persist (Adams, 2013). In addition, years of hard work has gone into the research of how to assist practitioners at the high school level and adopt more complex models to ensure student success at the college level.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is working with government and education leaders and with Achieve, Inc., in a number of states to promote policy changes to increase college readiness of students. SREB has developed a model

college readiness agenda including six components, all of which must be addressed if state efforts are to be comprehensive, systemic, and effective. At the heart of this agenda is the adoption of specific, statewide college readiness standards that influence classroom instruction from middle school through high school in fundamental ways. (Adams, 2013, p. 1)

This is one of the most recent initiatives to tackle the issue of college readiness.

Indicators Perceived by College Student Advocates and College Students

The college student advocates who participated in this study provided a wide range of examples of student performance, participation, and interaction throughout the college campus. The interviews highlighted a number of themes that were consistent among all of the college student advocates. It should be understood that these individuals work directly with the students and have daily interactions in the form of phone calls, one-on-one conferences, emails, and texts. Therefore, the college student advocates are a great resource for understanding the growth of the college students at the partnership schools. However, some of the students in the study who participated in the survey attend colleges that are not part of An Achievable Dream's partnership colleges. This means that there is not an individual on campus who has a particular interest in the student and is holding that student accountable. Nonetheless, these students are thriving in the college environment without the additional resources. Therefore, it is critical that students enter college with a variety of soft skills (time management, working as a team player, respect for others, and the belief that they can be successful).

Social component. The social framework implemented at An Achievable Dream incorporates self-control activities and practices for all grades K-12. These skills have

been created to be age appropriate and provide a great deal of variation for students.

Some of the key variables associated with the social framework are working in groups to complete a task, volunteering for community service projects, mentoring younger students, and helping create a safe and orderly environment.

College student advocates indicated that the college students performed well in socialization. Emergent themes that came out of the interviews were the following: Respectful and Active. The students were described as being respectful and appreciative for being helped in a variety of settings from financial aid assistance and course schedules, to academic assistance. Students were described as well-mannered and frequently offering to lend a hand. Students were also viewed as being active around the campus. They participated in clubs, social activities, and special events on campus. It was even said that students who were not part of the An Achievable Dream cohort wanted to join some of the organizations created just for the An Achievable Dream students. Without these soft skills, the college students would not have performed as well as the college student advocates explained. These skills promoted those of influence (staff members, administration, and organizers of special events) to view the An Achievable Dream students as stand-outs. In other words, the students not only ensured that they were being perceived as ideal college students, but they also helped solidify the growth of the partnership between the colleges and An Achievable Dream. The students become ambassadors for the program. Closing the achievement gap also takes into the equation how others view students who come from diverse backgrounds and show that they belong in an environment saturated by other classes. The literature states that one of the biggest challenges in college readiness is the disparity in preparation for certain racial and low-

income college students (ACT, 2013). The partnerships between the An Achievable Dream program and certain colleges have been able to focus on these concerns and provide resources to support student success.

Although the college student advocates praised the social abilities of the college students, there were a few characteristics that drew a negative reaction. One interview documented the use of the word “soft spoken.” When this language was used, there was a strong sense of the students not being vocal enough. This characteristic is one that is developed at a young age, and one that An Achievable Dream attempts to overcome. An Achievable Dream works with students to develop their voice and to be proactive instead of reactive and timid. Being self-motivated to address difficult situations (financial, academic, or a social setting) with a strong, mature voice is at times critical to getting a message across. The literature deems it necessary to support multiple areas of a student’s intellect and growth; and effort and energy are direct correlations to engagement or disengagement (Jensen, 2013). A student’s ability to vocally engage in a topic or a discussion, become excited about learning, yet challenged, are critical to the success and vitality of a student’s progression through college.

Through analysis of the student surveys, 94% of the students believe that An Achievable Dream prepared them for communicating effectively with college administrative staff, 89% of the students believed that they were prepared for communicating effectively with other students, and 91% believed that they were prepared for communicating effectively with professors. These data are significant in the verification of a student’s comfort level with communication skills. It is also a strong indication that students have the ability to verbalize their concerns and needs as they

pertain to academics, socialization, and personal care. When compared to the emerging themes that transpired from the college student advocate interview responses, having respectful interactions and being active in social settings are instrumental in the student's personal reflections of communication comfort levels. If students were not comfortable communicating, participating in activities and functions on campus would be difficult. However, although most of the students indicated that they believed that they were prepared to communicate effectively, nine students indicated that they did not feel they were prepared. Two students indicated that they disagreed that they were prepared to communicate effectively with college staff, four students indicated that they were unprepared to communicate effectively with other students, and three students indicated that they were unprepared to effectively communicate with professors. There could be many reasons for the difference in perceptions. Students who disagree could be individuals who can make strong attempts to speak with the prescribed individuals, but they felt internal conflict with this interaction. In addition, students may not be confident in their abilities to communicate, but the training they received at An Achievable Dream prepared them to make the transition in certain circumstances.

Academic component. An Achievable Dream provides a rigorous high school curriculum. All students are exposed to honors level classes, and the majority of students have been enrolled in at least one advanced placement class before reaching the 12th grade. Table 12 shows a sample of the 2014-2015 Honors and Advanced Placement data for An Achievable Dream High School.

Table 12

2014-2015 Honors and Advanced Placement data

Strategic Goals for An Achievable Dream	2014-2015 Results
25% will complete one AP class during freshman year	39%
30% will complete one AP class during sophomore year	67%
50% will complete one AP class during junior year	76%
50% of students complete a dual enrollment course	40%

Preparing students academically entails providing course options that meet the needs of college-bound students. In addition to these course options, An Achievable Dream also offers dual enrollment courses for students that meet the criteria. Unfortunately, rigorous course offerings in high schools are difficult to build due to the qualifications necessary for teaching such courses. A teacher must have a master's degree specifically in the concentration area (or 18 hours). The school only has a certain number of teacher allocations available. Certain courses cannot be scheduled without these criteria met. In other words, offering students coursework to prepare them for college studies is not as simple as it may appear. The literature describes the difficulty in ensuring that students in low-income areas receive the same educational opportunities as students in more affluent school districts. "To close achievement gaps, schools need funding that is equitable—funding that accounts for the fact that it simply costs more to educate low-income students, many of whom start school academically behind their more affluent peers" (Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015, p. 4). To make matters worse, school districts with less desirable schools usually do not employ the best teacher candidates (or qualified candidates) for these positions. The students often lose. The literature describes schools such as KIPP Academy and Success Academy and their ability to attract

dedicated teachers. Finding educators who want to work in certain less-desirable, financially strapped districts is difficult. Those who are committed come few and far between. The literature review also emphasizes the disparity among schools with monetary funding versus schools in low-income areas and the challenges that precede it. ACT (2013) provided data addressing the disparity in preparation for certain racial and ethnic sub-groups, as well as low-income and first-generation college students.

The research emphasizes the lack of preparedness of African American students, especially those in high-poverty schools. As the literature suggests, “Far too frequently, African American students are thought to be unfit for college and directed to low-wage work or trade schools following high school completion” (Bryant, 2015, p. 2). The measurement is a mix of various testing agents to include SAT scores, Advanced Placement course exams, graduation rates, and high school exit exams. These discouraging statistics are offset by what the An Achievable Dream program provides for students. The college student advocates were in agreement that the college students were prepared academically and proved to be resilient when challenged by academic struggles.

Common themes associated with student academic analysis include excelling and growth. College student advocates perceived that academic growth was observed through analyzing students’ grade point averages, working with professors, attending study labs, and maintaining satisfactory progress in majors. Although some of the growth predictors were the reactions to student progress after there was a dip in performance expectations, growth was measured as the result of remediation efforts. After students realized the ramifications of not performing to the university academic standards, students began utilizing the various resources throughout campus. College student advocates recognized

the academic growth of the student after such measures were utilized. College student advocates also emphasized that students (students who did not show a dip in performance) excelled throughout the year. The responses were reflective of the students' high grade-point averages and the positive feedback from those who work with the students throughout the year. An important point to note is that the college student advocates did not specifically identify the students who excelled right away or the students who dipped before they showed growth. In other words, depending on the number of years the students were in college could have determined whether they were excelling or just picking up academic momentum. College student advocates play an essential role in student achievement verification.

With the partnership schools, it is vital to maintain certain grade point averages (along with course credits) in order to receive certain scholarships earmarked for An Achievable Dream students. Graduating from high school with the tools to begin a new challenge is one step, but continuing to maintain a high level of academic growth and achievement utilizing these tools (and gathering more for the toolbox) is paramount.

Moral component. Those who have worked at An Achievable Dream since the program's inception describes the moral component as "Making the right decision when no one is looking." The moral component encompasses the shared belief about student success; it is the internal drive that everyone can learn. It is the instilled values that students need to be good citizens. This character trait is taught through a program known as Ethics. This particular skill must be developed in order to make good decisions (even when no one is looking), create a sense of integrity, and serve as a role model and a good citizen for an inspiration to others. The literature review identifies the need to focus on

more than just academics and stresses the need to teach the whole child (holistic approach). Eric Jensen identified the need for strong vocabulary, effort and energy, relationships, and the ability to manage stress as key success indicators (Jensen, 2013). The moral component taught at An Achievable Dream is one that is difficult to measure especially outside the realms of the school in which the students were part of for many years. An Achievable Dream thrives on providing students with an environment rich in purpose, developmental scholastic learning opportunities, and purposeful social enactment. When a student returns home from this environment, the moral dynamics change and he transforms into an individual that is able to survive within the home constraints. Moreover, when a student enters college, the ethical domain changes and students begin to adapt to the type of environment that exists at college. Thereby, ethics is formed within groups based on what is accepted by the whole.

The college student advocates responded favorably to the interview question of whether students exhibit a moral code of conduct compared with the college expectations. Each of the five interviewees complimented the students' demonstration of respect and a high level of expectations for those with whom they came in contact. During these interviews, responses were interpreted as excited, positive, and thankful that the partnership existed between An Achievable Dream and the colleges. One of the college student advocates even commented that they were proud of the students' belief system outside of just being academically sound. Interview 4 said "When the kids look good, we look good. Keep sending them to us!" The reality is that the students perform well academically when the moral underpinnings are strong. Feeling confident, trusting in others, and believing in a bureaucratic system of checks and balances becomes a

position of strength and purpose. Students need a belief system and a sense of accomplishment. Eric Jensen (2013) explained that students who experience chaos, stress, and insecurity often have no desire to try or to win. Instilling strong morals in students sets the stage for greater challenges.

Although analysis of the college student advocates' interview responses was valuable, also addressed was the question of whether there was evidence suggesting that the moral code of conduct was compromised. An important factor to consider in analyzing data regarding college students is their age. The data from the college student advocates is weighed equally, whether the student is a first year college student or a fourth year college student. Interview questions regarding how socially and morally competent a student is perceived could have much to do with the number of years they have been attending college. The maturation of students entering college at 18 years old varies on so many levels. Some students are mentally and physically prepared for college, but others are not. Whether it is a matter of blooming late, the absence of parental involvement, or not ready but being pushed into a collegiate situation, going off to college is not a declaration of independence. (Hartwell-Walker, 2015) Having the tools to make good decisions, thus making those good decisions each and every time is arduous. Moral fortitude is also the ability to get back on your feet after falling down. Learning from mistakes and not making them again is evidence of sustained growth. Individuals are driven by a core compass. Setting high expectations for themselves, living under a value system that ensures justice for all, and understanding that they are role models for others to aspire are the subsystems that drive success and self-worth.

Discussion

Through an evaluation of college student advocates and college students' perceptions of the impact of the SAME program at An Achievable Dream, findings show varying areas of college student competencies and deficiencies. There are key findings from the results of the interviews and surveys that will assist in developing the existing SAME program components and learning focus.

The results of this study focused on An Achievable Dream's framework and its impact on student success. The SAME model is comprised of three major components: social, academic, and moral education. This framework was created to address the needs of students who come to school with risk factors. These risk factors include impoverishment, living in areas of economic depression, and having family members with criminal backgrounds. Teaching students the established district grade-level curriculum, coupled with providing opportunities to develop strong morals, ethics, etiquette, conflict resolution, healthy living, and financial know-how, was the basis for the growing model.

When the An Achievable Dream was conceptualized and programs were developed, graduating high school seniors was the goal. Now there is a new goal, the goal of assisting college students (An Achievable Dream alumni) through their college careers. Thus, a new set of questions arise. Are the programs implemented at An Achievable Dream providing the students with the appropriate tools for college success? I determined that students pursuing college degrees were entering an arena laden with new environmental pressures (socially, academically, and morally). An interview of the college student advocates revealed that student social skills are essential to college life.

These skills expressed by the advocates take many forms to include working with fellow classmates and professors, getting along with peers, working and coordinating team assignments for coursework, asking for academic assistance, and utilizing resource labs and other services provided by the college. These social skills are seen to be essential to getting the most of the college experience.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2006) the vast majority of first-year college students are actively engaged in small groups and are expected to work with others inside and outside class on complex problems and projects. They are expected to make presentations and to explain what they have learned. In these courses, students are expected to be independent, self-reliant learners who recognize when they are having problems and know when and how to seek help from professors, students, or other sources. (Conley, 2007, p. 7)

Developing these skills is not a one-day course. These skills must be developed over a period of time (sometimes a life-time). Introducing skills of this nature early (as An Achievable Dream current does) is key, but it is also key to continue building upon these skills with age-appropriate activities leading up to college entrance. In addition, understanding what is appropriate to learn at grade nine versus what students need to know by grade 12 is essential to these learning tasks. As discussed in chapter two, An Achievable Dream lays the foundation for a number of social skills and moral aptitude development. These activities and opportunities strengthen student's skills in the areas of social, academic, and moral. Socially, the following components are implemented daily.

- 1) Students participate in a morning program reciting daily affirmations such as I must

learn to earn, I can go to college if I work hard, Believe in yourself, Nothing was ever achieved without enthusiasm, I will say no to drugs, I will say no to guns. 2) Students' uniforms are inspected each day. Merit points are given to students with perfect uniform inspections. These points are converted to money to purchase items from the An Achievable Dream bookstore. 3) All students participate in clubs. 4) Students rotate monthly through social rotations (Etiquette, Speaking Green, Conflict Resolution, Healthy Living, and Ethics). Academics are enhanced through a mandatory Intersession (4 week summer program for grades 3 – 10), mandatory Saturday School for students who are recommended based on a variety of assessment measures, and study programs during extended day school hours to ensure competencies in math, science, English, and social science. The moral component is a universal belief system that all students can and will succeed. The following activities have been built into the school day to help create culture rich in high expectations. 1) Corporate partners (consisting of corporations who contribute financially to the An Achievable Dream program) rotate through the classrooms on a monthly basis to discuss what it takes to succeed in their business. 2) Guest speakers discuss the latest global business developments. 3) Newport News Police Department shakes hands with every student who walks in the school each morning. This creates a sense of community and safety. 4) Newport News Sheriff Department works with middle school student every morning to inspect uniforms. 5) High school students are trained to be mentors and role models for younger students.

These SAME program components have been implemented into an eight and a half hour school day (this is an increase in school seat time from the standard six and a half hour day). However, students enter the school climate each morning and leave in the

afternoon. Even though many hours are attributed to the successful school climate at An Achievable Dream and the academic success of the students, students return each evening to an environment stricken with poverty and crime. Students must transform back to an individual that must do what it takes to survive until the school doors open the following day.

Analysis of the student surveys indicate that 100% of students (40 students) believe that they were provided with the tools to achieve academically in college, and 95% (38 students) believe that they were provided with strategies by An Achievable Dream to support good study skills at college. There were similarities when this data were compared to the emerging themes of the college student advocates' interview results (growth and excelling). Students believed that they were achieving academically. This shows growth and excelling in coursework. Growth can be assumed as coursework gets more difficult (as students register for higher level courses after the completion of entry level coursework) and students scaffold up to the next level. Without satisfactory progress, students would not be able to move forward. Student satisfaction was indicated by the data points. Student grade point averages were analyzed to determine the criteria to suggest successful completion. However, two students (5%) indicated they disagree that the An Achievable Dream provided them with strategies to support good study skills at college. Study skills are vital to academic success and endurance at college. Understanding why the students felt this way would provide a deeper analysis of current practices. The survey did not provide for additional comments.

This particular evaluation research study brings up the very questions that the nation is now investigating. For me, the study is the second one conducted that focused

on college student retention and the factors associated with college student success. Most interesting was that the emerging themes were the same highlighted in much of the research of previous studies. The pilot study that I conducted two years ago consisted of only 30 college student surveys. The questions associated with the survey covered a great deal more material and was not as focused on the social, academic, and moral components. Instead it was focused on college student behaviors and academic outcomes. This research took a more focused approach in an effort to drill down to the source of some general themes that have typically been the core of student success or failure. Interviews, surveys, previous semester student grades, and current status of student progress provided me with specific areas of focus to improve the academic success of the An Achievable Dream graduates.

In conducting the literature review, many of the categories and themes that were identified in this research support previous studies. Developing social skills is a top priority for Eric Jensen (2013) in understanding the factors that influence learners. Perkins et al. (2004) examined why social and moral competencies are critical to close that gap for students of poverty. They added that these competencies will also provide the answer to lowering crime and social service needs. Additionally, Berger (2010) attributes student success to the development of internalized values like respect, compassion, and discipline. Without this belief system, academic achievement does not stand a chance. When analyzing the interviews and the survey data, there were areas in which students felt they could have been better prepared or provided with better tools to ensure success. For example, two students felt that communication was difficult and two different students believed that they were not prepared for content and coursework. The college

student advocates also identified areas of weakness; for example, the incident where the student was brought in front of the college ethics committee. These examples show there is room for improvement. The literature stated, “African American students are less likely to succeed in college because the high schools they attend do not properly prepare them. Generally, high-minority schools, particularly those with significant numbers of low-income students, are lacking in several ways” (Bryant, 2015, p. 15). An Achievable Dream serves students that are classified as 100% free or reduced-price lunch. The student base is 98% minority, a high-minority school. Moreover, An Achievable Dream does have the resources to provide services to change these statistics. This is an extremely fortunate situation for this program (eliminating the financial barrier). However, even though there are several areas of strength with the current program, understanding what the current research indicates today will strengthen the program even more as efforts are made to build on the current teachings.

Implications for Practice

The findings demonstrate the common components of college preparatory programs that could provide success for students who are college-bound. Preparing students early (early high school and even in middle school) is now the thought of many scholars. It is no longer good enough to offer a checklist of preparation strategies in hopes that families work with their college-bound student prior to the first day of college.

Several studies of college faculty members nationwide, regardless of the selectivity of the university, expressed near-universal agreement that most students arrive unprepared for the intellectual demands and expectations of postsecondary. For example, one study found that faculty reported that primary

areas in which first-year students needed further development were critical thinking and problem solving (Lundell, Higbee, Hibb, and Copleland, 2004)” (Conley, 2007, p. 12).

This evaluation study aimed to evaluate how well An Achievable Dream is preparing students with the social skills necessary to acclimate in an unfamiliar environment, provide a rigorous academic environment, and provide opportunities to develop a moral compass to make good decisions.. One distinguishing factor that was highlighted by the college student advocates was the ability of the students for forging ahead, having initiative, and not giving up under challenging circumstances. Having these skills is the basis for problem solving and trying to think beyond what is directly in front of them (looking at the big picture). This will always be an area of growth for students, but the favorable responses can verify that An Achievable Dream is offering the students a solid framework for these practices.

Through the interviews and surveys, common themes were identified to promote college academic success. These include excelling, being active, showing respect, demonstrating academic growth, and possessing strong character traits. College students with these traits are perceived to display the characteristics of successful students. However, data show that preparing students academically in high school has not shown an increase in college readiness and success.

While course requirements for the high school diploma have increased in a number of states, they have yet to produce significant improvements in student performance in college (Conley, 2004). For instance, since 1987 many states have increased their mathematics and science requirements (Conley, 2007), but measures of

college graduation have not shown increases (ACT, 2013; Conley, 2004), nor have NAEP scores improved significantly (Conley, 2007). This lack of improved college success rates, even in the face of increasingly demanding high school graduation requirements, demonstrates how difficult it will be to achieve greater college success by simply having students take more prescribed courses without understanding what is being learned in those courses (Conley, 2007). An Achievable Dream, as previously mentioned, has a strong course base consisting of honors courses and advance placement courses. However, according to the research, these rigorous academic course offerings will not provide the full complement college ready skills students need without supplementing learning with social and moral skill building. Another important variable to consider about the outcome of the student's performance is the student's on-going struggle with family dynamics, permanent residency when not at college (going home for the weekends, holidays, and summer), and outside influences who do not have the same goals and aspirations (or means) that the students from An Achievable Dream have been able to maintain. In the past, these influences have been parents, siblings, relatives, friends from the neighborhood, and other individuals who live in the surrounding area. The difficult continues to exist when these outside influences contradict the teachings that the student has received over the many years at An Achievable Dream.

This mixed-methods evaluation study explored the perceptions of college student advocates of current freshman, sophomore, and junior college students who graduated from An Achievable Dream. It also explored An Achievable Dream college students' perceptions of the An Achievable Dream SAME program. There is affirmative research

evidence to support the An Achievable Dream SAME program and its effect on students going to college is making positive impressions on student achievement.

Implications for Future Research

As colleges continue to feel the impact of students entering their institutions unprepared for the rigors of coursework, changes in social status, and the independence associated with living on their own for the first time, high schools ramp up efforts to find specific tools to ensure students have the resources to advance to the second semester. The review of the literature indicates a strong need to ensure that students are prepared.

Research and data on disparities in high school policy and practice elevate an issue that is often ignored or discounted in education reform discussions. Far too frequently, African American students are thought to be unfit for college and directed to low-wage work or trade schools following high school completion. However, the primary reason these students lag behind their peers is that their schools provide inadequate course, resource, and supports. Better understanding of the differences in what low-minority and high-minority schools offer to students can provide a foundation for reforms that yield more college-ready students from all racial backgrounds. (Bryant, 2015, p. 2)

However, just pointing out that more needs to be done to assist students and prepare them for college is like diagnosing a problem, but not giving a solution. Do the students need skills such as coursework in math, a stronger vocabulary, stronger team building, the ability to ask for assistance, and the ability to never give up? Future research should identify specific skills that are strong indicators of success and build upon these as more data is available to determine the success rate. Focusing on one aspect of the social,

academic, and moral education components is not sufficient for students to succeed in college settings that require independency and determination. Academics is critical to enter a college program; however, to work through the daily routines of scheduling coursework, scheduling study sessions, working with college mates, establishing a lifestyle that is healthy and productive does not come from a text book. These are skills that have to be introduced early in a student's life and reflected upon regularly. The use of these soft skills is more of a tool that students utilize when necessary depending on the immediate need. Understanding what is expected of students in the future (socially and morally) is an immediate need in order to begin preparing students in much younger grades for college endeavors.

As the literature indicates, there is much data supporting the need to evaluate the way student from lower socio-economic status's and African American students are prepared for college and assisted once in college. As stated by Bryant (2015) typically students who were not seen as having the ability to afford college or who did not appear to have the typical characteristics of a college student would be steered in the direction of a trade school or a manual labor position. Today, the college student looks much different than what they looked like 10 years ago. College campuses are much more diverse in color and in socio-economic status. Preparations to understand the needs of students prior to entering college are as important as understanding the needs of these students once admitted to college. Cultural barriers, lack of family support (first-generation students), and breaking down the barriers of student acceptance are variables that need to be addressed.

The newest education act was signed by President Obama in December, 2015. The ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) will help ensure that students, parents, teachers, and administrators have the support to increase knowledge of resources to improve graduation rates and accountability, ensure that vital assessment data is available to measure student growth, and provide advancements for equity for American's disadvantaged and high-need students. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015) This Act references a new educational standard, but neglects the logistics and ramifications of not upholding such standards. There is a push to provide a standard of education that incorporates students of all backgrounds. The An Achievable has been targeting this group of students for over 20 years.

The two students who believed that they were not supplied with these tools are not significant in the current context; however, given a larger survey sample might increase the number of students who disagreed. Having the tools to achieve academically and having the study skill tools to achieve academically are similar tools. However, the same students who agreed that they were provided the tools to achieve academically (again, 100% agreed to this statement) responded with disagree to study tools. A factor to this difference could be the students' ability to remediate well, get assistance in labs, and communicate well with their professors to accommodate for lack of study skills. Furthermore, understanding this difference for future research would be beneficial to track this paradox.

The student survey data indicated that 98% of the students believed that An Achievable Dream's moral component helped them make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations, and 100% of students believed that An Achievable Dream's

moral component helped them make good decisions regarding treating others with respect. Only 1 student indicated that they disagreed with An Achievable Dream helping them make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations. Due to the nature of the question, the student that disagreed may have believed that a parent taught them moral responsibilities, or he may have had an incident where he made a poor decision. To understand this outcome, it would take complementing this question with additional questions to find out the reasons for disapproval. In order to strengthen the An Achievable Dream's moral component analysis is critical. Fine-tuning the strategies and practices associated with teaching moral values is essential to student success in college.

This study focused on four separate high school graduate years (2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015) of students who now attend college. In analyzing the surveys, it was clear that there was a difference in perceptions of student responses for students who were first year college students versus students who had been in college for four years. The closer students were to completing college coursework, the more favorable the responses. In contrast, students who were in their first year of college had less confidence in their abilities to be successful. The college student advocates stated multiple times that once the student began utilizing the available resources grades improved dramatically.

An Achievable Dream's SAME program has been in existence for 18 years. As the literature review describes, the programs created to provide students with the skills to be success are Speaking Green, Etiquette, Peaceful Conflict Resolution, Healthy Living, Financial Know How, and Ethics. The An Achievable Dream High School was created in 2007. The social, academic, and moral programs were created for grades K-8. Few changes have been made to accommodate college bound students. Future research for An

Achievable Dream should focus on college readiness through social and moral skill building. The partnerships with ODU, UVA, VPI, VMI, NSU, and JMU have increased the understanding of what it takes to succeed, but this is only a start to understanding student grade point averages and the number of years it takes An Achievable Dream students to complete college. Survey An Achievable Dream teachers would also provide a different perspective on the relevancy of program implementation and effectiveness at the grade school level. Starting this cognitive development early and determining what is working and what is not will be the next steps.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Table 2

<i>Interview Questions</i>	
Q	Interview Question
Q1	Have the An Achievable Dream students shown growth in academic achievement (GPA, credits earned, etc.)?
Q2	Have the An Achievable Dream students shown a lack of academic accomplishment?
Q3	Would you consider the An Achievable Dream student socially adjusted (respectful, coming to class on time, participating in clubs/extracurricular activities) ?
Q4	What evidence can you provide that may reveal that the An Achievable Dream students are not adjusting socially to the college setting?
Q5	Is it perceived that the An Achievable Dream students exhibits the moral codes of conduct compared with the college's expectations (i.e. plagiarism, adhering to school policies, and code of ethics)?
Q6	Have the An Achievable Dream students exhibited unethical behaviors?
Q7	Is there anything else you would like to add that relates to the students from An Achievable Dream?

Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter to Interview Respondents

I, _____, agree to participate with the interview on An Achievable Dream's impact on the student's success in college.

As a doctoral student in educational policy, planning, and leadership at the College of William and Mary, the researcher is interested in analyzing the perceptions of the social, academic, and moral program on the An Achievable Dream by the students. Your feedback will assist the program in making future decisions.

I understand that my participation will entail one interview, lasting approximately one hour. Following the interview, should additional clarification and/or elaboration be needed, I will be available for follow-up communication. If at any time I am uncomfortable answering a question or sharing my perceptions or perspectives, I understand that I can refrain from comment without consequence.

I understand that the researcher will protect the identities of participants through the use of pseudonyms in this and any future reports or publications. I understand that participants may be quoted directly in the study's results, but their names will not be used in any part of the report. Audio recordings will be used for data collection and analysis purposes only and will not become a part of the presentation of the study's results. All data will be stored in a secure location during the study, and will be destroyed after the study's results have been shared through publication and/or presentation. Furthermore, I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. Other individuals will not be made aware of my preference not to participate if I so choose and no consequences shall exist because of my refusal to participate. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence.

I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions with any aspect of this experiment to the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary, Dr. Thomas J. Ward, 757-221-2358. Also, any concerns may be directed to An Achievable Dream is interested in collecting data to determine parental satisfaction and the impact the program has on the student's families. Directed to the chair of this study, Dr. James Stronge, at 757-221- 2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. I am aware that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

My signature below signifies that I am at least 18 years of age, that I have received a copy of this consent form, and that I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Format Outline

- **Welcome**

Introduce facilitator **Topic and Purpose**

The results will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent involvement program at An Achievable Dream.

- **Review the Informed Consent Letter**

- **Guidelines**

- No right or wrong answers, only differing points of view.
- We are tape recording.
- Please answer fully, the more information you can provide, the better we can serve students.
- Rules for cellular phones and pagers, if applicable. For example: We ask that you turn off your phones. If you cannot and if you must respond to a call, please do so and rejoin us as quickly as you can.
- My role as facilitator will be to ask the interview questions and prompt deeper analysis.

Introductory Script

Good evening and welcome to our interview session. Thanks for taking the time to join me to talk about An Achievable Dream's social, academic, and moral program. My name is Amy Runge and assisting me is Pervis Blake. We're both employed by An Achievable Dream, Inc. and I am a doctoral student at the College of William and Mary.

You were invited because you indicated your willingness to participate when you received my email. There are no wrong answers. Please feel free to share your point of view even if you feel it may contradict the intent of the partnership. Keep in mind that we are just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.

You have probably noticed the microphone. We are tape recording the session because we do not want to miss any of your comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and we cannot write fast enough to get them all down. We will not use any names in our reports. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. If you decide this survey is not something you would not like to continue, please let us know.

Well, let us begin. I have placed a copy of the interview questions on the table in front of you to help assist you. Let us find out some more about each other by stating your name and title. Please add anything else you would like to share.

Appendix D

Survey Questions College Students

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable/I Do Not Know
Q1	An Achievable Dream provided you with the tools to prepare you to achieve academically in college.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q2	An Achievable Dream provided you with strategies to support good study skills at college.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q3	The courses you took at An Achievable Dream prepared you for courses and content taken at college.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q4	An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with college staff (i.e. Financial Aid Department, Student Accounts, etc.).	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q5	An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with other students.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q6	An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating with professors.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q7	College and campus life offers many social opportunities. An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helped you make good decisions regarding college rules and regulations.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q8	An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make decisions regarding treating others with respect.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q9	An Achievable Dream encouraged you to seek academic assistance when necessary.	4	3	2	1	N/A
Q10	An Achievable Dream was consistent in the encouraging	4	3	2	1	N/A

	students to join organizations/volunteer opportunities.					
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Appendix E

Informed Consent Letter to Survey Respondents

I, _____, agree to participate with the survey on An Achievable Dream's impact on the student's success in college.

As a doctoral student in educational policy, planning, and leadership at the College of William and Mary, the researcher is interested in analyzing the impact that the program has had on students attending college. Your feedback will assist the program in making future decisions.

I understand that my participation will take time to complete a survey, lasting approximately one hour. Following the survey, should additional clarification and/or elaboration be needed, I will be available for follow-up communication. If at any time I am uncomfortable answering a question or sharing my perceptions or perspectives, I understand that I can refrain from comment without consequence.

I understand that the researcher will protect the identities of participants through the use of pseudonyms in this and any future reports or publications. I understand that participants may be quoted directly in the study's results, but their names will not be used in any part of the report. Audio recordings will be used for data collection and analysis purposes only and will not become a part of the presentation of the study's results. All data will be stored in a secure location during the study, and will be destroyed after the study's results have been shared through publication and/or presentation. Furthermore, I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. Other individuals will not be made aware of my preference not to participate if I so choose and no consequences shall exist because of my refusal to participate. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence.

I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions with any aspect of this experiment to the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary, Dr. Thomas J. Ward, 757-221-2358. Also, any concerns may be directed to An Achievable Dream is interested in collecting data to determine parental satisfaction and the impact the program has on the student's families. Directed to the chair of this study, Dr. James Stronge, at 757-221- 2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. I am aware that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

My signature below signifies that I am at least 18 years of age, that I have received a copy of this consent form, and that I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix F

Research Participation Informed Consent Form

The College of William and Mary Education Department

Principal Investigators

This is to certify that I, Amy Runge, Director of Collegiate Services, have been given the following information with respect to the participation in this study:

1. Purpose of the research: The purpose of this evaluation study is to determine whether the current social, academic, and moral components emphasized and taught at An Achievable Dream provide the students entering post-secondary education with useful tools to adapt, persist, and succeed. The results of the study will be used to determine if the content of the curriculum should be changed to better assist students transitioning to college.
2. Procedure to be followed: Participants in this study will be asked to complete a 10 question survey or asked to answer seven interview questions.
3. Discomforts and risks: There are no known risks associated with the
4. Duration of participation: Participation in this study will take approximately 20 minutes to answer surveys or answer interview questions.
5. Statement of confidentiality: Your participation is confidential. The data you contribute to this research will be identifiable only by a number assigned by the experimenter. All data and records will be stored on a password-protected computer. All paperwork will be secured and disposed of once it has been input into a spreadsheet.
6. Voluntary participation: Participation is voluntary. Participants are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Participants may choose to skip any question or activity.
7. Incentive for participation: There is no monetary incentive.
8. Potential benefits: All research will be given to An Achievable Dream for future reference. Furthermore, your consent to allow the research to be started will contribute to the development of our understanding about the nature study.
9. Termination of participation: Participation may be terminated by the experimenter if it is deemed that the participant is unable to perform the tasks presented.
10. Questions or concerns regarding participation in this research should be directed to: Dr. James Stronge, 757-221-2339.

I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions with any aspect of this study to Dr. Thomas J. Ward, Ph.D., the Chair of the Protection Of Human Subjects Committee by telephone (757-221-2358) or email (tjward@wm.edu).

I agree to allow alumni and college affiliates to participate in this study and have read all the information provided on this form. My signature below confirms that participation in this project is voluntary, and that I have received a copy of this consent form

_____ date 2/28/2016

Signature

Yvette Pauling



date 2/28/2016

Witness

Appendix G

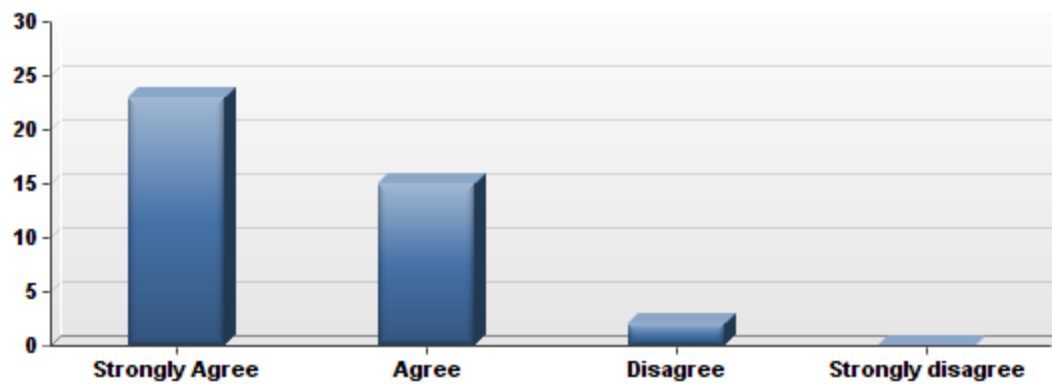
Student Survey

1. An Achievable Dream provided you with the tools to prepare you to achieve academically in college.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		28	70%
2	Agree		12	30%
3	Disagree		0	0%
4	Strongly disagree		0	0%
Total			40	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.30
Variance	0.22
Standard Deviation	0.46
Total Responses	40

2. An Achievable Dream provided you with strategies to support good study skills at college.






#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	<div></div>	23	58%
2	Agree	<div></div>	15	38%
3	Disagree	<div></div>	2	5%
4	Strongly disagree	<div></div>	0	0%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Total Responses	40





3. The courses you took at An Achievable Dream prepared you for courses and content taken at college.

#	Answer		Response	%
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1	Strongly Agree		15	38%
2	Agree		23	58%
3	Disagree		2	5%
4	Strongly disagree		0	0%
Total			40	100%





Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.68
Variance	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.57
Total Responses	40

4. An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with college staff (i.e. financial aid department, student accounts, etc.).

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		16	41%
2	Agree		21	54%
3	Disagree		1	3%
4	Strongly disagree		1	3%
Total			39	100%





Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.67
Variance	0.44
Standard Deviation	0.66
Total Responses	39

5. An Achievable Dream prepared you for communicating effectively with other students.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		17	44%
2	Agree		18	46%
3	Disagree		3	8%
4	Strongly disagree		1	3%
Total			39	100%





Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.69
Variance	0.53
Standard Deviation	0.73
Total Responses	39

6. An Achievable Dream prepares you for communicating with professors.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		14	36%
2	Agree		22	56%
3	Disagree		3	8%
4	Strongly disagree		0	0%
Total			39	100%



Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.72
Variance	0.37
Standard Deviation	0.60
Total Responses	39

7. College and campus life offers many social opportunities. An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make decisions regarding treating others with respect.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		19	48%
2	Agree		20	50%
3	Disagree		1	3%
4	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
Total			40	100%



Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.55
Variance	0.31
Standard Deviation	0.55
Total Responses	40

8. An Achievable Dream's "Moral" component helps you make decisions regarding treating others with respect.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		24	60%
2	Agree		16	40%
3	Disagree		0	0%
4	Strongly disagree		0	0%
Total			40	100%





Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.40
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	40

9. An Achievable Dream encouraged you to seek academic assistance when necessary.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		21	54%
2	Agree		18	46%
3	Disagree		0	0%
4	Strongly disagree		0	0%
Total			39	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.46
Variance	0.26
Standard Deviation	0.51
Total Responses	39

10. An Achievable Dream was consistent in the encouraging students to join organizations/volunteer opportunities.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		12	31%
2	Agree		23	59%
3	Disagree		3	8%
4	Strongly disagree		1	3%
Total			39	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.82
Variance	0.47
Standard Deviation	0.68
Total Responses	39

Vita
Amy L. Runge

EDUCATION

2009	<i>DOCTORATE STUDENT IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION</i> (2009-PRESENT) The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
2009	SAIC Certified
2003	Administration and Supervision Licensure, PreK-12 Commonwealth of Virginia Certification
2003	Master of Education Leadership and Administration PreK-12 The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
2001	Virginia Teacher Licensure, PreK-8
1993	Bachelor of Science, Business Administration with a Concentration in Marketing Research Christopher Newport University, Newport News, Virginia

EXPERIENCE

2013 – PRESENT	DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND COLLEGIATE SERVICES, AN ACHIEVABLE DREAM, INC.
2013	STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENTS OF ACADEMICS READINESS WRITING PROJECT ADMINISTRATION EXPOSITORY WRITING REVIEWER
2006 – 2013	Assistant Principal of Instruction, An Achievable Dream Middle & High School, NNPS Certified Trainer, Data Teams & Data Driven Decision Making – Center. for Performance Assessment (3 year) Certified SAIC Accreditation
2005 – 2006	Assistant Principal, An Achievable Dream Academy, Newport News Public Schools
2002 – 2005	Teacher, Mary L. Passage Middle School
1998 – 1999	Teacher, FAS, Cairo, Egypt