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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFICACY OF ADVISORY PROGRAMS IN
TWO KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOLS

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

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TWO KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOLS

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A Dissertation Approved on

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Dr. Joshua D. Phelan, and my sons, Drake and Asher. Thank you, Josh, for showing me what I am capable of. My every success has been founded on your belief in me. Drake, thank you for being so reliable and patient. Your calm presence keeps me moored. Asher, thank you for being so charming and silly. Your laugh is contagious. I love you and thank God for each of you.

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Thank you to my incredible dissertation committee for agreeing to be part of seeing this study to fruition. To Dr. Debbie Powers, my amazing chair and a constant (and ever-accessible) voice of reason. To Dr. Adam Hicks, you were so helpful in making sure my data was accurate and thorough. To Dr. Stevens, thank you for being honest and telling me how it is, and for the candles, of course. To Dr. Yarbrough, I want to be you when I grow up.

Thank you to Shelby County Public Schools for providing me such a strong start in my journey as a public school educator and leader. Dr. Sally Sugg, thank you for

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ABSTRACT

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFICACY OF ADVISORY PROGRAMS IN TWO KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOLS

Mitzi D. Phelan

December 15, 2023

It is the endeavor of this research project to investigate how a gap in understanding and communication of an advisory program's fundamental purpose could potentially impact the thoughts and beliefs of teachers in shaping their perceptions of an advisory program's efficacy. To this end, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of twelve teacher-advisors in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky to understand their concepts of an advisory program's efficacy. Using convenience sampling, twelve teacher-advisors participated in semi-structured interviews, providing insight into three research questions regarding teachers' beliefs, intentionality, and challenges of implementing a school-based advisory program. The results of this study will be valuable in improving the process of introducing and enacting advisory programs into school settings effectively.

Teacher-advisors shared their lived experiences of serving as teacher-advisors in an advisory program. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using Initial (Open) Coding and In Vivo coding. Five main codes and eight sub-codes emerged from the data, those codes are: Relationships, Goals, Communication, Efficacy, and Social Emotional Learning. Each theme was used to address the three research questions

regarding teacher-advisors' beliefs, intentionality and challenges of implementing an advisory program.

Findings from this research suggested that teacher-advisors' perceptions of their own self-efficacy as a teacher-advisor informs their implementation of advisory and shapes their perception of the efficacy of the advisory programs. Findings also showed that teacher-advisors' self-efficacy is shaped by their ability to accomplish the perceived goals of advisory; relationship-building, fulfillment of the school's advisory program framework, and successful completion of the advisory's year-end project.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Friday, March 13, 2020, was the last time I ever shared a physical space with my senior English class of 2020. From that day forward, teaching has never been the same. Today, classrooms are peopled with students that are markedly changed, forever altered by a world-wide pandemic that changed the fabrics of their lives. The ‘before-times’ lessons could be structured completely around learning targets with little consideration given to the social and emotional gaps that a pandemic would leave in future students. While it is true that equity and inclusion had become more attended to in the educational sphere prior the pandemic, it is clear that in the post-pandemic world the work must be taken up even more purposefully. Now, there is even more that must be done.

The role that the COVID-19 would play in disrupting lives was unimaginable. Teachers, counselors, and administrators worked rapid-fire to shift to alternative methods of instruction and communication in hopes to counter the loss of learning and need for support that would emerge from interrupted seat time for students. For students, their trauma came in compounded waves of new responsibilities and experiences they had not previously encountered. Combined with fear of the virus, long periods of isolation, and uncertainty about the world around them, many students did not thrive in this new environment. Thus, it is imperative for the public educational system to understand the methods and procedures used in preparing students pre-pandemic are now inadequate.

For the reasons outlined, advisory programs with social and emotional learning firmly centered in the design are becoming necessary to address the needs of the post-

pandemic trauma students bring into schools. However, for these advisory programs to be successful, teachers called upon to fill the role of advisors must have the adequate training and preparation to implement the social emotional learning components. Research has shown that most teacher pre-service programs do not have intentional social emotional learning training in place in their required courses (Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2017). Duly, teachers, both old and new, likely have multiple misinterpretations about advisory programs brought about by unclear expectations and inconsistent implementation practices. These experiences of misinterpretations are not just localized to only a few schools with gaps in knowledge and practice but are likely found nationwide. Wherever they are found, they are indeed detrimental to enacting successful advisory programs that meet critical needs in our students, especially post-pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

It was the endeavor of this research project to investigate how this gap in understanding and communication of an advisory program's fundamental purpose could potentially impact the thoughts and beliefs of teacher-advisors in shaping their perceptions of advisory program's efficacy. To this end, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the current thoughts and beliefs of teacher-advisors in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky to understand their concepts of advisory program efficacy.

Research has shown that teachers' beliefs inform their practices and understanding their beliefs around advisory programs will shed valuable light on how advisory programs are most likely being implemented contributes to the success rate of

advisory programs, both individually and holistically (Bandura, 1977, 1997, 2006; Lazarides & Warner, 2020; Ross, 1994; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Context of Study

The context for this study was Shelby County High School and Martha Layne Collins High School, the only high schools in the Shelby County Public School District. I selected these secondary schools in this district purposefully, as they implemented advisory programs in 2019.

Important to the context of the study was to understand the student demographics of both high schools in the district. As of the 2020-2021 school year, the demographic data from Infinite Campus, the district's learning management system, showed that Shelby County High School had 979 students, of which 46.6% are economically disadvantaged. Of the student body, 62.1% students are white, 24.7% are Hispanic/Latino, 5.6% are African American, and 6.0% are listed as two or more races. For Martha Layne Collins High School, the demographics are a little different. They host 1,183 students, of which 53.3% are economically disadvantaged. Of the student body, 55.3% students are white, 29.9% are Hispanic/Latino, 7.5% are African American, and 6.1% are listed as two or more races (MLCHS & SCHS, 2020-2023. [Student demographics] [Unpublished raw data]. Infinite Campus, Inc.).

There were three research questions guiding this study. They were:

RQ 1: What shared beliefs about the purpose of advisory programs exist among the teachers who cultivate advisory programs?

RQ 2: In what ways do teachers consciously and intentionally create advisory programs for their specific community of students?

RQ 3: What challenges emerge for teachers when creating advisory programs for students?

These questions were answered by using a qualitative, phenomenological design with a constructivist lens.

Significance of the Study

Advisory programs are becoming more and more common in school districts across the United States due to the growing complex needs, both social and academic, of today's students. Through the promising models of advisory programs, structured time can allow for advisors to create intentional spaces for students to engage in learning opportunities that foster and develop academic, social, and emotional skills (McClure et al., 2010). These skills, focused on a whole-child approach, allow students to develop tools crucial to deconstructing potential barriers.

When advisory programs are coupled with social and emotional components, along with academic support, the complex needs of students are met on multiple levels (Chaturvedi, et al., 2021). While states have begun recognizing the value in implicit social emotional learning for both students and teachers, colleges of education have been slow to design required coursework with intentional social emotional components (Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2017). Multiple theorists have taken up investigating how teacher identity is composed, and the research very often points to the importance of a teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy when performing the many roles of teaching; designing and implementing instruction, managing classroom behaviors, and the overall work of guiding students (Hoy & Spero, 2005; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016).

The gap that becomes evident is the one this study sought to investigate: if teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy are critical for successfully implementing advisory programs, and they have received little training to perform the role of advisor, what are their perceptions of effective advisory programs?

Ample literature exists discussing the value of advisory programs, social emotional learning, the lack of social emotional learning opportunities for teachers, and the importance of teacher self-efficacy, but a gap remained in literature that turned the focus back toward teachers to investigate their perceptions of the effectiveness of advisory programs. This will be what sets this study apart from the current literature available. It is hopeful that the findings that emerged from this study will aid in multiple ways; to persuade schools, both in which teachers work and also those that prepare teachers for their careers, to invest time in equipping teacher-advisors to successfully serve in the space somewhere between guidance counselor and teacher, to design advisory programs more intentionally with solid components of social emotional learning in place, and lastly, to honor advisory programs as the sacred spaces they are. Lastly, these emergent findings hopefully serve as a clarion call for educational leaders from all levels of power to authentically and purposefully investigate ways to support teacher-advisors with training and ongoing support to be the advisors our students need.

Theoretical Underpinnings and the Selection of Methodology

This qualitative research study utilized an interpretive phenomenological framework to explore the lived experiences of teachers serving in a role of an advisor in a high school space. The primary focus of qualitative research is to explore and understand the meaning individuals ascribe to their lived experiences usually a specific and particular

phenomenon (Creswell, 2018). Researchers use this approach to explore and investigate to learn more about social phenomena and to attempt to understand the meanings people attach to their everyday lived experiences.

This constructivist lens, sometimes referred to as interpretive, was appropriate in that constructivism is “defined as a view of human beings as actively constructing knowledge, in their own subjective and intersubjective realities and in contextually specific ways (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 182). Leavy describes this lens as one that examines how people engage in the “process of constructing and reconstructing meaning through daily interactions” (p. 129).

Interpretive phenomenological studies most often use in-depth interviews as the primary source of data collection (Leavy, 2017). The length of time for these interviews can vary with many researchers recommending 1 to 2 hours (Leedy and Omrod, 2019). Since this study was an attempt to explore the lived experiences of individuals who are serving as advisors in two Kentucky high school advisory programs, interpretive phenomenology offered the best framework to study the experiences of the targeted participants in the two district high schools. Through this framework I was able to mine for meaningful experiences and insight into the lived experiences surrounding the phenomenon of the perceptions of self-efficacy teachers when filling the advisor role and how those feelings translated to perceived perceptions of the efficacy of advisory programs. For the purposes of this research project a phenomenological study was more appropriate than a different method of qualitative inquiry, such as a case study, because I was seeking out the experiences of individuals from two different high schools and focusing specifically on their experience as teacher-advisors in relation to their feelings

of preparedness and efficacy and its impact on the perceptions of successful advisory programs according to those teacher-advisors.

Definitions of Terms

I used the following terms in the context of this study:

Advisory Programs: a regularly scheduled period of time, typically during the school day, when teachers meet with small groups of students for the purpose of advising them on academic, social, or future-planning issues. In some cases, other adults and staff members, such as guidance counselors or social workers, may act as advisors or participate in an advisory program (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2015).

Social Emotional Learning: the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013, p. 10).

Teacher-Advisor: A teacher serving in the capacity as an advisor in an advisory program.

Teacher Self-Efficacy: the belief that one holds about one's capability with regard to the domain of teaching (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized as follows: Chapter 1 includes the introduction, purpose, statement of research questions, rationale for the study, scope of the study, definition of terms, methods, data sources, and organizational summary of this study. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive review of the relevant literature to this study. Chapter 3 is an

explanation of the research methodology used, data collection, and procedures of this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of my study. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the study's major findings and includes recommendations for future research and policy implications.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Review of Literature

It was the endeavor of this research project to investigate how a gap in understanding and communication of an advisory program's fundamental purpose could potentially impact the thoughts and beliefs of teacher- advisors in shaping their perceptions of advisory program's efficacy. To this end, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the current thoughts and beliefs of teacher- advisors in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky to understand their concepts of advisory program efficacy.

These are the three questions that guided this study:

RQ 1: What shared beliefs about the purpose of advisory programs exist among the teachers who cultivate advisory programs?

RQ 2: In what ways do teachers consciously and intentionally create advisory programs for their specific community of students?

RQ 3: What challenges emerge for teachers when creating advisory programs for students?

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to student advisory programs including their intended purposes and those that serve as advisors. Advisory programs are now permanent fixtures in the schedules of many schools across the nation. As this literature review discusses, they provide an intentional space of time in students'

schedules to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs that may need attending to in their lives (Makkonen, 2004). Further, the multi-layered approach of advisory programs afford schools opportunities to comply with state legislation. However, as advisory programs gain popularity, so does the need for more research to fully understand its impact on schools, advisors, and most importantly, students.

This literature review examined scores of research with the intention to define advisories, investigate the history of advisories, understand the purposes of advisories, and to explore the perspectives and beliefs of those that enact advisory programs, the teacher-advisors. To do this, attention was given to the legislation that was crafted and the shifting sands of the educational landscape that created the space for advisories to emerge.

Defining Advisories

Advisories are an important source of school culture (Johnson, 2009). Simply defining an advisory program is a task within itself. The time set aside by schools that would align with the concept of being an advisory group existing within an advisory program manifests differently in schools and districts across the United States and goes by just as many different titles and labels. Further, the make-up of advisory programs and their respective student groups varies in its purposes and executions. Therefore, for this study, I co-opted the Glossary of Education Reform's definition of "advisory" as it is situated within an advisory program:

a regularly scheduled period of time, typically during the school day, when teachers meet with small groups of students for the purpose of advising them on academic, social, or future-planning issues. In some cases, other adults and staff

members, such as guidance counselors or social workers, may act as advisors or participate in an advisory program (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2015).

Within advisory programs, advisory periods can occur daily, weekly, or even monthly. The way the advisory period's time is spent can vary from school to school but often it is constructed loosely on a day-to-day basis with an overarching framework, the advisory program itself, which typically has goals and tasks to meet at certain times throughout the school year.

The impact of advisory programs on students both emotionally and academically cannot be overstated. Meloro (2005) writes,

Student advisory programs can play an important role in the high school environment, one that is missing in many school structures. They provide students with at least one adult who knows about them and can assist them as they progress through their high school years. In addition, it provides them with a guided opportunity for social interaction. During the school day, students are primarily engaged in instructional activities with little opportunity to interact with each other and their teacher with a prosocial and nonacademic focus. Student advisory programs give them this time to personalize the high school experience (p. 17).

This structure, when attended to intentionally and with fidelity by all stakeholders, can go far in preparing students for success in areas of their lives where there may be social and academic gaps inhibiting them from realizing their full potential.

History of Advisory Programs

The origin of how advisory programs came to be a dominant model in the educational system is indeed multi-faceted. The landscape that allowed for the development of advisory programs, however, was borne out of the 1980s shift in educational practices which began moving away from the dominating ideologies like Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and instead turned its focus toward practices more aligned with Vygotsky's theories of social constructivism. This new focus on adolescent social and emotional development and their confluence with how learning occurs revolutionized the way learning happened in schools across the country.

As the focus intensified on the social and emotional components of education, so did the role of guidance counselors to ensure these needs were being met in the schoolhouse. Historically, the focus of guidance counselors has arced from vocational guidance in the pre-1950s to the modern tasks of including personal and social skills and ensuring the comprehensive development of students (Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998). This expansive role is not easy to navigate within the constraints of the school day when it is distilled down to meeting these multiple needs in each individual student. Compounding the issue is the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommendation that the counselor ratio be 250:1 and it is evident that it is nearly impossible for school counselors to "ensure equitable academic, career and social/emotional development opportunities" for every student (ASCA, 2021).

Advisory Programs as a Response to Legislation

Shifts in the history of education that set the stage for the development of advisory programs are due in part to the educational reforms that were developed over the last three to four decades. Historically, educational reforms have been constructed and

put into practice as well-intentioned attempts to rectify issues such as racial inequities and other disparities that hinder equitable access to education. While done with the best of intention to address identified issues, education reforms once in practice were often misguided or even misdirected. In retrospect, it is easy to see how early reforms were founded in equity but morphed into being primarily academic focused, resulting in test-centric and metric-oriented legislations.

As legislators, policymakers, educators, parents, and other stakeholders reflected on the successes and errors of these earlier reforms, new ones came into being. These modern iterations of reform, specifically 2015's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) were attempts to rectify the scores of states with low performing schools. These accountability measures were created with the goal of positioning students toward success by considering students' experiences as they make their way through the educational system. ESSA consisted of a framework of five indicators that states were required to submit plans on how they would satisfy each indicator. The first four indicators were academically focused, but the fifth indicator was explicitly constructed as a way to focus holistically on student development evidenced by using language such as "student/community engagement" and "school climate" as suggested benchmarks (Marion & Lyons, 2016).

To satisfy the fifth indicator, some schools opted for incorporating blocks of time as an advisory period in which to perform the work of an advisory program. By incorporating advisory programs, which were designed as a place to build relationships with students, and then transitioning many of the social, emotional, and academic tasks traditionally ascribed to guidance counselors over to teacher-advisors, schools were able

to ‘check the box’ for ESSA’s fifth indicator, alleviate the stress of the student to guidance counselor ration and implement a protected time for holistic student development.

Models of Advisory Programs

Typically, most schools opt to perform the functions of an advisory program through the implementation of an advisory period. Advisory periods stem from the concept of creating a space of time in a student’s schedule that can be used multiple ways. This creates groups of students who are typically in the same grade-level. Often, advisory programs are intentionally constructed to meet the requirements of ESSA’s fifth indicator. This means that advisory periods likely look extremely different among schools nation-wide, and sometimes even within districts (Johnson, 2009).

The most appealing aspect for schools implementing an advisory program through advisory periods is the potential for flexibility of content. This flexibility means that it is often rare to see advisory programs carried out the same way in each advisory student group even in the same school as teacher-advisors are able to personalize the content based on students’ needs (Johnson, 2009). The dedicated advisory period can also be used by the school to synchronize assigned days of instruction and address whichever ESSA requirement is most in need of attention. For example, if students are struggling with “Proficiency” or meeting a “Separate Other” academic indicator and/or “Growth” then a school could potentially dedicate advisory period time once or twice a week to enrichment time with the benefit of having a teacher-advisor in the room to assist with tutoring. Some schools also use advisory period as a time to have teacher-advisors discuss students’ academic performance and assign additional support by enrolling them

in specific extended school services (ESS) that are available. “Transition readiness” can be met during advisory period time through guiding advisory cohorts collectively through the district’s achievement plan framework, e.g., Profile of a Graduate, Backpack of Success, etc., aimed at promoting student-growth holistically.

A breakdown of how Kentucky interprets ESSA’s fifth indicator is outlined in *The Commonwealth of Kentucky Revised Consolidated State Plan Under The Every Student Succeeds Act* (Pruitt, [2018](#)). Their goals can be achieved when matched with an advisory program’s period time in multiple ways. “Achievement Gap Closure” can be addressed through an advisory program by centering diversity when creating advisories and additionally through encouraging advisors to plan advisory period events that create opportunities for inclusion through cultural appreciation and implementing diversity learning opportunities.

Pruitt’s (2018) *The Commonwealth of Kentucky Revised Consolidated State Plan Under The Every Student Succeeds Act* contains an at-a-glance accountability system which outlines the indicators of achievement and measures at which they might be obtained. Advisory programs could be structured to meet these indicators in a variety of ways as supported through the measures outlined. For example, “Opportunity and Access” (Pruitt, 2018) could be met in an advisory program period by multiple ways and is broadly interpreted. A few ways some schools could meet this requirement is by creating advisory curriculum where students can have the opportunity to explore their interests. Also, an advisory period can also provide time for targeted and intentional academic support through teacher access. It can also be used to gauge the school climate

from the student point of view and also to enhance student engagement by promoting school events.

An advisory program's time can also potentially influence "Graduation Rate" (Pruitt, 2018) through strengthening students' connections to the school. This can be done when teacher-advisors implement social emotional learning techniques into their advisories which helps students to learn to manage their emotions and also serves to form positive relationships with peers and adults, making them less likely to disengage from school and more likely to graduate. Also, an advisory period can be used to play games, engage in fun, non-traditional activities, and connect to students in various, non-academically focused ways. These opportunities, when done intentionally and with all staff members on board and aware of the goal, student success, could be powerfully effective in meeting ESSA's fifth requirement.

Why School Advisory Programs?

Advisory program periods are often the most important space of time in the school day for students and teacher-advisors to build vital relationships. This is the time when adults can connect with students in a significant way. This includes monitoring students' emotional health and academic needs (Johnson, 2009). Teacher-advisors are vitally important in a student's development. Therefore, it is equally important to understand how the teacher-advisor constructs their own identities when embodying this role. The construction of teacher identity and how it shifts over time can be most successfully understood through the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and additionally through the work of Bakhtin (1981; 1986). The lens of sociocultural theory focuses on the development of identity in the context of different sociocultural

perspectives. It is the constant resituating of the 'self' as interactions with 'others' in the social community occur that allows for the construction of identity (Friesen & Besley, 2013). This is clearly seen in new teachers constructing their teacher identity as they are immersed in new spaces and new peer networks.

The choice of using the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky and Bahktin is drawn from their work in the developmental process. Both theorists focus on how growing and learning occur, but in slightly different ways. Vygotsky's (1978; 1986) ideology centered on how development occurred in activity systems. Bahktin's (1981; 1986) works in confluence with Vygotsky's theories as he centers the role of dialogue in development. Further, both theorists examine how people grow and their identities shift as they move through social communities. As the necessity of filling the gaps in students' social, emotional, and academic skills has become more and more necessary, public education has stepped in to take up the slack left behind; a whole-child approach.

The potential impact advising periods can have on student success is well documented. One study states, "There is growing evidence that indicates greater personalization -- improved, trusting relationships particularly among teachers and students -- are able to raise students' expectations for themselves and teachers' expectations for students" (McClure et al., 2010). From this definition the conclusion can be drawn that the public education system has recognized the developmental gaps in students that come by not having supportive adults in their lives that are familiar with them and their home lives. But is that being clearly communicated to the teacher-advisors who are being appointed advisory student groups that this critical connection must be made? For an advisory program to have the intended results, a teacher-advisor must work

to build responsive, effective, and authentic relationships with their advisory program students.

School Mental Health and Behavior

The world-wide COVID-19 pandemic created a hyper emergence of interest by researchers regarding the need of supporting students' emotional and mental well-being. Researchers posit that pandemic-oriented student trauma, and its related repercussions will be significant and on-going (Chaturvedi, et al. 2020; Maranto, et al. 2020). Teachers, as the face of public education and the ever-present body in the classroom (both virtually and in-person) are often the first in line to recognize and respond to these traumas (Palmer, et al., 2021).

Historically, students' mental health has been an on-going concern for the public education system for decades. The battle to ensure that all students with mental health needs are identified and supported has been mostly uphill. Researchers found that secondary data analyses in three nationally representative household surveys fielded in 1996-1998 showed that of children and adolescents 6-17 years old who were defined as needing mental health services, nearly 80% did not receive mental health care (Kataoka, et al., 2002). Further, the results unearthed inequities in that the rate of unmet need was greater among Latino children than white children, and among uninsured than publicly insured children. This age-old disparity has for multiple decades caused behavioral issues and unsuccessful academic performances (Flaherty & Osher, 2002).

There have been attempts to counter the mental health disparities that children face. Legislation has made moves toward national reform by working to align learning and mental health. Propositions for the mental health service expansions in school were

made by both the Surgeon General's report (US DHSS 1999) and the report from the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) (Atkins, et al., 2011). Additionally, the No Child Left Behind Act, also stressed the need to ensure “student access to quality mental health care by developing innovative programs to link the local school system with the local mental health system” (U.S. Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education 2002, p. 427). These legislative moves were the onus that moved most public school systems away from a punitive response to student behavior and were instrumental in laying the groundwork for more of the responsive-style reward programs seen in schools today.

The prevalence of positive responses frameworks to intervene in favor of students in schools has multiplied in the last few decades. Growing numbers of schools are using programs that are evidenced-based and shown to be effective, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for behavioral support and Response to Intervention (RTI) for academic support (Al Otaiba, et al., 2015; Houchens, et al., 2017).

Restorative justice practices are also one of the multitude of frameworks available for adoption by public schools to help mitigate the imbalance of mental health support services and offer students emotional and behavioral support. The restorative practice approach requires viewing student behavior through a different lens; a restorative one that “frames the problem as a violation of relationships, rather than a violation of institutional rules of order” with the primary drivers being “respect, responsibility, and relationship” (Morrison, 2015). This framework of responding to students in a way that offers reconciliation rather than possibly reinforcing negative self-images goes far in building healthy perceptions of self in students. This framework also provides a growth mindset

for teachers and students to grow into the vital relationships needed for holistic student success while providing a grounding for social emotional learning to flourish in the public education setting.

As the pandemic continues and the post-pandemic world emerges, teachers must be prepared with social emotional learning strategies to host responsive classes and curriculum for students with trauma (Crosby, et. al, 2020). Studies assert that once the pandemic ends, students are likely to suffer from “stress, anxiety, and depression, so it is necessary to provide emotional support” (Chaturvedi, et al., 2021). Beyond having positive behavior frameworks in place, responsiveness to these traumas must include guidance counselors and educational climates fortified with social emotional learning practices present and palpable.

History of Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning (SEL) has only emerged as a component of the educational landscape over the last sixty years and is defined as:

the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013, p. 10)

However, the conceptual origins of social emotional learning are much older. When researching the origins of SEL the philosopher Plato and his writings in 380 B.C. are very often invoked as the foundations of why social emotional learning components are critical in the preparations of the society of tomorrow. Many researchers point to Plato’s

(ca. 380 B.C.E./1955) assertions in *The Republic*, “maintaining a sound system of education and upbringing you produce citizens of good character; and citizens of sound character, with the advantage of a good education, produce in turn children better than themselves and better able to produce still better children in their turn...” as the cornerstone for SEL (p. 125).

A more recent history of SEL finds John Dewey’s theories echoing the claims of Plato which centers education as the cornerstone of social and moral development in *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920/1957). Further, his writings in *Democracy and Education* (1916/2015) contain a full chapter on “Education as a Social Function” devoted to the ideology of education as a continuator in the functioning and development of society. Dewey argues, “When we have the outcome of the process in mind, we speak of education as shaping, forming, molding activity—that is, a shaping into the standard form of social activity” (1916/2015, p. 18). The confluence of society and education as the basis of solid future citizens purported by these early theorists is the foundation that underpins the need for social emotional learning in schools.

Today’s Social Emotional Learning as it has come to be known in its current iteration is rooted in the work of James P. Comer. Through a collaboration between the Yale Child Study Center team and the New Haven Public School System he developed the Comer School Development Program (CSDP) in 1968 (Comer, 2013; Yale School of Medicine, 2019). This program allowed Comer to understand and address the social and emotional gaps he had witnessed and believed to be the cause of the disparity in academic experiences among African American students (Comer, 1988; Comer, 2013).

According to Comer (2013), indicators of academic success for African American students could be tied to the family and home experience. Comer's own home life was learning-centered and consciously prepared him for valuable social experiences such as interaction skills and relationship building. Through his child psychiatry training at Yale and personal reflection Comer, "began to appreciate how my own developmental experience had been a major determinant of my readiness for positive opportunities, and the absence of similar experiences had been a major determinant of opposite outcomes for so many of my friends" (Comer, 2013).

Comer's beliefs regarding the role that family and home life play in academic success is supported by many other theorists. bell hooks has worked diligently for many years in her writing to forward the concept of 'engaged pedagogy' where students and their cultures are invited into academic spaces and teachers are responsive to their needs rather than relying on traditional teaching methods. In *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) she speaks of the deficits she personally experienced in the newly desegregated classroom where the Black students and home lives were not known by the White teacher as they had been by the Black teacher who was no longer present.

The lack of representation and faltering of cultural awareness in the academic experiences mirror Comer's observations in that academically prepared African American students had strong cultures of support behind them that forwarded learning and centered social and emotional skills. This lack of understanding by White teachers and separation of the students from this culture of support potentially allowed for the destabilization of social emotional awareness in the students and possibly jeopardizing their future academic success. hooks gives a powerful example of her experience; "my

[Black] teachers made sure they ‘knew’ us. They knew our parents, our economic status, where we worshiped, what our homes were like, and how we were treated in the family” (1994, p. 3). hooks’ observation and experience aligns perfectly with the Comer School Development Program’s theoretical framework’s belief that, "Children need positive interactions with adults in order to develop adequately" (Comer et al., 1996, p. 28).

The continual inclusion of the home culture into the classroom supports social emotional experiences of students and allows potential gaps to be observed in order to be addressed and countered towards student academic success. In order to allow for this inclusion to occur, the CSDP restructured the way education occurred and developed a collaborative-management team involving multiple members of the community, not just teachers and administrators to provide inclusion opportunities and to grow strong and successful relationships among students and adults (Comer, 2013).

The familial cultural experiences that Comer speaks of connects to the “funds of knowledge” concept that, when combined with SEL, has revolutionized education. It reinforces the value of honoring and inviting the lived experiences of our students, not only for affirming their presence but also for acknowledging these learnings as inherent and fundamental to the growth of the student. Luis C. Moll coined the term ‘funds of knowledge’ to refer to historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills developed in the home that contributed to the successful functioning of both the household and the individual (González et al., 1995; González et al., 2005; Moll, 2019). Recognizing students’ funds of knowledge goes toward the work of teaching the whole student and identifying and countering deficits in social emotional learning that could potentially impede academic success.

Social Emotional Learning Today

The current iteration of social emotional learning as it relates to education is based on the successful results and outcomes of the schools that implemented the practices and beliefs of the Comer School Development Program (Lunenburg, 2011; Yale School of Medicine, 2019). Building on Comer's work in New Haven, researchers Roger P. Weissberg, a Yale psychology professor, and Yale graduate and New Haven teacher Timothy Shiver began working together, eventually building the K-12 New Haven Social Development Program between 1987 and 1992 (Weissberg et al, 1997).

It was during this same time the W.T. Grant Consortium on the School Based Promotion of Social Competence was created by Weissberg and Maurice J. Elias to design and implement a developmentally appropriate social emotional learning framework for K-12 (Elias et al., 1996). From this consortium emerged five essential emotional skills necessary for student success; "identifying and labeling feelings, expressing feelings, assessing the intensity of feelings, managing feelings, delaying gratification, controlling impulses, and reducing stress" (Catalano et al., 1998). These competencies are essential in supporting academic performance, in understanding and implementing positive social behaviors, and aid in developing healthy social relationships with both peers and adults during the school years. Additionally, these core competencies have shown to lessen issues related to behavior. Evidence emerged that these skills aided students in learning how to function in society; especially college, work, family (Elias, 2014; Jones & Kahn, 2017). These essential emotional skills became the bedrock for the emerging social emotional learning movement.

In tandem with the work done at the W.T. Grant Consortium, a collaboration of researchers, educators, and child advocates focused on addressing the compounding social and emotional needs of students met in 1994 at the Fetzer Institute and, known as the ‘Fetzer Group’, eventually developed a conceptual framework for implementing social emotional learning in schools. The Fetzer Group was the origin of today’s most widely recognized platform for the advancement of social and emotional learning; the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (CASEL, 2022; Durlak, et al., 2015). The term coined by the Fetzer Group in 1994, ‘social and emotional learning’, has only continued to explode in usage in informing instructional practices and in educational circles.

As today’s leading authority in social and emotional learning, CASEL has made a mission of creating access to social emotional learning practices that can be infused throughout students’ school experiences. Using the term ‘Systemic Implementation,’ CASEL has developed a social emotional learning program that spans seven categories, or groupings of people affected, ranging from the classroom level to the school district level, including the levels of: families and caregivers, communities, et cetera. CASEL’s systemic implementation program also houses the categories of “SEL Policy at the State Level” and “SEL Policy at the Federal Level” (CASEL, 2022). CASEL’s seven categories for systemic implementation are robust and provide access to resources and information on the work they are doing at each level to advance social and emotional learning. In 2019, CASEL’s Chief Knowledge Officer, and an original founder, Roger P. Wiessburg wrote that two of the biggest challenges he faced at CASEL was the “sheer ambitiousness of CASEL’s goals” of systemic implementation, and “the growing national

and international interest in and demand for SEL” (Wiessburg, 2019). With the continuation of the impact of COVID-19 this demand will likely only increase.

CASEL offers various training opportunities for learning leaders of all types to become certified in social emotional awareness practices (CASEL, 2022). A quick glance at their website shows multiple opportunities for engagement through webinars on various dates. The majority of the webinars and training opportunities are available at no cost, with the exception of a few virtual conferences. The training opportunity the “SEL Fellows Academy,” a 10-month virtual learning experience, is the most cost-incurring at \$4,500 per attendee with only 50 applicants accepted while the annual 2021 SEL Exchange Virtual Summit can still be viewed on the CASEL website for \$125 (CASEL, 2022). While questions of equity always linger around the borders of pay-for-access opportunities, CASEL’s use of evidence-based research has increased their reliability as being a trustworthy provider for administrators and teachers seeking guidance on implementing social and emotional learning in their schools.

Beyond the local classroom, CASEL has extended the focus of social and emotional implementation to include district collaboration. The CASEL website provides a listing of districts working collaboratively to enhance social emotional awareness and extends an invitation to onboard more districts in an effort toward a national integration of social emotional learning. CASEL further pledges a commitment to systemic implementation by providing consistent federal policy updates on their website regarding legislations and policies that may potentially impact social emotional learning in schools (CASEL, 2022). CASEL’s expansive reach in the educational world has made them a formidable advocate for the advancement of social emotional learning on a national level.

Effective Empirically Based Practices

The necessity of integrating social and emotional learning into schools is abundantly clear (Weissberg, 2019). As discussed earlier, challenges around school-based mental health and behavior, already a concern, have only compounded since the COVID-19 pandemic began (Chaturvedi, et al., 2021; Owens, et al., 2022; Palmer, et al., 2022). Social emotional learning is an effective and research-based way of providing support to and for struggling students but is also an effective way of meeting many state requirements, especially those found in ESSA's fifth indicator of success. As expounded upon already, advisories provide a dedicated space to intentionally attend to students' needs through infusing empirically based SEL practices found in CASEL's framework with specific indicators in Kentucky's ESSA Accountability Systems.

The most obvious connection between evidence-based social emotional learning practices and Kentucky's ESSA Accountability Systems is most likely the 'Opportunity and Access' indicator. Research has shown that advisory programs claimed improved achievement, school climate, planning and goal setting, teacher and student relationships, fewer failing grades, improved test scores, better attendance, reduction in dropouts, and attitude improvement (Makkonen, 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable to surmise that these evidence-based improvements stemming from advisory programs go far in satisfying ESSA's school quality measure of "Opportunity and Access" defined as "Equitable availability to research-based student experiences and school factors that impact student success" which include specific indicators such as chronic absenteeism and behavior events (Pruitt, 2018,

p. 13). Fundamentally, schools with a healthy social and emotional climate are more likely to experience student success.

Program Implementation

Educational Initiative Implementation

Legislative educational mandates and their connections to advisories were discussed earlier in this literature review, but the connection between legislation and social emotional learning has yet to be made clear. As innumerable scholars have illuminated in their work, social emotional learning has overwhelmingly proven to be effective in promoting student success in schools (Weissberg, 2019). Despite this success there has been only some state, and no federal, legislative support toward the mandatory inclusion of social emotional learning or the creation of SEL standards in K-12 school curricula. Currently, twenty-seven states require social emotional learning to be integrated through standards, professional development or classroom instruction (NASBE, 2021). This lack of specificity by states in how social emotional learning is to be enacted allows for broad interpretation by districts.

To be clear, this means that an SEL curriculum is likely not present in all twenty-seven of these states, merely that components akin to social emotional learning, such as character development is delivered to students in some manner, as required by the state. Some states meet this requirement by developing their own competencies that seek to define their ideals of a holistically developed student. Examples of this can be found in Shelby County's 'Profile of a Graduate' and Jefferson County's 'Backpack of Success Skills' (JCPS, 2021; SCPS, 2021). Both of these programs are similar in creating frameworks centered on specific components that must be present, exhibited, and

defended in some capacity as a requirement for graduation. When looked at holistically both programs can be pared down to a focus on character development, which incidentally was a key piece of legislation enacted for Kentucky Education in 2009 (NASBE, 2021). To reiterate, standards based on the evidence-based research of the specific five competencies of social emotional learning are not present in either of these two examples given, but character development is, therefore they are considered as having satisfied Kentucky Revised Statutes 158.6451.

The growing evidence of student success in schools that are implementing social emotional learning has drawn the attention of bipartisan groups of legislators. On February 10, 2015, Representative Tim Ryan introduced H.R. 850, a bill that would amend title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This bill would seek to “include teacher and principal training in practices that address the social and emotional development needs of students among the activities funded under the Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund program” and “Allows funded training to include training in classroom instruction and schoolwide initiatives that enable students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills most conducive to social and emotional competency” (Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2015, 2015). The bill has fourteen co-sponsors and was referred to the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education on April 29, 2015. As of this writing there has been no progress on this specific bill.

In the House of Representatives, on October 10, 2019, Representative Tim Ryan introduced a different bill, H.R. 4626; the “Social Emotional Learning for Families Act of 2019” or, the “SELF Act of 2019”. This act, still only in the introductory phase, would

allocate grant money to local educational agencies to “develop, implement, and evaluate educator and school leader professional development programs on social-emotional learning and family engagement” (Social Emotional Learning for Families Act of 2019, 2019). The goal of this bill is different from previous bills as its aim is to grow the capacity of teachers and school leaders to impact the family of students, rather than just the students directly, in teaching social emotional learning skills. Appropriately, this turn towards the inclusion of family lends itself readily to one of the early advocates of SEL James P. Comer’s beliefs about childrens’ familial experiences and their impact on academic achievement (Comer, 1988; Comer 2013).

Relatedly, on September 17, 2020, Senator Angus S. King, Jr. of Maine introduced S.4615, the “Social Emotional Learning for Families Act of 2020” also referred to as the “SELF Act of 2020” into the Senate. This bill is nearly identical to the bill introduced into the House of Representatives in 2019 by Representative Tim Ryan (SELF Act of 2020, 2020). In both bills, the centering of the family by educators and school staff in teaching social emotional skills allows for the bills to add-on the language of ‘family engagement’ in its construction and deliverance which can be interpreted, and thus enacted, in multiple ways.

The lack of legislation requiring the enacting of social emotional learning in schools does not mean that organizations are not working to implement SEL curricula systematically across the United States. In their ten-year report published in November 2021, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) reflected on their 2011 launching of the Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI) which was designed specifically to work towards implementing SEL in large, urban districts

across the United States. Since the inception, the CDI has grown to over 20 partner school districts in the United States (CASEL, 2022). In the report, school districts name the benefits of being in an SEL collaborative network like CASEL as ranging from cross-district support to help in identifying an SEL curriculum that reflects the needs of their student population.

Advisory Program Implementation

The Role of Teachers as Advisors

A recurring theme that emerges in each section discussed above is the critical role that adults play in the development of children's skills that will prepare them for successful futures. Comer references the impact the healthy relationships he had with both of his parents at a young age and speaks specifically of the powerful memory of his childhood teacher holding his hand as they walked to class everyday (Comer, 2013). As one of the most core representatives of the educational sphere for the child, a teacher has the opportunity to enact the most positive change in the social and academic life of the student. Dewey supports this theory in *Experience and Education* when forwarding his ideology concerning the role of education as a social process. Referring to society as a 'community group' Dewey (1938/1997) writes,

It is absurd to exclude the teacher from membership in the group. As the most mature member of the group, [s]he has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group as a community (p. 58).

The ‘peculiar responsibility’ which directs the ‘life of the group’ is the very essence of the experience Comer had while holding his teacher’s hand. Teachers, in the eyes of their pupils, are more than purveyors of rote academia; they are guides and role models that have the keen positionality.

to import opportunities for social and academic success in their students.

Teacher Identity and Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura’s (1997, 1986, 2002, 2006) social cognitive theory aids in understanding how teachers construct their identity. Social Cognitive theory postulates that “human achievement depends on interactions between an individual’s behavior, personal factors (e.g., beliefs), and environmental conditions” (Lazarides & Warner, 2020). One of the fundamental components of this theory is the self-efficacy construct. Bandura defines self-efficacy as the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1977, p. 3). To further clarify, he offered another definition of self-efficacy in 1986: “Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance” (p. 391).

Bandura forwards the concept that an individual’s beliefs of self-efficacy are highly influential on predicting their success. According to Bandura (1977, 1997, 2006), the goals teachers set for themselves and how much effort they put toward meeting the goals are influenced by their perceptions of their own self-efficacy. Beliefs around self-efficacy also play into their perception of their abilities to overcome obstacles and difficulties. Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is critical as it shapes the teachers’ perceptions of their ability to engage students socially, emotionally, and academically, even when

students may be resistant, challenging, or apathetic to learning. Teachers with strong beliefs of self-efficacy have shown in research to be “more open to new teaching methods, set themselves more challenging goals, exhibit a greater level of planning and organization, direct their efforts at solving problems, seek assistance, and adjust their teaching strategies when faced with difficulties” (Lazarides & Warner, 2020). Further, teachers with high-level of self-efficacy have shown lower levels of burnout and have higher levels of job satisfaction. These dividends have been shown to pay off in student success as well with higher levels of achievement and motivation due to teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs related to classroom management and student engagement (Ross, 1994; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Teacher Preparation

Increasingly, teachers are entering into the profession in non-traditional ways. In 1983, only eight states offered alternative certification. In 2016, forty-seven states had alternative certification laws (Fraser & Lefty, 2018). There are multiple reasons for this shift in legislation. Most researchers reach the conclusion that, simply, there is a teacher shortage, and that it is growing more each year. The economic justification of relaxing teaching regulation is clear: it impacts the labor supply and increases competition in the labor market which in turn keeps teacher compensation low (Sass, 2011). Negative implications, however, are evident as well. Removing barriers to the teaching profession could potentially “increase the churn of teachers through the public schools since lower entry costs mean lower exit costs, and/or reduce student achievement if those previously barred from the profession are less effective teachers” (Henry, et al., 2014, pg. 266). Of the research currently available, there is a gap in comparing the effectiveness of

individuals who qualified via the traditional-route and those entering the profession through alternative certification.

Regarding current trends in teacher preparation, a review of current research by Kini and Podolsky (2016) suggest that according to recent data a high number of the teaching workforce has less than five years' experience. To situate this historically, they point out that in 1988, the common teacher had 15 years' experience. The positive outcome of their research review is that of the 30 studies they conducted examining the effects of teaching experiences on student achievement, 28 found a positive correlation (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). So, the longer a teacher is in the profession, the more likely they are positively impacting student achievement.

For social emotional learning to be truly integrated into the curriculum in a way that significantly impacts students, new teachers will need to be introduced to it in their teacher preparation programs (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). Ultimately, Kini and Podolsky (2016) found in their quantitative study of teacher preparation policies and the effects on student achievement that teachers who entered the profession through ways other than traditional teacher preparation routes were both similarly effective. These results are encouraging in that CASEL did a 'scan' of teacher preparation programs to examine the degree to which social emotional learning is incorporated into state-level teaching requirements in colleges of education in the U.S.

This examination resulted in three key findings: first, they found that "ten states addressed four of the five core Teachers' SEL dimensions (competency areas) and that 36 states had requirements that addressed one, two, or three of the five core Teachers' SEL dimensions," meaning that all fifty states and the District of Columbia address some area

of SEL in their certification requirements (Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2017, pg. 7). Second, their scan revealed that “27 states addressed four or five of the five dimensions of Students’ SEL. Only 15 addressed one, two, or three of the five dimensions,” meaning that “more than half of all states have state-level teacher certification requirements that have a comprehensive focus on the promotion of Students’ SEL (Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2017, pg. 8). Finally, they found that almost every state requires that pre-service teachers obtain knowledge regarding dimensions of the Learning Context (e.g., a focus on classroom, school, and community environments that promote students’ SEL skills) for teacher certification (Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2017).

While it is encouraging that social emotional learning is present as a state requirement in different aspects of teacher preparation in nearly all states, it was unfortunate to discover that there is little intentional instruction provided through colleges of education’s required coursework to aid teachers in learning how to teach social emotional learning explicitly. It was revealed that when state requirements intersect with required coursework in teacher programs, very few schools of education teach how to actually instruct students on social emotional learning. The key take-away of CASEL’s scan is clearly that “there was a large mismatch between state-level certification requirements and required coursework for Students’ SEL and Learning Context” (Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2017). This misalignment represents a core discrepancy that impacts teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy when performing the role of advisors as social and emotional learning is a key component of positioning students toward success in multiple channels.

The power of an advisory program is only fully harnessed with appropriate teacher preparation. Until colleges of education respond to the need to empower their teacher candidates with explicit and intentional social emotional learning coursework, the responsibility will fall to the schools to fortify their staff with the tools they need through personal development training. Johnson (2009) surveyed twenty-five schools about their advisory programs and the results spoke to the importance of attending to teachers' preparation.

So much depends on the quality of the advising that comes from the educators serving as advisors. If schools can create systems of professional development that genuinely prepare teachers to be effective advisors, the school culture will flourish. If not, advisories will be problematic (Johnson, 2009).

Teachers, armed with positive perceptions of self-efficacy acquired through robust SEL training, are the key to creating and implementing advisory programs in the way they were intended to be.

Teacher Perceptions and Professional Practice

The 2021/2022 school year has seen attrition rates of teachers skyrocket due to the complexities surrounding teaching and learning in a pandemic and post-pandemic educational environment (Chaturvedi, 2021; Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022; Mahaye, 2020). News articles and social media reports abound highlighting the rapid-fire resignations of teachers across the country (Arroyo, 2020). Many times, when the news reports and social media posts are read, the reasons outlined for the mass departures boil down to teachers feeling overworked, unappreciated, and generally burned out often related to the pandemic (Palmer, et al., 2021). According to Friedman (2000), burnout

commonly is conceptualized as a “three-dimensional phenomenon consisting of exhaustion, depersonalization, and unaccomplishment.” It is clear how these feelings could impact students and classrooms and create a negative cycle among teachers, students, and school climate.

An undercurrent of student behavior issues and general feelings of disrespect are often cited as compounding teachers’ reasons for leaving the field of education. Additionally, principals, themselves overworked and stretched thin, are now tasked with the challenging responsibility of being responsive to the growing discontent of their current teachers all the while working to recruit new teachers from a steadily dwindling pool of candidates (Palmer, et al., 2021). The cycle can be vicious; parents blaming principals, principals blaming teachers, teachers blaming parents, and students all the while seeming apathetic to blame. To counter these negative cycles that spiral into negative school climates and negative experiences for all stakeholders, a robust social emotional learning program is critical to the health of every public school.

Social emotional learning is something that teachers must attend to intentionally. In addition to meeting educational expectations of their administration, students, parents, and the demands of the state, they must also coordinate the prescribed ongoing educational strategies of SEL including “systematically teaching, modeling, and facilitating” SEL in the classroom while “establishing safe, caring, and highly engaging learning environments involving peer and family initiatives” (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

The Gap Between Teacher Preparation and Professional Practice

Bandura (1977, 1997) posits that teacher self-efficacy in the early years of teacher training is the most pliant and holds fairly stable once it has been established. There is, however, a slight drop upon first entering the profession, which is attributed to ‘reality shock’, followed by an incline in self-efficacy toward mid-career and then a decline afterward (Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Redmon (2007), however, attributes a lack of self-efficacy in teachers first entering the profession to be linked to the structure of the teaching program from which they are emerging. He argues that teacher programs are inherently designed to filter out undesirable candidates and are therefore designed with lenses trained at focusing on negatives and deficiencies within the candidates which creates negative perceptions of self-efficacy. Further compounding negative beliefs of self-efficacy, is that new teachers are historically placed in the most undesirable teaching positions that are hardest to manage, quickly deteriorating any positive perceptions of self-efficacy (Redmon, 2007).

As novice teachers experience their first year of teaching, they are oftentimes driven to burnout. This is undoubtedly due to there being a “distance between expected (if unrealistic) and actual levels of professional performance” which is a reflection of a teacher’s perception of teaching-related stress and their beliefs around work commitment, along with how well they feel supported and prepared (Hoy & Spero, 2005). This ‘gap’ between what pre-service teachers perceive as the expectation of teaching versus the experience of working as a practicing teacher is so jarring that many new teachers give up and leave the profession in the first year.

Obstacles to Implementations of Advisory Programs

Teachers who do not hold strong beliefs of personal self-efficacy may face challenges in implementing successful practices needed to create a thriving advisory program experience for students. According to Bandura (1997) teachers' beliefs about themselves and abilities are enacted and embodied in their pedagogical practices and impacts what they say and do in their classrooms. Specifically, "Teachers' beliefs in their ability to motivate and promote learning affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve" (p. 117). Therefore, it is easily surmised that these inherent beliefs inform the teachers' practices as they fulfill the liminal roles of advisors to students. Johnson also points to the challenges unskilled teachers face in the role of advisors citing 'sufficient time' and 'adequate advisor preparation' as challenges teachers face when they were surveyed about implementing advisory programs (Johnson, 2009).

Advisory programs, like academic classes, can fall victim to mismanagement and ineffective implementation practices. One of the most prolific challenges at implementing effective advisories is the tendency for it to become a downtime for students or to serve as a sort of homeroom where no formative opportunities for growth occur. Too often, advisory program periods become unstructured and merely serves as a time for administrative issues like grade checks, attendance, home communication, or other rote activities which are void of any purposeful or intentional growth for students (Johnson, 2009). Fidelity to the goals of a well-understood and thriving advisory program are critical, for as Johnson (2009) writes, "in the worst advisory scenarios, teachers and students experience the advisory as an additional burden on their time without any real

value, and this is when the real unfulfilled promise of advisories has had tragic consequences.”

Literature Review Summary

This literature review has underscored the value structurally sound and intentional advisory programs add to educational structures. This space of time in a student's day can be used in multiple ways to impact student success. As students have evolved, so must schools evolve, including the daily structures and the approach to fortifying students.

Further, a case has been made for the consideration of better-equipping teachers to serve in the role of advisors. The role of advisor was created to fill the gaps by the impossible guidance-counselor to student ratio. However, training for teachers to serve as de facto guidance counselors did not follow and teachers often find themselves unprepared to assist students with needs that fall outside the academic realm.

Unfortunately, states have seen the need for social and emotional learning and more and more states are beginning to require SEL components for teacher certification, but researchers were hard-pressed to find the significant and intentional social emotional learning aspects in teacher preparation coursework. Teachers must be provided with social and emotional learning training so that they are prepared to attend intentionally to the diverse needs, academically, socially, and emotionally, of the learners populating advisory student groups within an advisory program.

Equipping teachers to be effective advisors through sufficient teacher preparation programs fortified with intentional social emotional learning components is critical for teachers' positive perceptions of self-efficacy. A teacher with a positive perception of self-efficacy experiences feelings of empowerment, feel better prepared, suffer less

burnout and are more motivated as they engage with students in classroom spaces. These feelings are highly necessary so that advisory program time is used with intention and as designed to bring about the positive experiences and moments of learning needed to impact social and emotional changes so desperately needed in today's school climates.

A discussion of the unique make-up of the students enrolled in today's post-pandemic classrooms, and the trauma that compounds their lived experiences, underscores the need for advisories to be integrated with existing academic programs in schools. This generation of students bring with them all the typical teenage experiences and emotions yet have layer of trauma from having lived through two years of a world-wide pandemic in which many experienced periods of extended isolation, deficits in learning, atypical household responsibilities, caring for siblings, and, most horribly, the deaths of loved ones from the COVID-19 virus. It will be years before the trauma of the last two years is fully unpacked, much less addressed. One of the most significant ways we can begin to care for these students is through thoughtful and intentional advisory programs. For schools to do the work of advisory programs effectively and authentically they must have teachers who have experienced responsive teacher programs centered on social and emotional learning and that are designed to address the complex needs of students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a phenomenological framework to explore the lived experiences of how teachers at two Kentucky high schools perceive, understand, cultivate, and create advisory programs. This chapter details the research methodology and design which will include a description of the setting, the participants, the ethical considerations of the research, and the data collection and data analysis methods which were utilized in this study. The primary data collection method for this study was primarily semi-structured interviews. This chapter will give a framework for how these interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded to find trends from the data collected. In addition, this chapter will also discuss the trustworthiness of the research with an additional section related to University of Louisville's Institutional Review Board and will detail the steps taken to obtain approval from the IRB before any of the actual research began. There were three research questions that guided this study:

RQ 1: What shared beliefs about the purpose of advisory programs exist among the teachers who cultivate advisory programs?

RQ 2: In what ways do teachers consciously and intentionally create advisory programs for their specific community of students?

RQ 3: What challenges emerge for teachers when creating advisory programs for students?

These questions were be answered by using a qualitative, phenomenological design with a constructivist lens. The sample for this study consisted of teachers who served as grade-level advisors at Shelby County High School in Shelbyville, Kentucky.

Background

On August 9th, 2019, the teachers at Shelby County High School (SCHS) attended a professional development meeting (See Appendix A) and were first introduced and inaugurated into the world of advisory programs. A high school mathematics teacher and recipient of the 2015 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in their home state was flown in to introduce the idea of advisory programs in a professional development. The SCHS principal began the meeting by sharing how impressed she was with what she saw when visiting the guest speaker's school and seeing their advisory program at work in action first-hand. She then described how long the guest speaker's school had successfully implemented advisory program periods in their daily practice. The guest speaker then took the floor and guided the local teachers through what their advisory program looked like in her home school. A handout (See Appendix B) from that day addressed the question, 'Why is advisory important?'. The answer from the handout states, "A robust literature review by the University of Chicago's Consortium of school research shows that students who have meaningful relationships with adults will be academically successful. Great Schools Partnerships has also included advisory as a cornerstone of their school reform process. [XXXXXXX] High School has been doing advisory since its inception in 1992 and it is our most important program" (SCHS Advisory Meeting Informational Handout). The 'meaningful relationship with adults contributing to high school success portion' quickly became the

perceived theme guiding the building of the SCHS advisory program as it also appears in students' Advisory FAQ handouts and in a letter home to parents (See Appendix C) introducing the advisory program. However, while the rhetoric fully supported the value of building relationships was fully covered, there was little to no intentional or substantive guidance or discussion related to what the substance and value of these relationships with students should be in order to purposefully support the teachers in attaining success.

Purpose Statement

It was the endeavor of this research project to investigate how a gap in understanding and communication of an advisory program's fundamental purpose could potentially impact the thoughts and beliefs of teachers in shaping their perceptions of an advisory program's efficacy. To this end, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the current thoughts and beliefs of teachers in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky to understand their concepts of an advisory program's efficacy. The results of this study will be valuable in improving the process of introducing and enacting advisory programs into school settings effectively.

Seasoned teachers know that for learning to occur, students must know what the target of the learning is, and why they are learning that target; the purpose of it (Chappuis, 2014). If teachers are being asked to build 'meaningful relationships' with students through advising, then, there is merit in communicating to them the value of this relationship building. The SCHS professional development meeting handout lists the 'givens for an advisory program.' They are followed by these words: "intentionality, clear goals/purpose, student centered, growth mindset" (SCHS Advisory Meeting

Handout, 2019). For the majority of the staff who did not observe the New Hampshire school's advisory program in person or read and discuss any research regarding the purpose and value of an advisory program prior to this meeting, these words are at risk of being misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Research Design and Methodology

This research study utilized a phenomenological framework to investigate the experiences of teachers serving in a role of an advisor in a high school space. Phenomenological research explores the meaning of people's lived experiences (Leavy, 2018). Social phenomena are most commonly explored through this framework of qualitative inquiry. Phenomenology seeks to understand the meanings individuals attach to everyday experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). This study specifically utilized a constructivist lens which is also known as constructivism. Constructivism is "defined as a view of human beings as actively constructing knowledge, in their own subjective and intersubjective realities and in contextually specific ways (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 182).

Phenomenological research interviews are generally in-depth and vary in length typically lasting between one to two hours (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Participant interviews are the most common means of data collection in phenomenological research (Leavy, 2017 & Creswell, 2018). Since this study was an attempt to explore the lived experiences of individuals who are serving as advisors in two Kentucky high school advisory programs, phenomenology offered the best framework to study the experiences of the targeted participants in the two district high schools. Through this framework, I was able to mine for meaningful insights into the phenomena of the perceptions of self-

efficacy teachers experience when filling the advisor role and how those feelings translated to perceived perceptions of the efficacy of advisory programs. For the purposes of this research project, a phenomenological study was most appropriate as opposed to a different method of inquiry such as a case study because I was seeking the experiences of individuals from two different high schools and focusing specifically on their experience as teachers in relation to their feelings of preparedness and efficacy and its impact on the perceptions of successful advisory programs according to those teachers.

In this study, my goal was to explore the multifaceted dimensions and layers that comprise teachers' perceptions surrounding advisory programs and the implementation thereof. Qualitative scholars do not try and simplify observable data, but they recognize that human issues have many dimensions with varying layers which makes qualitative research multifaceted (Creswell, 2018). Because this study centers on teachers as research participants and utilizes their perspectives and observations, it most closely aligns with the purpose of phenomenological research. This research paradigm was useful when seeking to understand teachers' perceptions of an advisory program since it forwards the position that the process of making meaning is intersubjective and that experiences are "shaped through the interaction and mutual influence of individual, subjective impressions of shared experience" (Nakkula & Ravich, 1998, as cited in Ravitch & Riggan, 2017, p. 143). It is these experiences and perceptions of the teachers' experiences that were investigated and drove the work of this research project.

To uniquely understand the work of understanding teachers' perceptions of an advisory program, a lens of constructivism was be applied. This lens was appropriate in that constructivism is "defined as a view of human beings as actively constructing

knowledge, in their own subjective and intersubjective realities and in contextually specific ways (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 182). It was imperative in this research to bring attention to the ways that teachers make and apply meaning to the work of engaging in an advisory program as it informs the creation of the advisory program itself which is ultimately the iterations of teachers' perception with which students interact with when experiencing an advisory period.

This type of framework allowed me to explicate rich descriptions and personal meanings of lived experiences surrounding the phenomenon of experiencing the daily implementation of an advisory program. A phenomenological study was most appropriate to study these experiences as opposed to a different method of qualitative inquiry such as a case study because I was looking into the experiences of individuals from different teaching experiences and focusing specifically on the experience of the teacher in the given phenomena.

Setting

The proposed setting for this research study was in two different high school settings. Although the actual interviews did not occur in the schools themselves, the lived experiences of the teachers took place within these particular structures. Each of the two high schools have had advisory programs in place for over two years. The geographic locations of the two schools are in Shelbyville and Simpsonville, Kentucky, both within the Shelby County Public School District.

As stated in the first chapter, it is important to the context of the study is to understand the student demographics of both high schools in the district. As of the 2020-2021 school year, the demographic data from Infinite Campus, the district's learning

management system, showed that Shelby County High School had 979 students, of which 46.6% are economically disadvantaged. Of the student body, 62.1% students are white, 24.7% are Hispanic/Latino, 5.6% are African American, and 6.0% are listed as two or more races. For Martha Layne Collins High School, the demographics are a little different. They host 1,183 students, of which 53.3% are economically disadvantaged. Of the student body, 55.3% students are white, 29.9% are Hispanic/Latino, 7.5% are African American, and 6.1% are listed as two or more races (MLCHS & SCHS, 2020-2023. [Student demographics] [Unpublished raw data]. Infinite Campus, Inc.).

Participants

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of teachers who have experienced implementing advisory programs within their schools, so that inconsistencies and misalignments of the goals and purposes of advisory programs can be identified. The sample participants selected for this study was purposeful in that, “based on the premise that seeking out the best cases for the study produces the best data” (Leavy, 2017, p. 148). It was the goal of this researcher “to find ‘information-rich cases’ that best address the research purpose and questions” (Morse, 2010; Patton, 2015). The purposeful sample was selected using a convenience sampling technique where participants were identified based upon general knowledge of and accessibility to me as the primary research instrument (Leavy, 2017). Participants were be selected for this study who met the following criteria which was used as a measure to ensure each participant could give information rich data which speak to phenomena being studied.

The participants of this study were a purposeful sample of teachers that served as grade-level advisors at Martha Layne Collins High School and Shelby County High School in

Shelbyville, Kentucky.

All participants met the following set of established criteria.

1. Individuals will be certified teachers in the state of Kentucky and will have served in the role of an advisor in their school setting. These parameters are designed to ensure each participant can provide knowledgeable and experienced feedback.
2. Individuals will have experienced at least two years of implementation of advisory programs within their schools. These parameters will ensure that each participant can accurately give voice to the experience of implementing an advisory program under an extended period in a variety of different situations.
3. Individuals must be able and willing to make themselves available for at least two separate interviews lasting between one to two hours in length.

Perspective participants were personally contacted by me using a research recruitment form (See Appendix D) to ensure they met the above established requirements and were willing to participate in the study. Interviews typically lasted between one to two hours with interview participants consisting of a small sample group between (5 to 25 individuals) who were all carefully and purposefully selected based on their direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. Phenomenological interviews are typically unstructured and require the researcher and participant to work together to “arrive at the heart of the matter” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46). I listened closely as participants described their lived experiences related to the phenomena. As the participant is describing the experience the research should be alert to subtle cues in participants’ “expressions, pauses, questions, and occasional sidetracks” (Leavy, 2017, p. 274).

I attempted to ensure the participants in the research study were demographically

diverse. Actual time in their role as a teacher was taken into consideration when selecting the participants so that the sample group would have rich and diverse experiences under the phenomena and the group would not be homologous.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data was gathered by in-person or Zoom interviews depending upon the level of comfort of each participant given their school schedule. The participants were selected from two Shelby County high schools and the overall participant size ranged from either ten to twelve individuals ideally with a proportionate number of individuals from each school. Data triangulation were embedded into the interview questions which increased the reliability of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017). According to Peoples (2021), “a combination of instruments is ideal rather than one so that the findings are rich, but dissertation students should also be realistic about choosing various instruments so that they do not overwhelm themselves with unrealistic expectation” (p. 50).

Collection Methods

Phenomenological research studies largely depend upon interviews as the primary instrument for data collection therefore, the primary methods of collecting data was through semi-structured, one-one-one interviews (See Appendix G) (Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Individual interviews were conducted by me using a selected group of twelve individuals. One in-depth interview and a potential follow-up interview was conducted with the participants from both schools. Therefore, I had a total of twelve in-depth interviews from which to gather data. The initial interviews were in-depth and then I conducted follow-up interviews with the same participants to enhance and build

upon the initial themes of first interviews when deemed necessary by me. I sought participants from various ethnicities as well as age ranges. It was the intent of this researcher to have a heterogeneous sample of participants in order to offer the most diverse data response possible for the research purpose (Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017).

The interviews occurred at a location chosen by the participant as long as it was suitably quiet to record the interview. Interviews allowed for teachers to share experiences and give first-hand accounts of their perspectives and experiences regarding an advisory program through open-ended questions. The study participants were informed that the interviews were recorded and were given a consent form to sign (See Appendix E). The interviews were recorded using two recording devices, one digital recorder and one tape recorder, to ensure the conversation was captured completely and accurately. I also kept a research journal to record notes during the interview.

Data Analysis

Perhaps the most gargantuan task of any research project is making sense of the data that emerges. Processing and interpreting the data allows opportunity for the researcher to mine for themes and assists in answering the question of what it may mean in order to create an intelligible account (Leavy, 2017, p. 150). Creswell (2018) and Leavy (2017) texts guided the data analysis process of this study. There are five steps to the process of data analysis outlined in the texts: data preparation and organization, initial immersion, coding, categorizing, and theming, and interpretation.

Analysis Methods

Data Preparation and Organization

During this phase, all the data from the interviews were transcribed using a word processing system and then stored on my password protected secured computer. Once the data was transcribed and stored, I organized the data by chunking the data into files based on each participant's responses in both the initial interview and the potential follow up interview. All data was organized according to the research question's particular data answers.

Initial Immersion

After the data was prepared and organized, I began the process of reading and reviewing the data sets in order to mine for meaning and to seek out emerging themes. Guided by Leavy's writings on data collection and preparation, I was purposeful and took time to reflect on the data sets, so the themes naturally developed (Leavy, 2017). Through the immersion process I began noticing and tracking emerging ideas. Data reduction began to occur at this point by prioritizing the themes that emerged in regard to the research questions.

Coding

The first cycle of coding was done using a mix of mostly 'Initial (Open) Coding' which I used to deconstruct the qualitative data into loose and tentative categories as it lends itself well to interview transcripts and In Vivo coding, as it is effective in capturing the participants' words specifically (Saldaña, 2021, p 149). I anticipated for these themes to evolve as I worked through the coding process. Values coding was also utilized throughout all coding cycles in order to capture the participant's attitudes, beliefs, and values (Saldaña, 2021, p. 167). The second cycle of coding was done using 'Focused

Coding' in order to create a fixed set of codes in which all data was re-coded and assessed for comparability and transferability (Saldaña, 2021, p. 307).

Categorizing and Theming

After coding, I then began to look for patterns and relationships between codes. Memos allowed me to categorize the themes that emerged from the data after the coding process (Creswell, 2018 & Leavy, 2017). Memos were especially efficient in that I could organize the data through the lens of the research questions. These memos held detailed descriptions or summaries, key quotes from the data, analytic memos about different codes, and interpretive ideas (Leavy, 2017).

Interpretation

Interpretation is one of the most important parts of the data analysis process. It is where the answers to the research question truly begin to crystalize. The interpretation stemmed from the coded data and the using of the memos to find patterns, and intersectionality among the different categories and themes (Leavy, 2017). I utilized the following as suggested by Leavy (2017, p. 153) in the interpretation process by returning to the research purpose and questions with the following questions in mind:

1. What are the relationships between categories, themes, and concepts?
2. What patterns have emerged?
3. What seems most salient in the data? What is the essence of the data saying?
4. What is learned by placing the data in the context of existing literature?
5. What is learned by considering the data through more than one theoretical lens?
6. Using what is learned, how is each research question answered?

These questions guided me in understanding and investigation of the data and I began to arrive at an interpretation from the participants' lived experiences of implementing advisory programs in their respective school.

Epoché and Positionality

In accordance with traditional roles of phenomenological studies and interviews, this researcher acted as the primary research instrument as: recorder, reporter, analyzer, as well as interactor (Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017). I conducted the interviews and developed the interview questions using research-based protocols as is typically employed in qualitative research (Creswell, 2018, p. 181).

According to Peoples (2021) phenomenological inquiry is never truly free from the investigator's beliefs of the phenomena being studied. For the purpose of this study, I used the process of reflexivity (Creswell, 2018, p. 182) to explore the beliefs I brought into the study. At the time of this writing, I was co-leader of the sophomore level advisory group in the advisory program for Shelby County High School. Shelby County Public Schools only introduced the advisory program concept in 2019 and this was my first year to serve as a grade-level advisory co-leader, although I had served as an advisory program advisor/teacher every year since it was introduced to SCHS. As a co-leader of sophomore advisories, I not only advised my own small group of sophomore students but also served with another teacher -advisor as the point person for advisory-related issues or questions for other sophomore advisors/teachers. Since the advisory program had only been a part of SCHS since 2019, I brought to this study the background and pre-understandings of what it was like to have lived the experience of implementing an advisory program into a school for the first time as I have experienced the school's

climate before the pre-advisory program and was present at the meeting that introduced the idea of an advisory program. Therefore, I have experience surrounding the given phenomenon being studied. At the time of this writing, I was forty-two years old and had been a certified teacher in the state of Kentucky for four years. As an advisor, and a researcher, and a fellow teacher, I sought to investigate the beliefs and experiences of other teachers as we implemented this advisory program in our advisory periods and have first-hand experience related to the phenomena which relates to Heidegger's hermeneutic lens in that the author has ideas and relative understanding of the phenomena and can use this as a point of understanding when working with the sample group and writing about the overall findings.

Ethical Considerations

Structured Ethical Research (SER)

Creating a structured ethical reflection (See Appendix H) has been critical in allowing me to approach my research work in a new light. I chose to focus specifically on transparency, respect, trust, self-awareness, and objectivity as I feel they reflected my core beliefs about my own identity and kept me aligned to those beliefs as a teacher-advisor with the eventual goal of school leadership.

I first became aware of the Structured Ethical Research (SER) process in Dr. Brydon-Miller's class and was amazed at how it sharpened the focus of how I went about the work I intend to do. Before working through this process, I was not truly aware of how much of my own identity I could inadvertently bring into the research as a student whose education was grounded in a rural community. Further, I had not considered the intricacies of the inner workings of this project and how, relationally, it might impact

both individuals directly involved in the research and others the research may ripple out to. The reflections that emerged from this project made me more aware, sharpened my focus, and, I believe, made me more prepared to undertake this research project.

Basic Values

Transparency

As a teacher who sought to launch a project that investigated the practices of the teachers in the building in which I worked, transparency was paramount. I sought to investigate teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of advisory programs. To do this, I had to be transparent with other teacher-advisors that I worked with in making known that we must reflect on and take ownership of the work we did in enacting advisory programs. Investigating one's own pedagogical practices and openly sharing what emerges may lead to feelings of discomfort. However, this transparency allowed teachers to voice their experiences toward the eventual goal of working collaboratively to center students in the best way for academic success through advisory program experiences.

Respect

Respect was one of the targets that I wished to focus on in this research project. Teachers, as educated professionals in their field, garner certain elevated levels of respect, both as wielders of authority in their academic space, and as givers of specific fields of knowledge in which they are specialists. Their roles as advisors may feel secondary to their roles as teachers, but still, they are composite in creating the teacher's identity. It is in this spirit that I endeavored to engage both my participants in respectful and equitable ways.

Trust

As I first began thinking about this research project, my thoughts were initially focused on the goal of securing the data needed to help guide the growth of advisory programs. As I pondered the role of participants, and grown more in my professional role, I came to the understanding that teachers opening up about their own pedagogical practices for investigation can create tension, discomfort, and potentially withdrawal if trust had not been established. There was the possibility that the idea of critical inquiry of the current framework could be viewed negatively and could result in resistance by the school advisory creators. With that in mind, I sought to engage my peers in a relationship of trust. This was garnered through shared experiences and in non-evaluative conversations related to their experiences of building advisory programs.

Another concern was with creating trust between teachers-advisors in the survey portion of data collection. As a staff member in the building, I was aware that there are many different applications of the advisory program that occur within advisory student groups within the school. Some teachers adhered strictly to the prescribed advisory curriculum while other teachers followed it loosely, choosing to create their own style of advisory program implementation. For the survey results to be most beneficial in providing authentic and usable data, teachers-advisors will need to be willing to be transparent about their advisory program practices.

Self-Awareness

I worked to be more aware of my preconceived ideas that I brought into this project. One of the ethical considerations I considered is that I was a leader within the group of participants I sought to investigate. I had to work to show a clear separation between my role as an advisor leader and my role as a researcher. I was a teacher who

witnessed the implementation of an advisory program on the ground floor and have seen its failures and successes firsthand. Additionally, I had heard co-workers lament about advisory programs and express disdain over what they felt to be inane and pointless work. I had also witnessed teacher-advisors turn advisory programs into study halls or gossip fests. However, these were my observations as a teacher-advisor and not as a researcher and I had to be consciously aware and not allow these experiences to influence the work I sought to do.

Objectivity

As a researcher, a teacher, and a parent, I knew that objectivity was crucial in attaining the end goal: understanding teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of advisory programs. I was concerned about how this would impact my working relationships with staff members who have worked to develop the current iteration of the advisory program. However, I did not allow friendships with co-workers, experiences with my own advisory program student group, or even uncomfortable realizations about my own pedagogical practices to dissuade this research project from its target.

Further, I am from a rural community and experienced school in a rural public high school. My graduating class consisted of only 25 people. The students I went to school with closely mirrored the demographic of the students I teach at SCHS; conservative and solidly working class. It is this lived experience that often informs my pedagogical practices. I actively include rhetoric to validate students' choice to pursue post-high school goals that may not be academic. As a researcher, I worked to ensure no biases based on my personal experiences became present in the work I was seeking to do.

Institutional Review Board

Research for this dissertation was conducted in compliance with University of Louisville's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I completed the IRB process and ensured all supporting documents and parts were submitted in compliance with the application process as provided on the IRB of University of Louisville's website.

All participants in this research study were at least eighteen years old and signed the most up-to-date Informed Consent Form (See Appendix E) as approved by the IRB of University of Louisville and were able to withdraw from the study at any time they chose during the research process. All participants in the study remained confidential to protect the identity of the participants. This ensured participants could be open and honest in their responses and discussion without fear of retaliation. In compliance with the IRB process each participant was assigned a pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality. All pseudonyms were selected from the names of former presidential advisors. Interviews were recorded using a handheld audio digital recorder and a tape recorder. All recordings were stored on my password protected secure computer. Participants were notified of the interview format and granted permission prior to the interviews taking place. If an in-person interview format was used the audio interview from the handheld audio digital recorder was transferred onto my password protected secured computer and the original audio file from the handheld recorder was deleted. Printed transcripts were kept in a secure file within my home office and will be shredded three years after the research and data analysis process is completed. All data was stored on a password protected secured computer owned by me. Data will be kept in confidence for three years as indicated by the IRB of University of Louisville.

Summary of Chapter 3

The data that emerged from this phenomenologically designed study using a lens of constructivism will be used to inform the future creations of advisory programs and guiding practices. Students have lived experiences that are not always represented in broad advisory program curricula, and they deserve to be present, reflected, and voiced in advisory program experiences where their growth is a goal. Teachers hold the unique privilege of having the most opportunities to connect with students on a daily basis and that connection lends itself to opportunities to observe and understand the needs of the students in more intimate ways than administrators and/or support staff are afforded. These teacher/advisor understandings and observations are ripe for mining valuable understandings in how advisory programs can be collaboratively created to better meet the specific needs of the students at Shelby County High School.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

In this study, I sought to answer three research questions. These were:

RQ 1: What shared beliefs about the purpose of advisory programs exist among the teachers who cultivate advisory programs?

RQ 2: In what ways do teachers consciously and intentionally create advisory programs for their specific community of students?

RQ 3: What challenges emerge for teachers when creating advisory programs for students?

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the lived experiences of teachers at two Kentucky high schools and how they perceive, understand, cultivate, and create advisory programs.

In this chapter, I present the findings of my study. I begin with revisiting my epoché and positionality and then move into an overview of the context of the study that includes information regarding the research sites and participant demographics. This section also includes a table of participant demographic characteristics and a detailed description of each participant to support their inclusion in this study.

Epoché and Positionality

To support the integrity and fidelity of this study, it is important to revisit my epoché and positionality as the researcher. Since the completion of the gathering of the data for this study through semi-structured interviews I have assumed a new role in education. As stated in previous chapters, the data was gathered from twelve teacher-advisors in the two high schools of Shelby County Public Schools. At the time of the semi-structured interviews, I was also serving as a teacher-advisor in the same county. Since the interviews I have begun serving as an assistant principal of a middle school in another district in Kentucky.

In the middle school in which I serve as assistant principal, there is no model of advisory. There is also not an advisory-adjacent program or anything like the advisory program that was present within the Shelby County High Schools. Further, social emotional learning is a component in my new district, but only insomuch that it is referenced when talking about teaching the needs of the whole child or when discussing trauma-informed teaching. Therefore, from the data-coding point of this study on, I no longer served as an advisor or advisory-related role in any capacity.

As I have shifted out of the role of teacher and into that of administrator and one who now leads teachers, I had to be aware of the potential to see things through the lens of an administrator which is one of problem-solving. As an administrator I tend to think about how many of the challenges advisors face could have been resolved but instead had to remember it was critical to retain my position of researcher neutrality instead.

Sample

The twelve teacher-advisors who participated in this study came from a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. All participants were identified as certified teachers in the state of Kentucky and served as advisors for at least two years in their respective school settings. Participants were selected through convenience sampling and were provided a research recruitment form (See Appendix D) which included the research topic name, a brief description of the research topic, and the contact information of the researcher. Once the participant expressed interest in participating, they were given the participant questionnaire protocol (See Appendix F) to establish eligibility to participate in the study. Once participants had been identified as having met all established requirements to participate in the study, they were provided the informed consent document (See Appendix E) to sign acknowledging their consent to participate in the study. Each participant completed a semi-structured interview (See Appendix G) in the location of their choice, which in all cases was the participants' respective school grounds in the secure location of their classrooms, devoid of students and colleagues. Each interview was planned to last no longer than two hours. The average length of the twelve interviews was forty-nine minutes, with the longest being seventy minutes and the shortest being twenty-four minutes. There were no follow-up interviews deemed necessary by this researcher due to the in-depth nature of the initial interviews and the use of probing questions that ensured each participant's responses gave adequate sets of data needed to analyze each research question. Each interview was transcribed using Rev.com transcription software and reviewed for accuracy by the researcher using the audio recordings of the interview.

For the coding process, steps one through three (data preparation and organization, initial immersion, and coding) of the five-step data analysis plan outlined in Chapter Three of this study were used. Each transcript was uploaded into the online coding software Quirkos, reviewed multiple times, and the researcher made notes of ideas and key themes/trends which emerged from the data immersion. After reviewing the research notes and notated transcripts, participant responses were coded using Saldaña's (2021) exploratory coding methods with thematic analysis. Once codes were assigned, the emergent themes were categorically grouped. The emergent themes were then aligned with the research questions guiding this study for the interpretation of the data to begin.

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym drawn from the names of former presidential advisors to protect their confidentiality. For this study, they shared their unique first-hand experiences on leading, developing, and instituting advisories in a high school setting. References to the names of their respective schools, as well as any other identifying information has been removed.

Participant Information

Twelve Kentucky teachers from two local high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky, participated in the study. Questions from the participant questionnaire protocol (See Appendix F) asked questions that established their eligibility for participation and are shown in the following table. Questions whose answers could lead to participant identify have not been included. Answers to questions that arose in the interviews and supply demographic information have been added.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Years Teaching	Years in SCPS	Years as Advisor	Current Grade Level Advisory	Previous Grade Level Advisory	Most Recent University Attended	Other Universities Attended
Claude	2	2	2	Juniors	Juniors	University of Cumberland	
David	6	4	4	Seniors	Sophomores Juniors	University of Louisville	International Universities
Edwina	11	11	4	Seniors	Sophomores	University of Kentucky	
Elliott	12	4	4	Freshmen	Sophomores	Eastern Kentucky University	
Frances	20	3	2	Seniors	Seniors	Campbellsville University	
Hilary	2	2	2	Sophomore	Sophomore	University of the Cumberlands	
Jennifer	5	5	4	Senior	Freshman Sophomore Junior	University of Louisville	
Joe	11	11	4	Junior	Freshman	University of Louisville	University of the Cumberlands
Kenneth	12	12	4	Senior	Senior	University of Kentucky	
Lisa	4	4	4	Freshman	Sophomore Junior Senior	Georgetown College	University of the Cumberlands
Mary Beth	2	2	2	Freshman	Junior	Western Kentucky University	Murray State University
Susan	5	5	4	Freshman	Freshman	Murray State University	

Claude is a second-year teacher and is balancing obtaining his teaching certificate with navigating the experience of managing a classroom. He entered the profession through his current enrollment in the alternative teaching certification program at

University of Cumberlands after receiving an undergraduate degree in English at University of Kentucky. His advisory group consists of juniors.

David received his undergraduate degree and a master's degree from international universities. His most recent master's degree is from University of Louisville. This is his sixth year in education and his fourth year in Shelby County. He first taught middle school for two years before moving to the high school. He has advised sophomores, juniors, and currently is currently working with seniors.

Edwina is in her eleventh year of teaching. She began at the middle school level but has taught at the high school level for the last six years. She is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and has also attained advanced certifications which have allowed her to teach a rich variety of students with varying levels of ability. At the time of this study her advisory group consisted of Seniors.

Elliott is an educator with over twelve years of classroom experience at the high school level with four of them served in Shelby County. He graduated from Eastern Kentucky University but holds additional certifications from other universities. His current advisory grade level is freshmen, but he has worked with sophomores in the past.

Frances is a veteran teacher with over twenty years of diverse experiences. She holds multiple degrees, including her teaching degree, from Campbellsville University. In addition to her content knowledge, she has led many extra-curricular activities which inform her understanding and implementation of advisory-like practices.

Hilary is coming to the end of her alternative teaching certification program at University of the Cumberlands and is in her second year in the high school classroom.

This is the same university at which she received her bachelor's degree. Both years she has served as a sophomore advisor.

Jennifer has been teaching for five years with all of them being at Shelby County and at the high school level. She received her teaching certification through the alternative certification program at University of Louisville but did her bachelor's degree work at other universities. She has served as an advisor to all grade levels, but currently works with a senior level advisory group.

Joe has spent the entirety of his eleven years in education in Shelby County. He received his undergraduate degree and his master's degree at University of Louisville and then completed his Rank 1 certification at University of the Cumberlands. He taught his first year at a middle school and the rest have all been at the high school level. He currently serves as a junior advisor but has also advised freshman in the past.

Kenneth is in his twelfth year in the high school classroom with all the years being served in Shelby County. He has also supported the high school by leading many student-focused extra-curricular activities and clubs. Kenneth received his teaching degree from University of Kentucky. His advisory grade level has all been seniors.

Lisa is in her fourth year of teaching, all in Shelby County and at the high school level. She received a content area degree from Georgetown College and later earned a master's degree through the alternative teaching certification through University of the Cumberlands. Lisa's advisory practices are informed by her unique experiences teaching in an advisory-adjacent non-traditional student educational program.

Mary Beth has been teaching for over two years and has taught exclusively at the high school level and in Shelby County. She received her bachelor's degree from

Western Kentucky University and is currently working on her master's degree from Murray State. She currently advises the freshmen advisory level but has advised at the junior level previously. Mary Beth also serves the high school level by sponsoring a very active student organization.

Susan began her teaching career at the middle school level for one year and then transition to the high school level for a total of five years in the classroom. She has always taught in the Shelby County school district and gained her teaching degree through Murray State University. While there was an iteration of the advisory experience at the middle school from which she gained advisory-adjacent experience, it was structured very differently from the structure of advisory she encountered at the high school level. At the high school level, she has exclusively worked with the freshmen advisory level.

Identified Themes

The three research questions guiding this study informed the basis for conducting the data collection and analysis of this study. Five main themes and eight sub themes emerged based on the semi-structured interview transcriptions and audio recordings. Each theme is show in Table 2.

Table 2. Themes and Subthemes

Relationships	Goals	Communication	Efficacy	Social Emotional Learning
Advisor-Student Relationship Building	Advisory Framework		Advisory Program Efficacy	Social Emotional Learning Components
Student-Peer Relationship Building	Year-End Project		Advisor's Self-Efficacy	School Connect

Research Question 1

What shared beliefs about the purpose of advisory programs exist among the teachers who cultivate advisory programs?

This research question was created for the purpose of allowing the researcher to gain an understanding of what beliefs were the drivers of teacher-advisors' development of feelings of efficacy. This research question had eight corresponding interview questions (See Appendix G) to better understand the beliefs that advisors share as they cultivate and implement their advisory program in their school.

Relationships

One of the most dominant themes to emerge from the participants answers to the interview questions was the theme of relationship. The majority of participants referred to the concept of "building relationships" as their belief of the primary purpose of an advisory program. Many of them came to this conclusion intrinsically as they developed and performed the work of advising, while others became aware of this explicitly through their introduction to the advisory program and its framework.

When discussing building relationships, the most common references participants made were centered on building relationships between adults and students, while the second most common occurrence was related to advisory being a space where students could build relationships with peers.

Advisor-Student Relationship Building

Many participants referenced their belief that the purpose of advisory was the building of positive relationships between the advisor and student. Many examples were given which supported the reasoning for the belief of this goal. Several stated their belief in the value of students having an adult in the school setting to which they could connect and relate to. As Elliott said, “Our students need a trusted adult in the building, and they need a connection to the schools, somebody who gets to know them in a deep way.” Others echoed that the goal of relationship building was to allow students to learn how to be successful in adult relationships in order to eventually achieve long term, post-high school goals. Lisa says, “If you struggle to talk to your advisor, you're not going to do very well at an internship.” David described it as having that person (advisor) who “models behaviors as an adult” and who “you can talk openly with.” Or as Kenneth said, a person who can “teach you how to be an adult.”

Student-Peer Relationship Building

A secondary purpose of the advisory program was another commonly held belief that influenced participants as to the purpose of advisory program. Kenneth clearly indicates this when I asked him what he believed to be the original mission of advisory to be: “To create the community of the authentic connection between students and teachers is beyond just teacher and pupil” or as Mary Beth called it, “team bonding.” This belief

was manifested in a myriad of ways in how advisors cultivated advisory. For example, David grew his peer-to-peer relationships in his advisory through the card game of ‘Spoons’. He said, “The whole group, um, we're really into it and we really bonded over it. Um, some of those students still talk to me, like, they'll go outta their way to come find me every day and talk to me still.” Mary Beth also found creative ways to make the “team bonding’ occur. She says,

I have a bunch of daycare instruments. So we all made music. I don't know if everyone out in the hallway could hear us, but I love that we were making a band and I was like, we had a train and we were all making music.

Goals

Advisory Framework

When asked about their beliefs of the goals of their advisory program, many participants referred to their school’s respective advisory framework, which was developed by the school’s designated advisory program leader based on the model of advisory observed in the Souhegan and brought back to Shelby County Public Schools. The model, referred to throughout the interviews as the “advisory framework” was developed at Shelby County High School and was adopted and revised for use at Martha Layne Collins High School. The frameworks house advisory guides from the macro-level (year-long grade level goals) to the micro-level (day-by-day). Data emerged indicated that their beliefs around the purpose of advisory programs were drawn from the content and activities found within the advisory framework. However, the goal of relationship building kept emerging as an over-arching theme of the advisory program. For example, Joe states,

But even on days when I don't have something planned and we're kind of just hanging out, especially with a good advisory, we, I build connections. Like I see kids that were in my freshman advisory, um, and they, I still have connections with them, so you get a deeper connection with a student. And I definitely understand that point of advisory because I get a little more time to build relations with them, I think than a regular core content teacher, but in advisory, I think that gives everyone a chance to hopefully build close relationship.

Year-End Project

Another subtheme that was mentioned with regularity by participants when discussing their beliefs around the purpose of advisory was the school's framework's year-end task that each grade level advisory was expected to complete in order to receive the half credit for passing advisory. The year-end task, or project as it is referred to sometimes, is different for each grade level. The most often mentioned year-end task was the Senior Defense that every senior student is required to complete. Through the interviews it became evident that the end-of-the-year task was often tied to the participants' beliefs around the purpose of advisory.

The language used by participants when discussing the year-end projects for any grade level was interesting. Commonly used words were, "focus", "pressure", "ambitious", "heavy-ended", "expectations", "structure", and "growth". These words seemed to be related to how some teacher-advisors felt regarding their beliefs based on the expectations of guiding their advisory group towards these end-of-the-year projects.

Other participants, like Joe, felt very positive about the year-end projects in the advisory framework. He says,

One more thing. Uh, and a huge purpose of advisors, especially with our senior defense that I don't see, cuz I'm thinking about Juniors and we do things that lead up towards our senior defense. We haven't really started it yet, but we will. And they know about it and they know what we're gonna do, but I just feel like we don't need to start it yet. We'll be fine. Um, yeah. But senior defense, there's no better space to do that than advisory. And so that's a good thing.

So, the emergent data supported the idea that while advisors felt the year-end projects were stressful, they felt if projects had to be done, then advisory was the place for that work to take place.

Communication

Throughout the interviews there was discussion given to how teacher-advisors came to understand and develop their beliefs around their advisory program. Some of the other major themes became situated within the theme of communication. Susan, for example, shared her beliefs around advisory that came from her year of teaching in middle school and then explained how it was different from the high school advisory program. She indicated concern on the detriments a lack of communication could cause for an advisor making that type of transition into an unfamiliar advisory program.

For me, when I came here from the middle school, my view of advisory was much different than what it actually is here. So that was a difficult transition. I feel like the trainings are chock full of information, which is important, but I also think it's important to make the teacher or advisor aware of what the purpose, the overall purpose is, or what they think the purpose should be in that. There's a lot of flexibility with how they can design their advisory as a teacher to focus on building relationships with students anyway, so that was my mindset coming in, so I was able to figure that out on my own, but there are teachers who don't. So, I think it's important to maybe, I don't know, a SEL for advisors too, to understand that that's the prime goal is to build those relationships with those kids.

The data supported the belief that there was not strong communication around advisory, both at its implementation at the beginning of the year, or in an ongoing fashion. Hilary said,

Just, I don't know, especially like, or maybe it would be better with like, newer teachers, like talking about it with those people. I just feel like the older people or the admin, like their expectations for advisor are really high, but yeah, it's not like they're around every class to see what they actually do. Like they just, they have those high expectations, but they also just expect teachers to do that and not really

make sure that they're doing it. Not that I want them to harp or anything, but just ask like, Hey, how is this going?

Lisa also indicated she shared the belief that a lack of communication impeded the successful implementation of advisory. She said,

I would like it if we were all on the same page. There's only been maybe one time that all the freshman advisors could get together. I would love to have maybe a PD day to do that would be great. Let's all chat about what our freshmen are doing. We can all complain about how they're bad or whatever we need to do. That would be nice. So that's only happened maybe once.

Efficacy

Advisory Program Efficacy

The participants' shared beliefs around the purpose of advisory must also include a reflection on their beliefs of the efficacy of the advisory program. The responses to this concept varied. The majority of the data were favorable to the belief that advisory programs were efficient in meeting its goals; others were not as optimistic.

Kenneth's response to the question of whether advisory programs were beneficial to kids was somewhere in the middle. He said,

I believe that for 60% of them, yes. Okay. For 40% of them, no. And that's too high. And that's just my own personal number, so I don't really know what the school sees, so I don't know if I'm being better or worse at this than other people around me. But also no feedback means I have no idea. So for 60% of my kids, they get something out of it for the 40. And I think part of it might be covid, like they just, they're used to just being isolated the whole time and their go-to is just being on their phone and isolated. And so no, they're not getting anything out of it.

Lisa indicated she believes in the efficacy of advisory because she says has seen it be successful. She described the advisory program at her school and what an effective advisory looks like.

I think they want it to be where students are meeting other peers and they're getting to know them. I think they see it as a lessening maybe, of bullying in a way. They also want that to be the defense and exhibition focus for advisors to kind of help with that. I think they want advisors to help these students and kinda be their school mom. Yeah, I, I'm your school mom. That's who you're going to go to when you have an issue, you go to your advisor.

Advisor's Self-Efficacy

There were varying responses that dealt with an advisor's feelings of self-efficacy as it relates to their beliefs about the purpose of advisory. As it became evident that the shared belief regarding advisory is that it is intended to build relationships with trusted adults and peers first and to fulfill the year-end project secondarily, then it follows that advisors' concepts of self-efficacy are strongly related to how confident they feel in their ability to build relationships and to fulfill the components of the advisory framework.

Jennifer's self-efficacy as an advisor was built from reflecting on her own experiences in her life. She navigated the social-emotional learning component in the framework by investigating her own understanding of the competencies. She says,

And so there are things that I've been doing my entire life that I'm now realizing, okay, that is something that I've learned from elementary school that was social emotional learning. That would be considered it. But I had no idea that that's what it was. Being an active listener, being someone who is able to give good feedback and listen to that feedback and take that feedback, I just thought that was being a person. I had no idea that something that people have to learn if they didn't learn it when they were growing up.

When discussing self-efficacy, Elliott shared that he felt he may not have the strongest skills when it came to advisory, and that he felt only guidance counselors likely had the complete skills needed. However, he did say he had, "a decent PowerPoint and decent materials to follow to help aid me in this quest."

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Data related to social-emotional learning and its heavy integration into the advisory program framework and expectations did come up regularly in most of the interviews. Many of the participants expressed their shared belief that social-emotional learning was important and valuable based on their perception of the role it had played in their life and its contributions to successful adulthood. Mary Beth gave an example of this when she said,

Yeah, I grew up really, really fast. That's why I'm a teacher today. I just have always been interested in stuff like that, I guess. And so I did a study about social-emotional learning in college. I personally enjoy social-emotional learning. And so that's why I see the importance of it because it is life skills.

Others implied the value of social-emotional learning was most needed for navigating the multiple spheres of adulthood and cultivated the social emotional portion of their advisory time through that lens. David indicated that the need for social emotional learning was partly due to the lack of students receiving the skills and competencies outside of the school setting. He says,

Some of the life skills though also that, you know, parents that made sure that you were not just with peers your own age, that you were socialized in, in sort of many different facets of life. So that when you became an adult, you could speak to adults and you could speak to younger people, you could, you know, do it. I do feel that, you know, that social emotional learning was more embedded in my life and I didn't know it was there. And it's, you know, whether it was at church or school or sports, it was sort of always there. Whereas I feel that, you know, it could be lacking more in modern life. And that's why we have to, that's why we have to try to explicitly teach it.

Frances echoed David's sentiments about students' perceived lack of social emotional competencies in her response, too. She says,

I'm a firm believer that that school is not just about math, science, reading and social studies. Like, there are so many life lessons for students to get, um, here

that they do not get at home. Um, also like I sound like an old person because, I'm gonna talk about generations. Yes. But especially in this generation.

School-Connect SEL Curriculum

When the participants were asked about their beliefs regarding the School-Connect SEL curriculum that was purchased for implementation in the advisory program, there were a variety of responses. The data showed that some advisors enjoyed the click-and-play, low-prep, 'pre-packaged' modules of topics and videos they could show to their advisory groups. The discussion guides and lesson plays were also included so most participants responded that they spent little to no time planning for the advisory framework's Wednesday SEL day.

Joe said, "I actually like the SEL program. I think it's good." Edwina echoed other participants responses regarding the ease of implementing School-Connect but also brought up another issue that emerged in other responses; the belief that many students disliked the School-Connect videos. Edwina says,

I tend to riff through some of the SEL lessons because I have seniors, we're trying to implement this, the SEL curriculum, and some of my advisory complained that some of the lessons are a little juvenile for them and they like the later ones. So we have done, if I look at a lesson and say, okay, I think probably my advisory is good on this skill, I'll go to a later lesson and do it. But it really has been the last thing on my list of things to think about. And I don't spend a ton of time preparing.

Hilary echoed this when she shared her beliefs of how students perceived School-Connect's curriculum, "Sometimes they think it's corny or they just don't really think it's information they can use or they think it like dumbs them down."

Research Question 2

In what ways do teachers consciously and intentionally create advisory programs for their specific community of students?

This research question was created for the purpose of allowing the researcher to gain an understanding of how teacher-advisors' beliefs influence their practices when creating and performing advisory. This research question had seven corresponding interview questions (See Appendix G).

Relationships

Advisor-Student Relationship

It was interesting to notice that even newer teachers, like Claude with only two years of experience, understood and prioritized relationship-building with his advisory group. It is also noteworthy that he did so through intentionality, rather than a specific community building activity. He says,

I've built relationships up to now with my kids, just naturally, not because we did any activity as a group or anything, but on days, specifically Fridays where we don't really do anything. I'll sit down with a group of kids or something. We'll just talk about whatever. Okay. There's no structure. Yeah. I just try to focus on every little group in my advisory. I'll talk to them for five or 10 minutes and just nonchalant, nothing official. I'm not taking notes or anything.

Student-Peer Relationship Building

To build successful student-peer relationships, the data indicated that advisors tried many different approaches. Some, like Jennifer, worked toward building stronger student-peer relationship by creating opportunities for them to work together toward a goal for their community building activity. She says, "Sometimes some groups of kids will bring in food and do a little potluck, but it's entirely led by them. So I'm not

organizing a party for them unless it's a holiday area. If it's around a break, I'll ask, do you guys want to bring in food? We can do a little whatever.”

Other interviewees shared that they would often pair with other advisory groups to be able to do activities on a larger scale that were centered on student-peer relationship. These groupings would usually be advisories of the same grade level. Susan said,

So, for example, [blank] had a freshman advisory last year, and every Friday would team up with another advisory Ms. [blank]'s advisory, and they would go for a walk out in the woods or go for a walk around the track, both groups. And that was wonderful. And they loved it because they were getting out, they were moving. They didn't have to worry about being fidgety or they would play dodge ball or something in the gym.

Data also emerged showing that many of the student-peer relationship building happened during the social- emotional activities that advisors intentionally created during advisory. Edwina shared a powerful example of this:

And one of the activities we do pretty early in the year is the cross the line activity where we read a statement and if the student resonates with that statement, then they cross the line to indicate that's happened to them or that's an experience they've had. And the questions kind of range everything from my favorite color is blue, I'll cross the line to, it gets into some deep, I've experienced the death of a parent. I'm living in a single parent household, I've been homeless. But it gets into some really, really deep probing questions. And the idea of the activity is not to discuss necessarily what has happened to you that has led you to cross the line, but it does allow them to see that they're generally never alone in a thing that they've experienced. There's usually someone who has also experienced that particular thing.

Goals

Advisory Framework

When participants were asked how they created advisory for their advisory groups, they almost always referred to their school's advisory framework. The discussion often centered on the weekly schedule provided in the framework. Participants felt they

were meeting the goals of advisory by following the prescribed weekly schedule and having a Monday meeting, which consisted of making school-related announcements and ensuring that students were aware of happenings around the building for that week. They also followed the weekly schedule by having ‘Academic Day’ on Tuesdays, which served as a time for students to work with their advisor to improve academic performance. Wednesdays were focused on social-emotional learning, specifically the day set aside to engage with the School-Connect SEL curriculum. For Thursdays, the respondents showed some variation in their responses. The majority said that Thursdays were used as a “community building day” where they would engage their students in activities that were designed to build inter-relationships among the advisory group. A minority of respondents felt that the weekly schedule supported using Thursdays as a ‘framework’ day, which was time devoted to working on their advisory group’s year-end projects. Despite the disparity, all indicated their belief that the schedule they followed was the schedule outlined in the framework. Fridays were referred to as community day, free day, outside day, or other loosely structured concepts in which fell plans like potlucks, outside activities, etc.

While all cited the advisory framework as a support in helping them create an advisory experience that was goal-focused, it was interesting that they all mentioned ways that they made agential choices on moving the days around based on the needs of their advisory group in that particular week. David shows this when he says,

Uh, Tuesday we try to do academics, and Wednesday SEL, sometimes we have to flip those, we have to flip flop 'em sometimes just for, you know, seniors, there's always other things going on. So we get, we try to get, you know, Tuesday, Wednesday are, um, those important pieces out of the way to kind of open up our Thursday, Friday to be a little bit more free choice.

Mary Beth also feels agency is moving around the weekly schedule to meet her students' needs and desires. She says,

I know Wednesdays are SEL days Thursdays, either Tuesdays or Thursdays, we do academic day. Like I said, it depends on how they're feeling. I'll be like, they'll come in Tuesdays and I'll be like, do we want to do academic today or they'll come in Tuesdays and I'll be like, do we want to do academic today or Thursday? And if majority of them say, let's just get it done today and we'll get it done today. But then we do it on Thursday.

Year-End Project

Because the majority of the participants mentioned the advisory framework's end-of-the-year projects as a goal of the advisory program, there was much discussion around how they created and implemented these projects into their advisory time. Mary Beth spoke reflectively about her practice,

But I have learned from this year to last year is if you set the standard in the beginning that these are the things we have to do, then it's easier to execute that. And so last year I didn't do that. And so it was really hard to get them to do academic days at after Christmas or the end of year project.

Communication

Throughout the interviews it became clear that a large component of how advisory is consciously and intentionally cultivated came back to be situated in the understanding advisors had around what the goals and expectations of advisory were. Claude alludes to this when he discusses his perceptions of other teacher-advisors. He says, "Because I mean, the teachers who don't do a lot with advisory, I don't think it's because they're lazier because they're crappy teachers. I think it's just because it's not really clear what they are supposed to be doing." This insight links closely with the concept of on-going guidance around advisory and the views participants shared

regarding it. For example, when asked how she perceives other advisors feel about advisory she says,

I mean, I think pretty well we all kind of treat it the same. Like it's, there's a lot of gray area. If I could have one statement. It was just, I feel like there's always a lot of gray area. Maybe not so much confusion, but kinda lack of knowledge or how to, not how to handle it.

Efficacy

Advisory Program Efficacy

The participants were very candid in how they created their advisory to be effective in reaching their perceived goals for their specific community. The data that emerged showed that advisors felt the efficacy of the advisory program was at its highest when the advisory students' interest led the advisory framework components. For example, Joe talked about how he used opportunities provided in the advisory framework days to integrate student-generated learning activities. He says,

I printed out this packet and it was like, what do kids need to know when they graduate high school? And so like, we've done how to tie, tie, we've done how to change the tire, uh, this, our next one is how to change the oil on my truck. So we're gonna do that. Um, we did how to start a fire, um, how to become a Millionaire. Uh, through investing. Uh, young especially. Um, we've done a couple sports ones. Um, I'm trying to think what else. I know we've done other ones, but we, they, and a lot of times they come up with it, they're like, [Blank], teach us how to do a pushup and so we learned how to do a proper pushup one day and, and one wanted me to teach 'em how to dance and I said, no, we're not gonna do that one.

Advisor's Feelings of Efficacy

Claude, one of the newest teachers I interviewed, shared about he has developed his own sense of efficacy garnered through performing advisory. He said,

I feel like now I know what I'm supposed to be doing. Or at least I've created my own sense of what I'm supposed to be doing. I don't know what other teachers do, but I guess when I first started, I didn't really know what we were supposed to be

doing. And even still, I don't know if there's more that we should be doing that I'm not doing. I don't know what other teachers' advisories look like if they're all sitting there on their Chromebooks doing their lesson every week or what.

Emergent data showed that many advisors felt comfortable using the advisory framework and extending the contents into areas that students expressed interest. Advisors showed their feelings of efficacy by how they used language of empowerment when speaking of how they guided their advisory. Edwina is an example of this when she shares how she built and implemented her advisory groups activities by providing learning experiences above her knowledge. She says,

So for example, I remember at one point the big conversation was like, I don't know how these schools don't teach us how to do our taxes. And I was like, well, advisory is a perfect place where if you really wanted to learn that we could find a guest speaker, we could go find some videos, watch about it.

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning Components

When the interview discussion turned toward to the social-emotional component of the advisory program, many of the interviewees expressed at least some discomfort or hesitation regarding engaging students in this topic. Some felt ill-prepared to layer this topic onto their advisory work. And others, felt it was how the advisor approached the topic that made the difference. Joe said,

And just to be honest, I don't think we have as deep conversations about the SEL pieces. I think my biggest strength is just relationship with the student, but, we have good SEL lessons but I, I think some, like a lot of teachers will be crying in their SEL lessons and stuff and I don't, we don't get that deep. We go through the stuff and they understand why it's important and we, I give 'em, I always give 'em examples of how those things have affected me and a lot of times they'll give a few examples but um, yeah, overall the SEL, is way more specific in the like a certain thing. Um, and we have good discussions on it, but I wouldn't say the SEL is like my strong strong point. But we do it and they do get something out of it.

School-Connect SEL Curriculum

Many teacher-advisors expressed relief with the roll-out of the School-Connect curriculum. The reasons for the relief, according to the participants, ranged from less planning to more guidance on navigating social-emotional conversations with students. All of these things, according to the interviewees, made it more convenient when cultivating and implementing the social-emotional aspect of advisory. Francis says,

So I was extremely excited about school Connect because I mean, you don't have to plan anything. For the most part, the, um, themes correlate to our district themes. So when the district themes came along, it kinda, um, mess with what we already had going on because we came up with the themes of the month already and then the district wanted everybody to be on the same page, which I agree with, but it just messed up our, our framework a little bit. But then when we got School Connect, um, they, I wouldn't say they went, the lessons went hand in hand, um, with the theme of the month that the district sets out, but, um, teachers could, you know, pick and, and choose within School Connect.

The other side of the coin was that over half of the data showed that the ease of use of School-Connect led to many advisors not doing any sort of preparations and opening the School-Connect module for that day's lesson literally at the beginning of advisory time. Elliott said, "you just click on it, follow the PowerPoint. Don't even have to read it all the way through. Just you can learn it as you go." Jennifer's honesty about how she implements the School-Connect curriculum was probably the most surprising. She says,

So it has turned into, it's almost like a game, because I've not looked through most of these modules, and I don't typically have the time to look through them before it happens. So my kids have turned it into a game of does [Jennifer] know what she's about to say? It's just me looking at the slide at the same time as them being like, okay, we're going to talk about active listening today. We're going to be active part participants. We're going to have so much fun. Next slide. Okay. So we're going to watch a video and we're going to rate this person's active listening skills on a scale of zero to ten.

Edwina was optimistic and felt that the future of SEL would be harnessed with curriculum like School-Connect. She says,

I would hope to see that in further years, some of the SEL curriculum that we're implementing right now will be more meaningful later. I think our seniors, because I'm a senior advisor, it's probably, it does feel like it is geared to younger students, and hopefully is having a better impact for them. And that maybe as time goes on, we can have more authentic conversations. But I think that remains to be seen.

But others, like Elliott, held cynical beliefs around the inclusion of SEL in advisory due to the political climate around the subject. He says, "I don't mind doing a weekly social-emotional learning lesson but it's, in my opinion is it's more or less a waste of time or has, we're probably only months away from social-emotional learning, SEL being banned at the state."

Research Question 3

What challenges emerge for teachers when creating advisory programs for students?

This research question was created for the purpose of allowing the researcher to gain an understanding of what teacher-advisors believe and perceive as barriers to creating and implementing an effective advisory program where goals, as they are understood, are attained. This research question had five corresponding interview questions (See Appendix G).

Relationship

Advisor-Student Relationship Building

There were many examples of perceived barriers participants shared that caused a struggle when it came to building relationships with their advisory students. The majority

of the data showed that participants felt that the goal of building relationships sometimes felt forced and inauthentic, causing it to go against the intended effect and instead impede relationship building. Jennifer shared an example of this when she talked about how sometimes building relationships with students should be more organic than it felt sometimes in advisory, which to her seemed very prescriptive. She says,

And there are some that I've never been able to have a good conversation with because they're very closed off and I'm not going to be everybody's cup of tea. And that's perfectly fine. You don't have to have a connection with me as long as you have a connection with someone else in the building. But relying solely on the advisor to make that connection is not going to be beneficial if they are not wanting to connect with their advisor.

Edwina also shared her feelings that the current model of relationship building in advisory felt very inauthentic. She reflected on a conversation she had with a student who had previously experienced a different type of advisory setting when he attended the Governor's Scholar program. She says,

So he was like, I know you guys want us to build deep relationships, but you don't know how to get us to have deep relationships, especially in a quick amount of time. I think he's probably a hundred percent right. I think there is value to it, but if you can't really come out of the gate with the intention to build relationships and you don't have everybody willing to have to do that or feel capable of doing that or feel like you said, have that kind of background where they feel secure enough knowing SEL kind of curriculum and ideas to implement that, then we can't effectively build relationships that way. So I feel like there's probably programs where if they can do that, I don't know what that looks like. And I asked, I even asked that student tell me what to do. And I think that it probably requires a lot of vulnerability, but it probably needs to be built in and provided from the start so that we can actually have authentic conversations with students and know how to deal with the repercussions of having really vulnerable and authentic conversations with students that reveal some things that are heavy.

Student-Peer Relationship Building

As mentioned above, a struggle that many participants repeatedly mentioned was that of keeping students engaged collectively in the advisory space. Even Joe, the

participant whose responses were overwhelmingly positive regarding the advisory experience, when asked about an advisory struggle, indicated that he had negative experiences within this data point. He says,

You know, it's just like anything you go good and bad. Last year had probably the worst advisory, maybe one of the worst ones in the school. So my struggle was, you know, I had a group of boys who should never been in the same advisory. Um, and they kind of brought it down a little bit. It's, we couldn't really have good discussions. Um, we didn't really, we got to stuff and I, I'm a, I tried to get them along, but if they're not gonna come, I'm not gonna let everybody else down. So, um, we got everything we needed done, but it's kind of as a teacher and I think I'm pretty good at, uh, building a culture in a classroom mm-hmm. at a certain point. There's only so much I can do.

Hilary also shared the struggle of having students disengaging and 'cliquing up' instead of building relationships with all advisory peers. She says,

Just kids not wanting to be engaged or wanting to run here and there. Go to this person's class, this person's class. Um, just them not wanting to be involved. Or maybe, I think this year, last year I had a class that they all kind of knew each other and were more so talkative with each other. But this year I have a lot of like cliques so nobody really inter interacts with each other other than like in their cliques. So just seeing how they like kind of ungroup themselves to be with like three people instead of the whole class.

Kenneth felt like students struggled to amplify their voices to those of their peers in their advisory groups, causing them to never be able to feel fully integrated and valued by their peers. He says, "Some of them feel like there's no point because we're just going to do whatever the loud kids want anyways, and so why should they advocate for themselves?"

Additionally, Kenneth gave keen insight to what may hinder as how past traumas, unknown to an advisor, may keep a student from engaging in an student-peer relationships. He says,

But some of them are also genuinely scarred from various traumas in their past and they use that as a reason to not engage well, I know I got this thing that happened and I'm never going to engage with these people again and I'm never going to see at their high school. Why should I engage with them by the time that we have?

Edwina also spoke to how past traumas influenced current student engagement in the advisory space, and specifically its impact on engagement. She says,

This year, I'm coming up against this thing of students who felt like they were bullied by other students in advisory in previous years when they were younger. And so they just don't want to engage with other kids in the advisory. I have a couple that are more outgoing who maybe have built a better, more positive relationship than they did in previous years. I really did have students who would not have been friends and would never have talked to each other. And because of advisory we're at least friendly with each other by the end of the year and offering to help each other. And this year I do not have that.

Goals

Advisory Framework

Participants often indicated that the school's advisory framework impeded the ability to achieve the overarching goal of building relationships, which they believed was primary. Elliott cites his understanding of the school's advisory program framework when he says, "And what do they say 60% of advisory needs to be, games and community building, getting to know each other? Personally, I think it probably should be a little higher." When prompted by the researcher to explain further he says,

More community building. Our advisory program is decent, but half of the time we need to be working toward these big end of the year goals, which I understand the seniors and their senior defense, but the products, in my opinion for the freshman, sophomore and junior levels are more something that just etched on at the end, not necessarily something that we take properly seriously if we need to have that kind of reflection going on during advisory for the course of the year.

For both schools, the advisory program framework contained specific guides for each grade level with year-end tasks that nearly every participant referred to. Edwina described one school's framework as it looks weekly:

So, in any one week we have Monday meetings. So, Monday, literally Monday meeting Monday. So that's all their announcements. Everything they get. Tuesday is supposed to be related to study hall, so they're academic, any kind of academic work they need to do. Then Wednesday is supposed to be SEL [Social Emotional Learning] which is formulated lesson, structured lesson. So then Thursday they're supposed to be working on defenses of learning, and I guess Friday they can kind of do whatever. That's our free day."

And Jennifer describes the other school's week in advisory:

So, on Mondays we have regular advisory and Mondays are supposed to be for grade check-ins, making sure you're doing your work, community building, whatever it might be. And then signing your kids up for [enrichment], which are the remediation days that we have on Tuesdays and Thursdays. So then Tuesday instead of meeting as an advisory, you meet for [enrichment]. So, whoever signs up to be in your class, whether you're offering a remediation or test corrections, or always, since I have a big group of children and freshmen don't really have a lot of options, I host a study hall instead. So, mine is always open for study hall so that'll be Tuesday and Thursday. Wednesdays are the social emotional learning days. So that's where you're supposed to be doing the School Connect, connecting to the theme, whatever it might be. And then Fridays are making sure you're signed up for Thursday as well. And then Fridays are the community builder days.

Again and again, the participants described the perceived goals of relationship building and the advisory framework as being at odds instead of seeing them as working in tandem with one another. Kenneth said,

Number one thing, definitely, let's put it back to 40% required 60% freedom time. And part of that is because if we're going to build relationships, the kids are going to have to have some free time and the ability to explore and expand and do that, which says to me that we really need to focus on what we really want out of advisory. It can't just be a catch all for homeroom, otherwise it's not fully intended purpose.

Year-End Project

As briefly discussed above, the data showed the grade-level advisory end-of-the-year project was mentioned often by the participants. Interviewees often cited these

projects as sources of struggles when intentionally creating their advisory program experience for their student. Emergent data showed that many advisors struggled with the pacing and pressure they perceived as related to the year-end project and how it reflected on the advisor. While present in most all grade-level advisors, this was truer with Senior-level advisors than any other group.

Kenneth, a senior advisor, said “there’s so much pressure on that final product that they have at the end with the senior defense that a lot of that feels like pressure for if the student doesn't perform, that says something about the advisor”.

Elliott, who is not a senior advisor, echoed the feelings of frustration with the year-end project when he said,

Our advisory program is decent, but half of the time we need to be working toward these big end of the year goals, which I understand the seniors and their senior defense, but the products, in my opinion for the freshman, sophomore and junior levels are more something that just etched on at the end, not necessarily something that we take properly seriously if we need to have that kind of reflection going on during advisory for the course of the year. I remember a few years ago, our sophomore into the year product, originally they were supposed to make video diary entries every month and then come put them together at the end of the advisory period and reflect upon them and eventually our standards slipped and they slipped and they slipped and they slipped and they just had to make an end of the year video reflection. If I recall correctly, I think with advisory is it probably should be more about community building and relationships and that's about coming together and making these end of the year products for grades that aren't seniors, in my opinion.

Communication

Communication was one of the most re-occurring responses teacher-advisors gave when asked about their challenges to implementing advisory. Communication was most often spoke of in relationship to school leadership and advisory program leaders and the way they did or did not communicate oversight and ongoing guidance to the teacher-

advisors. Emergent data indicated that while lack of communication was a significant barrier, inconsistent communication was detrimental in that impeded advisors' ability to provide consistent advisory experiences throughout the school. The theme of communication came up when I asked Susan what she believed to be the purpose of advisory. Her response showed the importance of clearly and consistently communicating the goals of advisory from leadership. She says,

I've seen the official purpose, but I think we get wrapped up in all of the documents and all of the things, and we forget that the big picture is not those things. The big picture is creating those relationships and making sure students feel comfortable here and we're creating a culture, a positive culture for each other. I think that gets lost sometimes.

Hilary felt the struggle she was most aware of was based in her experience with communication. She said that while she knew about the framework and the year-end projects, she lacked support and guidance around the projects. Regarding the sophomore year-end video project she says,

Like nobody, no expectations, no rubric of like how it was supposed to look. Um, no. Like do they at least have 30 seconds of video done at this point? Um, and no one ever, like it was just, okay, I hope it's done kind of thing. You know what I'm saying, at the end of the year. So just no clearly like guideline or timeline of how things like it says it in our bookmarks I think, but that's just words. It's not really, yeah. You know what I'm saying? It's not really followed up on either.

Efficacy

Advisory Program Efficacy

There were varying responses when asked about the challenges advisors face regarding the efficacy of the advisory program. Many of the participants cited a perceived misalignment between what they believed to be the goals of the advisory program and the advisory framework.

Elliott's response is a great example of this. His struggles with advisory point to feeling of an inefficiency within the advisory program itself:

My opinion, advisory is trying to do too many different things. It should either be made more rigorous like an actual class or we all follow a very similar curriculum and have the same expectations throughout it. Or we should focus more on community building and becoming a focal point for students to interact with the community. So, in my opinion our advisory time should be used more toward community building gain to know the students.

Susan strengthened this data trend when she shared her struggles of balancing the expectations of implementing the advisory program framework with complete fidelity and the ongoing struggle of keeping students engaged. She says,

The pushback from students is a big struggle. Getting them to buy in, which I don't know, it, again, it varies year to year, partly because of the differences just between students and personalities. But some of it too is I think because they get fatigued from all the things that we have to do, and I get fatigued from all the things that we have to do when we finally have opportunities to do those fun things or whatever, they just want to hang out. So I think that's my biggest struggle.

Advisor's Feelings of Efficacy

A consistent struggle that emerged as a data point was how advisor's feelings of efficacy were linked closely to their perceptions of how students viewed and responded to advisory. For example, the more they felt students enjoyed and engaged in advisory, the more present the advisor's feelings of self-efficacy. This was interesting because the related perception is that students were more engaged in community building and activities and less engaged in the allotted academic days and/or SEL days in the advisory framework. Therefore, an advisor's self-efficacy could likely be impacted by how closely they followed the advisory framework.

Elliott talks about students' perceptions of the advisory work and how it relates to their responses regarding advisory. He explains, "students equate work and learning with

worksheets and bookwork” which means the days focused on community building, SEL, or other abstract concepts are sometimes viewed by students as “doing nothing” due to the lack of tangible artifacts. He adds,

So yeah, I'm not giving them worksheets or bookwork for advisory. And if they want to equate that with doing nothing, that would make sense. But time to spend together, time to chat, time to play games, watch the Monday meeting, do a weekly sel. Those are all activities students might equate with nothing because nothing is expected of them other than task participation. So I can see how students can sell. We never do any, oh, I have students say that. Oh, we never do anything in here. The answer's more like, actually could you never do anything in here? But there is learning going on.

Edwina has also combatted the ‘we don’t do anything’ claim with her advisory and also turns it back toward the reflections of the advisory student. She says,

I think that's an interesting question because when I ask students what didn't work in advisory, they'll say, I liked my advisor, but we didn't do anything. And I a hundred percent could see them saying that about me as well, where I think they see advisory as a time where they should be entertained, but they only want to be entertained in a way that they want to be entertained, if that makes sense. So my advisory is perfectly content watching cartoons during advisory, but if I were to say, well, you wanted to learn how to put together a resume, they would not engage in it even though that is a requirement of their advisory. So I think they probably don't have a concept of what the goal of advisory is.

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning Components

There were several different viewpoints regarding the challenges the participants felt they faced in relation to social emotional learning in the advisory space. Some of the struggles emanate from the participants varying degrees of comfort when discussing the traditionally understood components of social emotional learning. Claude said,

I mean, I'm fine with it. I'm comfortable with it. It's just sometimes I feel like I don't really know what I'm supposed to do or what they want me to say Exactly. Or if there's things I should avoid or things that are okay to talk about. Because when you get into that, there's a lot of things that you're right might make people

uncomfortable. There's some things that people want to talk about and I don't really know which direction to go.

Edwina echoed Claude's feelings of struggling to navigate the social emotional learning landscape. When guiding her advisory group, she, like many other participants, draws a lot from her own experiences to fill any knowledge gaps around the social emotional learning competencies.

Really, my social emotional learning awareness, I guess is really more experiential and on the fly than it necessarily is based within research, which is probably a drawback thing. That's part of the reason we needed our curriculum for that because I think a lot of, I've probably feel more comfortable than other teachers with that, but still, it's not research based. It's based on what my experience has been as a teacher. So I feel like it's really more, here's what I think it, yeah.

Data also emerged showing advisors struggled with the social emotional learning aspect because they were unable to gauge its effectiveness. Joe gave an example,

I'm like, you know, I'm like a preacher. I'm trying to preach change. I'm not preaching content. It's a choice. I'm preaching change and that's harder to do. They can tell me why nicotine's bad. Right. Doesn't mean they're gonna not do it. So I think the SEL stuff kind of falls under the same thing. They, maybe they understand it now, but it doesn't mean they're gonna do it. Uh, and so that's, that's a little difficult for me to say if it's working.

School-Connect SEL Curriculum

The data showed that the participants' overall response to School-Connect has mostly been positive due to its user-friendly and accessible features. It has also relieved a lot of advisors from feeling overwhelmed by guiding the discussions around sensitive SEL-related topics. Kenneth's response captures this thought perfectly when he says, "So I'm also going to say I'm not great at the social emotional learning part of it. The curriculum helps a lot. It gives me a place in a jumping point to a conversation to happen."

However, there have been struggles. A struggle Frances brought up was the inability to tailor the content to the advisory group's unique needs and interests. She says,

So, it's so funny you asked that, um, the lady from School Connect sent me an email asking for some feedback and that one of the things that I'm hearing kids ask for are those more explicit, um, topics like the depression and anxiety and teen pregnancy and living in a single mom household. Like how do you cope with that? Um, an EL focus would be great. Yeah. Um, lots of kids here who were sent with family members and their moms aren't here. Yeah. Um, um, topics like that. And I love School Connect. Um, one of the reasons why I like it is because there are videos that are led by students mm-hmm, um, and they're about relevant topics. However, I think we could go deeper.

Summary

In Chapter 4, data was analyzed using the data analysis steps outlined in Chapter 3. This study utilized a phenomenological framework to explore the lived experiences of how teacher-advisors at two Kentucky high schools perceive, understand, cultivate, and create advisory programs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve teachers currently serving as advisors in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky. The in-depth semi-structured interviews yielded a considerable amount of response-rich data from which codes were derived and then themes developed and were analyzed. Participants interviews were used verbatim to analyze their experiences with the phenomenon. During the data analysis, five main themes and eight sub themes emerged based on the semi-structured interview transcriptions and audio recordings. Each theme related to the lived experiences of advisors serving in the advisory program of their respective school. Based on participants responses, the following themes emerged: Relationships, Goals, Communication, Efficacy, Social Emotional Learning.

In Chapter 5, a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, implications, limitations, and conclusion are included.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the current thoughts and beliefs of teachers serving as advisors in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky to understand their concepts of advisory program efficacy. Specifically, I wanted to explore how possible gaps in understanding and communication of an advisory program's fundamental purpose could impact the thoughts and beliefs of teacher-advisors in shaping their perceptions of advisory program's efficacy.

In this study, I sought to answer three research questions. These were:

RQ 1: What shared beliefs about the purpose of advisory programs exist among the teachers who cultivate advisory programs?

RQ 2: In what ways do teachers consciously and intentionally create advisory programs for their specific community of students?

RQ 3: What challenges emerge for teachers when creating advisory programs for students?

This chapter includes a summary of the findings for each research question and a discussion of the implications of my findings for policy, practice, and future research.

RQ 1: Teacher-Advisors' Shared Beliefs of the Purpose of Advisory Programs

The first research question revealed the shared beliefs that teacher-advisors held regarding advisory and the efficacy of the advisory program. It was interesting to see the variations of how the teacher-advisors developed their understandings and became

orientated into the advisory program, yet data supported that the ideas of “relationship building” and completing the year-end projects from the advisory program framework were the most commonly held beliefs as to the purpose of the advisory program.

The teacher-advisors’ belief that relationship building was the fundamental purpose of an advisory program was shared by nearly all the interview participants. Further dissection of this theme revealed two meanings when interviewees referenced relationship building. The first concept of relationship building was references as being between teacher-advisor and student or students. The language used to support this concept included mentor, trusted adult, model, and connection. The participants’ responses supported their perception and belief that the purpose of advisory was for them to build a relationship with their advisory students and to fulfill the role of a mentor and trusted adult within the educational space.

A co-existing concept of relationship building that emerged was the building of relationships between students and their peers. The language used to support this concept included community building, team building, group, inclusion, and belonging. Participants believed that their role was to create an advisory space and provide opportunities for peer relationship building to occur. The perceived purpose of student-peer relationship building was twofold; to increase students’ feelings of belonging and to decrease bullying.

The second most commonly held belief by teacher-advisors regarding the purpose, or goals, of the advisory program was related to the advisory program framework and specifically, the end-of-the-year project each grade level must complete for a passing score in advisory. When asked follow-up questions during the semi-

structured interview, participants shared their perceptions that advisory time was created so advisory students could complete the activities in the advisory framework with the purpose of completing their year-end advisory projects. This was especially true for teacher-advisors leading a senior grade-level advisory. Their language around the belief that the purpose of advisory was to work on the year-end Senior Defense project included words such as pressure, focus, heavy, and intense. Emergent data showed teacher-advisors felt strong pressure to adhere to the advisory framework schedule with a significant emphasis on the year-end project.

There were several other concepts that influenced the beliefs of the teacher-advisors. Communication was a strong data-point in relation to how teacher-advisors came to hold their current beliefs around the purpose of advisory. For example, some teacher-advisors shared how their beliefs were shaped by what was, and was not, communicated to them by their school leaders when being oriented into the advisory program.

Other pieces of high-yielding data were situated around efficacy, both the perception of the efficacy of advisory and the teacher-advisors' respective feelings of self-efficacy in filling the role of advisors. Data emerged showing the perception of the efficacy of advisory was often linked to student engagement, therefore, teacher-advisors believed that efficacy was achieved when students were engaged in the daily advisory activity, this idea is present in all of the participants' beliefs of the advisory purpose. For example, advisory efficacy is achieved when students are engaged in relationship building with advisors and peers and when the advisory program framework is followed to completion through the year-end project.

The teacher-advisors' beliefs of self-efficacy are closely linked to advisory efficacy. For example, a teacher-advisor's belief of self-efficacy is at its highest when they feel that their advisory is in a state of efficacy. The opposite held true as well; data showed that teacher-advisors who indicated low feelings of self-efficacy did not believe their advisory had high efficacy. An interesting component of this is how communication relates to efficacy. This will be discussed further in the summary of research question three.

Social emotional learning and its role in the advisory program also had strong beliefs associated with it. Teacher-advisors believed that students were in critical need of social emotional competencies and cited many examples of how the skills were more present for learning outside the school setting when they were growing up. The necessity of these skills for success in adulthood and their perceived lack of access outside of school supported teacher-advisors belief of the importance of housing them in advisory. To this end, teacher-advisors felt somewhat comfortable in teaching social emotional learning skills, but typically only through the lens of their own life experiences. Further than that, most teacher-advisors only felt comfortable engaging students in social emotional learning through a plug-and-play SEL curriculum like School Connect.

RQ 2: How Teacher-Advisors Create Advisory

Understandably, teacher-advisors' beliefs about the purpose of advisory, which was for building relationships between advisors and students, students and their peers, and to provide a space for the advisory framework to be enacted and fulfilled through completion of the year-end grade level project was highly influential in how teacher-advisors consciously and intentionally created their advisory time for their community of

students. Teacher-advisors continually indicated their use of the advisory framework to shape students' weekly experiences. They did indicate that they felt agency to shift the prescribed days around to better fit their perceived students' needs every day. Many gave examples of "reading the room" or "checking the temperature" when students came in for advisory to see if they needed to move the prescribed order of days around to better suite what would bring about the goal of relationship building, both between advisor and student, and among student peers. The data related to the reflexive practice of teacher-advisors shifting the order of prescribed days and having the feelings of agency to do so, also showed a correlation with teacher-advisors with higher feelings of self-efficacy.

An interesting trend of data that emerged was that while teacher-advisors felt agency to move the prescribed days of the advisory framework around within the week, they all felt compelled to ensure the prescribed days did occur at some point within the week. For example, many participants stated they sometimes switched a day but they rarely, if ever, omitted or considered omitting a day of the advisory framework. This means that teacher-advisors felt that the advisory framework supported their creation of an advisory that could meet their goals of advisory.

Interestingly, while the reflexive nature of the teacher-advisors was highly utilized when creating the daily advisory experience regarding the perceived advisory goal of building relationships, teacher-advisors took a more recursive approach to implementing the perceived goal of creating the year-end grade level project. This was indicated through the responses of participants sharing how the repetition of the prescribed days in the advisory framework allowed allotted days to do the work required for the year-end project. The data showed that there was little to no variance on the part

of the teacher-advisor when it came to creating and implementing advisory toward the year-end project. Teacher-advisors used the days and instructions provided by the advisory framework without differentiation or engaging any agential choices to influence the creation of the year-end product.

Data emerged showing that teacher-advisors came to understand how to create and implement their advisory for their community of students through communication. From the interviews it became clear that the expectations of what advisory time should look like came from school leaders and was centered on the advisory framework. The agential choices were empowered through communicating informally with other grade-level teacher-advisors and learning how they created their advisories toward the goal of relationship building and creating a year-end project. Other opportunities for communication came from formally meeting monthly with grade-level advisors and school advisory leaders to discuss the advisory framework implementation and progress toward goal attainment.

As previously stated, advisory efficacy is tightly linked to attainment of the perceived goals by teacher-advisors. Therefore, when teacher-advisors perceive themselves as creating and implementing an advisory experience that is moving toward the achievement of relationship building between the advisor and the student, among the students, and is also implementing the advisory framework with fidelity, which includes moving toward the culmination of the year-end project, then it is deemed by the teacher-advisor to be an efficacious advisory.

The self-efficacy of the teacher-advisor, however, is a different matter. According to the data, a teacher-advisor who holds low confidence in their ability to move their

advisory toward the perceived goals rarely believes their advisory is efficacious. For example, the respondents who did not feel they had the capacity to build relationships with their students often admitted to struggling to create a feeling of community within their advisory group. Often, this impacted their capacity to implement the advisory framework consistently, and even sometimes led to the advisory framework rarely being implemented. When these participants were asked how they believed students perceived advisory time, they often responded that they likely viewed it as a study hall or free time. In contrast, teacher-advisors with high feelings of self-efficacy felt that students viewed as advisory as a time to build skills, be with their friends, or to learn new stuff.

Most teacher-advisors felt that social emotional learning has always been linked intrinsically to advisory programs by the very nature of advisory. This is founded, of course, on the inherent social and emotional aspect of their perceived goals of advisory; relationship building. Further, social emotional learning is intentionally made present in how teacher-advisors create and implement advisory through the extrinsic implementation of the social emotional curriculum School Connect. Some participants shared that their belief in the value and importance of students gaining social emotional skills led them to make the agential choice of creating and including social-emotional learning opportunities more frequently than just the prescribed day provided in the framework. Other participants followed the prescribed weekly social emotional learning day housed in the advisory framework and used the district-provided School Connect social emotional curriculum to implement the social learning component in their advisory time.

RQ 3: Perceived Challenges Teacher-Advisors Encounter When Creating Advisory

Teacher-advisors expressed many perceived challenges when it came to meeting what they considered the goals of advisory; relationship building and the year-end advisory frame project. Relationship building, according to most participants, often was felt to be inhibited due to feelings of inauthenticity. Interviewees shared that because it was perceived as a goal, it sometimes felt forced or coerced, when, in their opinions, if it were not perceived as a goal with attached supporting expectations, and rather just a byproduct of advisory, then it may have been more achievable through organic experiences. Additionally, data emerged indicating that many teacher-advisors struggled with creating feelings of community within their advisory space. Again, inauthenticity was named as the main detractor of reaching this perceived goal. Many advisors felt that by students being assigned an advisory randomly, it was challenging to create relationships between students who perhaps nothing in common and had very dissimilar interests. A common theme was that teacher-advisors sometimes felt overwhelmed at trying to find commonalities among so many students on which to build peer relationships.

Not many of the teacher-advisors expressed challenges regarding the existence and implementation of the advisory framework. Most found it useful in the basic sense of outlining advisory expectations. There were expressions by multiple participants stating frustration at the year-end grade level project. Many advisors, especially senior level advisors, expressed frustration at the advisory framework's year-end project. The basis of this frustration often lay in perceived issues of communication. An overwhelming challenge that emerged repeatedly was participants' perception of the communication

around advisory. Many were frustrated that the communication around the year-end project seemed to shift throughout the year. Specifically, many advisors felt that the senior year-end project was communicated repeatedly as being more high-stakes and of greater importance, leading to stress and feelings of overwhelmingness for senior level advisors. Conversely, most participants who were non-senior level advisors felt that the communication of the year-end project for their grade levels were vague and became even more ill-defined as the school year ended. Participants felt the communication challenge was consistent with feelings of lack of oversight by school leaders regarding the advisory program. In short, data determined participants felt the communication started strong at the beginning of the year but dwindled significantly by year's end. Interviewees evidenced this by saying they often felt like no one in leadership knew what went on in any of the advisories.

As stated in the summary of research question two, perceptions of advisory efficacy and advisor self-efficacy are closely linked. If a teacher-advisor does not feel they have the capacity to serve as an efficacious advisor, then they likely will not feel that their advisory has efficacy. The challenge many teacher-advisors encountered when building their self-efficacy is that many had no training or experiences on how to serve as an advisor. When participants were asked in their semi-structured interview whether they had received any type of advisory training or advisory-adjacent training in any of their teacher preparation classes in college, each of them said they had not. This means that the only training they had received was what was provided in the limited professional development hours provided at their school. It must be noted that teachers immediately are rostered to serve as an advisor on their first day of school. Therefore, if they start

mid-year, they are immediately serving as an advisor, regardless of if they have never had any advisory experience or training. So, one of the monumental challenges to implementing advisory is the feelings of inefficacy of the teacher-advisor who is serving the advisory.

Social emotional learning implementation has become challenged inasmuch that it goes beyond the advisory space. However, within the advisory space, teacher-advisors often felt they grappled with feelings of incompetence when trying to explicitly teach what they felt to be such abstract concepts as social emotional learning competencies. Some participants went so far as to say they often felt it was not within the school's domain, but rather the place of the students' homes, to learn social emotional learning skills. Further, some participants stated that they did not believe social emotional competencies could be taught prescriptively, especially in a such a limited space as advisory.

The only challenge that repeatedly emerged regarding the social emotional learning curriculum School Connect was that sometimes the students found the videos and the actors to be hokey. Some also stated that the students felt the lessons, while designed for high school audiences, were not engaging and seemed to not meet the age appropriateness for the target audience. Most other comments regarding the curriculum were supportive.

Implications of Practice

There are clear implications of practice that can be implemented on the school level for advisory program success. Some of these are:

- Inconsistencies in teacher-advisor training and preparation at the school level

- Assessment and reflection of the teacher-advisors knowledge and understanding of the advisory program by school leaders
- Ongoing support and professional developments from building leaders for teacher-advisors
- Monitoring of advisory implementation
- Implementation of a clear and consistent communication strategy by school leaders

Teacher-advisors indicated the need to address potential implementation issues; specifically, the inconsistencies in training, preparation, and ongoing support from both teacher training programs, and district and school leaders. This points directly to implications for practice to mitigate these issues and to foster capacity-building and feelings of self-efficacy for teacher-advisors, which, in turn, will positively impact the implementation of the advisory program.

In order to achieve the best possible results in the advisory program, school-level leaders should consider teacher-advisors first, asking if they have the capacity, training, and preparation, to effectively serve as teacher-advisors. When considering teacher-advisors capacity to implement advisory, the reflection must include teacher-advisor understandings of advisory goals, the advisory framework, relationship building, the year-end product, and social emotional learning competencies. School leaders should also consider providing ongoing support for teacher-advisors through monitoring, purposeful feedback, and targeted professional developments for the unique components of advisory, such as trainings on how to build relationships, strengthening school-based communities, and teaching social emotional learning.

Thought must be given as well to where teacher-advisor knowledge sits when they enter into the space of the advisory program for the first time. Teacher-advisors have varying experiences, both personally and professionally, that accompany them into the advisory space. While veteran teachers may have solid capacity to implement classroom learning techniques, they may have deficits when tasked with serving as a teacher-advisor. A thorough advisor orientation for all teacher-advisors encompassing advisory goals, implementation, and expectations would alleviate variances in teacher-advisor entering the advisory program to serve as an advisor.

Another key component of this implication is for school leaders to develop and implement a solid communication strategy to be utilized throughout the implementation of the advisory program. Advisory program goals can be achieved more successfully when teacher-advisors receive consistent communication in alignment with the school's advisory goals and the attainment of those goals. This would alleviate inconsistent student experiences within advisory spaces, both in grade-level advisories and within the advisory program as a whole. A clear communication strategy would also build self-efficacy in teacher-advisors as they implement the advisory program by allowing them to feel knowledgeable and aware of what is expected of them as advisors.

These strategies outlined above may help to mitigate the most critical implementation issue impeding successful advisory program implementation; teacher-advisors' low perceptions of self-efficacy. These perceptions lead to uneven school-wide implementation and result in inconsistent student experiences within the advisory program. Ongoing support, coaching, and modeling can effectively shift teacher-

advisors' practice and can build their capacity to successfully serve as advisors to their students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Teacher-advisors expressed having different experiences in both their orientation into the world of advisory and in the expectations of implementing advisory. While one of the recommendations for practice made above was to strengthen school-based orientation into advisory for teacher-advisors entering the advisory space, it did not address the critical lack in colleges and universities of preparing future teachers to serve as advisors. As evidenced in the literature review, the concept of the advisory program is decades old, as is the proven benefits of social emotional learning, yet nearly every respondent to the semi-structured interview expressed there was little to no reference made to either of these concepts in any of their teacher training programs. Without this preparation, teachers are entering the classroom with low capacity to meet the needs of today's students. Further research into specific practices of colleges and universities in preparing teachers to implement advisory programs and to teach social emotional learning would be timely and relevant for benefit of the modern classroom and advisory space.

A related area of research which would likely yield benefit is an exploration of the 'bottom up' versus the 'top down' style of advisory program implementation. The question of a prescriptive, district-designed model of advisory has been implemented in many school districts across the nation. The implementation of a district-designed model is often forwarded in the name of fostering district cohesive, supporting a common vision, and working toward common goals. However, the question has been posed as to

whether it is as effective in harnessing the benefits advisory programs have to offer when it is not designed at the school level for the specific students the advisory program would serve. Therefore, researching which model, the school-designed advisory program or the district-designed advisory program, could answer many questions on how achieve the greatest results for students.

Lastly, an additional suggestion for research would be to investigate the opportunities within the advisory space for feelings of inclusion or othering. It would be beneficial to understand how the advisory space is used or could be used to close gaps and build community among diverse student groups, and further, how teacher-advisors could navigate this. This research area could potentially explore the experiences students who are English Language Learners navigate as they participate in creating the culture of the advisory space. Further, an adjacent area of research could be founded in delving into how other cultures are invited and represented within the advisory space when it has historically been a one-size-fits-all application style. These could be explored from both the perspective of the student and the teacher-advisor. As the population of students continues to shift nationally, the intrinsic qualities of the advisory program when fully harnessed offer a broad range of opportunities rich for development.

The data was clear: teacher-advisors believed advisory programs were effective only when they viewed themselves as effective in their capacity to implement advisory. Training and support would fortify them with the tools and confidence to build their self-efficacy achieve the goals of advisory; relationship building and advisory framework implementation. By increasing their feelings of self-efficacy, their beliefs of their

capacity to implement an efficacious advisory would emerge and successfully impact the advisory program.

Summary

As I stated in the introduction, March 13, 2020, was the very last time I saw my group of students. The chairs were sitting on top of the desks as I switched off the lights for what I believed to be an extended spring break. It was over a year before those desks were used again by students. Since that day, a large component of every educational decision, every professional development, every data chat, and every conversation within the schools is related to learning loss from the pandemic. We talk about how things used to be in the classrooms, how learning used to occur, and pine for the days of old. Regardless of the longing and the pining, those days are forever gone, and our students are forever altered. Teacher attrition rates are sky-high and student achievement is still being assessed using the same metrics and systems designed to capture pre-pandemic student data in a post-pandemic world. The study underscores the critical need for forward thinking in this new educational landscape. The need to not only focus on new and creative ways to design learning, but also one with a keen focus on the whole child which includes addressing their growth both socially and emotionally.

As the researcher, the most significant part of this study for me was to come to the conclusion that teacher-advisors believe in the work of advisory. They believe in the value of teaching our students the importance of building community through relationships with adults and peers and also supporting their social emotional growth. And as the awareness of advisory and the benefits for students through advisory programs continues to develop nationally and more schools take up this work, we will see

an increase in global citizens, inspired innovators, and creative collaborators emerge and take up the work to make the future an even better one than we know today.

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APPENDIX A: SCHS ADVISORY TRAINING AGENDA 2019

Advisory Training Agenda

Morning 8:00-11:30

Welcome Back XXXXXXXX

Introduce [Guest Speaker] XXXXXXXXX

Why Advisory?

Staff Q & A

BREAK

[Text Based Protocol](#) - Grade Level Group based on [One Pager Doc.](#)

Norm Setting - Grade Level Group

Advisory Structure- Day to Day/Month to Month/Year to Year

LUNCH: 11:30-12:45

Afternoon 1:00-3:00

Grade Level Groups review framework - Advisory grade level leaders

9th Grade - Room 201

10th Grade - Room 158

11th Grade - Room 212

12th Grade - Library

Planning first month

Closure 3:00-3:30 in the library

Appendix B: SCHS Advisory Handout 2019

Why is advisory important?

A robust literature review by the University of Chicago's Consortium of school research shows that students who have meaningful relationships with adults will be more academically successful. Great Schools Partnerships has also included advisory as a cornerstone of their school reform process. XXXXX High School has been doing advisory since its inception in 1992 and it is our most important program

What are the givens for an advisory program?

Intentionality
Clear goals/purpose
Student centered
Growth mindset

What does advisory look like at Souhegan?

Logistics of making advisories
Grade level focus
Once monthly meetings
First day of school
School emergencies
Communication
Progress report and report cards
Community meeting days
Senior project days

Recommended sequence of events for the year:

First couple of weeks:

Introduction games: pair interview, postcard activity, If my summer were a book, the title would be...

Mission/purpose of advisory - text protocol to unpack /mission/purpose/grade level exhibition:

[Making Meaning](#)

Norm setting: chalk talk, free write and share, selfish norms - "What do I need from this group to be my best self in advisory?"

Conduct rubric development - Given the purpose and goals what are the behaviors expected - use this two day protocol

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1H_1kKvklD-JmlBt7d6la5dKYq-be-Yr6S13LHg9nzc0/edit

Calendar setting routine

Celebrations

Games

Week by Week

One day of the week should be academic time

Part of one day could be setting the calendar

Appendix B: SCHS Advisory Handout 2019

Three days of the week should have clear purpose and engagement from all - board game/active game (team/group development), discussion, guest speaker, food, celebration, walk outside, etc...

Discussions: There should be guidelines for how the group will engage in conversation
For example: talking stick, raise hand, speak, call on raised hand, speak..

Guest speaker This could be an individual in school or out who has some expertise in monthly themes or post secondary career
For example: : guidance counselor, school resource officer, social worker, school psychologist, school nurse, or outside community member

Food: This could be a potluck style family style meal or ordering out and eating family style. Obviously anything that requires students to bring their own money can be difficult depending on the situation. This option requires forethought on advisor's part.

Month by Month

Each month could have a theme and once a week discussions/activities could incorporate that theme

For example:

Mental Health/Mindfulness

Video on mindfulness basics with JayZ, Kobe and Beasties (3:35min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up3MZuYkf-g>

Video on Teen Pressures and connection to mindfulness with Kendrick Lamar (7:20min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ-ZAyxHd9Y>

Guided Meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZToicYcHIOU>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-works-and-why/201803/how-your-mental-health-reaps-the-benefits-exercise>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-benefits-of-exercise.htm/>

Drugs and Alcohol

Videos:

[Nuggets](#) Animation that illustrates addiction (5 minute video)

Websites:

[Heroin Facts](#)

[Prescription Drug Facts](#)

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week/chat-with-scientists>

APPENDIX B: SCHS ADVISORY HANDOUT 2019

Appendix B: SCHS Advisory Handout 2019

Healthy relationships

Tea consent video

It's a 3 min video that is a good conversation starter about consent.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igqM6irCWvM> (American clean version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Nii5w2Fal> (British clean version, same as the US version, but the accent is always great)

Analyze some current media/shows/films consider how media influences the culture of relationships.

1) Review the Equality and Power & Control wheels first

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/VPI/types/wheelsofpower.html>

2) Suggested movies and clips:

Twilight Background reading: <https://www.wired.com/2011/01/using-twilight-to-educate-about-abusive-relationships/>

Stranger Things: Episodes featuring Steve and Nancy, and Nancy and Jonathan.

3) Ask students to identify scenes, relationships, themes and link them back to items on the power and control wheel and the Equality wheel.

4) Rate the relationships you see and facilitate a discussion on the types of relationships you see in the film (healthy, unhealthy and why)

The following videos can be used during advisory or to kick off any small group activities.

Unhealthy relationships:

Intensity <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZodyjWEdp0>

Obsession: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtdqEllsSQ4>

Isolation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PCsnO2oWV0>

Guilt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCZCJkt53Cs>

Put Downs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTK5ObpBdV0>

Anger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLgzmcMloCk>

Control: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2IF1OZ48IQ>

Because I Love You: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JYyHa03x->

Healthy Relationships

Signs of Healthy Relationship: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmxVv-x3I_c

What Self-Love Slogan:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efG502n_WXM&feature=youtu.be

Relationships Are Like Cake: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T7HJSyyQa0>

Freedom and Space in Relationships:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F6NYk-_4HQ

APPENDIX C: SCHS ADVISORY LETTER TO PARENTS 2019

Appendix C: SCHS Advisory Letter to Parents 2019

Parent/Guardian:

This year Shelby County Public Schools is introducing an advisory period for students. From our staff wide advisory training this summer we reviewed extensive research showing that students who have meaningful relationships with adults will be more academically successful. We also learned that Advisory should be fun, helping Rockets feel more connected to their school and to each other.

Through advisory at Shelby County High School, we will develop a strong, positive Rocket community with student agency. We will know who we are as Rockets, as individuals, and as learners. The role of your student's advisor is to serve as a mentor and an advocate. He or she will know your student well and will partner with you to provide your child with the best possible high school experience. Every day we have a designated time from 12:00 to 12:30 for students and staff to work in small groups building strong relationships and a robust support system. We will explore career and college opportunities, build academic and social skills, problem solve and play; all while developing competencies that will support your student well beyond high school.

If you have questions regarding advisory, feel free to contact XXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXX at the email addresses below.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXX, Advisory Co Chairs
Shelby County High School
1701 Frankfort Road
Shelbyville, Kentucky 40065
(502) 633-2344

APPENDIX D: RESEARCH RECRUITMENT FORM

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the College of Education and Human Development at University of Louisville, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Organization Leadership degree. The title of my research project is: Teachers' Perceptions of the Efficacy of Advisory Programs in Two Kentucky High Schools. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the current thoughts and beliefs of teachers in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky to understand their concepts of advisory program efficacy and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and meet the following criteria:

- Individuals must be certified teachers in the state of Kentucky and have served in the role of an advisor in their school setting.
- Individuals have experienced at least two years of implementation of advisory programs within their schools.
- Individuals must be able and willing to make themselves available for one interview lasting between one to two hours in length.

In order to participate, please contact me at mitzi.phelan@louisville.edu or via my cell phone, 615-418-6200.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you meet the study criteria and choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at my email address listed above prior to the interview.

Sincerely,

Mitzi D. Phelan
Doctoral Candidate
University of Louisville

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFICACY OF ADVISORY PROGRAMS IN TWO KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOLS

Introduction and Background Information

You are invited to take part in a research study because you have been identified as a teacher who serves at the high school level in Shelby County. The study is being conducted under the direction of Deborah Powers, Ed. D., at The College of Education and Human Development at the University of Louisville.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and you do not have to participate. Take your time to decide.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of teachers in two high schools in Shelby County, Kentucky and to understand their current thoughts and beliefs about the effectiveness of advisory programs. This study will also attempt to explore how the preparation the teachers went through to become advisors and how they fill these roles.

What will happen if I take part in the study?

If you consent to participate, you will be asked to schedule a time with the principal investigator to participate in semi-structured interview that will last no longer than two hours. You may choose the interview place as long as it is in a quiet environment with limited distractions. The purpose of the interview questions is to gain information that will help in understanding how advisory programs are designed and experienced by teachers. The questions will also help develop an understanding of how teachers are prepared to serve in advisory roles. Interviews will be recorded with audio equipment to ensure reliability and accurateness. Preexisting data related to your name, location of your employment, and designation as a high school teacher will already be known. The overall study duration including consent forms, interviews, and follow up questions should last no longer than two months but your time commitment to this study should be minimal. During the interview process, you may decline to answer any question that may you uncomfortable.

Results of the overall research study will not be shared with you.

What are the possible risks or discomforts from being in this research study?

There are no foreseeable risks other than possible discomfort in answering personal questions and the potential for identification by other teachers in Shelby County who may read this research study. There may be unforeseen risks.

What are the benefits of taking part in the study?

You may or may not benefit personally by participating in this study. The information collected may not benefit you directly; however, the information may be helpful to others.

The possible benefits of this study include providing information which may help positively influence the way advisory programs are designed and implemented which benefits all educational stakeholders and students.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in the study?

Instead of taking part in this study, you could choose to not participate in this study.

Will I be paid?

You will not be paid for your time, inconvenience, or expenses while you are in this study.

How will my information be protected?

The data collected about you will be kept private and secure by a password-protected computer and secured server with limited access.

Who will see, use or share the information?

The people who may request, receive, or use your private information include the researchers and the study team. We may also share your information with other people, for example, if needed for your clinical care, for the research study activities, or for regulatory/compliance functions.

Additionally, by signing this form, you give permission to the research team to share your information with others outside of the University of Louisville. This may include the sponsor of the study and its agents or contractors, those who provide funding to the study, outside providers, study safety monitors, government agencies, other sites in the study, data managers, and other agents and contractors used by the study team. If applicable, your information may also be shared as required by law (for example, to collect or receive information for reporting child abuse or neglect, preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability, and conducting public health surveillance, investigations, or interventions.)

We try to make sure that everyone who sees your information keeps it confidential, but we cannot guarantee this. Those who receive your information may not be required by federal or state privacy laws to protect it and may share your information with others without your permission.

Will my information be used for future research?

Your data will not be stored or shared for future research.

Can I stop participating in the study at any time?

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may change your mind and stop taking part at any

time. You will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you qualify. You will be told about any new information learned during the study that could affect your decision to continue in the study.

Who can I contact for questions, concerns and complaints?

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Mitzi Phelan at 615-418-6200.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call this toll free number: 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24 hour hot line answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. You may discuss any questions about your rights as a research participant, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Acknowledgment and Signatures

This document tells you what will happen during the study if you choose to take part. Your signature and date indicate that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in the study. You are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled by signing this informed consent document. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Printed Name of Participant
Date Signed

Signature of Participant

Printed Name of Investigator (PI, Sub-I, or Co-I)
Sub-I, or Co-I) Date Signed

Signature of Investigator (PI,

Phone number for participants to call for questions: (502) 852-6428 or (615) 418-6200

Principal Investigator: Deborah Powers, Ed.D., (502) 295-7770, Department of Education Administrational and Leadership, Porter Educational Building, Room 369.

Co-Investigator: Mitzi Phelan, Doctor of Education, (615) 418-6200, University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development, 240 Bartholomew Blvd., Jeffersonville, IN. 47130.

Site(s) where study is to be conducted: Shelby County, Kentucky.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE PROTOCOL

1. Do you hold a Kentucky teaching license?
2. For how long?
3. Do you currently serve as an advisor in your school-based advisory program?
4. Have you ever served as an advisor in your school-based advisory program?
5. What grade levels have you served as an advisor for in your school-based advisory program?
6. Give a brief description of what you believe is the purpose of school-based advisory programs?
7. At what time does the advisory program period occur at your school?
8. Do you believe that school-based advisory programs are effective in promoting student success?
9. Why or why not?
10. Have you ever attended any type of training program related to advisory programs inside your school? If yes, please describe briefly.
11. Have you ever attended any type of training program related to advisory outside your school? If yes, please describe briefly.

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Does your school have an advisory program?
2. If so, who creates your advisory program curriculum or framework?
3. How much ‘say-so’ do you feel like you have in the creation and implementation of your school’s advisory program in general?
4. How are advisors and students paired together?
5. How do you think students see advisory period?
6. If you could change your school’s advisory programs at your school, what would you do?
7. What do you wish your administrators knew about the advisory program in your school?
8. Explain what struggles, if any, you have experienced while being an advisor?
9. How do you prepare for your advisory student group?
10. Do you feel you have had adequate training to deliver your advisory program content to your students?
11. What is your opinion of the successfulness in supporting students through participation in advisory programming?
12. What do you know about social emotional learning?
13. Tell me about the first time you ever heard of advisory programs. What did you think then? Has your thinking changed? In what ways?
14. Do you believe that advisory programs improve the educational experience for students?

APPENDIX H: STRUCTURED ETHICAL REFLECTION

Basic Values	Developing Internal Relationships and Research Partnerships	Constructing Research Questions/ Developing Methods	Identifying Sources of Data	Gathering Data	Analyzing Data/ Access to Data	Taking Action	Disseminating Knowledge/ Ownership/ Intellectual Property	Moving On
Transparency	Clearly stating the intentionality of this project and being up front that it will bring moments of reflecting on one's own practices and experiences.	Questions will be developed and reviewed by stakeholders of the project to ensure no bias is present.	Am I honestly being open to all potential sources of data?	If there is bias, or the potential for bias, it must be acknowledged.	How can I make sure I do not overstep my boundaries as a teacher when accessing student data?	Acknowledge that our family engagement practices are weak and work to build new, research-based, actionable practices to be implemented.	Since this project is a collaboration between teachers and parents, who does it belong to?	Staff and parents realize that each possess knowledge the other needs to best create a successful learning experience for the student.
Respect	Honoring the lived experiences and knowledge that participants and members bring to this project.	Thinking deeply and reflectively in order to form effective questions that will drive the research.	Do I have any unacknowledged implicit bias toward any of the data sources that could affect the research?	Data must be handled respectfully with consideration of the source.	Confidentiality and privacy are paramount to the success of this project.	Staff will begin to engage parents as partners and equals in the education of the student.	How can I protect both the parents and teachers of my district when discussing the current lack of engagement practices?	Families and teachers will understand that all stakeholders are necessary in positioning a student toward success.
Trust	I will strive to create a mutual relationship of trust between my peers and me.	The questions will come from a place of interest and growth instead of punitive and judgment.	Seek out diverse participants to create trust in my project goals.	All data should be received from sources in a respectful and equitable manner.	Participants should feel vested in the potential change this study could engender.	What can we identify as solid foundational trusts confirmed by interview that should bedrock our work moving forward.	Is everyone represented equitably?	We will create a foundation of trust in the purpose and potential of advisory programs using the data from this study.

Self-Awareness	Continually checking my power and privilege and how it situates me moment-by-moment in this project.	Recognizing my position as a teacher and purposely countering that identity to create unbiased and effective questions.	Is my position as a teacher affecting how I view the data sources?	I must investigate and acknowledge my position as both a teacher and a parent and borrow from these in a balanced and objective way.	I have to be aware that when I am analyzing data, I am doing so as a researcher, not as a teacher.	Staff will understand that they are perceived in a position of power and will work against the perception by empowering families.	Am I inflating my sense of importance in my role as researcher?	Staff and parents will work together as equals.
Objectivity	Ensuring that all involved members are respected and have the opportunity to engage fully and equally in this project.	Creating questions that honor the power that all participants will bring to change the current status quo.	How are the data sources contributing to the goal of engaging families for the purpose of increasing student success?	Be vigilant in making sure data is focused on the goal of student success, not skewed toward teachers' or parents' needs or desires.	Each set of data must speak to the end goal of student success in some way.	Am I clearly communicating the benefits of family engagement on student success with all research members?	Do the outcomes of this action research project create a tangible guide to how student success can be improved through family engagement practices?	To constantly keep in place a culture of engagement between school staff and families for the sake of the students.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Mitzi D. Phelan
240 Bartholomew Blvd.
Jeffersonville, Indiana 47130
Cell: 615-418-6200
mitzi.phelan@gmail.com

Education:

M.A. Teaching, University of Louisville, 2020
M.A. English, University of Louisville, 2018
B.A. English, University of Memphis, 2016

Experience:

Assistant Principal, Zoneton Middle School, 2023-Present
Bullet County Public Schools, Bullet County, KY

English Teacher, Shelby County High School, 2018-2023
Shelby County Public Schools, Shelby County, KY

Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Louisville, 2017-2018
University of Louisville Writing Center, Louisville, KY

Instructor, Empire Education Group, 2006-2015
Empire Education Group, Nashville, TN