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ASSESSING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS ENTERING A
SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Emily R. Wuenschell

August 2023

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Emily Wuenschell

2023

ASSESSING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS ENTERING A
SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

By

Emily Wuenschell

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ABSTRACT

ASSESSING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS ENTERING A SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

By

Emily Wuenschell

August 2023

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Tammy Hughes, Ph.D., ABPP

Adolescents who are involved with the juvenile justice system encounter setbacks, stigma, and other increased risk factors that negatively impact their future life outcomes. Schools, and in turn school psychologists, are in the unique position of being able to provide effective services for these adolescents. Previous research has identified many practices that schools can implement to improve the academic, social, and vocational prospects of adolescents entering their districts from a juvenile justice placement. This study sought to understand the role of school psychologists in this transition by assessing their recommendations for and opinions of students involved with juvenile justice. Results indicated that multiple best practices are not recommended or deemed feasible by the majority of school psychologists. Additionally, their responses sustained the pattern previously found in literature indicating that while school psychologists feel their districts have the ability to meet these students' needs, these adolescents

may continue to have poor life outcomes. Considerations including the implications for the field of school psychology, future research opportunities, and potential limitations are also discussed.

Keywords: Juvenile justice, school psychology, juvenile justice reentry, best practices for reentry, life outcomes, school preparedness.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States (US), 744,500 adolescents have contact with the juvenile justice system through summons, arrest, detainment, and/or adjudication, annually (Hockenberry & Puzzanchera, 2020). Over half of these adolescents are boys and girls who identify as a minoritized race, yet they make up less than a quarter of the overall population (Puzzanchera et al., 2020; Hockenberry & Puzzanchera, 2020). These youth have an increased risk of negative life and educational outcomes, including lower academic achievement, grade retention, high school dropout, unemployment, and underemployment (Carter, 2019; Hirschfield, 2003; Sizemore et al., 2020).

Although the pathway from school to the justice system, labeled the school-to-prison pipeline, is well documented through research (Skiba et al., 2014; Teske, 2011; Wilson, 2014), what is less well understood is the pathway for a student's return to school. As the vast majority students with justice contact are of age to return to school, a better understanding of the transition process is necessary. For example, the average stay in a detention center in the US is 64 days; for students in placements ordered by the court, the stay is on average 113 days (OJJDP, 2021). As such, the needs for planning how students can return to school is essential.

Furthermore, states previous use of step-down processes whereby students would return from placement to alternative or other out of school (approved private) placements prior to reentry into a typical school or general education has been found to be discriminatory (Education Law Center, 2014). Therefore, there is an increasing need to support youth arriving directly to general education schools from justice contact (Vanderhaar et al., 2014).

Significance of the Problem

The school-to-prison pipeline encompasses “the policies and practices [...] in the public schools and juvenile justice system that decrease the probability of school success for children and youth, and increase the probability of negative life outcomes, particularly through involvement in the juvenile justice system” (Skiba et al., 2014, p. 546). This “get-tough” approach began in the 1990’s and have affected millions of children (Skiba et al., 2014; Wald & Losen, 2003, pp. 10).

The school policies of particular concern are exclusionary punishments that remove students from the education environment, often for offenses associated with typical teenage immaturity (Teske, 2011). Zero tolerance policies use these exclusionary punishments without consideration of the situational context, presenting administration as uncompromising in the eyes of the students of whom they are supposed to be serving (Wilson, 2014). In a confluence of policies and measures, schools exclude students who do not conform to the status quo while state policymakers have made it easier for these youth to be prosecuted for highly subjective actions (e.g., use of obscene language or gestures, making noise) or given a summary citation and fined for other acts (e.g., uniform violations, etc.; Wald & Losen, 2003; Wilson, 2014). Amplifying this divisive relationship between students and administration is the presence of School Police and School Resource Officers (SROs), who often patrol the halls and use detainment and arrest procedures to intimidate students into compliance (Pigott et al., 2018). These mislabeled “deterrent” strategies disproportionately affect Black students and students of other minoritized races and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline by channeling them into the juvenile justice system (Bell, 2016, pp. 16; Hughes et al., 2020; Teske, 2011).

Service Provision in the Juvenile Justice System

When students are involuntarily removed from their home, the expectation is that a quality education, mental health and behavioral supports, and social skill development will be provided while the student is detained (Nelson et al., 2010). Realistically, the services provided to adolescents while they are incarcerated largely do not meet the standards of quality, consistency, and fidelity (Gagnon, 2010; Leone & Wruble, 2015; Mathur & Schoenfeld, 2010). It is well known that students may not acquire the same number or variety of credits while detained. For those that do complete classes, the education provided in detention facilities frequently does not meet the curriculum and instructional standards required of public education (Leone & Wruble, 2015; Sizemore et al., 2020). Yet, a major part of the rehabilitation focus within the justice placement requires youth to attend school daily (Sizemore et al., 2020). A requirement that is transferred with them as they reenter the community.

When a student is being released from detention and moved back into the community, a plan for services and supports is developed to help them avoid future contact with the justice system (Chung et al., 2007). Unfortunately, these comprehensive plans require a level of arranging, communication, and interagency communication that is beyond the staffing capabilities of many organizations (Goodstein & Sontheimer, 1997; Hirschfield, 2014). Successful transition services typically involve the appointment of a transition specialist or case manager that oversees a team of people, including a parole officer, psychologist, representatives from both the school in the detention facility and the receiving school in the community, along with the student and the parent (Chung et al., 2007). Together, they would identify the services and supports needed to help the adolescent successfully reenter the community and avoid delinquent behavior (Pace, 2017). In order for these services to be effective, they must be

identified, planned, and implemented in a timely manner as well as conducted consistently and with fidelity (Calleja, 2019). Unfortunately transition plans are not monitored for consistency and effectiveness (Nelson et al., 2010; Pace, 2017) and there are often many barriers (Chung et al., 2007).

Problem Statement

While researchers have compiled the systems-level policies, care teams, and interventions that aid in the successful reintegration of students coming from detention facilities, little research has considered the implementation of these services within school districts (Chung et al., 2007; Kubek et al., 2020; McGriff, 2021). Additionally, research has found a juxtaposition in school personnel's attitudes towards students involved in juvenile justice in which they believe both that their schools are equipped to meet these students' needs, but also that these students will have poor negative outcomes (Sinclair et al., 2017). Given the legal requirements now in place in the state of Pennsylvania through Act 1 (2022), schools are responsible for the provision of specific services and supports for students who have experienced educational instability.

As such, this study seeks to assess whether school psychologists, who play a key role in academic, mental health, and behavioral programming within the school, are appropriately advocating for the needs of students entering their schools from juvenile justice facilities. Moreover, this study will also measure school psychologists' attitudes towards this population and their school's ability to meet their needs.

Research Question 1

Are school psychologists recommending the implementation of evidence-based practices and services for students entering from juvenile justice placements and are these recommendations effected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Hypothesis 1: I hypothesize that school psychologists' recommendations will not align with the best practices supported by evidence. Additionally, I hypothesize that these recommendations will be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Research Question 2

Is there an interaction between the student's race and special education status that effects the school psychologists' ratings of perceived feasibility of service implementation?

Hypothesis 2: I hypothesize that there will be an interaction between the student's race and special education status that effects the school psychologists' ratings of feasibility. that this will not be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Research Question 3

Do school psychologists perceive the implementation of evidence-based practices for students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities as feasible within their school and is this perception affected by the student's a) race and b) special education status?

Hypothesis 3: I hypothesize that school psychologists will report the implementation of all evidence-based practices as feasible in their school. Additionally, I hypothesize that this will not be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Research Question 4

Do school psychologists perceive students who are entering their school district from juvenile justice placements as having positive life outcomes and is that attitude effected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Hypothesis 4: I hypothesize that school psychologists will have a negative attitude regarding the students' life outcomes. Additionally, I hypothesize that this attitude will be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Research Question 5

Do school psychologists believe that their school has the ability to support the needs of students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities and is this affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Hypothesis 5: I hypothesize that school psychologists will have a positive attitude regarding their school's ability to meet the student's needs. Additionally, I hypothesize that this attitude will be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Summary

When an adolescent is detained, their education, social, behavioral, and vocational service provision is disrupted (Houchins, Jolivette et al., 2010; Sizemore et al., 2020). Ideally, a transition team will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the academic and mental health services needed for the individual's successful reentry into the community in light of their schooling, home life, and family needs (Pace, 2017). While research has been conducted to consider the best practices for assisting this successful transition, few have recorded the implementation of these practices in schools (Chung et al., 2007; Kubek et al., 2020, McGriff, 2021). As school psychologists act as stakeholders in the selection and assignment of academical, mental health, and behavioral programming, their role within the entry process for these adolescents is in need for further research. Their recommendations and attitudes regarding these students and their schools may impact the future composition of education and professional development in the field.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Children who have contact with the juvenile or criminal justice system experience significant disruption in their educational attainment (Cavendish, 2014; Foley, 2001; Sizemore et al., 2020). Given that educational gains are associated with positive life course outcomes, educators, administrators, and policymakers should prioritize equity in their communities by providing support to children who are disproportionately affected by the school-to-prison pipeline (e.g., black, disabled, poor, over-policed, and other marginalized groups; Hirschfield, 2003; Hughes et al., 2020). Below is a review of theories that are reported to contribute to the continued flow of students into the school-to-prison pipeline and how these impacts can contribute to the expression of aggression and acts of delinquency.

The Theories of Delinquency

Psychologists, sociologists, attorneys, neurobiologists, among other professions have long considered the reasons that individuals, and adolescents in specific, commit crimes. The result of decades of analysis, experimentation, and study have culminated in dozens of theories and explanations for why youth perform delinquent acts. In this paper, I will use two critically evaluated theories as a lens through which inequality and delinquency can be examined. Critical Race Theory serves as a consideration of the societal and system-level conditions that set the stage for delinquency. General Strain Theory, on the other hand, allows for a more individualized conceptualization of how delinquency comes to fruition.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) began as a theorization of the racist underpinnings of the legal system in the United States (U.S.; Yale Youth Ministry Institute, 2020). Since its initial

inception following the Civil Rights movement of the 1970s, CRT has been considered in multiple areas of society, beyond the law, including education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006).

As Crenshaw and colleagues (1995) discuss, the foundation of American society and law is the power of property possession. When colonizers arrived in North America, they quickly overran the Native Americans, deciding that their fledgling habitation of the land gave them the right to rule over these native peoples. When the slave trade was introduced, the subjugation of Black people became another source of power for the White population. These initial practices “propertized” Whiteness by making it a commodity, that when possessed, gave a person rights and freedoms not allowed to people of minoritized races. This idea was then encoded into legal doctrine through the 3/5ths law that straddled the humanity versus property argument by making Black slaves both property and people in the eyes of the law. “When the law recognizes, either implicitly or explicitly, the settled expectations of whites built on the privileges and benefits procured by white supremacy, it acknowledges and reinforces a property interest in whiteness that reproduces black subordination” (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. 281). These basic foundations of society and law are unyielding, constant biases that affect people throughout the country on a daily basis (Crenshaw et al., 1995).

Using this framework of considering race as a property, in which Whiteness is the ultimate possession, while Blackness is de-legitimized, Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) examined the disproportionality in the educational system. The first tenet of their analysis connects race, particularly the African American race, to lower rates of academic achievement and higher rates of school dropout and disciplinary action; these findings are not better explained by class or gender differences. Their next proposition is that a person’s property in the United States (U.S.) provides power. In many areas, this is directly connected to education, as schools

are typically funded through the property taxes paid by the citizens in that area, leading to schools in lower income areas having smaller budgets. Education itself also acts as intellectual property, giving the curriculum value to those who are educated. By defining these two elements of CRT, Ladson-Billings and Tate explain a theoretical perspective of educational inequality that assesses the current state of education, as well as provides recommendations for creating a more equitable system.

Currently, educational inequality stems from the racism ingrained in American society. In order to address these inequalities, it is recommended that policymakers should rework civil rights laws, as their approach has been insufficient in balancing the quality of the education received by different races (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). While the 1960s saw a significant decrease in segregation, resulting in an increase school completion and a decrease in poverty and incarceration, this is attributable to substantial federal pressure for schools to desegregate. Since the 1980s, the government has not made the same effort to promote desegregation, which has slowed the positive impact of desegregation (Hahn et al., 2018). Thus, segregation has returned to the American education system as race and class segregation combined to concentrate students of minoritized races and low-income households into the same schools (Rosiek, 2019).

General Strain Theory (GST)

General Strain Theory (GST) was proposed as a more comprehensive theory of crime compared to the strain theories previously proposed (Agnew, 1992). Unlike its predecessors, such as Anomie Theory and Structural Strain Theory, GST broadened the definition of strain to include any negative events in a person's life (Agnew, 1992; Agnew, 2007; Thio 1975). It also focuses explicitly on the negative relationships with others, rather than a lack of support, which

creates the aspect of an external pressure pushing an adolescent to commit delinquent acts (Agnew, 1992).

Brezina (2017) expounds upon the current theories associated with GST, describing the principles of the theory as well as the empirical research that has been done. The three major types of strain outlined by GST are the inability to achieve goals, the presence of negatively valued stimuli, and the loss of positively valued stimuli. Together, these three encompass virtually all sources of stress in a person's life. GST posits that these stressors generate negative emotions such as anger, frustration, resentment, and sadness. Adolescents who experience these negative emotions use delinquent behavior as a coping mechanism; for example, substance abuse may be used as an escape from stress or aggression may be used in retaliation against a source of strain (Brezina, 2017).

Of course, not all strain causes delinquent behavior and not all people in stressful situations commit delinquent acts. The combination of multiple sources of strain, particularly those involved in coping with stress, increases the chances that a person will respond with delinquent behavior. Adolescents with prolonged strain, such as inequality due to their race as described in CRT, who also lack appropriate coping skills, resources, and social support, along with fewer opportunities for positive coping and greater opportunities for coping through delinquency, are more likely to use delinquency when stressed (Brezina, 2017).

Since the proposal of General Strain theory, various researchers have designed experiments and projects to examine the link between strain and delinquency. Longitudinal studies have shown that the number of sources of strain in a person's life predicts their likelihood of delinquent behavior. Researchers have also demonstrated that how a person processes strain affects the type of delinquent behavior they commit. Adolescents whose strain manifests in anger

are more likely to act aggressively towards others, while adolescents who direct stress inwardly in the form of depression are more likely to turn to substance abuse (Brezina, 2017). In China, Bao and colleagues (2004) found that in adolescents who had strain from negative relationships with adults, anger was linked to serious delinquency (both violent and non-violent) and resentment was linked to non-violent delinquency and minor offenses.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

The school-to-prison pipeline describes the link between educational exclusion and criminalization (Wilson, 2014). The phenomenon is suspected to have arisen from the growing crime rates and high-profile juvenile offenders that occurred in the 1990s which caused a cultural shift in juvenile justice from rehabilitation to punishment (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). The first of this two-pronged phenomenon stems from schools using punitive sanctions that remove students from the benefits of the school environment, oftentimes for offenses associated with teenage immaturity (Teske, 2011). These policies damage the trust between students and administrators, as well as diminish students' perceptions of a school's climate as supportive and safe, particularly as they are overused with Black students and students of other minoritized races (Skiba et al., 2014; Wilson, 2014). The second prong of the phenomenon refers to states adjusting their policies to increase the number of offenses in which juveniles can be charged as adults and the severity of punishments if convicted, while decreasing the confidentiality maintained during legal proceedings (Greene & Evelo, 2013; Wald & Losen, 2003). This combination has led to "a system that once stood for educating our children and youth [being] turned into a pipeline to the criminal justice system" (McGriff, 2021, pp. 117).

School Policies

The school policies in question that negatively impact youth are exclusionary practices, zero-tolerance policies, and the presence of SROs (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Elliot et al., 2020; Wilson, 2014). These policies disproportionately affect students of minoritized races as they may be more often and more severely penalized for offenses than are their White peers (Hughes et al, 2020; Skiba et al., 2011). Furthermore, in some geographic locations, schools may serve as the main referral source for youth to the juvenile justice system (Hughes et al., 2020).

Exclusionary policies include punishments that remove students from the instructional environment, such as suspensions and expulsions (Skiba et al., 2014). The application of these sanctions is often as subjective as the enforcement for the perceived infractions; in many situations, such enforcement may be at the discretion of the authority meting the punishment (Elliot et al., 2020). The most common example of this is when students are cited for “Disorderly Conduct,” which acts as a catchall for non-conforming behaviors (Morgan, 2020). Students may be referred to the juvenile justice system under Disorderly Conduct for excessive noise or rude language (Elliot et al., 2020). This authoritative enforcement of “order” reinforces the racist and discriminatory underpinnings of our society and justice system, while simultaneously excluding and othering minoritized cultures (Morgan, 2020). Research has indicated that these exclusionary practices are unduly applied to students of minoritized races. Black students have higher rates of suspension, expulsion, and office discipline referrals, even for behaviors comparable to their White peers (Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011).

Zero tolerance policies use predetermined consequences as a response for violations of school rules, which typically involve expulsion or suspension regardless of the circumstances of the offense (Welch & Payne, 2018). Originating in the concerns for a school’s crime and

substance abuse problems, these policies were implemented as a preventative measure through the removal of problematic youth from the school environment (Teske, 2011). However, the scope of these policies has widened from a specific list of contraband to non-violent and non-drug-related offenses (Stinchcomb et al., 2006; Teske, 2011; Wilson, 2014). The generalization of the zero-tolerance policy application allows faculty and administrators to remove students from school without appropriate cause or consideration (Wilson, 2014). Theoretically, these policies should be equally applied to all students, no matter their race; however, Black students are disproportionately affected by these policies (Teske, 2011; Wilson, 2014).

The introduction of SROs began as a deterrent to undesirable behavior, with the belief that the presence of a uniformed police officer would keep students in line as they feared arrest (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Pigott et al., 2018). Unfortunately, rather than creating an environment of safety and order, the use of such officers actually creates a more hostile environment that pits figures of authority against the students (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Coon & Travis, 2012). Ryan and colleagues (2018) theorized that this shift in the role of the SROs is a byproduct of numerous variables, including a lack of sufficient behavior management training for teachers, as well as an inadequate curriculum. Such issues contribute to students being arrested for “Disorderly Conduct” five times more in schools that have an SRO as compared to schools that do not (Ryan et al., 2018). This reliance on law enforcement to deal with behaviors that are typical for adolescents deprives them of their education and infringes on the freedoms of right to speech and civil protest taught in schools (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; McGriff 2021). Along with this encroachment upon their rights, students also face the trauma of witnessing or experiencing heavy-handed acts of detainment and force in the school building that is supposed to be supporting and nurturing them (Pigott et al., 2018).

The Juvenile Justice System Disproportionality

Every day, across the U.S., 48,000 adolescents reside in out-of-home placements in the juvenile justice system (Sawyer, 2019). Overall, an estimated 1.6 million youth are processed through the juvenile court every year (Chang et al., 2019). Of this number, children from racial minority backgrounds, from the LGBTQI+ community, with trauma histories, with disabilities, or with poor records of academic achievement are disproportionately represented. Even more troubling, such youth are also at greater risk for school dropout and the associated negative outcomes.

In Allegheny County and the city of Pittsburgh specifically, this school-to-prison pipeline is evidenced by the reports of disproportionality of education, student arrest, and student punishment statistics (Elliot et al., 2020; Howell et al., 2019).

Race

Although about 16% of the youth population in the U.S. is Black, more than 70% of school-based arrests and 40% of juveniles committed to detention facilities are Black (Brinkley-Rubenstein et al., 2014; Rovner, 2016). Those involved with the 100 Percent Pittsburgh Project (2017) found that 69% of youth involved in the juvenile justice system in Allegheny County identify as Black, an overrepresentation that continues through many aspects of the juvenile justice experience. Nationally, Black youth are around 4 times more likely to be referred to the justice system than their White peers, however, in Pittsburgh, that rate increases to 19 times (Brinkley-Rubenstein et al., 2014; The Pittsburgh Foundation, 2017). Black juveniles are also more likely to be detained, spend more time in a detention facility, and are less likely to be released on misdemeanor charges than their White peers (Brinkley-Rubenstein et al., 2014).

While there are strong disparities between the representation of various races in the system, there are also inconsistencies regarding how the youth of each race are treated within the system.

In their investigation, Barrett and Katsiyannis (2017) considered the impact of the type of offenses that juveniles committed, along with their race. These researchers found that white boys were more likely to be prosecuted for status offenses - the least serious - and for violent felonies - the most serious. Black males were more likely to be prosecuted for non-violent felonies and misdemeanors, which are the intermediate levels of offense. A clear-cut pattern of racial bias in the judicial system developed when the researchers moved from the rate of the prosecution to the rate of incarceration for each race. The investigators found that Black males were significantly more likely than white males to be incarcerated for their first, second, and third offenses, regardless of the severity of the offense (Barret & Katsiyannis, 2017).

The Pittsburgh Area. Allegheny County, Pennsylvania is home to 1.2 million people, a quarter of which live in the city of Pittsburgh (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The Black Girls Equity Alliance, led by Kathi Elliot, and the City of Pittsburgh's Gender Equity Commission considered the distribution of youth disciplinary actions, punishments, summons, and arrest across race and gender in both the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (Elliot et al., 2020; Howell et al., 2019). Results from these reports have found significant disproportionality in the race of juveniles who are referred to the juvenile justice system within the city compared to other major cities across the country.

Overall, the city of Pittsburgh sees disproportionality between the races in education from kindergarten to college, as discussed by the City of Pittsburgh's Gender Equity Commission in their 2019 report. In primary school, Black boys are more likely to be retained and suspended, quickly followed by Black girls and students of other minoritized races. In high school, Black

boys and girls are 3 to 5 times more likely to be arrested than their White peers. Educationally, White adolescents are more likely to be enrolled in AP or IB courses, take the SATs and ACTs, and be in the Gifted or Talented programs. Considering high school completion and college, Black men are two-and-a-half times as likely to have dropped out of high school and White men and women are three times more likely to reach their bachelor's degree (Howell et al., 2019).

Through their investigation, Elliot and the Black Girls Equity Alliance (2020) found that Pittsburgh Public School District was a major driver of the school-to-prison pipeline as they were the most common source of referral for adolescents to the juvenile justice system in Allegheny County. This school district referred more students to the juvenile justice system in Allegheny County than the City of Pittsburgh Police Department or all the other 42 school districts in the county. Comparatively, Pittsburgh Public School District referred more students to the juvenile justice system than 95% of other major cities; in particular, Black girls were referred more by the Pittsburgh Public School District than 99% of other cities and for Black boys, that statistic was 98%. Adolescents arrested by Pittsburgh Public School District were charged predominantly with minor, non-violent, and non-safety-related offenses, often "Disorderly Conduct" (Elliot et al., 2020).

Not only were these rates of referral higher than the national average for Black youth, but also the rate of White students being referred to the juvenile justice system actually fell below the national average, highlighting the serious disproportionality in the city. Only 10% of all juvenile arrests made were White adolescents, while 80% of the population in Allegheny County is White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Black adolescents tend to receive harsher penalties than their White peers through the issuance of a summary citation, requiring the adolescent to stand

before a magistrate in response to minor violations, when their White peers are more likely to have minor disputes settled without police involvement (Elliot et al., 2020).

The side effects of receiving a summary sentence or being detained reach far beyond the rehabilitative or penitent goal of the juvenile justice system. When an adolescent is issued a summary citation, the result is typically a fine that is to be paid to the city. Not only is this punitive response an ineffective rehabilitative practice, but also is unnecessarily harsh for youth who cannot legally work to make the money it takes to pay the fine. If the adolescent falls behind in paying their fines, they may be referred to the juvenile justice system for detention. Black youth in the city of Pittsburgh were ten times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system for not paying their fines than their White peers, and this charge constituted 1/3 of the referrals for Black youth entering the juvenile justice system. Beyond the individual, families are required to pay the fees associated with the fines and may be removed from public housing if the adolescent is detained for failing to pay on time (Elliot et al., 2020).

LGBTQI+

Adolescents who identify within the LGBTQI+ community are more likely to be victimized by members of their community, as well as to have contact with the juvenile justice system (Palmer & Greytak, 2017; Poteat et al., 2016). Members of this community experience higher rates of suicide, substance abuse, mental disorders, and unsafe sex than individuals who do not identify as LGBTQI+ (Palmer & Greytak, 2017). For students in the sexual minority, school is less likely to be a supportive environment, likely leading to increased school avoidance and truancy problems (Kosciw et al., 2005). These truancy issues, as well as victimization, lead to higher levels of disciplinary actions in school and contact with the juvenile justice system (Poteat et al., 2016). Overall, LGBTQI+ youth are one-and-a-quarter to three times more likely

to have contact with the juvenile justice system and receive disciplinary action at school (Himmelstein & Bruckner, 2011).

Not only do students in the LGBTQI+ community experience difficulties with peers at the social level, but also encounter ineffective and discriminatory practices or policies enacted by the school administration. Rigid school policies serve to reinforce gender and sex norms by preventing students in the LGBTQI+ community from receiving services, dressing according to their identified gender, and accessing facilities appropriate for their identified gender (Palmer & Greytak, 2017). In the 2019 National School Climate Survey, 60% of LGBTQI+ students reported personally experiencing discriminatory policies in their school (Kosciw et al., 2020). Students in the LGBTQI+ community also encounter higher rates of discipline for similar infractions compared to their heterosexual or gender normative peers. Such infractions include dress code violations or public displays of affection. Disciplinary actions are also more severe for these students and are more likely to consist of suspension or juvenile justice involvement (Poteat et al., 2016).

Trauma

Up to 93% of juvenile delinquents have experienced a traumatic event in their lives (Wilson et al., 2013). This is significantly higher than the estimated 25% of all adolescents who have experienced trauma (Costello et al., 2002). Adjudicated youth most commonly report the traumas of loss, separation from or impairment of a caregiver, domestic violence, emotional and physical abuse, and community violence. Most report a trauma occurring within the first five years of their life and a third report multiple traumas every year of their lives (Dierkhising et al., 2013). These traumas tend to occur both early and often in these children's lives, disrupting their emotional, social, and cognitive development from the very beginning.

Harmful parental relationships are also a traumatizing risk factor commonly reported by adjudicated youth. Those who had absent, abusive, or negative relationships with their fathers were significantly more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system (Simmons et al., 2018). If the youth's relationship with their mother was characterized by authoritarian qualities, including high demand coupled with low responsiveness from the mother, they were also more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior (Mowen & Schroeder, 2018).

Youth who experience traumatic events often need significant intervention and counseling to overcome the physiological changes to their brain caused by the trauma. Children exposed to traumatic events, especially long-term or recurring trauma, may have diminished memory, learning, and self-control skills. These events may lead to long-term disabilities, including internalizing thought patterns that disrupt their ability to learn or externalizing manifestations of stress such as an inability to control impulsive actions. Trauma affects every aspect of an adolescent's life, from their interaction with peers and teachers to their ability to remember lessons taught at school (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014).

Disability Status

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004) identified thirteen categories of disability that encompass health impairments, emotional/behavioral difficulties, and academic disability. Health impairments can be as diverse diagnoses such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Asthma, and Cerebral Palsy, while emotional/behavioral disorders include diagnoses such as Depression, Anxiety, and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) among others; these examples are merely exemplars of a non-exhaustive list. Academic disabilities include Specific Learning Disabilities, which may be in one or more areas of academic functioning. There are also disabilities that encompass multiple areas of health, emotional/behavioral, and academic

development, such as Intellectual Impairment and Autism Spectrum Disorder (Lunsford, 2018). Overall, 33% of youth with juvenile justice contact have an identified need for Special Education due to a disability, which is four times the national average of all youth (Geis, 2013). This number is also assumed to be an underestimation of the true number of students in need of services as states differ on their reporting of mental health disorders that are not listed under IDEA (i.e., trauma related disorders) and some groups of students are excluded if school teams determine they are “socially maladjusted” a term that is not found in mental health or psychiatric literature but rather was defined by a committee of educators when IDEA was written and was reportedly to exclude juvenile delinquents (Geis, 2013).

Health impairments, particularly ADHD, are common in adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system. Youth detained in the justice system are more likely to have ADHD than those in the general population. As many as 45% of juvenile delinquents meet the criteria for ADHD, while approximately 5% of the general population meets these same criteria (Faraone et al., 2003; Rösler et al., 2004). ADHD is often diagnosed alongside other behavioral issues such as ODD and Conduct Disorder (CD). This comorbidity prevents researchers from making a link between ADHD alone and delinquency (Von Polier et al., 2012). A relation has been made between ADHD and recidivism, as youth are more likely to commit another crime if they are diagnosed with ADHD (Philipp-Wiegmann et al., 2018).

Children with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities typically demonstrate emotional dysregulation and behavioral control difficulties and represent a great portion of those involved in the juvenile justice system. Roughly, 70% of juveniles in detention centers meet the criteria for a mental disorder, and 79% of those youth meet the criteria for at least two disorders. Most of these disorders are externalizing, affecting adolescents’ self-control and outward behavior. Just

under half of the adolescents with mental disorders internalize their stress, which may manifest, for example, as excessive worry or depressed thought patterns (Dierkhising et al., 2013). Youth who have experienced trauma often demonstrate such symptoms, as their adverse childhood experiences affect their emotional and social development. These traumas may result in long-term patterns such as the symptoms associated with ODD, anxiety, Acute Stress Disorder or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In the female delinquent population, the prevalence of PTSD may be as high as 70% (Kerig et al., 2009). Untreated PTSD leads to a range of negative risk factors, such as suicide attempts and substance abuse, social and relationship difficulties, and physical health problems (Anda et al., 2006).

Academic disabilities include disorders that represent a significant deficit in a student's learning. Typically, these are linked to specific cognitive and instructional needs that are required for the student to be successful. In detention centers, only about half of the incarcerated adolescents are functioning at their grade level (Leone & Fink, 2017). Such findings suggest that half of all the students being educated within the juvenile justice system have unique educational needs that must be addressed in order for them to achieve at the same level as other peers. Unfortunately, as will be discussed later in this chapter, states' juvenile justice systems typically are not equipped to deal with the educational need of the population they incarcerate (Houchins Jolivette et al., 2010; Leone & Weinberg, 2012; Leone & Wruble, 2015).

Educational Barriers

Youth involved in the criminal justice system encounter unique barriers to their education including disruptions to their schooling, low-quality educational services, and a lack of preparation for school after detention. This experience has a "profoundly negative impact on young people's mental and physical well-being, their education, and their employment" (Holman

& Ziedenberg, 2006, pp. 2). Upon their return to the community, youth face a new set of challenges as they transition back to the community, whether they have been away for days or months (McGriff, 2021; Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020)

Disruption via Incarceration

When students are arrested, they face a substantial loss of instructional time, not only due to changes in placement but also because of time-consuming detainment procedures. Juvenile detention centers are legally required to provide schooling; however, it takes time for new students to transition into the classroom. In many institutions, school attendance is not mandatory and in fact is viewed as a privilege, as such students may choose to miss school or may be sanctioned for behavior occurring outside of the classroom that results in a loss of instructional time (Houchins, Jolivette, et al., 2010). Additionally, many institutions use isolation as a response to rule-breaking behaviors, forcing students to be absent from the classroom for extended periods of time. These punitive tactics prevent students from receiving educational services in the facility, further increasing already-established academic achievement gaps (Leone & Wruble, 2015). These policies also antagonize any preexisting behavioral or emotional difficulties, increasing unsafe and antisocial behaviors (McGriff, 2021).

Moreover, participation in the juvenile justice process impedes a student's overall educational development. Hirschfield (2003) found that students were significantly more likely to be retained in the 8th grade if they were arrested in the 7th or 8th grades. Similarly, arrests in 9th grade were associated with decreased attendance and grades, as well as a significantly increased risk of dropout. These outcomes are magnified for students who had lengthy stays in detention facilities or had multiple arrests while in school (Hirschfield, 2003). The type of experience that youth have with the juvenile justice system also affects their educational

outcomes. Adolescents experiencing a first-time court appearance for their first arrest have more detrimental outcomes than those not experiencing a court appearance (Sweeten, 2006).

Education Quality

The actual teaching and education provided in juvenile detention facilities are often lackluster at best and ineffective at worst. Leon and Wruble found that by 2015 29 of the 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico, have encountered Class Action litigation that concerned the regular and special education services provided in juvenile correction facilities. Plaintiffs in these cases sought restitution and policy change based on the facilities' curriculum, length of the school day, teacher qualifications, instructional practices, and discipline practices. Only half of students in detention centers receive the typical 6 hours of education a day and students with special education needs receive approximately a third of the educational hours as students not incarcerated (Sizemore et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the educational programs in these sites are often overlooked by their states' departments of education and are not held to the same standards as the public schools (Leone & Wruble, 2015, Sizemore et al., 2020). Even as educational programs move to improve their curricula, the content rarely matches the education being provided within the student's community school (Sizemore et al., 2020). When educational directors at these sites responded to surveys about their curriculum and assessment policies, results showed that only one-half of juvenile correctional facilities used their state's educational curricula (Gagnon, 2010). With regard to class demographics, institutions often lack the staffing or organizational means to separate students by grade or skill level; thus, youth of various achievement abilities, chronological age, and educational grade may attend classes together receiving the same instruction (Houchins Jolivette et al., 2010).

As explained, juvenile correctional facilities work with adolescents who are very likely to have academic deficits and mental health needs (Houchins Jolivette et al., 2010; Leone & Weinberg, 2012). However, such sites are often unprepared to deal with the complex behavioral and emotional needs of these adolescents, as they are also lacking the funding and preparation required to deal with students who require more intensive academic programming (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Many foundational specially designed instruction (SDI) practices that are included in students' IEPs are unable to be implemented within detention centers due to the strict restrictions controlling student movement (Sizemore et al., 2020). An example of this the SDI in which students with executive functioning or emotional regulation deficits to identify their need for a break and are typically able to leave the room or take a movement break. In a detention facility, staff members are required to carefully monitor students and schedule or assign breaks as they see fit, removing the skill-building aspect of the SDI in which the students learn self-regulation skills (Sizemore et al., 2020). Indeed, personnel who work in juvenile detention centers and provide court services often are not provided with sufficient training and education to effectively help students with disabilities. In one investigation, only 62% of sampled staff had received any training in working with children with disabilities and less than half had any training specific to individuals with learning disabilities (Kvarfordt et al., 2005). Correctional facilities often lack the funding to provide the professional development courses necessary for the student body, resulting in unqualified, underpaid teachers who are isolated from the typical public school environment (Leone et al., 1986; Leone et al., 2002). Thus, even comprehensive Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) cannot meet the students' needs when there is a lack of training and staffing (McGriff, 2021).

Teacher satisfaction. Teacher satisfaction is a main contributor to educational quality and, along with school culture, positively impacts academic achievement in students (Banerjee et al., 2017; Houchins et al., 2006). In educational institutions in which the setting is restrictive, such as juvenile justice facilities, teachers often feel stifled and have diminished job satisfaction when working with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders, in particular (Houchins et al., 2006). In these difficult settings, teachers note barriers such as lack of administrative and staff support, heterogeneity of students, lack of student motivation and support services, and limited access to transition services (Houchins, Shippen et al., 2010). In turn, these difficult conditions lead to poor teacher satisfaction, low self-efficacy, and higher rates of teacher turnover in juvenile justice facilities (Houchins et al., 2006).

While these factors impede teacher satisfaction, there are identified contributors to teacher security, creativity, and effectiveness that increase satisfaction and student achievement. Teachers in juvenile justice settings are more satisfied with environments that are staffed with well-paid counselors and security officers, reduced class size, and appropriate materials (Houchins, Shippen et al., 2010). Also noted across numerous settings is the need for professional development that provides training to teachers and staff to be able to meet the complex needs of their students (Houchins, Shippen et al., 2010; Mather et al., 2009).

Lack of Preparation

The main focus of a juvenile correctional facility is to prepare the adolescents for life after detention; this includes both academic and social functioning. In order to facilitate this transition successfully, treatment staff should meet with youth regularly to discuss their plans for education and work after release (Leone & Fink, 2017). Case managers and others involved in

the adolescents' education should focus on developing the skills and credits needed to transition back into school, post-secondary education, and employment (Leone & Wruble, 2015).

Academic preparation. At this time, less than half of school-age students actually return to school once released from detention (Cavendish, 2014). For the youth that do return to school, their rate of dropout is six to eight times higher than their non-delinquent peers (Hirschfield, 2009). This means that for most students, the classes they attend while being detained are their last educational experience (Foley, 2001). As education is essential in the treatment and rehabilitation process it must be considered a foundational aspect of programming for youth who plan to return to school and those who do not (Leone et al., 2002).

Unfortunately, facilities often focus on the students receiving the minimum standard of education or preparation for school after release (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Such standards often manifest in educational policies that encourage students to complete their GED, which may be quicker and easier than continuing on to complete high school courses. In a study of Floridian incarcerated youth, although only 9% of juveniles actually earned a diploma, 86% of those diplomas were GED diplomas (Cavendish, 2014). This strict focus on program completion rather than education and academic achievement disregards the legal requirements for access to general education set by the No Child Left Behind Act and ignores individual goals set for students who qualify for special education services (Mathur & Schoenfeld, 2010).

Behavioral support and preparation. Along with preparing students academically, these detention facilities must focus on preparing adolescents to socialize and behave satisfactorily with others. This may include instruction in functional skills, independent living tasks, and vocational work (Mathur & Schoenfeld, 2010). For students with mental health issues and behavioral disorders, assessment of these disorders and services designed to treat their

symptoms should also be included. However, in 2011, less than half of the facilities actually met the accreditation standards set by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care for mental health and behavioral services (Braverman et al., 2011). There is no governing body that oversees such service provision or holds facilities accountable for monitoring their service provision, resulting in unethical and ineffective practices (Aalsma et al., 2015). In 2006, for example, more than one-third of facilities administered behavioral assessments of services via untrained correctional staff (Desai et al., 2016).

Special education and IEPs. When a student is identified as needing Special Education due to health, behavioral, emotional, or academic disability, an Individualized Education Plan is created to support their needs in the classroom and school environment (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014). This plan details their current level of performance and required interventions and services, sets goals that focus intervention, and outlines the method of progress monitoring of these goals (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014). As noted previously, over 33% of youth in juvenile detention have an identified disability and IEP (Geis, 2013). However, these IEPs are often not fully incorporated into their education while in detention (Nelson et al., 2010). As detention facilities have different rules and regulations, a student's IEP is often not transferable and is in need of altering in order to align with the detention facility's policies (Gonsoulin et al., 2012).

Due to the nature of the classroom within these facilities, students are learning alongside others who are at a different chronological age and/or academic achievement ability level (Houchins Jolivette et al., 2010). They are also being taught by teachers who are often overworked, underpaid, and undertrained (Houchins, 2006; Leone & Wruble, 2015). These conditions lead to detention facilities focusing on the provision of basic Special Education services, rather than the quality of the services (Leone et al., 2002).

Returning to the Community

Upon returning to the community, youth previously incarcerated are met with social and educational barriers to their behavioral and academic success leading to more than 25% of youth dropping out of school within 6 months of their release (Kubek et al., 2020). Socially, youth return to schools in which faculty, administrators, and the school climate as a whole stigmatizes their previous behavior and detention (Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020). School leaders play a significant role in the likelihood of a successful transition to school as their attitudes influence school policies on re-enrollment in school, disciplinary action, placement in alternative education programs, and the role of the probation officer on campus (Cole & Cohen. 2013). In a study of school personnel, participants were found to have negative views of the life outcomes for students involved in the juvenile justice system (Sinclair et al., 2017). They indicated beliefs that these students were less likely to graduate from college, stay out of trouble with the law, or develop financial stability. Notably, these same participants indicated that their districts were well prepared to meet the needs of students entering from juvenile justice placements. They felt their schools were welcoming, well prepared, and took appropriate steps to provide services for these students as they entered the district. These contrasting patterns defy the logic that students who receive effective, well developed supports through their school should have more positive outcomes after graduation (Sinclair et al., 2017).

Educationally, students with learning difficulties tend to struggle even more upon their return to public school (McGriff, 2021). This results in increased rates of retention and dropout and decreased literacy (Hirschfield, 2003). Educational attainment and literacy skills are essential for success in adult society and are tied to decreases in recidivism for juvenile delinquents (Leon et al., 2002). Though all of these barriers play a role in the success of youth

returning to the community, researchers agree further investigation is necessary to consider the breadth of the issues (Kubek et al., 2020)

Transition Services

When an adolescent is detained for committing a crime, ideally, parents, administrators, parole officers, counselors, and other professionals come together to consider the necessary programs and services to ensure the adolescent successfully transitions back into society and does not commit another crime. These services are considered aftercare and they, along with these teams of people, vary widely from state to state and county to county. However, the overall goal is the same: to prevent the adolescent from committing another crime.

Effective transition services encompass the many settings and variables unique to the adolescent, including school, home, work, substance abuse, peer influences, etc. Responsive transition services balance the adolescents' developmental needs with the demands of the justice system while considering how they function in their families, communities, the justice system, and society as a whole (Chung et al., 2007). In some states, such as Texas, this transition planning begins the day an adolescent is entered into the system, as a baseline assessment is conducted, to which future progress monitoring points can be compared (Pace, 2017). Through extensive research in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, Pace (2017) developed a set of recommendations for facilities looking to complete comprehensive transition services:

1. Implement individualized, long-term educational planning from intake to discharge.
2. Encourage greater collaboration between state education agencies, local school districts, and juvenile justice facilities.
3. Align correctional education curricula and standards with local school districts.
4. Increase tracking and evaluation of academic outcomes.

5. Place more social workers in public schools to support youth in transition.
6. Mandate that schools accept formerly incarcerated students.
7. Increase investment in and funding for correctional education and reentry programs.
8. Implement best practices in the continuum of educational services.

School Reentry

When an adjudicated delinquent is released from a placement, their re-enrollment in school may be delayed to the slow transfer of student records, the need to identify an appropriate school, the refusal of a receiving school to enroll an adjudicated delinquent, or the insistence by the receiving school that a student wait until the next semester to enroll, even though these delays are not allowed and are often illegal (Clark, 2019; Hirschfield, 2014). During the tumultuous weeks of transition from detention back into the community, the lack of school structure exacerbates the stress experienced by the adolescent and increases their risk of recidivism (Hirschfield, 2014).

Hirschfield (2014) uses Virginia as an example of the requirements that can be set by a state to hold the juvenile justice facilities and receiving schools responsible for a quick re-enrollment after release. Legally, detention facilities and schools must have re-enrollment coordinators who oversee the process. When an adolescent is sentenced, the detention facility has two days to request their school records. The law also requires the educational administrators in the facility to be notified 30 days before a student is released, which then gives the team five days to create a preliminary reenrollment plan, identify a school to receive the student, and send over the appropriate records. The transition team must meet before the release in order to finalize the plan and ensure that a student is receiving instruction within two days of release from detention (Hirschfield, 2014).

While this list of requirements is ideal, it may not be appropriate for more populated, urban areas in which the caseload would be overwhelming (Hirschfield, 2014). At minimum, transition teams should include a contact from the receiving school to assuage inefficiencies in transition and reduce reticence from receiving schools (Clark, 2019). While these strategies may decrease the time between release and reenrollment, research indicates that this alone may not sufficiently reduce recidivism, other services and supports may be necessary (Clark et al., 2011).

Mental Health Services

Mental health disorders are one of the strongest predictors of recidivism (Kubek et al., 2020). Consequently, adolescents who receive treatment for their behavioral or social-emotional disabilities while incarcerated are less likely to commit another crime (Aalsma et al., 2015). Upon transition, there are evidence based mental health practices such as Multisystemic therapy, functional family therapy, and multidimensional foster care that effectively reduce adolescents' recidivism (Aalsma et al., 2015; Early et al., 2013). These services and supports should be chosen based on the individual's unique experiences, symptoms, and needs. As Vaughn and colleagues (2008) found, there are racial differences in the self-reporting of mental health issues. Specifically, Black adolescents endorsed lower levels of mental health issues; however, they were more likely to be victims of and experience traumatic events (Vaughn et al., 2008). These statistics suggest that transition teams should consider the unique needs of the adolescent rather than enrolling them in a program that was appropriate for another adolescent of the same race or experiences.

Substance abuse. Adolescents who have experience with substance abuse, whether it be a history of abuse, current use, or a parent who uses, are more likely to have contact with the justice system (Young et al., 2007). During their detainment, services designed to treat the abuse,

including the causes and repercussions of the substance use, should be provided (Aalsma et al., 2015). When the transition team is working to find appropriate services and supports to aid the transition, a comprehensive plan to address the adolescent's substance abuse should be considered (Becan et al., 2020).

Calleja (2019) outlines the model of best practices for substance abuse services during the reentry process. The model requires screening and assessing substance abuse through many measures to get a full picture of the abuse's effect on the adolescent. In order to ensure that service provision continues, the model also encourages the transition team to contact a community-based clinician who treats substance abuse using an evidence-based approach, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT; Calleja, 2019). In order for substance abuse to be meticulously treated, the plan for services during reentry needs to be developed in consideration of both the adolescent's own use and use by the people around them (Jain et al., 2018). This multi-faceted approach requires interagency coordination and communication, as supports should come from school, the community, and mental health service providers (Becan et al., 2020; Mathur & Clark, 2014).

Community Engagement

Once an adjudicated delinquent is released from detention, their engagement in society is reflected by their employment and/or enrollment in school without further contact with the criminal justice system (Bullis et al., 2004). Through the collection of qualitative data from community stakeholders and adjudicated delinquents, Mathur and Clark (2014) extended this definition to mean "an ongoing relationship that involves planning and collaboration to achieve a shared goal" (p. 729). This engagement is the responsibility of the justice system, parole officers,

case managers, social workers, community partners, and all other professionals involved in transition service provision (Mathur & Clark, 2014).

One way to increase community engagement in youth transitioning from detention is through mentor relationships as discussed in Hanham and Tracey's 2017 research article. These authors found that by establishing bonds between mentors and adjudicated delinquents before the juvenile's release, they were able to focus on resisting peer pressure and develop plans that reduced the anxiety associated with the move. Initially, these mentors acted as role models and guides; however, after release these mentors were highly valued by their mentees as non-authoritative allies who built their confidence and held their trust (Hanham & Tracey, 2017).

Fidelity, Consistency, and Intensity of Supports

Extensive research has indicated the aspects of transition planning that may be most effective for adjudicated delinquents (Hirschfield, 2014; Pace, 2017). However, large-scale reentry program providers often struggle to implement a range of services with the necessary fidelity, consistency, and intensity needed to effectively reduce recidivism (Abrams et al., 2011; Altschuler et al., 1999; Goodstein & Sontheimer, 1997; Wiebush et al, 2005). Abrams and colleagues (2011) found that as the length of time a juvenile participated in transition services increased, their risk for recidivism decreased. Multi-service programs that did succeed involved a residential reentry specialist that oversaw the juveniles' transitions, including the length of service provision that would be necessary for positive results to be made from that support (Calleja, 2019). Facilities must consider the personnel required to conduct this comprehensive case management or risk reducing effectiveness due to overworked transition specialists (Goldstein & Sontheimer, 1997). When conducted consistently, with fidelity, and at the intensity

level appropriate for the service, transition planning and reentry services can reduce the risk of recidivism in adjudicated delinquents (Calleja, 2019; Early et al, 2013; Hirschfield, 2014).

Developing Social Attachment

Healthy human relationships are essential for children to develop their social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Adolescents who feel secure in their relationships with adults and authority figures are more likely to develop appropriate social skills and behaviors. On the other hand, adolescents who experience insecure or preoccupied attachments with their parents or teachers have an increased rate of delinquency (Allen et al., 2002). Not only do the relationships affect their likelihood of delinquent behavior, but also, delinquency tends to impact their relationships. Once an adolescent has contact with the juvenile justice system, they are more likely to have problems creating positive social connections with others (Liska & Reed, 1985). This type of bidirectional effect indicates that early intervention to build relationships in a positive, supportive manner is crucial for students with the risk factors for delinquency.

The adolescents in the juvenile justice system often lack positive, supportive relationships with parents, teachers, and other adult role models. In order to effectively meet the needs of the students in their facility, teachers and staff need to focus on building a positive environment that fits each student's unique needs. This type of practice takes training and supervision to develop as these adolescents often have complicated histories of trauma with adults (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018).

School Bonding & School Connectedness

As children and adolescents spend approximately 1,000 hours each year in school, the connection they feel with their environment is critically important in the development of appropriate behaviors, social interactions, self-esteem, and academic achievement. Feelings of

disconnection may lead students to withdraw and become isolated from the community around them, including parents, teachers, and peers (Mouton et al., 1996). On the other hand, feelings of support from other peers and teachers often lead to increased academic achievement and decreased delinquency (Liljeberg et al., 2011). Liljeberg and colleagues define school bonding as a three-part phenomenon that includes school attachment, school commitment, and teacher attachment (2011).

A student's school attachment is characterized by their emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. Students with low emotional and behavioral engagement often have higher rates of antisocial or delinquent behaviors (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). As peer relationships are most crucial during this phase of adolescent development, emotional and behavioral disengagement prevents students from connecting with peers positively in the school environment. This lack of supportive connections is theorized to lead to an increase in delinquent behavior (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). Within the same school of thought, the presence of peers who consistently commit delinquent or antisocial acts can negatively impact an adolescent's behavior and decrease their engagement in the rules and structure of school (Zhang & Messner, 1996).

Higher levels of cognitive engagement in the classroom have also been linked to delinquent behavior. Hirschfield and Gasper theorized that when students who have high expectations for their academic achievement are met with a frustrating and unsupportive community, they more often turn to delinquency as their view of the future becomes less bright and positive (2011). This theory aligns with the principle of General Strain Theory that describes a main area of strain being a disjunction between a person's aspirational goals and their expectation of reaching those goals (Brezina, 2017). Policies and practices that aim to increase

school attachment and decrease frustration may be effective measures in reducing juvenile delinquency.

School commitment describes the effort and value a student places on their academic achievement. When this commitment to education is low, students are more likely to break school rules, commit delinquent acts at school, and have low attendance (Jenkins, 1995). Indeed, an adolescent's effort and appreciation toward academics is affected by their peers and their parents. Peer relationships affect the adolescent's perception of the school environment and the viewed importance of work, while parent relationships are more influential on the behavioral study and work habits displayed in the classroom (Estell & Perdue, 2013). This commitment to school requires both the effort and the value to be high, supporting the Hirschfield and Gasper (2011) theory that if students have high effort and cognitive engagement but reside in a community that does not value education, they will have more problems using academic achievement as a motivator to avoid delinquency.

Student-Teacher Relationships

Adolescents' attachment and relationship with their teachers is also an influential factor of school bonding and delinquency. General strain theory posits that these relationships are important as they mitigate stressful events through communication, support, and respect. Moreover, negative relationships with teachers often blossom into negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and depression that place further stress on adolescents. If adolescents cannot use positive relationships with teachers as a coping mechanism for stress, they may turn to delinquency as an outlet for their emotions (Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Research has shown that negative teacher relationships are tied to increases in delinquency for all adolescents but are a

particularly strong influence in young female delinquency (Liljeberg et al., 2011; Sabatine et al., 2017).

The quality of student-teacher relationships is tied to social, behavioral, and engagement outcomes for students (Decker et al., 2007). Positive relationships with teachers can increase behavior and engagement for students, while negative relationships can increase delinquency (Decker et al., 2007; Liljeberg et al., 2011). Van Bergen and colleagues (2020) found that one-third of students in alternative education could not recall having a single positive relationship with a teacher. Additionally, while only half of non-disruptive, mainstream students could recall having a negative teacher relationship, almost all of the students in alternative education could recall having a teacher who was hostile, unjust, or ineffective (Van Bergen et al., 2020). Other research has found that teachers report lower relational closeness and higher relational conflict with students who exhibit disruptive behaviors (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). As students who are disruptive tend to have less trust in their teachers, schools must train their teachers to have a more positive approach with these students, so they do not feel blamed, frustrated, or treated unfairly due to the focus on their negative behaviors (Hajdukova et al., 2014; Murray & Zvoch, 2011).

Trauma-Informed Care in Schools

Schools can nurture their students' connection to the school, teachers, and staff through evidence-based programming, such as Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) that is aimed at creating an environment that is supportive, encouraging, and meets the unique needs of the students. The goal of TIC is to foster healthy, safe relationships between the students and the teachers and staff. These relationships set the foundation for supportive environments that help the students regulate their physiological stress responses (Perry & Daniels, 2016). When adolescents have

experienced trauma, as do most incarcerated youth, their brains process information differently. Traumatic stress interferes with the development of stress responses in adolescents and often leads to a constant state of fight or flight response (Carrion & Wong, 2012). These negative stress emotions, compounded by fear of failure, self-doubt, and anxiety, prevent the brain from being able to process information in order to learn (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018).

TIC approaches the education of these traumatized adolescents through the three pillars defined by Bath (2008): safety, connection, and management of emotional impulses. Safety comes first as it is the basic need of all human beings in every psychological theory currently studied including those posited by Maslow, Erikson, and Bowlby (Bretherton, 1992; Kunc, 1992; Widick et al., 1978). Adolescents who have had events and relationships that left them feeling unsafe or uncared for may develop a mistrust for adults. Whether working in a counseling or educational role, the professionals who work with traumatized students need to first focus on developing an environment that feels safe and supportive for the student. Once this safety is established, progress towards mental health, academic, or other goals may commence (Bath, 2008). One aspect of these safe environments is strong, reliable connections with care providers. Teachers and care providers must work to retrain their students' brains to associate relationships with adults as positive and supportive instead of negative or abusive (Bath, 2008).

When teachers have created positive relationships with their students, adolescents will be more likely to see the teacher as sensitive to their needs and goals, and thus willing to rely on that teacher for support and feel a sense of belonging and acceptance within the relationship (Jennings, 2019). The management of emotional reactions and impulses is crucial for successful functioning in society. As adolescents with a history of trauma have trouble regulating their emotions, guidance and support is necessary for them to learn effective self-control and emotion

management strategies (Marusak et al., 2015). Care providers, teachers, administrators, and other staff within the school need to find the right strategies and practices that address the emotional regulation needs of each student (Bath, 2008). Systems or schools that develop TIC practices and policies can meet the adolescents' most basic needs.

Trauma-informed schools. According to Duffy and Comly (2019), districts across Pennsylvania are making an effort to restructure their schools to account for the growing research involved in trauma-informed education. In Philadelphia and Pottstown, schools are providing professional development training for their staff to increase the knowledge, understanding, and identification skills. In Pittsburgh, the Department of Human Services is working to integrate the information collected about children from health and educational agencies to increase collaboration and communication (Duffy & Comly, 2019).

The goal of these efforts is to increase the accuracy of trauma identification, particularly the balance between increasing the awareness of the signs of trauma and reducing over-referral to juvenile justice services. When students return from detention in the juvenile justice system, schools equipped with TIC practices would have stress identification, intervention planning, and crisis response skills appropriate for meeting the needs of the adjudicated delinquent. Schools that are able to implement these trainings and procedures campus-wide see reductions in their disciplinary referrals and actions while seeing an increase in engagement and attendance (Duffy & Comly, 2019; McInerney & McKlindon, 2014).

Trauma-informed teaching. Through professional development training courses, teachers can become better equipped to identify, react, and help students with trauma backgrounds (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). For initial trainings, stakeholders should consider that while trauma-informed trainings are effective for growing the knowledge of

teachers about TIC approaches, their acceptance of these practices depends upon their perceptions of the appropriateness of this approach in fitting within their school environment (McIntyre et al., 2019). This indicates that schools should select training programs that are appropriate and effective for their unique community. Trainings should also include self-care support for the teachers and staff working with children as they are susceptible to the additional stress that often accompanies providing sustained emotional support over long periods of time (Luthar & Mendes, 2020).

In the classroom, teachers who receive TIC training are able to more effectively respond to disruptive events and pass down disciplinary sanctions that are developmentally and contextually appropriate (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). In her guide for teachers implementing TIC, Minahan (2019) outlines strategies that make a difference in a classroom with traumatized students. First, teachers are warned to expect the unexpected with regard to their students' responses and behaviors as sudden emotional reactions and changes are typical for children with trauma backgrounds. Second, Minahan describes the importance of thoughtful interactions as a relationship building exercise to develop trust and safety in the classroom. Third, specific relationship building strategies for other teachers and staff that students encounter should be used, as this may increase the number of safe adults in that student's life. Fourth, Minahan emphasizes the importance of modeling predictability and consistency in both schedules and attention, so students know what to expect. Fifth, the implementation of cognitive distractions as opposed to movement or calming breaks without any cognitive stimulation can prevent students from ruminating upon any negative stressors. Sixth, Minahan encourages teachers to use lots of positive feedback and praise, especially when pointing out corrections, to keep a student's self-efficacy high. Seventh, teachers should work to recognize and highlight

students' strengths, so they form a more balanced, realistic self-image that includes their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, Minahan warns against exclusionary practices such as ignoring negative behaviors or setting incentives, as they may trigger previous neglectful trauma or imply a conditional aspect to the relationship (Minahan, 2019).

Mental health first aid. Originally developed in Australia, this 14-hour course has been adapted to an 8-hour training for all adults in the school building (Gryglewicz et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2011). This training focuses on early intervention and identification while educating trainees about the various mental health issues that plague children, including disorders such as eating disorders and self-injury (Kelly et al., 2011). Kelly and colleagues (2011) evaluated the program through both randomized, control group trials and uncontrolled trials and resulted in many significant positive outcomes. Specifically, trainees have shown an increase in their knowledge of mental health illnesses and needs, an increase in their confidence to identify and appropriately refer a child in a mental health crisis, and a decrease in the stigma they associated with mental health issues (Kelly et al., 2011).

Best Practices for School Reentry

Considering the extensive and complex needs of youth transitioning back to the community, this study sought to explore the best practices for successful reentry into the school environment. These practices encompass systems-level policies and procedures regarding teacher training, and transition planning, as well as individual-level programming to address mental health needs, engagement, and vocational skills.

Systems-Level Policies

It is recommended that, first and foremost, “school policy be developed to reflect the importance of support[ing] youth as they return to school” (Kubek et al., 2020, pp. 7). This

ensures that all decisions regarding practices and procedures are focused on proactive means of success rather than punitive response to mistakes (Kubek et al., 2020). As such, this return to school policy must explicitly outline the district's role in transitioning students to the school (Goldkind, 2011).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has established legislation through Act 1 of 2022 that further expounds upon each school's responsibilities for students experiencing educational instability (Act 1, 2022). This statute states the schools must provide support for students who are homeless or adjudicated through protective services, delinquency, or court-ordered services. Furthermore, schools must establish a point of contact that ensures all services are provided, provide equal access to participate in any school related activities, eliminate fees and fines, and ensure timely graduation. The point of contact for each student works to secure appropriate mental health counseling, class placement, educational services, IEP updates, and a graduation plan. With regard to equal access, schools are prevented from barring student participation due to late registration or mid-year entrance and penalizing a student for school uniform violations due to their late registration delaying appropriate clothing provision. Students who meet the criteria for educational instability cannot be assigned fees or fines for materials, damages, exams, etc. Lastly, schools must work to explicitly outline the credit structure and graduation requirements to ensure that students who have faced educational instability and participated in a variety of classrooms receive credit for their work and graduate in an appropriate time frame. (Act 1, 2022)

School policy regarding teacher and administrator professional development also affects a students' transition success. As noted previously, the connection between disability and delinquency is often tied to teacher and administrator training (McGriff, 2021). As teachers seek

to remove problematic students from the classroom and criminalize immature behavior, student-teacher relationships become strained (Cole & Cohen, 2013). Through TIC and de-escalation training, teachers and administrators develop the skills to calm students without exacerbating behaviors or removing them from the classroom (McGriff, 2021).

As school districts receive students who have the complex needs often associated with those coming from detention, the team they create may also impact the student's success. As discussed above, transition teams should meet before the youth leaves the detention facility in order to ensure a smooth enrollment in the district (Briscoe & Doyle, 1996; Chung et al., 2007). The team within the school district then assumes the role of planning the necessary programming required for the students' success. As such, this team should consist of members from the juvenile justice system, school personnel, community agencies, the student, and their family to ensure that the plan meets all of the student's needs in school, at home, and in the community (Kubek et al., 2020). Research also indicates that strengths-based and restorative justice approaches are the most effective for these teams as they provide the space for all the team members to discuss goals, feelings, and concerns regarding the student's success and select appropriate interventions (Kubek et al., 2020).

Student-Centered Transition Plan

The transition plan that is created for a student moving into a district from a juvenile detention facility should meet their social, behavioral, and academic needs while balancing their community and legal obligations (Chung et al., 2007). Within the school, this plan should consider educational goals, mental health and behavioral needs, vocational training, engagement programming, health concerns, and needs at home (Kubek et al., 2020).

Assessment

IEPs are required to be updated every year in order to ensure the student is meeting goals and services are appropriately meeting their needs (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014). As discussed earlier, a student's IEP may be adjusted when they enter a juvenile detention center (Gonsoulin et al., 2012). Thus, updated testing to understand the student's current academic achievement and mental health status ensures a legal and correct IEP (Drasgow et al., 2001).

For students without an IEP, updated mental health testing is still highly recommended by researchers as it has been noted by participants who were once juvenile delinquents that this is an imperative step in developing appropriate community support and service provision (Sullivan, 2004).

School-Based Coordinated Care Team

Along with participating in the school district's transition team, school personnel should coordinate with community and health care providers to provide comprehensive wraparound services for the student (Wood et al., 2008). This team may consist of health educators that focus on sexual health, substance abuse, and social skill development (Massey-Stokes & Lanning, 2004; Wood et al., 2008). The school nurse may also play a role on this team as they coordinate with detention staff to learn and plan for any medical conditions or injuries (Wood et al., 2008). School counselors and/or community-based mental health providers ensure that appropriate and effective mental health services are provided by the school and community (Briscoe & Doyle, 1996; Wood et al., 2008). Finally, family involvement in the team, including parent-based programs, engages families to take an active role in their child's transition and development (Wood et al., 2008).

Intervention and Programming

Intervention and program selection should consider the interpersonal, intrapersonal, instructional, and systems-level needs of the school environment (Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020). Snodgrass Rangel and colleagues defined interpersonal needs as the interactions between teachers, staff, administrators, students, and parents. They defined intrapersonal needs as the educators' and students' internal beliefs and attitudes about the student and the school. Instructional needs are defined as the academic rigor and cultural relevance of the curriculum selected. Finally, systems-level needs considered the student's access to behavior support and positive policies within the school. (Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020) Considering all of these factors, the transition team enrolls the youth in appropriate interventions and programming that meet their needs.

Mental health services are necessary for students who have been detained as they are more likely to have experienced trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Youth coming into a district may need individual counseling, group counseling, substance abuse counseling, and/or wraparound services that address their needs at home (Wood et al., 2008). By incorporating strengths-based approaches into these mental health services, students can develop their self-concept and self-esteem, while increasing their optimism (Kubek et al., 2020). Individual and group counseling services are often assigned for students with IEPs; however, students in need of mental health services that do not qualify for special education may receive counseling fit for their unique needs (Marsh & Mathur, 2020). These supports have been shown to be beneficial in the reduction of recidivism for students returning to the community (Unruh et al., 2009).

A multi-tiered system of support implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) provides the framework for schools to implement appropriate school rules and develop prosocial behaviors (Jolivette et al., 2016). Within this framework, students transitioning into the school can be immediately included in school-wide, small group, and individual behavioral skill development. For students with a range of behavior difficulties including defiance, anger, or impulsivity, comprehensive programs that focus on positive reinforcement, modeling, and parenting-skills training are most effective for their success (de Vries et al., 2015). Parenting-focused behavior management programs that focus on building positive relationships and parenting skills are also recommended for students transitioning from detention (Goldkind, 2011).

Programs outside of mental health, behavioral, and academic work can also be beneficial. Programs focusing on school engagement and positive peer relationships can increase positive social attachments and promote prosocial behavior (Unruh et al., 2009). Vocational training programs also provide a space for students to focus on their strengths and skills outside of traditional academic areas (McKay & Brumback, 1980).

Gaps in the Literature

While researchers have investigated the aspects of transition programs and services that effectively impact a student's success after release, little research has been conducted into the implementation of these services in school districts. Snodgrass Rangel and colleagues (2020) indicated that future research should consider the interpersonal and systems-level practices in school districts with regard to their role in student reentry. As school psychologists play a crucial leadership role in the selection and implementation of academic, mental health, and behavioral skill programs, they should play a role in students' transition from detention placements.

Additionally, with the multidisciplinary and consultative training included in school psychologists' education, they should play an administrative role on transition teams to effectively advocate for the student's needs.

Another gap in the literature consists of the impact of a school psychologists' view of student outcomes on their recommendations and attitude on policy. In a study of school personnel, participants were found to have negative views of student outcomes, while remaining confident that their school could meet their needs (Sinclair et al., 2017). Given the potential impact of school leaders' influence on transition success, this juxtaposition of attitudes, if also held by school psychologists, may identify necessary changes to school psychologist training and professional development (Cole & Cohen, 2013).

Summary

The issue of adolescent arrest and detainment can be considered as both a societal-level issue of systemic racism, as well as an individual manifestation of strain. CRT considers the impact of "propertized" race as a driver of inequality in education leading to increased disciplinary action and decreased educational attainment in schools with higher populations of minoritized race students (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). GST analyzes delinquency as a result of multiple strains increasing the negative feelings in a person that overwhelm them to the point that delinquent behavior is used as a coping mechanism against the anger, resentment, or depression they feel (Agnew, 1992; Brezina, 2017).

Within the school systems in particular, the phenomenon of the school-to-prison pipeline describes the policies developed to manage behavior in school that remove students from the educational environment and criminalize their behavior with increasing severity (Wilson, 2014). Unfortunately, these policies are being used disproportionately against students of minoritized

racism, particularly Black students, and for infractions that are associated with typical teenage immaturity (Skiba et al., 2014; Teske, 2011). Exclusionary punishments, zero tolerance policies, and SROs serve to reduce beneficial instruction time for students and break down the relationship between students and authority figures in the school (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Skiba et al., 2014; Welch & Payne, 2018).

Within the population of adjudicated delinquents, adolescents from minority backgrounds, the LGBTQI+ community, with disabilities, with trauma histories, and with poor records of academic achievement are overrepresented compared to non-delinquent populations (Elliot et al., 2020; Faraone et al., 2003; Palmer & Greytak, 2017, Wilson et al., 2013). These students face unjust disciplinary action that is often applied at the discretion of the authority figure, allowing that adult's bias to criminalize the adolescent's behavior (Morgan, 2020).

When an adolescent is charged, arrested, and/or detained for a crime, they see a disruption in their education services (Houchins, Jolivette, et al., 2010). Not only are they seeing a reduction in time spent with these supports, but also a reduction in the quality of the instruction provided (Leone & Wruble, 2015). While in a detention facility, adolescents should also be prepared for their return to the community through academics and behavioral supports; however, these services are often sidelined by detention facilities (Cavendish, 2014; Mathur & Schoenfeld, 2010). Upon release, these adolescents experience further barriers to receiving an adequate education that meets their complex needs (Cole & Cohen, 2013; Kubek et al., 2020).

When it comes time for transition, comprehensive planning and support services should be conducted by a transition team that considers the educational, vocational, mental health, and social/behavioral needs of the adolescent (Chung et al., 2007). Academically, an appropriate receiving school should be identified, contacted, and enrollment should be completed before the

adolescent leaves the detention facility (Hirschfield, 2014). Mental health services that address family, behavioral, and substance abuse issues should be planned to begin as soon as the adolescent is released (Aalsma et al., 2015; Calleja, 2019). The transition team should also find the relationships, supports, and services required to help the adolescent feel engaged and involved in the community (Mathur & Clark, 2014).

Adolescents require healthy relationships with peers and adults in order to develop appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive functioning skills (Allen et al., 2002). Detention facilities and schools should consider the importance of these social connections as they try to build school bonding as a preventative for initial delinquency as well as a promotive factor against further behavioral issues (Liljeberg et al., 2011). TIC is an evidence-based program that educates teachers, staff, and administrators about appropriate interactions, punishments, and expectations when dealing with students who have a history of trauma (Bath, 2008). By creating a safe environment, with bonded relationships, in which students can process their emotions, teachers and administrators can help students manage their stress responses and prepare their brain for learning information (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). This can be conducted at the school level through training programs and community outreach as well as in the classroom through professional development (Duffy & Comly, 2019; McInerney & McKlindon, 2014).

Research has suggested that the best practices to encourage a successful transition from a detention facility to school includes systems-level policies and procedures, as well as individual-level planning and programming. At the systems-level, appropriate school policy that focuses on supporting the youth, training teachers, and selecting appropriate interventions are necessary (Briscoe & Doyle, 1996; Cole & Cohen, 2013; Kubek et al., 2007; McGriff, 2021). At the

individual level, student centered transition plans, updated assessment information, a school-based coordinated care team, and evidence-based interventions ensure all of the student's needs are met (de Vries et al., 2015; Drasgow et al., 2001; Kubek et al., 2007; Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2004; Unruh et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2008).

This study seeks to understand the role of the school psychologist in the student transition process. Due to their role in academic, mental health, and behavioral skill programming, as well as their training in consultation, the school psychologist should be an appropriate advocate for the student to ensure they receive comprehensive services. Additionally, this study seeks to understand if school psychologists maintained the attitudes found in previous literature including findings that juxtapose a negative view of student outcomes and with a confidence in school programming and ability.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will describe the investigation that was conducted to assess the implementation of evidence-based practices for students entering schools from juvenile justice facilities by school psychologists. Detailed below are the study design, the participants who were recruited, and the measures, procedures, and analyses used to answer the proposed research questions.

Participants and Recruitment Procedures

The participants in this study included school psychologists practicing in schools in the state of Pennsylvania. A list of the population was compiled through the Pennsylvania Department of Education's database of school psychologists working for school districts during the 2021-2022 school year. From this list, the emails of the school psychologists working within these districts were obtained from their school's websites.

In order to assess the sample size required to answer the proposed research questions, an a priori power analysis was conducted using JAMOVI software. This analysis utilized an effect size of $d = 0.50$, power of 0.80, and an alpha level of $p < .05$ to calculate the required sample size. These values for effect size and power selected based on evidence in the literature that these are the most commonly used values for psychological study that utilize independent samples T -tests and one-way ANOVAs (Lipsey & Wilson, 1993; UCLA, n.d.). In order to detect a difference between groups reliably on the T -test calculation, the a priori power analysis indicated that a sample size of $N = 126$ is the minimum sample size necessary. In order to detect group differences reliably on the one-way ANOVA calculation, the a priori analysis indicated that a sample size of $N = 68$ is the minimum required sample size necessary.

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the school psychologists were invited to complete the study through email. A total of 211 responses were collected. After removing incomplete responses, the resulting total sample size included 164 participants.

Measures

List of Best Practices for Successful Reentry from Juvenile Detention

The 14 best practices for successful reentry from juvenile detention identified for this survey were separated into three categories based on their face validity: Systems-Level Supports (explicit school policies, multi-tiered systems of support integrating Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, de-escalation focused professional development, and Trauma-Informed Care professional development for teachers), Transition Services (multidisciplinary team, coordinated care team, individualized transition plan, academic assessment, mental health assessment), and Individual Programming (individual counseling, group counseling, peer relationship programming, vocational training, parenting skill development).

Life Outcomes

In order to access the school psychologists' perceptions of the student's future success, the Perceptions of Chances for Success survey was administered. The survey contains 8 items originally utilized by the Pathways to Desistance study (retrieved from <https://www.pathwaysstudy.pitt.edu/codebook/perceptions-of-chances-for-success-cf.html>). These items were adapted by Sinclair and colleagues (2017) for administration with school personnel. The reliability for this adapted survey had a Cronbach's alpha of $a = .93$. An exploratory factor analysis also indicated that all items of the survey loaded to a single factor.

Perception of School Preparedness

The measure used to assess the school psychologists' perception of their school's preparedness regarding juveniles returning from detention was adopted from the survey utilized by Sinclair and colleagues (2017). The survey consists of 16 items that were found to load to three factors. The reliability for this adapted survey had a Cronbach's alpha of $a = .90$.

Procedures

This research study utilized a survey methodology allows for the inclusion of a wide range of psychologists across the state through a consistent modality. The survey was created through the Qualtrics XM platform and distributed to the population via email. Within the survey, participants were provided an electronic consent form, as required by the IRB, along with demographic and survey questions created by researchers, which are detailed below. The data collected through the Qualtrics XM platform was then be exported to SPSS for analysis.

Demographic Data

The following regarding the participants' demographic information was collected: gender (male, female, non-binary, other), race (white, Black, Asian, Native American or Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander), ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino), highest degree earned (EdS, PsyD, PHD, other), years as a school psychologist (open-ended), current employment setting (elementary, middle school, high school), and school community (rural, urban, suburban). Participants were also asked questions regarding their experience with students entering their school from juvenile justice placements. They were asked to report if they have students in their district who were previously incarcerated and whether or not they participated on the transition team or in the service planning process for a student entering the school. Lastly, participants were asked whether their school's policies and procedures aligned with Pennsylvania Act 1.

Case Conditions

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups in which they reviewed the provided case vignette and respond to the survey questions. Each of the four vignettes had identical information regarding the student's gender, age, grade, cognitive ability, academic achievement, classroom behavior data, and discipline record. The student in each case was a 14-year-old male in 8th grade with an average cognitive ability (standard score of 90), low average academic ability (standard scores ranging from 75 to 85), classroom behavior observations indicating inattentiveness and impulsivity, and a severe discipline record. The student's race (Black or white), as well as their special education status (previously identified as qualifying for special education under Other Health Impairment due to ADHD, or not previously identified) were the two details that varied between the four vignettes. Notably, all the cases described a student who met criteria for special education under Other Health Impairment due to ADHD, they only differed on whether or not the student has previously qualified. Case 1 presented a Black student with a note designating previous qualification for special education. Case 2 presented a Black student without a note designating previous special education qualification. Case 3 presented a White student with a note designating previous qualification for special education. Case 4 presented a white student without a note designating previous special education qualification. The specified variability of the information across the four cases permits the comparison of recommendations and attitudes across the variables of race and special education qualification.

Research Design

This research study utilized a multi-condition (group), cross-sectional design. The cross-sectional design allowed for the collection of information from multiple participants at one time.

This approach provided the space for researchers to examine the relationship between variables, under varying conditions, while accounting for variability due to time (Spector, 2019).

The use of vignettes has been found to provide researchers with a versatile modality through which survey research can simulate real life experiences (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020). These vignettes provide “specific situations and the problems that might arise in them in order to probe informants about the way they understand these” (Torres, 2009, p. 94). Researchers are able to use data collected through vignette and survey research to analyze the participants’ judgements, beliefs, and biases regarding the situations presented (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020).

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

Are school psychologists recommending the implementation of evidence-based practices and services for students entering from juvenile justice placements and are these recommendations effected by the student’s a) race or b) special education status?

Hypothesis 1: I hypothesize that school psychologists’ recommendations will not align with the best practices supported by evidence. Additionally, I hypothesize that these recommendations will be affected by both the student’s race and special education status.

Survey Materials. Participants were asked to endorse which of the provided evidence-based practices they would recommend for the student in the vignette. They were asked to rank these practices in order, based on their importance for the student in the vignette.

Data Analysis Plan. Descriptive statistics were calculated, through the examination of frequency of responses, for all four of the groups. Three chi-square test of independence analyses were executed to understand the differences in the frequency of each recommendation within a category across the two race groups. Another three chi-square test of independence analyses

assessed the differences in the frequencies of the recommendations in each category between the special education status groups.

Research Question 2

Do school psychologists perceive the implementation of evidence-based practices for students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities as feasible within their school and is this perception affected by the student's a) race and b) special education status?

Hypothesis 2: I hypothesize that school psychologists will report the implementation of all evidence-based practices as feasible in their school. Additionally, I hypothesize that this will not be affected by either the student's race or special education status.

Survey Materials. Through the survey, participants were asked to rank the feasibility of each of the evidence-based practices listed on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not At All Feasible) to 4 (Very Feasible).

Data Analysis Plan. First, descriptive statistics examined the feasibility rating of each practice. The average feasibility of each recommendation was then compared through a one-way ANOVA with the other recommendations within the category. A total of three one-way ANOVAs were used to measure the difference in feasibility between the two race groups for each category. Next, three more one-way ANOVAs compared the feasibility ratings of each recommendation between the two special education groups for each category.

Research Question 3

Is there an interaction between the student's race and special education status that effects the school psychologists' ratings of perceived feasibility of service implementation?

Hypothesis 3: I hypothesize that there will be an interaction between the student's race and special education status that effects the school psychologists' ratings of feasibility.

Survey Materials. Participants were asked to rank the feasibility of each of the evidence-based practices listed on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at All Feasible) to 4 (Very Feasible).

Data Analysis Plan. The average rating of feasibility for each practice was computed. For each of the three categories of practices, a two-way ANOVA will be used to calculate the interaction effect of race and special education status.

Research Question 4

Do school psychologists perceive students who are entering their school district from juvenile justice placements as having positive life outcomes and is that attitude effected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Hypothesis 4: I hypothesize that school psychologists will have a negative attitude regarding the students' life outcomes. Additionally, I hypothesize that this attitude will be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Survey Materials. Participants were asked eight questions regarding the student's life outcomes. They responded to each question on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Excellent).

Data Analysis Plan. An overall average score of the participants' belief of the student's life outcomes was calculated. An independent samples *T*-test then compared the difference between the mean scores between the two race groups. Next, another independent samples *T*-test was used to compare the means between the two special education groups.

Research Question 5

Do school psychologists believe that their school is able to support the needs of students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities and is this affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Hypothesis 5: I hypothesize that school psychologists will have a positive attitude regarding their school's ability to meet the student's needs. Additionally, I hypothesize that this attitude will be affected by both the student's race and special education status.

Survey Materials. Participants were asked sixteen questions regarding their school's ability to support students entering from a juvenile justice facility. They responded to each question on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis Plan. An overall average score of the participants' belief in their school's preparedness was calculated. An independent samples *T*-test then compared the difference between the mean scores between the two race groups. Next, another independent samples *T*-test was used to compare the means between the two special education groups.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the descriptive statistics for the demographic characteristics of the sample population. Additionally, I conducted analyses to test the hypotheses and analyze the recommendations made by and perceptions endorsed by school psychologists in Pennsylvania.

Descriptive Analyses

The sample collected included 164 school psychologists currently practicing in Pennsylvania. Table 1 shows that 83.5% of the sample were female (N = 137) and 91.5% were white (N = 150). 65.9% of the participants had earned master's or Specialists degree (N = 108) and the other 34.1% had earned a doctorate in the field (N = 56). The number of years they had spent in practice ranged from less than 5 years (N = 25) to more than 21 years (N = 36), with the majority falling in the 6 to 20 year range (N = 100). With regard to their current positions, the participants noted that they worked in preschools (33.5%, N = 55), elementary schools (78.7%, N = 129), middle school (68.3%, N = 112), and high schools (69.5%, N = 114). 33.5% described their schools as rural (N = 55), 34% urban (N = 56), and 49.4% suburban (N = 81). 90% of the school psychologists were aware of students within their district who had previously been in a juvenile detention facility (N = 148). The majority felt their districts complied with PA Act 1 (76%, N = 124) and 59% had not participated in a transition team for a student entering their district from a juvenile detention center (N = 97).

Table 1*Descriptive Information of the Participants' Demographic Data*

Baseline characteristic	Guided self-help	
	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	137	83.5
Male	26	15.9
Race		
White	150	91.5
Black	43	7
American Indian	1	0.6
Asian	4	2.4
Highest educational level		
Master's or Specialist	108	65.9
Doctoral Degree	56	34.1
Years in Practice		
Less than 5	25	15.2
6 to 20	100	61
More than 21	36	22
Schools Served		
Preschool	55	33.5
Elementary School	129	78.7
Middle School	112	68.3
High School	114	69.5
School Description		
Rural	55	33.5
Urban	56	34
Suburban	81	49.4
School Enrollment of Students from a Juvenile Justice Placement		
Yes	148	90
No	16	10
School Compliant with PA Act 1		
Yes	124	76
No	40	24
Participation in a Transition Team		
Yes	67	41
No	97	59

Statistical Analysis

Research Question 1

Are school psychologists recommending the implementation of evidence-based practices and services for students entering from juvenile justice placements and are these recommendations affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status? Table 2 shows the frequency with which each best practice was recommended by the participants. The recommendations that were selected most often were the MTSS system that incorporates PBIS, as well as a multidisciplinary team and individualized transition plan. Four practices were recommended by less than half of the participants, including parental skills development, explicit school policies, group counseling, and peer relationship development.

Table 2

The Frequency of Recommendation for the Best Practices for Successful Reentry from Juvenile Detention

Best Practice	Frequency	
	<i>n</i>	%
Multi-tiered Systems of Support integrating PBIS	152	92.7
Multidisciplinary Team	151	92.1
Individualized Transition Plan	134	81.7
Individual Counseling	118	72.0
Coordinated Care Team	108	65.9
Mental Health Assessment	102	62.2
Vocational Training	101	61.6
Trauma-Informed Care professional development for teachers	97	59.1
De-escalation Focused Professional Development	96	58.5
Academic Assessment	83	50.6
Parenting Skill Development	75	45.8
Explicit School Policies	57	34.8
Group Counseling	54	32.9
Peer Relationship Programming	10	6.4

To ensure statistical assumptions were met for the chi-square goodness of fit tests, the participants were randomly assigned to a group and the data were collected via random sampling. When considering the differences in the frequency of each recommendation's selection across the two race categories, white and black, no significant differences in recommendations were seen (Table 3). Notably, participants who received a vignette with a white student were more likely to recommend parenting skill development, though this was not significant ($\chi^2 (1, N = 164) = 3.646, p = .056$).

Table 3

Comparison of the Frequency of Each Best Practice Recommendation between Race Groups

Measure	χ^2	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Explicit School Policies	.41	1	.525
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support integrating PBIS	.09	1	.769
De-escalation Focused Professional Development	.97	1	.324
Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development	.27	1	.601
Multidisciplinary Team	.00	1	.975
Individualized Transition Plan	1.77	1	.184
Academic Assessment	.76	1	.383
Mental Health Assessment	.01	1	.909
Coordinated Care Team	.02	1	.897
Individual Counseling	.51	1	.477
Group Counseling	.87	1	.352
Peer Relationship Programing	1.01	1	.314
Vocational Training	.15	1	.702
Parenting Skill Development	3.65	1	.056

In comparing participants who received the student who had previously qualified for special education to those who received the student who had no prior history of special education, multiple differences were seen (Table 4). Students who had previously qualified for special education were more likely to have an individualized transition plan recommended for them ($\chi^2 (1, N = 164) = 6.24, p = .012$). However, students who had not previously qualified for

special education were more likely to have an academic assessment ($X^2(1, N = 164) = 3.84, p = .05$) and mental health assessment ($X^2(1, N = 164) = 7.71, p < .01$) recommended.

Table 4

Comparison of the Frequency of Each Best Practice Recommendation between Race Groups

Measure	X^2	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Explicit School Policies	2.53	1	.112
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support integrating PBIS	1.34	1	.248
De-escalation Focused Professional Development	.02	1	.895
Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development	.85	1	.36
Multidisciplinary Team	.11	1	.738
Individualized Transition Plan	6.24	1	.012
Academic Assessment	3.84	1	.050
Mental Health Assessment	7.71	1	.005
Coordinated Care Team	2.05	1	.153
Individual Counseling	.06	1	.802
Group Counseling	.05	1	.819
Peer Relationship Programing	2.75	1	.097
Vocational Training	.13	1	.720
Parenting Skill Development	.17	1	.678

Research Question 2

Do school psychologists perceive the implementation of evidence-based practices for students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities as feasible within their school and is this perception affected by the student's a) race and b) special education status? Table 5 shows the feasibility ratings of each of the best practices as rated by the participants. Academic assessments were considered the most feasible by participants ($m = 3.76$), whereas parenting skill development was rated the least feasible recommendation ($m = 1.56$).

Table 5

The Feasibility of Each of the Best Practices for Successful Reentry from Juvenile Detention

Best Practice	Feasibility		
	Mean	Min	Max
Academic Assessment	3.76	1	4
Individualized Transition Plan	3.32	1	4
Mental Health Assessment	3.14	1	4
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support integrating PBIS	3.01	1	4
Individual Counseling	3	1	4
Vocational Training	3	1	4
Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development	2.93	1	4
De-escalation Focused Professional Development	2.9	1	4
Multidisciplinary Team	2.88	1	4
Explicit School Policies	2.86	1	4
Coordinated Care Team	2.78	1	4
Group Counseling	2.59	1	4
Peer Relationship Programming	2.29	1	4
Parenting Skill Development	1.56	1	4

To ensure that the necessary statistical assumptions were met for the ANOVAs, the data were screened. Independence of variable was assured through random sampling measures.

Additionally, Bartlett’s test of sphericity indicated equal variance between the variable groups ($p > .05$). None of the practices were found to be normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk $p < .05$). Given the one-way ANOVAs robustness regarding normality, the analysis continued. When considering the difference in feasibility ratings between participants who received a vignette with a white student compared to a black student, only parental skill development differed significantly ($p = .03$). Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8 show each comparison of feasibility ratings.

Table 6*Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and**Race, Group 1*

Measure	Black		White		<i>F</i> (1, 164)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Explicit School Policies	2.87	.963	2.85	.948	.007	.932
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support integrating PBIS	3.04	.829	2.99	.971	.107	.720
De-escalation Focused Professional Development	2.81	.865	.297	.872	.952	.263
Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development	2.91	.888	2.94	.909	.069	.792

Table 7*Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and**Race, Group 2*

Measure	Black		White		<i>F</i> (1, 164)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Multidisciplinary Team	2.96	.965	2.81	.890	1.085	.299
Individualized Transition Plan	3.32	.738	3.33	.876	.002	.964
Academic Assessment	3.75	.617	3.76	.603	.033	.856
Mental Health Assessment	3.12	.854	3.16	.891	.074	.786
Coordinated Care Team	2.83	.891	2.74	.899	.358	.545

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and Race, Group 3

Measure	Black		White		<i>F</i> (1, 164)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Individual						
Counseling	2.96	.965	3.03	.898	.256	.613
Group Counseling	2.61	1.01	2.56	.852	.125	.724
Peer Relationship						
Programing	2.21	.843	2.35	.880	.995	.320
Vocational Training	3.03	.870	2.98	.965	.115	.734
Parenting Skill						
Development	1.44	.642	1.66	.656	4.793	.030

Identical screening measures were conducted for the ANOVAs comparing participants'

feasibility ratings between special education status groups; the same findings were recorded, as well. No significant differences in the feasibility ratings of each recommendation were found between the two groups (Table 9, 10, 11).

Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and Special Education History, Group 1

Measure	No Special Education History		Special Education History		<i>F</i> (1, 164)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Explicit School						
Policies	2.93	.972	2.8-	.934	.772	.381
Multi-Tiered						
Systems of Support						
integrating PBIS	3.10	.943	2.93	.866	1.463	.228
De-escalation						
Focused Professional						
Development	2.85	.853	2.94	.888	.418	.519
Trauma-Informed						
Care Professional						
Development	2.85	.937	3.00	.855	1.119	.292

Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and Special Education History, Group 2

Measure	No Special Education History		Special Education History		$F(1, 164)$	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD		
Multidisciplinary Team	2.84	.955	2.92	.900	.276	.600
Individualized Transition Plan	3.28	.762	3.36	.864	.371	.544
Academic Assessment	3.78	.570	3.73	.646	.203	.653
Mental Health Assessment	3.25	.830	3.04	.903	2.419	.122
Coordinated Care Team	2.72	.952	2.84	.833	.832	.363

Table 11

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and Special Education History, Group 3

Measure	No Special Education History		Special Education History		$F(1, 164)$	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD		
Individual Counseling	3.02	.866	2.98	.987	.113	.737
Group Counseling	2.56	.908	2.61	.948	.165	.685
Peer Relationship						
Programing	2.27	.866	2.30	.866	.048	.827
Vocational Training	3.06	.966	2.94	.874	.719	.398
Parenting Skill						
Development	1.60	.719	1.52	.592	.715	.399

Frequency and Feasibility. In order to assess whether or not a relationship exists between a practice's likelihood of being recommended and the feasibility rating of the participant, individual one-way ANOVAs compared the two variables. To ensure that the

necessary statistical assumptions were met for the ANOVAs, the data were screened.

Independence of variable was assured through random sampling measures. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated equal variance between the variable groups ($p > .05$). None of the practices were found to be normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk $p < .05$). Given the one-way ANOVAs robustness regarding normality, the analysis continued.

Table 12 outlines the significant differences in feasibility ratings between groups were seen in multiple variables including explicit school policies ($F(1, 162) = 14.125$ $p < .001$), de-escalation focused professional development ($F(1, 162) = 5.735$ $p = .018$), multidisciplinary teams ($F(1, 162) = 5.513$ $p = .020$), individual counseling ($F(1, 162) = 18.895$ $p < .001$), peer relationship programming ($F(1, 162) = 11.380$ $p < .001$), and parenting skill development ($F(1, 162) = 10.746$ $p = .001$).

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Feasibility Ratings and Recommendation

Measure	Recommended		Not Recommended		$F(1, 164)$	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD		
Explicit School Policies	3.23	.866	2.66	.941	14.125	<.001
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support integrating PBIS	3.01	.913	3.00	.853	.002	.962
De-escalation Focused Professional Development	3.03	.839	2.71	.882	5.735	.018
Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development	2.96	.828	2.88	.993	.300	.585
Multidisciplinary Team	2.93	.924	2.31	.751	5.513	.020
Individualized Transition Plan	3.38	.783	3.01	.907	3.711	.056
Academic Assessment	3.82	.500	3.69	.701	1.741	.189
Mental Health Assessment	3.23	.843	3.00	.905	2.607	.108
Coordinated Care Team	2.86	.912	2.63	.843	2.601	.109
Individual Counseling	3.19	.857	2.52	.937	18.895	<.001
Group Counseling	2.60	.955	2.59	.922	.001	.973
Peer Relationship Programing	2.46	.872	2.00	.775	11.380	<.001
Vocational Training	3.07	.828	2.89	1.049	1.496	.223
Parenting Skill Development	1.73	.708	1.40	.558	10.746	.001

Research Question 3

Is there an interaction between the student's race and special education status that effects the school psychologists' ratings of perceived feasibility of service implementation? In order to understand if the interaction between students' race or history of special education

qualification significantly impacted the participant’s ratings of feasibility, a multivariate general linear modeling analysis was conducted. This interaction was found to be present for explicit school policies ($p = .095$) and coordinate care team ($p = .089$).

Research Question 4

Do school psychologists perceive students who are entering their school district from juvenile justice placements as having positive life outcomes and is that attitude effected by the student’s a) race or b) special education status? In order to assess whether the statistical assumptions for an independent samples *T*-test were met, the data were screened. Independence of variables was ensured through random sampling and group assignment measures. Additionally, no outliers or missing data were found. Data was also found to be within the accepted range of skewness and kurtosis. Overall, a mildly negative perception of life outcomes was reported ($m = 2.33$). No effect was found regarding the student’s race on the psychologists’ perception of their life outcomes $t(162) = -.653, p > .05$ (Table 13). Similarly, there was no significant difference in their perceptions between the special education groups $t(162) = 5.43, p < .001$ (Table 14).

Table 13

Comparison of School Psychologists’ Perceptions of Student Life Outcomes Across Race Groups

Measure	Black		White		<i>t</i> (162)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Life Outcomes	2.283	.491	2.377	.505	-.653	.514

Table 14

Comparison of School Psychologists' Perceptions of Student Life Outcomes Across Special Education Groups

Measure	No Special Education History		Special Education History		<i>t</i> (162)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Life Outcomes	2.283	.491	2.377	.505	-.653	.514

Research Question 5

Do school psychologists believe that their school has the ability to support the needs of students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities and is this affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status? In order to assess whether the statistical assumptions for an independent samples *T*-test were met, the data were screened. Independence of variables was ensured through random sampling and group assignment measures. Additionally, no outliers or missing data were found. Data was also found to be within the accepted range of skewness and kurtosis. No effect was found regarding the student's race on the psychologists' perception of their life outcomes $t(131) = .024, p > .05$ (Table 15). Similarly, there was no significant difference in their perceptions between the special education groups $t(131) = .135, p < .001$ (Table 16).

Table 15

Comparison of School Psychologists' Perceptions of School Preparedness Across Race Groups

Measure	Black		White		<i>t</i> (131)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
School Preparedness	2.907	.082	2.905	.085	.024	.981

Table 16

Comparison of School Psychologists' Perceptions of School Preparedness Across Special Education Groups

Measure	No Special Education History		Special Education History		<i>t</i> (131)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Life Outcomes	2.913	.654	2.898	.707	.135	.893

The relationship between the psychologists' perceptions of the students' life outcomes and their school's preparedness was highly correlated with a medium to large effect size (Cohen's *d* = -0.96; Pearson's *r* = -0.43; Table 17). This relationship is also negative, indicating that as one increases, the other decreases.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics of Psychologists' Perception of Student Life Outcomes and School Preparedness

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Life Outcomes	164	2.33	.499
School Preparedness	133	2.91	.677

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on interpreting the findings of the study as they relate to the research questions and hypotheses. Potential limitations of the study will then be discussed, as well as the conclusions surmised from the study and future directions for practice.

Summary of Findings

Through this study, I examined the likelihood of school psychologists' recommendation of each of 14 best practices previously identified in the evidence-based research literature and consistently cited by justice agencies as imperative for student success (de Vries et al., 2015; Drasgow et al., 2001; Kubek et al., 2007; Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2004; Unruh et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2008). The psychologists' perception of implementation feasibility for each of these practices was also collected. Lastly, their attitudes towards not only the students' life outcomes, but also their school's ability to meet the student's needs were considered.

Research has not yet been released regarding how school psychologists' role within a district may impact students entering from juvenile detention. Nor have researchers considered school psychologists specifically when looking at the relationship between educator's views on students' lives and school preparedness. Through this study, I sought to add to the growing literature on juvenile justice and provide insight into how school psychologists can become more aware of and beneficial for students in this situation.

Best Practices Recommendations

Q1: Are school psychologists recommending the implementation of evidence-based practices and services for students entering from juvenile justice placements and are these recommendations affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Frequency of the Recommendations. Based on the frequency of recommendation for each best practice, as reported in the previous chapter, there are clear differences in which recommendations are more common for school psychologists. First, at the top of the list are MTSS services where PBIS is emphasized, multidisciplinary team meetings, and the development of an individualized transition plan. Interestingly MTSS and PBIS are tier one universal interventions that are to be integrated into every student's school experience. These are not tailored to youth coming from a juvenile justice placement. Given that these are common, it is understandable that these are the easy practices to recommend. However, they lack focus on the individual students' needs beyond the prevention level. A student is less likely to be successful when entering a school from a justice placement when they provide these services alone. Second and third, meeting with a multidisciplinary team and the development of an individualized transition plan are best practices identified to be useful when tailored to this group of youth. It is promising that 92% and 81% of the participants endorse these practices, respectively.

The next six practices that were recommended by more than half (> 50%) of the participants were a coordinated care team (i.e., medical health and community-based service providers along with the professionals within the school setting which are typically included in a multidisciplinary team), a mental health and academic assessment, providing individual counseling and vocational training, and professional development in TIC and de-escalation for the school staff. Considering that the presence of medical professionals and community advocates are not commonplace in many districts, coordinated care teams may be a new practice within districts. The emphasis on ensuring academic success by removal of systemic barriers is explicitly stated in PA's ACT 1 (2022). Moreover, the attention to ensuring mental health

services is consistent with data that shows there are unmet mental health needs in the youth who are placed in justice settings (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Given that counseling and vocational training are common offerings within the school setting, it is unsurprising that these services may be viewed as reasonable for teams. Finally, professional development training is widely recognized as an important avenue to meet the needs of youth (McGriff, 2021). Interest in supports for students returning from placement is discussed below in the context of practice feasibility.

Towards the bottom of the list, recommended by fewer than half (<50%) of participants were recommendations for parenting skill development, the creation of explicit school policies, the provision of group counseling, and peer mentoring programming. With regard to parenting skill development courses, research has indicated that schools may be hesitant to provide this type of programming because the number of families that participate fall shy of what is necessary for an intervention to be cost efficient (Ingoldsby, 2010). Regardless, experts in the implementation of these programs still assign the responsibility of making programs accessible, relevant, and engaging to the schools and program facilitators (Sim et al., 2021). While federal and state guidance supports the development of explicit school policies, in consideration of how minoritized students can be systematically disenfranchised, these guidelines are relatively new and many schools are slow to adopt them (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). However, even though school psychologists have a unique position to consume literature and are often interested working to build appropriate administrative practices, their caseload and other responsibilities may prevent them from being able to participate in other activities (Splett et al., 2013). Along the same lines, group counseling is often difficult to implement in the educational setting due to scheduling conflicts, teacher preferences for participation, the availability of counselors with

training that match the needs of these high needs students, lack of administrative support, and an under developed progress monitoring system with accompanying fidelity checks (Hilts et al., 2019). Even though school psychologists are qualified to conduct both individual and group counseling services, they may not (Hughes & Mazzotta, 2020) These barriers may also impact the low frequency of recommendation for peer mentoring programming. The time, competency, and commitment of all parties negatively impacts the efficacy of programming in schools (Coyne-Foresi, 2015).

Differences Across Race. Results did not indicate any significant differences in the frequency of the recommendations for the white and Black students except on the recommendation of parenting skill development. Results indicated that school psychologists would recommend parent skill development of white students more than they would for Black students and parents. One explanation for this difference may be the perception that since white students are more likely to be of a higher socioeconomic status, their parents are more likely to attend to and benefit from programming (Li & Fischer, 2017). Additionally, schools with a higher percentage of low SES students are often the most overworked, making the implementation of interventions more difficult (Duncombe, 2017). As discussed by Ingoldsby, parenting courses are often plagued with lower participation rates than other interventions which may further deter schools from focusing resources on these programs as the return on investment tends to be lower (2010).

Difference Across Special Education History. Results comparing the likelihood that each best practice would be recommended for students with a previous history of qualifying for an IEP and those that did not found significant differences in three practices: transition plans, academic, and mental health assessments. The students who previously qualified for an IEP were

more likely to be recommended for an individualized transition plan. This may be due to the fact that whenever a student who qualifies for special education moves to a new district, the team is required to develop a new educational plan for them, no matter their previous placement (IDEA, 2004). As such, this transition may already be salient for transition team tasked with developing plans for their school. Importantly, when a student is sent to a juvenile justice facility, the services and supports are often diminished or changed and need to be readjusted when they return to a school district, though it is not clear if this is usually known to school teams (Nelson et al., 2010).

Additionally, the students that had not previously qualified for special education were more likely to have the academic assessment and mental health assessment recommended. This may be due to the fact that all the participants saw a need for special education within the vignettes; however, the students that had not previously qualified were in greater need of updated assessments to ensure the school provided appropriate services through an IEP.

Q2: Do school psychologists perceive the implementation of evidence-based practices for students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities as feasible within their school and is this perception affected by the student's a) race and b) special education status?

Feasibility of the Recommendations

The results of the participants' feasibility ratings indicated academic assessments were rated as the easiest to implement ($M = 3.76$), with individualized transition plans and mental health assessments following just behind ($M = 3.32$ and $M = 3.14$). MTSS with PBIS ($M = 3.01$), individual counseling ($M = 3.00$), and vocational training ($M = 3.00$) also achieved an average rating indicating they were perceived as feasible. Both forms of professional development: TIC and de-escalation were also rated as feasible interventions to within their

districts. Additionally, the multidisciplinary teams, explicit school politics, coordinated care team, and peer relationship programming had more people indicate they were feasible than not. Lastly, the only practice rated more often as unfeasible parenting skill development, which was also the least commonly recommended practice.

Differences Across Race. In comparing the feasibility ratings of various practices across the student's race, one significant difference was found. The psychologists who received the vignette of a white student rated parenting skill development as more feasible than those who read a vignette of a Black student. Similar to the pattern observed in the likelihood of parenting skill development being more often recommended for one race over the other, this programming may seem more feasible for white families as they are often perceived as higher SES and more involved in their children's lives (Li & Fischer, 2017).

Difference Across Special Education History. Results did not indicate any differences in the feasibility ratings of each practice between the two groups of special education status. Moreover, the participants who read vignettes of students had previously qualified for special education did not vary from the participants who read vignettes of students who had not previously qualified for special education. It is unclear how special education status weighed into decision making for these school psychologists.

Feasibility and Frequency

The results analyzing whether a relationship exists between a practice's average feasibility rating and whether or not it was recommended found many significant relationships. The feasibility of explicit school policies, de-escalation focused professional development, multidisciplinary teams, individual counseling, peer relationship programming, and parenting skill development were all higher for participants who had recommended the practice than those

that had not. This may indicate that practices are more likely to be recommended if they are perceived as easily implementable. Conversely, school psychologists that did not see these practices as feasible, were less likely to recommend a practice for the student. Notably, while the specific practices listed above were found to be significantly different between groups, all of the average feasibility ratings were higher when recommended, than when not.

Q3: Is there an interaction between the student's race and special education status that affects the school psychologists' ratings of perceived feasibility of service implementation?

Feasibility, Race, and Special Education History

As discussed in the previous chapter, analysis considered whether an interaction between a student's race and special education history impacts the perceived feasibility of a practice. No statistically significant interactions were found; however, a difference was seen in two practices: explicit school practices and coordinated care team. Black students with a previous special education status were most likely to have coordinated care teams seen as a feasible service. Participants who received a vignette of a Black student without a history of special education qualification rated explicit school policies as most feasible.

School Psychologists' Perceptions

Q4: Do school psychologists perceive students who are entering their school district from juvenile justice placements as having positive life outcomes and is that attitude affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

Life Outcomes. The results of participants' view of the student's life outcomes found that, overall, they held a mildly negative perception of the student's future. They indicated that it was somewhat unlikely that students involved in juvenile justice would have healthy relationships, academic success, and good careers.

In comparing the participants' views across race and special education history, no significant differences were found. Moreover, the psychologists did not exhibit a more negative view of a student's future due to their disability status or race.

Q5: Do school psychologists believe that their school has the ability to support the needs of students entering the school from juvenile justice facilities and is this affected by the student's a) race or b) special education status?

School Preparedness. The survey considered participants' view of their school's ability to meet the needs of students involved in the juvenile justice system through support of staff, appropriate curriculum, and effective transition plans. Overall, the participants indicated neutral feelings towards their school's ability to support these students. Additionally, no significant differences were seen when comparing participants across race or special education history.

Relationship Between Life Outcomes and School Preparedness. In order to assess whether school psychologists maintained the contrasting dichotomy of perceptions seen in previous literature this study compared perceptions of life outcomes and school preparedness (Sinclair et al., 2017). Overall, a strong, negative relationship between the two was evident, replicating findings found previously. This indicates that as participants' view of their school's ability to meet students' needs increased, their view of the students' life outcomes became more negative. This misalignment highlights a pattern consistently seen in literature and indicates that as schools are seen as more equipped to support students from the justice system and better prepared with the staffing and programming to meet their needs, the students receiving those services are believed to have worse relationships and careers in the future.

Summary

The purpose of this study was two-fold, to assess the recommendations made by school psychologists for students entering from juvenile justice placements and to gauge their perspectives on these students' life outcomes and their school ability to meet their needs. Findings indicated that while many best practices are likely to be recommended and are deemed feasible by school psychologists in Pennsylvania, others are not. The best practices least likely to be recommended were the creation of explicit school policies, group counseling, peer relationship programming, and parenting skill development; these were also among the least feasible to implement in a district. Differences in recommendation patterns and perceptions of feasible were noted when a student's race and special education history were compared. However, no interaction effect between race and special education was seen in the ratings of feasibility. Lastly, school psychologists sustained the negative relationship between their perspective on students' futures and their school's preparedness that had been previously found in literature.

Limitations

Given this study's research design, sample, and methodology, various limitations must be considered. First, participants were provided with a short vignette, yet some participants may have wanted to seek additional information needed to consider a student's unique case which was not possible given the non-interactive nature of the survey. The sample was comprised of school psychologists in Pennsylvania. As such, many of the results of this study may only be generalizable to practitioners in Pennsylvania or states with similar state level legal requirements (i.e., Act One). For example, in state such as Virginia, legal requirements outline what services are to be provided for a student reentering a school district from a juvenile justice placement

(Hirschfield, 2014). Therefore, the likelihood of practices being recommended, as well as the feasibility of those practices, may not accurately reflect the experiences of a school psychologists in another state where their laws dictate certain services are to be provided.

Survey research, particularly self-reports, also carry the potential limitation of inaccurate responding. It is known that participants may respond in a manner intended to reflect social desirability rather than their true approach to reentry practices in their everyday practices (Hart et al., 2015). Regardless, literature supports the use of survey research for the sampling of large groups, such as those in this study, due to the methodology's ability to collect responses to numerous variables with minimal time investment (Ponte, 2015). The forced choice format can further limit the collection of data as multiple-choice responses do not provide insight into why answers are selected or the experience of the participant that leads them to select an answer. Moreover, while we are able to interpret what practices are being recommended or how feasible they are perceived to be, the foundational reasoning behind the responses is not provided in this format.

Implications

The results collected through this study have theoretical and practical implications across settings. By considering all of the results from this survey, we can assess the adjustments necessary for administrators, training institutions, and school psychologists for delivering recommended best practices (de Vries et al., 2015; Drasgow et al., 2001; Kubek et al., 2007; Snodgrass Rangel et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2004; Unruh et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2008).

Furthermore, we have a snapshot for how Pennsylvania's Act One is being implemented to date.

The results of this study may be pertinent to the Pennsylvania's Department of Education (PDE), State Education Agencies (SEAs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), state advocacy

groups (e.g., Education Law Center – Pennsylvania, American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, etc.), and district administrators as it provides a look into the recommendations, perceptions, and beliefs of their school personnel. First, concerned readers may consider the fact that parenting skill development, peer mentoring programs, and group counseling were consistently lower than all other services in both frequency of recommendation and perception of feasibility. Therefore, the development of accessible, comprehensive programs in these areas should be considered an area of focus for students entering from the justice system, as well as the entire student body. Additionally, school psychologists' perceptions of their school's ability to meet the needs of their students was found to be overall positive. Yet, this finding was paired with a slightly negative view of the students' life outcomes which indicates the school's support is likely not meeting these students' long-term needs. Indeed, the Pygmalion effect, where educators' high expectations is correlated with an improvement in behavior and therefore performance in a given area, should be considered (Jahan & Mehrafzoon, 2019). Given that research has indicated a connection between teacher perceptions, relationships and student success, these results may warrant an adjustment to school districts' supports, culture, and professional development plan to improve the effect of school support on life outcomes.

The training institutions that develop the skills of school psychologists may also see these programming areas as points where further education is necessary. Building these aspiring professionals' confidence in advocating for and overseeing the implementation of appropriate, effective programming may increase the likelihood that these services be more readily available in the schools they work in (NASP, 2020). Moreover, as the creation of explicit school policies was consistently rated unnecessary and unfeasible, training institutions must consider the

importance of adhering to the requirements of Act 1 (2022) so as to prioritize educating their students in accordance school policies and procedures that remove barriers.

For school psychologists, the results of this study implicate areas of further personal professional growth with regard to their recommendation of evidence-based practices. Given almost a third of the practices were recommended by less half of the participants, school psychologists need further education on appropriate practices for students returning from juvenile justice placements. They should consider not only what practices are most effective, but why they are effective and how to introduce them to their school, so they are implemented with fidelity. The data on the relationship between school psychologists' perceptions of student life outcomes and their school's ability to meet their needs also brings a juxtaposition of opposing opinions to the forefront. School psychologists must critically consider how it is possible that their school is providing appropriate, effective intervention for students involved in the juvenile justice system, yet their academic, career, and relationship futures are bleak. Finally, school teams should grapple with how their own systems disproportionately send students to the school-to-prison pipeline at the start of the cycle.

Future Research

Future researchers may further build on these results with an emphasis on addressing barriers to the recommendation of best practices as well as the feasibility for implementation of these practices with special attention to those that are underutilized. University programs, professional development trainings, and life-long learning continuing professional education plans need to seriously consider their school psychologists' knowledge of each of these practices and their beliefs about the potential to positively effect student success. The Pygmalion effect showcases how expectations lead student outcomes (Jahan & Mehrafzoon, 2019). Finally, in

order for a school's preparedness to have a positive effect on student life outcomes, it is essential that a positive experience be delivered at school through effective service and appropriate policy provision.

Given Pennsylvania's legal requirements for schools to reduce barriers for students experiencing educational instability due to judicial placements, it is clear that schools now have an affirmative duty to provide effective supports for students entering their districts from juvenile justice placements (Act 1, 2020). This study outlined many evidence-based practices that were deemed unnecessary or unfeasible by key school personnel charged with advocacy for students (NASP, 2020), the school psychologists. Therefore, future researchers may consider a deeper investigation into the barriers that prevent effective implementation within school districts from the perspective of school psychologists; other administrators' perceptions should also be evaluated. These results may further inform the necessary adjustments to schools' practices, policies, and culture that ensure they comply with state laws requiring districts meet students' needs.

School psychologists are trained in a wide variety of skills including information gathering, assessment, and consultation. This diverse repertoire gives them a unique perspective on the selection, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions within their district. Using the information collected through this study, future researchers may consider looking into school psychologists' understanding of these practices, particularly with students involved in the juvenile justice system, to ensure that they are providing accurate, effective input when consulting with their district.

Finally, future researchers may consider investigating further into school psychologists' views on their school's preparedness and students' life outcomes. Examining why these beliefs

exist and how they were formed would allow training institutions, and school psychologists themselves, to face any implicit and explicit biases that exist. Once these biases are identified, they can be dismantled and replaced with positive skills and growth mindset aimed at improving school preparedness.

Conclusions

Adolescents who become involved in the juvenile justice system experience are known to experience traumatic events that effect their mental and physical health, significant disruption to their education, and higher risk for negative life outcomes (Carter, 2019; Hirschfield, 2003; Sizemore et al., 2020). After enduring exclusionary practices, marred by documented disproportionality, and disruptive placement in a juvenile justice facility, these students are often released to school districts that are often unprepared to meet their needs. This study sought to understand how school psychologists in Pennsylvania, approach the recommendations they would make for students in this situation – including their beliefs regarding these students. These psychologists’ have a unique position within school districts to provide evidence-based input, given their training and professional preparations, and are compelled by the state to ensure Act 1 (2022) requirements are considered. Little research has included the school psychologists – particularly their skills in program evaluation and their extensive training in the consumption of professional literature which prioritizes scientific interpretations, adherence to legal requirements, the implementation of programs with fidelity – which lends to their comprehensive and holistic approach to students in the juvenile justice system. The results of this study found that while there were many practices that were commonly recommended and deemed feasible, there were some, including providing parenting skill development, peer mentoring, group counseling, and the creation of explicit school policies, that consistently fell to the end of the list

of needed actions. Additionally, when considering school psychologists' perspective on their districts ability to meet these students' needs alongside their beliefs regarding these students' life outcomes, an inverse relationship was found. That is, school psychologists who had a more positive view of their school's preparedness, had a lower view of the students' life course once they left school. This indicates that schools are likely to under serve the educational needs of one of our most vulnerable groups.

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