

CONTEXTUALIZING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: A CASE STUDY
OF THE DESTINATION DIPLOMA PROGRAM
AT CROWLEY HIGH SCHOOL

By

Susan Phan

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Project Approved:

Supervising Professor: James Riddlesperger, Ph.D.

Department of Political Science

Samuel Arnold, Ph.D.

Department of Political Science

Mike Sacken, Ph.D.

Department of Education

ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to explore an overarching issue in urban education policy. In this case, that issue will be the achievement gap. Socioeconomic status and human capital contribute to the achievement gap by making it more difficult for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are of low socioeconomic status and/or first-generation status. Aside from the vastness of the achievement gap, the paper will explore economic and demographic factors will explore to better understand the intricacy of *educational outcomes*. As a result, this paper will explore the achievement gap further by analyzing the relationship between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes*.

The *supplemental education program* under examination is the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at Crowley High School (CHS) in Crowley Independent School District (CISD). This project will include a general discussion regarding other *supplemental education programs* that strive to improve *educational outcomes*. The DDP operates at CHS, which is one of two high schools within CISD. CHS is situated in the poorer part of Crowley and thus the preponderance of the student population is socially or economically disadvantaged. As an urban education environment, CISD has formulated the DDP to meet the needs of CHS students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

I will analyze the term *educational outcomes* by contextualizing the relationship between the achievement gap and the poverty gap. Furthermore, the project will analyze *educational outcomes* in terms of demographic factors, parental engagement, and program interventions. The CISD DDP case study, aimed at generating hypotheses that will guide further inquiry, will focus on these factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Each year, students embark on the first step of their collegiate journey. For some students this transition is less daunting given family members who can lessen their anxieties about the cultural landscape and social contexts of college. However, there exist a certain cohort of students that start their freshmen year with a fragmented idea of college. Preparation is essential if high school students are to successfully navigate the transition to college and related cognitive, social, and environmental changes. Thus, college and career readiness becomes increasingly relevant in determining the *educational outcomes* of high school students.

In theory, the high school system works to prepare students for college through rigorous curriculum and college readiness efforts. One of the goals of publicly funded high schools is to place graduates in the position of gaining success at the collegiate level. In reality, high schools work mostly to ensure college admission rather than collegiate success. The disconnect between what colleges require and what high schools provide is problematic. Even so, no high school system can adequately prepare a student for college. In most cases, students from high socioeconomic backgrounds will be able to overcome this disconnect.

Inevitably, some students will fall behind due to a lack of resources. These students may be lower middle class, of lower socioeconomic status, first-generation, and/or urban high school students. As families with financial means move to suburban areas, urban communities have less of a local tax base and their students suffer the consequences of insufficient school funding. Equity in education continues to be a problem and thus the fight for equity continues through policy efforts. The issue of equity is at the heart of *supplemental education programs* as they work to ensure favorable *educational outcomes* for students who deserve more than systems that overlook them.

Since its beginning, a goal of the public school system has been to provide equal opportunity to all students, and that promise requires special efforts for students who are first generation or of low socioeconomic status.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Achievement Gap

Without a doubt, the achievement gap generates ample debate in the field of education.

The achievement gap refers to the differences in knowledge between Caucasians and students whom the system has traditionally underserved, including African American, Hispanic, and Native American students (Glenn, 2008). In terms of academic achievement, students from such underserved ethnic backgrounds tend to perform at lower levels in comparison to their Caucasian classmates. Despite the progression of education through legislation and policy, the achievement gap evokes conversations about what ails the educational system at large.

To better understand the achievement gap, researchers have analyzed how poverty contributes to this knowledge gap. For the most part, a consensus exists that poverty is a large contributor to the achievement gap. When students live in impoverished circumstances, they lack positive role models and societal resources. Thus, students lack social capital or the actual and potential resources that exist in social ties that may achieve a specific outcome (Madyun, 2011). As a result, the relationship between social capital and poverty gives way to further discussion regarding other factors that contribute to the achievement gap.

The achievement gap has a far-reaching effect in the United States' educational system. Approximately one in five school-age children will grow up in impoverished communities and cultures with the preponderance of impoverished minority households being led by a single parent (Portes, 2008). As mentioned previously, poverty contributes to the achievement gap in that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds will struggle more in school as compared to their wealthier counterparts.

From the 1960s and onward, the federal government has tried to mitigate factors that contribute to the achievement gap. The Coleman Report was published during the 1960s and presented a way to cut school expenditures and school reform efforts in schools that are low performing (Rojas-LeBouef and Slate, 2012). Prior to the Coleman Report, President Lyndon B Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) into law as a part of Johnson's War on Poverty. The ESEA sought to provide funds to public schools that were poorly funded schools throughout the United States. As demographics shifted, legislators added the Bilingual Education Act to the ESEA to serve students with limited English proficiency. In 1994, the ESEA became the Improving America's Schools Act that soon after morphed into the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (p.3). In 2015, president Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law, which replaced the NCLB. Throughout the years, legislators and policymakers have worked to close the achievement gap between Caucasians and non-Caucasians and between students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and those from high socioeconomic backgrounds with varied success.

Parental engagement tends to improve *educational outcomes* and thus positively contributes to closing the achievement gap. In relation to parental engagement, community engagement works best when a culturally responsive paradigm fosters family engagement that will in time lead to successful parent partnerships (Yull, Thompson, and Murray, 2014). Such family engagement practices can overcome the sense of isolation that students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds and their families might feel. Additionally, family engagement is more effective when it aligns with culturally responsive practices that fortify high expectations and expanded opportunities for students (Mayfield and Garrison-Wade, 2015). Culturally

responsive practices acknowledge that students' educational experiences are influenced by their ethnic backgrounds and associated cultural environments.

Research surrounding the achievement gap explores the effect of poverty on the *educational outcomes* of students. The socioeconomic status of students "is linked to a number of factors associated with the achievement gap, including reading and mathematics scores, high school graduation rates, college attendance, and college graduation" (Collopy, Bowman, & Taylor, 2012). The link between socioeconomic status and the achievement gap sheds light on how difficult it can be to ensure social mobility for students. Among the many factors that contribute to the achievement gap, familial income and poverty have a large bearing on possible *educational outcomes*.

Policymakers work to improve the achievement gap through several efforts within policy and school practices. One of these efforts, early childhood education in public schools, which tends to have positive effects on the students' long-term success. Early childhood education is effective given that children will have a greater chance of succeeding in school (Slaby, Loucks, & Stelwagon, 2005). The concept of equity is relevant in early childhood education given that not every family can afford a high-quality preschool program for their child. In addition, students benefit from higher expectations and positive perceptions from educators despite labels such as "at risk" (Mirci, Loomis and Hensley, 2011). Related to the previous point, *supplemental education program* staff encourage students to develop persistence in their academics and life in general. When students learn, they may come to have more grit and thus will be less likely to give up when they confront general problems, and are more equipped to overcome obstacles to achieve a goal (Huang, 2015). Such efforts will help students be more successful but can not alone overcome the achievement gap. The roots of the achievement gap reside in poverty and the

related need to mitigate the effects of poverty. As a result of the need to close the achievement gap, policymakers and educators have designed many programs to address the academic and social needs of low socioeconomic status (SES) students.

First-Generation College Students

Public schools in the United States, for the most part, have come to embrace the diversity of their population via a greater sense of connection and understanding between students and educators. As the job market for college-educated individuals continues to grow, the job market for high school graduates and dropouts declines (Reid & Moore, 2008). For all students, especially ethnic minorities, the job market makes higher education a necessity and a perplexing concept. Five areas of differences exist amongst first-generation college students and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds: applying without assistance of parents, increasing usefulness of college preparation, lacking of rigorous academic preparation, choosing a college or university closer to home despite fit, and experiencing differences in self-esteem and social acceptance (p. 242). Consequently, these differences contribute to a difficult transition and a possible increase in acculturative stress among students.

First-generation college students are mostly individuals color who tend to be less academically prepared, as proven by ACT scores, grade point averages, and class rank (Jehangir, 2010). At the start of their college career, first-generation students picture college as a place to gain economic and social stability. Even so, the alienation that occurs as a result of the transition from high school to college may cause students to find college to be an elusive setting in terms of academics and social practices. This alienation can be difficult given that first-generation students tend to be skilled at embracing changes in context through employment, childcare, and multilingual experiences (Jehangir, 2010). Thus, the transition from high school to college

causes first-generation students to question their ability to navigate new experiences. Prior to college, first-generation students have been successful in navigating changes in context and environment. However, first-generation students struggle to comprehend changes in context and thus have issues navigating their first and/or second year of college.

The changing demographics of minority populations also occur on a national level as suggested by data from the United States Census Bureau. Given population growth, “[by] 2050 about half of the U.S. population will be composed of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds- African American 14.7%, American Indian 1.1%, Asian and Pacific Islander 9.3%, and Hispanic 24.3%” (Pitre, 2009, p. 99). Furthermore, by 2060 children belonging to both racial and ethnic minorities will total 64% compared with 56% of the total population (Colby & Ortman, 2014). The preceding statistics and the fact that TRIO programs receive funding to serve only ten percent of the eligible student population, which includes students who are low-income and/or underrepresented ethnic minorities, raises a fundamental issue regarding *supplemental education programs* (Pitre, 2009). *Supplemental education programs* cannot evade the issue of funding. Similarly, to the education system at large, the issue of funding is essential when discussing *supplemental education programs*. TRIO programs serve as a government-funded, nationwide *supplemental education program* geared to serve students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus, the federal government allocates funds in a way that causes TRIO programs to be underfunded. As a result, TRIO programs can only serve a limited number of eligible students. As a result of educational funding and the fixed nature of TRIO programs, the likelihood of student success in their transition from high school to college is tied to the availability and effectiveness of *supplemental education programs*.

College Readiness Programs

In exploring *college readiness* programs and students from disadvantaged backgrounds who comprise such programs, one can see the essence of transformative education as a gesture in the right direction. Programs with social justice objectives at their core promote the idea that educational opportunities for students of color who may be marginalized (Pitts, Sanders-Funnye and Lukenchuk, 2014). *Supplemental education programs* vary and one can find them in college-readiness programs. In most circumstances, *supplemental education programs* embrace transformative education in hopes that students will be able to communicate their future goals in a positive yet realistic manner (Knaggs, Sondergeld, Schardt, 2015).

The concept of *college readiness* became increasingly relevant in the mid twentieth century when college access expanded. The expansion of college access led to an increase in the amount of students deemed academically unprepared for college. To alleviate this situation, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, as a part of their war on poverty legislation, enacted a nationwide *supplemental education program* that would come to be known as the TRIO programs. The TRIO programs, along with other federally funded programs, address educational inequality amongst students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (Sablan, 2014). Summer bridge programs (SBPs) are a component of certain programs and allow students to explore social, academic, and financial aspects of *college readiness*. Even so, the effectiveness of SBPs are questionable given that not much empirical research exists in peer-reviewed journals in comparison to the amount of SBPs in universities across the nation (Sablan, 2014). *Supplemental education program* exists across the local, state, and/or federal levels. The fact that *supplemental education programs* range from large-scale programs, such as the TRIO programs, to smaller-scale SBPs indicates that educators must make a substantial effort to address issues that student

from disadvantaged backgrounds face. The question of program effectiveness has been difficult to pinpoint in a quantitative sense. Even so, qualitative research methods, including testimonials by program participants can capture program effectiveness.

Despite the lack of research regarding the effectiveness of *college readiness programs*, the need for these programs is apparent. Regardless of the fact that certain *supplemental education programs* may be underperforming, some program participants will receive positive benefits. As a type of *supplemental education programs*, *college readiness programs* work to provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds a more balanced view of college. However, to better understand *supplemental education programs*, one must define *college readiness programs* and the concept of *college readiness*. *College readiness* is defined by high school coursework, grades gained in these courses, and scores on the ACT or SAT. Aside from this primary definition, an operational one exists which addresses the level of preparation necessary for a student to enroll and succeed in a postsecondary institution (Conley, 2007). The operational definition relates to first-generation and/or low-income students who do not have a clear understanding of *college readiness*. The optimal outcome is for students to merge their cultural assumptions with the cultural assumptions and expectations of a college environment (p. 13). In combining the primary and operational definition of *college readiness*, a comprehensive definition arises which allows students to understand the purpose of college and take full advantage of the opportunities afforded to them.

Federal TRIO Programs

Brief Timeline

Legislation/Year	Effect
Economic Opportunity Act of 1964	Upward Bound
Higher Education Act of 1965	Talent Search
Higher Education Amendments	Student Support Services Educational Opportunity Centers
Education Amendments (1976)	Training Program for Federal TRIO programs
1986	Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
1990	Upward Bound Math/Science Program

Eligibility based on income

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Outlying Jurisdiction	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$17,820	\$22,260	\$20,505
2	\$24,030	\$30,030	\$27,645
3	\$30,240	\$37,800	\$34,785
4	\$36,450	\$45,570	\$41,925
5	\$42,660	\$53,340	\$49,065
6	\$48,870	\$61,110	\$56,205
7	\$55,095	\$68,880	\$63,345
8	\$61,335	\$76,680	\$70,515

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal TRIO Programs, Website.

Brief Overview

One of the best-known *college readiness programs* occurred during a transitional time in United States history. As a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration's "War on Poverty," federal *college readiness programs* came to exist through the Economic Opportunity Act. This piece of legislation "gave rise to the Office of Economic Opportunity and Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, or as they have since become more commonly known, the nation's TRIO programs" (McElroy & Armesto, 1998, p. 373). TRIO now encompasses eight programs which include Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Veterans Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC), Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, and the Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs Staff.

First-generation *college readiness programs* such as TRIO have grown in importance since the initial call to action via the Economic Opportunity Act. As the social and cultural fabric of the United States changes with shifting demographics, *supplemental education programs* and *college readiness programs* have become increasingly relevant. Population growth in the near future will redefine the term *minority* due to current demographic trends that predict that minority populations might possibly become the majority in the near future. As of 2010, four of the most populous states in the United States, California, Florida, New York, and Texas, are home to one-third of the youth population in the nation. Of increasing relevance to educational policy, as it relates to *college readiness program*, is the fact that California, Florida, New York, and Texas have minority youth populations exceeding 50 percent of the total (Balz & Esten, 1998). Such a large population of minority youth means an increased likelihood of first-generation status (FGS), which will likely lead to a widening of the current knowledge gap in

terms of higher education. First-generation students are those whose parents have not attended college, which tends to coincide with lower socioeconomic status. The inability of parents with first-generation students to provide information regarding higher education is supplemented by *college readiness programs* such as the TRIO programs.

Federal TRIO Programs resulted from President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The ultimate goal of these programs is to ensure equity in regards to educational opportunities for citizens of the United States. The term TRIO refers to the first three educational equity programs: Educational Talent Search, Student Support Services, and Upward Bound. Despite claims of reverse racism, the absence of TRIO programs would most likely lead to dismal enrollment among students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (Pitre, 2009). As a result, policymakers designed TRIO programs to address educational equity problems. The hope of such programs lies in the belief that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can overcome labels such as low income, minority, and first-generation college student if *supplemental education programs* provide adequate resources. The preceding resources may allow students to succeed academically or professionally if they decide to seek employment immediately after high school. Even so, the greatest outcome of the TRIO programs and programs like TRIO is their ability to assist students in becoming members of society who effect change and contribute in a positive manner.

As mentioned previously, derived from the Federal Act or Post-Secondary Act of 1965, TRIO consisted of three programs: Educational Talent Search, Student Support Services, and Upward Bound hence the name TRIO is derived from the fact that in the beginning there were three programs or a trio of programs. The purpose or mission of the TRIO programs is primarily to increase higher education opportunities for individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds

and to hopefully stifle the existing cycle of poverty among said groups (Pitre, 2009). As time progressed, the TRIO programs evolved to address educational opportunity amongst a variety of students (Educational Opportunity Centers), graduate school training and preparation (Ronald E. McNair Scholars program), and programming directed toward subjects in which the United States desperately needs improvement (Upward Bound Math & Science).

Supplemental Education Programs

The first and largest federal TRIO program, Upward Bound, provides students from disadvantaged backgrounds with an opportunity for academic tutoring and mentorship. Essentially, Upward Bound seeks to prepare its program participants to enter college and to navigate the transition from high school to college. To qualify for the Upward Bound program, high school students come from low-income families and families in which neither parent has completed a bachelor's degree. Thus, the goal of the Upward Bound program is to ensure secondary and postsecondary graduation.

The tutoring component of Upward Bound provides students with academic instruction in subjects such as composition, foreign languages, laboratory sciences, literature, mathematics, and other relevant subjects. Aside from academic services, the Upward Bound programming provides services such as counseling, cultural enrichment activities, mentorship, and work study programs that seek to provide student both financial and economic literacy. Program staff design Upward Bound's programming to be inclusive so that a student's circumstances do not hinder their understanding. For example, students with limited English language proficiency can participate in the program along with homeless students and those in foster care. Therefore, by design, Upward Bound prevents barriers from interfering with *college readiness* programming and initiatives.

The Talent Search program's mission is to identify individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who are interested in higher education and have the potential to succeed. The program assists these students by providing counseling in areas such as academics, career, and financial literacy with the ultimate goal of ensuring high school and college graduation. Additionally, the Talent Search program seeks to empower individuals to attain their undergraduate degree by informing them of the financial aid opportunities that make pursuing a collegiate degree more attainable. Thus, the Talent Search program increases the rate of high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Aside from the federal TRIO programs, Breakthrough Collaborative is another *supplemental education program* that serves disadvantaged students. The Breakthrough Collaborative assists minority students prepare for and be successful in the higher education experiences. The program serves students in middle school and helps increase their chances of becoming admitted to college preparatory high schools, whether public or private. This service is important for students since admittance into competitive college preparatory high schools will increase the likelihood of acceptance and success in institutions of higher education. The preceding logic underlies the programming and initiatives of the Breakthrough Collaborative program.

Analytical Framework

Supplemental education programs work to ensure postsecondary success, which is inevitably linked to a need for professional development. Professional development is important for students who attend college and those who employment upon graduation. In relation to the need and importance for self-efficacy in higher education and life in general, program

intervention that seeks to improve career decision self-efficacy among students occurs through programming and initiatives that further the goal of *supplemental education programs* (Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2012). To ensure career decision self-efficacy, professional development programming will be analyzed in terms of constructivist career tools.

Among the many constructivist career tools, four are particularly relevant to student populations in *supplemental education programs*. These tools include narrative, action, construction, and interpretation. Narrative relates to the ability of the program participant to discuss his/her story as it relates to their understanding of self and the projection of self for college and/or career purposes. Action signifies the need of each participant to explore core qualities such as his/her own values, identities, and beliefs. Constructivist career tools assist in developing the participant's ability to construct his/her identity across different contexts.

Construction is important for individuals who are low-income and/or first-generation college students, often prone to cultural shock and tension when navigating both school and home environments (Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2012). The last constructivist career tool is interpretation, which encourages program participants to employ their own personal information to make well-informed career decisions. Professional development has many applications to produce the desired *educational outcomes* for *supplemental education programs*, such as the CISD DPP program and federal TRIO programs.

In relation to constructivist career tools, social constructivist views also shed light on the ability of *supplemental education programs* to promote persistence and efficacy among participants. Social constructivist views are instrumental in providing *educational outcomes* because program participants are typically part of families who have taxable incomes below 150 percent of the designated poverty level and their parents have not completed their college

education (McLure & Child, 1998, p. 346). As students who are low-income and/or first-generation, program participants may not be able to divorce the perspective that culture is hopelessly intertwined with collegiate and professional success.

According to social constructivist views, students experience a need to de-center individual perspectives and acknowledge the effects of the local culture that fosters an alternate viewpoint that acknowledges the fundamental impact of counselors, family, friends, teachers, and other community members on postsecondary experiences (Coffman, 2011). Thus, one must examine how *supplemental education programs* account for the social and human influences relevant to class and race on the postsecondary experiences of program participants. Aside from familial and school socialization, the media impacts *educational outcomes* by portraying certain images of race and class with inherent biases. Furthermore, lower socioeconomic family background and lack of decision making skills may inhibit postsecondary success. Additionally, low socioeconomic backgrounds “strongly influence factors such as having a strong support network, college debt, and degree completion” (p.84). The nature of program participants makes it increasingly relevant to pursue the relationship among programming and initiatives of *supplemental education programs* and the *educational outcomes* that result.

The role of the parent in *supplemental education programs* is worth examining in light of the education outcomes that result. The benefits of parental involvement are numerous since it develops a greater sense of efficacy within parents which may then have reverberating effects on the student. For example, an abundance of research has shown that parental involvement in a student’s education may lead to the respective student earning higher grades and an increased probability that these students will enroll in postsecondary education in comparison with students who have less involved parents (Zulli, Frierson, & Clayton, 1998, 365). As such the involvement

of parents in *supplemental education programs* would probably fit well within the programming and initiatives of said programs. The paper will examine the exact nature of parent involvements and the mechanisms that encourage involvement through a case study of CISD DDP.

Information gathered from the CISD DDP case study will provide a snapshot of how local *supplemental education programs* work to improve the *educational outcomes* of students.

Problems in Existing Literature

For the most part, literature regarding *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes* is varied in content. For example, for TRIO programs, national research conducted by the Department of Education's program last occurred in 2015 and availability depends on the program in question. Also, literature seems to speak to personal experiences and certain social phenomena in relation rather than detailing *supplemental education programs* on a local, state, or national scale extensively.

In addition, the literature on the achievement gap does not pinpoint the exact cause of this social phenomenon. The examination of socioeconomic factors fails to examine how the achievement gap may be a function of poverty. Understandably, researchers can not pinpoint the achievement gap's exact cause. However, some literature on the achievement gap that does cite impoverished circumstances as a contributor to the achievement gap. Overall, the discussion on the achievement gap would benefit from a more extensive study of the effects of poverty on student achievement.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To examine the relationship between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes*, I examine the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at Crowley High School (CHS) in Crowley Independent School District (CISD) from 2010-2015, using a hypothesis-generating case study. The DPP at CHS will serve as a local representation of *supplemental education programs*. The program operates through a collaboration between CISD and the United Way of Tarrant County.

To examine the causal relationship between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes*, a hypothesis-generating case study will occur. The unit of analysis in this case study will be CISD in relation to its DDP with a focus on the United Way of Tarrant County as well. The relationship between CISD and United Way will shed insight on how nonprofit organizations and urban school districts interact to ensure favorable education outcomes for program participants. The DDP is studied from 2010-2015 and thus the temporal dimension does not conflict with case study research. Thus, a hypothesis-generating case study will attend to the overarching themes and efforts of the DPP at CISD during the five-year period from 2010-2015. Consequently, a hypothesis-generating case study will provide a framework that illuminates how trends in programming and initiatives lead to desired *educational outcomes*.

I based my decision to study the DDP on the CISD to serve students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the presence of a high-achieving yet relatively new *supplemental education program*. Also, because DDP exists at Crowley High School (CHS), student population is conducive to studying the achievement gap. The research will examine the DDP at CHS in terms of development over time and less so in regards to standard operating procedures. I will examine the DPP at CISD through the mission and populations served.

CISD tasks the DDP with goals such as success in high school, graduation, and providing social mobility post-graduation. The program's ability to provide desired *educational outcomes* is correlated with students' time of graduation, academic success as a result programming, and degree of student retention.

Dependent Variable

The ability of the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at Crowley Independent School District (CISD) to provide positive *educational outcomes* is the dependent variable that the research will seek to explain. The term *educational outcomes* has broad implications and as a result is associated with several education issues or terms. For example, *educational outcomes* may relate to overcoming the achievement gap between different ethnicities or income classes to ensure social mobility. In this case, positive *educational outcomes* translate into postsecondary success whether through students' pursuit of college or a career upon high school graduation. Furthermore, one can view *educational outcomes* as the potential that the preceding program has in providing equality of outcome to students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Even so, I will measure *educational outcomes* in terms of program participants understanding of career constructivist tools, social constructivist tools and the extent of parental engagement. Additionally, I will measure career constructivist tools and parental engagement via internal data from the case study methods, which may include exit surveys, data collection, or engagement efforts. Lastly, I will measure social constructivist tools largely by the degree to which programming regarding academic and cultural issues promote student efficacy in their studies and their self-reflections.

Independent Variable

The independent variable under study is the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at Crowley Independent School District (CISD). The DDP serves as a graduation-gearred *supplemental education programs*. I further evaluate the ability of the DDP to assist in providing desirable *educational outcomes* by analyzing several independent variables that stem from the broadest independent variable *supplemental education programs*. The additional independent variables are programming and initiatives.

As an independent variable, programming will consist of interventions, field trips, and parental engagement efforts. Interventions vary and may include subject matter such as professional development, academic skills, or leadership development. Field trips will consist of opportunities to visit certain cultural institutions, and institutions of higher education. A parental engagement specializes initiates parental contacts and interactions with students are carried out by two other staff members. The DDP at Crowley High School currently consists of a staff of three. The CISD and United Way of Tarrant County oversee human capital and the staff size of the DDP may be subject to change in the near future. Lastly, initiatives are another independent variable that relate to the DDP at CISD. These initiatives may include academic tutoring, student leadership conferences, and contacts with both parents and students.

CASE STUDY

Justification of Need

The Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at Crowley High School (CHS) works in conjunction with the United Way of Tarrant County, setting up a public school/private charity collaboration to address concerns for students who might be at risk for failure without supplemental program opportunities. The Learn Well Initiative at the United Way of Tarrant County works with programs similar to DDP to ensure the urban education environments continue to improve. For example, the United Way of Tarrant County also partners with the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) to support *supplemental education programs* that help improve the *educational outcomes* of students. The interaction between non-profit organizations and urban school districts arise from the additional funding needs that programs may have. Thus, the partnership between the United Way of Tarrant County and CISD is to ensure that the DDP at CHS and Crowley 9th Grade Campus helps improve graduation rates.

The goal of improving graduation rates seems simple. However, as an indicator of student success, high school graduation can be a step in the right direction toward postsecondary success. As a result, the DDP makes a substantial effort to ensure students are productive and disciplined in their studies. To ensure graduation of program participants, DDP staff develop relevant skills for college and the workforce. The DDP monitors the core credits students are taking and will advise students about course selection. Academic advising will help students prepare for admission into college and success thereafter. As a graduation-gearied program, the DDP provides students with resources about career options if the student is not interested in enrolling in an institution of higher education. As a minimum, the goal of the DDP is to ensure

high school graduation but at another level the program works to provide students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed after high school.

The DDP operates at Crowley High School (CHS) and Crowley 9th Grade Campus in CISD. The program consists of three staff members, two graduation coaches and one parental engagement specialist. Currently, the program's staff size is sufficient for the population served. The program's staff size depends on funding received from CISD and the United Way of Tarrant County. Any increase in funding would result in an increase in the overall caseload. An expansion in staff size would result in an expansion of the DDP's services, which may occur in the near future. The program serves a total of three hundred students who come from both the Crowley 9th Grade Campus and CHS. Each graduation coach serves a total of a hundred and fifty students. Additionally, the parental engagement specialist is responsible for speaking with the families of all three hundred families.

Given that the DDP's funding will not increase in the near future, the staff size and population served will remain constant. The fact that the program serves 300 students with only three staff members reflects on the dedication and persistence of the program despite resource shortages. Additionally, the program can only serve three hundred students because it lacks the financial resources and human capital necessary for a larger caseload. If the DDP program were to expand, it could serve more students at Crowley 9th Grade Campus and CHS. Such changes would help at-risk or economically disadvantaged students, but the longevity of the program may be at odds with such growth. The growth of the program may complement or conflict with the communal approach of the program. Currently, staff members and program participants work together to achieve positive *educational outcomes*. Thus, an expansion of the program may result

in unintended consequences for the program structure and services offered. The preceding unintended consequences may be positive or negative.

As mentioned previously, the DDP program arises from a specific need within Crowley Independent School District (CISD). From 2010-2014, Crowley 9th Grade Campus and Crowley High School (CHS) performed lower on several indicators of student success in comparison to the district and state. For example, the attendance rate, graduation rate, and dropout rate are a few of many indicators of student success, which Crowley 9th Grade Campus and CHS struggle with. Also, labels such as economically disadvantaged and at-risk are worth examining.

Academic Performance Reports

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) compiles Texas Academic Performance Reports each school year to determine if a district or campus has met state standards or requires improvement. In the 2012-2013 Texas Academic Performance Report, the Crowley 9th Grade Campus had a met standard of accountability rating. The preceding accountability rating may overshadow the difficulties CISD and the Crowley 9th Grade Campus experience in providing favorable outcomes for students who are at-risk or economically disadvantaged.

The Academic Performance Report begins by summarizing students' progress on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The TEA breaks down student performance on the STAAR and other indicators of student success into three geographic areas. These three areas include state, district, and campus. The comparison between the state and the district, or more generally the campus, is helpful in determining whether Crowley 9th Grade Campus and Crowley ISD are performing adequately.

Additionally, TEA examines each indicator of success in terms of the performance of each major ethnic group. The major ethnic groups reported include African American, Hispanic,

White, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Even so, the major focus of these academic performance reports will be on the three major ethnic groups in the district and the state. In addition to ethnicity as an identifier, TEA classifies students may as special education (504/SPED), economically disadvantaged, or English Language Learners (ELL). For the purposes of this case study, I did not consider standardized exams such as the STAAR when examining the relationship between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes*. As an indicator of student success, standardized tests are adequate but beyond the purposes of this case study.

Crowley 9th Grade Campus Profile

Furthermore, the 2012-2013 Academic Performance Report for Crowley 9th Grade Campus includes the attendance rate, annual dropout for grades nine through twelve, advanced course completion, and dual enrollment completion rates. In terms of the attendance rate for 2010-2011, Crowley 9th Grade Campus has lower attendance rates in comparison to the district and state. The state's and district's attendance rate is 95.7% compared to the 94.9% campus attendance rate. The racial distribution of the campus attendance rate is revealing since only Asians have an attendance rate (97.1%), that is higher than the state and district's attendance rate (95.7%). The attendance rate for African Americans (94.9%), Hispanic (94.7%), and White (95%), and American Indian (94.7%) are all below the state and district attendance rate. Additionally, special education students have an attendance rate of 90.5%, which is significantly lower than the state (95.9%), district (5.5%), and campus (95.4%). The trend is similar for economically disadvantaged students who have the lowest attendance rate (94.8%) in terms of geographic area (state, district, campus), ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, White, American Indian, Asian), and other categories (special education).

The trend remains the same for the 2011-2012 school year, with a few exceptions. The first exception is the fact that the district 2011-2012 attendance rate (96.0%) is almost the same as the state attendance rate (95.9%). The campus attendance rate (95.4%) remains less than the state attendance rate (95.9%), but the campus attendance rate has increased 0.5% between the 2010-2011 school year and the 2011-2012 school year. The increase in attendance rate from the 2010-2011 school year to the 2011-2012 school year is as follows: 0.6% for African Americans, 0.9% for Hispanics, 1.3% for American Indians, and 0.4% for Asians. The only ethnic group to have a decrease in attendance rate between the 2010-2011 school year and the 2011-2012 school year are Whites with a 0.2% decrease. Similarly, the attendance rate for special education decreases 1% from the 2010-2011 school year (91.5%) to the 2011-2012 school year (90.5%). Students who are economically disadvantaged showed a slight improvement (0.7%) in attendance rate from 94.1% during the 2010-2011 school year to 94.8% during the 2011-2012 school year. Despite the campus attendance rate being below the state and district, Crowley 9th Grade Campus shows signs of improvement. Even so, it is important not to overlook groups that have shown a decrease in attendance rate.

The Crowley 9th Grade Campus attendance rate trends for the 2012-2013 school year slightly differ from those in 2011-2012. Instead of the district attendance rate (95.9%) being almost identical to the state (96 %), during the 2011-2012 school year, the district attendance is slightly lower than the state in 2012-2013. Similar to the past trends, the attendance rate for Crowley 9th Grade Campus is lower than the district but the attendance rate decreases from 95.4% in the 2011-2012 school year to 94% in the 2012-2013 school year. The attendance rate for all ethnicities is lower during the 2012-2013 school year as compared to the 2011-2012 school year. For example, the decrease in attendance rate for all ethnicities is as follows African

American (1.4%), Hispanic (1.6%), White (1%), and Asian (0.3%). Students who are economically disadvantaged experienced a 1.2% decrease in the attendance rate during the 2011-2012 school year (94.8%) and the 2012-2013 school year (93.6%). The ebb and flow of the attendance rate percentages from year to year hints to the complexity of urban school districts.

The case study examines the annual dropout rate for grades nine through twelve mostly in terms of district statistics. The state dropout rate is 2.4% for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. The district dropout decreases from 1% in the 2010-2011 school year to 0.5% for the 2011-2012 school year. The Crowley 9th grade campus has a dropout rate of 0.6% with a dropout rate of 1.2% for African Americans and 0.7% for Hispanics. The following ethnic groups have a dropout rate of 0%: White, American Indian, Asian, and biracial. In addition to African Americans (1.2%), students who are special education (2.5%) and economically disadvantaged (1.0%) have dropout rates higher than the campus dropout rate (0.6%).

In terms of advanced coursework and/or dual enrollment completion, the state advanced coursework/dual enrollment completion percentage has increased from 30.3% in 2010-2011 to 30.6% in 2011-2012. The district has a more significant change with advanced coursework/dual enrollment increasing from 21.3% in the 2010-2011 school year to 25% in the 2011-2012 school year. Despite the statistics for the state and district, Crowley 9th Grade Campus has 0% advanced course and/or dual enrollment due to the fact that such academic measures are beyond the scope of the 9th grade curriculum.

Altogether, the fact that attendance rate for Crowley 9th Grade Campus is lower than district and state speaks to the need for the Destination Diploma Program (DDP). Even so, the case study deems state attendance rate to be unacceptable and would serve as justification of need for *supplemental education programs*. Also, the need for the DDP becomes more

pronounced given that all three major ethnic groups (African American, Hispanic, and White) have lower attendance rates than the state and district. Additionally, the preceding trends occurred during both the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school year. Thus, the attendance rate alone is an adequate justification of need for the DDP at the Crowley 9th Grade Campus.

The Crowley 9th Grade Campus has a total of 542 students compared to 15,000 students in the district and 5,058,939 students in the Texas. The TEA measures the preceding totals for the 2011-2012 school year and they appear in the TEA's Texas Academic Performance Report for the 2012-2013 school year. Crowley 9th Grade Campus has 7.9% of the ninth graders for the district and 8% of the ninth graders for the state. The ethnic distribution of the Crowley 9th Grade Campus is as follows: 35.8% African American, 23.6% Hispanic, 31.5% White, 5.7% American Indian, and 2.0% Asian. For the purposes of this case study, the focus will be on the three major ethnic groups (African American, Hispanic, and White) who comprise 90.9% of the student population. Additionally, the 2013-2014 campus profile depicts similar trends in demographic with overall enrollment declining from 542 students to 476 students. The district has a modest increase whereas the state has a substantial increase in student enrollment. Even so, the trends in demographics remains consistent with the 2012-2013 campus profile.

Aside from ethnic distribution, a disproportionate amount of students at Crowley 9th Grade Campus are economically disadvantaged. Approximately 58% of students are economically disadvantaged compared to 59.4% for the district and 60.4% of the state. Thus, one can infer that both Crowley and the state of Texas as a whole has a significant amount of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In addition to the label economically disadvantaged, TEA considers approximately 44% of students at Crowley 9th grade at-risk. This percentage is lower than the district (47.5%) and

state (44.7%). The mobility rate also contributes to likely unfavorable *educational outcomes*. More specifically, the mobility rate refers to students attending more than one school within a school year. The mobility rate for Crowley 9th Grade Campus is considerably high at 18.2%. Also, the mobility rate for the district (18.4%) and the state (17.9%) are also high. The preceding percentages for at-risk students and mobility suggest negative effects for *educational outcomes*. Thus, the existence of the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at Crowley 9th Grade Campus and Crowley High School is justified given the factors that discussed in the case study.

Crowley High School Campus Profile

In the 2013-2014 Texas Academic Performance Report, CHS had an accountability rating of improvement required. The preceding accountability rating demonstrates the difficulties CHIS and CISD by extension experience when serving students who are demographically diverse, disproportionately at-risk and/or economically disadvantaged. However, in the 2014-2015 Texas Academic Performance Report, CHS had an accountability rating of met standard with the distinction of academic achievement in science. The following paragraphs will analyze indicators of student success and the relationship between demographics and *educational outcomes*.

In terms of the attendance rate for 2011-2012 (92.8%) and 2012-2013 (93.8%), CHS has lower attendance rates in comparison to the district and state. The state's attendance rate is 95.9% for the 2011-2012 and 95.8% for the 2012-2013 school year. The district attendance is 95.5% for the 2011-2012 and 96% for the 2012-2013 school year. Thus, the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) helps to mitigate the low attendance at CHS in hopes of improving *educational outcomes* for students and the community at-large.

The racial distribution of CHS attendance rate is revealing since only Asians have an attendance rate (96.7%) that is higher than the state (95.9%), district (96%) and campus (92.8%)

attendance rate during the 2011-2012 school year. The attendance rate for African Americans (94.1%), Hispanic (93.1%), White (93.7%), and American Indian (93.3%) are all below the state and district attendance rate in 2011-2012. Additionally, economically disadvantaged students have an attendance rate of 93%, which is significantly lower than the state (95.9%) and district (96%) and slightly lower than the campus attendance rate (93.8%). The trend is similar for students that TEA classifies as special education who have the lowest attendance rate (90.7%) in terms of geographic area (state, district, campus), ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, White, American Indian, Asian), and other categories (special education).

The trend remains the relatively the same for the 2012-2013 school year with a few exceptions. The district attendance rate decreases 0.5% from the 2011-2012 school year (96%) to the 2012-2013 school year (95.5%). The campus attendance rate for CHS decreases by 1% between the 2011-2012 school year (93.8%) and the 2012-2013 school year (92.8%). The decrease in the attendance rate from the 2011-2012 school to the 2012-2013 school year is as follows: 0.7% for African Americans, 0.8% for Hispanics, 1.3% for Whites, 3.6% for American Indian and 0.3% for Asians. Between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school year, no ethnic group experienced an increase in the CHS attendance rate. Similarly, the attendance rate for special education decreases 1% from the 2011-2012 school year (90.7%) to the 2012-2013 school year (89.7%). Students who are economically disadvantaged showed a slight decrease (1.1%) in the CHS attendance rate from 93% during the 2011-2012 school year to 91.9% during the 2012-2013 school year. As a result of the preceding statistics on attendance rate, it is important not overlook how demographics and economic circumstances affect *educational outcomes*.

The attendance rate trends for Crowley High School (CHS) for the 2013-2014 school year slightly differ from those in the 2012-2013 school year. The district attendance rate (95.4%)

is slightly lower than the state (95.9%) in the 2013-2014 school year. The campus attendance rate remains lower than the state and district and decreases from 92.8% in the 2012-2013 school year to 92.2% in the 2013-2014 school year. The attendance rate for all ethnicities excluding Asians is lower during the 2013-2014 school year as compared to the 2012-2013 school year. For example, the decrease in attendance rate for all ethnicities is as follows African American (1.1%), Hispanic (0.1%), White (0.5%), and American Indian (1.4%). Students who are economically disadvantaged experienced a 0.3% decrease in the attendance rate during the 2012-2013 school year (91.9%) and the 2013-2014 school year (91.6%). Fluctuations in CHS attendance rates may be small, but they allow a snapshot of the problems the district face.

The graduation rate for the class of 2013 is 88% for the state, 95.7% for the district, and 94.6% for CHS. The graduation rate for the following ethnicities are: African American 95%, Hispanic 95.8%, White 92.7%, American Indian 100%, and Asian 100%. Students classified as special education have a graduation rate of 74.1%, the lowest amongst all categories. Economically disadvantaged students have a graduation rate of 93.4%. The graduation rate trends remain the same for the class of 2014 with some minor fluctuations in percentages.

The graduation rate is a great point of reference for the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) given that the ultimate goal of the program is graduation. Even so, the DDP goes beyond graduation with certain programming and initiatives that seek to instill *college readiness*. These efforts are laudable giving the percentages of college-ready graduates at CHS. For English Language Arts, the CHS class of 2012 had 64% of students who were college ready. The preceding percentage is below the state (69%) and district (66%). For the three major ethnic groups, the percentage of students who are college ready in ELA are as follows 60% African American, 56% Hispanic, and 69% for White. Only Whites have an ELA college ready

percentage above the district and CHS. The trend for College-ready graduates in ELA remains consistent for the class of 2013 with the notable difference of Hispanics having a college-ready ELA percentage higher than the campus, district, and state. For the class of 2014, the trend remains the same but African Americans have a college-ready graduates in ELA percentage of 46%, which is 10% lower than the campus percentage. Therefore, the relationship between demographics and *college readiness* is relevant for CHS and the services provided by the DDP.

The *college readiness* rate for mathematics for CHS is lower than the district and state for the class of 2013. For the class of 2013, CHS has 64% of students who were college ready mathematically compared to 65% for the district and 74% for the state. Amongst the three major ethnic groups at CHS, Whites are the only group to have a rate of college-ready graduates (75%). Whites have a college-readiness rate for mathematics that is 9% greater than the campus and 10% greater than the district. For African Americans, the *college readiness* rate for mathematics is 49%. The preceding percentage is 15% lower than the state. The trend for the class of 2014 is similar to the class of 2013 aside from the district and campus both having a mathematics *college readiness* percentage of 51%. Also, the three major ethnicities experience a decrease in the percentages of college ready graduates in mathematics from the class of 2013 and class of 2014. More specifically, African Americans had 49% of students who were college ready in mathematics for the class of 2013 but only 36% of students for the class of 2014. Additionally, Hispanics had 65% of students who were college ready in mathematics for the class of 2013 but only 51% for the class of 2014. The preceding decrease in college ready graduates in mathematics also occurs for Whites but does not occur for Asians.

Crowley High School (CHS) has a total of 1,994 students compared to 14,918 students in the district and 5,215,282 students in the total. The preceding totals were measured for the 2013-

2014 school year and appear in the Texas Education Agency's Texas Academic Performance Report for 2014-2015. The ethnic distribution of CHS is as follows: 37.4% African American, 30.4% Hispanic, 26.3% White, 0.7% American Indian, and 2.1% Asian. For the purposes of this case study, the focus will be on the three major ethnic groups (African American, Hispanic, and White) who comprise 94.1% of the student population. Additionally, the 2013-2014 campus profile depicts similar demographic trends with overall enrollment increasing from 1,440 students to 1,994 students. The district has very small decrease in student enrollment whereas the state has a significant increase. Even so, the demographic trends remain consistent with the 2012-2013 campus profile.

Aside from ethnic distribution, there is a disproportionate amount of students at Crowley 9th Grade Campus that are economically disadvantaged. Approximately 61% of students are economically disadvantaged compared to 64% for the district and 59% of the state. Thus, that both Crowley and the state of Texas as a whole over half of their student population from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The decision to study both Crowley 9th Grade Campus and CHS stems from the fact that program participants are in the ninth and tenth grades. The DDP targets students early in their high school years and continues to oversee their educational experiences thereafter. Given that Crowley 9th Grade Campus exists as a separate entity from CHS, it becomes necessary to examine both schools. Thus, the case study will examine the efforts of the DDP in both the Crowley 9th Grade Campus and CHS.

In addition to the label *economically disadvantaged*, approximately 60% of students at Crowley High School (CHS) are considered at-risk by the TEA. This percentage is higher than the district (54.2%) and state (51.2%). The mobility rate also contributes to likely unfavorable

educational outcomes. As mentioned previously, the mobility rate refers to students attending more than one school within a school year. The mobility rate for CHS is slightly high at 14.6%. Also, the mobility rate for the district (17.4%) and the state (16.9%) are higher than CHS. The preceding percentages for at-risk students and mobility are worth further attention given their negative effect on *educational outcomes*. Thus, the existence of the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) at CHS as is justified given the needs of students.

Standardized test scores are another indicator of success that is relevant to the DDP at CHS. The two best-known standardized test in terms of undergraduate admission in the United States are the ACT and the SAT. The two standardized tests are relevant to the DDP at CHS since different demographics have varying results. The average SAT for CHS' class of 2010 is 953, which is lower than the district (956) and the state (985). For the three major ethnic groups, the average SAT scores are as follows African American 857, Hispanic 921, and White 1014. The average SAT scores for African Americans and Hispanic are both lower than the district and state. However, the same problem does not apply to Whites. The trend for the class of 2010 is consistent with the average SAT score for the class of 2011. A general decrease exists for the geographic regions (state, district, and campus) and for two out of three of the major ethnic groups (African Americans and Hispanics). Only Whites saw an increase in their average SAT scores from the class of 2010 (1014) to the class of 2011 (1032).

The CHS class of 2010 had an average ACT score (20.6) that was only 0.1 greater than the state (20.5) and district (20.5). Similar to the average SAT score for the class of 2010, the average ACT score for African Americans (18.3) and Hispanics (19.2) was lower than the campus (CHS), district (CISD), and state. However, the average ACT score for Whites (22.6) is substantially higher than CHS, CISD, and the state. For the CHS class of 2011, the trend for the

class of 2010 remains consistent but with some notable differences. For example, the average ACT score for CHS (19.8) is now lower than the district (20.2) and state (20.5). African American students experienced a 1.6-point decrease from the average ACT score for the class of 2010 (18.3) and the class of 2011 (16.7). Hispanic students experienced a slight decrease of 0.2 points in the average ACT score from the class of 2010 (19.2) and the class of 2011 (19.0). Lastly, similar to the average SAT score trend, Whites experienced a substantial increase of 1 point in the average ACT from the class of 2010 (22.6) and the class of 2011 (23.6). These trends for the average SAT score and average ACT score help to shed light on the credentials of CHS. The SAT and ACT serve as a basic indicator of student success in terms of *college readiness*. For the Destination Diploma Program (DDP), the goal of ensuring graduation essentially means ensuring postsecondary success. The DDP must work with standardized test data to gauge the ability of program participants to gain admission to a higher education institution of their choosing. Thus, the distribution of average SAT and ACT scores by the three major ethnic groups in CHS and CISD allow a more inclusive picture of college admission and potential postsecondary success.

The ultimate goal is to provide a snapshot of the urban education environment that the DDP serves. The examination of attendance rates, dropout rates, graduation rates, demographic factors, socioeconomic factors, and standardized test scores provides a descriptor of CHS and Crowley 9th Grade Campus. In terms of CISD, the school district is disproportionately economically disadvantaged and increasingly majority minority. The state of Texas shares a similar problem with CISD in terms of the populations served. However, the entirety of CISD and the state of Texas may not experience the full effect of serving at-risk or disadvantaged students. Thus, by examining indicators of success, both the Crowley 9th Grade Campus and

CHS need *supplemental educational programs* that can respond to a student population that is disproportionately economically disadvantaged and labeled at-risk. CISD instituted the DDP that continues to operate as a response to the urban education environment that has arisen as a result of shifting demographics and the cycle of poverty in Texas. Overall, the DDP works as a *supplemental education program* with the ultimate goal of graduation and postsecondary ensuring more favorable *educational outcomes* for students of color, students labeled at-risk, and students who are economically disadvantaged.

DDP Student Legend

Label (At-Risk Indicator Code If Applicable)	Definition
Eco Dis	Economically Disabled
At-Risk	Students meet At-Risk Indicators by State of Texas Standards
DAEP (6)	District Alternative Education Program
JJAEP (11)	Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. Either Currently Enrolled or Previously Enrolled
Homeless (12)	Student does not have a permanent residence
LEP (10)	Limited English Proficiency
Below Attendance Threshold	Crowley 9TH Grade Attendance Percentage is 95.2% . Student's Daily Attendance is below 95.2%
Retained (3)	Did not meet Advance to Next Grade Level
Pregnant or Parent (5)	
Probation or Parole (8)	Currently on Parole, Probation, Deferred Prosecution
Foster Care or Residential Treatment Facility (13)	Either Resided in or is Currently Enrolled in either Program

Destination Diploma Program Caseload Form

Demographic Information				
Name:				
School ID Number:				
Grade:				
Tier:				
Parental Contact:				
Cell Phone:				
Address:				
Tier Identification (Bold Tier Level)				
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed At least One SECTION OF 8TH Grade STAAR Test • Identified as At-Risk by State Indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Minimum of Three Process Categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failed Reading Section of 8th Grade STAAR Test 2. Failed Math Section of 8TH Grade STAAR Test 3. Identified as ECO DIS 4. Age 16. (Over Aged/Under Credited) 5. Attended 3 or more schools over the last 3 school years 6. Attendance Rate below Campus Average 7. Limited English Proficiency Designation 8. Identified as At-Risk by State Indicators 9. Attended DAEP during 8th grade school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Minimum of Four Process Categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failed Reading Section of 8th Grade STAAR Test 2. Failed Math Section of 8TH Grade STAAR Test 3. Identified as ECO DIS 4. Age 16. (Over Aged/Under Credited) 5. Attended 3 or more schools over the last 3 school years 6. Attendance Rate below Campus Average 7. Limited English Proficiency Designation 8. Identified as At-Risk by State Indicators 9. Attended DAEP during 8th grade school year 		
Incoming Academic/Discipline/Attendance Information				
Total Classes Failed	STAAR Reading	STAAR Math	Total Absences	Total Infractions

The Destination Diploma Program (DDP) maintains a caseload of 300 students, two graduation coaches and one parental engagement specialist. For organization and record keeping purposes, graduation coaches document each student entering the DDP with the DDP caseload form above. The DDP form begins with demographic information and the school ID number, which helps to identify students within CISD. However, for the purposes of this case study, DDP uses the school ID number to code each program participants so that no identifying information appears on any data report used in this case study. In addition, the DDP maintains and updates parental contact information as needed for the parental engagement specialist. The parental engagement specialist is responsible for maintaining contact with the parents of all three hundred participants. As mentioned previously in the literature review, parental engagement contributes to positive *educational outcomes* for students. The DDP encourages staff and students to engage with parents regarding the academics and postsecondary goals of students. The DDP emphasizes the importance of parental engagement with the caseload form and maintained through the persistence of the parental engagement specialist.

The next section of the caseload form indicates three tiers that incrementally increase in terms of student needs. The risk factors for graduation become greater as one moves from tier one to tier three. The case study will further examine the concept of *tiers* by analyzing student data. The last section of the form includes additional information regarding academic areas of need such as classes failed and STAAR tests failed. Additionally, the attendance rate and total infractions of a student assist staff members better assist a student labeled at-risk.

United Way Destination Diploma Program Policies

- We will only meet with a student if the student is not in a core class unless that teacher gives permission
- We will never meet with more than 8 students per class period at once unless it is Power Hour or otherwise specified via email. (It varies based on available space)
- We will always give 72 hour notice for a student attending a field trip. If a teacher or faculty member states that the student is ineligible to attend that trip, the student will be removed.
- Our caseload will be maintained at 150 students per six weeks. Our program represents every segment of the student population: from athletics to BIC; from Pre AP to SPED.
- We take recommendations for students to be added to our caseload and will add those students as spots are available.
- As a group, we attempt to address our student's academic, social, behavior, and safety concerns. Our goal is to remove barriers and/or distractions that keep students from meeting the expectations of the Crowley Faculty, Staff and Community
- If there is something that a teacher or staff needs us to address specifically with a student on the caseload, please either email anthony.johnson@crowley.k12.tx.us or text 817-691-2530 (UW Graduation Coach) or traveon.jefferson@crowley.k12.tx.us (UW Family Engagement Specialist). Under most conditions, we will address your request within 24 hours or the next business day.
- We are capable of also doing home visits for students or working unconventional hours to meeting the needs of the students
- Our hall passes will usually be purple and specifically say "CISD/United Way Graduation Hall Pass"

The United Way Destination Diploma Program Policies helps to clarify the goals of the program along with services offered. The policies are for general use, but the main purpose of the United Way Destination Diploma Program Policies document is to facilitate communication among participants in the program. The DDP works with students mostly but by extension it also works with Crowley staff, faculty, and the community in general. Thus, the program's ability to serve students partially depends on the ability of the staff to navigate the relationships between the members of the Crowley 9th Grade Campus and Crowley High School.

The first two policies set guidelines for meeting with students. The DDP staff's greatest goal is to ensure academic success and for this reason students are called out of core classes if necessary and allowed by the teacher of the respective class. Also, the availability of staff and office space limits the amount of students that can be in the DDP room at a time. The preceding policy exists to ensure efficiency and organization.

The case study explains the caseload of the DDP to ensure that staff members, teacher, and the community understand the breadth of the program. The program is inclusive but staff and funding constraints cause the DDP to admit students on a space-available basis. When DDP staff admit students to the program, the ultimate goal of the program is to ensure graduation and postsecondary success. However, DDP staff members expect students to be productive students inside the program and CISD.

The last policies ensure that members of the Crowley community will be able to communicate with the graduation coach and/or parent engagement specialist as needed. The DDP staff also inform school staff, teacher, and community members of CISD that they are willing to work outside of usual parameters to ensure *educational outcomes*.

2014-2015 Data Collection

Data Collection Benchmarks	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year to date total
Parental Contacts	27	48	42	46	163
One on One Graduation Student Contacts	370	301	430	503	1604
Total Special Group Participation	48	30	18	118	214
Total Infractions per Quarter	30	36	55	27	148
Total DAEP Placements per Quarter	6	3	5	2	16
Total Academic Interventions (Tutorials)	4076	3171	3701	4356	15304
Total Individual Academic Plans Completed	82	58	29	12	181
Total Students trained for Student Lead Conferences	n/a	77	15	25	117
Total Students Completed Student Lead Conferences	n/a	21	11	7	39
Total Destination Graduation Events Planned	4	6	3	10	23
Total Destination Graduation Participants	60	76	n/a	407	543

The yearly relevant data collection for the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) is a part of the United Way Tarrant County Learn Well Initiative summary report and is reflective of the 2014-2015 school year. The case study divides data collection for the DDP into 4 quarters that comprise the year to date total, which then provides a holistic overview of services provided by the DDP. The case study examines each data collection benchmark, in the left most column, in terms of quantitative and qualitative significance.

Parental contacts during the first quarter totaled 27 and steadily increased from the second quarter to the fourth quarter. During the second quarter to fourth quarter, parental contacts remained in the forties. The parental engagement specialist was able to visit with 163 parents during the year. Given that the caseload consists of three hundred students, the family engagement specialist has reached more than half of the population despite limited time and resources.

The one-on-one graduation student contacts exceed the prescribed caseload of 300 students given that graduation coaches reach out to all students possible. During the first quarter, there were 370 one-on-one graduation student contacts. The number of student contacts decrease by approximately 60 during the second quarter but increases substantially during the third quarter (430) and fourth quarter (503). By the end of the 2014-2015 school year, the DDP has totaled 1604 one-on-one graduation student contacts between program staff and program participants.

The total special group participation highlights increased activity among students. Special groups involve leadership, mentoring, and academic or cultural enrichment activities. The goal of the special groups is to provide a space in which a program or project provides for the holistic development of program participants. The number of special group participation may fluctuate

from quarter to quarter, but a significant increase from the first quarter (48) to the fourth quarter (118) occurs. The total infractions per quarter does not exceed 60 for any individual quarter. However, a total of 148 infractions for the 2014-2015 school year. Given the students that the DDP serves, the program acknowledges that students who are labeled at risk may have disciplinary issues. Additionally, District Education Alternative Placement (DEAP) fluctuates from quarter to quarter but does not exceed ten for any individual quarter. The DDP works to help students become productive and does not intend to be punitive. The program records the amount of infractions received by students to monitor progress in term of tier assignment and to account for at-risk labels.

The DDP has a strong focus on providing academic interventions or tutorial to program participants. DDP conducts anywhere between 3000-4500 tutorials occurring each quarter, and in total the DDP offered 15,304 tutorials during the 2014-2015 school year. Aside from tutorials, DDP staff encourages academic plans for students and approximately half of the caseload has completed an academic plan with a staff member.

Student Lead Conferences (SLC) are another important component of the DDP. DDP staff members train students for the SLC and then students may choose whether or whether not to complete one. SLC provide an avenue for students to converse with their parents about their academics, extracurricular activities, and postsecondary plans. The SLC allows both student-parent and parent-staff engagement. During the 2014-2015 school year, 117 students were trained for SLC with 39 of those students completing an SLC.

Destination Graduation events are a notable effort amongst DDP staff since the student to staff ratio is large. As a result of this student-to-staff ratio, the DDP enlists the help of the district, nonprofit organizations such as the United Way of Tarrant County, and other

supplemental education programs that exist at Crowley High School. The DDP staff planned a total of 23 destination graduation events during the 2014-2015 school year. Destination graduation events may include cultural enrichment, speaker series, and/or field trips to institutions of higher education.

Lastly, the amount of program participants fluctuates throughout the four quarters. During the first and second quarter, the number of program participants did not exceed 100. However, the fourth quarter had a total of 407 participants. Overall, the DDP served 543 students during the 2014-2015 school year.

Crowley DDP Data Report

The DDP has helped improve *educational outcomes* by working to ensure postsecondary success. During the 2014-2015 school year, 85% of the DDP caseload reached the attendance mark. The program also works to intervene in disciplinary issues. For example, 5.3% of the CHS was at District Alternative Education Program (DAEP) placement, which decreased from the year before. Also, 66% of the caseload earned all four of their core credits and 87% of students were promoted after receiving all six credits or more. In addition, parental engagement saw a substantial increase given that there was no parent-teacher involvement the previous year but a total of six events during the 2014-2015 school year.

The DDP 9th grade cohort participated in a variety of workshops aimed at improving the social and academic skills of program participants. The workshops are as follows:

Table 1: Workshops

Workshop Title	Quantity	Dates
Time Management	12	9/9/2014-3/7/2014
Resource Recovery	24	9/10/2014-12/17/2015 and 1/7/2015-4/14/2015
Problem Solving	4	9/10/2014-1/4/2015
Conflict Resolution	4	9/24/2014-1/28/2015
Communication	4	10/8/2014-2/11/2015
Cyberbullying	4	10/22/2014-2/25/2015
Evaluating Decisions	4	11/12/2014-3/11/2015
Academic Readiness	4	12/10/2014-4/14/2015

The goal of the DDP is to ensure high school graduation first and postsecondary success thereafter. One way in which the DDP works toward this goal is by providing opportunities for

students to tour college campuses. The DDP program may work alone or in conjunction with the Communities in School (CIS) program to plan and carry out college tours. The 9th grade cohort of the DDP has participated in the following college tours during the 2014-2015 school year:

Table 2: College Tours

Date	College/University	Organization
November 15, 2014	Southern Methodist University	DDP
April 1, 2015	Texas Christian University	CIS and DDP
April 21, 2015	Texas Wesleyan University	CIS and DDP
May 11, 2015	Tarrant County College	CIS and DDP

As mentioned previously, a total of six parent-teacher involvement events during the 2014-2015 school year. At the Crowley 9th Grade Campus, CIS and DDP worked together to promote awareness and engagement in Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. A schedule of the PTO meetings and events are as follows:

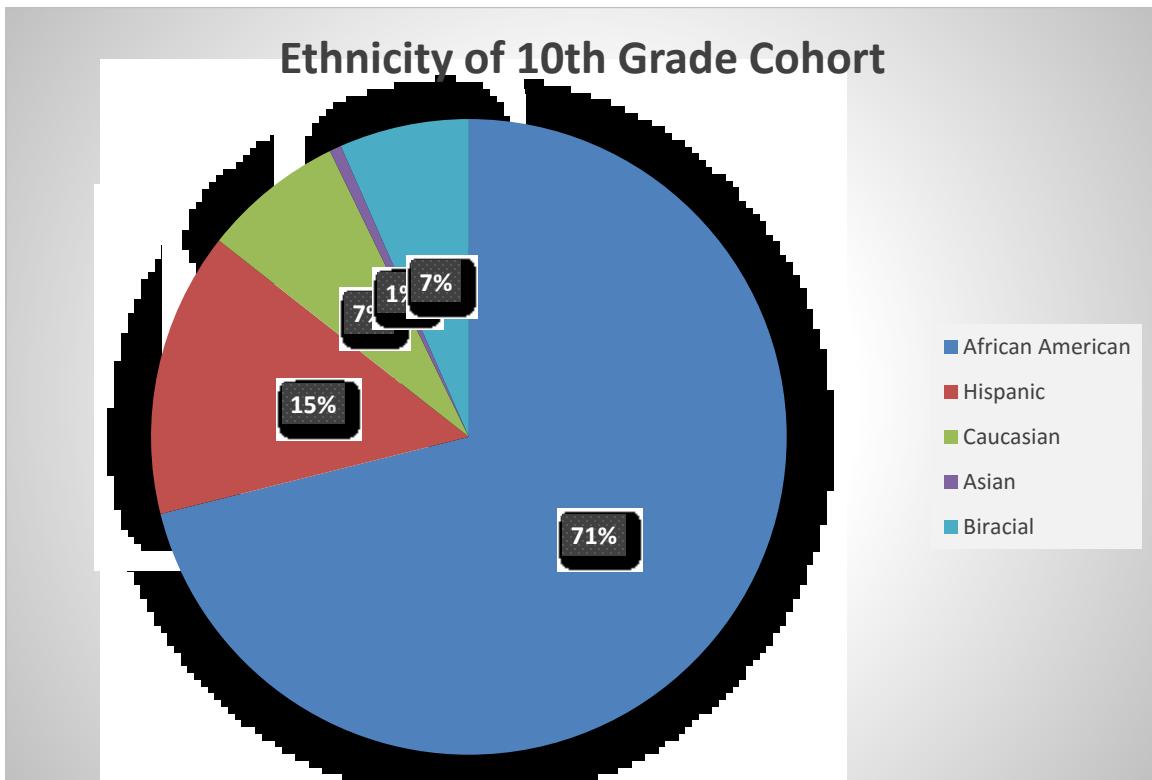
Table 3: PTO

Date	Event
October 5, 2014	College Money Management
November 16, 2014	Thanksgiving Program
December 14, 2014	Winter Holiday Party
January 25, 2015	Cyberbullying
March 3, 2015	General Meeting
May 16, 2015	Transition Programming

In addition to increased PTO awareness and engagement, the DDP hosted career luncheons in conjunction with CIS. The career luncheons focus on the issue of college and career readiness. In the month of February, the DDP hosted two luncheons occurring consecutively. To further support the concept of college and career readiness, the DDP provides study hall sessions to program participants. During study hall sessions, DDP staff cover all subjects and students work with program staff, mentors, and fellow classmates. A total of 21 sessions during the 2014-2015 school year, which occurred from September 11, 2014 to April 29, 2015. Sessions occur from third to fifth period to allow program participants adequate time to study, work collaboratively, and finish assignments.

For the 10th grade cohort, the DDP worked with a total of 152 students. The ethnic makeup of the 10th grade cohort is diverse given the following distribution:

Chart 1: Ethnicity



As mentioned previously, in the DDP Caseload Form, the DDP staff members classify students into three tiers. This system helps program staff mitigate and understand the socioeconomic and academic factors that may inhibit a student's success. Additionally, academic information includes pass or fail status on the STAAR, DAEP placement, and attendance rate. More information about tiers is as follows:

Tier	Indicators
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed one or more STAAR tests in the 8th Grade • Identified as At-Risk by State
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet at least 3 of the following indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failed one or more STAAR tests in 9th Grade ○ Failed Both Reading and Math in the 8th Grade ○ DAEP Placement 2013-2014 ○ Below campus attendance rate ○ Eco Dis Advantaged ○ LEP Designation ○ Age 16 or Above ○ Attended 3 or more schools in the last three years • Identified as At-Risk by State
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet at least 4 of the following indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failed One or More STAAR tests in 8th Grade ○ Failed Both Reading and Math in 8th Grade ○ DAEP Placement 2013-2014 ○ Below Campus Attendance Rate ○ Economically Disadvantaged ○ LEP Designation ○ Age 16 or above ○ Attended 3 or more schools in the last three years

The 10th grade cohort has the following distributions according to tiers.

Chart 2: Tiers

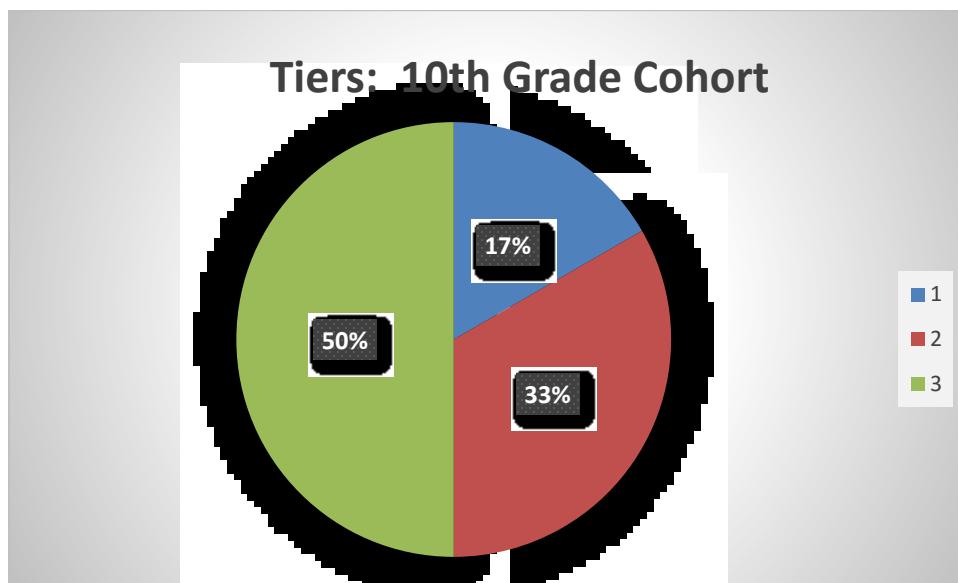


Chart 3: Sex

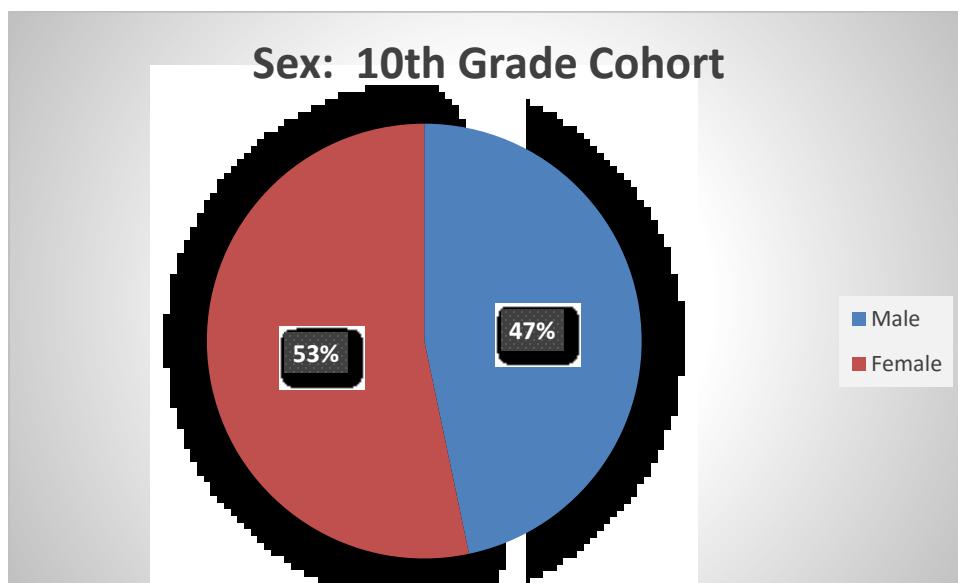
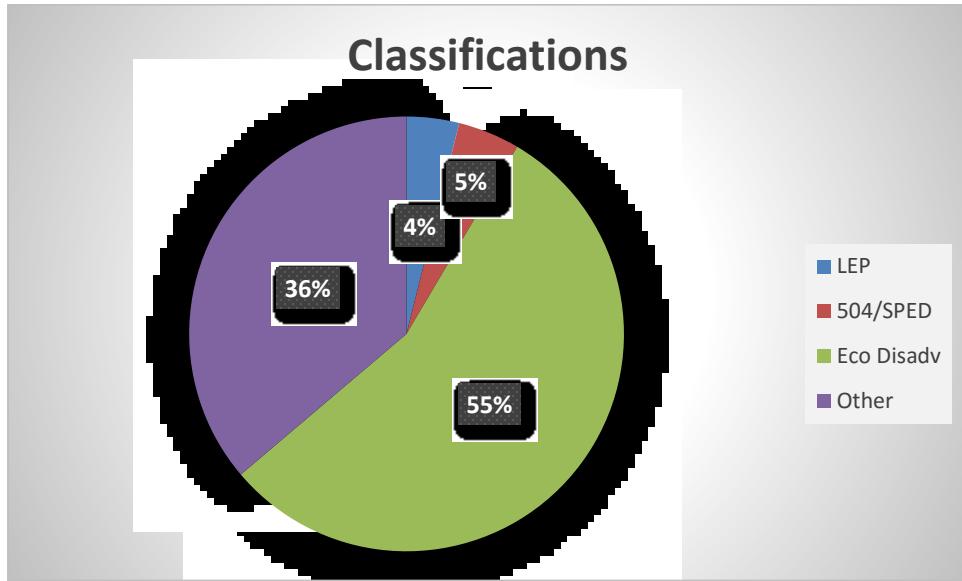


Chart 4: Classifications



Overall, the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) has taken a holistic approach to its staff member's interactions with program participants. Both the 9th grade and 10th grade cohort have seen improvement in long-term and short-term *educational outcomes*. For example, the TEA promoted 87% of 9th grade CISD students to the next grade. By ensuring that students reach the preceding milestones, the DDP works to ensure high school graduation incrementally. Thus, as a *supplemental education program*, the DDP works to enrich the education experiences and the *educational outcomes* of students. The DDP is not simply about high school graduation but more so about postsecondary success. The DDP staff guide students through a crucial time in their academic development and are introduced to the possibility of colleges and careers that they might have otherwise been overlooked. As a result of such assistance, students have experienced an improvement in attendance rate, passing rates, parental engagement, and other factors that contribute to student success.

CONCLUSION

As the case of the Destination Diploma Program (DDP) suggests, the causal relationship between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes* is a product of a program's ability to provide opportunities for parental engagement along with college and career readiness programming. As discussed previously, the analytical framework used to examine the ability of the DDP to provide socioeconomic opportunities depends on program's incorporation of social constructivist views, constructivist career tools, and parental engagement efforts.

The DDP works to provide positive *educational outcomes* by empowering students to pursue postsecondary education and opportunities regardless of socioeconomic status. More importantly, the DDP makes higher education a probable and realistic outcome by holding students accountable through program objectives and responsibilities. Furthermore, the opportunity to participate in college tours allows students to understand that college is within their reach. Experiential learning is impactful given that it allows students to grapple with what exactly college and career readiness entails. Therefore, the fact the DDP exists to help low-income and/or first-generation students overcome barriers to postsecondary success makes positive *educational outcomes* a goal of the program. This is consistent with the long-running goal in public education to provide equal opportunity for students.

The programming and initiatives of the DDP work to ensure that students develop academic persistence. Additionally, students receive access to academic tools such as time management and relevant study skills to overcome gaps in knowledge due to low socioeconomic status or first-generation status. In this sense, the DDP instills student with the mindset that an individual's background does not define him or her and that with the proper guidance students can overcome their circumstances. The DDP addresses the academic needs of students through

tutoring services and study hall sessions. By providing the following services, students accomplish their academic goals without considering their socioeconomic background to be a barrier to success. Thus, assertive accommodation strategy is implicit in the DDP by design regardless of whether students are cognizant of this strategy.

The ability of students to employ social constructivist views is relevant in the DDP. The social constructivist view, in the simplest terms, focuses on the impact of teachers, mentors, parents, and others to generate a holistic perspective. *Supplemental education programs* such as the DDP, through their services and programming, stress that a student's success does not occur in a vacuum. *Educational outcomes* for student depend on the support of the community and may also be negatively impacted by stereotypes or misunderstandings. As a result, the DDP seeks to implicitly incorporate social constructivist views in service offerings, programming, and initiatives.

The DDP program incorporate constructivist career tools through the college and career luncheons. Also, constructivist career tools are inherent in professional development opportunities offered by the DDP program given that the ultimate goal of the program is graduation and postsecondary success. DDP's goal of graduation is linked to professional development to ensure future employment, whether immediately after graduation or after attending college. Therefore, professional development programs seek to prepare the student for their future after the program. The DDP provides professional development workshop as to relate to the college and career readiness that caters to both college going students and students who will seek employment after high school graduation. On the other hand, the program also works to provide students professional development workshops that focus on immediate employment after graduation for students who do not intend to enroll in a postsecondary institution.

Parental engagement efforts have shown great promise for the DDP program as a whole. Both staff members and students benefit from increased parental engagement in Student Lead Conferences (SLCs) and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. The SLCs and PTO meetings help parents to understand the academic workload and extracurricular activities that their children are experiencing. Through these activities, parents gain a greater understanding of school environment and can participate in their children's education. Such participation by parents helps facilitate a connection between the staff and parents. The preceding connection helps staff improve the *educational outcomes* of students by providing an accountability mechanism for students. In addition, the DDP's parental engagement efforts employ a culturally responsive paradigm that fosters a meaningful and effective relationship between program staff and parents. Prior to the DDP, parental engagement in PTO meetings were dismal since the PTO had few, if any meetings. During the 2014-2015 school year, the DDP assisted in the planning and execution of six PTO meetings. The viability of the connection between DDP staff and parents are essential to the success of students and the continuing sense of community that the program works to instill.

The case study of the DDP is not sufficient to suggest that a positive relationship exists between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes*. Essentially, *supplemental education programs* such as the DDP work to improve socioeconomic opportunities for participants but the qualitative data can not prove a definitive positive relationship. Thus, the relationship between *supplemental education program* and *educational outcomes* does not suggest that an increase in the quantity of programming and initiatives of a *supplemental education program* will lead to an increase in the favorable *educational outcomes* experienced by program participants. The subjective nature of programming and initiatives has definitive

objectives, but the case study can not easily measure *educational outcomes*. Also, students are fickle and their *educational outcomes* hinge on a variety of factors including student goals, background, and socioeconomic environment. Thus, the case study analyzes DDP through a qualitative rather than a quantitative lens. The effectiveness of a *supplemental education program*, such as the Destination Diploma Program at Crowley High School, is a function of parental engagement, career and *college readiness* programming, academic tutorials, and college tours. The programming and initiatives of the DDP respond to the needs of the program participants, but it is difficult to say that they lead to positive *educational outcomes* for a student. It is possible that the efforts of *supplemental education programs* such as the DDP may contribute to positive *educational outcomes* but one cannot prove that causality exists. Along with other programs, the DDP works to mitigate socioeconomic status, social and human influences on race and class, and other factors that may affect the *educational outcomes* of students. Therefore, the relationship between *supplemental education programs* and *educational outcomes* is contingent on the ability of such programs to merge the needs of their participants with the ultimate goal of the program. For example, the DDP adapts its programming and initiatives to the socioeconomic background and postsecondary goals of the program participants. To achieve program goals, more specifically graduation and postsecondary success, the DDP also takes a communal approach by including educators, administrators, and parents to understand the services provided by DDP. Thus, the case study of DDP sheds light on how *supplemental education programs* work to provide positive *educational outcomes*.

The examination of DDP suggests the following hypotheses:

H₁: If *supplemental education programs* offer at least six Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, then an increase parent engagement in student academic activities will occur.

H₂: The more *supplemental education programs* incorporate the social constructivist view, the less students will experience social or cultural shocks in postsecondary opportunities.

H₃: The more *supplemental education programs* implement culturally responsive practices, the greater the ability of the program to improve the *educational outcomes* of program participants.

Overall, the DDP at CISD does provide favorable *educational outcomes* for their program participants. The DDP is a local representation of *supplemental education programs* and as a result cannot speak for all *supplemental education programs*. However, the lessons learned from the DDP are valuable in understanding how urban public education environments work to improve the *educational outcomes* of students. The DDP has a caseload that is majority minority, disproportionately economically disadvantaged, and students who are deemed to be at risk. The results of the DDP are quite impressive given that the students served require the most assistance. By helping students that the system may overlook, the DDP provides a safety valve for the CISD and Crowley High School. Without *supplemental education program* such as DDP, educational systems may overlook students. The case study shows that importance of *supplemental education programs* such as DDP is a result of their work to ensure favorable *educational outcomes* despite the difficulty of ensuring equity in education. The fact that the case

study cannot prove a positive relationship between *supplemental education program* and *educational outcomes* does not mean that programs like the DDP are not helpful. The effectiveness of a *supplemental education programs* is hard to prove given the subjective quality of existing data. For example, program activities such as PTO meetings and college tours have occurred but the case study cannot be determined by the exact content of such activities cannot with absolute precision. However, issues such as the achievement gap and the larger issue of equity necessitates the existence of *supplemental education programs* for the purpose of student progressing toward positive *educational outcomes*. Admittedly, equity in education is far from being achieved but urban education environments are much improved by *supplemental education programs* such as the DDP. If public schools are to move towards providing true opportunities for students to be college-ready upon graduation regardless of their family or socioeconomic background, programs such as DDP may fulfill the promise of equal opportunity.

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