Alternative High Schools: What Types Of Programs Lead to the Greatest Level of Effectiveness?

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Abstract
Based on the writings and research of Mary Anne Raywid (1994) and Gary Wehlage (1989), this study sought to identify characteristics of effective alternative high schools in Iowa. This effectiveness was identified as both student retention and graduate completion. The following characteristics were not positively related to graduate completion and student retention: teacher choice, student choice, autonomous schools, and learning community characteristics of discovery learning and simulation. Teacher and administrator lengths of service were also not positively related to graduate completion. As hypothesized, smaller schools did have a negative relationship when compared to student retention. Overall the findings in this study of Iowa's rural alternative high schools did not support the research hypotheses. All schools, however, regardless of specific characteristics, can be effective when given the right combination of learning attributes. This research does help to lay the groundwork for those traits, as well as for future studies.

Review of Literature

One in eight students does not complete high school (McMillen, 1997). Minorities, the poor, and the disabled often fare even worse. Over 50 percent of students in a quarter of the nation's poor, urban high schools fail to graduate (Braddock & McPartland, 1993). Suspension, expulsion, retention, chronic failure, and alienation all contribute to unacceptable dropout and incompletion rates. In response to these issues, many states have created alternative schools to address the needs of students at risk for school failure.

Despite the accelerated growth of alternative schools, research and evaluation of these schools and the effect they have on student retention

and academic achievement levels is very limited. Many schools do not keep accurate records with regards to attendance, discipline referrals, academic grades, and school completion. Many successes are reported through collections of anecdotes, with little or no 'hard data' collected, tabulated or analyzed (Montecel, 1999). States, such as Florida, are now beginning to develop evaluation instruments used to assess the impact of local alternative schools and other dropout prevention programs. Typical evaluation instruments consist of six major components dealing with school climate, resources, curriculum and instruction, transition, specific program planning and evaluation, and leadership (Florida Department of Education, 1999). These instruments also employ measurable indicators that provide evidence that standards are being achieved. Additionally, as the number of alternative high schools increase, their fundamental style and design take on many fragmented approaches. Those factors that lead to higher levels of graduation from alternative schools must be identified in order to propose specific guidelines for the formation of those schools.

The growth of alternative schools can be traced to several factors. The advent of the U.S. Department of Education's Report, *A Nation at Risk,* (Holland, 2002) created a perception that America's public schools were failing to meet the educational needs of students. With our nation's schools losing approximately $77 billion dollars annually because of school dropouts, public schools have had to "step to the plate" to find alternative methods to keep otherwise at-risk students in school. This historical fact has led to the formation of alternative high schools. For the purposes of this paper, at-risk students have been defined as those exposed to inadequate or inappropriate educational experiences in the family, school, or community (Pallas, 1989).

During the 2000-01 school year, 39% of public school districts in the United States administered at least one alternative school for academically at-risk students. This percentage amounts to 10,900 public alternative schools during this year. Also during the 2001-02 school year, 612,900 students were enrolled in public alternative schools. This accounts for 1.3% of all public school students in the United States. This boom in alternative education stems from a variety of reasons. The vast majority of school districts transfer their at-risk students for reasons such as possession, distribution, or use of drugs; physical attacks; chronic truancy; continual academic failure; possession or use of a weapon other than a firearm; disruptive verbal behavior; possession or

use of a firearm; and, pregnancy/parenthood or mental health needs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Generally, alternative education comes from a recognition that all people can be educated. It is in the general interest of society that educational opportunities are provided to enable each individual to find a learning environment in which they can participate. Only through this participation can individuals receive the general education that prepares them for inclusion into the community.

There is also evidence that when adopted as a model, alternative schools can transform school districts (Raywid, 1994). Many different reasons can be cited for these "transformations" but there are several specific factors that mark all successful alternative programs. First, successful alternative schools are small and were designed by those who were going to operate them. They continually maintain a small teacher to student ratio. Second, they took their character, theme, or emphasis from the strengths and interests of the teachers who conceived them. These first two factors lead to the category of size. Third, their teachers all chose the school, with subsequent teachers selected with the input of present staff. The strength of the teaching staff lies in the fact that the teachers chose to work in this type of setting. Fourth, their students and families chose the schools that were administered by a specific teacher-director. Factors three and four lead to the category of choice. Fifth, their small size denied them much auxiliary or specialized staff, such as librarians, counselors, or deans. Students in these schools work directly with their classroom teachers for all of their critical needs. Sixth, the superintendent of the school district sustained the autonomy and protects the integrity of the school. Top administration support the alternative schools and allow them the flexibility to work outside of district bureaucracy. Seventh, all of the schools were relatively free from district interference and the administration also buffered them from demands of central school officials. These preceding three factors of auxiliary services, administrator autonomy, and the buffering of traditional district bureaucracy lend themselves to a category specifically dealing with autonomy. Finally, the continuity of leadership has been considerable.

Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989) believed that two specific factors lead to the success of alternative high schools. First, these schools generate and sustain community within them. Second, they make learning engaging. Raywid (1994) added a third component that alternative

schools provide the organization and structure needed to sustain the first two.

Aronson (1995) also identified from a number of studies the various characteristics of successful alternative schools. The most easily recognizable aspects that these schools included were such features as their culture or climate, organizational structure, curriculum and instruction, and their links to other programs and services. The creative design of programs to meet the specific needs of students and community necessitates that the way schools look may vary, but these general features exist across the range of all successful schools.

Extensive emphasis and energy go into making curriculum compelling, challenging, and inviting. Alternative schools emphasize experience-focused learning and attempt to combine academics with work-related fundamentals (Raywid, 1994). Successful schools give teachers flexibility in designing strategies and methods that will work with their students. Specific strategies include individual learning, cooperative learning, competency based learning, team teaching, peer tutoring, teaching to multiple intelligences, and an absence of tracking. Curriculum usually varies from a focus on basic skills to a focus on personal development and behavior.

Even though evaluation of alternative schools is somewhat limited, it is vital that local districts take on this endeavor. Evaluating these schools is necessary to achieve at least two important goals. First, alternative schools should be held to strict accountability measures. This accountability can help boost the traditional school's faculty and public confidence in these programs. Second, evaluation will inform future decision making and funding mechanisms.

Alternative schools have had a long history filled with many changes, adaptations, and continuous modifications. Educational theorists and researchers have continually published materials and other forms of data to support the strengths of these types of schools. This vast history has led to huge cultural, economical, and financial changes for public school districts. In an attempt to provide a positive atmosphere conducive to learning for all, local school districts have, by the thousands, adopted these alternative philosophies and programs. As federal and state mandates require schools to increase their accountability towards educating all students, alternative forms of education will undoubtedly continue to expand and build upon past findings.

In order to better understand what makes alternative high schools in Iowa effective, it was the purpose of this study to examine characteristics comprising rural alternative high schools in Iowa and to make quantitative comparisons on the types of programs that each contained. These comparisons should lead to an analysis of common characteristics that promote high completion and graduation rates. These common characteristics should also help guide local districts, with assistance from the Department of Education, in making more informed decisions on their current, or new, alternative school programming.

Method

The alternative high schools chosen for this study were all schools classified by the Iowa High School Athletic Association as class A through class 3A. The term "rural" refers to these schools because of their smaller size. This included all school districts other than the largest 48. These top 48 are included in the 4A classification and were not utilized for this research study. Class A through 3A school districts have high school populations (grades 9-11) ranging from 26-545 students.

The total population of alternative schools in the state of Iowa is currently at 108. Of these, 70 questionnaires were sent out to the schools classified for this project. This group comprises 66 of the schools currently in place in Iowa that are not part of a 4A size school district, and those that have been in existence for at least three years. Four schools were omitted because one of the alternative schools was comprised of middle school grades, and the other three were comprised of such a large number of smaller districts that data collection would have been very difficult. This sample was also contacted via e-mail prior to the study to verify that they had been in existence for at least three years.

In an effort to gather reliable data, a questionnaire (see Appendix) was developed to learn specific characteristics that each school utilized in an attempt to foster a successful program. Questions asked were formulated from research gathered dealing with both the theory of learning communities and from research conducted by Raywid (1994) and Wehlage et al. (1989).

The survey instrument itself was comprised of twelve questions (see Appendix), all directly related to the five research questions from this study

(stated below). All questions on the survey were closed-ended and group intervals utilized for purposes of response were designed based on several pilot studies completed. Respondents were given the opportunity for open responses if desired.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship, if any, between both teacher years of service and administrator years of service, and the impact on successful graduate completion?
2. What impact, if any, does the size of the school have on student retention and graduate completion?
3. What does the relationship between teacher choice and student choice have on student retention and graduate completion?
4. What impact, if any, does the autonomy of the school have on student retention and graduate completion?
5. What impact, if any, does the use of learning community teaching methodologies (i.e., discovery learning and simulations) have on graduate completion?

To insure that the instrument developed and the data analysis procedures described above were appropriate for this particular study, a pilot study was conducted with a group of 30 alternative school instructors. These participants were all involved in instruction at alternative high schools in the northeast quadrant of Iowa. This area was chosen so as to help this researcher gain a high degree of response. The schools chosen also were classified in the Iowa High School Athletic Association as schools in class A through 3A. Unfortunately, data received proved difficult to support any type of significance due to the fact that only twenty-one surveys were returned. Of these 21, only 10 indicated the graduation rate. Without this information, data analysis was difficult. This information provided valuable assistance in designing a final version of the survey instrument that was much more user friendly.

The population in the final study was made up of the coordinators and/or teachers of 70 alternative schools throughout the state of Iowa. These schools had been in existence at least three years and were classified through the Iowa High School Athletic Association as schools in class A through 3A. The largest

48 schools were omitted from this study due to their different environments and methods of instruction. These schools operate in a very similar manner to the traditional high school where several instructors teach various courses and students move from subject to subject. Since this is not where the largest growth in alternative schools has been, these types of schools were not the focus of this study. Of the 70 potential respondents, 61 completed and returned the instrument. This yielded a return rate of 87%. Sixty-seven percent of the schools contacted replied to the initial survey mailing, 20% replied after a follow up e-mail, and 13% did not respond.

Results

Data tabulated from survey responses were then placed into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) package and analyzed for statistical significance using the Pearson Chi-Square. When the survey questions articulated with Research Question 1 were analyzed, 56 respondents answered with specific knowledge about their principal tenure and subsequent graduate completion rate. Of these 56, 78.6% responded that more than one-half of their students had graduated. The highest percentage of graduate completion showed up where the principal had been in his or her position from one to three years. Also worth noting was that a total of 19 respondents (34%) answered that their principal had been in his or her position from four to five years or six to ten years. Thus, of the 44 respondents answering that they had more than half of their students graduate, 59% came from alternative schools where the principal had at least four years of service to the district. While it is a finding worth noting that 78.6% of the schools surveyed showed a graduate completion rate of more than half, the data did not support a statistically positive relationship between this rate and the tenure of the building principal from which the students originated.

To further attempt to answer Research Question 1, survey questions that dealt with the tenure of the alternative school teacher and the subsequent graduate completion rate at the specific schools were analyzed. 75.4% of the respondents indicated that at least half of their students had graduated. Of these 46, 65% were found to be from schools where the teacher tenure had been at least six years.

When the survey questions articulated with Research Question 2 were analyzed, the first test that was performed dealt with looking at the size of the school and the graduate completion rate. From the data analyzed, it was noted that 98.3% of the respondents provided this information. Of these 60, 38.3% indicated that the size of their school was between 21 and 30 students. Schools with more than 30 students and those with 16 to 20 students both indicated a graduate completion rate of 21.6%. However, of these school sizes, only 80% showed a graduate completion rate of more than half. Thus, five of these schools had a graduate completion rate of only one-fourth to one-half of their students.

To further answer Research Question 2, the two variables of school size and subsequent retention were analyzed. The data showed that alternative schools ranging in size from 21 to 30 students had the greatest number of student retention. Of the 59 respondents, 20% indicated that one-fourth to three-fourths of their students remained in the alternative school setting for at least one full year. Another 18.6% responded that more than three-fourths of their students stayed for one full year or more. Another high degree of retention existed with the schools that maintained over 30 students. In these schools, 69% of the respondents indicated that more than three-fourths of their students stayed in school for one full year or more. This relationship proved to be statistically significant.

When the survey questions articulated with Research Question 3 were analyzed, the first test that was performed looked at whether or not teachers were satisfied in their decisions to teach in an alternative school setting and the impact, if any, this factor had on the graduate completion rate within their schools. Of the 60 respondents, 81.6% were very satisfied with their decisions to teach in an alternative school setting. Of these 49, 79.6% indicated that their students graduated at a rate of more than one-half. Another 16% indicated that one-fourth to one-half of their students graduated. Another 11.6% indicated that they were satisfied in their decision to teach in an alternative school setting, and showed that at least one-fourth of their students graduated. Worth noting was that only 5% of the teachers indicated that they were dissatisfied at all to teach in the setting they were in.

Within Research Question 3, the next analysis that was performed looked at the variables of teacher choice and student retention. While 83% of the

teachers indicated that they were very satisfied to teach in the alternative school setting they were in, only 47% of those responded that more than three-fourths of their students remained in school for one full year or more. Another 49% indicated that one-fourth to three-fourths of their students remained in school for one full year or more. While these were strong numbers, and accounted for 83% of the teachers that responded, there was not a strong relationship that existed to indicate a high degree of retention.

As part of the analysis for Research Question 3, student choice and the graduate completion rate were discussed. 84.7% of the respondents indicated that more than three-fourths of their students had come to the alternative school based on a mutual decision between themselves and the school's administration. The remaining 15.3% of the respondents indicated that one-fourth to three-fourths of their students came to the alternative school setting based on that same mutual decision.

Another set of variables tested within Research Question 3 were student choice and subsequent retention in school. While 84.7% of the respondents indicated that more than three-fourths of their students had come to the alternative school based on a mutual decision between themselves and the school's administration, only 50% indicated a retention rate of more than three-fourths. Another 48% indicated that only one-fourth to three-fourths of their students had remained in the alternative school for one full year or more. Of the remaining 9 respondents only 33% indicated that more than three-fourths of their students had remained in the school for one full year or more. A p value of .301 indicated no statistical significance.

When the survey questions articulated with Research Question 4 were analyzed, the student use of auxiliary services at the regular high school and the impact, if any, on the graduate completion rate were observed. Given the specific data, it was obvious that the respondents indicated a high degree of students not utilizing these services. While 47.5% of the respondents indicated that more than one-half of their students had graduated, they also showed that less than one-fourth of their students utilized auxiliary services at the regular high school. These services included the media center/library, the guidance office, and the health center. Only 16.4% indicated that more than one-half of their students graduated and that within those same schools, more than three-fourths of their students took advantage of auxiliary services at the regular high school.

When the use of auxiliary services was compared to the student retention at specific alternative high schools, it was evident that 63.3% of the respondents indicated that their students took advantage of auxiliary services at the regular high school less than one-fourth of the time. Further evident is that only 21.7% of the respondents indicated that their students utilized the auxiliary services more than three-fourths of the time. While 46.7% indicated that more than three-fourths of their students remained in their schools for one full year or more, 67.9% of those respondents showed that their students utilized auxiliary services less than one-fourth of the time. Therefore, the data showed no real confidence in indicating any type of relationship between these two variables.

Two additional variables were analyzed to determine the autonomy of the alternative schools. These two variables consisted of the autonomy of the alternative school and the relationship, if any, that existed between that and the graduate completion rate of that school. Specifically, the autonomy of the school referred to the alternative school having the flexibility to work outside of the district bureaucracy, being relatively free from district interference, and buffered from demands of central office officials. While 77% of the respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that their school was relatively autonomous, their subsequent graduation rate was somewhat dispersed. 21.3% of these respondents indicated that one-fourth to one-half of their students graduated, while another 76.6% indicated that more than one-half of their students graduated.

When the survey questions articulated with Research Question 5 were analyzed, the corresponding test dealt with the impact, if any, that the use of learning community teaching methodologies such as discovery learning and simulations had on graduate completion. In the first analysis, the use of simulations was examined. Respondents answered in a variety of ways; and these responses were not at all strongly related to high graduation rates. 41% of the respondents indicated that they used simulations somewhat, but those same respondents showed graduation rates ranging from 20%, where one-fourth to one-half of their students graduated, to 76%, where more than one-half of their students graduated. These numbers alone show a wide variance in responses. On the opposite side of this, 26.2% of the respondents indicated that they used simulations very little. Within this group, 31.3% indicated that one-fourth to one-half of their students graduated and another 68.8% indicated

that more than one-half of their students graduated. Although not statistically significant, nine of the respondents made considerable use of simulations, and of this group, 88.9% showed a graduate completion rate of more than one-half.

The final analysis within Research Question 5 dealt with the teaching methodology of discovery learning and subsequent graduate completion rates. While only 11.5% of the respondents made considerable use of discovery learning in their alternative school settings, 71.4% showed a graduation rate of more than one-half of their students. Another strong factor that was evident existed in the schools that said they used discovery learning moderately. Of these schools, 81.25% indicated a graduation rate of more than one-half of their students.

Discussion

Both teacher tenure and administrator tenure showed strong relationships within some of the years of service categories, but there were no specific categories that lent themselves to strong relationships that were significant to the .05 expectancy level. There also existed no statistical relationship between the size of alternative schools and the impact of that size on both graduate completion rates and student retention. Between the variables of teacher choice and graduate completion, there existed no statistically significant relationship when compared to the .05 expectancy level. However, 13% of the relationship would be considered to have occurred by chance. This low percentage lends itself well to further research in this area. Also showing no significance were the two variables of teacher choice and student retention. This test indicated that as much as 72% of any relationship would be considered to have occurred by chance. While respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction in their choice to teach in an alternative school setting (95%), their levels of student retention varied far too much to be considered significant.

Another set of variables that indicated no relationship based on the .05 expectancy level were that of student choice and graduation rate. The chi-square test indicated that as much as 19% of any relationship would occur by chance. The final analysis within this question was conducted between the variables of student choice and retention. The tests performed indicated that as much as 30% of any relationship would occur by chance. When looking at the analysis of the variables that dealt with the use of auxiliary services at the

regular high school, the significance levels were very weak. However, earlier research further documents that successful alternative schools are typically smaller in size and that this size does not allow for the use of these auxiliary services**.** Thus, while there existed no statistically significant relationship, they actually support earlier research that was conducted.

When learning community methodologies were compared with graduate completion, the variable of discovery learning indicated a 43% probability that the significance was by chance, while the simulations variable indicated an 85% probability that any observed results was by chance. As is evident with this data, the learning communities' phenomenon may lead to strong communities of learning, but the specific methodologies selected from earlier research do not tend to have much of an impact on graduate completion.

Conclusions

This study sought to determine, through a self-administered survey, if specific characteristics of alternative high schools in rural Iowa lent themselves to higher graduate completion and retention rates for their students. The following conclusions have been drawn based on a review of the relevant literature as well as on the findings of this study.

1. Of the 70 alternative high schools chosen for this study, over half indicated that they had been in existence for less than ten years. This finding was consistent with the research results of Holland (2002), Young (1990), and Walberg (1992).
2. The respondents in this study indicated that their alternative schools were quite small. Sixty percent showed that thirty or fewer students attended their schools. This finding was consistent with the research results of DeBlois (2000), Berlin and Cienkus (1989), and Raywid (1994).
3. Alternative school teachers and coordinators throughout this study indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with their jobs. Over 80% showed that they were very satisfied with their decision to teach in the alternative school setting. In addition, 85% of the respondents indicated that they believed that their students chose the alternative school setting based on their own decision. These findings were consistent with the research results of Raywid (1994), Isaacson and

Bamburg (1992), and Marshak (1998).

4. The largest percentage of administrators involved in this study (52.4%), had been in their positions less than five years. This data supports the recent reports from the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) indicating the large turnover in Iowa administrators.
5. There existed no statistically significant relationship between the student use of auxiliary services at the traditional high school and subsequent graduate completion rates. This data indicated that successful alternative schools were small in nature and that their size limited the opportunities for students to take advantage of these services. These findings were consistent with the research results of Raywid (1994).

While many of the conclusions drawn from this study supported the earlier stated research, the vast majority of the statistical tests that were conducted did not prove to be significant at the level of expectancy. Several conclusions can be drawn from these results.

1. While alternative schools, in some form, have been around for well over fifty years, their large expansion in the state of Iowa has been much more recent. This fact tends to limit the body of knowledge that can be drawn from participating alternative school instructors.
2. Specific characteristics that were tested for were quantitative in nature. However, effective schools of any type are still guided by simple characteristics such as caring instructors, relevant curriculum, and students that are motivated to succeed in areas where they have not always been successful. These characteristics are very subjective in nature and difficult to test for.
3. The categories utilized on the survey instrument were quite specific and small in range. While these types of categories lend themselves to more objective data, they tend to limit the findings of statistical significance. One can assume that broader categories would have likely increased the chances of finding statistical significance between several of the variables tested.
4. Consistent findings to research do not always indicate that a statistical significance will exist between two variables. Simply looking at percentages may indicate that some degree of relationship may exist.

However, proving that relationship to be statistically significant at the .05 expectancy level is much more difficult due to the countless factors that play a role in any type of quantitative testing.

Implications

While the body of literature containing information about alternative high schools is quite extensive, the information regarding current practices and effective methodologies is lacking. One aspect that was discussed in the literature was specific to accountability. While alternative high schools in the past did not adhere to the same types of accountability standards; that is drastically changing. Current alternative high schools must now live by the same standards and assessment criteria as traditional schools.

Another implication from this study is the information found through the survey and yet identified as not being statistically significant. While the majority of the variables tested did not yield a statistical significance near the .05 expectancy level, a larger group of respondents may very well broaden the scope of responses and thus increase the chances for significance.

As school districts search frantically for ways to save money and resources, alternative schools will most certainly figure into this search. While schools do not typically view students in terms of dollars, every student that they prevent from dropping out is a savings of roughly $5,000. Alternative schools not only help prevent students from dropping out of school completely, but they also keep students on the district "roster." Add to these factors the research from Morley (1991) indicating that alternative school graduates tend to become productive citizens, and the evidence lends itself strongly to a continued growth in alternative forms of education.

Observations

The growth of alternative high schools in Iowa has been extensive and widespread. This growth, however, has come at such a rapid pace that many characteristics that lend themselves to at-risk student success have been overlooked.

Successful alternative schools must be built upon the premise that all students can succeed and graduate. To facilitate this success, these schools

need to incorporate not only quantitative characteristics such as small size and specific teaching methodologies, but they must embellish those subjective traits that make all effective schools what they are. Traits such as caring people building a community of learners, as well as those caring people facilitating an environment where effective teaching and learning is commonplace. While these subjective characteristics can be enhanced by objective variables researched in this paper, one does not specifically rely on the other.

While the levels of statistical significance found in this paper did not indicate any of the research hypotheses to be supported by the data, the data should still prove beneficial in facilitating future thought and research. Alternative schools currently in existence, as well as those districts considering starting these types of schools, can learn a great deal about what factors lead to effective programming. This research should also help those same schools realize what are not specific requirements for success. In both methods, administrators and program coordinators have a body of research that can help provide them with knowledge that did not previously exist.

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Appendix

This questionnaire is intended for the person or persons most knowledgeable about the alternative school in your school district. Please feel free to collaborate with others who are able to help provide the required information. If you wish to make an additional response to a question, please feel free to do so.

1. How long has your alternative school been in existence?

_____ 3 - 5 years
_____ 6 - 10 years
_____ 11 - 15 years
_____ more than 15 years

2. To the best of your knowledge, how long has the high school principal, within your district, been in his/her job?

_____ 1 -3 years
_____ 4 - 5 years
_____ 6 - 10 years
_____ 11 - 15 years
_____ more than 15 years

3. How long have you been in your current position as teacher/director of your alternative school?

_____ 1 - 3 years
_____ 4 - 5 years
_____ 6 - 10 years
_____ 11 - 15 years
_____ more than 15 years

4. At the present time, how many students are enrolled in your alternative school?

_____ less than 10
_____ 11 - 15
_____ 16 - 20
_____ 21 - 30
_____ more than 30

5. What is your maximum capacity?

_____ less than 10
_____ 11 - 15
_____ 16 - 20
_____ 21 - 30
_____ more than 30

6. How satisfied are you with your decision to teach in an alternative school setting?

_____ very satisfied
_____ satisfied
_____ dissatisfied
_____ very dissatisfied

7. About what proportion of your students came to your alternative school based on a **mutual** decision between themselves and the school's administration?

_____ less than one-fourth
_____ one-fourth to three-fourths
_____ more than three-fourths

8. About what proportion of your students stay in your alternative school for one full year or more?

_____ less than one-fourth
_____ one-fourth to three-fourths
_____ more than three-fourths

9. About what proportion of your students have visited any of the following auxiliary services at the regular high school: library, guidance, and/or health services?

_____ less than one-fourth
_____ one-fourth to three-fourths
_____ more than three-fourths

10. For purposes of this study, **autonomy** refers to alternative schools having the flexibility to work outside of district bureaucracy; are relatively free from district interference; and are buffered from demands of central school officials. From your perspective, please rate your agreement or disagreement with this statement: "This alternative educational program is relatively autonomous."

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly disagree

11. **Discovery Learning** requires that students learn through direct or hands-on experiences.

Simulations require that students are engaged in real life activities that provide them with the essence or essential elements of the real situation.

To what degree are your alternative school students involved in these characteristics of learning communities?

Discovery Learning			**Simulations**
_____	very little	_____	very little
_____	somewhat	_____	somewhat
_____	moderately	_____	moderately
_____	considerably	_____	considerably

12. About what proportion of your alternative school students complete the necessary requirements for graduation.

_____ less than one-fourth
_____ one-fourth to one-half
_____ more than one-half