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# The Significance of Employing a Comprehensive Transitional Program for Sixth Grade and its Effects on Student Anxiety and Performance

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Dissertation Proposal

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**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

Students transitioning from elementary school to middle school can trigger emotions of enthusiasm or trepidation in students.  According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, transition means to move, pass, or change from one place, stage, or condition to another place, stage, or condition (Merriam-Webster Online, 2019).   Typically, all students will experience multiple transitions throughout their lives and educational journeys.  Students will transition from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and from high school to college or careers.  In this study middle school transition is the term used and defined as the process of changing from an elementary environment to a middle school environment (Gilewski & Nunn, 2016).  Middle school may be considered as one of the most crucial transition years for students, and may pose challenges to many students who meet these tasks with varying levels of success" (Akos & Kurz, 2015).  As a focus to this concern, Dillion's (2008) study, *The Transition Years*, discusses the importance of creating a well-thought-out plan to ease the transitions students make, especially between two of the most critical junctures in K-12 education: the move from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school (Dillon, 2008).   Even though some middle schools may have transitional activities in place for incoming sixth grade students, they do not adequately address the needs of all students during the transition process.  According to Lorain (2017) most schools provide some sort of transition program for students in their final year of elementary school consisting of a parent/student night, followed by a tour of the school for students sometime in the spring (Lorain, 2017).   These activities alone, even though are meaningful activities, do not address the overall needs and concerns of students and parents.  An eleven or twelve-year-old, usually without much preparation, is entering into a school culture of student independence, fast paced, and a greater academic challenge.   It should

be considered that during this time of transitioning to a new environment, students are also changing hormonally, mentally and physically (Gilewski & Nunn, 2016).    Fifth grade students are transitioning from a highly organized and nurturing configuration to an environment with less structure, more impersonal, more social, and competitive academically (Akos, 2002). Because of this environmental change, entering middle school may not appear to be a fresh start for some students.  After a summer of social media and smartphones, students may have mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety.  Students may have seen their classmates posting photos from summer hangouts that they weren't invited to, or were not allowed to play a part in. Because students are able to see everything via social media. The feeling of exclusion may trigger certain emotions in students.  Unfortunately, the anxiety of not being included is even stronger today (Kelly, 2018).  Making the interchange from the traditional pre-school orientation programs to a comprehensive transitional program may help address these concerns and foster a more fluid transition for students.

Because some students mature faster than others, those developmentally behind will typically experience more stress than their peers and may require more support to assist with procedural and academic transition (Gilewski & Nunn, 2016).  These challenges impact student academic achievement and increases anxiety.  Research has revealed that students' experience difficulties developmentally and academically during the transition process.   Akos' (2002) study proposes that even though declines are not gender exclusive, boys tend to show a significant drop in academic achievement, while girls seem to experience a greater level of psychological distress after transition (Akos, 2002).  In both genders, transitioning has the susceptibility to effect student motivation and attitudes toward school.   "While students experience other "transitions" during their educational journey, such as advancing from one grade level to the next, the three

major transition points are of particular focus of educators and school reformers because transitioning students often experience significant academic, social, emotional, physical, or developmental changes that may adversely affect their educational performance (The Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to provide a structure for the interrelated research conducted on the pressing need to address the concerns of middle school transition. This chapter provides background information of the problem that warrants the need to research this topic. This study compiled and analyzed data regarding the effectiveness of implementing a comprehensive transitional program to help students become acclimated to middle school. Also, this study delineates a framework to assist middle school leaders in establishing an environment that is more conducive for students transitioning from elementary to middle school.

## Background

"The transition experience can be a negative one for many students resulting in losses in academic achievement, self-concept, disengagement from school and increased disciplinary problems" (Akos & Kurz, 2015). During this transitional period, students may be at an increased risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety and stress which may cause a decline in their academics. According to Gilweski & Nunn (2016), students are worried about being thrown into an environment of independence and responsibility which is an environment significantly different from what they have known for the past six to seven years. The emotion of anticipating what's to come may contribute to the anxiety the students feel during this transition. Children have reported their concerns with the fear of bullies, being lost, peer relationship worries, and anxiety over coping with an increased workload (Evans, Borriello &

Field (2018).   It may come as a surprise to some that transitioning from one school to the next

can cause these emotions to rise up in children, but when looking at the structure of elementary

school, students are mostly taught in self-contained classrooms with one teacher.  In middle

school, the structural, social and instructional processes are different.    The students are more

independent and are transitioning to a more socially complex and academically demanding

environment. The students will spend the first few months adjusting to a new environment, an

unfamiliar setting with unaccustomed structures, and an innovative set of expectations that are

not all exclusively taught. They will have, in most cases, six different specialized teachers for

different domains, more peer interaction, intensified expectations to perform academically and to

be more responsible.   The students are more concerned with the routines and complex

procedures required in middle school such as getting to class on time, combination locks, and

lockers, homework and higher demands academically.  Students are expected to get to and from

classes on their own, manage time wisely, organize and keep up with materials, be responsible

for every teachers' assignments, and develop and maintain a social life (Gilewski & Nunn,

2016).   Additionally, the students are in a crucial transitional stage in their bodies and mind that

brings about a multitude of challenges as they metamorphose from childhood to adolescence.

"These changes in school context are often at odds with the cognitive, physical and social

changes of early adolescence that make supportive peer and teacher relationships especially

important at this stage of life" (Ryan, Shim, & Makara, 2013).

The students must believe they are a part of the school if the goal is to optimize their

overall success in school.  Their success hinges on their ability to transition from elementary to

middle school with self-assurance.   This is initiated through well-communicated expectations as

students are entering into an environment that is less structured than the environment in which

they are most familiar.  Providing the sixth-grade students with explicit details of expectations and procedures of the school's structure may help students navigate the school in a safe, stressless and systematic format (Gilewski & Nunn, 2016).   Failing to create this understanding, promotes an unsteady transition experience for students entering middle school which may cause anxiety in students and a decline in their academic performance.  Previous research supplies evidence that, in general, students suffer significant declines in academic achievement in the transition from elementary school to middle school due to changes in instructional approaches, work expectations and school structure (Schielack & Seeley, 2010).

Most research is conducted on students transitioning from middle to high school and reveal the positive effects of the implementation of a transitional academy universally referred to as a ninth grade academy.  A ninth grade academy is defined as a yearlong uniquely designed school program that provides support and resources to ninth grade students who are usually housed in a separate location (Cook, Fowler & Harris, 2008). While policymakers and researchers alike have focused on improving students' transition into high school, a new study of Florida schools suggests the critical transition problem may happen years before, when students enter middle school (Sparks, 2011).    What is also lacking in research is a quantifiable study that examines the effects that a comprehensive transitional program has on the students' level of anxiety and achievement during the transition process.  According to Elias (2002), adolescents transitioning to middle school need a combination of skill training and social-emotional learning. "Since the middle school concept was introduced in the 1960s to replace the junior high model, educators and the general public have been concerned that adolescents are not being adequately prepared for the rigors of high school" (Nolan, 2014).    Elias points out that students' experiences magnify at this stage, and the many stressors associated with this transition can be

damaging to students if there is no structure in place to help them grow and regulate (Elias, 2002). Historically, schools have attempted to mitigate these concerns by providing transition orientation activities during pre-school. These activities are slated to demystify the concerns students and parents have regarding the new routines of middle school prior to the first day of school. Transition orientation activities usually consist of a school visit, forums with incoming sixth-grade students and their parents, and a tour of the middle school campus. There is usually a brief discussion of this transition orientation initiative among administrators and staff to help facilitate the process. However, research studies have concluded that a more comprehensive approach is needed to ensure a smooth transition for sixth grade students. According to Elias (2002), many students are simply not prepared for the academic demands of middle school. They need explicit instruction, coaching and support on organizing time, and resources for homework. The students will also need coaching on responding to work that is more challenging and requires more effort. Helping them to understand and address the varying expectations of teachers in different subject areas, accomplish basic tasks as studying, taking notes, and taking tests are all areas in which support is needed (Elias, 2002). Elias believes that a more comprehensive approach of skill training and social-emotional learning is needed to help students become more successful as they transition. This approach will take a concerted effort of teamwork and collaboration with administration, teachers, parents and students in designing and implementing a comprehensive transitional program that is deliberate in practice to minimize the distress associated with the transition process.

Instituting the precise components of a comprehensive transitional program will provide students with the support needed to ensure the smooth adjustment to middle school. Perkins and Gelfer (1995) suggests that there are five essential components of the elementary-to-middle

school transition model that should be considered: developing a planning team, generating goals and identifying problems, developing written strategic transition plans, acquiring the support and commitment of teachers and all stakeholders involved, and evaluating the overall transition process.   Also, Perkins and Gelfer (1995) believed that planning and anticipating for important changes in our lives can help us cope with the uncertainties that accompany these changes (Perkins & Gelfer, 1995).   A comprehensive transitional program is a great opportunity for administrators and teachers to help students experience social and academic success by utilizing strategies in and out of the classroom that promote individualized learning and social development.  It creates a great outreach opportunity to inform parents about the developmental needs of their adolescent, address any concerns the parent has and encourages continuous parental involvement in their child's education.  The elements of a comprehensive transitional program should demonstrate awareness of the anxieties students face while transitioning to a new school as well as the importance of the role parents and teachers have as partners in the process.  Middle schools must recognize that transitioning is a continuous process and extends beyond the single event known as the pre-school orientation for incoming sixth-grade students. Students will need continuous support during their first year to assist them in becoming secure in a new environment.  It is vital that schools effectively address this problem as middle school becomes the model structure of the duration of the students' educational career.  Middle school is the pivotal point in the lives of children when they began to think about academic and career opportunities.  A well designed transition program for sixth-grade can combat many distractors that will cause anxiety, students to become disinterested in school, a decline in academic achievement, and simultaneously, create a strong sense of belonging.  Creating a sense of

belonging will create a climate of amiability and compel teachers not to give up on the students regardless of the number of times they may regress.

School structure for sixth-grade students may also contribute to the effect of student success in the transition process. Eccles (2004) posits that school structure plays a part in creating and sustaining the issues that contribute to our school system's inability to meet the needs of students. Felner, Seitsinger, Brand, Burns, & Bolton, (2007) propose that personalized learning communities foster productive learning both by removing developmentally hazardous conditions that may be present in the school context and by providing the opportunities-to-learn, opportunities to teach, and learning supports that enable a school to become a positive, developmentally enhancing context. Creating a sense of belonging provides a level of security for students as it creates a sense of personalization and belonging among teachers and students. Teacher and student relationships are essential for student success and failing to establish relationships with students can cause destabilization for many. According to Longobardi, Prino, Marengo & Settanni (2016), "Children experiencing positive relationships with their teacher develop interest in school activities, are more motivated and willing to learn" (Longobardi, Prino, Marengo & Settanni (2016). Likewise, Cauley's and Jovanovich's (2006) findings revealed that students were not only concerned about relationships with their peers but were also anxious about relationships with their teachers (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

Some schools have incorporated "small learning communities" which are also called schools within schools and have succeeded in creating more nurturing and personalized environments for students and their teachers. The notion of breaking large schools into smaller units has found favor as a way to increase personalization, relevance and rigor of coursework, and teacher collaboration (David, 2008). Small learning communities have the propensity to

impact isolationism and transform the impersonal nature of large schools. Small learning communities can also decrease drop-out rates, while increasing student engagement and achievement. Because of the positive impact small learning communities have had on student success, school districts have begun to revisit the configuration of schools. Many school districts are reconsidering and embracing the K-8 model. The K-8 model was America's dominant school configuration in the 19th century up until the middle of the 20th century. In the 1970s, educators in America began to gravitate to the middle school or junior high concept. Those districts that chose not to reform their school structures found that students performed better in the K-8 model. According to Yecke (2006), parents, teachers, and administrators at many schools that remained K–8 discovered anecdotally that their students demonstrated fewer behavioral problems and higher academic achievement than many students enrolled in the middle school configuration. Also, a longitudinal analysis was conducted in 1987 by Simmons and Blyth on 924 Milwaukee students enrolled in two different school configurations. Some students attend a K-8 model and the other students attend a K-6 model. The K-8 students transition to a four-year high school starting in grade 8 and the K-6 students transitioned to the middle school model starting in 7th grade. "The researchers found that the students in the K–8 schools had higher academic achievement as measured by both grade point averages and standardized test scores, especially in math". The authors concluded that the intimacy of the K–8 environment and postponing transition to a new school at a more mature age may have accounted for the discrepancy (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). This study supports the notion that a comprehensive transitional program is necessary to provide support for parents and students transitioning from elementary to a middle school structure. The influences that affect students' ability to deal successfully with the transition to middle school can be subdued if the new school

environment and the level of preparation and social support are available to the students prior to and during the transition process.

## Statement of the Problem

While there has been research conducted examining transitional ninth grade academy programs for ninth grade students transitioning from middle to high, there is very little literature on sixth grade academy programs for students transitioning from elementary to middle school. Even though many high schools have implemented ninth grade academies to ease the transition experience for students to include challenges of stress and anxiety, middle schools have not adopted this reformation. The middle school leaders caution could stem from the lack of research available that supports the successes of a sixth grade academy program. Because there is not substantial research on sixth grade academies housed in small learning communities, this study will explore the effects of incorporating a comprehensive transitional program for sixth grade students. There is a need for further research in this area to examine the impact a comprehensive transitional program has on student anxiety and student achievement. Although few studies have found that students thrive in the transition process from elementary to middle school, a substantial body of research reports this transition milestone as stressful for many students" (Theriot & Dupper, (2010). Additional research in this area will also assist school leaders in formulating well-informed decisions when configuring the components of a comprehensive transitional program. Research discloses that the process of transitioning may negatively impact student academic achievement and student anxiety. Even though there are transitional activities in place in many middle schools for fifth grade students transitioning to sixth grade, they do not effectively address the needs of students during the transition process. Middle school leaders need a transformation from the traditional pre-school orientation programs

to a comprehensive transitional program that is intentional in fostering a more fluid transition for students matriculating from elementary to middle school. The transition process causes trepidation and creates a challenge in the establishment of teacher relationships with students which causes destabilization for many. Barber & Olsen, (2004) concentrated on the perceived changes in the middle school environment and its' impact on student academic performance, their study revealed that parents and teachers perceived decreases in the quality of school environment and social emotional function. They also made the correlation to the decline in the quality of environment to the changes in the procedural aspects of middle school. Specifically, environmental changes to large class sizes and teacher support due to a setting that is less personalized (Barber & Olsen, 2004). Creating an environment that is welcoming and cultivating may overpower these matters and transform the attitudes of teachers motivating them to assist students in maximizing their potential.

This case study will examine how student achievement and student anxiety may be influenced by the implementation of a comprehensive transitional program. This case study was chosen to add more awareness on this complex issue by comprehensively exploring and collecting data from a representative sample using a survey instrument. To assist with the development of a comprehensive transitional program, a pre and post-survey will be administered to parents via the school counselors to gain insight on their concerns and thoughts about starting middle school. The data collected will be categorized based on the parents' greatest to least concern about transitioning to middle school. The data will also be used as a blueprint to begin construction of a comprehensive transition plan. A focus on the school's leaders approach and implementation was assessed to determine its effect on student anxiety and academic performance when transitioning to middle school. The study will then examine the

implications that a comprehensive transitional program has on parents' perception of students'

anxiety and student achievement as they transition to middle school.

## Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to identify the specific concerns the parents of incoming sixth

grade students have about starting middle school.  The researcher intent is to create a

comprehensive transition program tailored specifically to those concerns and ascertain if the

program alleviates, increases or decreases the students' anxiety levels.   The findings of this

study may determine whether or not the implementation of a comprehensive transitional program

for middle school students fosters a more fluid transition from elementary to middle school than

the traditional pre-school orientation programs.  This study may also reveal the effects of a

comprehensive transitional program on student achievement and student anxiety after

implementation.  The study was conducted using a sample from a Title I middle school in a large

urban school district in Florida.  Title I school is defined as any school that receives federal

funding because it serves a high percentage of students with the demographics of low

socioeconomic status.

Chapter two will show that a gap exists on the impact that middle school transition has on

student anxiety levels and academic performance.  The researcher will compare parents'

perception of anxiety levels of their children starting middle school and compare the parents'

perception of anxiety levels of their students when they complete a comprehensive transitional

program.

## Research Questions

The main goal of this study was to inform of the school's deliberate practice for

supporting students transitioning from elementary to middle school and contribute to existing

literature by a continued exploration of the perceptions of parents as they prepare for and navigate through the transition process.   This study will help Mayan Middle School expand their practice by obtaining a deeper understanding of parents' concerns and needs.  Likewise, this study will provide the necessary data to help improve the educational experiences for parents as they adjust to transitioning to middle school.

**Questions to Explore**

The following questions guided the exploration into this problem of practice at Mayan Middle School:

1.  What is the parents' perception of the anxiety levels of students entering middle school?

    $H1_0$ Parent perceptions will not indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

    $H1_a$: Parent perceptions will indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

2.  What implications does a comprehensive transitional program have on the parents' perception of student anxiety levels upon completion of the program?

    $H2_a$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will decline.

    $H2_0$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will not decline.

3.  What educational impact will a comprehensive transitional program have on student academic performance in the first semester compared to the students who did not participate in the program?

*H3$_a$:* There is a statistically significant difference in the means of student

academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive

transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

*H3$_0$:* There is no statistically significant difference in the means for student

academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive

transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

The research questions were designed to be independent indicators yielding results that are not

related to the results of each other.  The first research question will seek to address the parent's

perception of student anxiety levels before completing a comprehensive transitional program and

compare the data to parents' perception of student anxiety levels about transitioning to middle

school.  The second research question will seek to address the parent's perception of student

anxiety levels upon student academic performance upon completion of a comprehensive

transitional program.  The third research question will seek to address the academic performance

of students who attended a comprehensive transitional program and compare to the academic

performance of students who did not attend a comprehensive transitional program.   The data

will prove the null hypothesis or the alternative hypothesis.

## Significance of Study

This case study will facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive transitional

program in a Title I middle school.  The study will examine the perceptions of parents to provide

awareness of student anxiety.  The data collected from the parents will be used as the blueprint to

develop a transitional program.  The program will be implemented and examined for its effects

on student achievement and student anxiety upon their transition to middle school.   The

expectation of middle school leaders is to ease or minimize the levels of anxiety associated with

transitioning and to improve student achievement.   This study may contribute to the limited available research on comprehensive transitional programs for sixth grade.  This study will examine the effects of a comprehensive transitional program and the factors that can effect student achievement and anxiety.  This case study may have the capacity to improve the transitional process from elementary to middle school and may serve as a framework for school leaders to restructure their configuration for sixth grade students.  The artifact that will be established from this study is a comprehensive transition program at a Title I middle school that is intentional in design to assist parents as they prepare for the transition from elementary to middle school.   The program will be strategic in establishing systems and employing those systems to contest the emotional and academic strains parents may encounter.  The program's ultimate mission will strive to extinguish or significantly reduce the identified stressors that are associated with the transition process.

**Design of the Comprehensive Transitional Program**

*Strategies for Middle School Success* is the comprehensive transitional program that was developed and implemented at Mayan Middle School.  The program was designed with a structure that has never been available in Mayan Middle School's setting for students transitioning to middle school.  This structure is the most important factor as it separates the *Strategies for Middle School Success* program from the traditional orientation activities administered each year.

The Strategies for Middle School Success was designed with five components that separate it from the traditional orientation programs.  The duration of the program lasted eight days running from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. (see APPENDIX I); the participants were enrolled in six classes and given a schedule to follow (see APPENDIX J ); the participants were exposed

to a mock daily experience with 45 minute classes and class change; bus transportation was provided to and from school; participants were provided a thirty-minute breakfast and a thirty-minute lunch. These components were employed to differentiate the traditional orientation practices of Mayan Middle School.

The first feature of the program is that the duration of the program was designed for eight days opposed to two hours on the day before the official start of school. The comprehensive transitional program took place three weeks prior to the first official day of school. The program ran daily from 9:00 A.M. until 3:30 P.M. compared to 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. The day schedule was implemented using middle school actual start and end times to expose participants to a full academic day in middle school. The eight days were determined to give participants adequate time to become familiar with the campus layout. The first two days of the program required each teacher to give participants a tour of the campus during each class period. The third day of the program required participants to navigate the campus independently or with a partner to arrive at their next scheduled class.

The second feature is the participants were provided with a six period schedule that include courses in preview lessons in: math, reading, technology (google classroom), notetaking and study skills, middle school culture, and organizational skills. The participants all had six different teachers who were all located in different buildings throughout the campus. This feature was designed to expose participants to a full academic schedule with multiple teachers.

The third feature exposed the participants to a mock daily experience with 45 minute classes and class change. The bell resonated to indicate class change and resonated after 4 minutes to indicate tardiness to class;

The fourth feature is that the participants were provided bus transportation to and from school.  The buses were scheduled to arrive on campus by 9:00 A.M. as they would during the school year in time for breakfast, which is thirty, minutes prior to the start of the first class.

The fifth feature provided participants with a thirty-minute breakfast and a thirty-minute lunch just as school meals are offered during a regular school day.  All participants had the same lunch period which allowed them to stay together and socialize with those not in their scheduled classes.

## Review Definition of Relevant Terms

*Adolescence*: the transitional period between puberty and adulthood in human development, extending mainly over the teen years (ages 10 to 24) and terminating legally when the age of majority is reached.

*Adolescent development:* The stages of human growth identified as early adolescence, approximately 10-14 years of age, middle adolescence, approximately 15-16 years of age, and Late adolescence, approximately 17-21 years of age (Spano, 2004).

*Anxiety:* a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event such or something with an uncertain outcome such as transitioning to middle school.

*Comprehensive transitional program:* a longitudinal program that provides activities prior to the beginning of middle school and continues throughout the first year of middle school to equip students with the necessary resources and strategies to be successful along the way. (Hill & Mobley, 2016).

*Early Adolescence:* the first transitional stage in human development that occurs between the ages of 10 to 14.

*Feeder School*:  a school where the students are all able to go to the same comprehensive middle school rather than being split up to different schools.

*Middle School Configuration:* the structure of a middle school typically K-8 or traditional middle school arrangement consisting of grades 6-8. The grades 6-8 structure is the most prominent model and is the model used for this study.

*Pre-School orientation:* a two-hour session held before the start of an academic year that includes procedures to introduce and welcome incoming sixth grade students to middle school.

*Puberty:* is the name for the time when a child's body begins to develop and change as he/she moves from child to adult.  No two people are exactly alike, but everyone will go through this developmental state. Usually, puberty starts between ages 8 and 13 in girls and ages 9 and 15 in boys (kidshealth.org, 2015).

*Social-emotional development:*  the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others (Cde.ca.gov, 2018).

*Title I School:* A school with a large concentration of low-income students that receives federal funds to supplement and assist in meeting students' educational goals.

*Transitioning:*  the change from one place, state of being, or condition to another place, state of being, or condition (Merriam-Webster Online, 2015)

**Organization of the Study**

The study will examine and compare parents' perception of student anxiety levels of transitioning to middle school before and after completing a comprehensive transitional program. Also, the study will compare the academic performance of participants who participated in a

comprehensive transitional program to those who did not participant in the program.  Chapter two provides a review of the research regarding the transition from elementary school to middle school and the developmental changes students face that are happening simultaneously which may contribute to student anxiety levels and academic performance.  Chapter three encompasses the research questions and research hypothesis, data collection procedures and analysis.  Chapter four contains the findings and results of the study to include the impact a comprehensive transitional program on student academic performance.  Chapter five is the summary of results, the conclusions of the study, and the recommendations for conducting future studies.

## Chapter II:  Literature Review

### Overview

For this research study, the researcher used the Lynn University Library resources.  The databases used to find scholarly articles were ERIC, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Ebook Central, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Academica.edu, and WorldCat.org.  Research terms include, but are not limited to, *adolescence, adolescent development, anxiety, comprehensive transitional program, early adolescence, middle school configuration, pre-school orientation, puberty, social-emotional development, Title I, and transitioning.*  This chapter provides a review of adolescent and middle school literature and research related to the outcomes of transitioning to middle school.  The literature review also explores whether a comprehensive transitional program would be more beneficial to transitioning students than pre-orientation activities alone.  Research from the literature supports the perception that transitioning to middle school is an event that is challenging for the overwhelming majority of students causing anxiety, a decline in academic performance and perceived gaps in programmatic support for the transitioning students.  According to Hill and Mobley (2016), the transition from elementary to middle school is a critical time that is considered to be one of the most difficult for students due

to environmental adjustments, psychological distress, and developmental changes (Hill & Mobley, 2016). The research also highlights the developmental changes students are experiencing between the ages 11 to 14 often referred to as early adolescence or puberty. Puberty is defined as the time when a child begins to develop and change from a child to an adult. Usually, puberty starts between ages 8 and 13 in girls and ages 9 and 15 in boys This transitional phase is substantial and recognized as the most profound physical, emotional and mental transformation children will ever experience. The two transitional phases, environmental and developmental, occurring simultaneously can be devastating to many children. Typically, students will experience the stressors of transitioning more than once throughout their journey in education. They will transition from pre-school to elementary, elementary to middle, middle to high, and high school to college. "Research has demonstrated that the negative results of the two changes occurring together will include lowered achievement, lowered grade point average (GPA), diminished student leadership behaviors, poor self-concept, and over-reliance on the peer group" (Davis, 2008). It is important to note that each transition brings about a change in culture, emotions, adaptation and the risk of being inefficacious. In reviewing the literature, research has been consistent for decades in identifying the negative outcomes associated with students transitioning to middle school. Adolescent development has been a prominent topic throughout history and has been viewed through the lenses of many theorists who suggest that "the timing of transition, the perceived changes in environment, and adolescent development are related to declines in academics and delays in social-emotional development" (McKeon, 2014). Adolescent development is defined as the stages of human growth identified as early adolescence, approximately 10-14 years of age, middle adolescence, approximately 15-16 years of age, and late adolescence, approximately 17-21 years of age (Spano, 2004). Styron (as cited

in Davis, 2008) indicated that the purpose of the middle school is to provide a smooth transition

from elementary school into middle school and to provide programming that is more suitable for

adolescents (Davis, 2008). This literature review focuses on the significance of employing a

comprehensive transitional program for sixth-grade to assist students with the successful

transition from elementary to the successful adaptation to middle school. It is imperative for

students, parents, and teachers to have a program that supports them before, during and after the

transition process. This chapter will provide a structure for the interrelated research conducted

on the pressing need regarding this problem. In addition, the information presented in this

chapter will provide background knowledge about the impact transitioning has on fifth-grade

students matriculating to middle school and delineate the concept of comprehensive transitional

programs.

## Rationale for Choosing the Problem

**Transition Effect of Student Anxiety**

Studies have noted the transition that causes more mental disruption in students happens

in the transition from elementary school to middle school. According to Elias (2002), the

transition from elementary to middle school destabilize many students, requiring they re-

establish a sense of their identity in a more mature and demanding environment (Elias, 2002).

Perhaps this transition is more prominent because it takes place during a time students are

transitioning developmentally. This period of development often leaves the children feeling

more perplexed, increases their level of anxiety and mental fog as they lack the understanding of

the emotional turmoil they experience. According to the National Middle School Association

(2003), aside from infancy young people undergo more rapid and profound personal changes

between the ages 10 and 15 than at any other time in their lives (National Middle School

Association, 2003). What is important to note is this developmental change looks different on

every child. "Although pubertal changes occur at different times and at different rates for children, these pubertal changes involve physical, emotional, and social changes" (Theriot & Dupper 2010). When students enter into sixth grade, most are just past age 10. While some may have the appearance of maturity, they will lack the cognitive maturity their appearance suggests (Dillion, 2008). They are told that they are in middle school now and need to be more responsible. These statements may be true, however, what the students need to be taught is structure, organization, and procedures, and what they need to learn are boundaries and expectations (Dillon, 2008). In general, our lives are purposed with challenges that intensify with our age. The caveat to adolescence is the inability to personalize it and categorize it as a learning experience. At this tender age, students must learn to cope with every change they encounter which includes transitioning from school to school. Unfortunately, students, often, do not receive adequate support to promote a successful transition. Greene & Ollendick (1993), conducted their study to examine whether students experiencing a poor academic transition to middle school showed greater problems in other areas of adjustment such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem, stress, and behavior. The authors' experiment provided the students with support from teachers and parents and training in problem-solving, social skills and goal setting. The researchers categorized this group as receiving a full-treatment condition. This group of students showed significant improvement in academic achievement, anxiety, and teacher-reported behavior problems (Greene & Ollendick, 1993). Without supporting these students effectively through their developmental changes and the educational demands of middle school, schools and parents may begin to see an increase in disciplinary problems and a decline in academic success. Andrews & Bishop (2012), suggested that middle grades teachers may exacerbate anxiety by telling students that in secondary school their work will be much harder, that they will have to be

more organized, and their teachers will not have time to care about them the way they have been cared for in elementary school. "Teachers who do not understand young adolescents may inadvertently create transition problems" (Andrews & Bishop, 2012). Teachers, specifically those teaching in middle grades, need professional development to help them properly address school transition issues (Andrew & Bishop, 2012). Studies have revealed that "middle schools that take into consideration the physical, social-emotional, and intellectual-cognitive development of students transitioning to middle school when developing programs and activities, will see a positive impact on the social-emotional development of the adolescents and academic achievement. These programs ease the destabilization frequently experienced by students" (Akos & Martin, 2003). Greene & Ollendick (1993) also suggest that the rates of incidence and prevalence of diverse problem behaviors peak during the high school years, however, noted that these difficulties are thought to emerge from unresolved issues of the middle school period (Greene & Ollendick, 1993). Theriot & Dupper (2010) conducted a study to determine the link between transitioning to middle school and the negative educational outcomes, decline in student motivation, functioning, and overall attitudes toward school. The findings of this study revealed an 18% increase in 6th graders with discipline problems in middle school compared to elementary school, and 26% of all 6th graders were written up at least once for an infraction while only 8% of all 5th graders were written up at least once. Theriot and Dupper (2010) also hypothesized that disciplinary incidents with these students would decrease as they adjust to middle school (Theriot & Dupper 2010). This shift has been the norm for the past twenty-five years, and few middle schools have incorporated comprehensive transitional programs that assist students with adjusting to the transition process. It is evident that this cultural shift is drastic for many children and may be viewed by most children and parents as very severe. Parents and

students alike are plagued with emotional paradox ranging from enthusiasm to apprehension. Even though parents express their concerns with negative behavioral changes their children display upon entering middle school, we cannot negate the fact the changes in peer and family relationships are also caused by the increased cognitive and emotional sophistication caused by puberty. When puberty begins, there are higher baseline levels of stress hormones and blood pressure in these adolescents compared to younger children. Because of these increased levels, the children may have more pronounced responses to stress, and less control over their stress reactions (Symonds, 2015). Symonds believes that the children's inability to control their reactions to stress makes pubertal children more susceptible to feeling stressed and anxious at transition, and increases the probability of difficulty coping emotionally with the changes (Symonds, 2015).

Perkins & Gelfer (1995) propose that families face challenges as they have to learn new routines, rules and cope with leaving a familiar program. Symond (2015) suggests that the school size creates many issues for children because of its more complex layout. This complexity may generate concerns for students about navigating larger buildings and a larger campus. The fear and anxiety may stem from the idea of getting lost, adapting to a new building and their ability to move around in their new school with confidence (Symond, 2015). Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph (2015), conducted a study focusing on the subjective stress and anxiety that youth experience as they adjust to their middle school environment and explores how this stress and anxiety links with academic performance, motivation, and bonding to school. The results indicate that those adolescents who experience greater anxiety regarding the middle school transition also are at increased risk of experiencing lower academic performance and motivation (Goldstein, Boxer & Rudolph, 2015). McKeon (2014) conducted a study that

examined the academic, procedural and social changes that occur in middle school from the stage-environment fit and adolescent development theories. Her findings revealed that "while both parents and faculty experience anxiety and excitement about transitioning all participants perceived the social and academic domains as the most difficult especially for students with special needs" (McKeon, 2014).   Hill & Mobley (206) noted that students can experience negative effects during transition, including anxiety, stress, fear and apprehension; however, schools can make the transition less strenuous on students emotionally.  The purpose of a comprehensive transitional program is to "build on the excitement of transitioning to a new school while equipping students with enough good information to overcome any apprehension" (Andrews & Bishop, 2012).  Eccles and Midgley (as cited in Eccles & Roeser, 2008 ) proposed a model of stage-environment fit to guide research on the impact of school transitions on adolescent development  They argued that individuals have changing emotional, cognitive, and social needs and personal goals as they mature (Eccles & Roeser, 2008).  The researchers noted that students experience a decline in motivation and academics during their transition to middle school. Eccles and Roeser (2008) denote that the critical aspect of students transitioning from elementary to middle is not the cause of the declines in their motivation and academics, but suggest that the students are entering into a space that does not meet their developmental needs and growth.  The authors further believe that exposure to the developmentally appropriate environment should facilitate both motivation and continued growth (Eccles & Roeser, 2008).

**Transition Effect on Student Academic Achievement**

The implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 had an extensive impact on public schools in America.  Because of the adequate yearly progress (AYP) specification, school districts became more strategic in their efforts to improve student

achievement for all students. AYP was defined as the measure of yearly improvement each district was expected to make on state assessments under Title I of the NCLB Act to support low-achieving children in meeting high-performance levels expected of all children (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). It is innocuous to infer that the NCLB legislation defined the success of a school by student performance on state assessments. This ideology has generated the need for districts and schools to rethink their processes, school structures, and instructional practice. Many school districts began to reassess the structures of their elementary and traditional middle schools to establish a climate that provides adequate support to students as they transition communally and developmentally. Some districts have reformed their education system by adopting the K-8 configurations. Armstrong (2006) stated that school districts are considering the K-8 model over the traditional middle school model as an attempt to increase academic achievement of middle school-aged students by avoiding a transition during the onset of puberty (Armstrong, 2006). "But regardless of whether the middle grades stay in an elementary building or have their own school, "any model can be done well or can be done poorly" (Jacobson, 2019).

The combination of school transition and adolescence have long been associated with a decline in academic outcomes. Alspaugh & Harting (1998), established that there is a consistent student achievement loss associated with the transition from self-contained elementary schools to intermediate-level schools. The achievement loss in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies occurred when the transition was at Grade 5 6, 7 or 8" (Alspaugh, 1998). Students in this transitional stage of growth, developmentally and environmentally, should receive support from schools through comprehensive transitional programs that support adolescents through this complex transitional phase. Bailey, Giles, & Rogers, (2015) contend that meeting the academic,

psychosocial, and emotional needs of young adolescents is too important to ignore. Their view

supports that transitional programs should be intentional and address the intellectual, physical,

social and emotional developmental needs of the students.  It is vitally important that all areas of

development are considered to create the strongest probability to impact student growth,

development and academic achievement (National Middle School Association, 2003).   The

academic environment and school procedures are substantially different than elementary school.

Students and parents, unsurprisingly, express concerns regarding these areas.  Schools ought to

be proactive in addressing these concerns to minimize the level of anxiety for students and

parents.  Because middle schools have been described as more academically rigorous, larger in

size and as having more rigid behavior standards than elementary schools, creating the

opportunity for students to have a successful experience when transitioning to the middle school

has been linked to future academic success for students (Bailey, Giles, & Rogers, 2015).  The

research suggests that transition activities should span the spring and summer before entry into

the new school and continue during the fall (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

Effective transition programs characteristically improve student attendance, achievement,

retention and are most effective when they are comprehensive and target activities to students,

parents, and teachers (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).  "Comprehensive transitional programs that

include numerous activities geared toward the needs and concerns of students, parents, and

teachers can be effective in helping students transition to a new school with less anxiety and

more academic success" (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).  Schwerdt and West (2011) examined

data of students in grades 3 through 10 in Florida public schools to measure the impact school

configuration has on student achievement. The authors found that the students moving from

elementary to middle school caused greater drops in achievement during the transition year.

Their data revealed that middle school students had lower achievement on standardized test than the students in a K-8 configuration. Their estimates specify that middle school transition causes achievement to decline by at least 0.124 and 0.086 standard deviations in math and reading, respectively, for the students entering middle schools in grade 6 (Schwerdt & West, 2011). These results propose that students transitioning to a 6 through 8 middle school model are more than likely to experience a negative impact on student achievement. Goldstein, Boxer, and Rudolph (2015) piloted a study to investigate the connection between adolescents' subjective experiences of stress associated with the middle school transition and their academic outcomes (Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph, 2015). The results of the study indicated a strong correlation between transition stress and a decline in academic performance. The study also revealed that transition stress impacted students' academic performance negatively in spite of positive relations with friends. Overall, "adolescents who were more stressed by the middle school transition reported higher levels of anxiety about school and academic performance in general" (Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph, 2015). This evidence endorses the need for middle schools and districts to implement effective practices through the use of comprehensive transitional programs that assist students through the transition process. Ali-Hawkins (2015) "suggests that sustainable middle schools should focus on reform that builds capacity for teachers by improving their knowledge, skill, and disposition, which will in turn positively affect student outcomes.

**The Effects of Transition Programs on Middle School Transition**

Transitioning to middle school comes at a time when adolescents are in need of close and cultivating relationships from teachers and other adults in the school setting. Unfortunately, the students are not afforded this opportunity in every middle school. In some cases, the chances of developing relationships with teachers are less likely to emerge compared to elementary school.

According to Goldstein, Boxer & Rudolph, (2015), the differences in the social and academic climates of elementary versus middle schools have been implicated as at least partially responsible for students' decline in motivation and achievement during early adolescence.  At a time when the youth would benefit greatly from close and nurturing extra-familial relationships with adults, opportunities for developing these relationships with teachers' decline (Goldstein, Boxer & Rudolph, 2015).  It is important to develop programs that supplement the needs of teachers, adolescent students, and their families as they navigate through the multidimensional changes of the transition process.  Research conducted by Barber and Olsen (2004) explored teachers and parents' perceptions regarding changes in the middle school environment and the associated impact on academic performance.  The authors found that teachers and parents perceived decreases in the quality of the middle school environment that were reflected in decreases in both achievement and social-emotional function.   Their conclusions linked the decline in achievement and social-emotional function to the procedural changes of middle school such as moving from smaller to larger classes with a less personalized setting and a decline in teacher support.  The National Middle School Association (NMSA) and The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) support program planning that can "restore the strong sense of belonging the middle school student and parent once felt in elementary school" (Smith, 2006).   The NMSA and NAESP offered recommendations for activities related to the academic, social and procedural concerns parents and students have about moving to a new school and recommends that teachers and parents establish a partnership.  Because transitioning to middle school is a continuous process, programs for students, faculty, and families have been recommended to support specific activities that occur before, during, and after the transition in response to negative and positive factors associated with the transition to

middle school (Akos, 2002). Carter, Clark, Cushing, and Kennedy (2005) offer nine steps by which parents and faculty can support the transition to middle school.

> These include: planning early, collaborating, preparing students well in advance, offering demonstrations of curriculum and activities through orientation and open house formats, involving middle school students as mentors, offering a shadow program; encouraging parents to discuss middle school with their children, offering pictures of faculty, students, and facilities, and encouraging parents to establish middle school routines prior to school (Carter, Clark, Cushing and Kennedy, 2005).

Middle school leaders need a transformation from the traditional pre-school orientation programs to a program that is intentional to help foster a more fluid transition for fifth graders matriculating from elementary to middle. The transition programs should incorporate strategies that address the essentials students need to transition successfully. Addressing the concerns of students, parents, and teachers can be effective in helping students transition to a new school, minimize anxiety and cultivate academic success. Greene and Ollendick (1993) piloted a study to evaluate the efficacy of a multidimensional program. The study evaluated the program's effectiveness in its intent "to provide teacher support, group support, training in problem-solving skills, social skills, goal setting, self-monitoring and parental support to poor academic transition students as compared to teacher support alone" (Greene & Ollendick, 1993). The findings of their study showed a direct correlation to the multidimensional program contributing to the success for students and the establishment of close, trusting relationships between students and teachers (Greene & Ollendick, 1993). The authors' study highlighted the details that program planners should consider. When designing a comprehensive program, it is important to understand that this objectionable shift in the behavior of students, parents, and teachers is

multifaceted.  Andrew & Bishop (2012) conducted a study by examining middle grades

transition programs globally.  They concluded that a smooth transition between schools requires

more than a student orientation, a family welcome barbecue, and a letter home.  They contend

that schools should ensure that students negotiate the new practices, policies, and school layouts

as a complex endeavor (Andrew & Bishop, 2010).  Akos & Galassi (2004), conducted a study to

gain an understanding of the perceptions of students, parents, and faculty involved in middle

school transition.  The authors collected data from a survey completed by 493 sixth and ninth

grade students, 144 parents, and 29 faculties.  The results revealed that school transitions posed

both challenges and opportunities for students. This data was used as a recommendation to

enhance programming for students transitioning to middle school and high school.  The results

from this study suggest that distinct types of transition programming and a different temporal

sequence may be needed to facilitate successful adjustment to three components—academic,

procedural, and social—of a school transition (Akos & Galassi 2004).   In another study

conducted by Akos (2002), data was collected concerning student perceptions during the

transition from elementary to middle school.  The author surveyed 331 fifth grade students in a

large, rural, Southeastern public school district.  One component of this study required students

to generate a list of questions they had about middle school.  Rules and procedure were major

themes of student questions.  The students understood that rules and procedures were in place as

discussed generally during the orientation program. However, they desired to have more of an

explicit and thorough explanation of the rules and expectations beyond the general information

given during orientation (Akos, 2002).  An additional component of Akos' study revealed that all

stakeholders should systemically collaborate to develop a transition program.  Students revealed

their perception of the importance of having friends, parents, and teachers as sources of help in

the transition process. The needs of the students may vary academically, socially and

emotionally; however, the compartments that need to be addressed are initially the same.

Addressing the concerns of students, parents, and teachers can be effective in helping students

transition to a new school, minimize anxiety and cultivate academic success.  A transition plan

that addresses the concerns of parents, students and teachers are important factors influencing the

relationship with families during the transition process.

Usually, schools' transition programs are in the form of a two-hour orientation a few days

before the start of school.  The two-hour orientation consists of a campus tour, introduction of

guidance and administrative staff, and an overview of expectations, rules, and procedures.

Unfortunately, the orientations do not extend beyond the start of school.  The literature suggests

that providing support to students during their initial year in middle school will benefit

successful integration into the new environment.  "While all students benefit from transition

activities, students who are most at-risk need the additional support from teachers, counselors,

and administrators to integrate successfully into the new environment, maintain satisfactory

attendance, and work hard at more difficult academic subjects" (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006).

Even though many schools have a set of procedures in place to welcome students to middle

school and provide tours of the campus, transition activities should extend beyond the first days

of school to establish a sense of belonging and connectedness among peers and a rapport with

teachers.  "The underlying consensus of belonging research indicates that students who feel a

sense of belonging to their school environments are more likely to develop positive

psychological, academic, and social outcomes and better overall health and well-being when

compared to students who feel unsupported and disconnected from their school" (Bouchard &

Berg, 2017).  Research supports the belief that creating a sense of belonging for students has an

impact on how students view school and their overall well-being. Also, establishing a more personalized environment for students has an effect on their psyche. Felner, Seitsinger, Brand, Burns and Bolton (2007) expressed the significance of creating "small learning communities" to transform middle schools to create personalization of school environments. The authors believed that schools seeking to create a more personalized environment for students are attempting to develop a productive learning environment via an interpersonal context between the students and teachers, and among their peers (Felner, Seitsinger, Brand, Burns & Bolton, 2007). Small learning communities will give autonomy to teachers, create more teacher leaders, and create a sense of empowerment as they are given the opportunity to significantly contribute to the overall success of students in their community beyond the classroom. This autonomy has a domino effect as it helps establish relationships between students and teachers, and illuminates the teachers' care and concern for students which may transform the mindset of students and their perceptions about their teachers. Small learning communities is a school reformation that support the stage-environment-fit theory proposed by Eccles and Midgley in 1989. According to Midgley, Middleton, Gheen and Kumar (2012), stage-environment-fit is based on the assumption that if changes in needs are aligned with changes in opportunities at a certain stage of life, positive outcomes will result (Midgley, Middleton, Gheen & Kumar, 2012). Symonds (2015) argues that if the match between the children, their stage of development and new school environment is a good fit, they should be motivated to want to engage in school, but if the environment fit is poor, then it is likely the students will have a negative developmental trajectory (Symonds, 2015). Eccles and Roeser (2008) project that understanding the impact of schools on adolescent development requires a conceptual framework for thinking simultaneously about schools as contexts in which development takes place and about the changing

developmental needs of students as they move through the school system (Eccles & Roeser, 2008).   The authors argue that not only are the students changing developmentally, but the organizational, social, and instructional processes in elementary, middle and high school are all different which creates a constant change for students.  Based on the evidence of research, it is paramount that that schools develop transition programs that are comprehensive, involve teachers and parents, and create a sense of community and belonging for students transitioning to a new school environment.  Even though every school has its individuality and there is no one size fits all approach, the commonality among the schools is the effects of the transition process for most fifth graders.  Cohlhepp, (2018) conducted an inquiry to explore student perceptions regarding the transition from elementary to middle school.  The author collected data from students to use in the development of an improved, data-informed, comprehensive transitional program designed to assist all students as they move through the transition process (Cohlhepp, 2018).  The collected data included activities the students' believed to be beneficial in decreasing student anxiety about transitioning to middle school. Several students suggested activities that would allow incoming students to become acclimated with the buildings, teachers, and procedures.  These suggested activities included a "demo day" for incoming sixth and seventh-grade students to attend school on the middle school campus for an entire day before the first day of school.  According to Cohlhepp (2018), the study was not designed to be a means to an end, but rather a set of recommended research-based strategies to inform of future practice in meeting the diverse needs of students across this time of great change and adjustment (Cohlhepp, 2018).  It is important that each school establishes a committee that will continuously investigate student needs and anxiety levels on an ongoing basis.  As the literature has delineated, many students will always have trepidation relating to the transition process.  "Middle school students are

familiarly characterized as "caught in the middle" or "lost in the middle." Perhaps strong transition programs will allow rising sixth graders to be more aptly described as "secure in the middle" (Bailey, Giles, & Rogers, 2015).

The majority of research that addresses programs and program planning on middle school transition has a common goal to minimize the effects transitioning has on the loss in academic achievement and to reduce the level of anxiety students may encounter.  The research suggests that students adapt smoothly and enthusiastically if middle schools are proactive in designing a program with transition activities to assist students with the changes in academics and procedures.  Research has confirmed that the changes in the students' learning environment in conjunction with the changes associated with early adolescence and puberty do affect student anxiety levels and academic performance.  "When the needs or goals of the individual are congruent with the opportunities afforded by the environment, then favorable motivational, affective, and behavioral outcomes should result" (Midgley, Middleton, Gheen & Kumar, 2012).

**Chapter III: Methodology**

As an instructional leader for curriculum at a Title I middle school, the researcher is grounded by a practice and practitioner approach. This study addresses a perceived problem in practice with the process of elementary students transitioning to middle school. This study compiled and analyzed data regarding the middle school's programmatic approach to promoting a fluid transition for students entering grade six. Also, an exploration of the effects of implementing a comprehensive transitional program and the factors that affect student achievement and parents' perception of student anxiety was conducted. The researcher will use the data collected from the study to develop a framework that will assist educational leaders at Mayan Middle School in providing an environment that is more conducive to help parents help their students adapt to the climate, academic, and procedural changes of middle school. The aim was to investigate whether the implementation of a comprehensive transitional program for middle school fostered a more fluid transition from elementary to middle than the traditional pre-school orientation programs. This case study examined the school's current programmatic approach for transitioning students, the perceptions of parents about the changeover to middle school, and compared the academic performance of students at the end of the current year's first semester to those students who did not participate in the program. A sample of parents from a Title I middle school in an urban school district in Florida were the participants in this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study was conducted to identify the specific concerns parents of incoming sixth grade students have about starting middle school. The researcher's intent is to use the data from the study to create a comprehensive transitional program tailored specifically to those concerns. In addition, the researcher will ascertain if participation in the program alleviated, increased, or

decreased the parents' perceived concern about students' anxiety levels.  The findings of this study will be used to help school leaders evaluate the quality of their practice in helping students adapt to the procedural, instructional and social changes of middle school.  This study identified ways of enhancing the activities, orientations, or transitional programs for middle school that may foster a more fluid transition from elementary to middle school.  These enhancements could potentially impact the students' academic performance, attitude, and anxiety levels.  The results of this study may enable the school leaders to improve their transitional programs to help students, parents, and teachers better adjust to the changes associated with middle school.

## Research Questions

In this proposed exploratory study, the researcher investigated the effects of a comprehensive transitional program for incoming sixth grade students and examined the deliberate practice of a Title I middle's programmatic approach for students transitioning to middle school.   The researcher described the methods the school had in place that help fifth-grade students' transition to middle school efficiently.  The researcher examined the effects a comprehensive transitional program had on improving student academics for the first semester and minimizing anxiety levels in parents during the transition process.  The study explored three questions:

4. What is the parents' perception of the anxiety levels of students entering middle school?

   $H1_0$ Parent perceptions will not indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

   $H1_a$: Parent perceptions will indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

5. What implications does a comprehensive transitional program have on the parents' perception of student anxiety levels upon completion of the program?

   $H2_a$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will decline.

   $H2_0$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will not decline.

6. What educational impact will a comprehensive transitional program have on student academic performance in the first semester compared to the students who did not participate in the program?

   $H3_a$: There is a statistically significant difference in the means of student academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

   $H3_0$: There is no statistically significant difference in the means for student academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

The researcher compared the academic performance of students exposed to the comprehensive transitional program to those students who were not exposed to the program. It was proposed that incoming sixth grade students who participate in a comprehensive transitional program will have decreased levels of anxiety and will demonstrate a higher academic performance than those students who did not participate.

## Research Design

The primary goal of this instrumental case study was to examine how student academic performance and student anxiety may be influenced by the implementation of a comprehensive

transitional program.   For this study, a comprehensive transitional program is defined as a longitudinal program that provides activities prior to the beginning of middle school and continues throughout the first year of middle school.  The program is designed to equip students with the necessary resources and strategies to be successful along the way (Hill & Mobley, 2016).  An instrumental case study serves the purpose of providing understanding or insight into a problem, redraw generalization, or build theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).  This study used the quantitative methods approach to research which follows a positivism form of study. Positivism is challenging the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge and recognizing that we cannot be positive about our claims of knowledge when studying the behavior and actions of humans (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).   In quantitative research, the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collects quantifiable data from participants, analyzes these numbers using statistics, and conducts the study in an unbiased objective manner (Creswell, 2008).    The researcher selected the quantitative approach to seek to understand relationships between to independent groups and develop schemes or strategies to improve the transition process for sixth grade students based on numerical data that can be analyzed.

The research was conducted using a survey design.  The survey design used a descriptive rating, Likert-type survey.  The Likert Scale used in this study had a five-point scale which allowed the respondents to express how much they agree or disagree with each question.  The data collected from the surveys was analyzed to reveal the quantitative facts based on the numerical data.  The researcher reviewed the data and identified the factors that contributed to parents' perceived levels of student anxiety and student academic performance.  This data will be used to develop and implement a comprehensive transitional program that aims to eliminate or

significantly reduce anxiety and promote positive academic performance in students as they

transition to middle school.

The pre-survey (see Appendix D) was administered prior to the implementation of the

comprehensive transition program and a post-survey (see Appendix E) was administered after

the program had been implemented. The post-survey was attached to the consent form and given

to all teachers participating in the comprehensive program with instructions to send post-survey

home with students for the parents to complete.  The post-survey contained closed-ended

questions to support theories and concepts in the literature and collected data about parents'

perceived apprehensions of students transitioning into middle school upon completion of the

program (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).  The criterion established for participation in this study

was participants had to be willing to complete the survey, answer the questions truthfully and

sign consent form.

## Setting

Mayan Middle School (pseudonym) is in a small town in the southern region of Florida.

It is listed as one of the district's higher-needs middle schools.  This need is demonstrated by

student performance on standardized testing and the socioeconomically disadvantaged status of

the communities it serves.  For the 2020 school year, Mayan Middle School had 387 sixth-grade

students, 417 seventh-grade students, and 385 eighth grade students.  The sixth-grade core

subjects have an average class size of twenty.  Students at Mayan Middle School attend six

classes per day with four minutes to pass between classes and a thirty-minute lunch break.

Mayan Middle School service a diverse population of students who have various exceptionalities

and speak more than ten languages to include indigenous languages. The students at Mayan

Middle School have a reputation in the community of being behaviorally challenged.  Many of

the students have family members who attended Mayan Middle School which makes them second and third generation students in their families. There is also a portion of the student population that is transient. These students move with their families up and down the state throughout the school year for the purpose of work in agriculture. The goal of intervention and support at Mayan Middle School is to prepare students to be high school ready at the end of their eighth-grade school year which ultimately begins their sixth-grade year. The school also has a goal to help the incoming fifth graders transition to middle school to a less restrictive and much larger environment. Collecting data from the parents will provide the researcher with manageable data and descriptors to develop a comprehensive transitional program for middle school transition.

**Description of Population**

Parents of transitioning students enrolling in a Title I middle school in a large urban district in Florida in the 2019-2020 school year were selected to be the sample. A Title I school is categorized as a school with a large concentration of low-income students that receives federal funds to supplement and assist in meeting students' educational goals. For this study the demographics were categorized according to the criteria set for this research project: (a) four elementary schools that offer a transition class ending grade five and (b) one elementary school that offers a transition class ending grade six. These elementary schools are categorized as Title I because more than 90% of the student population receive free or reduced lunch. All five elementary schools transition students at the end of grade five school year. One of the five elementary schools offers a dual language program for sixth grade students which gives those selected students the option to remain in their elementary school setting for grade six. All five schools are identified as feeder schools for Mayan Middle School (a pseudonym). A feeder

school is defined as a school where the students are all able to go to the same comprehensive middle school rather than being split up to different schools. Mayan Middle School is a sixth through eighth grade middle school located in a large urban area in a Florida school district. The district has a geographic organizational structure. With schools spread over a very large region, each school functions as a pseudo-independent organization with its own internal structure and management layers. The schools are assembled into regions based on their geographical location. There are thirty-seven elementary schools in the central region and five of the thirty-seven elementary schools feed into Mayan Middle School. At the time of this study Mayan Middle School's student enrollment was 1189 Students. The breakdown in demographics is as follows:

**Figure 1**



Demograhpics

- Hispanic
- African American
- White
- American Indian

61.0% Hispanic, 28.0% African American, 10.0% White, 1.0% American Indian
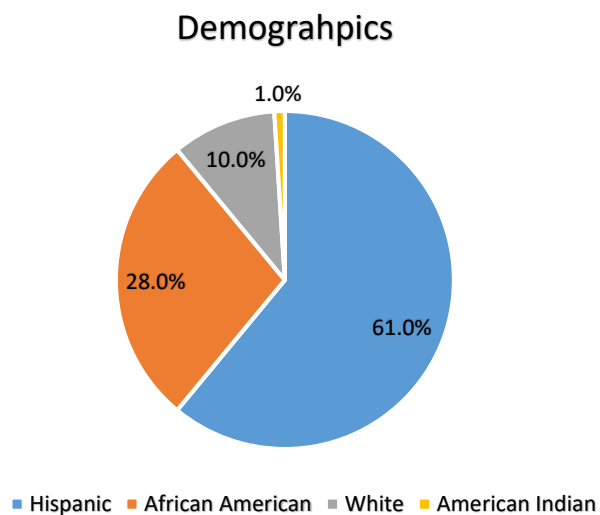
**Table 1**

*Special Population*

| English Language Learners | Exceptional Student Education | Free or Reduced Lunch |
|---|---|---|
| 31% | 25% | 97% |

**Participants**

Transitioning from elementary to middle school is a difficult change for some students. This study was designed to identify parents' perception of student apprehensions and develop a comprehensive transitional program from the basis of those identified concerns to better support students in successfully completing their first year in middle school.

The type of sampling used in this quantitative study is purposive sampling. "Purposive sampling is a non-probability sample when the researcher intentionally selects participants based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, the researcher used the purposive sampling known as homogeneous sampling. The researcher purposefully a sample of parents who were members of a subgroup identified as a Title 1 school and possessed the defining characteristics identified in the described population. The parents were stakeholders of Mayan Middle School and have children who attend one of the (a) four elementary schools that offer a transition class ending grade five or (b) the elementary school that offers a transition class ending grade six.

The criterion for participation in this study was participants were stakeholders of Mayan Middle School. A total of 422 sixth grade students transitioned into Mayan Middle School for the upcoming 2020 school year. However, 30% (127 students) registered to participate in the program and 27% (34 students) of the total students registered participated in the program. Each participant received a unique code to identify and track responses to pre and post surveys as well as to gather accurate GPA data for each participant and nonparticipant.

**Access to School Site**

The researcher was able to obtain access to the school site because the researcher is an employee of the district who is assigned as a staff member of Mayan Middle School. The

researcher understands the operational processes and procedures of Mayan Middle School as they pertain to the context of this study. The Principal of Mayan Middle School has provided approval and support of the research (see Appendix C). Prior to conducting the study, the researcher obtained permission from the dissertation committee and Lynn University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher provided to the dissertation committee and IRB for approval a description of the proposed study that included a detailed description of data collection procedures, the pre- and post-surveys, and an informed consent form. Upon obtaining permission from all parties to conduct the case study, participants were selected based on the established characteristics.

## Research Instrument

The study was conducted using a pre-survey, post-survey, and data that became available via the school's database in the form of student quarterly report cards. The pre-survey and post-survey were paper and pencil questionnaires that asks respondents to complete a set of questions. Because of not finding the appropriate survey from other sources, the researcher designed the instrument independently. In designing the instrument, the researcher-based questions on 14 years of experience in middle school from perceived concerns parents have expressed. The survey contained 16 questions about the logistics of middle school. The same survey was used as the pre-survey and the post-survey. The answer choices on each question was described by a 5-point Likert Scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree.

The grade point average for the first semester which includes the grading period for the first and second quarters was also data collected and used in the study (see Tables 3 and 4). The procedures used in data collection are describe in the data collection section.

**Procedures**

A "call out" was made using the Parentlink communication system to inform the parents of the 422 students of the opportunity to attend an eight-day middle school transition program. The Parentlink is the communication tool used to provide information between schools and parents, the school district and parents, and the schools and District to District staff. The participants were notified of the upcoming parent orientation and comprehensive transitional program for incoming sixth grade students. The communication included date, time, and location. A flyer highlighting the components of the comprehensive transitional program was also given to the guidance counselors to distribute elementary school counselors for distribution to all fifth-grade students enrolled in the five feeder schools (see Appendix A). The flyer was available in three languages, English, Spanish, and Creole. The students were instructed and expected to give the flyer to their parents to review. Upon interest, the parents were required to complete the registration form located on the bottom half of the flyer and return the completed form to Mayan Middle School by the specified date on the flyer. Once the participants were registered based on the completed and submitted interest forms, the researcher hosted a two-hour parent information meeting on the first day of the program to share program information and answer parent questions.

Because of the diverse population at Mayan Middle School, all forms and questionnaires were translated into Spanish and Creole so that parents, who speak English as a second language, were given the opportunity to participate. Lastly, the information was translated in Creole and Spanish as it was presented. During the parent orientation the participants were informed that an application for admittance into the comprehensive transitional program must be completed.

Also, the participants were asked to participant in a survey anonymously on a volunteer basis and to answer the survey questions as truthfully and adequately as possible.

At the same meeting, the parents were given an informed consent form (Appendix B) and then the survey (Appendix D).  In the same way, the informed consent forms and surveys were available in three different languages English, Spanish, and Creole.   The researcher also had translators on staff to assist with translation of written and spoken information.  Also, during this two-hour parent orientation, the researcher obtained the parents' consent to participate in this case study and instructed them to complete the survey.  The survey was administered manually as most of the parents in the community did not have access to computers.   The pre-survey responses were recorded and maintained on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, before being coded (Appendix G) and then entered manually into IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).  SPSS is defined as a comprehensive and flexible statistical analysis and data management tool (Creswell, 2008).

**Table 2**

*Coding Table*

| Category | Variable | Coding in SPSS |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 0 |
| | Female | 1 |
| GPA: Pre and Post | 1.0 – 1.9 | 1 |
| | 2.0 – 2.9 | 2 |
| | 3.0 – 3.9 | 3 |
| Feeling about the Transition | Panicked | 1 |
| | Worried | 2 |
| | Unsure | 3 |
| | Excited | 4 |
| | Confident | 5 |
| Parent's Perceptions: Pre and Post | Strongly Disagree | 1 |
| | Disagree | 2 |
| | Neutral | 3 |
| | Agree | 4 |
| | Strongly Agree | 5 |

To capture the parents' perceptions of their children's anxiety levels, the survey was administered prior to the implementation of the comprehensive transition program. The same survey was sent home with students with instructions to have parents complete the survey upon completion of the program. The survey collected data by way of the parents to include demographic information (gender), parents' perceptions of student anxiety levels as they prepare to transition to middle school, and parents' perception of students' level of apprehension upon completion of the comprehensive transitional program. The post-survey responses were recorded and maintained on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, before being coded (see Tables 2) and then entered manually into IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is defined as a comprehensive and flexible statistical analysis and data management tool.

Students transitioning from elementary to middle school do not enter middle school with a grade point average (GPA). At the end of the first semester, the researcher gathered GPA data for the students who completed the comprehensive transitional program and gathered GPA data for those students who registered but did not participate in the program. The GPA data was retrieved from student report cards once grades for the semester were finalized. The researcher used the calculated GPA for the first semester for each participant and nonparticipant. There was no identifiable information on surveys or data for student GPA. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher stored all collected data in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office.

**Table 3**

**GPA Data for Participants (4.0 Scale)**

| PARTICIPANTS | Sem GPA | | PARTICIPANTS | Sem GPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | 1.6 | | P18 | 2.0 |
| P2 | 2.5 | | P19 | 3.6 |
| P3 | 3.5 | | P20 | 3.0 |
| P4 | 2.8 | | P21 | 3.6 |
| P5 | 3.6 | | P22 | 2.1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P6 | 3.0 | | P23 | 3.1 |
| P7 | 1.8 | | P24 | 3.1 |
| P8 | 3.5 | | P25 | 2.1 |
| P9 | 3.6 | | P26 | 3.0 |
| P10 | 3.3 | | P27 | 2.3 |
| P11 | 3.5 | | P28 | 2.6 |
| P12 | 3.9 | | P29 | 1.9 |
| P13 | 2.1 | | P30 | 3.0 |
| P14 | 3.1 | | P32 | 2.9 |
| P15 | 2.0 | | P31 | 2.6 |
| P16 | 2.6 | | P33 | 2.5 |
| P17 | 1.9 | | P34 | 1.8 |

**Table 4**

*GPA Data for Non-Participants (4.0 Scale)*

| Non-Participant | Gender | GPA | Non-Participant | Gender | GPA | Non-Participant | Gender | GPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NP1 | Female | 2.0 | NP75 | female | 2.7 | NP51 | Male | 0.8 |
| NP10 | Female | 3.5 | NP78 | female | 1.1 | NP52 | Male | 2.4 |
| NP11 | Female | 1.1 | NP79 | female | 1.0 | NP53 | Male | 0.9 |
| NP12 | Female | 2.7 | NP8 | female | 2.6 | NP54 | Male | 2.5 |
| NP13 | Female | 3.6 | NP80 | female | 2.9 | NP56 | Male | 2.4 |
| NP14 | Female | 3.2 | NP81 | female | 2.0 | NP57 | Male | 1.7 |
| NP15 | Female | 2.9 | NP88 | female | 3.3 | NP62 | Male | 3.7 |
| NP16 | Female | 2.6 | NP89 | female | 2.3 | NP63 | Male | 0.8 |
| NP17 | Female | 3.4 | NP9 | female | 1.8 | NP64 | Male | 0.7 |
| NP18 | Female | 3.1 | NP91 | female | 1.3 | NP66 | Male | 2.2 |
| NP19 | Female | 2.0 | NP93 | female | 3.1 | NP67 | Male | 2.1 |
| NP2 | Female | 1.5 | NP28 | Male | 2.3 | NP68 | Male | 2.3 |
| NP20 | Female | 3.8 | NP29 | Male | 2.1 | NP72 | Male | 1.5 |
| NP21 | Female | 1.4 | NP30 | Male | 2.0 | NP73 | Male | 1.6 |
| NP22 | Female | 2.3 | NP31 | Male | 3.8 | NP74 | Male | 2.6 |
| NP23 | Female | 3.4 | NP32 | Male | 3.2 | NP76 | Male | 1.8 |
| NP24 | Female | 1.0 | NP33 | Male | 3.5 | NP77 | Male | 1.2 |
| NP25 | Female | 2.0 | NP34 | Male | 2.9 | NP82 | Male | 3.3 |
| NP26 | Female | 1.7 | NP35 | Male | 3.4 | NP83 | Male | 3.2 |
| NP27 | Female | 2.2 | NP36 | Male | 3.6 | NP84 | Male | 3.6 |
| NP3 | Female | 2.0 | NP37 | Male | 3.2 | NP85 | Male | 1.5 |
| NP4 | Female | 1.8 | NP38 | Male | 1.8 | NP86 | Male | 2.7 |

| NP5 | Female | 1.0 | | NP39 | Male | 1.2 | | NP87 | Male | 1.4 |
|------|--------|-----|--|------|------|-----|--|------|------|-----|
| NP55 | Female | 2.7 | | NP40 | Male | 2.8 | | NP90 | Male | 1.4 |
| NP58 | Female | 2.0 | | NP41 | Male | 1.9 | | NP92 | Male | 2.1 |
| NP59 | Female | 1.9 | | NP42 | Male | 2.3 | | | | |
| NP6 | Female | 0.6 | | NP43 | Male | 1.0 | | | | |
| NP60 | Female | 3.2 | | NP44 | Male | 2.2 | | | | |
| NP61 | Female | 3.1 | | NP45 | Male | 2.5 | | | | |
| NP65 | Female | 1.2 | | NP46 | Male | 1.5 | | | | |
| NP69 | Female | 3.1 | | NP47 | Male | 1.3 | | | | |
| NP7 | Female | 0.8 | | NP48 | Male | 2.2 | | | | |
| NP70 | Female | 3.2 | | NP49 | Male | 2.0 | | | | |
| NP71 | Female | 3.5 | | NP50 | Male | 1.9 | | | | |

**Data Collection**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects a comprehensive transitional program has on elementary to middle school transition.  This is a dissertation in practice where the researcher explores a problem of practice that may be solvable and tied to the mission and priorities of the organization.   Data collection took place using a survey questionnaire that was administered to parents prior to the students going through the comprehensive transitional program and administered once again after the students completed the comprehensive transitional program.  The survey was administered a second time as a post-survey (see Appendix E) upon completion of the program.  The participants in the study were notified of the survey once they registered their student(s) for admittance into the comprehensive transitional program.  Once the participants were registered based on the completed and submitted interest forms, the researcher hosted a two-hour parent information meeting on the first day of the program to share program information and answer parent questions.  During this meeting, the parents were provided with an informed consent (Appendix B) and then a pre-survey (Appendix D).  The informed consent form was available in three different languages including English, Spanish, and Creole.   The researcher had on site translators to assist with translation of written

and spoken information.  Also, during this two-hour parent orientation, the researcher obtained the parents' consent to participate in this case study and presented them with the opportunity to complete the survey.

The survey was administered manually as most of the parents in this community did not have access to computers.   The participants were asked to place completed surveys in a marked box located at the end of each table.  The information was then entered manually into a spread sheet in SPSS.  A pre-survey was administered prior to the implementation of the comprehensive transition program and a post-survey was administered after the program had been implemented. The survey collected data by way of the parents to include demographic information, parents' perception of students' insights of transitioning to middle school, and parents' perception of students' level of apprehension of transition to middle school upon completion of the comprehensive transitional program.

The same survey was administered as a post-survey (Appendix E) at the end of the program.    The purpose of the post-survey was to ask the same questions regarding parents' perception of student apprehension and anxiety levels upon completion of the comprehensive transitional program.  The participants were informed that their responses are anonymous, and participation was voluntary.   The survey was administered manually as most of the parents in this community do not have access to computers.  The post survey was attached to the consent form and given to all teachers participating in the comprehensive program with instructions to send post-survey home with students for the parents to complete. The researcher collected surveys and manually enter the data into a spread sheet in IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Research Variables**

| Dependent Variables | Independent Variables |
|---|---|
| Academic Performance<br> • Participants GPA<br> • Non-Participants GPA | Comprehensive Transitional Program |

**Data Analysis**

Quantitative data is the value of data in the form of numbers that can be used for mathematical calculations and statistical analysis (Creswell, 2018). The researcher collected the data from the survey and assign a numeric value to each response category for each question on the survey. To analyze the data, the researcher assigned scores to responses based on a Likert scale (See Coding Table/Appendix F). The Likert Scale used in this study will be a five-point scale which will allow the respondents to express how much they agree or disagree with each question. The data received in the form of a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet were entered into the SPSS system.

To answer Research Question 1, an analysis of the parent responses to the pre-survey was used to determine the parents perceived anxiety levels of their children regarding the transition to middle school.

To answer Research Question 2, an analysis of the parent response to the post-survey was used to determine if there was a significant change in the parents perception of anxiety levels of their children regarding the transition to middle school.

To answer Research Question 3, in addition to descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation analysis will help the researcher determine if participating in a comprehensive transitional program can have appositive impact on academic performance of students transitioning from elementary to middle school. A t-Test for Independent Means was also run to determine if the

difference in the average GPA of participants of the comprehensive transition program included in this study and those who did not was significant. The results and interpretation of the data will be described in chapter four.

## Limitations and Delimitations

### Limitations

Potential limitations in this study include sample size. The sample size used in this study is suitable for a quantitative study but lacks the necessary sample size to meet the standards for a national study. Also, as the researcher and affiliate of the organization used in the study, the researcher became a part of the setting, context and social phenomenon and was subject to a lack of objectivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 16). Another limitation was the selection of participants to be surveyed. The participants were not random but were based on the researcher's professional network. The participants included parents who speak English as a second language and required translation from a Community Language Facilitator. This approach was a limitation as the information may have become distorted or lost during the translation process. The questionnaire used to conduct the research may be viewed as a limitation of this study. The questions were not to be structured in a manner that was suggestive or written in a fashion that could be interpretive. The questions were to be written with conciseness and clarity. Lastly, the researcher may have had an unintentional bias which could impede on the validity of the study due to affiliation with the school.

### Delimitations

This study was limited to a Title I, public, middle school located in a large urban school district in Florida that has the traditional middle school configuration sixth to eighth grade. The focus was on parents of sixth-grade students only which can be viewed as delimiting. The

researcher understood that information collected via a survey instrument is delimiting.    Because the researcher is focusing on a problem and questions, the researcher did not examine additional problems or questions that may be revealed during the study.

## Trustworthiness

Quantitative research uses the methods of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity to establish trustworthiness.  The researcher administered the survey to a group of parents prior to children's participation in the program and re-administered a post-survey instrument to the same group of participants. The survey instrument adequately measured the concept, construct, or variable of and used objectivity through methodology of measurement, data collection, and data analysis to establish reliability and validity.  Although the data was collected from the parents of students transitioning to Mayan Middle School, the researcher was considered distant from many of the participants.  This appropriate distance between researcher and participants is established through a language barrier that did not permit researcher to communicate effectively with many of the participants.  The survey was made available in three languages, English, Spanish, and Creole to lessen any occurrence of intentional or unintentional bias and diminish the chance for the researcher to influence the participants and the study. Furthermore, following up with a post-survey reinforced a valid response rate.

## Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured the rights and interests of every participant in this study was protected.   The researcher had no determined identifiable risks to participants for participating in the study.  All participants involved in the study were treated according to the Institutional Review Board's ethical guidelines.  The identities of the participants will be protected by using pseudonyms for the individuals and their organizations to ensure confidentiality and reduce risks.

All participants taking the survey were anonymous in that no names were recorded on the surveys.   In addition, the informed consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet up to three years.  After the third year, all materials will be destroyed.   The researcher will take every measure to ensure participants are at liberty to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.  "Researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust with them; promote the integrity of research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).  Because of the diverse population at Mayan Middle School, all forms and questionnaires were translated into Spanish and Creole so that parents, who speak English as a second language, were given the opportunity to participate.  The informed consent letter generated for the parents indicated the same guidelines of protection.  There were minimal to no risks, however, if a participant felt uncomfortable, he/she could refuse to complete the pre or post survey at any time.  There are no benefits to taking the pre or post survey, but participants may enjoy helping to create a program to assist sixth grade students to transition smoothly from elementary to middle school.

Conducting this study at the researcher's school site posed possible opportunities for biased results.  Researcher established limitations with participants to establish a climate that was non-threatening, non-intimidating but safe and open that encouraged them to share truthfully.  Overall, this study provided valuable insight to help the leaders at Mayan Middle School to develop an effective program and improve current programs that will ultimately support students in the successful completion of their first year in middle school.  This study is deliberate and will impact the incoming sixth grade students at Mayan Middle School.

## Summary

Chapter 3 described the methodology and processes for conducting this study on parent perceptions of anxiety levels and student academic performance impacted by middle school transition.  The researcher used a pre-survey, post-survey, and GPA data to conduct an exploratory study.  The research questions and hypothesis were established to guide the research. This chapter provided comprehensive description of procedures on research design, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

**CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS**

The purpose of this case study was to determine whether or not the implementation of a comprehensive transitional program for middle school students fostered a more fluid transition for sixth-grade students transitioning from elementary to middle school than the traditional pre-school orientation programs.  In addition, this study aimed to reveal the effects a comprehensive transitional program has on student achievement and student anxiety for participants compared to non-participants.

Mayan Middle School historically has followed the pre-school orientation model for incoming sixth-grade students.  This model permits incoming sixth-grade students and parents to attend a two-hour session a couple of days before the official day of school.  Within this two-hour session, students and parents sit through an hour informational forum.  During this forum, a few staff members are introduced such as the sixth-grade school counselor and school administrators.  The last thirty minutes is spent touring the school as schedules are not distributed until the first official day of school.  This process has its rewards but does not provide the necessary preparedness for a fluid transition.

This chapter presents the findings of the parent surveys and analysis of the data of their anxiety levels prior to and after their child's participation in the comprehensive transitional program.  The findings are based on the primary research question for this case study that explores two components: How does a comprehensive transition program impact student academics and student anxiety?   The research questions explored and analyzed were:

1.  What is the parents' perception of the anxiety levels of students entering middle school?

*H1₀* Parent perceptions will not indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

*H1ₐ*: Parent perceptions will indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

2. What implications does a comprehensive transitional program have on the parents' perception of student anxiety levels upon completion of the program?

*H2ₐ*: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will decline.

*H2₀:* Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will not decline.

3. What educational impact will a comprehensive transitional program have on student academic performance in the first semester compared to the students who did not participate in the program?

*H3ₐ:* There is a statistically significant difference in the means of student academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

*H3₀:* There is no statistically significant difference in the means for student academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

A pre-survey and post-survey were conducted to gather data regarding parents' perception of student concerns as they prepare to transition to middle school. The data was analyzed and will be used for the sole purpose of crafting a comprehensive transitional program that will meet the needs and concerns of the upcoming middle school parents. Also, the

statistical difference was measured by comparing sixth grade academic performance data for students who attended the transitional comprehensive transitional program with those who attended the traditional sixth-grade pre-school orientation. The academic data analyzed were the sixth-grade student grades in language arts, math, science, and social studies for the first semester. These findings from the data analysis will provide an answer to Research Question 3. The results from the parent surveys will provide an answer to Research Questions 1 and 2.

## Data Description

The data collected for this study were retrieved from Mayan Middle School which is in an urban school district in south Florida. The data for parents' perception of student anxiety was collected from the parents of students attending Mayan Middle School via paper and pencil surveys. A transition survey was developed by Mayan Middle School and administered to the parents of incoming sixth-grade students during the summer of the 2019-2020 academic year. At the time the survey was administered, the parents 'children were enrolled as incoming sixth-grade students. The data for student academic performance in core classes for the first semester in sixth grade were also collected. At the time of administration, 403 students were enrolled in sixth grade at Mayan Middle School. There were 127 students registered to participate in the comprehensive transitional program at Mayan Middle School. Due to bus transportation barriers, approximately 35% of the students registered attended the two-week summer comprehensive transitional program at Mayan Middle School. A total of 44 students attended the program at least one day, and a total of 34 students attended the program for the full eight days. Thirty-four parents of in the coming sixth-grade students completed the pre and post paper-and-pencil survey which collected perception data regarding parents' logistic, academic,

and social concerns for middle school transition.   The survey provided insight into the parents'

concerns of the incoming sixth-grade students transitioning into Mayan Middle School.

**Demographic Data**

All thirty-four participants attended one of the six feeder elementary schools in the urban

school district.   The surveys did not collect any demographic data beyond gender.  The gender

of parent responses was identified as 41% (n=14) female and 59% (n=20) male.

**Table 5**

*Crosstabs Gender*

|  |  | Gender | | |
|  |  | female | male | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | N | 19 | 15 | 34 |
|  | P | 14 | 20 | 34 |
| Total |  | 33 | 35 | 68 |

Also, the non-participants used in the study were randomly selected from the 93 students who

registered but did not participate.  There were 56% (n=19) female and 44% (n=15) male students

randomly selected from the registration list.  The GPA data for the participants were reviewed

after the students completed one full semester in 6th grade.  The grade point average is based on a

4.0 grading scale and is the average of the first and second nine weeks grading period.

**Table 6**

*Participants GPA*

|  |  | NPreGPA | | | |
|  |  | 1.0 | 2.0 | 3.0 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | P | 5 | 13 | 16 | 34 |
|  | Total | 5 | 13 | 16 |  |

The data illustrated in Table 4.3 for the randomly selected nonparticipants was also collected and reviewed after the students completed one full semester in 6th grade. The grade point average is based on a 4.0 grading scale and is the average of the first and second nine weeks grading period.

**Table 7**

*Crosstabs Participants and NonParticipants GPA*

|  |  | 1.00 | NPostGPA 2.00 | 3.00 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | N | 11 | 16 | 7 | 34 |
|  | P | 5 | 13 | 16 | 34 |
| Total |  | 16 | 29 | 23 | 68 |

**Research Question #1**

*What is the parents' perception of the anxiety levels of students entering middle school?*

*H1$_0$* Parent perceptions will not indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

*H1$_a$*: Parent perceptions will indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

The data for research question 1 will be based on responses to Survey Question #2 (Pre-Survey)

*Question #2: When my child thinks about the transition to middle school, he/she feels:*

**Table 8**

*PreTransition Responses*

| Participant | | | **PreTransition** Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | Valid | confident | 7 | 20.6 | 20.6 | 20.6 |
|  |  | excited | 16 | 47.1 | 47.1 | 67.6 |
|  |  | unsure | 7 | 20.6 | 20.6 | 88.2 |
|  |  | worried | 4 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 100.0 |
|  |  | Total | 34 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

The parents' responses to the question about the perceived emotions of students in reference to transitioning to middle school indicated that close to 50% of the parents reported their children were *Excited* about transitioning to middle school; 20.6% were *Confident and 11.8%* reported they were worried to begin middle school. The parent responses also revealed that 20.6% were *Unsure* about their emotions toward beginning middle school.

**Figure 2**

*Parents' Perception of Students' Response Regarding Transitioning to Middle School*
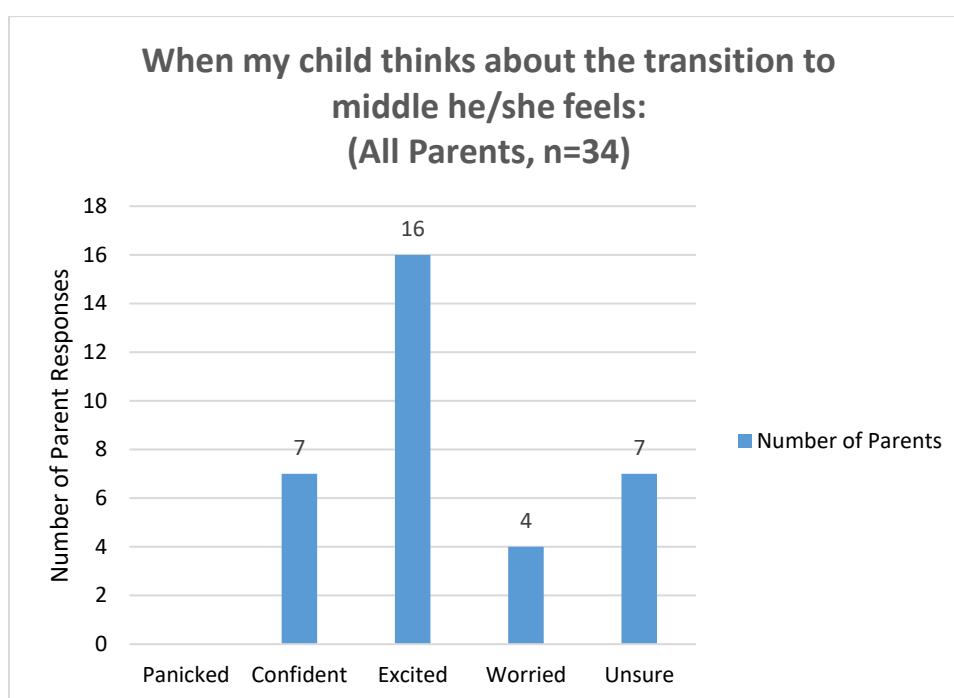


Survey question #2 asked parents to indicate their perception to the *question "When my child thinks about the transition to middle school, he/she feels:"* Parents were provided with five choice answers that included 1. *Confident, 2. Excited, 3. Unsure, 4. Worried and have many questions, or 5. Panicked and freaking out.* Sixteen students (47%) responded that they were excited, while eight (23.5%) were confident, seven (20.5%) were unsure, and four (12%) specified that they were worried. The survey did not define the response unsure, therefore it is

unclear if the parents fully understood the question or if they were not certain of the students'

feelings about starting middle school.   However, question 4 on the survey asked parents if their

child was *currently nervous about starting middle school*, and 61.2% agree and 2.9% strongly

agree that their child was nervous about starting middle school.

**Figure 3**
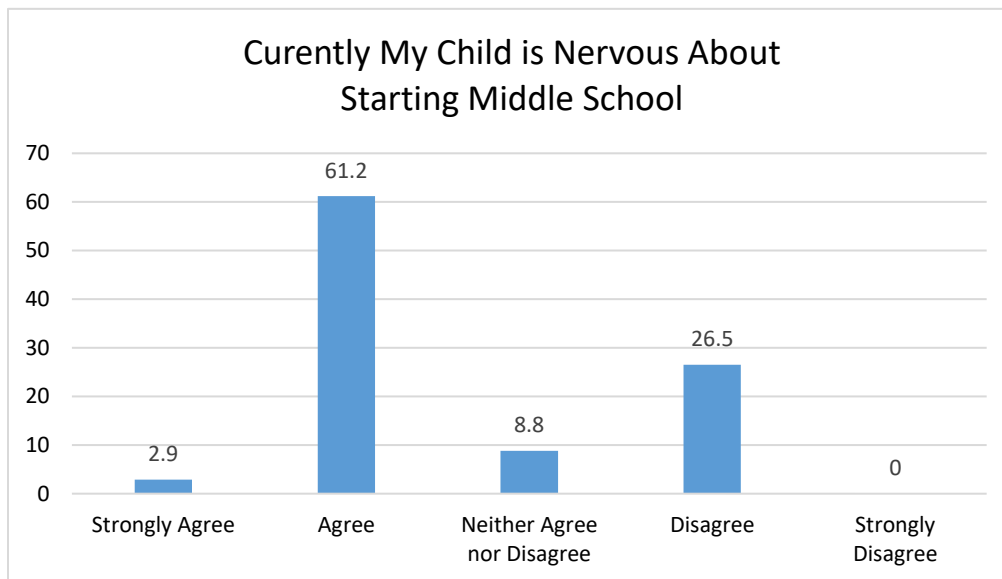


The above figure illustrates the parents' responses to the question, *currently my child is*

*nervous about starting middle school.*   As figure 3 shows, 64.1% of the parents believe that their

child was nervous about starting middle school; 26.5% indicated that they were not nervous; and

8.8% indicated that they neither agree nor disagree that their children were nervous about

transitioning to middle school.

**Middle School Transition Concerns**

With the transition to middle school, parents were asked to indicate their level of concern

regarding logistic related concerns.  Parents selected a response of *1. Strongly Agee, 2. Agree, 3.*

*Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4. Disagree, 5. Strongly Disagree.*  The responses were coded

*Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree = 2, Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly*

*Agree = 5).*

**Table 9**

*Parent's level of concern regarding logistic related concerns (Pre-Survey)*

| Question | Strongly Agree n=34 | | Agree n=34 | | Neither Agree nor Disagree n=34 | | Disagree n=34 | | Strongly Disagree n=34 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Currently my child is nervous about starting middle school. | 2.9% | 1 | 61.2% | 21 | 8.8% | 3 | 26.5% | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried that the school campus will be much bigger than my elementary school campus. | 17.6% | 6 | 32.4% | 11 | 23.5% | 8 | 26.5% | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried about getting lost on the campus. | 26.5% | 9 | 35.3% | 12 | 20.6% | 7 | 17.6% | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried that he/she will not be able to find his/her classes. | 8.8% | 3 | 41.2% | 14 | 23.5% | 8 | 26.5% | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried about having multiple teachers. | 23.5% | 8 | 50% | 17 | 14.7% | 5 | 14.7% | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried that his/her classes will be too difficult. | 14.7% | 5 | 38.2% | 13 | 17.6% | 6 | 26.5% | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried that he/she will not be able to keep his/her schoolwork organized. | 8.8% | 3 | 29.4% | 10 | 29.4% | 10 | 26.5% | 9 | 5.9% | 2 |
| My child is worried that he/she will not know what is expected of him/her in the classroom | 20.6% | 7 | 35.3% | 12 | 14.7% | 5 | 14.7% | 5 | 14.7% | 5 |
| My child is worried about not having good study habits. | 14.7% | 5 | 41.2% | 14 | 20.6% | 7 | 23.5% | 8 | 0 | 0 |

| Statement | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My child is worried that he/she will not know how to take notes. | 17.6% | 6 | 35.3% | 12 | 17.6% | 6 | 17.6% | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried that the teachers will not know him/her. | 5.9% | 2 | 52.9% | 18 | 14.7% | 5 | 26.5% | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is worried that the teachers will not be friendly and helpful. | 5.9% | 2 | 26.5% | 9 | 23.5% | 8 | 17.6% | 6 | 20.6% | 7 |
| My child is worried that he/she will not have any friends in middle school. | 5.9% | 2 | 14.7% | 5 | 32.4% | 11 | 32.4% | 11 | 14.7% | 5 |
| My child is worried about being on a campus with older students. | 29.4% | 10 | 41.2% | 14 | 14.7% | 5 | 14.7% | 5 | 0 | 0 |

The findings revealed that parents' perception of the highest rated concerns of incoming sixth grade students are *having multiple teachers ( 73.5%), being on a campus with older students (70.6%), teachers will not know him/her (58.8%), not having good study habits (55.9%), and not  able to find his/her classes (50%),*.  Nearly sixty-two percent (61.8%) indicated that they *Agree or strongly agree* that *getting lost on the campus* is a grave concern.

**Figure 4**

*Frequently Identified Concerns Pre-Survey*
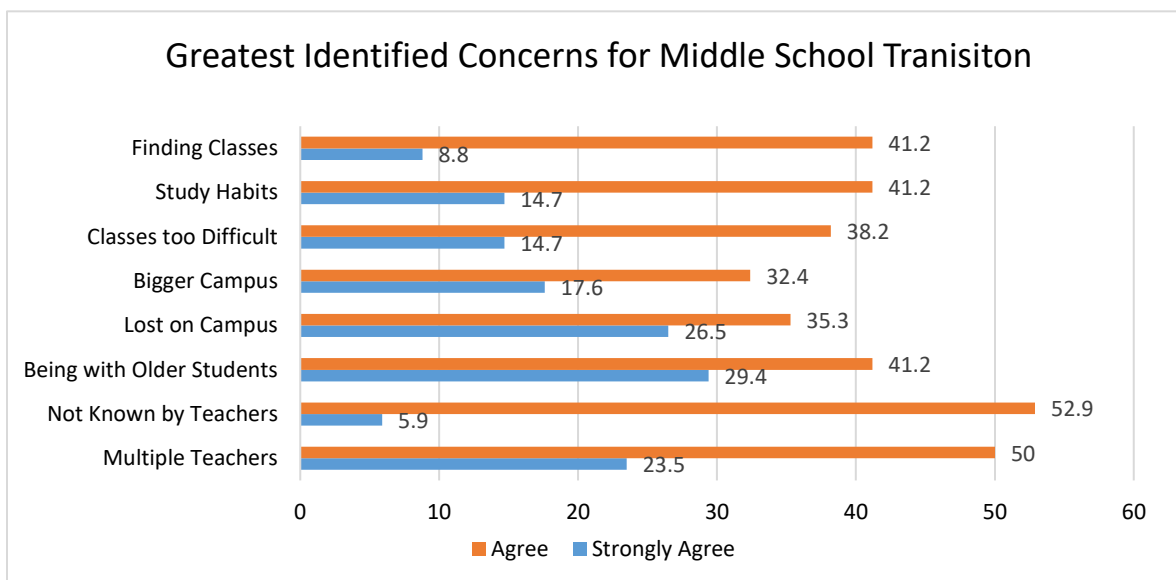


Fifty percent of the students indicated a strong concern for *being on a bigger campus than their elementary school's campus*, and 52.9% indicated a concern that *classes will be too difficult*. Figure 4 represents the percentage of parents who responded *Strongly Agree or Agree* for the greatest concerns identified for middle school transition. The results of the survey confirm that anxiety levels of students entering middle school are prevalent.

**Research Question #2**

What implications does a comprehensive transitional program have on the parents' perception of student anxiety levels upon completion of the program?

$H2_a$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will decline.

$H2_0$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will not decline.

The same survey was administered to the same participants at the end the comprehensive transitional program. The post-survey data analysis show that parents have a lower rate of concern for logistic issues associated with the transition to middle school upon students' completion of a comprehensive transitional program.

**Table 10**

*Parents' Perception of Students' Reaction to Transition (Post Survey)*

| Participant | | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | Valid | confident | 13 | 38.2 | 38.2 | 38.2 |
| | | excited | 14 | 41.2 | 41.2 | 79.4 |
| | | unsure | 4 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 91.2 |
| | | worried | 3 | 8.8 | 8.8 | 100.0 |
| | | Total | 34 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Question #2: When my child thinks about the transition to middle school, he/she feels.*

The findings show nearly that 80% of parents perceived their children to be excited or confident about transitioning to middle school compared to 67% from the pre-survey. Most notably, the number of parents who felt their children were confident rather than just excited increased by more than 18%. Similarly, a smaller percentage of parents reported their children feeling unsure (from 20.6% to 11.8%) or worried (from 11.8% to 8.8%).

**Figure 5**
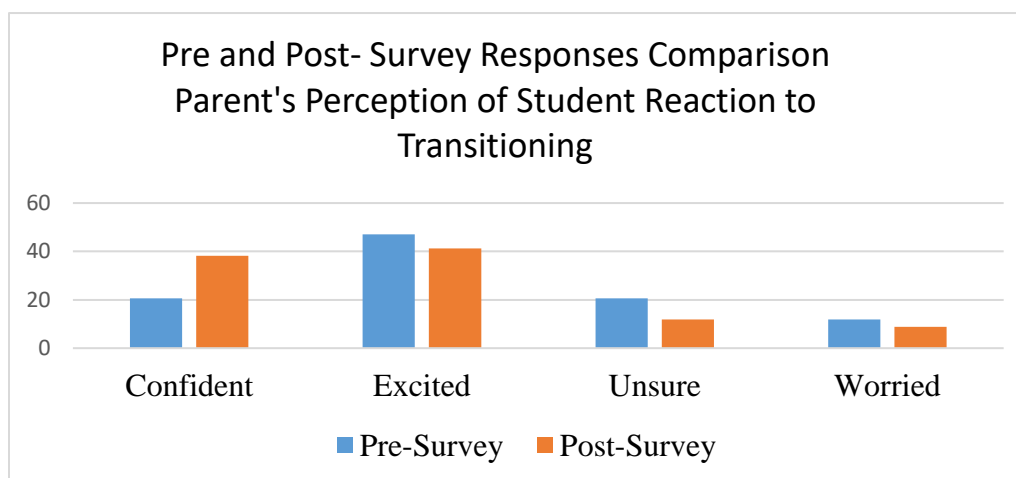
In addition, the same survey was administered at the end the comprehensive transitional program and asked the parents to indicate their level of concern regarding logistic related concerns now that the students have completed the program.  Parents selected a response of *Strongly Agee, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.*  The responses were coded (*Strongly Disagree =5, Disagree = 4, Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3, Agree = 2, Strongly Agree = 1*).

**Table 11**

*Parent's level of concern regarding logistic related concerns (Pre-Survey)*

| Statements | Strongly Agree n-34 | | Agree n=34 | | Agree nor Disagree n=34 | | Disagree n=34 | | Strongly Disagree n=34 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is nervous about starting middle school. | | | | | | | 61.8% | 21 | 38.2% | 13 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that the school campus will be much bigger than his/her elementary school campus. | | | | | | | 67.6% | 23 | 32.4% | 11 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about having multiple teachers. | | | | | 5.9% | 2 | 58.8% | 20 | 35.3% | 12 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about getting lost on the campus. | | | | | 8.8% | 3 | 64.7% | 22 | 26.5% | 9 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that his/her classes will be too difficult. | | | 26.5% | 9 | 11.8% | 4 | 50.0% | 17 | 8.8% | 3 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not be able to keep his/her schoolwork organized. | | | 11.8% | 4 | 2.9% | 1 | 64.7% | 22 | 20.6% | 7 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not know what is expected of him/her in the classroom | | | | | 8.8% | 3 | 61.8% | 21 | 29.4% | 10 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about not having good study habits. | | | 17.6% | 6 | 8.8% | 3 | 50.0% | 17 | 23.5% | 8 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not know how to take notes. | | | 14.7% | 5 | 14.7% | 5 | 50.0% | 17 | 20.6% | 7 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not be able to find his/her classes. | | | | | 8.8% | 3 | 50.0% | 17 | 41.2% | 14 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that the teachers will not know him/her. | | | | | 5.9% | 2 | 70.6% | 24 | 23.5% | 8 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that the teachers will not be friendly and helpful. | | | | | 8.8% | 3 | 64.7% | 22 | 26.5% | 9 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not have any friends in middle school. | | | | | | | 55.9% | 19 | 44.1% | 15 |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about being on a campus with older students. | | | | | 8.8% | 3 | 52.9% | 18 | 38.2% | 13 |

**Figure 6**

*Parents Frequently Identified Concerns about the Transition to Middle School*
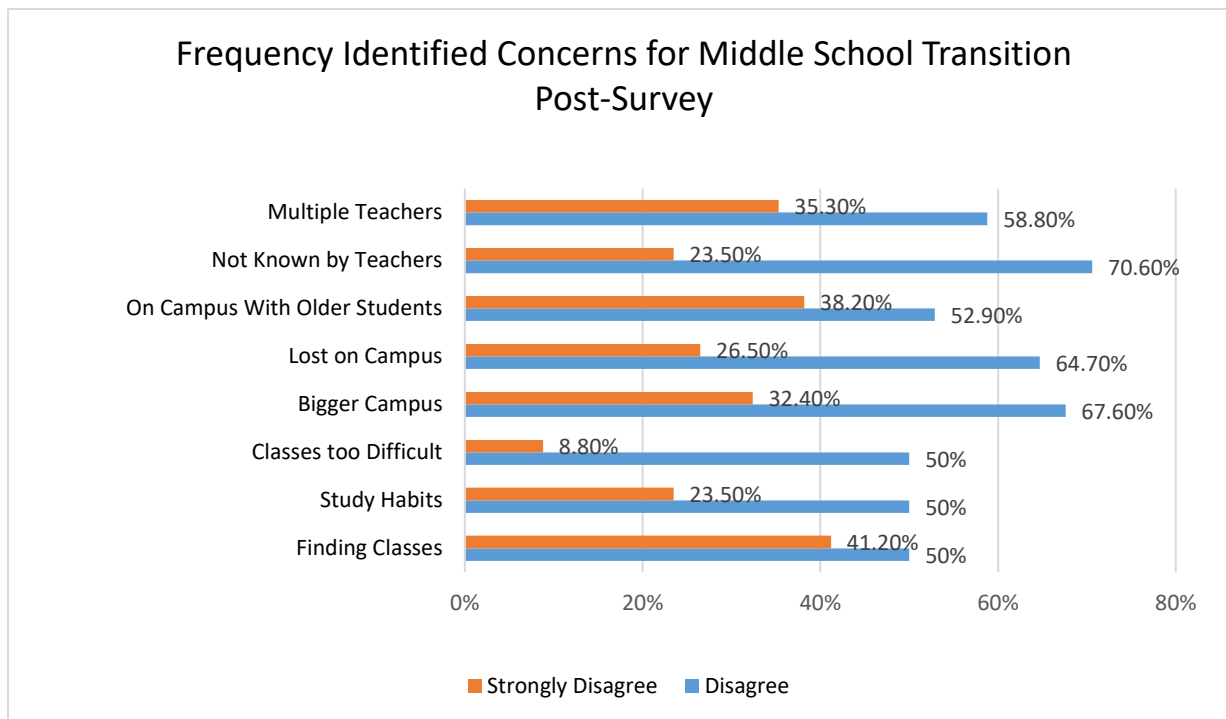


The results from the post-survey of the highest rated concerns identified by parents of incoming sixth grade students transitioning shows that their concern for *having multiple teachers decreased.* Upon completion of the program, 100% of the parents indicated that their strong concern for their children *being on a bigger campus than their elementary school's campus* decreased from 50% indicating this to be a concern. Their concerns changed from *73.5% agree and strongly agree to 94.1% disagree and strongly disagree.* Parent concerns for *being on a campus with older students changed from 70.6% agree and strongly agree to 91% disagree and strongly disagree; teachers will not know him/her improved 58.8% agree and strongly agree to 94% disagree and strongly disagree.* There was a 50% decline in parental concerns for *my child classes will be too difficult* decreasing from 52.9% to 26.5% agree and strongly and increasing to

58.8% from 26.5% disagree and strongly disagree. Overall, the parents' concerns about middle school transition logistics declined after completion of the comprehensive transitional program.

**Figure 7**

*Frequently Identified Concerns about the Transition to Middle School*
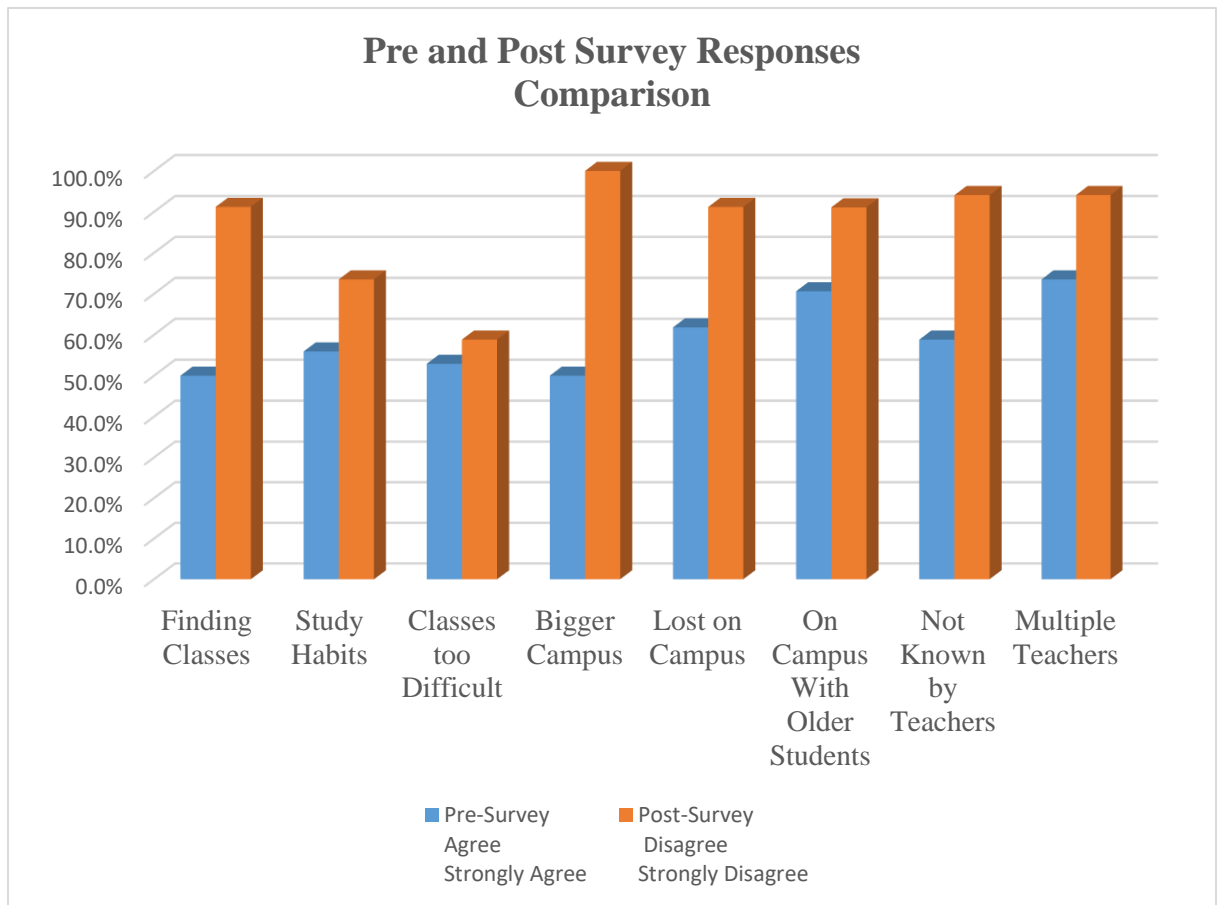


**Research Question #3**

What educational impact will a comprehensive transitional program have on student academic performance in the first semester compared to the students who did not participate in the program?

*H3ₐ:* There is a statistically significant difference in the means of student academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

*H3₀:* There is no statistically significant difference in the means for student academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

**Table 12**

*T-Test*

**Group Statistics**

|  | Participant | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NPostGPA | N | 34 | 1.8824 | .72883 | .12499 |
|  | P | 34 | 2.3235 | .72699 | .12468 |

**Table 13**

*Independent Samples Test*

|  |  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | F | Sig. | t | df |
| NPostGPA | Equal variances assumed | .480 | .491 | -2.499 | 66 |
|  | Equal variances not assumed |  |  | -2.499 | 66.000 |

**Table 14**

*Independent Samples Test*

|  | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower |

| | | .015 | -.44118 | .17654 | -.79366 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NPostGPA | Equal variances assumed | .015 | -.44118 | .17654 | -.79366 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | .015 | -.44118 | .17654 | -.79366 |

The researcher used the (t) significance 2 tailed in the study to see whether the means were different or not. The researcher compared (t) significance 2 tailed with level of significance setting the alpha level at 0.05. The (t) significance 2-tailed is less than 0.05, therefore, there is difference of means between the groups.

**Table 15**

*Independent Samples Test*

| | | t-test for Equality of Means<br>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference<br>Upper |
|---|---|---|
| NPostGPA | Equal variances assumed | -.08869 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | -.08869 |

The researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the mean GPA of two different groups – participants of the comprehensive transitional program and non-participants. The t-test for independent means is used when two groups are made up of different individuals (Fraenkel, 2015, p.233)." There was a significant difference in the GPAs for participants (M=2.32, SD=0.73) and non-participants (M=1.88, SD= 0.73) conditions; t (66) =-2.50, p= 0.015." It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant difference in the means of student academic performance between students who participated in the program and students who did not participate in the program. These results suggest, with 95% confidence that participation in comprehensive transitional program will have an educational impact on a student's academic performance in the first semester of middle school.

**Chapter V**

This chapter will review and outline the discussion of the data and analysis of this study. Also, the significant findings that resulted from this study will be discussed and recommendations for future studies will be presented.

**Restatement of the Research Questions**

The following are the research questions researched and reviewed in this study:

1.  What is the parents' perception of the anxiety levels of students entering middle school?

    $H1_0$ Parent perceptions will not indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

    $H1_a$: Parent perceptions will indicate that student anxiety levels are prevalent in students transitioning to middle school.

2.  What implications does a comprehensive transitional program have on the parents' perception of student anxiety levels upon completion of the program?

    $H2_a$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will decline.

    $H2_0$: Parents perception of anxiety levels of students who participated in a comprehensive transitional program for middle school will not decline.

3.  What educational impact will a comprehensive transitional program have on student academic performance in the first semester compared to the students who did not participate in the program?

*H3$_a$:*  There is a statistically significant difference in the means of student

academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive

transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

*H3$_0$:*  There is no statistically significant difference in the means for student

academic performance of students who participated in a comprehensive

transitional program and those who did not participate in the program.

## Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research study was to explore the impact a comprehensive

transitional program had on parents' perception of student anxiety levels and student academic

performance.  In addition to descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation analysis was used to help

the researcher determine if participating in a comprehensive transitional program can have

appositive impact on academic performance of students transitioning from elementary to middle

school. A t-Test for Independent Means was also run to determine if the difference in the average

GPA of participants of the comprehensive transition program included in this study and those

who did not was significant.

### Research Question One

The results from the pre-survey revealed that 64.1% of the parents believe that their

children were nervous about starting middle school.   The parents' responses to the question

about the perceived emotions of students in reference to transitioning to middle school indicated

that close to 50% of the parents reported their children were *Excited* about transitioning to

middle school; 20.6% were *Confident and 11.8%* reported they were worried to begin middle

school.  The parent responses also revealed that 20.6% were *Unsure* about their emotions toward

beginning middle school.    The findings revealed that parents' perception of the highest rated

concerns of incoming sixth grade students are *having multiple teachers ( 73.5%), being on a campus with older students (70.6%), teachers will not know him/her (58.8%), not having good study habits (55.9%), and not able to find his/her classes (50%),*. Nearly sixty-two percent (61.8%) indicated that they *Agree or strongly agree* that *getting lost on the campus* is a grave concern. Also, the findings show nearly that 80% of parents perceived their children to be excited or confident about transitioning to middle school compared to 67% from the pre-survey. Most notably, the number of parents who felt their children were confident rather than just excited increased by more than 18%. Similarly, a smaller percentage of parents reported their children feeling unsure (from 20.6% to 11.8%) or worried (from 11.8% to 8.8%).

**Research Question Two**

The same survey was administered to the same participants at the end the comprehensive transitional program. The post transition survey data analysis showed that parents had a lower rate of concern for logistic issues associated with the transition to middle school after the students completed the comprehensive transitional program. The findings revealed that nearly 80% of parents perceived their children to be excited or confident about transitioning to middle school compared to 67% from the pre-survey. Most notably, the number of parents who felt their children were confident rather than just excited increased by more than 18%. Similarly, a smaller percentage of parents reported their children feeling unsure (from 20.6% to 11.8%) or worried (from 11.8% to 8.8%). The results from the post-survey of the highest rated concerns identified by parents of incoming sixth grade students transitioning indicated that their concern for *having multiple teachers* decreased. Their concerns changed from *73.5% agree and strongly agree to 94.1% disagree and strongly disagree.* Parent concerns for *being on a campus with older students changed from 70.6% agree and strongly agree to 91% disagree and strongly disagree;*

*teachers will not know him/her improved 58.8% agree and strongly agree to 94% disagree and strongly disagree.* There was a 50% decline in parental concerns for *my child classes will be too difficult* decreasing from 52.9% to 26.5% agree and strongly agree and shifted to 58.8% from 26.5% disagree and strongly disagree. Overall, the parents' concerns about middle school transition logistics declined after completion of the comprehensive transitional program.

**Research Question Three**

The researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the mean GPA of two different groups – participants in the comprehensive transitional program and non-participants. There was a significant difference in the GPAs for participants (M=2.32, SD=0.73) and non-participants (M=1.88, SD= 0.73) conditions; t (66) =-2.50, p= 0.015. It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant difference in the means of student academic performance between students who participated in the program and students who did not participate in the program. These results suggest, with 95% confidence that participation in a comprehensive transitional program will have an educational impact on a student's academic performance in the first semester of middle school.

<div align="center">

**Discussion**

</div>

Research from the literature supports the findings of this study that transitioning to middle school is an event that is challenging for the overwhelming majority of students causing anxiety, a decline in academic performance and perceived gaps in programmatic support for the transitioning students. Greene & Ollendick (1993), conducted their study to examine whether students experiencing a poor academic transition to middle school showed greater problems in other areas of adjustment such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem, stress, and behavior. The authors' experiment provided the students with support from teachers and parents and training in

problem-solving, social skills and goal setting.  The researchers categorized this group as receiving a full-treatment condition. This group of students showed significant improvement in academic achievement, anxiety, and teacher-reported behavior problems (Greene & Ollendick, 1993).  Perkins & Gelfer (1995) propose that families face challenges as they have to learn new routines, rules and cope with leaving a familiar program.  The research also supports the ideology that a comprehensive transitional program is needed to assist students in the process of transitioning to middle school.

This study and its findings revealed the positive impact a comprehensive transitional program has on student anxiety and student academic performance.   The study showed that parents' perception of student anxiety levels decreased after their children participated in a comprehensive transitional program.  Additionally, the findings unveiled that there is a statistically significant difference in student academic performance for those who participated in a comprehensive transitional program and those who did not participate.   There was a significant difference in the GPAs for participants (M=2.32, SD=0.73) and non-participants (M=1.88, SD= 0.73) conditions; t (66) =-2.50, p= 0.015."   These results suggest, with 95% confidence that participation in a comprehensive transitional program has an educational impact on a student's academic performance in the first semester of middle school.

Furthermore, the results of the post-survey, which was administered once the program was completed, revealed that the parents' concern for their children *being on a bigger campus than their elementary school's campus* decreased from 50% of parents indicating it to be a concern to 100% indicating it no longer to be a concern.   Symond (2015) suggests that the school size creates many issues for children because of its more complex layout.  This complexity may generate concerns for students about navigating larger buildings and a larger

campus. The fear and anxiety may stem from the idea of getting lost, adapting to a new building and their ability to move around in their new school with confidence (Symond, 2015). Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph (2015), conducted a study focusing on the subjective stress and anxiety that youth experience as they adjust to their middle school environment and explores how this stress and anxiety links with academic performance, motivation, and bonding to school. The results indicate that those adolescents who experience greater anxiety regarding the middle school transition also are at increased risk of experiencing lower academic performance and motivation (Goldstein, Boxer & Rudolph, 2015). McKeon (2014) conducted a study that examined the academic, procedural and social changes that occur in middle school from the stage-environment fit and adolescent development theories. Her findings revealed that "while both parents and faculty experience anxiety and excitement about transitioning all participants perceived the social and academic domains as the most difficult" (McKeon, 2014). The results of the pre-survey indicated that 53% had parental concerns for classes being too difficult.

The purpose of a comprehensive transitional program is to "build on the excitement of transitioning to a new school while equipping students with enough good information to overcome any apprehension" (Andrews & Bishop, 2012). The results of the post-survey showed that parents' perception of student anxiety levels decreased in all areas after their children completed the comprehensive transitional program. The researcher also conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the mean GPA of two different groups – participants of the comprehensive transitional program and non-participants. There was a significant difference in the GPAs for participants (M=2.32, SD=0.73) and non-participants (M=1.88, SD= 0.73) conditions; t (66) =-2.50, p= 0.015. It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant

difference in the means of student academic performance between students who participated in the program and students who did not participate in the program.

Alspaugh & Harting (1998), established that there is a consistent student achievement loss associated with the transition from self-contained elementary schools to intermediate-level schools. The achievement loss in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies occurred when the transition was at Grade 5 6, 7 or 8" (Alspaugh, 1998). Students in this transitional stage of growth, developmentally and environmentally, should receive support from schools through comprehensive transitional programs that support adolescents through this complex transitional phase. Bailey, Giles, & Rogers, (2015) contend that meeting the academic, psychosocial, and emotional needs of young adolescents is too important to ignore. Their view supports that transitional programs should be intentional and address the intellectual, physical, social and emotional developmental needs of the students. Because middle schools have been described as more academically rigorous, larger in size and as having more rigid behavior standards than elementary schools, creating the opportunity for students to have a successful experience when transitioning to the middle school has been linked to future academic success for students (Bailey, Giles, & Rogers, 2015).

The results of this study suggest, with 95% confidence that participation in a comprehensive transitional program will have an educational impact on a student's academic performance in the first semester of middle school. "Comprehensive transitional programs that include numerous activities geared toward the needs and concerns of students, parents, and teachers can be effective in helping students transition to a new school with less anxiety and more academic success" (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Schwerdt and West (2011) examined data of students in grades 3 through 10 in Florida public schools to measure the impact school

configuration has on student achievement. The authors found that the students moving from elementary to middle school caused greater drops in achievement during the transition year. Their estimates specify that middle school transition causes achievement to decline by at least 0.124 and 0.086 standard deviations in math and reading, respectively, for the students entering middle schools in grade 6 (Schwerdt & West, 2011).  These results propose that students transitioning to a 6 through 8 middle school model are more than likely to experience a negative impact on student achievement.  Goldstein, Boxer, and Rudolph (2015) piloted a study to investigate the connection between adolescents' subjective experiences of stress associated with the middle school transition and their academic outcomes (Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph, 2015). The results of the study indicated a strong correlation between transition stress and a decline in academic performance.  The study also revealed that transition stress impacted students' academic performance negatively in spite of positive relations with friends.  Overall, "adolescents who were more stressed by the middle school transition reported higher levels of anxiety about school and academic performance in general" (Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph, 2015).  The findings of this study revealed that parents had a high concern for their children *having multiple teachers ( 73.5%), being on a campus with older students (70.6%), having teachers who will not know him/her (58.8%), not having good study habits (55.9%),not being able to find his/her classes (50%), and not knowing what is expected of him/her in the classroom.* In another study conducted by Akos (2002), data was collected concerning student perceptions during the transition from elementary to middle school.  The author surveyed 331 fifth grade students in a large, rural, Southeastern public school district.  One component of this study required students to generate a list of questions they had about middle school.  Rules and procedure were major themes of student questions.  The students understood that rules and

procedures were in place as discussed generally during the orientation program.  However, they desired to have more of an explicit and thorough explanation of the rules and expectations beyond the general information given during orientation (Akos, 2002).  The results of this study revealed that the parents' concern for their children not knowing what is expected of him/her in the classroom decreased from 55.9% indicating a concern to 91.2% indicating this was no longer a concern upon completion of the program.  In addition, nearly sixty-two percent (61.8%) indicated that they *Agree or strongly agree* that *getting lost on the campus* was a grave concern*, w*hile 50% of the parents indicated a strong concern for their children *being on a bigger campus than their elementary school's campus*.  Research conducted by Barber and Olsen (2004) explored teachers and parents' perceptions regarding changes in the middle school environment and the associated impact on academic performance.  The authors found that teachers and parents perceived decreases in the quality of the middle school environment that were reflected in decreases in both achievement and social-emotional function.  Their conclusions linked the decline in achievement and social-emotional function to the procedural changes of middle school such as moving from smaller to larger classes with a less personalized setting and a decline in teacher support.  The results of the survey confirms that anxiety levels are prevalent for families transitioning into middle school in sixth-grade.

Finally, Greene and Ollendick (1993) piloted a study to evaluate the efficacy of a multidimensional program.  The study evaluated the program's effectiveness in its intent "to provide teacher support, group support, training in problem-solving skills, social skills, goal setting, self-monitoring and parental support to poor academic transition students as compared to teacher support alone" (Greene & Ollendick, 1993).  The findings of their study showed a direct correlation to the multidimensional program contributing to the success for students and the

establishment of close, trusting relationships between students and teachers (Greene & Ollendick, 1993).  Furthermore, Andrew & Bishop (2012) conducted a study by examining middle grades transition programs globally.  They concluded that a smooth transition between schools requires more than a student orientation, a family welcome barbecue, and a letter home.  They contend that schools should ensure that students negotiate the new practices, policies, and school layouts as a complex endeavor (Andrew & Bishop, 2010).  Akos & Galassi (2004), conducted a study to gain an understanding of the perceptions of students, parents, and faculty involved in middle school transition.  The authors collected data from a survey completed by 493 sixth and ninth grade students, 144 parents, and 29 faculties.  The results revealed that school transitions posed both challenges and opportunities for students. This data was used as a recommendation to enhance programming for students transitioning to middle school and high school.  The results from their study suggest that distinct types of transition programming and a different temporal sequence may be needed to facilitate successful adjustment to three components—academic, procedural, and social—of a school transition (Akos & Galassi 2004).

Bailey, Giles, & Rogers, (2015) contend that meeting the academic, psychosocial, and emotional needs of young adolescents is too important to ignore. Their view supports that transitional programs should be intentional and address the intellectual, physical, social and emotional developmental needs of the students.  It is vitally important that all areas of development are considered to create the strongest probability to impact student growth.

### Limitations of Findings

This study has three limitations that the researcher must acknowledge:

1. The process of pretesting for validity and reliability of the survey was not performed prior to conducting research. However, the instrument provided consistent results, and measured what it was supposed to measure.

2. The study is limited to one middle school in one school district in the southern urban area of a major county.

3. The study is limited to the perception and beliefs of parents of students transitioning from elementary school in 5th grade to middle school for 6th grade.

## Implications of the Findings

Based on this study, it is the researcher's belief that it is imperative for students, parents, and teachers to have a program that supports them before, during and after the transition process. Studies have revealed that "middle schools that take into consideration the physical, social-emotional, and intellectual-cognitive development of students transitioning to middle school when developing programs and activities, will see a positive impact on the social-emotional development of the adolescents and academic achievement. This shift has been the norm for the past twenty-five years, and few middle schools have incorporated comprehensive transitional programs that assist students with adjusting to the transition process. It is evident that this cultural shift is drastic for many children and may be viewed by most children and parents as very severe. Parents and students alike are plagued with emotional paradox ranging from enthusiasm to apprehension. The academic environment and school procedures are substantially different than elementary school. Students and parents, unsurprisingly, express concerns regarding these areas. Schools ought to be proactive in addressing these concerns to minimize the level of anxiety for students and parents. This evidence endorses the need for middle schools and districts to implement effective practices through the use of comprehensive transitional

programs that assist students through the transition process. It is important to develop programs that supplement the needs of teachers, adolescent students, and their families as they navigate through the multidimensional changes of the transition process. Middle school leaders need a transformation from the traditional pre-school orientation programs to a program that is intentional to help foster a more fluid transition for fifth graders matriculating from elementary to middle. The transition programs should incorporate strategies that address the essentials students need to transition successfully. Addressing the concerns of students, parents, and teachers can be effective in helping students transition to a new school, minimize anxiety and cultivate academic success

## Recommendations for Further Study

This study provides several opportunities for future studies in the area of student academic performance and student anxiety levels impacted by transitional issues. This study was limited to one school, 34 subjects, and GPA data for each participant. These limitations identify areas deserving future research. The findings for the comprehensive transitional program's impact on anxiety levels and student academic performance in this study was significant. More research is needed to analyze the implications a comprehensive transitional program has on student academic performance and student anxiety levels related to middle school transition.

It is also recommended that research consideration should be given to include a qualitative component to a quantitative study. Findings from qualitative data may provide significant support to the quantitative findings in this study.

## Summary

This study may provide better awareness to middle school leaders on the influence a comprehensive transitional program has on elementary students transitioning to middle school.

It is imperative to the success of students that schools offer the support needed to ease or minimize the levels of anxiety associated with transitioning and help students maintain academic status.   Examining the perceptions of the school leader, faculty and parents, regarding middle school readiness and student apprehension will be instrumental in helping to devise a comprehensive transitional program and list the factors that may contribute to a decline in student academic performance.  This study can improve the transitional process for middle school students and can serve as a framework for school leaders to restructure their configuration for sixth-grade students.  The artifact that will be established from this study is a program describing the components and implementation process of a comprehensive transitional program for sixth-grade.  The program will be intentional in design to assist the leaders at Mayan Middle School in implementing a framework to help sixth-grade students with the transition from elementary to middle school successfully.   Students are in a crucial transitional stage in their bodies and mind that brings about a multitude of challenges as they metamorphose from childhood to adolescence.  "These changes in school context are often at odds with the cognitive, physical and social changes of early adolescence that make supportive peer and teacher relationships especially important at this stage of life" (Ryan, Shim, & Makara, 2013).

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# APPENDICES

# Welcome Incoming 6th Graders

## Lake Worth Middle
## Warrior Summer Prep Program

**Breakfast**
**Lunch**
**Transportation**

**Offered**

Study Skills

**Organizational Skills**

Physical Education

When: July 22 - August 1, 2019
**(Monday-Thursday of Each Week)**

Time: 9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Where: Lake Worth Middle School

**Math Review**

**Language Arts/Reading Review**

## GO WARRIORS!

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## *Come Learn All About Your New School*

Please Return This Portion of the Flyer to Lake Worth Middle School Main Office by **May 15, 2019**
*Warrior Summer Prep Program (July 22 –*
*Aug 1, 2019) Monday – Thursday*
*9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.*

**Please Print Clearly**

STUDENT NAME: First: _____  Last: _____  GENDER: M or F (Circle One)

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME:  First: _____  Last: _____

 CELL PHONE: _____ /_____ /_____  OTHER CONTACT NUMBER: _____ / _____ / _____

ADDRESS:  Street: _____  City: _____, FL  Zip:_____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
**All District and School Policies and Procedures Enforced During Summer**

# Bienvenidos Estudiantes entrando al 6to Grado

APPENDIX A

## Ven A Conocer Tu Nueva Escuela

## Programa Preparatorio del Verano para los Wariors de la Escuela Intermedia Lake Worth

Desayuno
Almuerzo y
Transportación
Son Ofrecidos

Habilidades de Estudio

Educación Física

When: July 22 - August 1, 2019
(Monday-Thursday of Each Week)

Time: 9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Where: Lake Worth Middle School

Repaso de Matemáticas

Repaso de Ingles y Lectura

## ¡VAMOS WARIORS!

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Regrese esta parte del volante a la oficina principal de la Escuela Intermedia Lake Worth no más tardar del día **15 de mayo de 2019**

**Programa Preparatorio del Verano para los Wariors (22 de julio – 1 de agosto de 2019)**
**lunes a jueves de 9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.**

**Por favor imprima claramente**

Nombre del Estudiante: Nombre: _____ Apellido: _____ GENERO: M o F (circule uno)

Nombre del Padre o Tutor: Nombre: _____ Apellido: _____

Número del Celular: _____ /_____ /_____          Otro Numero: _____ / _____ / _____

Dirección: _____ Ciudad _____, FL   Zona Postal: _____

Firma del Padre o Tutor: _____
**Todas las Reglas y Pólizas del Distrito Serán endorsadas durante el verano**

# Byenveni Nouvo Elèv 6ᵞᵉᵐ Ane

# Lake Worth Middle
# Pwogram Preparasyon Gran Vakans

**Manje Maten**
**Manje Midi**
**Transpòtasyon**

**Ap Ofri**

Teknik Etidye

Teknik òganizasyonèl

Edikasyon Fizik

**Kilè:** 22 Jiyè – 01 Out, 2019
**(Lendi- Jedi Chak Semèn)**

**Lè:** 9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

**Kibò:** Lake Worth Middle School

**Revizyon Matematik**

**Revizyon Lang Oral/ Ekri, Lekti**

# GO WARRIORS!

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## *Vini Aprann tout bagay de nouvo lekòl ou a*

Tanpri retounen pòsyon Feyè sa nan ofis direksyon Lake Worth Middle School la pa pita ke **15 Me, 2019**
*Warrior Pwogram Gran Vakans (22 Jiyè – 01 out, 2019) Lendi – Jedi*

*9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.*

**Tanpri Ekri Klè**

NON ELÈV LA: Prenon: _____ Non: _____ Sèks: M or F (Sèkle Yonn)

NON PARAN/GADYEN: Prenon: _____ Non: _____

Telefòn Mobil: _____ /_____ /_____ Lòt Nimewo Kontak: _____ / _____ / _____

ADRÈS: Ri: _____ Vil: _____, FL Zip: _____

Siyati Paran/Gadyen : _____
**Tout Règleman ak Pwosedi Distri ak Lekòl la ap Ranfòse Pandan pwogram Granvans la**

Thank you for taking the time to consider completing this survey on the concerns of your fifth-grade student starting middle school in sixth grade.

**Purpose of the Research**
The purpose of the study is to acquire information from parents to help the researcher develop a comprehensive transitional program for fifth-grade students transitioning to middle school.

**Specific Procedures**
Your participation in this study will assist the researcher in developing a comprehensive transitional program for fifth-grade students transitioning to middle school. You will be asked to answer 16 multiple choice questions about your perceptions and apprehensions of starting middle school.

**Duration of Participation and Compensation**
This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.  There will be no compensation for participation.

**Risks**
The survey is strictly voluntary, and no penalty will be imposed for non-participation.  There are minimal risks to those who participate in the survey, however, if you feel uncomfortable at any time, you may discontinue completing the survey at any time, and no data will be collected.

**Benefits**
There are no benefits in answering the survey questions. However, your answers can contribute to the development of a comprehensive transitional program to assist students in their transition to middle school.

**Confidentiality**
This survey is confidential and protected by the primary investigator and research collaborators.  The data and consent forms will be secured in a locked filing cabinet under the researcher's supervision.  The data will be kept for five years and then be permanently destroyed.

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions about the research project, you may contact Yolanda Gregory (phone: ); email: ygregory@email.lynn.edu.  For any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call Dr. Patrick Cooper, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects, at 561-237-7407 or pcooper@lynn.edu.

**Documentation of Informed Consent**
I have had an opportunity to read the consent form and have the research study explained.  I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the research project, and my questions have been answered.  I am prepared to participate in the research study described above.


Signature of research participant   _____   ____ /____ /____
                           Signature of Participant                    Date

CONSENTIMIENTO  INFORMADO                    APPENDIX B

Gracias por tomar el tiempo de completar esta encuesta sobre las preocupaciones que tiene por su
estudiante de quinto grado entrando a la escuela intermedia al sexto grado.

**Propósito de la encuesta**
El propósito de este estudio es para adquirir información de los padres para ayudar al investigador a
desarrollar un programa tradicional comprensivo para la transición de los estudiantes de quinto grado a la
escuela intermedia.

**Procedimientos Específicos**
Su participación en este estudio le ayudara al investigador a desarrollar un programa tradicional
comprensivo para la transición de los estudiantes de quinto grado a la escuela intermedia. Le pedirán que
conteste 16 preguntas de múltiples opciones sobre la preceptiva y temores sobre el comienzo de la escuela
intermedia.

**Duración de la Participación y Compensación**
Esta encuesta dura aproximadamente 20 minutos para completar. No habrá compensación por completar
esta encuesta.

**Riesgos**
La encuesta es completamente voluntaria y no habrá penalidades si no participa. Para los que participan,
los riesgos son mínimos. Pero, si se siente incómodo en cualquier momento, usted puede dejar de hacer la
encuesta y no colectaran ningunos de los datos.

**Beneficios**
No hay beneficios por contestar esta encuesta. Pero, sus repuestas pueden contribuir al desarrollo de un
programa tradicional comprensivo para la transición de los estudiantes de quinto grado a la escuela
intermedia.

**Confidencialidad**
Esta encuesta es completamente confidencial y los documentos serán protegidos por el investigador y los
colaboradores de la encuesta en un gabinete bajo llave por del investigador. Mantendrán la información
por cinco años y luego será destruida permanentemente.

**Información de Contacto**
Si tiene preguntas sobre la encuesta, póngase en contacto con la señora Yolanda Gregory por teléfono:
██████████ o correo electrónico: ygregory@eamil.lynn.edu.  Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos
como participante de una encuesta llame a Dr. Patrick Cooper, Presidente de la Junta de Revisión
Institucional de la Universidad Lynn para la Protección de Sujetos Humanos al 561-237-7407 o
pcooper@lynn.edu.

**Documentación de Consentimiento Informado**
He tenido la oportunidad de leer el formulario de consentimiento y tener el estudio de la encuesta
explicado. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre la encuesta y mis preguntas han sido
respondidas.  Estoy preparado para participar en el estudio de investigación descrito anteriormente.


Signature of research participant   _____   ____ /____ /____
                                          Signature of Participant                  Date

KONSANTMAN                                                  APPENDIX B

Mèsi paske w pran tan pou ranpli sondaj sa a sou enkyetid pitit ou an k ap kite senkyèm ane pou kòmanse lekòl mwayen nan sizyèm ane a kapab genyen.

### Objektif rechèch la
Objektif etid la se pou jwenn enfòmasyon nan men paran yo pou ede rechèchè yo devlope yon pwogram tranzisyon konplè pou elèv klas senkyèm ane k ap tranzisyone nan lekòl prime mwayen.

### Pwosedi espesifik yo
Patisipasyon ou nan etid sa a pral ede chèchè a nan devlope yon pwogram tranzosyon konplè pou elèv senkyèm ane k ap rantre nan lekòl primè mwayen. Yo pral mande w reponn 16 kesyon chwa miltip sou pèsepsyon ou ak enkyetid ou ta genyen sou tranzisyon nan lekòl primè mwayen.

### Dire Patisipasyon w ak rekonpans
Sondaj sa a ta dwe pran apeprè 20 minit pou fè. Pap genyen rekonpans pou patisipasyon.

### Risk
Sondaj sa volontè, epi pa gen okenn pwòblèm nan sa si yon moun pa patisipe. Moun ki chwazi patisipe nan sondaj la prèske pa pran okenn risk, sepandan, si ou santi ou pa alèz a nenpòt ki moman, ou ka sispann ranpli sondaj la, epi pa gen okenn done yo k ap kolekte.

### Benefis
Pa gen okenn benefis nan reponn kesyon sondaj la. Sepandan, repons ou yo ka kontribye nan devlopman yon pwogram tranzisyon konplè pou ede elèv yo nan tranzisyon yo nan lekòl primè segondè.

### Konfidansyalite
Sondaj sa a konfidansyèl, e kolaboratè rechèch la ak anketè prensipal yo ap fè sèten de sa. Done yo ak fòm konsantman yo ap fèmen anba kle an sekirize nan yon kabinèt sou sipèvizyon rechèchè a. Y ap kenbe done yo pou senk an, epi detwi yo.

### Kontak nesesè
Si ou gen nenpòt kesyon sou pwojè rechèch la, ou ka kontakte Yolanda Gregory nan (telefòn: ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓; imèl: ygregory@email.lynn.edu. Pou nenpòt kesyon konsènan dwa ou kòm yon patisipan nan rechèch la, ou ka rele Dr. Patrick Cooper, Prezidan Komite Revizyon Enstitisyonèl Inivèsite Lynn pou pwoteksyon sijè imen, nan 561-237-7407 oswa imèl li nan pcooper@lynn.edu.

### Konsantman enfòme
Mwen te gen opòtinite pou li fòm konsantman an epi mwen te jwenn eksplikasyon sou rechèch la. Mwen te gen opòtinite pou poze kesyon sou pwojè rechèch la, epi yo te reponn kesyon mwen yo. Mwen prepare pou patisipe nan etid rechèch ki dekri anwo a.


Siyati patisipan an  _____        ____ /____ /____
                            Siyati patisipan an                                    Dat

Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your school center. I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida, and am in the process of completing my thesis project. The study is entitled: The Significance of Employing a Comprehensive Transitional Program for Sixth Grade and its Effects on Student Anxiety and Student Academic Performance. This study has been approved by the Lynn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Palm Beach County School district IRB.

I will be reaching out to the parents of the incoming sixth grade students to anonymously complete a short survey. The parents will be provided with a consent from to be signed and returned to me at the beginning of the survey process.

If approval is granted, parent participants would complete the survey on campus during a scheduled parent orientation meeting. The survey process should take no longer than ten to fifteen minutes to complete. The survey results will be pooled for the thesis project and individual results of this study will remain anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by either the school or the individual participants.

If you agree to grant me permission to conduct the research study, please sign below.

Sincerely,


Yolanda Gregory,
Doctoral Candidate
Lynn University


Approved by

APPENDIX D
## Middle School Fifth Grade Transition Survey

In an attempt to assist fifth-grade students transition from elementary to middle school, please answer the following questions.  Your answers to the following questions will help in the development of a comprehensive transitional program to better prepare students for middle school.

What is your child's gender?        Male ◯        Female ◯

When my child thinks about the transition to middle school he/she feels...
◯Confident    ◯Excited   ◯Unsure  ◯Worried with many questions   ◯Panicked and freaking out

|  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Currently my child is nervous about starting middle school. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that the school campus will be much bigger than my elementary school campus. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried about having multiple teachers. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried about getting lost on the campus. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that his/her classes will be too difficult. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that he/she will not be able to keep his/her schoolwork organized. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that he/she will not know what is expected of him/her in the classroom | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried about not having good study habits. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that he/she will not know how to take notes. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that he/she will not be able to find his/her classes. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that the teachers will not know him/her. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that the teachers will not be friendly and helpful. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried that he/she will not have any friends in middle school. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| My child is worried about being on a campus with older students. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.  Your responses will help us better prepare students for this transition.

**Encuesta de la Transición de Quinto grado a la Escuela Intermedia**

Con el intento de asistir a los estudiantes hacer la transición de quinto grado para la escuela intermedia, por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas. Sus repuestas a las siguientes preguntas ayudara a desarrollar un programa tradicional comprensivo para preparar a los estudiantes para la escuela intermedia.

¿Cuál es su género?　　　Masculino ◯　　　Femenino ◯

Cuando mi niño(a) piensa en la transición a la Escuela Intermedia se siente...

◯Confidente　◯Emocionado　◯Inseguro　◯Preocupado con muchas preguntas　◯Pánico y Asustado

| | Muy en Desacuerdo | Desacuerdo | Ni de Acuerdo Ni Desacuerdo | De Acuerdo | Muy de Acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mi niño(a) está actualmente nervioso del comienzo de la escuela. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) se preocupa que el plantel de la escuela será mucho más grande que el de mi escuela primaria. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) se preocupa tener varios maestros. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa perderse. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Mi niño(a) se preocupa que sus clases serán muy difíciles. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa no poder organizar su trabajo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa no saber que se espera de su en el aula. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa no tener buenos hábitos de estudio. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa no saber cómo tomar notas. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa no poder encontrar sus clases. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa que los maestros no lo conozcan. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa que los maestros no sean amistosos y serviciales. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa no tener amistades en la escuela. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| A mi niño(a) le preocupa estar en la escuela con estudiantes mayores que él/ella. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Gracias por tomar el tiempo de completar esta encuesta. Sus respuestas nos ayudaran a preparar mejor a los estudiantes para esta transición.

**Sondaj Tranzisyon Lekòl Mwayen Pou Elèv Senkyèm ane**

Nan yon tantatif pou ede elèv senkyèm ane tranzisyone soti nan lekòl primè elemantè pou rantre nan lekòl primè mwayen, tanpri reponn kesyon sa yo. Repons ou yo pral ede nan devlopman yon pwogram tranzisyon konplè pou pi byen prepare elèv yo pou lekòl primè mwayen.

Ki sèks ou?    Gason ◯  Fi ◯

Lè pitit mwen panse sou tranzisyon pou l al nan lekòl primè mwayen an, li santi l...

◯ Konfidan      ◯ Kontan      ◯Ensèten      ◯Enkyete e li chaje kesyon      ◯ Panike

|  | Vrèman pa dakò | Pa dakò | Pa ni dakò oswa Ni pa dakò | Dakò | Vrèman dakò |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aprezan pitit mwen an enkyete anpil sou ale nan lekòl primè mwayen. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an ekyete ke lekòl la ka pi gwo ke lekòl primè elemantè li kite a. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an ekyete ke l pral genyen plizyè pwofesè. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke l ka pedi nan gwo lekòl sa. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke klas li yo pral twò difisil. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke li p ap ka byen jere kantite travay ak devwa li pral genyen yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke li p ap konnen ki sa y ap atann de li nan klas yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke abitid ak fason li etidye ka pa bon ase. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke li p ap konnen kijan pou l pran nòt nan klas yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke li ka pa ka jwen kote klas li yo ye. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke pwofesè yo p ap konnen l. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke pwofesè yo ka pa janti avèk li epi yo ka pa ede l. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete ke li ka pa genyen okenn zanmi nan lekòl prime mwayen an. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Pitit mwen an enkyete paske pral gen lòt elèv ki pi gran pase l nan lekòl la. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Mèsi paske w pran tan pou ranpli sondaj sa a. Repons ou yo pral ede nou pi byen prepare elèv yo pou tranzisyon sa a.

# Middle School Fifth Grade Transition Survey     APPENDIX E

Now that you have participated in the comprehensive transitional program, please rate the following questions that best reflect your thoughts.

What is your gender?     Male ◯     Female ◯

Since completing the transitional program, when my child thinks about the transition to middle school he/she feels...

◯ Confident     ◯ Excited     ◯ Unsure     ◯ Worried with many questions     ◯ Panicked and freaking out

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is nervous about starting middle school. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that the school campus will be much bigger than his/her elementary school campus. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about having multiple teachers. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about getting lost on the campus. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that his/her classes will be too difficult. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not be able to keep his/her schoolwork organized. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not know what is expected of him/her in the classroom | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about not having good study habits. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not know how to take notes. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not be able to find his/her classes. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that the teachers will not know him/her. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that the teachers will not be friendly and helpful. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried that he/she will not have any friends in middle school. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Since completing the transitional program, my child is worried about being on a campus with older students. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.  Your responses will help us better prepare students for this transition.

## Encuesta de la Transición de Quinto grado a la Escuela Intermedia     APPENDIX E

Ya que ha participado en el programa tradicional compresivo, por favor complete la encuesta como mejor refleje su opinión.

¿Cuál es su género?      Masculino ◯      Femenino ◯

Después de haber completado el programa, cuando pienso en la transición a la Escuela Intermedia me siento...

◯ Confidente   ◯Emocionado ◯Inseguro ◯Preocupado con muchas preguntas    ◯ Pánico y Asustado

|  | Muy en Desacuerdo | Desacuerdo | Ni de Acuerdo Ni Desacuerdo | De Acuerdo | Muy de Acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, presentemente esto nervioso del comienzo de la escuela. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupo que el plantel de la escuela será mucho más grande que el de mi escuela primaria. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa tener varios maestros. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa perderme. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa que mis clases serán muy difíciles. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa no poder organizar mi trabajo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa no saber que se espera de mí en el aula. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa no tener buenos hábitos de estudio. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa no saber cómo tomar notas. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa no poder encontrar mis clases. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa que los maestros no me conozcan. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa que los maestros no sean amistoso y servicial. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa no tener amistades en la escuela. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Después de haber completado el programa de transición, me preocupa estar en la escuela con estudiantes mayores que yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Gracias por tomar el tiempo de completar esta encuesta. Sus respuestas nos ayudaran a preparar mejor a los estudiantes para esta transición.

**Sondaj Tranzisyon Lekòl Mwayen Pou Elèv Senkyèm ane**     APPENDIX E

Apre ou fin patisipe nan pwogram tranzisyon an, tanpri reponn kesyon sa yo pou evalye Pwogram nan daprè sa w panse de li.

Ki sèks ou?     Gason ◯     Fi ◯

Apre pitit ou fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, lè l panse sou tranzisyon pou lekòl prime mwayen li pral fè a, li santi l...

◯ Konfidan        ◯ Kontan        ◯ Ensèten        ◯ Enkyè epi l ap poze anpil kesyon        ◯ Panike

| | Vrèman pa dakò | Pa dakò | Pa ni dakò oswa Ni pa dakò | Dakò | Vrèman dakò |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete sou tranzisyon li pral fè pou ale nan lekòl prime mwayen. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke lekòl la ka pi gwo ke lekòl primè elemantè li kite a. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete akoz li pral genyen plizyè pwofesè. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke l ka pedi nan gwo lekòl sa. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke klas li yo pral twò difisil. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke li p ap ka byen jere kantite travay ak devwa li pral genyen yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke li p ap konnen ki sa y ap atann de li nan klas yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke abitid ak fason li etidye ka pa bon ase. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke li p ap konnen kijan pou l pran nòt nan klas yo. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke li ka pa ka jwen kote klas li yo ye. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke pwofesè yo p ap konnen l. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke pwofesè yo ka pa janti avèk li epi yo ka pa ede l. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete ke li ka pa genyen okenn zanmi nan lekòl prime mwayen an. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Apre l fini ak pwogram tranzisyon an, pitit mwen an enkyete paske pral gen lòt elèv ki pi gran pase l nan lekòl la. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Mèsi paske w pran tan pou ranpli sondaj sa a. Repons ou yo pral ede nou pi byen prepare elèv yo pou tranzisyon sa a.

**Table 3.4** *Coding Table*

| Category | Variable | Coding in SPSS |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 0 |
| | Female | 1 |
| GPA: Pre and Post | 1.0 – 1.9<br>2.0 – 2.9<br>3.0 – 3.9 | 1<br><br>2<br><br>3 |
| Feeling about the Transition | Panicked | 1 |
| | Worried | 2 |
| | Unsure | 3 |
| | Excited | 4 |
| | Confident | 5 |
| Parent's Perceptions:<br><br>Pre and Post | Strongly Disagree | 1 |
| | Disagree | 2 |
| | Neutral | 3 |
| | Agree | 4 |
| | Strongly Agree | 5 |

## All Response to Pre-Survey

| PARTICIPANT | Gender | Transition | Nervous About Starting | Bigger Campus | Multiple Teachers | Lost on Campus | Difficult Classes | Organized | Unknown Expectation | Good study Habits | Notetaking Ability | Finding Classes | Teacher Relationship | Teachers aren't Friendly/Helpful | No Friends | Older Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | Female | Worried | A | A | A | A | SA | SA | A | SA | SA | A | A | A | A | A |
| P2 | Male | Unsure | A | SA | SA | SA | N | N | N | N | SA | N | N | D | SA | N |
| P3 | Female | Excited | A | N | N | N | A | N | A | N | N | N | A | N | N | A |
| P4 | Female | Excited | D | D | N | D | D | N | SA | D | N | A | D | A | SA | N |
| P5 | Male | Excited | A | A | D | D | A | A | A | SA | N | A | A | A | D | A |
| P6 | Female | Unsure | A | N | A | SA | N | N | D | N | D | A | D | N | D | A |
| P7 | Male | Worried | A | SA | SA | A | SA | SA | N | SA | SA | A | N | A | D | D |
| P8 | Female | Confident | A | D | D | A | A | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P9 | Male | Excited | D | A | SA | SA | N | D | N | A | D | A | D | D | D | D |
| P10 | Female | Excited | A | A | N | N | A | N | D | A | D | A | D | D | D | A |
| P11 | Female | Excited | N | N | A | SA | N | D | A | N | D | N | D | D | N | N |
| P12 | Male | Excited | D | D | A | D | A | A | N | A | A | N | D | D | D | D |
| P13 | Male | Excited | A | SA | A | N | A | A | D | A | D | D | D | N | A | A |
| P14 | Male | Unsure | N | A | A | A | D | A | D | SA | D | A | N | N | A | D |
| P15 | Male | Unsure | A | D | N | N | A | A | N | A | A | N | D | D | D | N |
| P16 | Male | Unsure | A | N | A | SA | A | N | D | N | D | A | D | SA | D | N |
| P17 | Male | Excited | A | A | SA | A | SA | SA | D | SA | SA | A | D | N | N | D |
| P18 | Female | Unsure | A | N | SA | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N |
| P19 | Female | Confident | D | N | D | N | N | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | N | N |
| P20 | Male | Excited | D | D | A | A | D | A | D | A | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P21 | Female | Excited | A | D | A | N | A | A | A | D | D | D | A | A | D | D |
| P22 | Male | Confident | A | N | D | D | A | N | D | N | D | A | D | N | N | N |
| P23 | Male | Excited | A | A | A | A | A | N | A | A | N | A | A | N | N | N |
| P24 | Female | Confident | D | A | A | A | D | N | D | N | N | N | D | D | D | D |
| P25 | Male | Confident | D | A | A | D | D | D | A | D | D | D | D | D | D | A |
| P26 | Male | Confident | A | N | A | SA | A | A | SA | N | A | SA | SA | N | A | SA |
| P27 | Female | Excited | A | SA | SA | SA | SA | A | N | A | A | N | SA | A | N | A |
| P28 | Male | Confident | N | D | A | A | A | D | D | D | D | D | N | A | A | A |
| P29 | Female | Worried | A | A | A | A | A | N | N | N | A | A | A | A | N | A |
| P30 | Male | Excited | D | D | D | A | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P31 | Male | Worried | SA | A | SA | D | D | D | A | D | D | N | N | A | N | N |
| P32 | Male | Excited | D | D | A | A | D | D | N | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P33 | Female | Excited | A | SA | SA | SA | SA | A | N | A | A | A | N | SA | N | A |
| P34 | Male | Unsure | A | SA | A | SA | D | D | A | A | A | A | A | D | D | D |

# All Responses to Post-Survey

| PARTICIPANTS | Gender | Transition | Nervous About Starting | Bigger Campus | Multiple Teachers | Lost on Campus | Difficult Classes | Organized | Unknown Expectation | Good study Habits | Notetaking Ability | Finding Classes | Teacher Relationship | Teachers Not Friendly/Helpful | No Friends | Older Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | Female | Excited | D | D | D | D | A | A | D | A | A | D | SD | D | SD | D |
| P2 | Male | Excited | D | D | D | D | D | SD | SD | D | D | D | D | D | D | SD |
| P3 | Female | Confident | SD | D | SD | SD | D | SD | SD | D | SD | N | D | SD | D | N |
| P4 | Female | Worried | SD | SD | D | D | D | SD | D | D | D | SD | SD | D | D | D |
| P5 | Male | Confident | SD | D | D | D | D | D | SD | SD | SD | D | D | D | D | D |
| P6 | Female | Excited | D | D | D | N | D | N | D | D | D | N | D | D | SD | N |
| P7 | Male | Confident | SD | SD | SD | SD | A | D | D | A | A | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD |
| P8 | Female | Confident | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD |
| P9 | Male | Excited | SD | D | D | SD | D | SD | D | D | D | SD | D | D | SD | SD |
| P10 | Female | Confident | SD | D | D | D | D | D | D | SD | D | SD | D | D | SD | D |
| P11 | Female | Confident | D | D | N | D | D | D | N | SD | SD | D | D | N | SD | SD |
| P12 | Male | Excited | D | D | D | D | A | D | D | A | A | SD | D | D | D | SD |
| P13 | Male | Unsure | D | SD | D | D | N | D | SD | D | N | D | D | D | D | D |
| P14 | Male | Excited | D | D | SD | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | SD | D |
| P15 | Male | Excited | D | SD | D | D | A | D | D | D | N | D | D | SD | SD | D |
| P16 | Male | Excited | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P17 | Male | Confident | D | D | D | D | A | A | D | A | A | D | D | D | D | D |
| P18 | Female | Worried | D | SD | N | D | A | D | D | A | SD | SD | D | N | D | D |
| P19 | Female | Excited | SD | D | D | D | D | D | SD | D | D | SD | D | D | D | D |
| P20 | Male | Excited | D | SD | SD | D | D | D | D | SD | N | SD | D | D | SD | SD |
| P21 | Female | Confident | D | D | D | N | N | D | N | D | D | D | N | D | D | SD |
| P22 | Male | Worried | D | D | SD | N | D | D | D | N | D | N | D | N | D | SD |
| P23 | Male | Confident | D | D | D | D | N | D | N | D | N | D | N | D | D | D |
| P24 | Female | Confident | D | D | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD | D | D | SD | D | SD | D |
| P25 | Male | Unsure | SD | SD | SD | SD | D | SD | SD | SD | D | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD |
| P26 | Male | Confident | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P27 | Female | Excited | D | D | SD | D | A | D | D | N | D | D | D | D | D | N |
| P28 | Male | Unsure | SD | SD | D | D | N | D | D | SD | SD | D | D | SD | D | D |
| P29 | Female | Unsure | D | SD | SD | SD | A | A | D | D | D | SD | SD | SD | SD | D |
| P30 | Male | Excited | SD | D | SD | D | D | D | SD | A | A | D | D | SD | D | SD |
| P31 | Male | Confident | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| P32 | Male | Excited | SD | D | D | D | SD | D | D | D | D | SD | D | D | SD | SD |
| P33 | Female | Excited | D | D | D | SD | D | D | D | D | SD | SD | D | D | D | D |
| P34 | Male | Confident | SD | SD | SD | SD | A | A | SD | N | N | SD | SD | SD | SD | SD |

## The Master Schedule

| Teacher | Room # | Per 1<br>9:30 -10:15 | Per 2<br>10:19 - 11:04 | Peri 3<br>11:08 - 11:53 | Lunch<br>11:57 - 12:30 | Per 4<br>12:34 -1:20 | Per 5<br>1:24 - 2:20 | Per 6<br>2:24 - 3:20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher 1A | 4-109 | Fort-Day | Fort-Day | Fort-Day | Lunch | Fort-Day | Fort-Day | Fort-Day |
| Teacher 2A | 2-113 | Organize This | Organize This | Organize This | Lunch | Organize This | Organize This | Organize This |
| Teacher 3A | 2-105 | Take Note of It | Take Note of It | Take Note of It | Lunch | Take Note of It | Take Note of It | Take Note of It |
| Teacher 4A | 6-101 | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture | Lunch | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture |
| Teacher 5A | 2-108 | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? | Lunch | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? |
| Teacher 6A | 7-105 | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact | Lunch | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact |
| Teacher | Room # | Per 1<br>9:30 -10:15 | Per 2<br>10:19 - 11:04 | Peri 3<br>11:08 - 11:53 | Lunch<br>11:57 - 12:30 | Per 4<br>12:34 -1:20 | Per 5<br>1:24 - 2:20 | Per 6<br>2:24 - 3:20 |
| Teacher 1B | 3-110 | The Ambassador | The Ambassador | The Ambassador | Lunch | The Ambassador | The Ambassador | The Ambassador |
| Teacher 2B | Media Center | Organize This | Organize This | Organize This | Lunch | Organize This | Organize This | Organize This |
| Teacher 3B | 4-105 | Take Note of It | Take Note of It | Take Note of It | Lunch | Take Note of It | Take Note of It | Take Note of It |
| Teacher 4B | 6103 | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture | Lunch | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture | Middle School Culture |
| Teacher 5B | 4-102 | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? | Lunch | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? | What's the Big Idea? |
| Teacher 6B | 3-101 | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact | Lunch | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact | Matter of Fact |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Substitute 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Substitute 2 | | | | | | | | |

**Sample Student Schedules**

| A | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 1 | Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 2 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |
| 3 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5A | 2-108 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4A | 6-101 | |
| 5 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3A | 2-105 | |
| 6 | Organize This | Teacher 2A | 2-113 | |
| | | | | |

| B | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Organize This | Teacher 2A | 2-113 | |
| 2 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 2 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 3 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5A | 2-108 | |
| 5 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4A | 6-101 | |
| 6 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3A | 2-105 | |
| | | | | |

| C | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3A | 2-105 | |
| 2 | Organize This | Teacher 2A | 2-113 | |
| 3 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 3 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |
| 5 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5A | 2-108 | |
| 6 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4A | 6-101 | |
| | | | | |

| D | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4A | 6-101 | |
| 2 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3A | 2-105 | |
| 3 | Organize This | Teacher 2A | 2-113 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 4 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 5 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |
| 6 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5A | 2-108 | |
| | | | | |

APPENDIX J

| E | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5A | 2-108 | |
| 2 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4A | 6-101 | |
| 3 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3A | 2-105 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Organize This | Teacher 2A | 2-113 | |
| 5 | Fort-Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 5 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 6 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |

| F | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |
| 2 | What's the Big Idea | Teacher 5A | 2-108 | |
| 3 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4A | 6-101 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3A | 2-105 | |
| 5 | Organize This | Teacher 2A | 2-113 | |
| 6 | Fort-Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 6 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |

| G | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 1 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 2 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6B | 3-101 | |
| 3 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5B | 4-102 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4B | 6-103 | |
| 5 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3B | 4-105 | |
| 6 | Organize This | Teacher 2B | Media Center | |

| H | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Organize This | Teacher 2B | Media Center | |
| 2 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 2 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 3 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6B | 3-101 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5B | 4-102 | |
| 5 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4B | 6-103 | |
| 6 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3B | 4-105 | |

APPENDIX J

| I | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3B | 4-105 | |
| 2 | Organize This | Teacher 2B | Media Center | |
| 3 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 3 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6B | 3-101 | |
| 5 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5B | 4-102 | |
| 6 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4B | 6-103 | |

| J | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4B | 6-103 | |
| 2 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3B | 4-105 | |
| 3 | Organize This | Teacher 2B | Media Center | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 4 | Fort Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 5 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6A | 7-105 | |
| 6 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5B | 4-102 | |

| K | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | What's the Big Idea? | Teacher 5B | 4-102 | |
| 2 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4B | 6-103 | |
| 3 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3B | 4-105 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Organize This | Teacher 2B | Media Center | |
| 5 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 5 | Fort-Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |
| 6 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6B | 3-101 | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| L | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| **Student Name** | | | | |
| **Student Number** | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Period** | **Course** | **Teacher** | **Room Number** | |
| 1 | Matter of Fact | Teacher 6B | 3-101 | |
| 2 | What's the Big Idea | Teacher 5B | 4-102 | |
| 3 | Middle School Culture | Teacher 4B | 6-103 | |
| Lunch | | | Cafeteria | |
| 4 | Take Note of It | Teacher 3B | 4-105 | |
| 5 | Organize This | Teacher 2B | Media Center | |
| 6 | The Ambassador | Teacher 1B | 3-110 | July 22 -25, 2019 |
| 6 | Fort-Day | Teacher 1A | 4-109 | July 29 - Aug 1, 2019 |