

**The Academic Effect of a Summer Transition Program for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students**

**By Emily A. Jewell**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine if a transition program between eight and ninth grade will improve academic performance. The measurement tool was the Baltimore County Public School Report Card This study involved the use of posttest design using data collected from the report cards of students. There is no significance between the two different grounds. Research in this area should continue as this time period in a adolescents life is very important to help the student succeed in school.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **Overview**

Transitional times can be very difficult and also a time when people experience different emotional states. Transitioning from middle school to high school can be one of those situations. It involves a new school, new friends, older students, new teachers, and a higher demand in school work. This transition can be exceptionally difficult as an adolescent is going through puberty, new hormones, and a lot of different aspects in their lives are changing as they grow older. It is also a period where adolescents really begin to rely on their friends and parents give their children more freedom. It is found that students who are at risk from an early start in school are the most likely to drop out. Simple things like skipping school, missing homework assignments, and failing a class in the first quarter create over a 50% chance of dropping out. Without catching this early, every year this continues to happen, the chance the student will drop out of high school continues to increase. How can schools, teachers, and the community continue to help students learn and graduate from high school?

The researcher became interested in this problem because graduation rate is an issue, where there is only an 82% graduation rate. That means from each class, there are around 60 students who drop out over the course of the 4 years. In 2014, there was a 90% graduation rate. It has dropped 8% over the course of 4 years and that percentage is continuing to get smaller. Finding ways to start early and help these students succeed is very important.

#### **Statement of Problem**

Middle school to high school transition programs have no effect on high school achievement.

#### **Hypothesis**

Through looking at the high school's summer transition program, the researcher believes that it will help the students make the transition not as stressful. Having the options for the parents to come makes school a community event, like a team, rather than just being on the teachers. It will take the other stresses of

understanding the expectations of high school, meeting teachers/other classmates, and receiving school supplies out of the picture so the student can focus on school and start building those important relationships.

### **Operational Definitions**

The independent variable is the freshman orientation day. It is a 4-hour long day plus lunch. The students go to different discussions to talk about high school. The students can receive a backpack with school supplies and a free lunch. Parents are invited to come to lunch with the staff and students.

The dependent variable is grade point average. It is a common grade identifying scale used across high schools in the United States. It is a scale of A-F that come with a number value: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1 and F=0. Then, the average of all 8 classes is taken to determine the student's GPA.

At the school where the study takes place, these letter grades come from a 4 point scale based on the state standards, also referred to as the expectation. If the student can show they understand the state standard, they receive a 3 on the assignment. If the student can think beyond to a more complicated example, then the student is exceeding the state expectation, so they receive a 4. If they show improvement and learning, then the student receives a 2, approaching expectations. Lastly if they don't understand the material, they receive a 1, not meeting expectations. The new grading scale is to base the learning off of the current standards that students are expected to know. Then, the high school came up with their own scale to transform this 4 point scale into letter grades in order to have grades that match the rest of the country, so the students can compete in applications for colleges.

For looking at the data, passing a course is considered succeeding. This means that the students average is a 2.0 or above. A 2.0 allows for students to be eligible for athletics and other extracurricular activities.

## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

Every single school system in the United States moves their students through schools at different paces. Some students stay in the same school all 12 years, some only complete one school transfer between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, while others go through two transitions (to middle school and to high school). According to Davis, Chang, Andrzejewski, & Poirier (2014), the transition from middle school to high school doesn't meet the needs of all adolescence, so it reflects in the decline of student motivation during adolescence. Transitions are never easy for people in general, but especially students going through adolescence and expected to perform well to have a successful life. Many papers have been written to discuss different ways to ease the transition.

#### Effects of Transitions on a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student

Transitions are a time of excitement, nervousness, change, and many other emotions that come along with it. Transitions from middle to high school can be a very difficult experience for some students. According to Benner, Boyle, and Bakhtiari (2017), as a student makes this transition there is evidence that students "grades often decline, engagement and motivation tend to be lower, and feelings of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and stress tend to rise (p. 2130)." These academic and social-emotional challenges continue to affect these students if they aren't addressed. A student is "significantly less likely to complete high school" (Davis, et al., 2014) if they run into academic and social trouble in ninth grade.

**New School.** Moving to a new school affects the norms of the student. The student has to leave behind the relationships built with their middle school teachers and sometimes friends or relationships with peers are split or disrupted because of the feeder pattern that is structured by the district. So, friends could go to different high schools, which could really affect a student who is already struggling academically (Langenkamp, 2010). This can cause some students to be in a "time of loneliness, isolation, and disconnection" (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010, p. 61). This affects the student in ninth grade because they will have to form new relationships to feel comfortable and accepted in the school (Neild, 2009). This gives some students a fresh start and others a

chance to get involved with more risk-taking friends. It could go either way for a student, especially if parents give the child more freedom with the transition to high school.

**Organization.** The transition from middle school to high school brings a different organization of the school. In high school, the teachers are completely departmentalized, so a teacher is not able to help with other classes because it isn't in their expertise. Also, teachers usually can't see all the students' grades, so there is not a way to see how the student is doing academically, unless the teacher takes extra time out of their day to reach out to the other teachers. Also, every students schedule is so different, that there is no discussion across departments for students (Neild, 2009).

**Preparation for high school.** Some students learned how to get by in middle school. They were able to earn a "C" to pass and move on to high school. If a student isn't challenged or forced to work hard, the student may have a misconceptions of how high school works. They think they can sneak by, but by the time they realize they needed to put effort into their schoolwork, it is difficult to get back on track. This means that the middle school preparation for high school really affects the students' academic transition to high school and their performance (Neild, 2009).

### **New Expectations in High School**

High school has new expectations from middle school. Students are required to pass their classes to move on to the next course. Also, to pass high school students are required to take an exit exam along with measured scores based on standardized exams (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). Along with these new expectations, there will be new classroom rules, a certain amount of time to get to each class, higher amounts of classwork and responsibility for their own learning/grades (Ellerbrock, Denmon, Owens, & Lindstrom, 2015). Along with increased expectations comes more homework and classwork than the student was used to in middle school (Butts, 2011).

**Misunderstanding of 9<sup>th</sup> grade importance.** It is found that most incoming freshman don't realize the importance of passing core courses because ninth grade is the first time that courses count toward their graduation (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). Iver, Epstein, Sheldon, and Fonseca (2015) found that ninth

grade academic success is an early indicator for high school, college, and/or training success. Each course that is failed increases the chances that a student will drop out of high school. Also, Iver, et al. found that “families are unaware of the nexus of students’ on-time, daily attendance, report card grades, and course credits” that are required for a student to continue to tenth grade and ultimately to graduation (p. 28).

**Graduation Requirements.** Every student must complete the graduation requirements to receive their diploma for high school. Usually it includes passing a certain number of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses and passing a state exit exam. One of the main difficulties of looking at graduation rates is that every school district and state has their own standards. This makes some schools have much more difficult promotion/graduation standards, while in other schools, students are pushed through the system (Neild, 2009). Also, with having graduation standards comes along with class rank, grade point averages and criteria for either going to college or getting a job (Butts, 2011). Many students and parents don’t realize how important these aspects of the graduation requirements are and that they start at ninth grade, so these students don’t have a free semester or year to adjust to high school.

**Falling off Track.** In school, everything a student learns builds off the previous lesson or previous year. The academics continue to get harder and if you begin to fall behind, that gap of learning continues to grow. This can show up in a student’s behavior, such as skipping class and failing classes. The term falling off track means that students aren’t completing their required classes/credits at the appropriate schedule/allotted time. This is because there are certain requirements to graduate the normal allotted time is four years of each year being a full class schedule. According to Neild (2009), “one-third of the nation’s recent drop outs never were promoted beyond ninth grade (p. 55).” This means that if a student falls off track early in ninth grade, it will be very difficult to catch back up with credits and classes, so the student is more likely to drop out. This is because if a student fails a course, they have to make up the credits by either attending summer school, staying after school for a credit recovery course, or taking time out of their schedule the following year to repeat the course again. This makes it more difficult to graduate on time because the student is trying to make up courses and

they can't move on to the next course without completing the previous course they failed. Looking at these students in ninth grade during the transition is crucial to help our students succeed academically.

**Attendance/Engagement.** Students are expected to be in class every day for the full class period. There are three different categories for not being in class. Excused means that it was approved by the school, for example with a doctor's note. Unexcused means that the school knows that the student is out, but the student did not have proof of why they were gone. Skipping is when the student was at school, but they don't show up to class. The school does not know where the student is. Each school has different rules with how to deal with excused, skipping or unexcused absences for making up assignments/tests. If a student is missing class multiple times a week, then the chances of failing and dropping out are high. It was found that students who "attend less than 70 percent of the time in ninth grade" drop out of school, even if they were an A student in middle school (Neild, 2009, p. 61). It is also found that, according to Benner & Wang (2014), attendance, task behaviors, extracurriculars, and other activities is a basic for success in high school. It helps maintain better behavior and teaches them skills like being on time and showing up every day. A student with poorer behavioral engagement gets involved with more risky behavior, academic performance decreases, and attendance drops. Attendance and academic performance go hand in hand.

### **Family Involvement**

Parents are able to buffer transition disruptions and support their child's sensitivity. A parent maintaining stable support throughout the whole transition, helps students continue to achieve good grades. When parental support decreases as a student enters high school and then increases as a student's grades begin to drop, the transition period becomes even more difficult for the student. Therefore, keeping parents involved helps students with the transition and academic achievement (Brenner, et al., 2017).

Involving the family at home can create a positive learning environment and better academic achievement. Having the parents involved can help create a structured study environment at home including encouragement to spend time on homework. The student can talk with parents about school, what they are learning to create the discussion with their child to encourage learning, engagement, importance, success, and

behavior at school (Iver, et al., 2015). Families/parents influence students' behavior and learning. Being able to work with the parents to have the most support as a team helps encourage the student to achieve success. It is a team effort.

Social peer groups are extremely important during this time for adolescence as they begin to look more toward their friends than their parents for support. So, making sure parents have a good communication with the school and have discussions with their children about the importance of school work will be that reminder for students. A student can "suffer if their peer group does not value education" (Butts, 2011, p. 9). This way, parents can continue to influence their children's long-term goals, such as college or working and the students' peers can influence daily activities. Also, letting parents know about the logistic/curricular information and the academic/social support that is provided as a resource for the students, is a way for parents to be able to discuss with their children about taking advantage of these resources to help them succeed. When parents stay involved with the school transition, it helps "students to achieve more, are better adjusted and are less likely to drop out" (Butts, 2011, p. 35).

### **Social Relationships**

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, belongingness and love needs is the third tier in the pyramid. Therefore, if a student does not feel like they are accepted, how can we expect students to learn and do well in school. Brenner, et al. (2017) found that when students can maintain the positive relationships with their peers/friends from middle school to high school, along with making new positive relationships with their teachers and peers, it helps create a more positive transition for the student. Especially because the stage of adolescence is when a person is most prominently influenced by their peers. Langenkamp (2010) noticed that peers/friends can be a coping strategy and a social support to protect from failure. They can push each other to either do well in school or to fail in school. Another aspect of these relations, according to Butts (2011), found that students were more likely to ask for help, have better study habits, and work on challenging work if they had high levels of support from their teachers.

Davis, et al. (2014) found that school engagement inside a classroom was affected by peer rejection, peer acceptance or teacher support. A student was much more likely to engage in discussions and activities if they felt they were accepted in the classroom and had a relationship with the teacher. Also, students benefit from the teacher's focus on monitoring the achievement and adjustment of the whole student. Being able to create a small team with a teacher and small group of students helps to support student engagement and connection in school by building those relationships in that support team.

Building social relationships between the incoming ninth grader and an upperclassman allows for that extra support. Entering a new school, the student is learning new behaviors. The ninth graders are watching and modeling after their other peers to fit into the school. Being able to create that relationship can teach them behaviors, have discussions about behaviors, and offer them assistance around the school. These relationships can, also, take away misconceptions about the high school (Butts, 2011).

### **Transition Programs**

According to Langenkamp (2010), all students have a decline in achievement after the initial transition. This decline is usually temporary for some students, but for others it will have a bigger effect. Therefore, many different schools have tried different programs for their incoming ninth graders. The idea is to smooth the transition from middle school to high school. Some of the programs are during eighth grade, some are during the summer before ninth grade and others are during ninth grade. An effective transition program, according to Butts (2011), improves retention, achievement, and attendance. McCallumore & Sparapani (2010) found that schools with good transition programs dropout rates decreased from the average of 24% to only 8%. Here are a few of the different programs that found some success in helping ease the students into high school.

#### **During 8<sup>th</sup> grade programs**

**Field Trip, Tours & Shadow Day.** Being able to provide academic expectations and procedural practices to the incoming freshman is a way to develop an easier transition for the students. The shadow day allows an eighth grader to follow an upper classman through a full day of school. It gives them an idea of what kind of work they will see in high and what an average day is like. The field trip/tour is a way to get the

students to the high school and see it before their first day of school. It is a way to start building connections with the administration, teachers, and other students. It gives them ease when trying to find their classes on the first day of school because they have already walked through the whole school before. Having multiple transition activities, like the field trip, tours and shadow day, allow for increasing a successful transition experience and remain at that high school (Ellerbrock, et al., 2015).

**Student Transition Talk.** The idea of the student transition talk is to bring in students that are already in high school to talk with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders who will be entering the high school next year. The opportunity is for the older students to inform the younger students about the teachers, work load, social expectations, regrets, requirements, and how to get involved on campus. “Learning about high school life from an upperclassman is noted to be more valuable to incoming students than hearing about high school from an adult perspective” (Ellerbrock, et al., 2015, p. 97).

### **Supports for Students**

One way to break the nervousness of students regarding the transition to high school is to have a bell schedule and map printed for every student. This way, when they get their schedules, they can map out where all their classes are and the way to walk through the building. They will have an idea where they are going and feel comfortable. Also, handing out samples of homework assignments or possible tests a student could have. This can answer some questions and get them thinking about the level of work they will be asked to do to succeed in school (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). Also, giving all the students a school planner is an easy way to give the extra support to stay organized.

### **Summer between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Freshman only first day.** The freshman only first day includes freshmen reporting to school a few days before school starts. They meet in the auditorium to have a small assembly. Then the students are walked to their first period class. Then they go through the schedule of the day with about 10 to 15 minutes in each class and then walking to find their next class, like a shortened regular day.

**Summer transition program.** It is a program put on during the summer. It can either be a one-day event or a few weeks event. The basis is to bring in some of the teachers and administrators. They run some talks on different topics, such as organization or class schedule. Sometimes they have parents attend. It is a way to give the students an introduction and begin giving them the support for the transition. Ilic (2011) looked even closer at the summer bridge intervention program.

**Meet the teacher night/Back to school night.** The basis is to allow parents and the students to come to the high school. They will be given their schedules, so they can find all their classrooms ahead of time and be able to build a relationship with their teacher before school starts. It can create a discussion at home because the parents have met the teachers also. It helps the students have an idea of expectations on the first day of school and it may also be able to break down their nerves to help them feel more comfortable. Also, building a good student-teacher relationship is important for the positive development for adolescents (Ellerbrock, et al., 2015).

Having different activities such as freshman only first day, students and parent's orientation, student orientation, and the summer transition program are all programs that have eased the transition for students. A successful transition has a positive impact on students' lives (Butts, 2011).

### **During 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition programs**

**Project Transition.** The basis behind project transition was to create a more personalized school environment for both the teachers and the students. The students and teacher would be placed on an interdisciplinary team. All of the students on this team would have the same four core teachers. Those teachers would have the same planning period and a coach to meet, prep, implement professional development, give constructive feedback on lessons and have discussions across disciplinary subjects to support the students in the best possible way. Neild (2009) noticed that there was an increase in attendance, the students build better relationships with their teacher (students felt that their teachers cared about them) and their peers. Also, it allowed teachers to communicate across subject areas, which brought in a more team like approach for these students. This transition program, also, showed a small increase in students passing their courses in ninth grade.

**Transition to Advanced Mathematics and Strategic Reading Courses.** The idea of this extra course is for students with low academic skills. It is a class that goes along with their math and reading courses to go more into detail/review previous material to help support them in their academic classes. Neild (2009) found that this transition program helped in math, but not as much in English. The class was able to review basic principles like fractions, multiplication, and solving for x that would build the skills in order to succeed in the ninth-grade math course.

**High School 101.** This is a class that is created for incoming freshman. It is a year long course that goes over high school survival skills. They learn different skills such as decision-making, time management, test-taking strategies, study skills, computer research skills, social tolerance and career alignment (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). It helps with the transition to high school and teaches them skills to help them be successful in school, along with taking these skills into their life.

**Freshman Academy.** The idea behind the freshman academy is that there is a certain floor or wing of the school that is only for freshman. All of their classes are together. This way, the freshman isn't mixed in with the upperclassman and experiences a year of transition into high school with the more rigorous curriculum (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). It also gives students more individualized attention and learning. McCallumore and Sparapani found that it increased "attendance, behavior, teacher moral, parent contact, a reduction in class failures, and increased standardized test scores (p. 62)."

**Jump Start.** Jump start is another form of a ninth-grade transition course to help students acclimate to high school and build skills that can help them in school and beyond. The class teaches skills such as: note-taking, productive studying, being proactive, taking responsibility, getting involved in activities, and many other life/academic supports. In addition, this course gives the students the opportunity to meet teachers and administration, introduces and updates students on in-school and extracurricular opportunities, builds goal setting and career aspirations, and lots of fun school spirit and class pride activities. This class is specifically designed to help build the supports necessary for a ninth grader transitioning to high school to obtain success (Ellerbrock, et al., 2015). Also, the school has upperclassman as tutors for the ninth-graders. Ellerbrock, et al.

found that this tutoring was an opportunity for upperclassman to build relationships with the ninth graders while helping the students with the work.

### **Conclusion**

Creating a safe place for incoming freshman is important to foster their success in high school. All of these different programs that go along with the transition to high school, keep the students on track. Examples of these different programs are field trips to the high school, parent/student meet your teacher night, and freshman skills class taken during freshman year of high school. All of these examples help create a seamless transition and help students and realize the importance of ninth grade, along with setting up the rest of their high school experience with a successful beginning. If they fall behind now, it is very difficult to get back on track. Getting them used to the school and taking away the nervousness of high school is a good way to begin their first day of ninth grades.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

#### **Design**

The design of this research is Quasi-experimental. There are two groups, one group attends the freshman orientation day and the other group does not. The group that is attending the freshman orientation day is the experimental group, they are receiving skills, such as organization, school tour, etc., to help them succeed at the start of high school. The students were split into two groups, one set attended the transition day and the other group did not. The student choose to attend the transition day, so the groups were not random. The parents even got the opportunity to attend the lunch. The post-test is looking at the students grades (GPA) of the group that attended the transition day after their first quarter at school and even more specifically the students' first quarter math grade.

#### **Participants**

The research participants are ninth grade students (13-15 years old) attending the same school. All the participants came from a collection of different middle schools. Most of the students came from the specific zone that is mapped to the school by the district. The participants that were not zoned to attend this high school, where admitted into the fine arts or Scholars program. To attend this program, students must audition for either art, dance, theater, music, etc. and maintain a certain GPA to remain in the program. The Scholars program is for students to learning a trade, such as cooking, work shop, or mechanic, for half of the day and the other part of the day is academic classes. The students in this action research were chosen since they were in one of the researcher's math classes, either Algebra 1 or Geometry, and they attended the freshman day over the summer. It was convenience sampling. The rest of the students who attended the event that were not in my class, where not included in this study.

#### **Instrument**

The instrument used was grade point average in their freshman year courses. It is based off the fact that A=4 points, B=3 points, C=2 points, D=1 point and F=0 points. Then, the average of the students' points are

calculated, which is their grade point average. All the grades were pulled from the school archival records system. All teachers submit their grades to the online program and then a students' records are all transferred under their name. The researcher searched the names of students in the system, which showed their grades. All of these grades, which were originally as points are normed to a letter grade in the system, which then corresponds back to the numbered value to find the average. The whole school is based off of the 4 point grading rubric: Exceeding Standards, Meeting Standards, Approaching Standards, and Not Meeting Standards. But, this 4 point scale has a different scaling range of values back to the letter grade which is presented on the report card: A=3-4, B=2.5-3, C=2-2.5, D=1-2 and F=0-1. All the teachers grade an assignment/test based on how well they meet the state standard that was being taught.

According to Walker, Block-Pedego, Todis, & Severson (1991) from *Mental Measurements Yearbook*, having the archival school record system allows for easy access to a students' school performance over the many years. It has all the possible information in the system such as demographic info, previous grades and teachers, attendance, discipline, teacher's notes, etc. It is a way to look at if behavior is similar to previous years, look at previous years' grades, and see if the student is keeping at the same success level as years before. Therefore, the grades will be accurate based on their performance of the first quarter in school of freshman year. It is also a way to look at notes from other teachers to see if the transition is going well or if there is a reason for the student struggling coming into high school. The goal of the transition program is to help students with the transition to high school by creating a smaller chance of being at risk. This program is a way to look at grades across the board of classes and be able to compare to previous years to determine if the student should receive more support.

One of the concerns for reliability is that all teachers grade differently and have different levels of workloads. Grading is subjective to the specific teacher, especially on this new grading system. Having a grading system that is not common to all the other schools around or across the US makes it very difficult to replicate the results at another school. Also, the high school has a requirement that students can come in after school to redo any assignments, quizzes, or tests. This allows students to not study initially or just turn in an

uncompleted assignment and then get a better score later. This makes it difficult to replicate and compare this study to another school.

Another concern is that all classes are standard. Since there are AP classes, honors, and advance classes also, it does not capture the whole school and the whole community.

### **Procedure**

The procedure for the action research was based on already produced data. On the freshman summer transition day, all the students were checked in at the start of the day. The researcher was able to go through the lists of students that attended and match it to class rosters. This started the list of students. They also documented which parents attended the lunch, to be able to document which parents attended.

During the transition day, the principal came and introduced himself. Then, the students were split into groups randomly. Then with that group, they attended a set of talks that were held by different teachers, district officials, or community members. Students were able to receive a free backpack and supplies, donated by a local college, and learned about different skills. Some of the group discussions throughout the transition program were about organization, different resources at school, clubs/activities, meeting with older students, note taking, talking about the expectations of high school, question time, etc., and it ended with a lunch that parents were invited to in the cafeteria.

The students that attended the freshman orientation and were in the researchers' class. An excel file was created to collect all the data for the students. A chart with the students' demographics was created. The chart included where they went to middle school, grades from the transition of elementary school to middle school, attendance documentation, state test scores. The researcher kept track of how many times the student attended coach class or had a missing assignment. This was a way to have documentation to look at when analyzing the grades. Sometimes, students work really hard and just don't understand math, so being able to personally look at this data, helps see if the grades match the effort or if there is something else involved that affected the students' grades.

The next step was to make a list of all the students that attended Freshman Day the Thursday before school started. This was a chance for students to walk through the day with 10 minutes in every class. This allowed the students to meet their teachers and know exactly where their classes were on the first day of school, so that the students didn't feel lost. This was documented in the extra excel sheet.

Half way through the quarter, progress reports were handed out to all the students. The researcher documented the grades of all of the students that were participating in the study. These grades were placed into an Excel file next to their initials. Finally, at the end of the quarter, the students grade point average and their individual math score from 8<sup>th</sup> grade were placed it in the excel file next to their initials and progress report grades.

Later, the grade point averages and the student's math scores of the first quarter were used to run the statistics in order to determine the significance of the freshman transition summer day.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This study examines the impact of having a 9<sup>th</sup> grade orientation over the summer for incoming ninth graders on their first quarter grade point average (GPA). It is thought that the better the transition for the students, the better they will be able to perform in their classes.

Looking at the data from the students' grades, Table 1 and Table 2 show that 12 out of the 19 student GPAs were in the "successful" range, but the parents who attended did not match up correctly with the GPA.

Table 1: *GPA Ranges*

Average GPA	# of Students	Parent	No Parent
3 - 4	4	3	1
2 - 2.99	8	5	3
1 - 1.99	7	4	3
0 - .99	0	0	0

Table 2: *Parents' Attendance*

Parents Attended	Total # of Students	%
12	19	63%

Looking in more detail a multiple regression was run. There were two independent variables and one dependent variable, which was the first quarter GPA. The first independent variable was whether the student attended the 9<sup>th</sup> grade summer orientation (assigned the categorical variable value of 1) or a student didn't attend the orientation (assigned the categorical variable of 0). The second independent variable was taking the students final quarter math grade from their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. Based on the multiple regression and Table 3, the only independent variable that was a significant predictor of first quarter high school GPA was the final quarter eighth grade math grade.

Table 3: *Regression Results*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.385	.303		4.570	.000
	Parent Attend Recode	-.124	.288	-.084	-.431	.672
	1Q Math	.460	.132	.678	3.474	.003

The regression tries to form a prediction between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In this process there is also a constant value created which is used when the equation – if one wishes – is graphed. This constant positions the line of the graph and for the purpose of this analysis may be disregarded. The table shows that other than the constant the only thing that was significant in predicting the high school grade was the eighth- grade final math grade. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of this study, the null hypothesis is retained. The study did not find a statistically significant impact of having a summer transition program on student's achievements at the beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **Implications of Results**

Based on these results, a transition program does not directly affect academic achievement. It is very difficult to make a one day, few hour event to really help support these students for the transition. It shows that there needs to be more support for these students. Also, every student learns differently, so expecting them all to follow the set of skills there were taught for an hour is hard.

What is noticed, is that students who do well, it rolls over into the next year. Since there was significance with their 8<sup>th</sup> grade math grades, that means that a student's success can be affected by previous achievement. One thing the researcher hears in the classroom often is "I am not good at math." Students with this thought process, which is derived from previous years of not doing well in math, bring forward the feeling of not being good at math/not being able to succeed. This supports that there is a bit of significance with previous grades.

#### **Theoretical Consequences**

Based on this research, we looked directly at academic achievement. A consequence of this, is that we didn't look at the emotion effects of the student of building relationships and nervousness for the first day of school. This transition program to 9<sup>th</sup> grade has nothing to with learning, but instead making the students feel comfortable and ready for high school. The eventual goal is for students to do well during their first quarter to set the students up to succeed for the rest of high school, but there is more to the transition than straight grades.

#### **Threats to the Validity**

Some of the threats to validity are that there are not enough subjects to make a full conclusion and the selection-treatment interaction. Only having 19 students in the study out of a class of around 350 students. Also, having it only be students from standard 9<sup>th</sup> grade math classes, it doesn't represent the whole school.

Another threat is external uncontrollable. There is a chance that something is going on at home so the students aren't able to study. There could be something else effecting the students that would bring their grades down. This has nothing to do with the fact of going to the summer orientation, but it will show up in their grades. The research doesn't necessarily directly measure how well the freshman orientation affects student achievement.

Another threat to validity is treatment diffusion/expectancy. The teacher wants all of the students to succeed. This brings in talking to the students individually, convincing students to come get help after school, etc. It mixes the independent variables and trying to get all the students to "succeed" in the course. It affects the behavior and grades of the students.

### **Connections to Previous Studies/Existing Literature**

Connecting to other research studies, they went about determining success in other ways during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of freshman year. According to Montgomery (2013), she looks more at how the transition program affected attendance, behavior, and grades. The idea is that the more class a student misses, the lower their grades are going to be (Montgomery, 2015). So, being able to have a transition program that will help keep students in school, is important to helping achievement. Benner and Wang (2014), also, look at trajectories from middle to high school. One major thing they noticed was bringing the transition program into a larger scope than just transitioning to a new school. They looked mainly at attendance of class/school.

Another study performed by Roybal, Thornton, and Usinger (2014) found that transition programs can promote student success. The idea behind their research is to give the students structure and get them involved with different aspects/activities at the school. The more involved, the better they do, and they have a sense of belonging.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Even though the 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition program didn't effect student achievement, it would be interesting to later look at how it affected the students emotionally. A possible future research study could involve asking the

students questions about the transition program. Seeing how it affected nerves, relationships, and other emotional aspects of the students' life.

Another aspect to look at is making the program spread over a longer period of time. This program was one day in July, so a month before school starts. Research could look at starting in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and then having the students in some sort of transition class through all of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Maybe having a longer present in the students' transition will create a bigger change in academics, which come with relationships.

Another future research idea is that the high school is becoming an AVID school. This means that all students will take AVID and teachers will have to change their teaching style to match the AVID requirements. Looking at how AVID can help students achieve and how AVID can be used to support a transition program.

### **Conclusions**

It was observed that the transition to high school is very difficult on students. The first quarter of high school helps set up the success of the student throughout the rest of their four years. Through completing an over the summer one day event, it did not have any impact on the students grades as the quarter continued to happen. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the students who attended the summer transition session will not be more successful than students who did not attend the summer transition session.

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