

Background

My research proposal is designed to encourage and improve attendance and behaviors with the goal of increasing the positive culture to benefit the current alternative student population and when students graduate. A simple incentive program will be added to incentives already in place. By students being present and engaged in the science classroom, students will be better equipped to finish and pass more classes each quarter, have less failing grades, and decrease student drops each quarter.

Treatment

Incentives for Students

- Color-Coded Silicon Wristbands
- Students earn green, blue, purple and then gold wristbands through good attendance and positive behaviors
- Students receive more privileges within the alternative program as they move up in color towards gold
- Names in drawings for prizes
- Recognition in front of peers for good behavior

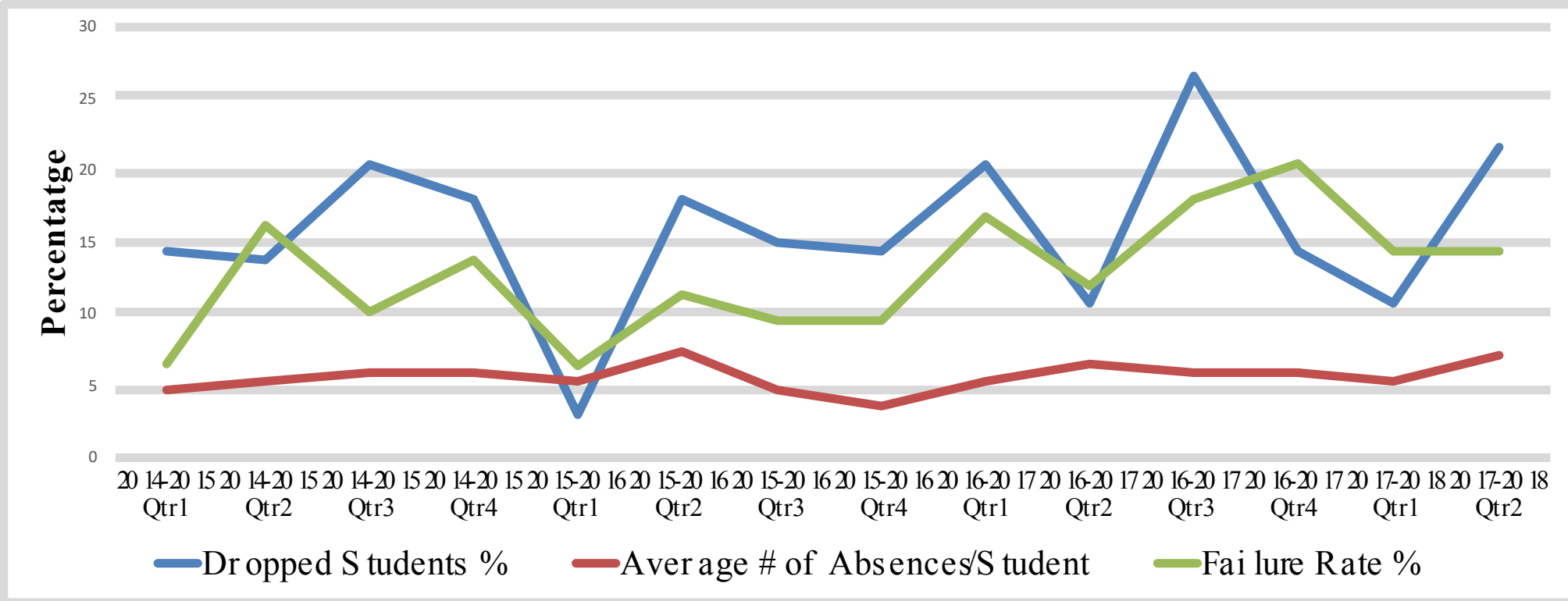


Figure 3. Historical trends for the percentage of dropped students, average number of absences per student, and the failure rate for the entire population of students in the alternative program for each quarter since 2014, (N=687).

Research Questions and Methodology

What impact does an incentive-based system have on attendance, behavior and academic learning in the science classroom within an alternative program?

Table 1
Data collection methodologies for each sub question of the action research project.

Research Sub Questions	Data Collection Methodologies						
	Parent Survey	Pre/Post Likert Survey	Behavior Data	Focus Group Interviews	Individual Interviews	Attendance Data	Credits Earned
1.What is the impact of using an incentive-based system on behaviors of alternative high school students?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2. What is the impact of using an incentive-based system on attendance of alternative high school students?	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
3.What is the impact of using an incentive-based system on the number of credits earned per student per quarter?				✓	✓	✓	✓
4.What is the impact of using an incentive-based system on me as a teacher?		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Behavior, Attendance, and Credit Results

- Percent of Students with Wristbands
 - Green Band – 38%
 - Blue – 11%
 - Purple – 11%
 - Gold – 0%
 - No Band - 40%
- 10.9% and 21.5% of students were dropped due to attendance issues during Quarter 1 and 2 respectively. Number one reason was not being able to get up in the morning or not sleeping.
- The historical calculated average number of absences was 5.6 absences. Quarter 1 was 5.3 and Quarter 2 was 7.1 absences. Quarter 2 had more absences than Quarter 1.
- The average historical failure rate was 21%. No significant difference was found for Quarter 1 or 2 during the treatment. Students did not earn more credits.

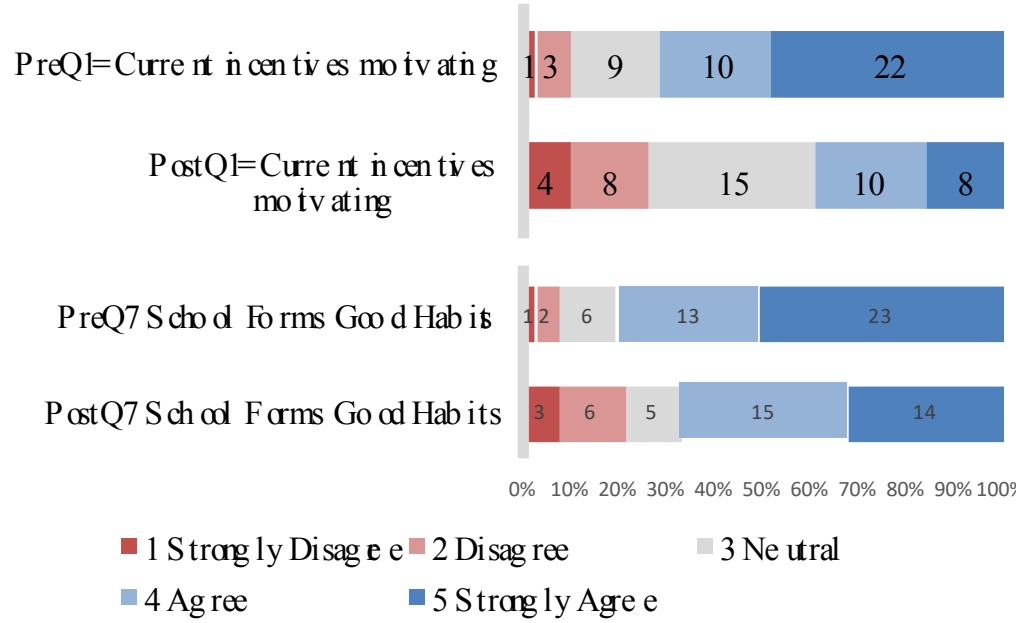
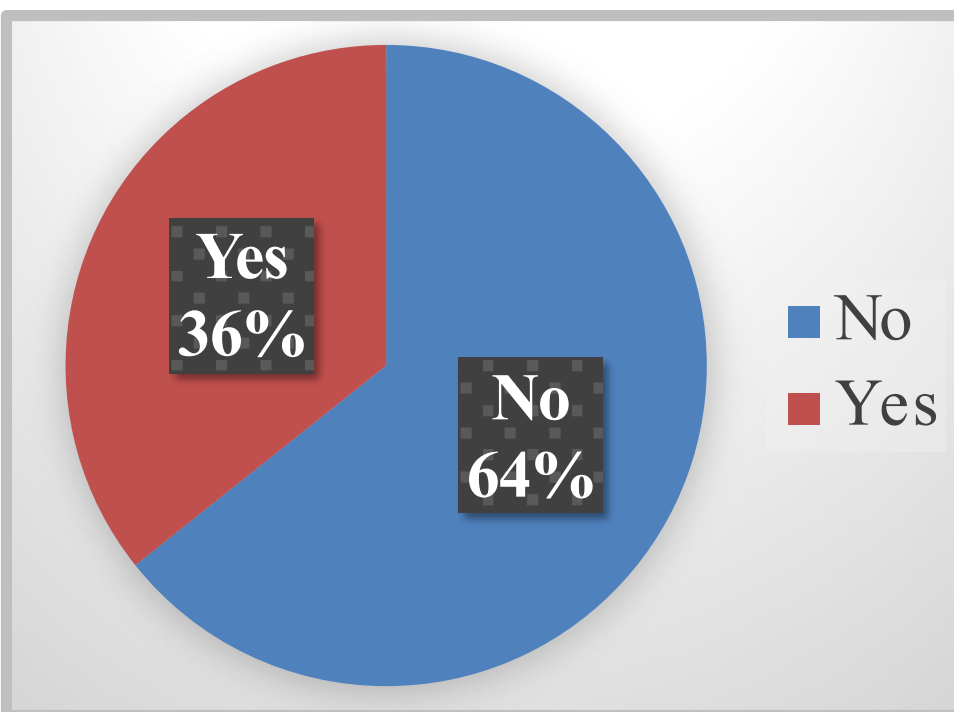


Figure 1. Students ranked two Likert questions lower from the beginning to the end of the treatment period showing a attitudes of students were changed negatively, (N=46).

Figure 2. Students were asked at the end of the semester if the additional incentives should be continued, (N=45).



“Quotes from Students”

What are characteristics of becoming more adult-like?

- “Getting everything like all assignments done on time and coming to school.”
- “Doing something without being told”
- “Having your priorities straight like school, being more independent and self-sufficient like don’t rely on your parents.”
- “Obeying the rules and if you don’t, then own-up by paying debts to society without complaining. Listen to the teacher.”
- “Having responsibility. Knowing what you want to do or an idea and set goals.”
- “Realizing that not everything deserves a reaction.”
- “Being respectful even if you don’t like your boss or co-worker. Being mean doesn’t get you anywhere.”

Impact of Research

The added incentive did not improve behaviors, attendance, or credits earned in the science classroom for the majority of students. The value in the research was reaffirmation of building relationships with students to encourage students to buy into the alternative program while working on engaging students academically and setting their compass on a career path for post-graduation understanding that each student is unique. Work needs to continue in working with the at-risk and wounded students the staff serve on a daily basis.

