ABSTRACT

REID, LISA GREGORY. Strangers in the House: How Early College High Schools and Their College Partners Ensure Student Safety. (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello.)

A two phase explanatory case study design was used to investigate how Early College High School (ECHS) leaders and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols. Specifically, the study focused on how selected ECHS safety protocols address the presence of early college students on an open college campus with adults. Another goal of the study was to emphasize the importance of addressing ECHS safety to help prevent students from becoming victims of college campus crime and violence. The purpose of Phase one was to survey multiple ECHS principals to illustrate an overview, or big picture, of ECHS safety protocols in the Southeastern United States. In addition, data from Phase one was used to identify participants and schools for in-depth case studies. Phase two encompassed case study interviews with three principals on two separate occasions. Case study questions were designed to first examine how ECHS leaders make decisions about and implement student safety protocols on the college campus. Second, the interview questions sought to reveal the most common ECHS student safety incidents as well as common ECHS security protocols used on college campuses. Finally, the study looked at how specific ECHS student incidents are addressed by school leaders and their college partners. This study revealed that ECHS leaders regularly faced student safety issues related to tracking student movement on campus; the age difference and interactions between ECHS students and adults on campus (students and non-students); and discrepancies between K-12 and college policies, procedures, and expectations. At this time, there is limited research related to ECHS student safety.
Strangers in the House: How Early College High Schools and Their College Partners Ensure Student Safety

by
Lisa Gregory Reid

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Educational Administration and Supervision

Raleigh, North Carolina

2015

APPROVED BY:

_______________________________  ________________________________  ________________________________  ________________________________
Dr. Matthew Militello  Dr. Greg Hicks  Dr. Kevin Brady  Dr. Lisa Bass
Committee Chair
DEDICATION

I am honored to present this work, with great gratitude, to those who have been my constant guiding light. Your collective spirits and genuine love for me have undoubtedly catapulted me to great heights in reaching for life’s opportunities that were waiting for me. Today, and every day, as I stand in my blessing, I honor each of you as my guardian angels.

To my outstanding husband, musical soul mate, and technical editor, Adrian Reid, for your love, devotion, constant encouragement, laughter, and wisdom. We have only just begun to unwrap the gifts that God has assigned for us to inspire the world.

To my dedicated and loving parents, Mrs. Seletidia Gregory and the late Roy Lee Gregory, for giving me the vision that all things are possible. There is no greater love.
BIOGRAPHY

Lisa Gregory Reid is a multifaceted educator who has dedicated her professional life to inspiring and motivating others. Her proud service in the public school system includes assignments as an English, Public Speaking, and Drama Teacher; award-winning Debate Coach; School Counselor; and Assistant Principal. Lisa has demonstrated her love of learning by earning two masters degrees from North Carolina State University in Counseling and School Administration respectively. In the spring of 2014, she was awarded the prestigious North Carolina State University Wilcox-Hoodnet Doctoral Fellowship for Public School Administrators for the 2014-2015 school year. The fellowship award was presented by the university’s Department of Leadership, Policy and Adult and Higher Education. The award was presented to Lisa for her educational innovation, creativity, and future potential to effectively contribute to the field of education and educational research. This research opportunity allowed her to combine her love of education with her passion for student safety and teaching others about personal protection.

Lisa is also a trained vocalist, public speaker, life coach, actress, and voiceover artist. Currently, Lisa travels, presents, and performs with her husband, Adrian, as the Performing Arts Duo Reid and Reid. She has performed in musical theater and with a professional Jazz Ensemble in multiple states. Lisa has directed and produced plays at the university and community theatre levels and has also performed in and directed multiple stage plays such as Bus Stop, God Spell, A Raisin in the Sun, God Don’t Need No Help from the Devil, and The Good Doctor. Lisa and Adrian are the proud parents of two children, Alana and Adrian, Jr.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is my pleasure to express my deepest gratitude to those who have supported and encouraged me throughout not only my dissertation journey, but also throughout my life. To my committee chair, Dr. Matthew Militello, you have a gift for bringing out the best in people. Thank you for pushing me to reach my goal. To my committee members, Dr. Kevin Brady, Dr. Greg Hicks, and Dr. Lisa Bass, I could not have asked for a better team to understand my research vision and help bring it to life. Thank you to Dr. Susan Faircloth for encouraging me to never give up and Dr. Lance Fusarelli for encouraging me to apply for the doctoral program. Thank you to Sharon Walker for all your support. Also, a very special thank you goes to my copy editor, Mrs. Hoyie Baker, and Mr. Lattie Baker.

To my sister, Sharell Williams, you are absolutely the best sister in the world and despite being the eldest, I have learned so much from watching your grace, dignity, professionalism, and care for others. I feel at peace knowing that you and my talented brother-in-law, Thaddeus Williams, are always there for our mother and for us when we need you. To my adorable, smart, and fun-loving children, Alana Reid and Adrian Reid, Jr., always be willing to work hard to reach your dreams. Many great things are waiting for you.

Finally, my wonderful extended family and friends, each of you has made a great and lasting impact in my life that words cannot effectively express. A special thank you to: Mary Boyd; Darlene Herbert; Kay Fields; Penny and Charles Harris; Simon Williams, Jr.; Kim and Mark Marshall; Teresa Pierrie; Jacquelyn Reid; Maria Givens; Barbara Simpson; Mark and Margo Gibson; Evangeline Herbert; Chantel Herbert; Yvette Lawson; and Felecia Dawson Brown.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. ix

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................ x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................. 1

  Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................... 6
  Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................... 7
  Significance of the Study ..................................................................................................... 8
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................ 9
  Overview of Approach ....................................................................................................... 10
  Organization of the Study .................................................................................................. 11

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ..................................................................................... 12

  Early College Design and Rationale .................................................................................. 12
  ECHS Location and College Campus Violence .................................................................... 17
  School Climate Theory ...................................................................................................... 17
  Decision Making Process: An Action Cycle ....................................................................... 19
  Significance of Selecting and Implementing Safety Protocols ........................................... 20
  School Safety and Court Rulings ....................................................................................... 20
  The Impact of Bullying ..................................................................................................... 24
  Public School Crime ......................................................................................................... 26
  Students’ Perceptions of Unsafe Schools .......................................................................... 28
  School Climate and Student Safety .................................................................................... 30
  ECHS Student Transitions and Safety .............................................................................. 33
  College Campus Safety ..................................................................................................... 35
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY ..............................................................45

Introduction .....................................................................................45
The Qualitative Approach ...............................................................46
Research Questions and Rationale ........................................................48
Participants ......................................................................................49
Site Selection and Sample ................................................................50
Data Collection ...............................................................................52
Data Analysis ...................................................................................57
Validity and Reliability .....................................................................58
Subjectivity Statement ......................................................................59
Bias .................................................................................................61
Ethical Issues (IRB) ..........................................................................63
Limitations of the Study ...................................................................64
SUMMARY ..........................................................................................66

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS ......................................................................67

Introduction .....................................................................................67
Principal Survey: Overview of Safety Practices and Policies at ECHSs ..............70
Incident Reporting Practices ...............................................................72
Major Policy and Legal Issues ...........................................................73
Creating and Implementing ECHS Safety Policies ........................................74
Alliance Early College High School ....................................................76
No Congregating on the College Side ..................................................80
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: ECHS Safety Data Collection.................................................................56
Table 4.1: ECHS Principal Survey Data...............................................................71
Table 5.1: Major Findings.....................................................................................107
Table 5.2: ECHS Safety Recommendations for Public Schools .........................149
Table 5.3: ECHS Safety Recommendations for Colleges and Universities ..........154
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Growth of newly opened Early College High Schools in North Carolina from 2005 to 2013 .................................................................16

Figure 2.2: Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2013) reported on-campus criminal offense data for 2 and 4 year colleges and universities. .................................................................36

Figure 2.3: Campus Safety Report (2009) data on college safety. ..................................................39

Figure 2.4: Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2011) data on public K-12 safety. ........40
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Society is constantly placing more demands and expectations on schools. Parents and community leaders expect students to be well-educated and competitive on a global scale. In response to that expectation, incorporation of college readiness preparation is gaining national momentum. To help push the national college readiness agenda, in 2009, college-and-career-ready standards were supported by Congress with the use of federal education dollars (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Elsewhere across the nation, leaders are providing more support, such as federal funding, to help increase academic rigor and success for all students while decreasing the dropout rate for both high school and college (2009).

One innovative school design that has had noteworthy success since the early 2000s, is the Early College High School (ECHS). However, with all of the positive strides these schools have made, the high school students who attend ECHSs on college or university campuses face potential dangers from adult crime and violence every day. If left unchecked, or minimally addressed, ECHS students may likely encounter college or university experiences that could potentially end in disaster. Ideally, all ECHS leaders and their college partners will make proactive, effective, and timely safety decisions before any of their students are seriously hurt or worse. Their safety leadership action and collaboration will also help to ensure the future academic, emotional, social, and physical well-being of all ECHS students who are enrolled in these innovative programs.

In 2002, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation began an Early College High School Initiative with the goal of improving the college graduation rates for students who were underrepresented in the college-going population (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009).
By targeting students who typically struggle in traditional high school settings, the Foundation set out to improve the lagging system that existed in our nation’s high schools. For example, during the beginning of the Gates’ Initiative, in North Carolina only 70 of every 100 ninth grade students graduated from high school within five years. Out of that 70, only 42 enrolled in college and only 19 completed a two or four-year college degree within six years of completing high school (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008). This data, which was similar to that of many other states, supported community and school leaders’ goal of better preparing students for college while developing skills necessary to compete in the larger global society (Jobs for the Future, 2008).

In 2005, with the assistance of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, school leaders and their college partners set out to create smaller high schools called Early College High Schools where students would not be permitted to slip through the cracks (Jobs for the Future, 2011). ECHSs are located on the campus of a college or university and serve high school students in grades 9-13. With the ECHS model, students who may not have the opportunity to attend college otherwise (e.g., first generation, low-income, ethnic minorities), have an opportunity to earn an associate’s degree or transferable college credits while they are still in high school, all at no cost to students or their families (North Carolina New Schools, 2013). The formation of ECHSs is the result of numerous public-private collaborations to initiate effective high school reform that offers success for all students (Edmunds et al., 2008). The increase in student success over the past several years is
supported by the steady increase in student graduation rates across the Southeastern part of the United States in states such as North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

For example, by 2014, North Carolina achieved the highest graduation rate in the State’s history at 83.9%. This was a 15.6% increase from 2006 when the graduation rate was 68.3% (NCDPI, 2014). This improvement and growth is a result of combined public and private efforts to improve public schools through establishing ECHSs and other school reform programs. In South Carolina, graduation rate data from 2013 revealed an increased for the third consecutive year (South Carolina Department of Education, 2013). In addition, the demographic groups of African American and Hispanic students experienced their largest gains since 2008-09 with graduation rates that increased by 5.4 and 4.9 percent respectively. Likewise, according to an External Affairs and Policy Press Release (2014), Georgia’s graduation rate improved over the last three years, increasing from 71.8% in 2013 to 72.5% in 2014. Since 2011, the graduation rate in Georgia has increased 5.1% overall. “When we see the graduation rate consistently trending upward and when we see a greater percentage of our students graduating from our public high schools, we are talking about individual students and individual dreams,” State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge, stated. “We’re talking about students whose options and futures expanded when they obtained a high school diploma” (p.1).

The upward trend in graduation rates in states such as North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia reflected a growing trend, pointed out by Education Secretary Arne Duncan, when the nation reached its highest graduation rate in 2012 with 80% (Layton, 2014). The occasion was highlighted as one to be celebrated and congratulated; however,
educational disparities were still present across the nation as well. According to Layton, in a number of states, the number of students who did not graduate was as high as one-third. Also, graduation rate disparities were highest for Black students at 69% and Hispanic students at 73%. The numbers were lower for English-language learners at 59% and special education students at 61%. By contrast, White and Asian students achieved a graduation rate status of 86% and 88% respectively (2014). In response to the statistical disparities, Duncan pointed out, “A generation ago, the United States led the world in college graduation rates. But today eleven other countries have surpassed the United States where 43% of young people have a college degree” (p.4). Therefore, a growing number of school and community leaders across the country are constantly seeking ways to increase the achievement levels of those students who lag behind in graduation rates. One such response was the establishment of the early college model.

According to North Carolina New Schools (2013), North Carolina leads the nation in the number of early colleges in one state with 77 ECHSs (See Figure 2.1). The success of these schools can be seen in both the student graduation rates and in the number of college credits earned. In 2009, a total of 2,995 ECHS students graduated from 64 schools in North Carolina. Of those graduates, 91% earned college credits, 44% earned more than one year of college credits, and 24% earned an associate’s degree or at least two years of college credit. In addition, for that same year, 70% of the students served in ECHSs in the state were members of the target populations that the schools were originally created to serve. Those college underrepresented groups included minority students of color, free and reduced lunch students, and first generation students who were the first of their family to attend college
(Jobs for the Future, 2011). Many other states, including Georgia and South Carolina, have successfully established ECHS programs to address the national graduation rate as well. However, in contrast to the commendable academic success of the ECHSs, there is also cause for concern related to the safety of high school students attending school on open college campuses. The number of early college students on any given college campus can range from 50 to over 350 and more ECHSs are opening each year across the country (Jobs for the Future, 2014).

As the number of new ECHSs grow each year, so will the number of high school students who attend school on college and university campuses, with some being as young as 13 years old (Jobs for the Future, 2011). On a daily basis, these high school students will be exposed to various potential dangers by being on an open college campus with adults, of which some will be traditional college students and some will not (e.g., campus visitors who may come and go throughout the day as they please). Potential college and university campus dangers include, but are not limited to, gun violence; drug and alcohol abuse; rape and sexual assault; harassment; etc. In addition, the adult mental health issue, which is largely unaddressed by colleges and universities, is another area of concern for housing ECHSs on college and university campuses (Hughes, White, & Hertz, 2008). Very little research speaks to the safety of ECHS students on college campuses and how to best protect them.

As we have seen across the country time and time again, the ills of society make it to our schools and sometimes they fester and explode with tragic results. Indeed, many of these same concerns are present at traditional high schools; however, the exposure to literally thousands more adults, strangers if you will, who may come and go at will on the school
grounds, increase the risk of exposure to various safety concerns. The reality of ECHS students being involved in a major crisis on a college or university campus is not a matter of if it will happen; it is only a matter of when it will happen. In fact, both minor and major incidents take place on college campuses on a regular basis (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Therefore, when a major incidence does arise, will the ECHS administrative leaders and their college or university partners have adequate policies and practices in place to respond? Will students and staff know what to do? In addition, what measures do ECHS leaders put in place to actively prevent foreseeable events?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine how ECHS leaders and their college or university partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols that address the presence of high school students on open college campuses with traditional adult students in the Southeastern part of the United States. The research will be addressed with the following set of questions:

1. How do ECHS principals balance state, district, and college/university policies when preparing safety protocols (Memorandum of Understanding, district policies, and State laws)?

2. How do ECHS principals apply school law and college/university policies when responding to specific incidents between ECHS students and traditional college students?
3. How do ECHS leaders navigate school laws and policies when communicating safety protocols to school stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, traditional college students, and college partners)?

**Statement of the Problem**

Throughout the nation, there is a growing need to increase both the high school and college graduation rates. Since the first ECHS opened its doors in 2005, the design has become increasingly popular in an attempt to help low-income and underrepresented college-going groups obtain the necessary postsecondary skills to compete in our highly competitive global economy (Hoffman & Vargas, 2010; Howley, Howley, & Duncan 2013). According to Hoffman and Vargas (2010), ECHSs are housed on a community college or university campus to allow increased access to the college experience for groups that are underrepresented in the college-going population. However, the increased ECHS student access to the college campus environment will also increase their exposure to college campus crime and/or violence. Sometimes a student’s exposure to college crime is mild, while in other cases, the exposure ends with tragic results.

One such tragedy includes the story of a young female college student named Jeanne Clery who was brutally murdered at school by a fellow college student. What Jeanne and her other classmates did not know was that this individual had history of mental illness and violence. Following Jeanne’s death, her mother recalls, “What Jeanne didn’t know and we didn’t know cost Jeanne her life. Howard and I are determined to make the public aware of this ‘best kept secret.’ If it happened to Jeanne in what seemed like the most idyllic and perfect circumstances, it could happen to anyone,” (Jackson & Terrell, p. ix). Following
years of hard work from Jeanne’s parents and countless school safety supporters, The Cleary Act was signed into law in 1991 to notify students and parents of the crimes that take place on college and university campuses (Binkley, et. al., 2014). However, many college and university crimes are still unreported, or underreported, today. Therefore, it is a critical reality that ECHS leaders must address the unique safety concerns that exist on college campuses. Likewise, ECHS leaders and their college partners must proactively plan and prepare for the reality that some ECHS students will fall victim to college campus crime and violence if the proper protocols are not put in place to protect them. Therefore, my study addressed how ECHS administrators and their college partners decide upon and implement specific safety protocols to protect ECHS students on open college campuses.

Significance of the Study

The ECHS opportunity offers many outstanding benefits as well as many unique challenges. One such challenge centers around how to keep ECHS students safe on college and university campuses. Little empirical research exists that addresses the reality of college campus violence and its potential impact on ECHS students. Data from the U.S. Department of Education reported in 2004 that there were nearly 72,000 criminal offenses committed on college campuses. By 2007, there were more than 51 murders reported on college campuses (U.S. Department of Education). By several accounts, this number greatly understates the harsh reality of crime on U.S. campuses (Hughes, White, & Hertz, 2008). As more students enter ECHSs, the need to address their safety on college and university campuses will also grow. For this study, there are several key terms that are critical to understanding the connection between ECHS student safety and the college campus environment.
Definition of Terms

- **Aggravated assault** - Attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether or not an injury occurs, and attack without a weapon when serious injury results (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2014).

- **Bullying** – Any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

- **College** - a school that offers courses leading to a degree such as a bachelor's degree or an associate’s degree (Webster’s, 2010).

- **Crime** - Any violation of a statute or regulation or any act that the government has determined is injurious to the public, including felonies and misdemeanors. Such violation may or may not involve violence, and it may affect individuals or property (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2014).

- **Early College High School (ECHS)** – schools located on the campuses of two and four year colleges and universities with a goal of serving predominately first generation and students underrepresented in the college population. The ECHS goal is to ensure that all students graduate with a high school diploma and up to two years of transferable college credit or an associate’s degree (Edmunds et al., 2010).
• **First generation college student** – students who are the first in their family to attend college (Jobs for the Future, 2008).

• **Safety** - freedom from harm or danger: the state of being safe (Webster’s 2010).

• **Sexual assault** - A wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include attacks or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between the victim and offender. Sexual assault may or may not involve force and includes such things as grabbing or fondling. Sexual assault also includes verbal threats (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2014).

• **Sexual harassment** - Unsolicited, offensive behavior that inappropriately asserts sexuality over another person. The behavior may be verbal or nonverbal.

• **Threat** - someone or something that could cause trouble, harm, etc. (Webster’s, 2010).

• **University** - a school that offers courses leading to a degree (such as a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree) and where research is done (Webster’s, 2010).

• **Violence** - the use of physical force to harm someone, to damage property, etc. (Webster’s, 2010).

**Overview of Approach**

The research method used for this study was case study research. I conducted case studies including three principals (one retired) and ECHSs in the southeastern part of the United States. I conducted an online school safety survey. I facilitated in-depth principal interviews, a counselor interview as well as site visits. The multi-site case study allowed me to compare processes and data results throughout the case study.
Organization of the Study

The coming chapters highlight my review of various literature, studies, and theories related to early college design and purpose; administrator decision making; K-12 school safety; and college campus safety. Specific methods are also explained in Chapter 3 relating to case study design; survey distribution and collection; site selection and sample, data collection, validity, reliability, bias, ethical issues, and study limitations.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Early College Design and Rationale

To help grow a more competitive workforce, the primary target student group for ECHSs is low-income and first-generation college students (Hoffman & Vargas, 2010; Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013). The term first generation means that the student’s parents do not have a college degree. The overall goal of the ECHS is to level the playing field for students who may not have had an opportunity to attend college. Therefore, according to Hoffman and Vargas (2010), ECHSs are housed on a community college or university campus to allow increased access to the college experience for groups that are underrepresented in the college going population. Under this model, students have an opportunity to successfully complete college courses while still in high school. To gain admission to an ECHS, students apply to the program and then are randomly selected by a lottery system (North Carolina New Schools, 2013). The overarching goal is that “all students will graduate with a high school diploma and two years of university transfer credit or an associate degree” (p. 3).

The Early College High School Initiative began in 2002 with funding, in part from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The goal of the initiative was to assist low-income, first-generation students, students of color, and English Language Learners to have access to institutions of higher education (Jobs for the Future, 2014). With the assistance of the Early College High School Initiative, more than 250 schools combine high school and college have been created or redesigned by 13 partner organizations. The partnerships and collaborations have led to a national early college movement over the past 13 years (Jobs for the Future,
During the planning stages for ECHSs, each school is expected to undergo at least a year of intensive partnership planning and development. The new early colleges are designed to be vastly different from the traditional high schools and they come with a greater array of support and expectations as well. According to Jobs for the Future (2014), ECHSs must incorporate the following key design features:

Aligned curricula and instruction – An instructional framework that is coherent and aligned to college-ready standards, with instructional practices that are consistent across all content areas and establishes a strong college-going culture and prepares students for postsecondary success.

- Personalization and student supports – Learning environments that are student-centered and permute personalization, engagement, and close relationships among students and staff, with assistance based on assessments that identify the needs of each individual.

- Power of place – ECHSs are located on or near college campuses and draw on that environment to enable high school students to experience real college coursework and build their identity as college goers.

- College credit – Students earn a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit simultaneously – tuition free.

- Partnerships – Strong college partnerships foster shared responsibility for student success, with collaboration on the development of academic programs that meet secondary and postsecondary standards and provide appropriate student supports. (p. 14)
In states that have actively expanding early college programs, such as Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, the ECHS design features have been incorporated in a manner that works best for the needs of the students in that state. For example, in North Carolina, the ECHS key design features have been incorporated as follows:

- **Ready for College** – Each school is expected to prepare students for college, careers, and life.
- **Require Powerful Teaching and Learning** – Each innovative high school will have high standards for high quality teaching.
- **Personalization** – Educators understand that knowing students well will help them succeed academically.
- **Redefine Professionalism** – Staff will share the school’s vision, maintain collaborative and leadership roles, and take responsibility for the success of each student.
- **Purposeful Design** – The innovative high school design will create conditions that support the success of the other four Design Principles. The organization of time, space, and resources will support the daily incorporation of best practices. (p. 2)

The implementation of these design principles is regularly monitored with a variety of assistance protocols such as instructional guidance via an academic coach, required NCNSP workshops that are attended by all staff members at various times, NCNSP funding that assists with supplies and staffing, and review team observations and interviews with feedback sessions that are designed to promote continuous improvement. According to NCNSP (2005), the development of the guiding principles that govern the establishment of a
foundation for successful early and middle college programs was developed by The Middle
College National Consortium. The principles are vital to each school regardless of local
circumstance or context. Also, in 2005, according to NC New Schools Project (program
name was officially changed), the rationale to increase the opening of more early colleges
was based on the following:

1. Four out of every ten North Carolina high school students do not graduate from high
school;
2. Fewer than half of students going to college complete a two or four year degree
within six years;
3. High schools have not kept pace with our rapidly changing economy;
4. Today’s knowledge economy values the ability to create, process information, and
perform high level skills; and
5. Our efforts are designed to raise the high school graduation rate and to create new
schools that help all students graduate as strong citizens ready for college and work.

(p. 1).

Therefore, in 2005, North Carolina opened the state’s first 13 early colleges. Since
that time, as illustrated in Figure 2.1, the state has led the nation by increasing its ECHS
numbers from 13 in 2005 to 77 in 2013-14. North Carolina ECHSs boast a combined student
population of 15,000 students in 71 counties and districts (North Carolina New Schools,
2013).
It has been suggested in some studies that ECHS students, when it comes to postsecondary studies, have a greater likelihood of pursuing higher educational opportunities and performing well (Morrison, 2008; Windham, 1996). A report by North Carolina New Schools (2013) supports the findings of the SERVE Center study at UNC-Greensboro. The current eight-year-study compares the progress of more than 2,000 ECHS students to students who enrolled in other schools. The study found that ECHS students outperformed the control group in all major categories including graduation rates, post-secondary enrollment, college completion, and positive educational experiences. Specifically, with graduation rates, 74% of ECHSs with graduating classes in 2013 achieved graduation rates of 95% (62 schools) and 25 schools had 100%.
ECHS Location and College Campus Violence

The location of ECHSs on college and university campuses and the collaboration between college and school administrators, enables high school students to attend college classes and experience college life early on (Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013). On the other hand, the location of ECHSs on college campuses opens the door for increased high school student exposure to the adult crime and violence that occurs in these settings. A caution highlighted by Hughes, White, and Giles (2008) states the increase in university administrator efforts to enact legislative change have done little to stop college campuses from becoming risky for students in areas ranging from misconduct to murder. However, when addressing these concerns, with policy selection and implementation, college administrators do so with the traditional adult student in mind. Therefore, unlike their traditional high school peers, ECHS students typically will not have the same level and type of safety measures on a college campus. With the events of campus crime being on the increase, I used a school climate model and decision-making model to examine a framework for addressing the research questions.

School Climate Theory

The school climate theory emphasizes that the relationships and interactions between students, administrators, and teachers at each school come together to create a unique school climate. That climate is composed of its own set of rules, social systems, and culture that is unlike any environment outside of school (Anderson, 1982; Welsh, 2000). A study of school climate theory by Stewart (2003) revealed that a school is only able to control student behavior to the degree that the physical, social, individual, and cultural environments are
controlled. Therefore, when a school’s social climate reflects an atmosphere of community and respect with shared values and beliefs, incidents of student disorder will be lower. In other words, the more students have positive connections, school activity involvement, and belief in school rules the less likely they are to become involved with delinquent behaviors (Payne et al. 2003; Stewart, 2003; Welsh, 2000, 2001) and victimization (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2010; Payne et al. 2003; Tillyer, Fisher & Wilcox, 2011; Welsh 2000, 2001).

In a research study including 254 secondary schools focusing on victimization by threats, physical attacks, theft by force, and theft Gottfredson et al. (2005), found that students who perceived the rules as being fair and clear had a lower incidence of victimization. In addition, Gottfredson et al. (2005) also found that student composition had an impact on victimization. Specifically, schools with more males, economic disadvantaged, and African Americans had high levels of victimization and delinquency.

Over the last 15 years since the massacre at Columbine, the growing emphasis on student victimization in school has taken center stage. The fear of parents and school officials concerning student safety has merit because students are at the greatest risk of becoming victimized close to or inside their schools (Roberts et al. 2010). Keeping this in mind, it is important to look at school climate as it relates to ECHSs. The climate created by both the school officials and their college partners will have a major impact on student safety as they transition from high school to college environments on campus throughout each day. Therefore, the decisions that are made by ECHS administrators and their college partners will play a significant role in the climate that is created, how students perceive their school climate, and if the ECHS students are victimized within their school or not.
Decision Making Process: An Action Cycle

It is likely that many action cycles in the decision-making process will occur at the same time (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The action cycle occurs in a series of steps that may overlap, periodically revert to previous steps, and/or occur simultaneously. The decision making action cycle steps are:

1. Recognize and define the problem or issue
2. Analyze the difficulties in the existing situation
3. Establish criteria for a satisfactory solution
4. Develop a plan or strategy of action
5. Initiate the plan of action
6. Evaluate the outcomes (p. 6).

The degree to which early college administrators consciously or subconsciously utilize these steps could determine the level of success they achieve in obtaining authentic safety protocols that address the majority of dangers that ECHS students face each day. In addressing the first and perhaps the most important step, administrators should first consider what dangers actually exist on their specific campus. Do the school’s unique qualities warrant the selection and implementation of safety protocols above and beyond the status quo? Before going deeper into these questions, it will first be necessary to take a look at the basic set up of the ECHS in addition to the traditional implementation of safety protocols at both the high school and college levels.
Significance of Selecting and Implementing Safety Protocols

In the ECHS, there exists the unique combination of having students as young as 13 years old on an open college campus with adults. Therefore, in addition to the normal transitional issues of being a first-time high school student, these young students are also experiencing the transition to college life. It is up to ECHS administrators and their college partners to select and implement safety protocols that address the specific and unique needs of ECHS students on the college campus. This will ensure that every ECHS student reaches his or her full potential in a safe and secure environment.

School Safety and Court Rulings

Violence in the United States is increasing. This increase is often reflected as violent behavior among young people, which oftentimes spills over into the public schools (Yell & Rozalski, 2000). Over the past several years, in an effort to make schools safer, lawmakers have passed expectations to individual states to quell the upward trend and presence of crime in educational settings (Yell & Rozalski, 2000). In 2006, Torres and Chen conducted a study analyzing the impact of the Columbine High School shooting. They highlighted the increased sensitivity to school crime and violence that moved across the country. This has been referred to as the “Columbine Effect” (Cloud, 1999). Following the aftermath of Columbine, many schools instituted search procedures to protect students from potential crime and violence (Beger, 2002).

In three landmark rulings, occurring both before and after Columbine, the Supreme Court upheld the latitude that school officials need to counter threats to student safety (Torres & Chen, 2006). In New Jersey v. T.L.O (1985) and Veronica School District v. Acton
(1995), the rulings directly impacted the way school administrators may respond in an effort to maintain student safety while also protecting the rights of students. In the TLO case, two female students were taken to the vice principal’s office after a teacher caught them smoking cigarettes in the restroom. The vice principal then searched one of the girl’s purse and found marijuana, a pipe, cigarette rolling papers, a large amount of money, two letters related to marijuana dealing, and a list of students who owed money to TLO. The parents of the girls were contacted and the evidence from the investigation was turned over to the police. A New Jersey juvenile court classified TLO as a delinquent teen. However, the parents appealed the decision because the school’s search was conducted without a warrant which made it illegal under the Fourth Amendment. The juvenile court decision was reversed by the New Jersey Supreme Court on the grounds that the vice principal’s search was conducted without a warrant and was therefore illegal.

The findings in TLO served as a framework for two other Supreme Court rulings involving the Fourth Amendment and schools. The first case is Verona School District v. Acton (1995). In the Verona School District v. Action case (Verona), an Oregon school district was experiencing a significant increase in drug use and disciplinary infractions among students. School officials determined that the instigators of the increased negative behavior were student athletes. Various interventions were implemented such as public meetings and educational programs, to no avail. Therefore, with community support from parents, school officials implemented a drug-testing program for all student athletes. Under the new policy, student athletes and their parents were required to sign a drug-testing consent form. If the form was not signed, the student was not allowed to participate in any school
sports. When a seventh grade student, James Acton, refused to sign the form, he was not allowed to play football. His parents sued the school claiming that their son’s constitutional rights had been violated. The U.S. Supreme Court heard the case in 1995 and ruled in favor of the school’s drug testing policy (Yell, 2000). The Court referred to its decision in TLO, where it determined that the Fourth Amendment required that the rights of an individual student must be weighed against the need for school officials to maintain the safety of all students. Therefore, students in school do not have the same rights of privacy as adults in the general population (Yell, 1998).

The second case impacted by TLO is Board of Education v. Earls (2002). School district leaders in the city of Tecumseh, Oklahoma implemented the Student Activities Drug Testing Policy. The Policy mandated all middle and high school students to consent to drug testing prior to being permitted to take part in any extracurricular activity. In addition, while participating in a school activity, students also had to agree to random drug testing as well as specific drug testing if the school had reasonable suspicion. Lindsay Earls, a student in her school’s show choir, marching band, the Academic Team, and the National Honor Society filed suit along with a fellow classmate, Daniel James. Daniel was planning to participate in the Academic Team. Together, the students and their parents stated that the policy violated their Fourth Amendment rights. They also stressed that the school system had not demonstrated that there was a specific need, based on evidence, for testing students who participated in extracurricular activities (Earls, p. 827).

In the Earls (2002) Supreme Court ruling, Justice Thomas discussed the pressing need for the state to take action in addressing the concerns surrounding student drug use that is still
present in schools today. Just as in the two previous cases, the Court upheld the philosophy that school officials be afforded the necessary flexibility to intercept elements that may pose a threat to student safety.

In a later decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the principles of the Fourth Amendment stating that illegal searches applied to adults and students alike. However, the Court also clarified that the right of student privacy must be weighed in conjunction with the necessity of school administrators and teachers to maintain an orderly and disciplined school environment. Therefore, schools would not be required to obtain a search warrant before conducting a student search. However, the standard of probable cause would have to be satisfied. In schools, the standard of reasonableness, instead of the stricter probable cause rule used by police, implies that any reasonable person would come to the conclusion that there is cause to suspect illegal activity. Therefore, along with the illegal activity, accompanying evidence will be found before a search is conducted (Yell & Rozlaski, 2000).

To define the expectation of reasonableness and legal validity for school officials prior to conducting a search, the Court instituted a two-part test. The two parts of the search determination test that must be satisfied are: (a) the search must be justified at the beginning and (b) the search must be related to violations of school policies or rules. The search must be conducted as a result of the presence of legitimate suspicion. A search may be justified based on a variety of reasons which include but are not limited to anonymous tips, phone calls, student informers, police tips, and student behavior that is out of the ordinary (Yell, 1998).
The Impact of Bullying

Another school safety issue that has many legal implications is bullying. Students who are bullied in school are greatly impacted in terms of their psychological and emotional well-being. Some students who are victimized by bullies resort to suicide or lashing out at the bully as a means to protect themselves (Essex, 2011). On a daily basis, thousands of students across the country are victims of bullying. Many students begin to dislike school altogether because of the teasing and degrading treatment they will suffer from because of bullies (Kuther, 2005). The four main forms of bullying include: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber (threatening or aggressive social network postings or texts) (Wang et al. 2009).

Compounding the growing epidemic of bullying is that numerous incidents are not reported. According to one study (Petrosino et al. 2010), a great detriment to addressing the bullying problem in public schools is underreporting. When incidents of bullying are not reported it gives school leaders a false sense of the safety of their schools and does not allow them to adequately address student safety concerns within their buildings. In the incidents of indirect bullying (DeVoe and Daffenberger, 2005), which includes purposely being left out or experiencing the spread of hurtful rumors, student reporting is low because they may not view those behaviors as bullying or they do not believe that the school would address it as bullying (Unnever and Cornell, 2004).

A pressing issue that public school leaders need to address with bullying relates to teachers not taking acts of bullying seriously. Cohn and Canter (2003) pointed out that 25 percent of teachers do not see bullying as a major offense and only step in to help bulling victims in 4 percent of cases. In addition, over two-thirds of students feel that their school’s
response to bullying is ineffective and poorly executed. These feelings may be especially true among the students who are victimized most often by bullies. These students are often times anxious overly careful, unsure of themselves, physically weaker than their peers, and have low self-esteem, which often prevents them from defending themselves from bullies (Hawker and Boulton, 2000). Also, victims of bullying oftentimes experience a multitude of ailments such as headache, stomach ache, depression, and psychological stress (Essex, 2011).

In several cases, bullied students resort to suicide to escape their torment. For students between the ages of 10 and 24 across the nation, suicide is the third leading cause of death (Murphy et al. 2012). In fact, research studies have pointed to bullying as a great factor in influencing the increase of suicide among adolescents (Klomek et al. 2010). Students who experience bullying as children or adolescents are more likely to attempt suicide as an adult (Meltzer et al. 2011) and are more likely to die by suicide by age 25 (Klomek et al. 2009). Another study found that students who are bullied are four to eight times more likely to kill themselves than students who are not victims of bullies (Fox et al. 2003). In addition to suicidal thoughts and behaviors, a study by Litwiller and Brausch (2013) found that both physical bullying and cyber bullying influence students’ involvement with substance abuse, violence, and unsafe sexual behavior. Moreover, the Secret Service documented that nearly two-thirds of the attempted and completed school shooting attackers were victims of bullying (Vossekull et al. 2002). As a result of these events, lawsuits have been filed against districts and schools for failing to keep bullied students safe (Dawson, 2006; Martindale, 2009).

Because the academic and personal cost of bullying is so great for student victims, it is imperative that administrators and teachers realize that they have both a moral and a legal
responsibility to protect students from intimidation and threats during the school day as well as during after school activities (Essex, 2011). School employees may be held liable for a tort when their lack of action causes injury to a student. A tort is an actionable of civil wrong committed against one person by another independent of contract. Thus, if an injury occurs because of the actions of school employees, liability charges may be filed. Liability may be the result of deliberate act of teacher and administrators or acts of negligence (Essex, 2011). To that end, a majority of states have passed anti-bullying laws (Associated Press, 2009). The vast majority of anti-bullying laws require districts and schools to create and implement conduct codes that forbid bullying specifically, incorporate strategies that address bullying, and report all bullying incidents to the state education agency (Petrosino et al. 2010).

**Public School Crime**

Since the tragic school shootings in 1997-1998 where student shooters left 12 dead and another 47 wounded (Derzon et al. 2011), the nation’s students have become increasingly concerned about their own safety at school. A study from 2007 reported that of the American school students between the ages of 12 and 18 nearly, 1.5 million were victims of nonfatal crimes at school, including both theft and violent acts. This school crime rate remained stable between 2004 and 2007 (Dinkes et al. 2009). Moreover, in 2007, for the first time in 15 years, the rates of violent crimes against students were higher in school than outside of school (Robers et al. 2010). Immediately afterwards, during the 2007-2008 school year, 85 percent of public schools reported at least one crime was committed at school (Roberts, Zhang, & Truman, 2010). As a result of higher school violence and crime rates, students exposed to these activities at school are more likely not to be engaged at school and
to have diagnosed mental and emotional disorders than their counterparts who do not experience a high level of violence or crime at school (Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Flannery, Westen, & Singer, 2004; Furlong & Morrison, 2000; Janosz et al. 2008; Morrison, Furlong & Morrison, 1994).

By comparison, public school crime data from 2011 does not show much improvement. In 2011 a national survey revealed that students between the ages of 12 and 18 experienced about 1,246,000 nonfatal victimizations at school, including 648,600 incidents of theft and 597,500 incidents of violence such as simple assault and serious violence. In terms of fatal school violence, student deaths accounted for 31 violent school-associated deaths such as homicide or suicide (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2012). According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (2011), students between the ages of 12 to 18 experienced more victimizations at school than away from school. Specifically, as mentioned above, students experienced 1,246,000 nonfatal victimizations at school, but away from school students experienced 965,200 nonfatal victimizations.

When it comes to specific types of threats and victimizations that students experience at school, the list can range from name calling to murder. The issue of school violence and how to best address it continues to be an ongoing concern for students, parents, and school staff. In 2011, seven percent of the nation’s 9th through 12th graders confirmed being threatened or injured, while at school, with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2012). For this same time period, for students age 12 to 18, nearly 18 percent reported that gangs were present at their school. Within the surveyed age groups, a higher number, 23 percent of urban students reported gangs at school compared to
16 and 12 percent of suburban and rural students reporting school gang presence respectively.

The 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed that 26 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug at school during the 12 month period prior to the survey. In terms of gender differences within this same population, the instances of illegal drugs being offered, sold, or given to them on school property was 29 percent for males and 22 percent for females. During that same time period, about 19 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 stated they had used alcohol anywhere at least 1 or 2 days during the last 30 days. In comparison, 3 percent of students confirmed using alcohol at school on a least 1 or 2 of the preceding 30 days.

**Students’ Perceptions of Unsafe Schools**

The fallout from the many incidences of school violence will come at a great cost to students across the nation. Unsafe schools come at a great price in terms of decreased student grades, attendance, and participation in extracurricular activities. School safety concerns also contribute to an increase in avoidance of school, fear, misbehavior, and posttraumatic stress (Hilarski, 2004). If school leaders are going to adequately address these issues, first they must understand the factors that contribute to students’ perceptions that their school is unsafe (Hong and Eamon, 2012). In their research study, Hong and Eamon use Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) model of ecological systems to study student’s perceptions of safety surrounding their school environment. According to the model, the interactions of several personal characteristics in the student’s immediate setting (such as home and school) impact his/her perception of safety within the school. The model’s personal characteristics include the
student’s socio-demographic characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, and gender) and family (marital status, parents’ education, and income).

The first example of the ecological systems model can be seen with the impact of race on students’ perceptions of safety. Generally, Black and Hispanic students tend to perceive their schools as less safe than White students. This is primarily because there are increased risks of victimization, involvement in fights, and the presence of gangs at school (Bachman et al. 2010). In a 2003 study, Schreck and Miller discovered that Hispanic students had greater fears related to theft, assault, and robbery at school while Black students had a greater fear of robbery at school instead of assault. White students appeared to have lower concerns about these violent acts at school.

In terms of gender differences, male students have a greater risk of experiencing violence or being threatened at school (Dinkes et al. 2009). Female students, on the other hand, are targeted more for gendered harassment and sexual victimization and tend to be less confident about being able to defend themselves (Meyer, 2008). That in turn, makes female students more likely to view their school as dangerous. One school safety study found that male students who did not have a close relationship with their parents (felt their parents did not care about them) were more likely to fear being victimized at school (Wallace and May, 2005).

As it relates to school and classroom order, research by Akiba (2008) illustrates that when a school has poorly managed, disorderly classrooms, students tend to have greater fears of experiencing school violence. Conversely, when schools are orderly and rules are enforced, White students (however, not Black students) do not feel as afraid at school.
(Bachman et al. 2010). However, a study by Akiba (2008) revealed that all students felt more protected and less threatened by school violence when they perceived that teachers cared about them and made them the focus of their lessons and classroom interactions. This simple but powerful act of demonstrating care and concern for students seemingly has a greater impact than the low positive effect of formal school safety measures such as security guards, hallway supervision, and locker checks (Kitsantas et al 2004).

**School Climate and Student Safety**

According to Gunzelmann (2002), understanding school climate is the key to understanding the problems in schools that threaten student safety. As pointed out by Peterson and Skiba (2001), the positive and negative feelings regarding school environments are reflected in school climate. This, in turn, may have a direct or indirect impact on learning outcomes. To obtain a full understanding of a school’s safety concerns as related to its climate, the viewpoints of all stakeholders must be considered (Gunzelmann, 2002). This includes administrators, teachers, school psychologist, school counselors, community members, parents, and students. At the top of her list of essential elements for a safe, healthy school climate Gunzelmann includes:

1. An administration that is strong and concerned with an open-door policy.
2. Alignment between school practices and the mission of the school.
3. Students with a desire to go to school.
4. No tolerance of violence or bullies.
5. A high level of optimism.
The research of several scholars (Battishtich et al. 1995; Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1994) revealed that many school safety policies focus on increased student control and supervision (searches, security, metal detectors); however, creating a more positive school environment by building a sense of community and belonging could be more effective in reducing school violence. In schools with a close community, the climate is positive; students communicate well with each other; and support the school’s expectations as a group. An increasing body of literature points to the school environment as a critical factor in influencing student success, well-being, and sense of order (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2010; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985; Gottfredson et al. 2005; Lee, 2010; Sapouna, 2010; Stewart 2003; Welsh, 2000).

Research has illustrated that relationships with adults is one of the most influential factors in positive student development (Steinberg et al. 1992). To that end, in the classroom setting, research has also found that teachers who use an authoritative parental guidance approach have a positive impact on student success (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Walker, 2008; Wentzel, 2002). Within the school setting, the authoritative approach incorporates high expectations and stern enforcement of school rules as well as a genuine demonstration of warmth and caring for each student’s well-being (Gregory et al. 2010). Furthermore, Gregory and Weinstein (2008) revealed that when African American students with discipline concerns perceived that teachers genuinely cared for them and maintained high academic expectations, the students were more accepting of the teachers’ authority. Moreover, Irvine (2002) found that teachers who had the qualities of being both warm and demanding while Vasquez (1988)
found that teacher who were compassionate disciplinarians were more effective at building trusting relationships with minority and low-income students.

Gregory and Cornell (2009) proposed in their formulation and study of the theory of authoritative school discipline, both structure and support had to be effectively used together to sustain a safe and orderly school climate. Therefore, students are more likely to seek adult help when they think their teachers are concerned (Unnever & Cornell, 2004; Wilson & Deanne, 2001). When students engage in help seeking behaviors, school safety increases because victims, such as victims of bullying, are less likely to be victimized again (Ladd & Ladd, 2001; Smith, Talamelli & Cowie, 2004). Also, there is a positive correlation between caring teacher-student relationships and reduced use of weapons (Henrich, Brookmeyer, & Shahar, 2005) and lower negative behavior (Jessor et al. 2003). Overall, when students perceived that their teachers and other adults at school respect and care for them, they may be more inclined to follow school rules and directions from adults (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

In their study of school climate and how school-level factors explain differences in the likelihood of students being victimized in school, Zaykowski and Gunter (2011) found that students’ risks of victimization increased with their involvement in deviant behavior. They also found that minority students were more likely to be victimized than White non-Hispanic students; however, the overall victimization rate was higher in schools that were predominantly White. The research study suggested that schools may build positive communities by increasing school-sponsored extracurricular activities, athletic events, and partnership efforts to improve communication between students, teachers, and the community (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993). Zaykowski and Gunter (2011) argue
that schools should make an effort to build a sense of community by building strong relationships with partners who are willing to work with them to reduce school violence. One limitation of this study, and the other prior ones, was that it did not consider the various types of victimizations, including bullying or gun violence, to examine how school climate may impact or reduce those incidences.

**ECHS Student Transitions and Safety**

Throughout their school careers, students have many transitions: day care to elementary school, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school. For ECHS students, the transition from middle school to high school is compounded by the necessity and expectation that they will make two transitions all at once, or in a very short period of time. ECHS students first make the transition from middle school to high school (usually on a community college or university campus) then, within the next two years, they must transition again to becoming primarily a college student before graduating from high school.

The safety concerns that may come along with young ECHS students are compounded by their presence on an open college campus and the lack of social maturity they may have to successfully navigate that environment. According to Fromme, Corbin, and Kruse (2008), first-year college students often have limited supervision and increased opportunities to participate in risky behaviors such as alcohol use and casual sex. The ECHS student, even though still in high school and living at home, will experience many of the same experiences as a traditional first-year freshman. This is especially true if the ECHS
student aligns himself or herself with an older college peer group who may or may not know his or her true age or high school student status.

If these high school-aged students begin to engage in risky behavior as ECHS students, it is likely that the behavior will continue for some time to come. It is a premise of problem behavior theory that any problem behavior that begins in adolescence will continue to a great degree into young adulthood (Jessor, Donovan & Costa, 1991). In support of that theory, a study has shown that in the college community, students feel a greater perceived degree of anonymity where their drinking, drug use, and sexual behaviors may go unnoticed or detected by their parents and most of their peers (Wetherill & Fromme, 2007; Wetherill, Neal & Fromme, 2008). In addition, the risky behaviors of college students, in many cases, also lead to mental health issues.

Studies have revealed that students are less likely to have difficulty in college when they are exposed to interventions while still in high school (Ahern, 2009). For the ECHS students this means that exposure to interventions that will address their transition to college classes and college life must begin in middle school or during their first year of high school at the ECHS. It is critical that these interventions take place prior to ECHS students taking their first college class or intermingling with traditional college students, either academically or socially. The options for interventions, to be discussed later in this chapter, will give ECHS students the best opportunity to be successful students and wise decision makers on either a community college or university campus. ECHS student will be exposed to most of the same benefits and drawbacks as traditional college students. Therefore, it is critical to address their unique needs as high school students co-existing on an open college campus.
College Campus Safety

Nearly all college campuses are governed by a code of student conduct. These campus policies, second only to federal, state, and municipal laws, outline the expectations that require students to act respectfully while allowing the campus to remain free of bullying, intimidation, or violence (Amada, 2007). In 1998, Congress passed an updated version of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (Public Law 101-542). This revised law is known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Public Law 105-244) (Janosik and Gehring, 2003). This legislation was sparked from the tragic rape and murder of a female student at Lehigh University. The act mandates that all colleges and universities distribute a specifically defined security report to all current students and employees. The report must include campus crimes such as robbery, aggravated assaults, and sexual offenses (Figure 2.2).
When requested, colleges must provide a summary of their campus crime report to any student or employment applicant (Campus Crime Act, 1992). Therefore, the legislation allows parents and students to make more informed decisions (that include campus crime) when selecting a college or university. Also, it allows campus students and employees to make more informed decisions related to risk and personal safety (Janosik and Gehring,
In 2013, President Obama signed the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, or SaVE Act (SaVE) into law. This was done as a part of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (Carter, 2014). SaVE is an amendment to the federal Jeanne Clery Act that requires public and private colleges and universities to be more transparent about the scope of sexual violence on campus, enhances victim’s rights, outlines standards for conduct hearings, and provide campus educational programming aimed at prevention.

The Clery Act identifies eight types of crime that are required to be included in the Annual Security Report submitted by colleges and universities. This information must also be reported to the U. S. Department of Education (Campus Crime Reporting, 2015). The criminal offenses include:

- Criminal Homicide
- Forcible and Nonforcible Sexual Assault
- Robbery
- Aggravated Assault
- Arson
- Non-vehicle Burglary
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Arrest as well as Disciplinary Referrals for Drug or Liquor Law Violations
- Illegal Weapons Possession (p. 1)

A study by Janosik (2001) found student knowledge of the Clery Act as well as information contained in the required reports to be low. However, 25% of students did report that campus
programs, crime-related material, and services (See Figure 2.3) heightened their level of confidence in their police departments on campus.

School administrators must help increase student confidence on multiple levels to increase student safety while also increasing student coping skills, decreasing campus violence, and decreasing risky student behaviors that, in turn, may lead to violent acts. Data from the American College Health Association (ACHA) (2008) revealed that 34.1% of college students reported that stress was the primary barrier to their academic success. Also, 13.6% reported being in a relationship that was emotionally abusive while 18.4% reported experiencing feelings of depression. A U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2007) report stated that among the population of 18 to 24 year olds, 20.1% of them had used an illicit drug in the past month with nearly 60% of the same group revealed they had used alcohol. Furthermore, there is a growing use of energy drinks (one quarter of students on college campuses use it regularly) as cocktail mixers; this allows the user to feel more alert while also intoxicated. This behavior greatly increases the risk of alcohol-related incidents (O’Brien et al. 2008). These incidents include, but are not limited to, mental health crisis and acts of violence.
In comparing college and high school safety protocols, the processes selected and implementation methods used vary greatly. It is important to look at the differences between the two because ECHS students are governed by the policies of both institutions while they attend school each day on the college or university campus. For example, as highlighted in Figure 2.4, the majority of high school security measures focus on the control of physical access that outsiders have to the building and students such as locks on exterior doors, security cameras, randomized drug searches, and requiring employee ID badges (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). In addition, the use of lockdown drills are growing in popularity among the nation’s high schools (Higgins, 2008). With the majority of high schools being housed in one building, the lockdown procedure could be quite effective in
protecting students and school employees from a potential threat (Fox & Savage, 2009). In contrast, attempting to lockdown a college or university campus could prove to be nearly impossible due to the size and scope of the campus. Also, this type of procedure could be in contrast with the overall goal of any college or university to provide free flow and access to the open college campus atmosphere (Fox & Savage, 2009).

Figure 2.4: Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2011) data on public K-12 safety.

The College Mental Health Crisis

In the most serious threats to student safety, such as with school shooters, the majority of high school shooters lash out when they feel bullied or cast out by their classmates and/or teachers (Vossekuil et al. 2004). On the other hand, as pointed out by Fox and Savage (2009), shooters at the college level are typically graduate students who kill in
response to a perceived failure or extreme pressure to obtain an unreachable level of success. Understanding the possible school shooter issue is critical for ECHS students in particular, because they are not only exposed to their peers who may turn to violence, but they are also exposed to college adults who may turn to violence in the face of personal and/or academic failure. This revelation leads back to the important issue of mental health treatment and resources.

A study by the University of California revealed that graduate and international college students suffer from an extremely high level of stress which, in turn, makes them more susceptible to mental health difficulties (University of California Student Mental Health, 2006). After the Virginia Tech shootings that took the lives of 32 college students and faculty members, one third of the nation’s campus counseling centers added a minimum of one new employee, and an additional 15% increased their operating budgets (Farrell, 2008). Yet, these efforts are not nearly enough to meet the needs that exist. According to the International Association of Counseling Services, most colleges have a student-counselor ratio of 1,500 to 1. In addition, the numbers from 2007 reflect that the national average is nearly 2,000 to 1 (Farrell, 2008). As time passes, and the numbers of ECHS students grow on college campuses across the nation, the concerns related to mental health and student safety will only increase.

Gallagher (2009) revealed that college counseling centers refer 16% of the students they see for psychiatric evaluations. Also, 25% of the students that college counselors see are on medication for a psychiatric disorder. A report from the American college Health Association National College Health Assessment (2006) listed depression and anxiety as the
top two mental issues facing college students. The assessment also revealed that feelings of hopelessness within the past twelve months existed among 70% of women and 50% of men. When it came to thoughts of suicide, 10% of women and 9% of men had considered it on a serious level. In addition, 49% of students identified anxiety, stress, and depression as the main road block to being more successful in their classes (American College Health Association, 2006).

College students who have had violent experiences (fighting, stalking, and sexual assault) are likely to acknowledge mental health difficulties (Amar, 2006). With the young college population, the greatest concerns revolve around their mental health because of the significant influence it can have on their daily lives (Ahern, 2009). Conversely, one of the best ways to forecast student success is to assess their positive coping skills (Pritchard, Wilson, and Yaminz, 2007). Because college students rank nurses and health care officials highest on believability when it comes to health related resources ACHA (2008), they must be empowered to screen for risk and provide education on healthy lifestyles for students. This strategy is most effective when school administrators work with health care professionals to remove barriers to student participation in health assessment programs or courses. According to Bost (2005), included in the barriers are student fear, time limitations, trouble with communication, and not feeling a need to participate. The primary message here is that college students must be educated about the resources that are available to them and exactly how to use them (Cook, 2007). One such resource is the college counseling center.

The first problem that counseling centers need to address is adequate staffing. A lack of qualified staff translates to longer wait times for students who need to be seen right away
(Farrell, 2008). Likewise, college campuses also lack proper mental health follow up. Schuchman (2007) noted that regular follow up is critical after a student has been hospitalized in a psychiatric institution. Unfortunately, many schools do not offer this type of service due to a lack of staff and large caseloads (Wood, 2009). However, there are some promising programs being implemented across the nation.

To improve mental health services and awareness across nationwide, the Mental Health on Campus Improvement Act of 2009 was founded. The goal of this legislation is to improve access to services, increase outreach, and improve the identification process of at-risk college students (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2009). All members of the campus community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators should be aware of the exact steps to take if they think a student or staff member is in crisis (Kadison, 2004). According to Leubsdorf (2006), the Center for the Study of College Student Health is now located at Pennsylvania State University. College counseling centers nationwide are working together to compile a set of universal questions to ask student clients. This may lead to increased identification of students who may be in crisis (Leubsodorf, 2006).

Marano (2004) suggested that colleges offer for-credit courses to new students that provide information about services that are available while offering students the opportunity to discuss their social and psychological needs. Also, the author suggested that colleges defer admission for new college students (out of high school) for them to participate in service learning activities. This would give them a year to mature while making a positive impact and contribution to society (Marano, 2004). One drawback to this concept would be the push
back from parents and student who want to start earning academic college credits right away. Ultimately, students and parents may decide to pursue admissions at colleges and universities that do not have these constraints on their accumulation of college credits. This could be especially true of ECHS students who applied to their program as a way to get a head start on college. One other option could be to build a comprehensive service learning project into the ECHS program for credit. This would allow the younger ECHS students to learn the value of service learning while helping to build a strong school community with both their high school and college partners.

Communication, education, and intervention are particularly important when it comes to mental health resources because students are less likely to look for them. Even early interventions that are short-term can have a great impact because they can empower students with vital coping skills that help them with the stresses of college (Ahern, 2009). The most successful mental health intervention programs for adolescent college students include life skill training, health courses, behavior therapy, health and wellness training, sexual assault prevention, and coping strategies (Cook, 2007; Frydenberg, 2004; Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008). Other innovative strategies using technology have proven to be beneficial in promoting positive mental health. For example, Sole, Stewart, and Deichen (2006) reviewed a web-based triage system showed promise for providing educational information and advice to student who had specific health concerns. Other options may include use of the internet, social media, cell phone text messages, and promotional signage (Escoffery et al. 2005; Riley, Obermayer, & Jean-Mary, 2008; Ford and Torok, 2008).
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

For the purposes of this study, I used a two phase instrumental case study design to investigate how ECHS leaders and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of an instrumental design is to gain a better understanding of a theory or problem (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The goal of this two phase study was to find how ECHS leaders make decisions about and implement safety and security measures that address the presence of high school students on their open college campus. In phase one of the study, I created and distributed an electronic ECHS School Safety Survey to 76 ECHS principals (See Appendix F). First, the results of the survey were used to obtain an overall view of the major ECHS safety concerns on college and university campuses. Second, the survey results were used to identify potential principals and sites for in-depth case study interviews.

In phase two of the study, I conducted multiple interviews, site visits, observations, and document reviews. The case study questions were designed to first examine how ECHS leaders make decisions about and implement student safety protocols. Second, the study interview questions sought to ascertain what were the most common ECHS student incidents and security protocols used on college and university campuses. Then finally, the study looked at how the specific ECHS student incidents were addressed by school leaders and their college partners.
The Qualitative Approach

When studying an area where human decision making and judgment play an important role, it is critical that researchers select the method that will provide the greatest amount of insight and data. The data gathered will help reveal the rationale for decisions that are made and the impact that they ultimately have on people and their environment (Stake, 1995). In this study, the people were the ECHS leaders, the college partners, and students. The environments studied were the college campuses where ECHSs are located. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, qualitative methods were selected. The four major characteristics of qualitative research that supported this research study are:

1. Naturalistic – The researcher spent time conducting interviews and gathering data in the settings being studied;

2. Descriptive Data – Data collected in the study settings gathered information in a variety of ways (e.g. interviews, field notes, surveys, documents) to accurately and appropriately tell the story of the interviewees and study sites;

3. Concern with Process – Because this study specifically focused on how ECHS leaders and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols, it was critical to examine the factors that influenced those decisions (federal law, state law, local polices, and/or college policies) and the extent to which those leader decisions were effective.

4. Meaning – The research questions of this study were concerned with the ECHS safety decision making and implementation processes as well as participant perspectives
related to the decisions made and their ultimate outcomes. (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007, p.12)

When comparing qualitative and quantitative research methods, one must look at the purpose of the study. In their assessment of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) pointed out that quantitative methods are concerned more with statistical, hard data that are frequently used in psychology, economics, political science, and sociology. Also, quantitative research typically has stated hypotheses prior to initial research; uses data generated through counts and measures; works with large, randomly selected control groups; has detached, short-term relationships with study subjects; and uses inventories, indexes, computers and test scores as primary instruments and tools. The limitations of using this approach involve controlling outside variables and validity.

With qualitative research, according to Stake (1995), the approach uses fieldwork, soft data, narratives, and case studies, and is interpretive in nature. In addition, as with this study on ECHS safety, there is a focus on understanding the meaning behind participants’ actions and decisions as they relate to the specific study setting. Qualitative research is closely associated with the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, and education. Study goals include developing understanding, describing multiple realities, and developing sensitizing ideas through the use of descriptive data, documents, field notes, and narratives. Sample sizes are generally small and purposeful. Stake also emphasized that small sample sizes give researchers the opportunity to develop relationships with the study subjects that foster intense contact, build trust, and invoke empathy from the researcher to the subject.
Because of the close human contact, researchers using the qualitative method rely on tape recorders, transcribers, and computers. The data gained from this type of research is often ongoing, inductive, and is used to develop new models and themes.

**Research Questions and Rationale**

The pressure for schools to be innovative and successful while also implementing effective safety measures is stronger now than ever before. ECHSs are fast becoming major contenders in the education reform movement for their innovative design and higher graduation rates among underrepresented college-going populations. The location of ECHSs on college and university campuses and the collaboration between college and school administrators, enables high school students to attend college classes and experience college life early (Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013). On the other hand, the location of ECHSs on college campuses also opens the door for increased high school student exposure to crime and violence that occur in college and university settings. A caution highlighted by Hughes, White, and Giles (2008), states the increase in university administrator efforts to enact legislative change has done little to stop college campuses from becoming risky for students. My research will provide insight and add to a body of literature that has not been widely studied in terms of ensuring ECHS student safety on the college campus. As the numbers of ECHS students increase each year, so will the questions about how to best protect them in their educational environment.

The research questions for this study were intended to examine the possible link between ECHS leaders and their college partner decision making related to ECHS safety protocols on the college campus. Therefore, the specific inquiry becomes one of appropriate
fit between leadership decisions about ECHS safety protocols and actual student safety. The overarching research question was: How do ECHS leaders and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols? In addition, the following related questions were developed to address this research query in more depth:

1. How do ECHS principals balance state, district, and college/university policies when preparing safety protocols (Memorandum of Understanding, district policies, and State laws)?

2. How do ECHS principals apply school law and college/university policies when responding to specific incidents between ECHS students and traditional college students?

3. How do ECHS leaders navigate school laws and policies when communicating safety protocols to school stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, traditional college students, and college partners)?

Participants

Seventy six ECHS principals in the Southeastern part of the United State were asked via email to participate in an online ECHS School Safety Survey. Using the survey results, three principals (one retired) were selected for in-depth interviews and site visits. Two of the principals were veteran school administrators with several years of administrative experience in other schools. One of the principals was a young principal with less experience as an administrator and educator in general, in comparison to the two other principal participants. Each principal was interviewed twice to increase validity and conduct member checks. Following the principal interviews, rolling sample interviews were conducted with one
counselor and one teacher. The interviews covered the topics of campus safety protocols, communication, climate, and ECHS leader’s personal experiences (Stake, 1995).

**Site Selection and Sample**

Using the responses from the online ECHS Principal School Safety Survey, I selected three ECHS principals (one retired) for an in depth case study and site visits. All ECHS sites were located on a community college campus. This was not a cause for concern as the majority of ECHSs are located on community college campuses. Each study site met the following criteria:

1. Each study site was housed on a community college or university campus.
2. Each study site was at least five years old.
4. All ECHS students were enrolled in at least one college course with traditional college students by their junior year of high school.
5. At least 40% of the ECHS student body met at least of the target population criteria ECHSs were designed to serve such as first generation students and student groups underrepresented in the college population (minority; free and reduced lunch; English Language Learners).

Purposeful and criterion sampling were used to ensure that the study results supplied the best answers to the research questions. First, I purposely selected ECHS principals with several years of experience specifically at the ECHS level. Second, I selected one younger ECHS principal with less experience. This selection process enabled me to look for leadership differences in safety decision making that may have been influenced by
experience and/or other factors. Finally, I used rolling samples, from the first interviews, to expand the interviews to one ECHS counselor and teacher. I also used purposeful sampling by selecting study sites the Southeastern part of the United States where there is a higher concentration of ECHSs. I also used criterion sampling to increase study consistency. For example, each study site met the five criteria listed above.

With purposeful sampling particular subjects were chosen for inclusion because of their likelihood to contribute to the development of the growing theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Likewise, the basis of purposeful sampling stems from the assumption that the researcher wants to understand, discover, and gain insight and thus must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). The sampling for this study was also criterion based. In her discussion related to criterion based sampling, Merriam clarifies, “The criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases” (pp. 61-62).

In this study, each ECHS selected had been in existence for a minimum of five years and was housed directly on a community college campus. ECHSs located in a separate location, away from the college campus, were not selected. ECHSs at least five years old were selected because these schools had:

1. Worked with at least one group of students from their freshman to senior year;
2. Established a documented pattern of making decisions about and implementing safety protocols;
3. Had time to develop processes and norms related to ECHS leader and college partner communication;
4. Established and evaluated systems (formally or informally) that promote student safety and well-being;

5. Had time to utilize reflective practices in decision making that lead to improved campus safety for ECHS students.

The selected study sites had similar characteristics in terms of student demographics. By design, ECHSs are expected to target students who are underrepresented in at the college level. Those groups include minority students as well as students who are first generation college goers. First generation students are students whose parents do not have a college degree (NSP, 2007). For the study, schools that had at least 40% of their student population as minority or first generation identified were selected.

Selected study sites were located directly on a college campus as opposed to being housed in an off-campus location away from the campus. This criteria requirement allowed me to accurately compare sites and determine to what degree schools’ college campus locations impact ECHS student safety. Students at each selected ECHS were also enrolled in a combination of high school and college courses with traditional college adults. Under the ECHS model, this gave students the opportunity to graduate within five years with both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree or transferable college credits.

**Data Collection**

For phase one of the study, I sent a request for survey participation to 76 ECHS principals in the Southeastern part of the United States. I created an online ECHS Principal School Safety Survey and distributed it to the principals through the survey software, Survey Monkey. The online survey contained 10 questions related to the level of involvement ECHS
leaders have in making school safety decisions with their college partners; the level of influence that federal laws, state laws, local district policies and college policies have on their safety decisions; and the types of ECHS student incidents that cause the greatest concerns on their campuses. At the end of the online survey, participating principals were asked if they would want to be considered for an interview. Following the collection of survey responses, I selected three principals (one retired) for in-depth case study interviews. The survey data was collected and categorized based on respondent responses related to the frequency with which he/she participates in each ECHS safety process or procedure listed. Participants marked their responses for each question as daily, weekly, monthly, semester, yearly, or never. Responses were then categorized based on the percentage of responses for each question. Higher percentages indicated a higher level of safety decision making participation or safety concern for each question. The highest percentage areas were then categorized together into the three recurring themes that were revealed in the survey.

For phase two of the study, I used two open-ended, semi-structured interview guides to conduct two separate interviews with each principal. The first interview guide included five focus questions that gave me a general overview of each principal’s perceptions about the greatest safety issues on their campus. The focus questions also provided insight into the principal’s safety decision making; level of involvement with the ECHS and college partnership agreements outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); and campus level of staff training or professional development related to safety. The first focus question interview also allowed me to build a professional relationship with the principals and get to know them better as people as opposed to just knowing them as interview participants. This
focus interview guide was also used in the rolling sample interviews with the counselor and teacher (these participants were interviewed one time).

The second principal interview guide in phase two focused on gleaning more in-depth information about their decision making around safety laws and policies; safety communication processes with their community partners and other stakeholders; and safety related incidents between ECHS students and traditional college students. The second interview protocol will examined the processes used by the ECHS leaders and their college partners to decide on, implement, and evaluate safety protocols (Creswell, 2014). Finally, the second interview guide included one critical incident question where each participant recalled the events and outcome of their most significant campus event related to ECHS student safety. The counselor and teacher answered the critical incident question as well. The interviews from both phase one and two were transcribed. Then details were coded and categorized into dominant, recurring themes. Table 3.1 illustrates the alignment between the three primary research questions and the case study questions contained in the electronic Principal Survey, Focus Interview questions, and the Principal Interview questions.

During each site visit and interview, with participant consent, I recorded participant responses with a voice recorder. I made note of my observations before, during, and immediately after the visits. I captured information related to the surrounding community, the college campus, and overall feel and climate of the ECHS. My observations and/or follow up interview questions included how the participants felt about the climate of the school, the role they play in safety decisions, and the working relationship between the ECHS leaders and their college partners.
Throughout the interviews, I also reviewed documents and artifacts from each study site. The artifact reviews allowed me to gain greater insight about the emphasis placed on ECHS safety at each site, the climate of the school, and the strength of the partnership between the ECHS and their college partner. Artifacts reviewed included, student/parent handbooks, school websites, college websites; the school district code of conduct, college code of conduct, open house agendas, college campus safety reports, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement. Documents and artifacts were specifically reviewed with the lens of how they did or did not contribute to overall ECHS student safety on the college campus. With the exception of student handbook and code of conduct documents, the safety related information was limited.

The process of collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative study happens simultaneously. The first interview, the first observation, and the first document read, begins the analysis journey (Merriam, 1998). “It is an interactive process throughout that allows the investigator to produce believable and trustworthy findings” (p. 152). Data for this study was collected using a variety of strategies including surveys, interviews, field observations, and document analysis. As pointed out by Patton (1990), “By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings” (p. 244). As a means to approach the process holistically (Merriam, 1998), I used information obtained during interviews and observations to help guide my selection of the documents and artifacts analyzed for the study. Field notes from on-site visits also played a role in helping to paint the picture of the case study as it related to ECHS decision making regarding student safety; ECHS student
interactions in the college setting; and ECHS leader and college partner implementation of safety protocols.

Table 3.1: ECHS Safety Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Principal Survey Questions = SQ</th>
<th>Focus Interview Questions (principal, counselor, teacher) = FQ</th>
<th>Principal Interview Questions = PQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. How do ECHS principals apply school law and college/university policies when responding to specific incidents between ECHS students and traditional college students?</td>
<td>SQ – 8 SQ – 9 SQ – 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>PQ – 3 PQ – 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do ECHS leaders navigate school laws and policies when communicating safety protocols to school stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, traditional college students, and college partners)?</td>
<td>SQ – 2</td>
<td>FQ – 1 FQ – 5</td>
<td>PQ – 4 PQ – 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

I used various analysis strategies to produce the most accurate and thorough account of the surveys, interviews, field note observations, and document analysis. From the interviews, I used excerpts of the first-person narratives to provide accounts of how participants perceived their individual experiences and roles related to ECHS safety protocols. I used detailed descriptions to analyze the content of the interviews illustrating how they each relayed first-hand information relating to decisions about and implementation of safety protocols for ECHSs on their college campuses. The content of the surveys, interviews, field notes, and documents were analyzed for common themes and recurring patterns. The themes and patterns were then coded (labeled) to assist with the development of an emerging answer to the primary research question that asks how ECHS leaders and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols (Stake, 1995).

Using the recurring themes and patterns from the study data collected, categories and subcategories were developed. In an explanation of category construction Merriam retorts, “Devising categories is largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study’s purpose, the investigator’s orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves” (p. 179). The thematic categories developed came from a variety of sources including the participants, the researcher, documents and artifacts, and the literature reviewed. To best address the specific research questions, data categories were organized by topic. Documents and artifacts included student/parent handbooks; school and college websites; Memorandum of Understanding documents; open house/orientation
meeting agendas; school safety data; college safety reports; and school district and college
code of conduct policies.

Validity and Reliability

It is important that research conducted in applied fields, such as education, is
trustworthy because this type of research touches people’s lives (Merriam, 1998). Therefore,
in this study, I addressed internal validity by taking steps to ensure that the findings matched
what the participants actually say and perceive in the research setting. This was accomplished
by first using triangulation to cross check a variety of sources of data and using a variety of
methods to verify findings as they developed. Second, member checks were used during
phase 2 of the study to verify preliminary interpretations and data with the participants who
provided the information. As a third method, peer examination, during small group and
individual meetings, was used to seek input from colleagues as findings arose. Finally,
researcher biases was addressed by “clarifying the researcher’s assumptions, worldview, and
theoretical orientation at the outset of the study” (p. 205).

To address reliability, I provided a detailed account of data collection, category
creation, and decision making throughout the duration of the study. As emphasized by
Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research may best be thought about in terms of being
dependable and consistent in data collection and results. “The question is then, not whether
findings will be found again, but whether the results are consistent with the data collected,”
(p. 206). To further ensure reliability within the study, I provided a clear description of
participant positions and used triangulation.
In looking at the study generalizability or external validity, I will randomly sample from all of the principals who completed the online survey. Also, three early college principals were selected for the case study to allow for cross analysis of the questions and research procedures used. Finally, several other techniques were employed to increase external validity, including rich descriptions; typicality categories relating to early college goals; ECHSs unique in their design elements; college campus crime and safety protocols; and a multisite design using purposeful and criterion sampling (Creswell, 2014).

Subjectivity Statement

As an administrator at an early college, I have a vested interest in the study of ECHS student safety. Specifically, my experience over seven years at the ECHS level, has led me to question if ECHSs, located on college and university campuses, need to make decisions and implement safety protocols differently. In my experience, at first an ECHS counselor and then as an administrator, I have seen numerous situations where young high school students lacked the maturity to make sound decisions when placed in a traditional college setting. I have also witnessed ECHS students being sought out by traditional college students to develop friendships or relationships that were not in the ECHS student’s best interest. Finally, the college environment that serves thousands of adults, over whom the ECHS administration has no direct control, provides many opportunities for ECHS students to be exposed to adult crime and violence such as stalking, sexual assault, harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, hazing, intimidation, and gun violence. Of course, these events also happen in traditional primary and secondary schools; however, adults on college campuses could potentially have more access to drugs and weapons, and be more sophisticated in carrying
out acts of violence or harassment than the typical high school student. In many situations, the ECHS students’ age, lack of maturity, and lack of social savvy make them easy targets for traditional college adults or adult campus visitors who come and go on campus at will.

For the reasons mentioned above, it is important that ECHS administrators and their college partners remain diligent in selecting and implementing safety measures that will address the unique and growing phenomena of high school students who are also full-time college students. Many of the ECHS students may need to be monitored differently or more regularly to protect them from seen and unforeseen dangers (from themselves and/or others).

Therefore, in addition to the traditional expectations of any traditional high school administration, ECHS administrators and their college partners have several unique challenges and opportunities that include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring the safety of high school minors as they move about on a college or university campuses;
2. Effective sharing of limited space and resources from the safety standpoint;
3. Interpreting policy expectations and deciding “who is in charge” in various situations;
4. Determining where liability issues lie (or may arise) and how to minimize their impact on students; and
5. Developing trusting relationships that inform effective decision making and safety policy implementation throughout the school.

My position on the topic is that ECHS students are exposed to various safety concerns on a daily basis that do not exist at traditional high schools. The daily ECHS student exposure to traditional adult college students as well as numerous campus visitors alone is
cause enough to put some proactive safety measures in place. In fact, some colleges have programs that cater to adults who have had past legal troubles as a means to help them “get on their feet”. There has also been several cases of known sex offenders on college campuses. After all, there are no campus rules saying that sex offenders cannot frequent an open college campus. Therefore, it begs the question, how will those realities impact ECHS leaders’ and their college partners’ safety decision making and implementation processes?

Bias

On the subject of school safety, I have several biases. As a student I have experienced both excellent and mediocre educational environments when it comes to school safety. As a high school student and career college student (with a bachelors and two masters degrees), I have been a witness to, receiver of, and beneficiary of teacher and administrative apathy when it comes to issues of student safety and well-being. Administrators should have a passion for what they do as well as a genuine concern for all of the students they are in charge of each day. It is my strong belief that the most effective administrators know how to check their personal, negative biases at the door to be able to communicate with all students and staff from a position of mutual respect and consideration for them as human beings first. Once that is established, a safe and positive school climate will follow naturally.

As a teacher, I spent several memorable years learning my craft and honing my skills in the classroom. I believed then, and still believe today, that finding a way to connect with students (and staff) is extremely important. One of my primary objectives when first meeting my students was to impress upon them the importance of safety and mutual respect in the classroom. I promised them that I would be sure to give the same respect that I expected of
them. Our classroom was a haven for students where everyone was safe. Once that critical message and discussion was conducted, learning could take place every day.

As an administrator, I have had the pleasure of working with many outstanding administrators and college partners who have the best interest of the students and the school at heart. When it comes to issues of student safety, they have all been willing to take whatever steps were necessary to ensure a safe and secure campus for the ECHS students. On the other hand, there were times when the question came up as to what institution was “in charge” of a situation or should take the lead in an investigation. Over the course of several years, these questions have been worked out; however, as more and more ECHSs open, will these schools always have the luxury of making these decisions as they go along? The college partners at most ECHSs are accustomed to working with adults and managing behaviors of adults who are responsible for their own actions. On the other hand, high school administrators are accustomed to working with minors in high school; answering to the state and local Board of Education; and answering to the students’ parents in times of crisis. These can be tricky waters to navigate and should be discussed and planned out as much as possible in advance.

As I conducted my research, I was constantly monitor my interviewing, observational field notes, and document analysis to keep my biases in check. I was mindful not to superimpose my values and beliefs on the research participants. I was also careful not to judge, nor appear to judge, the responses or actions of the participants because the moment that judgment starts is the moment where trustworthy research stops. By doing these things, I was able to gain genuine insight into so many rich and powerful case study stories related to
ECHS safety. I also realized that my experiences were shared by others to a great degree and that much work needs to be done in the area of deciding upon and implementing safety protocols on the ECHS campus.

**Ethical Issues (IRB)**

During early research studies, many willing and not willing subjects were seriously injured (physically and/or mentally) in the name of science. Today, there are safeguards in place to compare the cost and benefits of research, measures to protect the rights of participants, and guidelines to ensure ethical considerations with the analysis and presentation of research findings (Diener & Crandall, 1978). In preparation for this study, I submitted the appropriate request forms to the IRB (Institutional Review Board) of North Carolina State University to obtain approval prior to beginning any research with study participants. Within this process, I thoroughly explained the purpose of the study, what was going to happen during the study, the expected duration of the study, the risks and benefits of participating in the study, and confidentiality. I also explained the specifics relating to compensation, providing contact information, and consent to participate. It was clearly stated that any participation in this study was voluntary. All study participants have a signed consent form on file (Creswell, 2014).

To protect participants from possible physical or emotional harm or inconvenience, I will traveled to the study sites at a times that were convenient for them. This allowed for maximum participant comfort while decreasing their emotional risks. In addition to alleviating personal risks, the names of the participants, their schools, or school locations were not used in the study.
The potential benefits of this study, both to the participants and to the field of education, are great. With the numbers of ECHS students on college campuses increasing each year, research that examines ways to make these sites safe will impact the daily work and decision making of districts, building administrators, college partners, counselors, teachers, students, and parents. Helping to provide answers that will impact reflective decision making among ECHS administrators and their college partners could increase overall school safety measures as well as students’ physical, mental, emotional, and academic well-being. All of these areas must be accounted for to have the maximum positive impact on student achievement.

Finally, in keeping with ethical expectations, I was properly trained to conduct this study. First, I conducted multiple levels of research during the completion of two previous Master’s Degree programs at North Carolina State University. I also completed all course work, including methods in advanced qualitative study and a dissertation proposal writing class at the Doctoral level. Finally, I successfully defended the proposal for this research study with my committee chair and committee members.

Limitations of the Study

During this two phase study, I conducted an online ECHS safety survey with 76 ECHS principals. The results of the survey were used to obtain an overall view of ECHS safety and to identify principals and sites for an in-depth case study. In phase 2, I interviewed three principals (one retired), one counselor, and one teacher. The goal of the interviews was to answer the primary research question of how do ECHS leaders and their college partners decide on and implement safety protocols. I recognized that the principal approaches to and
rationale for selecting and implementing various safety protocols could be large in number. In addition, the factors that influence these decisions could be internal, related to the strength of the partnership, staff and student training, and having a clear grasp on the needs of ECHS students in the college setting. The leadership’s safety decisions could also be external, related to state laws, school district policies, college policies, and requirements that may make administrative decision making challenging.

The accuracy of the information gained from the interviewees could have been limited by the openness and candor of the participant responses. Another possible limitation was that “respondents may feel their privacy has been invaded, they may be embarrassed by certain questions, and they may tell things they had never intended” (Merriam, 1998, p. 214). This would have been more likely with the younger ECHS leader participants. To minimize these limitations, I provided participants with the questions prior to the interview. All participants also had the ability to opt-out of or discontinue the interview at any time.

The type of study used, the case study, also had limitations. As illustrated by Guba and Lincoln (1981), “Case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (p. 377). The nature of case study research leaves the investigator “to rely on his or her own instincts and abilities throughout most of this research effort” (Merriam, 1998, p. 42). To lessen this limitation, I was purposeful in using triangulation and member checks following interviews, field note observations, and document analysis. In addition, as pointed out by Merriam (1998), the final research product may be too long, have too much detail, or be too involved for busy educators and policy makers to ready and put to practical use. To account for this limitation,
the study is organized and categorized in a way that school leaders and other interested readers may easily reference different sections of the study (and get relevant useful data from the outcome of the study) without the need to take hours to digest the purpose, methods, findings, analysis, or recommendations. Although a full reading of the study would paint the best picture, each section may also stand alone as a reference (depending upon individual school needs) for beginning those critical discussions related to ECHS student safety.

Researcher bias is also a potential limitation. Qualitative research is unique in part because of its allowance of the subjective perceptions and biases of the researcher as well as the participants in whatever is being studied (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). In other words, the multiple interpretations of reality that exist are being brought into the study through the view of the researcher. Then the researcher’s views interact with the views of the subjects in how they interpret the issue being studied. Finally, the conclusions of the study are the result of the researcher’s attempt to explain the views of the study participants (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, there is a vast amount of subjectivity in qualitative research. “Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being’s worldview, values, and perspective” (p. 22).

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter was to review the methodology that was used with this case study. Methods of data collection were explained. Concerns relating to case studies and validity and reliability were discussed along with the limitations of the study. For each methodology area, the specific steps taken to address the research concerns were also identified. The next chapter will discuss the findings from this study.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Early College High School (ECHS) administrators and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols that address the presence of high school students on open college campuses with traditional adult students. This study also examined the differences between college and ECHS (public school) safety protocols and if and how state law, school district, or college policies take priority in leader decision making. Finally, the study looked at how the differences in safety policies and protocols are addressed in ECHSs.

ECHSs are unique schools with unique safety needs. First, ECHSs have a targeted population, nontraditional location, and college specific educational goals. First, ECHSs focus on recruiting and retaining targeted student groups who are underrepresented in the college population and may not have an opportunity to attend otherwise. ECHSs seek to maintain a certain percentage of their student body who are first generation college students and/or fit into an underrepresented minority group (e.g., Black, Hispanic, socioeconomically disadvantaged, etc.). The term First Generation indicates that neither parent has a degree from a college or university.

Second, ECHSs are unique because of their nontraditional location. They are housed on or near a college campus where the enrolled students have access to both high school and college courses. The ECHSs are governed by a local school district. This includes school district employees, including the principal, counselors, and teachers. ECHS leaders are also supported in select daily operations by college or university partners such as a college liaison...
and campus police. ECHSs are also held to the same state laws, local laws, and district policies as other public schools. ECHSs are formed as a formal partnership between a local school district and a college or university within the same county. The high school-aged students on an ECHS campus typically share the college or university facilities. They also attend classes with traditional college or university adults; oftentimes beginning in grade eleven or earlier. ECHSs leaders must be diligent in identifying, communicating, and maintaining safety policies and expectations that will keep students safe because of the students’ proximity to and potential interactions with adult college students and other general campus visitors.

Finally, ECHSs are unique because of their college specific partnership. ECHS programs are housed on the campus of a local college or university to allow students multiple opportunities to take college level classes. Students graduate with a high school diploma and a college degree (typically an Associates of Arts or Associates of Science) or a varying number of college credits from the college or university. The overarching goal of the ECHS is for students to be college-ready and competitive in applying to and getting into a four-year college or university. In addition, many ECHSs offer certification programs where students may take courses to obtain a certification in a specific area to enter the workforce upon graduation.

The structure of the ECHS allows students to complete the majority of their basic high school graduation requirements within the first two years in the program. Then students spend their final years in the program primarily in college courses focusing on a degree, certification, or accumulation of select college courses. Each year students become more
emerged into college courses and have increased academic and social exposure to traditional college adults. ECHS students are specifically supported in the development of their skills in studying, note taking, test taking, writing, speaking/presenting, and collaborating with others. Many students graduate from their ECHS program with the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in their chosen four-year college or university. However, for some students, the ECHS experience is academically and/or socially overwhelming. Leaving them with a trail of low grades, poor decisions, and unfortunate experiences that could have been avoided. The decisions of ECHS leaders and their college partners must specifically address student safety as it relates to the presence of high school students on the college campus.

ECHS leaders must adhere to multiple policies and laws from two different institutions. ECHSs are governed by local school district policies, state laws, and federal laws. Additionally, ECHSs are also governed by the policies and practices of the college or university. In some cases the policies and practices related to high school and college campus safety are similar; however, in many cases, they are not. For example, policies related to inclement weather may be closely aligned while policies related to lockdown procedures may not be aligned at all. It is up to the ECHS leaders and their college or university partners to make sound decisions in the best interest of the students and the campus at large while also following federal laws, state laws, school district policies, and college or university policies.

Three ECHSs in the Southeastern part of the United States were included in this study. Three principals (one retired), one counselor, and one teacher participated in detailed interviews that addressed the topics of student safety and specific safety policies on the ECHS campus. Case study results were gathered from initial focus interviews, site
interviews, and relevant stories as told by each interviewee. Each principal participant was interviewed twice. In addition, the cases include researcher observations, field notes, and document reviews. The document reviews include an ECHS Memorandum of Understandings (MOU), public school district policies, college policies, college safety reports, student handbooks, and school websites. Interviews, observations, and documents were reviewed through the lens of student safety.

Principal Survey: Overview of Safety Practices and Policies at ECHSs

This study began with a survey of ECHS principals to gain understanding related to the general context and safety practices of ECHSs. The online survey was distributed via email via the Survey Monkey program. The survey was administered to 75 schools in the Southeastern part of the United States and 28% responded. Of the respondents, two schools were selected for in-depth case studies. Additionally, one retired ECHS principal was identified and became a participant in the study. This chapter reports on the findings of this study.

The purpose of the survey was to provide an overview of the school safety issues ECHSs face. Additionally, the survey identified sites for the second phase of the study. The survey asked nine questions related to ECHS student safety and the creation of school policies related to safety (See Table 4.1). For each of the first nine questions, respondents selected from answers that identified how often they had to address specific safety issues on their campus over the last school year (complete survey located in Appendix). The response options for the first nine questions were daily, weekly, monthly, semester, yearly, never. The survey concluded with two open-ended questions about ECHS campus safety.
Table 4.1: ECHS Principal Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Annually</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating (writing and/or publicizing) school safety policies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing (enforcing/interpreting) school safety policies</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation/Revision of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing school incidents or safety issues that brought about changes in the MOU</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing MOU safety policies that are not directly aligned with public school district policy for all schools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing conflicting public school policies and college policies on student safety and discipline</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in safety planning sessions/meetings with college/university partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing safety issues related to high school students being on an open college/university campus (i.e. communication with adults; monitoring student whereabouts; incidents with adults, etc.)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Participating principals identified how often they addressed or participated in each activity or safety question listed.
Incident Reporting Practices

Responses to questions nine revealed, by a narrow margin, that ECHS principals mainly defer to campus policy and report safety incidents involving ECHS students to the college or university campus police. Seven principals stated that campus police are their first line of communication on their campus with incidents involving ECHS students. One principal explained, “The campus police is always notified first and if the law needs to be called, they will make that determination. Campus police is our first point of contact.”

Another principal revealed the positive working relationship between the ECHS leadership and their college partners, “We have not had a situation where the two did not line up. We work very closely with campus police and student services to align with legal precedent and district policy.” In contrast, a principal revealed campus policy is a regular concern because of the, “Inability to keep younger community college students (esp. those with criminal records or high school dropouts) away from the early college building, facilities, etc.”

On the opposite end of the spectrum, six respondents revealed that they reported ECHS student incidents first to their assigned School Resource Officer (SRO). School SROs are members of local law enforcement who are assigned to select public schools (typically middle and high schools) by the local school district. One reason for the split in the response to question nine could be because all ECHSs do not have an assigned SRO. This is a practice that varies from district to district and state to state. One principal reported that the response would depend on the incident.
Major Policy and Legal Issues

Five principals identified ECHS student and college adult interactions/relationships as a primary concern. Specific incidents ranged from ECHS students having relationships with traditional college students to a female ECHS student engaging in a relationship with a college employee. One principal shared:

Several young men that had either dropped out or been suspended from a local high school enrolled in the community college’s adult program. They wanted to come up and “hang out” around my students and faculty and use the equipment that is owned by the community college and located right in front of our building. They continued to disturb classes – especially during testing week – and were NOT a good influence on our students. I was told that they were allowed to be there, because we are located on the college campus and they were college students.

One principal explained, “We monitor students travel to and from the college daily and ensure locations where [traditional college] students congregate are not frequented by early college students.”

Five principals also listed lockdown procedure alignment and clarification as a concern on their campus. In some cases, teachers did not have keys to classrooms and no one had the ability to lock outside doors. One principal also expressed concern over not having clarity about what to do with ECHS students and staff during a campus evacuation (i.e. bomb threats). The college or university adults are in a position to drive home or walk off campus to a safe location; however, ECHS students are the responsibility of the school. These circumstances could make leadership decisions problematic.
Principals also mentioned tracking students as a challenge. Two ECHS principals listed this area as their biggest concern. Specifically, principals were concerned about making sure that students are only in areas designated for ECHS students. In addition, there was a concern about ECHS students leaving the college or university campus without permission. This is a challenge because older college students could take ECHS students off campus.

Creating and Implementing ECHS Safety Policies

Principals identified a wide range of decision making experiences and involvement with their college or university partners. Responses to questions one through eight of the survey revealed that all ECHS principals, 100% of the respondents, play an active role in creating and implementing school safety policies. However, 33% never participate in safety planning sessions or meetings. This is a particularly noteworthy result because 90% of the principals reported having to address safety issues related to high school students being on an open college or university campus (e.g., communication with adults; monitoring student whereabouts; incidents with adults, etc.). While six principals report this as an annual occurrence, six also report it as a concern each semester.

Two principals revealed that they address monthly issues related to the ECHS students being on a college or university campus and five reveal that it is a daily concern on their campus. In addition, 67% of the principal respondents also had to address conflicting public school and college or university policies on a yearly, semester, monthly, or weekly basis. It could be that principals who have regular communication with their college or university partners about student safety policies and procedures also have to spend less time
addressing conflicting policies or procedures when an incident takes place. However, that specific comparison was not addressed by this study.

The majority of principals, 90%, reported playing an active role in the creation or revision of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU outlines the legal agreement between the local public school district and the college or university partner. Specifically, the MOU outlines the basic logistical and operational standards under which the ECHS partnership will operate. Eighteen of the principals participate in the document revision on an annual basis and one reported this as a semester review. For 43% of the participants, significant incidents related to student safety issues led to changes in the MOU. Therefore, nearly half of the principals in the survey have dealt with an incident or safety issue that was serious enough for the ECHS partners to formally address it in the written MOU.

In addition, 53% of the principals reported implementing MOU safety policies that were not directly aligned with their public school district policy for all schools. This is important because colleges and universities, where ECHSs are housed, have an open campus design, unlike their traditional high school counterparts where the campus is generally closed to and directive toward visitor identification and movement on campus. For the typical ECHS student, they come in contact with scores of adults, both students and non-students at the college or university, on a daily basis.

In summary, ECHS principals share unique challenges in the areas of addressing student/adult interactions and tracking student movement on campus. There is also an ongoing issue of addressing student safety concerns with state laws, school district policies,
and college policies. Specifically, school district policies and college policies are often not aligned because they were written to serve two different populations of students: one is for children and the other is for adults. Overall survey results revealed that 90% of principal participants deal specifically with safety concerns related to ECHS students being on a college campus. This data supports the idea that ECHSs and their leaders do face unique safety issues. The purpose of the case study is to extrapolate information from specific ECHS leader stories, researcher observations, and document reviews that will either support or refute the findings of the survey.

**Alliance Early College High School**

Alliance Early College High School (AECHS) is located in a rural area in the Southeastern United States. It is approximately a 90 minute drive from a major metropolitan city. AECHS is housed on the campus of the local community college that sits just on the outskirts of the small town nearby. The surrounding area is sparsely populated with a local industrial building that sits just across the street. The college campus is surrounded by large, open fields and dense wooded areas. About a mile in either direction are a few, older single home subdivisions. The homes are modest and well maintained. A few miles east of the campus sits a busy shopping center where the locals come to shop and eat in the nearby restaurants.

The AECHS building is located in a well maintained, modular building on the property of the community college. There is identifying signage in front of the building and it is in close proximity to the large college buildings with its own separate parking lot for faculty and students. The AECHS building is where all high school classes are taught.
Students must report to the designated early college building in between college classes to study, work on assignments, and eat lunch. There is a clear line of demarcation between the AECHS building and the community college buildings. Students are only permitted to be in the college buildings for class or academic meetings. They are not permitted to eat lunch or socialize in or outside of any of the college buildings. The students are also not permitted to go off campus for lunch. Traditional college students are not permitted in the AECHS building or parking lot for any reason. The administration and community college partners (primarily the college liaison and police department) work together to monitor for student location and adherence to the rules on a daily basis.

The overall college campus is a moderate size with several large multi-floor buildings and one main entrance and exit. The community college maintains a security system, with cameras, that covers the community college and AECHS building areas. The flow of traffic from traditional college students and general campus visitors is steady during class dismissal times and at the end of the day. The AECHS bus drop-off and pick-up areas are located directly in front of the building where staff has a direct line of site and easy access to the location of the school bus each day. All visitors must go through the reception area at the front of the building. The office staff is prompt to acknowledge and greet any visitors. Students seem familiar with the expectations and protocol for their behavior throughout the building. One student, who was serving detention, was quiet and respectful during that time. The student asked for permission to return to class once the assigned time was up. Throughout the building, all students were actively engaged and no off task behavior was observed.
AECHS houses approximately 170 students from grades 9 through 13. The student population is 6% Caucasian, 38% African American, and 2% Hispanic. In addition to the student body, the school has one principal, one counselor, six teachers, and one college liaison. The college liaison is the college connection between AECHS and the community college. This person is typically the main point of communication in areas such as facilities, communicating with college instructors, scheduling college courses, etc. The college liaison also plays a key role in student safety by helping to monitor for student whereabouts and communicating college expectations related to behavior and academics.

AECHS is an application school within its local school district. Interested students must apply during their eighth grade year. The school begins recruitment in local middle schools in January of each year to make sure students and parents within the county are aware of the early college opportunity. In addition, they host several open house events in the evening for prospective students and parents to visit the site and ask questions. Selection is through a third party with a type of lottery selection system. Selected students are notified by April or May and begin their high school career at the ECHS in the fall of their freshman year. Approximately 80% of the student population of AECHS are first generation students. That means that neither of the students’ parents has a college degree.

The school takes in approximately 50 new students each year. At the end of the school year, students and parents are also sent letters of intent to sign and return. By signing the intent letter, students are making a commitment to remain at the school for one full school year. To allow students optimal access to the college classes and resources, the school follows the college schedule by starting up during early August and ending for the year in
May. All students have an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and an associate’s degree.

The principal, Mr. Blue, is an experienced school administrator with over 20 years of experience in education. He has worked for several years as an ECHS principal and has developed strong working relationships with his school’s community college partners. He expressed pride and confidence in the campus protocols that he has helped put in place, along with his community college partners, to keep the ECHS students safe. He makes purposeful and consistent efforts to make sure that all expectations are clearly communicated throughout the school community with students, parents, partners, and staff. Mr. Blue is a hands-on principal with a no-nonsense approach. He is fair but firm with his students and is well respected by his school community as a whole.

Ms. Long, the counselor at AECHS, has over 15 years of experience in education and has been at AECHS for over four years. She expresses joy and excitement about working with students and staff. Ms. Long also stressed how important it is for her to play an active role in campus communication and monitoring for student safety. She is regularly in communication with her school’s college liaison and principal about student safety issues and protocols. With the limited, small AECHS staff, Ms. Long also ensures that the ECHS student safety protocols are actively enforced when the principal is not on campus.

Overall, Mr. Blue’s school seems to take a proactive approach to student safety. The methods used seem more informal than formal in terms of systems and policy implementation; however, the building and campus was orderly with students and staff who knew and demonstrated understanding of the expectations for AECHS students on the
college campus. On a daily basis, student safety is monitored throughout the campus by Mr. Blue, Ms. Long, and the college liaison. Also, the community college campus police play an active role in helping to monitor the students’ whereabouts and activities on campus. The school leaders and college partners have come together to make a focused team effort in keeping students safe while ensuring that they follow the campus policies and rules that were put in place to keep them out of harm’s way. However, at times, student safety issues still arise.

No Congregating on the College Side

At Mr. Blue’s school, parents often ask what he has in place to make sure their children are safe on the college campus. His first step with new freshmen students is to ensure that they are escorted to each class for the first few weeks of school. They are not permitted to move about the campus on their own. In addition, for all students, they do what Mr. Blue likes to call ‘spot checks’, “The counselor, liaison, and me…we move about to make sure the students get to where they are supposed to be. They don’t know when we’re coming, but they know you’re coming. On occasion, we’ll find someone where they should not be”, he explains. If students are found where no classes are being held for them, they receive a consequence for not following the rules and being out of place.

Ms. Long emphasizes that students wanting to congregate on the college side of the campus is a big issue for students. That is why they have a strict rule about no congregating with any adults on campus. “Even if, let’s say if your mother is a student on the college side, you say hello to your mom and keep going.” She explains further, “You don’t stop and chat because that’s one of the things we tell our parents…the student body on the college side can
be anywhere from underage students, 13 or 14 to 82 or 90. We don’t have control over there
and that’s why we have strict rules about what they can and can’t do on the college side.”

Mr. Blue, his administrative team, and their college partners decided that letting the
adults know who the ECHS students are upfront would be the best way to go for them. Ms.
Long said it best when she said, “When they’re over there, traditional students will see
because they they’re wearing an ID badge, that they are a high school student and sometimes
that will prevent them from talking to each other.” In this respect, the requirement serves as a
proactive safety measure to keep ECHS students safe while in the presence of adults. Ms.
Long summed up her point with, “We’ve had issues where the girls will be talking to a
traditional college boy and they’re thinking she’s a traditional college student when she’s
not.”

The need to be proactive with safety and tracking students also includes the topic of
student drivers. Student driver safety is an issue that has to be addressed at all high schools;
however, the AECHS leaders have a unique challenge in managing student drivers on a
college campus with adult drivers where they have no control over the flow of traffic or the
surrounding buildings and parking lots. With that in mind, the leadership decided against
permitting any 9th or 10th grade drivers. Also, no students are allowed to have off campus
lunch.

Students at AECHS are not permitted to drive to school until their junior year. Even
then, they are only allowed to drive to school in the morning and from school at the end of
the day or when their individual classes end for the day. Mr. Blue interjects, “We caught a lot
of flak behind that one.” His position with the students was, “You’re not conscious of
At times, Mr. Blue and his administrative team have allowed for more student flexibility in other areas, such as students signing out of school when their classes are done for the day. To take advantage of this, students must return a signed parking form from their parents saying that they have permission to leave campus for the day when their classes are over. This also allows the school to keep detailed records on who their student drivers are each day. The caveat to this rule is that students must keep their grades up for this to remain in effect. If their grades fall or they are not passing all of their classes, they are not permitted to leave early. They must remain in school the entire day to receive extra academic assistance. Therefore, the option to check out of school serves as an incentive to remain more focused on their school work and less focused on social activities.

For example, Mr. Blue pointed out, “PDA (public displays of affection) is one of the biggest things we deal with. They can’t hold hands, hug, and all that kind of stuff.” When discussing an upperclassmen student who recently challenged the policy, Mr. Blue remembered, “I said we’re just gonna have to agree to disagree, but that’s the law right now.” Then he told the male student a story about when he was in college and saw a couple engaging in inappropriate sexual activity outside in the open. “You’ve got to be kidding me!” The student exclaimed. Mr. Blue continued, “I said, human behavior will tell me that most
people are gonna follow the rules, whether they agree with them or not, but you’re gonna have that small percentage that’s gonna take it to another level.” The student continued to listen attentively, “And that makes it bad for everybody else because now you’ve got to make up another rule. Now, how do we deal with this? Because we never planned for this. So, we thought it was necessary to put a rule in place not to allow any PDA period. That way we won’t have to deal with any of those other issues.” The student seemed satisfied (and a bit wiser) and moved on to his next class.

I’m Her Brother

Students at AECHS are not allowed to socialize with traditional college students. “We do not allow them to have relationships with the traditional students unless they’re in class. Once they get out of class that goes.” Mr. Blue clarifies, “They can’t go over there unless they have permission to go over there. They’re not allowed to go to the student lounge or any of those things…Anytime I bring a student in, I always ask them, ‘What’s the rule?’ That’s the first thing I ask them.” Students are well trained on the topic of appropriate and permissible interactions before entering classes with college adults. On the other hand, the adult concerns on campus have not been so thoroughly addressed.

“There’s one thing I have an issue with and I don’t know how other schools deal with it because we’ve got sex offenders over there. What about my students over there because those folks have to be so many feet or distance from them?” With a sigh, Mr. Blue said, “Now what do you do with that? It’s just something in my mind. How do you deal with that?” This topic had not been discussed with any of the college partners. After a moment of
thoughtful silence, he moved on to describe an incident between one of his ECHS female students and a traditional college male student.

One day, Mr. Blue saw a young man near his building and asked him who he was, he recalls him saying, “I’m so and so’s brother and I’m here to pick her up.” Mr. Blue walked with him to the ECHS building and asked the young man, “Do you know how old that young lady is?” “What do you mean?” I said, “Do you know how old she is?” “What do you mean?” I said, “I don’t know of anybody who don’t know the age of their sister. See, I listen very well. I’m gonna call the police and have them come pick you up.” “Uh, you don’t have to do all that. Uh, I got to go pick something up right quick.” The young man quickly left the campus with a long trail of dust flying from the back of his car. He, and his ECHS female accomplice, were unaware that another ECHS student had reported their sorted plan for him to check her out of school as her brother. The young man was dealt with by the community college partners (specific consequences unknown) and the ECHS female was suspended from school for a day.

Proactive principals, such as Mr. Blue, will regularly try to instill good judgment into their students well before something happens, “I tell these kids that everybody that treats them nice is not a good person. I tell them you’re dealing with men over there, not boys.” His explanation continues, “If you got a person who is a sex offender, he’s gonna groom you anyway. It may take him six months, but he’s patient. Then when he gets you in that car, it’s oh my God. That’s why I don’t want you to have any type of relationship with them because they are men.”
Matching Policies

ECHS principals constantly have to navigate the policies of multiple institutions. They must comply with federal law, state law, and school district policies. Then they must also adhere to the policies and expectations mandated by their community college partners. Finally, the policies and expectations must be clearly taught and communicated to the ECHS faculty, students, and parents. Mr. Blue has been pleased with the alignment of policies and expectations that are in place between his school and the community college.

“It’s amazing that our policies kind of mirror each other in many ways. We are very fortunate that we have not had major incidents of that nature, except one.” There was a theft that involved an ECHS student on the college side of the campus. Because that is in the college jurisdiction, they took the lead on the investigation. He went on to explain, “Once it happened, I was included from the beginning about what was going on and what not. Once they had concluded their findings, they made me aware of what they were going to do. There is never a time or anything going on with any of our students that we are not a part of.”

This positive partnership also extends to the placement and selection of other security measures on campus. The community college has its own police force and they are working on providing regular patrol coverage on the AECHS side of the campus. The support and inclusion of the ECHS leaders and program does not stop there, “In fact, when they put up the surveillance over there, they included us in where we thought the cameras would be best suited for that particular building.” Mr. Blue sees the student safety communication between the community college and the school as more of an informal process. “If something happens, we don’t have anything in writing, they just do. If they see them in places they
shouldn’t be they always let us know. They normally go to the liaison and the liaison will come to me saying so and so was in this place or that place, and they shouldn’t be there. Then I take it from there.”

The leadership at AECHS includes policy information for both the public school district and the community college during their multiple open houses. They also conduct parent information seminars throughout the year. Mr. Blue pointed out that they pay special attention to freshman students and their parents, “Because parents want to know is my child safe and what have you put in place to make sure my child is safe? And so those questions come up quite frequently.” In those meetings, parents and students are given a county handbook as well as an ECHS contract that they must sign stating that they understand they must follow all expectations and policies of the school system, ECHS, and community college. The school and college policies can be accessed all on line. “The college has its own, we have ours, and the county has their own. The kids have three policies they basically have to follow and adhere to,” he clarified.

Mr. Blue also explained that when the AECHS policies were created, they tried to mirror a lot of both and come up with a working blend of the policies that worked for their school. That allowed them to have procedure and safety policy statements that were unique to their site and their student needs. “We wear ID cards and I think we are the only high school that wears ID cards. And this again is if a young man sees one of these on a young lady, he knows that’s off limits city. He knows when I see one of these, boop, that’s a no, no because they’re under age.”
Boulder Early College High School

Boulder Early College High School (BECHS) is an urban early college that sits in the middle of a large city in the Southeastern United States. Students attend classes on two different college campuses. The main community college campus of BECHS is surrounded by apartments, single family neighborhoods, local businesses, restaurants, and a major technology business park. Nearby streets, which are major thoroughfares, are consistently busy with pedestrian, commuter, and city bus traffic. The community college campus is always a buzz with traditional college students and community visitors coming and going. The main campus is where all ninth and tenth graders, and some juniors and seniors, attend classes. During Ms. Brown’s, the former principal’s tenure, the early college area of the building had a small reception area where visitors and parents would come to ask questions or check students out of school. Students were not permitted to move freely between buildings. They were only to be in other buildings if they had class, or meetings about their class, over there. When junior or senior students on the main campus had open time between classes, they were required to be in the BECHS part of the building.

The BECHS juniors, seniors and thirteenth year students attended classes across the county, on the other community college campus location, approximately 35 minutes away. The second campus location sits in the middle of a mixed urban/suburban area surrounded by middle class single family homes, schools, stores and fast food restaurants. In addition, that community college campus location is only a few minutes away from two major shopping centers and thoroughfares. This added to the extremely busy hustle and bustle atmosphere of this campus.
Unlike Mr. Blue’s school, BECHS is not housed in a separate building. The program is housed in buildings where community college students, faculty, and staff come and go throughout the day. The well-manicured campus sits on two large campus sites with multiple buildings and multiple floors. The main site has one area of classrooms that is designated to the ECHS; however, on the second campus site students are mixed with campus students, staff, and visitors throughout the day. Both campuses have security cameras and several assigned members of the police force who patrol the campus each day. The administration and campus police worked steadily together, throughout Ms. Brown’s years as principal, to closely monitor student safety. Busses came in and out in close proximity of the building where the program was housed. Students and staff were regularly apprised of the expectations and policies related to safety and security on both campuses.

On the second campus site, students were required to sign in and out every day. Only seniors and thirteenth year students were permitted to go off campus for lunch. They also were required to sign in and out for lunch. In addition, students were required to sign out indicating where they would be (in approved locations) on campus at any given hour throughout the day when they were not in class. Staff would regularly monitor the campus to ensure that students were where they indicated they would be. Students who were not in the correct location, would face consequences such as detention and parent conferences. Also, because of their constant, close interaction and proximity to traditional college students and campus visitors, the students at BECHS were regularly instructed on what to do if anyone ever made them feel uncomfortable or fearful. They were also instructed on how to maintain appropriate, distant, and professional relationships with adults on campus.
Ms. Brown, now retired, served as the principal of BECHS for five years. She is an experienced teacher and administrator with over 25 years of experience. Ms. Brown was widely respected throughout the community and took great joy in working with the students and staff in her school each day. As the principal of BECHS, she implemented many safety protocols for monitoring students on an open college campus. Ms. Brown established and maintained strong, collaborative relationships with her school’s college partners and communicated regularly with students, staff, and parents about expectations and student safety. During the five years Ms. Brown was a principal at BECHS, the school averaged 70 to 85 students per grade and housed an average of 230 students per year between both campuses. The school took in approximately 70 students per year.

The second campus location held approximately 110 students with four staff members each year. The students had an opportunity to earn their high school diploma and an associate’s degree from the community college. To be admitted, students had to complete an application during the middle school recruitment period and application window. Students were selected through a lottery drawing through the county. Once each year, students had an opportunity to elect to move to their base/neighborhood assigned high school. The school experienced a low number of students (less than three) who opted to take advantage of this opportunity during any given year during Ms. Brown’s time at BECHS.

The school maintained at least 50% first generation students and staffed one principal, two counselors, nine teachers, and one college liaison total. The college liaison played an active role in monitoring for student safety; incident investigations; policy alignment and interpretation; advocating for seats in college courses; and college course
scheduling. Each day, Ms. Brown, her staff, and their college partners worked to ensure that the students on both campuses were safe and consistently monitored. As an experienced school administrator, Ms. Brown brought a great deal to the table in terms of implementing appropriate safety measures and communicating expectations to staff, students, and parents.

**Sign on the Dotted Line**

According to Ms. Brown, when the students are transitioning more into the college world, they are also given more independence in terms of their movement and action. The nature of the college schedule dictates that students will not be in class for 4 blocks straight from 7:30 to 2:30; however, there must be, because of state law, some structured way to monitor and account for their time and their safety. At BECHS, Ms. Brown’s students had to sign in and out during the day. Students had to sign out stating where they would be during their open periods between classes in addition to juniors and seniors being required to sign out for off campus lunch. “The power of that signature is great because it does become a binding signature that says you signed in here, you said you were going to this location. We need to know that you're there because of safety and security.” She goes on to give an illustration, “In traditional high school, if a kid skips class, Voice the Robocop plays a robo message call, says your kid wasn't in third block.

On the Early College campus the minute that kid does not show up somewhere, it's an APB and that's very different and that requires that the administrator be on his or her feet all day long. A big part of the job is tracking student movement and when that movement does not align with a binding signature, now we have a discipline issue and students need to be
apprised of that.” At Ms. Brown’s school, that expectation was delivered to students and parents during open houses, parent information sessions, and in the student-parent handbook.

Ms. Brown is adamant that everything must be documented in the student handbook. “Everything must be in print, must be readily available to everybody, including the governing bodies of the school. That's first and foremost.” In addition, she placed emphasis on the necessity of parent signatures, “Documentation by way of parent signature, that the handbook was reviewed, whether they did it or not, is important. And it has to give reference to the college handbook and the handbook that the school creates.” She also referenced the importance of a disclaimer being in the printed handbook that denotes it as a living document that is subject to “additions, addendums and how you will apprise folks of the additions.”

The concept of intentional teaching was also highlighted by Ms. Brown. She stated that ECHS leaders must be intentional about helping students understanding the expectations related to the documentation of their whereabouts on the college campus. The intentional teaching, or training, was a semi-annual process at BECHS as students transitioned from one campus to the next and as policies and procedures need to be changed or amended. As Ms. Brown clarified, “That needs to be done very early, either through some sort of orientation camp or within the first week of school as students are coming back to the campus each semester and it's important that be done with new incoming, as well as returning students, because year over year there are changes and what was allowable during my freshman year suddenly is now off limits in the sophomore year because the administration learned something that we then had to go back and add.”
Boys and Girls in the Grown Up World

For the students at BECHS, a critical discipline issue was who they could be friends with, or go to lunch with, in the community college setting. For example, traditional high school students may go to lunch with any other student who possesses an off-campus lunch pass. However, Ms. Brown pointed out, “On a community college campus, all of the adults have a lunch pass, but you are not free to go with them and the consequence of those actions have to be dire because of safety and because you're merging children with the adult community.” In other words, the early college students are at risk of questionable interactions with adults who don't see them as children. Similarly, particularly because of the existence of the college partnership, the adults are at risk as well. “They're moving about their daily lives innocently reaching out and talking to young people who don't always wear a badge that says ‘I am an early college student’ and then all of a sudden, they find themselves in trouble. That's a liability on both sides.” It is that liability that is a great concern for many ECHS principals. For example, on Ms. Brown’s campus, which sits in the midst of a highly populated urban area, the issue of student-adult interactions was a constant issue that had to be closely monitored and regularly addressed. One such incident was particularly upsetting for Ms. Brown and her team.

One warm fall afternoon, a female student left the main campus and never returned. “That was as frightening as anything I’ve lived through. The reason that was possible, and that’s not to say it couldn’t happen in a K-12 environment, is the open campus,” Ms. Brown explained. We have no idea where she went.” Over the next three weeks, the worried parents and police stayed in constant contact with Ms. Brown. There was an all-out search for this
young girl. “We have no idea how she left the campus or who she left with, but in an open campus environment and you're monitoring your carpool thing, but somebody comes through, she walks away from the building, she catches up with somebody on the top of the hill and you're done. History. She was history and that was among the scariest things that ever happened.”

About a month later the student was found in another state and was quickly pulled out of a scary situation. Ms. Brown was told the student was meeting up with a man she recently met on campus in an attempt to run away from her parents who were too strict for her liking. “She was running away right into the hands of some pretty sketchy characters. They were already reinventing her.” Ms. Brown continued, “I’m convinced, knowing now what I know about human trafficking that she was about to be trafficked into prostitution. Her family would have never seen her again, ever. When her family saw her for the first time, they did not recognize her, which is classic trafficking behavior”

In a similar close call at BECHS, two female students decided they going to have one girl’s adult boyfriend and one of his friends pick them up at school. “They strolled up on campus and thank God, we're watching them like a hawk, because they were almost gone in no time flat when I ran over to stop them,” Ms. Brown recalled. When the campus police officer saw what Ms. Brown was trying to do he yelled out to her as he rushed over, “We got this. You don't need to do this. You know, you could get killed.” Ms. Brown went on to explain, “In the moment, just like any good parent, you're not thinking about your personal safety. You're thinking this kid is about to get in this car with this random stranger and I don't
know where she's going to go.” In an instant, Ms. Brown and the campus police had averted another potential tragedy.

A Tale of Two Schools

On the ECHS campus, school and community college leaders find a common ground upon which to operate for the safety of the students. “These are open campuses and so the protections that occur in normal public schools don't apply in a college campus. So you have protections that are uniquely associated with the K-12 environment that do not apply in an adult community.” Ms. Brown further highlighted that it is unique to the early college environment where the administration and school are accountable to dual policies. On one hand, there are the policies of the school system that affords students the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them. Then on the other hand, sits the policies of the college that treats everyone as an adult who is responsible for their own actions and will face certain universal consequences when certain behaviors occur. In other words, she clarifies, “You’re caught between two worlds that are not consistent in their treatment of infractions. The college does not see itself as teaching adult behavior. It is there to teach curriculum, not to teach them how to be a student.”

On the high school side of the spectrum, policy is there primarily to teach. According to Ms. Brown, “The goal is to teach children how to be a successful, contributing part of their educational community. This is why the college and high school policies can sometimes be in conflict. In composing the ECHS handbook when the school rules are written, attention has to be paid to the realities of state law and district policy.” She also asserted that it is equally important to ensure that everybody in the school community understands the
relationship between the community college policy and process around student due process. In addition, they must be aware of the places where the school system policy may have to be second to the community college policy and vice versa. Specifically, this information must be clear to the students, the teachers, the parents who form that community and the partnering agencies.

The different institution policies are of great importance when it comes to communicating with parents. Ms. Brown reported, “ECHS parents need to know that once that child enters the college, that college sees that child, even an early college student as an adult, so he's responsible for his or her own actions and federal laws prohibit access to information that would not apply in the high school setting, so parents must be apprised and informed.”

However, it is incumbent upon the school to make sure that the parent has access to all of the policies associated with the college so they know how to coach their children. This is an area where the work of the college liaison, representing and teaching the college position, is so critical. This proactive communication will help bridge the gap between the policies of both institutions. Ms. Brown clarifies, “With the college policies there is an adult lens that sees its students as self-initiating and responsible for their own personal safety. To the contrary, the lens of K-12 is in loco parentis. In other words, the school is responsible for their students’ safety because they are not old enough or wise enough to fully make sound, self-regulating decisions.”
**Challenger Early College High School**

Challenger Early College High School (CECHS) is located in the middle of a small town in the Southeastern United States. It is located in a modular classroom building that sits at the back of its community college campus. The college campus is surrounded by densely populated neighborhoods and tight, narrow streets. The older, neighborhood homes are a combination of single family homes and houses that serve as rental apartments. The historic downtown area is within walking distance from the school and reflects a balanced mixture of the old and new. There are several local businesses in the area as well as fast food restaurants and specialty shops.

The community college campus is beautifully maintained and spans several city blocks. Tall, mature trees outline the streets and pedestrian traffic is thick with students moving to and from class and neighbors walking their dogs or on their way to local stores. The CECHS building sits tucked behind several college buildings at the end of a narrow driving path with only one way in or out. Parking is tight near the CECHS building, limited to less than ten spaces. Bus loading and unloading is down the street away from the main building. There are no signs present that identify the CECHS building. The entry to the building is dim and there is no clearly designated main office or reception area. However, the community college does have police officers and security cameras that cover all buildings. In addition, CECHS also has an intercom system that allows for communication between the classrooms and office areas. Approximately 55 of the school’s upperclassmen attend college classes on the community college second campus site that is located approximately 25 minutes away. They are supervised by one full-time teacher and one part-time staff member.
In addition to the modular building, the CECHS program also has several classrooms and staff offices that must be housed in a nearby community college building due to lack of space. In that second building, the administration and staff do not have the ability to lock any doors in case of an emergency. Students move freely between the two buildings where they attend high school classes throughout the school day. When they are not attending college classes, in other buildings throughout the campus, students are expected to be in the main CECHS building. During their twelfth and thirteenth years, some students, approximately 55, take some of their college classes at the other community college campus location on the other side of town. Those students are supervised by two staff members who monitors their attendance and other needs throughout the day.

CECHS currently serves 129 students in grades nine through thirteen and they take in about 30 freshmen each year. The staff consist of one principal, one counselor, seven teachers, and one college liaison. Unlike the liaison role at the previous schools in this study, the liaison at CECHS focuses primarily on student scheduling, reporting when there is a student concern, and disseminating college information. There is not much interaction between the college liaison and the school administration or staff as far as the daily operations or student monitoring processes are concerned.

Students at CECHS are admitted through an application process; however, the process is heavy on self-selection and students are rarely turned away unless they have an educational need that the school may not be able to meet through an Individual Education Plan (e.g., self-contained classroom, severe learning disability, etc.). CECHS also seeks to recruit students who are first generation students. The school currently serves over 70% first
generation students. The students there have an opportunity to earn both a high school
diploma as well as a community college degree.

Mr. Green, principal of CECHS, has less than three years of experience as an ECHS
principal. Prior to becoming the principal at CECHS, he taught high school science for six
years and served as a high school assistant principal for three years. He is young and
enthusiastic about his role and desire to make positive changes at his school. He has many
ideas about how to improve the safety practices and protocols on his college campus. Mr.
Green is also excited about increasing the collaboration and communication between his
school and its community partners. Unfortunately, not all partners share his enthusiasm or
vision and that has led to some frustration for him as well as his staff. The daily safety and
monitoring of the students are the primary responsibility of Mr. Green, his counselor,
teachers, and office staff. The college liaison and other college partners play a limited role in
daily operations as well as when major issues arise.

The High Price of Freedom

To address the issue of student monitoring, Mr. Green has procedures in place to
make sure that students are constantly accounted for when they do not have an assigned
class. “For our 9th through 11th graders, when they’re here at school, if they don’t have
college class on any given day, they have a place where they have to be. They are assigned a
location and a teacher.” Also, as an additional layer of safety, the students always have to be
where there is adult presence. For their lunch time, all students must eat in the CECHS
building. They cannot be in the traditional student lounge or café areas on campus. However,
even where there are strict expectations in place, there is more room for error when there is
not a community effort to monitor student activity between the ECHS leadership and the college partner.

During the last school year, Mr. Green had a case that involved a CECHS student selling prescription drugs on campus. “I was suspicious of it when I first saw him acting kind of funny one day. I really liked this kid, he was a good student, unbelievably polite, respectful. It started when he was found in places where there wasn't an adult from time to time,” he recalled. “One day he was walking back with one of our students, who was older than him and was also struggling academically. They were coming back from a building they were not supposed to be. I walked over to them, brought them both in, and I searched them both. The good academic student was the one who was carrying several bottles of different pills and several wads of money.” The student was eventually assigned to another school following a suspension. In this case, the principal did not receive much communication or support from the college partners.

He clarified that it is just the practice of the college partners at his school to primarily defer to the school system policies and practices. This also extends to issues such as ECHS students selling prescription drugs in the college campus buildings. When student issues arise, Mr. Green and his team are usually asked, "What does the school district say?" Then the school team will investigate and make a decision. “Anything that we've done, they've never had any further disciplinary action, they've just gone with what we've done.”

Mr. Green and his team were confused by the use of this protocol with the student selling drugs on campus. I said, "What does this mean? He had drugs on your campus because he was literally coming out of your building and then I searched him." They said,
"Whatever you all say. What is your policy? Our policy is kind of to wait for you guys." He presses further, "I mean what would you do if it was your student? It is your student." They said, "You searched him, you found it. Let us know." Mr. Green finally surrendered, said okay, and presented the school system protocol and steps for that type of policy violation. The college partners agreed.

Another critical incident for Mr. Green and his staff involved student misuse of the internet and the school operated Google Doc for communication between students and staff. At the community college there are no filters, blocks, or cyber nannies to prevent students from visiting and communicating with people on various sites. Likewise, there will typically not be tracking systems that easily allow the school to trace who did what in the event of a threat that is communicated via email. “We had a student who sent an anonymous email to myself and several teachers. In the email, there was no subject but the content contained hundreds of copied responses from a website.”

A CECHS student hacked into the school’s shared Google Docs and posted the link to an online chat room. Mr. Green immediately had the site shut down and they thought the problem was solved. Later that evening, he found a posting in the email. “Someone had written a song talking about walking into a school and blowing everyone away. Right away I called law enforcement and said, this is the situation. I need to meet with the SRO right away in the morning, can you be here as soon as the buses get here? Because I'm not sure what this is, but it might be something."

The SRO was there first thing in the morning to read the posting. He then called the sheriff’s department and they came out to the school to conduct an investigation. Mr. Green
also had some work to do. “I had also talked to the teachers, and I said who do you think could have done this?” They said, "Well, we talked to some of our students, and they said they think they’ve seen ‘Joe’ on this website before." I said, "OK, well why would he be upset?" One of the teachers said, “I gave him a D on his math project, and he was angry about it.” When Mr. Green asked if she thought he would do something like that the teacher replied, "Well, he’s kind of a strange kid. Yeah, he was upset." With that new information, Mr. Green questioned the student and the police included him in their investigation. The case was never solved. This was in part, because the technical department had no way of tracking the email that was sent from school back to the original author.

Ultimately, this event took a great toll on the overall climate at CECHS. The staff no longer felt safe. One of the teachers became physically ill and had to take some time off. Another teacher said during a staff meeting, "Well, essentially we can prepare as much as we can prepare. We should be vigilant. Watch interactions with kids, watch relationships. Build relationships with kids.” Today, the school is getting back on track, building those relationships and hoping that nothing like that ever happens again.

Who is That Masked Man?

Sometimes it is possible for early college students to cause a panic on campus among the adults. A CECHS student caused such a panic last fall. One day during the fall semester, a male student rode with two other early college students to the second campus where he attends classes. As soon as he got out of the car he put on a long, black trench coat, black hat, and mask. He was also carrying a large black stick with a flag tapped to it. He then starts walking around campus, carrying the bat and dressed in all black with a mask. People who
saw him on campus went into a panic not knowing what this strange person was going to do. Many of the adults expressed concerns for their safety and wanted him detained. This type of public outcry on the campus mandated that the college partners respond to this potential threat in a timely manner. The campus police later told Mr. Green that the flag on the bat represented a country that was currently in a civil war.

According to Mr. Green, a campus police officer caught up to the student after he entered a nearby building and said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Oh, I just felt like wearing this today." He questioned him again, and found out details about the flag and took the bat. While he had the student in an office area, the officer then went to review the community college handbook for campus policies on student attire; however, the policy was not specific. There was no policy that addressed dressing like a school shooter. The officer then looked at the student and said, "I don't care how you're dressed, but the way that you're dressed elicits a response. If you don't want that response, then you need to change now." The student complied and changed. He took off the coat, hat, and mask revealing regular school clothes underneath.

Following this incident, students and staff members began to come forward expressing their concerns about the masked student. Mr. Green explained, “They all said things that were based on news coverage of all these violent acts in schools. It was one red flag after another.” Staff and students expressed concerns about this student carrying out a violent act at school. “Here you have smart, White, loner kid. Not a whole lot of friends; kind of keeps to himself,” Mr. Green recalled. “Yes, one red flag after another.” He told the police officer, "Yeah, you've got all the right to do whatever you need to do on campus. If you need
to take him in for questioning or whatever. Yeah, absolutely, you always have that right.”

This was one case when the community partners exercised their right to do just that. The student was put on notice about causing any kind of suspicion or panic on the campus. His behavior and movements would be monitored for some time to come.

**Different Strokes**

When making campus safety decisions, Mr. Green relies heavily on district and state policy. “This is a high school, a state public high school, so I guess state policy takes precedence over district, but the district policies are always in line with what the state has as well.” He pauses, “But then if there's something that flies against the college policy, if it's brought to my attention, I let the community college know that something has happened and it goes against district or goes against college policy.” After another pause, Mr. Green continued, “Most of the time it's me asking: does this go against the community college policy? The situations that we've had that have involved long-term suspensions have always been decisions that are made at the local school level. Then they are carried to the college to say, does this go against your district policy? They've essentially said, 'well whatever you decide we'll go with.’”

With emergency procedures, Mr. Green admits that the ECHS and community college basically do totally separate things. “If something erupts, we follow our guide. If an emergency were to happen in any of the buildings, on either of the campuses, our teachers would follow our guide.” For example, Mr. Green shared that recently the fire alarm went off in one of the college buildings because it was being tested. “We didn't know that it was going to go off. I had a teacher who ran over here and said, ‘The fire alarm just went off, what
should I do?" He replied, "It's not a drill, your students need to get out of that building!" She said, "They are, we evacuated like we do when we have a drill." Then Mr. Green walked back to the front of the building with the teacher. All CECHS students had evacuated from the building and were out where they were supposed to be, according to district policy. However, Mr. Green didn't see any college classes, or anybody else from the community college outside. Everyone on campus, except the CECHS faculty and staff, knew the alarm was a drill. This scenario was not the last with school and partner miscommunication.

Mr. Green pointed out that last spring there was a lockdown on the other campus and his staff member called him right away. She called him from inside a closet, and said, "Do you know there's a lockdown over here?" Mr. Green replied, "No, are you guys OK? What's going on?" "Yeah, we're in the library, in the closet right now." Mr. Green said, "All right, do you know where all the students are?" She began naming students and gave him a count of how many students were with her. The entire campus was on lockdown, so the other CECHS students were in college classes at the time. She then clarified, "I don't know what they're doing, but I know everyone is on lockdown." Mr. Green was relieved that they followed the procedures for being on lockdown.

Mr. Green called the partners on the main campus and said, "Did you hear there's a lockdown on the other campus?" Unfortunately, they hadn't received word yet either. Thus, Mr. Green and the college partners were notified from the closet before an official notification was issued. It was later revealed that a man, wielding a knife and armed with other weapons, was walking around on campus. Mr. Green is hopeful that the opportunity to
coordinate on common appropriate lockdown and communication procedures on campus will be made a priority before the next campus crisis occurs.

**SUMMARY**

ECHSs are unique schools because of their targeted student population, nontraditional location, and college specific goals. The findings of this chapter uncovered three overarching themes that were common throughout each case study. The first theme for each case highlighted ECHS leader stories related to tracking and monitoring student whereabouts on the college campus. In each case, keeping up with students and their compliance in following procedures set to help monitor them brought different challenges at each site. The second theme involved ECHS student and adult relationships. In each case study, ECHS students had some type of inappropriate interaction with traditional college students that required immediate intervention. The final theme illustrated the misaligned policies and practices between the ECHSs and their college partners. For each school, there was some example of school district policies or practices that did not align or match with the college policies or practices. The difference here came in with how the ECHS and the partners addressed those differences. With two of the sites the partners found a common ground and mutually agreeable system for working out the differences. With the third site, this area is still a work in progress. In Chapter 5 a close analysis of each theme will be discussed and reviewed against the school safety research in chapter 2. In addition, implications for policy, practice, and research with ECHSs and student safety will be examined. Finally, an epilogue will reveal researcher reflections as they relate to the impact this research has had on her professional practice and future goals.
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

Introduction

A two phase study was used to investigate safety at Early College High Schools (ECHSs). The purpose of Phase 1 was to survey multiple ECHS principals to illustrate an overview or big picture of ECHS safety protocols in the Southeastern United States. Also, data from Phase 1 was used to identify participants and schools for the case studies. Phase 2 encompassed three case studies with multiple interviews including two principals, one retired principal, one counselor, and one teacher. Each principal participant was interviewed twice for the study. This chapter will present a summary and analysis of the study findings. The findings and data analysis will examine dominant themes found in the principal survey results from Phase 1 and the case study results from Phase 2. First, the major study themes will be analyzed in the context of the school safety literature found in chapter 2. Second, the major study themes will be used to look at implications related to policy, practice, and future research. Finally, this chapter will include an epilogue where the researcher discusses the impact the study and findings will have on her practice as an educator at an ECHS.

Summary of Findings

ECHSs are unique in the educational landscape. These schools are unique because of their targeted student population, nontraditional location, and college specific goals. The purpose of this study was to examine how ECHS administrators and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols. Specifically, this study looked at how ECHS leaders’ decisions address the presence of high school students on open college campuses with traditional adult students. In addition, this study investigated the differences
between college and ECHS safety protocols in terms of if and how state law, school district, or college policies take priority in leader decision making. Finally, the study focused on similarities and differences between the ECHS and college safety policies and how those differences are addressed by school leaders.

In Chapter 4, each case study contained three dominant themes. Each of the three themes gradually unfolded within the participant stories. Ultimately, the findings revealed that the essence of each major theme, for all three cases, was the same. All three case studies focused on the themes of monitoring ECHS student movement on the college campus; interactions between high school and college-aged students; and conflicts between K-12 and college policies and expectations.

Table 5.1: Major Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECHS Safety Case Study</th>
<th>Finding 1</th>
<th>Finding 2</th>
<th>Finding 3</th>
<th>Connecting Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance ECHS</td>
<td>No congregating on the college side</td>
<td>I’m her brother</td>
<td>Matching policies</td>
<td>Tracking: monitoring student movement on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder ECHS</td>
<td>Sign on the dotted line</td>
<td>Boys and girls in the grown up world</td>
<td>A tale of two schools</td>
<td>Issues of age: high school and college-age student interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger ECHS</td>
<td>The high price of freedom</td>
<td>Who is that masked man?</td>
<td>Different strokes</td>
<td>Colliding norms: K-12 vs college policies and expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The emerging ECHS student safety themes from the individual school leader case stories revealed strikingly common themes throughout the case study findings.
The first theme, tracking: monitoring student movement on campus, revealed that ECHS principals are constantly fighting a continuous battle in keeping track of students as they move about the college campus. The study highlighted the unique aspect of being located on a college campus and how it is a major contributing factor in the student tracking issue. ECHSs typically do not have bells, intercom systems, the ability to lock exterior (and sometimes interior doors), and adequate staff numbers to thoroughly monitor each building where students will attend college classes throughout the school day. Therefore, the principal and other staff members such as the counselor and college liaison must spend a great amount of time physically walking around the college buildings to ensure that students are not in forbidden and unsupervised areas.

Participating case study principals identified tracking student movement as a major daily concern. This finding also aligns with 24% of participants from the principal survey who listed student tracking as a major, daily issue on their campus. Principals listed the establishment of clear expectations, consistent consequences, and being visible throughout the campus as deterrents to ECHS students being out of place on campus. Furthermore, the establishment of mandatory procedures for checking in and out of school for the day as well as signing in and out to report to various locations on campus, outside of a college class, were also identified as key elements to successfully keeping track of student locations.

The topic of student movement on the college campus is particularly concerning for ECHSs because high school students fall under the expectation of the state that the adults in charge of their care will monitor and protect them. However, the monitoring becomes more challenging when school leaders must monitor and protect students where they essentially
have no control (e.g., strangers or sex offenders on campus or in college classes with ECHS students, students leaving campus with college-aged adults, or students being exposed to drugs and/or alcohol on the college campus). Study participants explained this is where their relationship with the college campus police is critical to the success of the ECHS program because they have control and power where the principals do not.

The second theme uncovered within the case study was issues of age: high school and college-age student interactions. Within this theme is where principals reported their most serious ECHS student safety incidents and close calls. The case study examples illustrated several instances of unsafe and inappropriate relationships between ECHS students and traditional college students. The instances ranged from a an ECHS student trying to sneak off campus with an adult male to an ECHS female student being taken from school to another state and not being returned to her parents until several weeks later. Principals reported the use of various policies and practices on their campuses to monitor ECHS student interactions and access to traditional college students on campus. Reported strategies included limiting student access to college buildings when they are not in a college class; inclusion and enforcement of specific rules related to ECHS students not socializing with traditional college adults on campus; and regular campus monitoring by the principal, counselor, and liaison (in two of the three cases).

Principal participants emphasized the importance of communicating expectations with students and parents prior to them starting school as an ECHS student. One principal also stressed that regular reviews of the expectations and rules are critical in the ECHS environment because of the age of the students and possible rule and procedure changes
throughout the year. Likewise, another principal reported that his school and college partners made the decision to educate the adult college students about the presence of high school students on campus from the beginning. On his campus, this was viewed as an important preventative measure to deter traditional college students from seeking out the ECHS students. In addition, the notification was also intended to make the traditional college students inquire about the age and program a student was in prior to attempting to befriend them in any way.

Although many state and district policies address the responsibility that schools have to keep students safe, policies related to student adult relationships, beyond that of appropriate teacher/student interaction, is limited at best. Therefore, ECHS leaders and their college partners must address student safety as it relates to appropriate interactions between ECHS students and traditional college adults. None of the study participants identified specific, written policies that outlined the dos and don’ts with ECHS and traditional college student interactions or relationships on campus. However, every participant referenced specific written policies related to where students were and were not permitted to be throughout the school day. The loose or tight reinforcement of the policy seemed to depend mainly upon the physical make-up of where the ECHS program was housed on the college campus. At two schools, ECHS students were able to be tightly contained in a building or modular unit that was just for ECHS student and staff use. Conversely, at the third site, the ECHS was not isolated from the college population and was housed in the same buildings where traditional campus students and visitors move about freely throughout the day. At this
site, the monitoring of student movement as well as ECHS student/adult interactions has been more challenging.

Fortunately, this ECHS principal had positive and supportive relationships with the college partner. This mutual and regular focus on ECHS student safety led to regular campus monitoring by the principal, counselor, liaison, campus police, and district security, as needed. The principal reported that the collaboration and safety-focused team work between the school and the college helped to divert several potentially dangerous situations that were in the beginning stages between ECHS students and traditional college students and/or campus visitors.

The third and final theme encompassed the area of colliding norms: K-12 vs college policies and expectations. Each of ECHS principals referenced instances where the school district policies and college policies were not aligned. Many of these cases involved issues of safety. Principals reported that none of their college partners held or participated in regular lockdown or fire drills. However, ECHS students and staff, lockdown drills and fire drills are required throughout the school year. Schools are obligated to teach certain safety measures to K-12 students. For ECHS students it is critical that they have a clear understanding of what to do when they are in an emergency situation. Also, when there is a misalignment between what the college does and what the ECHS program does, with practices related to safety procedures, it increases the likelihood of someone getting hurt or killed. This is especially true when ECHS students are in college classes or moving about the campus between classes. This increase in the level of danger for ECHS students could come from someone who is not trained making the wrong decision for the situation; traditional college students going into
panic mode because they have not been trained in what to do; and disorder erupting when ECHS students and college students attempt to follow different procedures during a crisis.

In addition, at one of the study cites, there was a lack of communication between the ECHS administration and the college partner when policies had been violated by ECHS students while on the college campus. For example, when ECHS students were found with drugs on campus, the college partners opted not to be involved in the investigation. Although the college supported the decision of the school, there was a missed opportunity to investigate if the ECHS students were involved with any of the adult students with selling and distributing drugs on campus. Furthermore, if there was adult involvement, the college had an obligation to look into the case to protect all students and staff from any potential harm that could come from the presence drugs or a drug deal gone wrong on campus. The next section will discuss the major research themes and how their connection to the literature related to ECHSs, school safety, and college safety.

**ECHS Themes and School Safety Literature**

The literature relating to ECHSs is increasing each year as more schools open up across the country; however, research related to ECHSs and student safety are quite limited. As ECHSs continue to grow in popularity, the body of research related to safety at these school sites must be included more with the research related to academics. Giving a voice to the untold stories related to ECHS student safety will hopefully shed light on some safety issues while they are still small as well as give school leaders a springboard for examining the deeper issues related to ECHS student safety. The key finding solutions to ECHS safety concerns rests with the school leaders and their college partners where ECHSs are housed.
This literature review will examine the themes of the research findings in relationship to the existing literature on ECHSs, school safety, college safety, and decision making.

**Tracking: monitoring student movement on campus**

The number of ECHSs are increasing across the country each year. With the popularity of ECHSs growing, so are the number of high school students who attend school on college and university campuses, with some being as young as 13 years old (Jobs for the Future, 2011). According to Hoffman and Vargas (2010), ECHSs are housed on a community college or university campus to allow increased access to the college experience for groups that are underrepresented in the college going population. As more and more high school students attend ECHSs on open college campuses with adults, it will become increasingly important to have effective ways to keep track of where students are throughout the day. At Ms. Brown’s school, students are expected to sign in and out to indicate their whereabouts on campus whenever they are not in a college or high school class. “A big part of the job is tracking student movement and when that movement does not align with a binding signature, now we have a discipline issue and students need to be apprised of that.”

A study of school climate theory by Stewart (2003) revealed that a school is only able to control student behavior to the degree that the physical, social, individual, and cultural environments are controlled. Ms. Long, counselor at Alliance ECHS, explained the school’s strict rule about no ECHS students congregating with any adults on campus. “Even if, let’s say if your mother is a student on the college side, you say hello to your mom and keep going.” She explains further, “You don’t stop and chat because that’s one of the things we tell our parents…the student body on the college side can be anywhere from underage
students, 13 or 14 to 82 or 90. We don’t have control over there and that’s why we have strict rules about what they can and can’t do on the college side.” This clear cut approach to governing student interactions and behavior, helps to ensure ECHS student safety while on the college campus.

Mr. Green’s school also has rules about ECHS students not hanging out in and around the college buildings. However, there will be times when students test their limits. For example, Mr. Green found that one of his CECHS students had been selling prescription drugs on campus. “I was suspicious of it when I first saw him acting kind of funny one day. I really liked this kid, he was a good student, unbelievably polite, respectful. It started when he was found in places where there wasn't an adult from time to time,” he recalled. “One day he was walking back with one of our students, who was older than him and was also struggling academically. They were coming back from a building they were not supposed to be.”

When Mr. Green searched the students, he found multiple prescription drugs and several wads of cash on one of the boys. On the topic of student searches, following the case of Board of Education v. Earls (2002), the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the principles of the Fourth Amendment stating that illegal searches applied to adults and students alike. On the other hand, the Court also clarified that the right of student privacy must be weighed alongside the necessity of school administrators and teachers to maintain an orderly and disciplined school environment. Therefore, schools would not be required to obtain a search warrant before conducting a student search. However, the standard of probable cause would have to be satisfied. In schools, the standard of reasonableness, instead of the stricter probable cause rule used by police, implies that any reasonable person would come to the
conclusion that there is cause to suspect illegal activity. Therefore, along with the illegal activity, accompanying evidence will be found before a search is conducted (Yell & Rozlaski, 2000).

Considering their suspicious behavior and repeated occasions of being in areas that were off limits for ECHS students, Mr. Green was justified in conducting his search. To define the expectation of reasonableness and legal validity for school officials prior to conducting a search, the Court instituted a two-part test. The two parts of the search determination test that must be satisfied are: (a) the search must be justified at the beginning and (b) the search must be related to violations of school policies or rules. The search must be conducted as a result of the presence of legitimate suspicion. Mr. Green appropriately applied the two-part test and his search produced a stash of illegal prescription drugs and money being held by his student. According to the ruling, a search may be justified based on a variety of reasons which include but are not limited to anonymous tips, phone calls, student informers, police tips, and student behavior that is out of the ordinary (Yell, 1998).

Unfortunately, in this case, the college partners declined to participate in the investigation. Therefore, no one ever found out what, if any, adults were involved in the buying and/or selling of those drugs in and around the college buildings. In short, there was no way to determine the number of students who continued to be negatively impacted by the sell and distribution of illegal prescription drugs on the campus.

In their study of school climate and how school-level factors explain differences in the likelihood of students being victimized in school, Zaykowski and Gunter (2011) found that students’ risks of victimization increased with their involvement in deviant behavior. In
this case, the college missed an opportunity to investigate a known case of drugs being sold on the college campus. Furthermore, they missed an opportunity to put a stop to any additional ECHS students being exposed to the influences and behaviors of the adults on campus who may have been involved. Left unchecked, this activity around ECHS students could lead to academic failure, physical consequences from drug exposure, and criminal behavior by purchasing or selling drugs. Therefore, the seemingly small issue of an ECHS student being in the wrong place from time to time can quickly turn into a negative, life-altering experience for both the student and his family.

The student in possession of the prescription drugs and money was suspended from school and eventually attended a drug program and alternative school. Every ECHS should incorporate some type of drug awareness training into their program for both students and staff. The opportunity for exposure to drugs and alcohol is high for ECHS students due to their close daily contact with traditional college adults as well as campus visitors who come onto campus from various location with various intentions. Studies have revealed that students are less likely to have difficulty in college when they are exposed to interventions while still in high school (Ahern, 2009). For the ECHS students exposure to interventions that will address their transition to college classes and college life should begin in middle school or at least during their first year of high school at the ECHS. It is critical that these interventions take place prior to ECHS students taking their first college class or intermingling in any way with traditional college students.

ECHS students will be exposed to most of the same college benefits and setbacks as traditional college students. The difference for ECHs students is that they are not mentally,
emotionally, or psychologically mature enough to appropriately or successfully navigate those setbacks. The shared setbacks on campus for ECHS and traditional college students can range anywhere from experiencing anxiety over meeting with a college instructor to being involved in a robbery or assault. For ECHS students to be both personally and academically successful, school leaders and their college partners must work together to incorporate personal safety programs that address students’ total well-being. It is critical for school leaders to address the students’ unique needs as high school students who must co-exist on an open college campus environment. The collaborative partnership here is key. Zaykowski and Gunter (2011) argue that schools should make an effort to build a sense of community by building strong relationships with partners who are willing to work with them to reduce school violence.

**Issues of age: high school and college-age student interactions**

On ECHS campuses where there is a clear, physical separation between the ECHS building or location and the general college population, school administrators must institute policies and practices that limit student exposure to adult social situations at school. The limited exposure to traditional college adults is particularly important early on for ECHS students because many of them will likely need interventions related to social skills and decision making in addition to academics. This is because the goal of the ECHS is to target students who may not have had an opportunity to attend a college or university. To help grow a more competitive workforce, the primary target student group for ECHSs is low-income and first-generation college students (Hoffman & Vargas, 2010; Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013).
In addition, the location of ECHSs on college and university campuses and the collaboration between college and school administrators, enable high school students to attend college classes and experience college life early (Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013). However, it is the responsibility of the ECHS leaders to ensure that the college life experiences of the students are positive, productive, and age-appropriate. Therefore, to the greatest extent possible, ECHS students must be shielded from those college life elements that could cause them harm. “There’s one thing I have an issue with and I don’t know how other schools deal with it because we’ve got sex offenders over there. What about my students over there because those folks have to be so many feet or distance from them?” With a sigh, Mr. Blue said, “Now what do you do with that? It’s just something in my mind. How do you deal with that?”

All three ECHS sites had put measures in place to deter student socializing with traditional college adults. On the other hand, none had specifically addressed the issue of ECHS students being near, and likely interacting with, sex offenders. Because the potential for ECHS students to be in close proximity or contact with a sex offender is high, school leaders and their college partners must address this issue prior to something taking place with an ECHS student. Options could include stricter monitoring processes; formal student classes/training related to personal safety; and social and safety student testing that mirrors academic testing for college readiness. Interventions such as these are critical for ECHS students because they have many of the same experiences as first-year college students. According to Fromme, Corbin, and Kruse (2008), first-year college students often have limited supervision and increased opportunities to participate in risky behaviors such as
alcohol use and casual sex. Some ECHS students can and will fall victim to these elements, even though they are in high school and living at home, if they align themselves with an older college group who may or may not know their true age or high school student status.

Oftentimes, the keen eye and safety consciousness of ECHS leaders is put to the test by the traditional college adults. On one such occasion, Mr. Blue saw a young man near his building and asked him who he was, he recalls him saying, “I’m so and so’s brother and I’m here to pick her up.” Mr. Blue walked with him to the ECHS building and asked the young man, “Do you know how old that young lady is?” The young man said, “What do you mean?” Mr. Blue retorted, “I don’t know of anybody who don’t know the age of their sister. See, I listen very well. I’m gonna call the police and have them come pick you up.” The young man quickly left the campus with a long trail of dust flying from the back of his car. In this case the situation was averted, but what about the ones that are missed? In terms of gender differences, male students have a greater risk of experiencing violence or being threatened at school (Dinkes et al. 2009). Female students, on the other hand, are targeted more for gendered harassment and sexual victimization and tend to be less confident about being able to defend themselves (Meyer, 2008).

In a serious case involving a student disappearance from an ECHS, a young female student left the main campus of Ms. Brown’s school one day and never returned. “That was as frightening as anything I’ve lived through. The reason that was possible, and that’s not to say it couldn’t happen in a K-12 environment, is the open campus,” Ms. Brown explained. We have no idea where she went.” For three weeks, the worried parents and police stayed in constant contact with Ms. Brown. There was an all-out search for this young girl. “We have
no idea how she left the campus or who she left with, but in an open campus environment
and you're monitoring your carpool thing, but somebody comes through, she walks away
from the building, she catches up with somebody on the top of the hill and you're done.
History. She was history and that was among the scariest things that ever happened.”

Approximately one month after the student disappeared from campus, she was found
in an apartment located in a large city in another state, she was quickly pulled out of a scary
situation where she ended up being held by strangers. Ms. Brown was told, the student was
meeting up with a man she recently met on campus in an attempt to run away from her
parents who were too strict for her liking. “She was running away right into the hands of
some pretty sketchy characters. They were already reinventing her.” Ms. Brown continued,
“I’m convinced, knowing now what I know about human trafficking, that she was about to be
trafficked into prostitution. Her family would have never seen her again, ever. When her
family saw her for the first time, they did not recognize her, which is classic trafficking
behavior.”

This case demonstrates how easy it is for a determined, high safety risk student to
walk away from and open campus environment and get into an extremely dangerous
situation. Here the overarching questions must focus on how ECHS students are selected and
if different student screening methods should be put in place? The current ECHS goal of
targeting first-generation and underrepresented student groups in the college going
population is not in question. What is in question is the philosophy that nearly all middle
school students have high enough levels of maturity and self-management skills to be on a
college campus at the age of 13 or 14.
Each of the three case study principals described different methods used in their student application process. However, none of them had a component in their application process that checked for potential safety red flags with high risk students. In fact, Mr. Green’s school had an application process in place, but ultimately every applicant is admitted, regardless of their past school behaviors and willingness or ability to comply with school rules and expectations. The only occasion where students were not admitted to the Challenger ECHS involved students who had a severe learning disability that the school was not equipped or staffed to serve.

**Colliding norms: K-12 vs college policies and expectations**

The policies and safety procedures that apply on an open college campus do not apply in a K-12 environment. “So you have protections that are uniquely associated with the K-12 environment that do not apply in an adult community,” Ms. Brown clarified. She further highlighted that it is unique to the early college environment where the administration and school are accountable to dual policies. On one hand, the school system policies afford students the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them. Then on the other hand, sits the policies of the college that treats everyone as an adult who is responsible for their own actions and will face certain universal consequences when certain behaviors occur. In other words, she clarifies, “You’re caught between two worlds that are not consistent in their treatment of infractions. The college does not see itself as teaching adult behavior. It is there to teach curriculum, not to teach them how to be a student.” However, the ECHS leaders and their college partners must come together to educate both the students as well as their parents about how an ECHS student should behave and respond on an open campus. Also, the ECHS
community must be educated on the specific differences between K-12 and college safety practices and purpose.

An example of that would be in the area of lockdown drills. The use of lockdown drills are growing in popularity among the nation’s high schools (Higgins, 2008). With the majority of traditional high schools being housed in one or more connecting buildings, the lockdown procedures could be quite effective in protecting students and school employees from a potential threat (Fox & Savage, 2009). In contrast, attempting to lockdown a college or university campus could prove to be nearly impossible due to the size and scope of the campus. Also, lockdown procedures could be in contrast with the overall goal of any college or university to provide free flow and access to the open college campus atmosphere (Fox & Savage, 2009). The lockdown safety policy, now mandated by many public school districts, was highlighted by principals in the survey as well as those in the case study. The growing concern is that ECHSs must complete lockdown drills in teaching students about safety. Conversely, all colleges do not have such a mandate related to lockdown drills. Therefore, in many cases, the ECHS leaders end up fulfilling this requirement on their own independent of their college partners. This is not the best practice because ECHS students attend college classes as well. Therefore, there should be some uniformity around processes related to a campus lockdown during a crisis situation. These are life-saving measures that would benefit the entire cam

From the ECHS perspective, school policy is there primarily to teach. According to Ms. Brown, “The goal is to teach children how to be a successful, contributing part of their educational community. This is why the college and high school policies can sometimes be
in conflict. In composing the ECHS handbook, attention must be paid to the realities of state law and district policy.” She also asserted that it is equally important to ensure that everybody in the school community understands the relationship between the community college policy and process around student due process. In addition, they must be aware of the places where the school system policy may have to be second to the community college policy and vice versa. Specifically, this information must be clear to the students, the teachers, the parents, and the partnering agencies.

The different institution policies are of great importance when it comes to communicating with parents. Ms. Brown reported, “ECHS parents need to know that once that child enters the college, that college sees that child, even an early college student as an adult, so he's responsible for his or her own actions and federal laws prohibit access to information that would not apply in the high school setting, so parents must be apprised and informed.” On the other hand, it must be acknowledged and addressed during the planning for the school, that ECHS students are not adults. They will not react to all situations as adults, will not make adult decisions, and do not have the same legal rights as adults. Therefore, safety measures, such as sign in procedures and student monitoring processes, must be put in place to address the ECHS dual existence.

In addition, it is incumbent upon the school to make sure that parents have access to all of the policies associated with the college so they know how to coach their children. This is an area where the work of the college liaison, representing and teaching the college position, is so critical. This proactive communication will help bridge the gap between the policies of both institutions. Ms. Brown clarifies, “With the college policies there is an adult
lens that sees its students as self-initiating and responsible for their own personal safety. To the contrary, the lens of K-12 is in loco parentis. In other words, the school is responsible for their students’ safety because they are not old enough or wise enough to fully make sound, self-regulating decisions.”

At the college level, nearly all campuses are governed by a code of student conduct. These campus policies, second only to federal, state, and municipal laws, outline the expectations that require students to act respectfully while allowing the campus to remain free of bullying, intimidation, or violence (Amada, 2007). In 1998, Congress passed an updated version of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (Public Law 101-542). This revised law is known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Public Law 105-244) (Janosik and Gehring, 2003). This legislation was sparked from the tragic rape and murder of a female student at Lehigh University. The act mandates that all colleges and universities distribute a specifically defined security report to all current students and employees. ECHS leaders and their college partners could use these reports to determine where the greatest safety areas of need are. Then a specific plan of action for ECHS safety could be devised from the real-life security data from their specific campus.

At Mr. Blue’s school, parents often ask what he has in place to make sure their children are safe on the college campus. The parent concerns have some factual basis because, over the last 15 years, since the massacre at Columbine, the growing emphasis on student victimization in school has taken center stage. The fear of parents and school officials concerning student safety has merit because students are at the greatest risk of becoming
victimized close to or inside of their schools (Roberts et al. 2010). In 2011, seven percent of the nation’s 9th through 12th graders confirmed being threatened or injured, while at school, with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2012). For ECHS students, the school safety risk is compounded by several factors: the daily presence of adults (students and non-students) on the college campus; a lack of ECHS student maturity and social training that includes teaching skills to remain safe on a college campus; limited college safety resources and training for administrators and staff; and the recurring misalignment between K-12 and college policies and expectations. A caution highlighted by Hughes, White, and Giles (2008), states the increase in university administrator efforts to enact legislative change have done little to stop college campuses from becoming risky for students in areas ranging from misconduct to murder.

In the most serious threats to student safety, such as with school shooters, the majority of high school shooters lash out when they feel bullied or cast out by their classmates and/or teachers (Vossekuil et al. 2004). An example of negative consequences of having socially isolated students took place at Challenger ECHS. An early college male student hacked into the school’s shared Google Docs and posted the link to an online chat room. Later that evening, the principal, Mr. Green, found a posting in the email. He explained, “Someone had written a song talking about walking into a school and blowing everyone away. During the investigation, a couple of teachers reported a growing concern, "Well, we talked to some of our students, and they said they think they’ve seen ‘Joe’ on this website before." When Mr. Green asked why the student would be upset, one of the teachers replied, “I gave him a D on his math project, and he was angry about it.” When Mr. Green
asked if she thought he would do something like that the teacher added, "Well, he's kind of a strange kid. Yeah, he was upset."

With that additional information, Mr. Green questioned the student. Then the police included him in their investigation. The case was never solved; however, the fear and uneasy climate created by the incident would linger for many months to come. The staff and students no longer felt safe at school. One of the teachers became physically ill and had to take some time off. Another teacher said during a staff meeting, "Well, essentially we can prepare as much as we can prepare. We should be vigilant. Perhaps this student would have been flagged or not admitted at all if different screening methods were used to assess ECHS students for safety risks.

The majority of ECHS applicants could pass a safety risk inquiry without any problem, but for the few who have serious emotional, behavioral, or psychological concerns, the school administrators have a responsibility not to place those students in an environment they are not equipped to exist in safely. This not only protects the safety risk student, but it also protects all other students who could easily become victims of their classmate’s poor decisions or inappropriate actions. Thoroughly reviewing students past disciplinary records for extreme behavior along with asking specific questions about student safety concerns in recommendations (provided by administrators and teachers) could help save some ECHSs from events that negatively impact the school as well as the college.

Some ECHS students have the potential to pose as great of a safety risk on campus as unlawful adults. For example, in another case at Challenger ECHS, an unstable male student caused a campus panic. When the student arrived on campus, instead of reporting to class, he
got out of the car and put on a long, black trench coat, black hat, and mask. He was also carrying a large black stick with a flag tapped to it. He then starts walking around campus, carrying the bat dressed in all black with a mask. People who saw him on campus went into a panic wondering what this strange person was going to do.

Ultimately, the student was detained by campus police and the situation was de-escalated. In this case, the college and ECHS administration did work together to investigate the student’s behavior. Following the incident, the behavior and actions of the student continued to be monitored, but no additional interventions were put in place for him. A proactive response to this student display should have included a meeting with the school counselor; community counseling resource recommendations to the student and family; and school-wide interventions that included teachers, the ECHS counselor, and the principal. The school-wide interventions would provide academic and social support for the student as well as a regular avenue for him to check in with an adult about his perceptions and feelings related to school. In addition, when an adult college student displays violent or abnormal behavior, are the reasons for the behavior the same? What policies and practices are in place to address adult needs, behavior, and violence on the college campus?

In contrast to the motivation behind violent and potentially dangerous high school students discussed earlier, Fox and Savage (2009) pointed out, shooters at the college level are typically graduate students who kill in response to a perceived failure or extreme pressure to obtain an unreachable level of success. Understanding the possible school shooter issue is critical for ECHS students in particular, because they are exposed to adults, both in and outside of the classroom, who may feel personally slighted and turn to violence. This also
includes the college adults who may resort to violence in the face of personal and/or academic failure. This revelation leads to the important issue of mental health treatment and resources on the college campus. The adult mental health issue, which is largely unaddressed by colleges and universities, is a noteworthy area of concern when deciding to house ECHSs on college and university campuses (Hughes, White, & Hertz, 2008).

Following the Virginia Tech shootings that took the lives of 32 college students and faculty members, one third of the nation’s campus counseling centers added a minimum of one new employee, and an additional 15% increased their operating budgets (Farrell, 2008). Yet, these efforts are not nearly enough to meet the needs that exist. According to the International Association of Counseling Services, most colleges have a student-counselor ratio of 1,500 to 1. Gallagher (2009) revealed that college counseling centers refer 16% of the students they see for psychiatric evaluations. Also, 25% of the students that college counselors see are on medication for a psychiatric disorder.

Therefore, ECHS leaders and their college partners must take into consideration that ECHS students will come into contact with adults on campus who have a potential to display violent behavior and/or victimize early college students. Likewise, there may be some ECHS students with specific safety risks who also need different types of interventions and monitoring for their safety and the safety of others. School leaders must accurately assess student safety needs and decide upon effective safety measures to put in place, for individuals and the student body as a whole. ECHS leaders and their college partners must engage in regular communication and create a uniform process for identifying action items when making safety decisions. For the partners, their collective decision making will ebb and
flow through many cycles before a workable decision is reached. The process should be intentional in both seeking and finding viable solutions to the unique ECHS safety needs that arise on the college campus.

In the ECHS decision-making process, it is likely that many action cycles will occur at the same time (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The action cycle occurs in a series of steps that may overlap, periodically revert to previous steps, and/or occur simultaneously. The decision making action cycle steps are:

1. Recognize and define the problem or issue
2. Analyze the difficulties in the existing situation
3. Establish criteria for a satisfactory solution
4. Develop a plan or strategy of action
5. Initiate the plan of action
6. Evaluate the outcomes (p. 6).

Each of the study participants identified scenarios that included items 1, 4 and 5 from the list above; however, the other steps seemed to be lacking. Also, there seemed to be little purposeful collaboration between the college partners when identifying safety concerns and addressing them in a proactive way as opposed to a reactive one. The proactive elements that were discussed, such as information sessions and student orientation, were typically completed in isolation by the ECHS leaders with little input from the college partners. A general starting place must include a clear understanding of the major safety policies that govern both the ECHS and the college.
Implications

Implications for policy makers

The findings in this study may be used by educational policy makers to consider and include the growing number of ECHS students on college campuses. At the district level, policy makers could implement a uniform safety criteria for the ECHS student application process. The first tier of the process would include specific screening criteria for determining potential ECHS student maturity level and ability to follow directions. For students who could pose a safety risk following the first tier assessment, the process would also include a thorough review of their past behavior history in school that would include both formal documentation and informal observations or statements from teachers, counselors, and administrators. If a safety risk student made it through the second tier, rigorous interventions would be put in place to assist the student in becoming college ready in terms of self-regulating, following directions, and decision making.

The student screening process would allow the most extreme safety risk cases for ECHSs to be caught and accounted for in advance. Depending on the recommendations of a selection team, the safety risk student would either be admitted with an intervention plan or would not be admitted for that application period at all. One of the primary stipulations of the screening process would emphasize that ECHS target population students not be unfairly labeled as safety risk students because of cultural or socioeconomic barriers in their educational history. The point would be to identify ECHS applicants who had the greatest potential for violence, criminal behavior, and unsafe decision making based on prior behaviors and a lack of response to interventions to correct those behaviors. Each student
story throughout this case study provided an example of an ECHS student who was not ready to be on an open college campus due to poor decision making in communicating with adults; trying to avert school rules with an adult accomplice; using technology to communicate school-wide threats; buying and selling drugs on campus; and leaving campus with adults who held them against their will for several weeks.

There are two important documents that include ECHS policies and practices that school leaders, college partners, and district leaders could use as a platform for clarifying the differences, expectations, and requirements that exist for ECHSs. The first step would be to include critical information related to ECHSs in all district policy manuals and student/parent handbooks. The critical information should include, but not be limited to the mission of ECHSs, locations, applications, and selection processes. Also, ECHS information should include brief details about FERPA, the college or university partners that serve the local school district; programs of study available; and student/parent expectations related to student support, school communication, and following all policies and safety procedures of both the school district and the college.

The second step is to include all ECHS district policy information along with ECHS campus-specific information in the student/parent handbook. Each ECHS will have a very different handbook that outlines daily, weekly, monthly, and annual campus policies and procedures that are tailored to that specific site. Policies related to due process and the student code of conduct should be included. Likewise, college policies that address due process and the student code of conduct should be included as well because ECHS students are obligated to adhere to the policies and expectations of both institutions. The ECHS
student/parent handbook must also include an explanation of what students need to do to remain an ECHS student. If the primary goal is to grow college-ready students who go on to four-year colleges and universities to become strong, contributing members of the nation’s workforce, then the conditions under which program participation is no longer an asset to the student or school must be made clear as well. For example, a student who regularly skips classes or has poor grades, will be dropped from college courses due to a violation of the college attendance policy.

A continued pattern of not attending classes, despite school interventions, would indicate that the student is not college ready at this time. As an intervention action item, the school must focus on scheduling the student to complete his or her high school graduation requirements. Once the graduation requirements are met for high school, the student will graduate without doing any further damage to his or her college record which will allow the student an opportunity to still be competitive in the college application process when ready. In some cases, ECHS leaders have to make decisions that will alleviate turning a current student problem into a life-long barrier to their future success.

**Implications for practice**

ECHS principals could use the results of this study to select and decide upon appropriate safety practices and policies that maximized student safety on the college campus. Results from the principal survey revealed that 90% of ECHS principals have to address issues specifically related to high school students being on an open college campus with adults. Furthermore, 24% of the survey participants and 100% of the case study participants specifically identified ECHS student and college adult interactions/relationships
as a primary concern on their campus. The student-adult issues addressed ranged from inappropriate verbal communication to inappropriate sexual relationships. Therefore, ECHS principals must first play an active role in the student application, assessment, and selection process. In other words, principals must have an opportunity to review student applicant data for any red flags pointing to a history of violence, drug or alcohol abuse, chronic truancy, or chronic mental health issues. Students who are identified as safety risk in any of these areas should be admitted under strict intervention plans or not admitted at all. In some cases, independent of academic records, safety risk students should not be admitted to ECHS programs where their exposure to high risk adults will be much higher as they have increasing opportunities to take full advantage of the ECHS program on the college campus.

Collective case study outcomes uncovered a recurring concern for principals in the area of monitoring student movement on the college campus. All case study participants recalled multiple events related to the challenges of effectively documenting and keeping track of student whereabouts on campus. Therefore, principals could use this study to guide their decisions related to monitoring student locations throughout the day on campus, particularly when they are not in class. For some, it is will be as simple as mandating that ECHS students must report to the ECHS building during any open time or gaps between classes during the day. However, other ECHSs do not have a separate building for the ECHS program. In addition, they may not have enough classroom space or staff to house or monitor students in large groups. In these cases, principals will have to be more intentional, directive, and creative with their student monitoring methods. Some study examples include incorporating a mandatory student sign in and out procedure for each hour students are not in
class; conducting regular administrative campus walks for visibility; and assigning safety risk
students to monitored intervention time with ECHS staff.

Finally, building a relationship with the campus police is another vital step that ECHS
principals can take to help increase the adult eyes on campus who are watching the ECHS
students. To get the most out of the partnership with campus police, ECHS leaders need to
communicate key state and district policies related to K-12 students and minors. Officers will
be familiar with laws related to minors, but they may not be as familiar with how they apply
in the school setting. Adults on the college campus are free to do many things that ECHS
students are not. Therefore, clarifying those major areas specifically is an important step in
selecting and deciding upon student safety measures.

Case study data illustrated that ECHS principals should have a clear student and
parent orientation plan, which includes a safety component, prior to the first day of school.
The unique goals, location, and partnership of ECHSs dictate that school leaders must
thoroughly educate current and future students and parents. All ECHS orientation and
educational programs should include information about the safety policies, procedures, and
expectations that are unique to the ECHS setting. Principals should include their college
partners in their safety orientation planning so program dates and agenda items meet the
needs of both institutions. Parents and students will benefit from meeting and hearing from
campus police, security guards, and the college liaison on matters related to student safety on
campus. Orientation trainings and reviews should include, but not be limited to campus
logistics (e.g. acceptable areas for ECHS students on campus; emergency numbers; use of
emergency call boxes; how to report an incident or suspicious activity; appropriate
communication with traditional adult college students; major/relevant school district and college policies related to safety; and locations where ECHS students must be during open times between classes).

The issue of wearing IDs for ECHS students could be an appropriate starting point for principals and college partners to come to consensus. This must be an individual campus decisions between the ECHS leaders and their college partners based on their specific campus culture and traditional population. On one hand, mandating that the ECHS students wear visible IDs at all times immediately differentiates them from the traditional adult population. This would instantly identify them as high school students and minors who are off limits. On the other hand, if a college campus has a significant number of sex offenders on campus, the IDs could potentially make the ECHS students targets for would-be repeat offenders. In most cases, it would be best to err on the side of providing due notice to all college adults that there are high school students on campus. In the one study ECHS students were required to wear IDs in a visible form and college students were informed about the early college program, the principal reported lower and less severe accounts of student-adult incidents.

College leaders could use the data from this study to implement education programs that informed college staff and students about the early college program on campus. Of the survey and case study participants 33% of both groups revealed having no or very limited safety planning or communication with their college partners. Empowering all college faculty and staff with ECHS program information and student names could serve as an effective safety measure for students. Simply put, the more faculty and staff know about the program
and program participants, the more they can assist in protecting the ECHS students when necessary. This includes protecting the students from their own poor decisions as well as protecting them from adults on campus who may seek them out as easy targets. The college faculty and staff will have the contact information of the ECHS college liaison as a main point of contact for all matters concerning the early college program.

School leaders could also provide college staff with important contact information for the principal and other key ECHS staff members to decrease the chances of an important communication delay when the college liaison is not available or in the office. The college faculty and staff would not be expected to actively “police” the early college students. They would simply be asked to report any behavior that is unusual, suspicious, or inappropriate for a high school student. The report would then be addressed by the campus police, college liaison, ECHS principal, and/or ECHS counselor.

Misalignment of practices related to lockdown drills was identified as a major concern for 24% of survey participants and 33% of case study participants. Study outcomes revealed that state and local school district safety drill/crisis response policies differed greatly from the college and university practices. Furthermore, 33% of principal survey respondents reported having no involvement at all in safety planning sessions or meetings. Using the steps outlined in the Decision-Making Action Cycle (Hoy & Miskel, 2005), ECHS leaders and their college partners could develop a regular meeting schedule to analyze, discuss, and decide upon clear, uniform safety drill/crisis response procedures. Answering critical safety questions in advance could prove to be life-saving measures in the event of an actual crisis. For example, what are the differences between local K-12 and college lockdown procedures?
Where can procedural gaps be closed or minimized? In the event of a campus evacuation, where will ECHS students and staff go and how will they get there? All major partners from both sides should work together to implement a working plan that keeps both institutions in compliance while also serving the best interest of the students. Knowing what to do in the time of a crisis will make students and staff feel more secure and less apprehensive when they need to act. Ultimately, positive communication and relationships between partner leaders will lead to a more positive school climate for ECHS teachers and students who are housed on the college campus.

Two of the three case study principals played critical roles in facilitating positive relationships with their college partners. Other principals could use their actions as a blueprint for building a positive school and community climate. As this research study and others have pointed out, schools with positive school climates tend to have less student safety incidents. In this study, the principals of Alliance ECHS and Boulder ECHS had regular, open communication with the college. They also were respected, active participants in determining mission-critical policies and procedures on the ECHS campus. Both principals communicated expectations regularly with students, staff, and parents and took a personal interest in building relationships with students. Each principal also viewed and conducted themselves as principal-parents who were authoritative, direct, compassionate, fair, relatable, and protective. These qualities helped them to reach and maintain a school culture where students wanted to go to school and learn. These principals still had student safety incidents, just as any other school would; however, the response to student incidents was a swift and
collective effort with the college partners as active participants. Therefore, with both ECHS administration and partner input, a viable solution was reached in a shorter time period.

Results from this study could be used by ECHS leaders and their college partners to build comprehensive safety education programs that focused on K-12 safety measures as well as the college safety policies. The education programs, unlike the parent open houses and orientation sessions, would have a regular presentation schedule (bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly) that addressed various campus safety topics. Leadership of the presentations would be a shared effort between the principal, counselor, teachers, school nurse, college liaison, campus police, college counseling department, and students. Topics could include safety and counseling resources, crime prevention and intervention, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, drugs and alcohol, date rape, self-defense, and social warning signs (situation specific).

At some point, ECHSs may create student safety clubs/organizations that focus on school-wide education and service-oriented projects. Student safety club, under the direction of carefully selected staff members, could take on activities such as helping to restock emergency bags/kits, creating regular safety newsletters, suggesting safety improvements for the school, organizing and participating in all safety education programs. Student leadership here would increase open communication between students and staff as well as promote a positive school climate overall.

**Implications for research and study limitations**

This study used a two phase case study research design to examine how ECHS leaders and their college partners select and decide upon safety protocols. In the first phase of
the study, 21 ECHS principals responded to online survey questions related to ECHS safety. Following the survey, results were compiled and principals and study cites were selected for in-depth study. Phase two of the study included principal interviews, a counselor and teacher interview, cite visits, and document reviews. Each principal was interviewed twice. The case study methodology allowed the researcher to build relationships with the participants while capturing the depth, richness, and essence of their stories related to ECHS student safety.

There is a large amount of research on student safety in general; however, the literature is highly limited as it relates to ECHSs. The body of research is even further limited when it comes to the topic of ECHSs and safety. This research will contribute to that body of literature.

The surface has not been scratched in the area of research and ECHS student safety. This study uncovered several areas where further study is warranted. The topic of student safety can, in essence be related to every person and every aspect of an educational environment. Under the umbrella of ECHS student safety in this study, future researchers could examine the impact that college campus safety issues have on students directly. It would stand to reason that ECHS student would underreport being aware of college campus crime, being victims of college campus crime, or participating in college campus criminal activity (just as these issues are underreported with traditional college students). Given the right circumstances, identity protection, and opportunity to receive help, ECHS students may be willing to open up about their safety-related experiences. The data from this study could have a great impact on ECHS policy and practice for future generations.
This study focused on adult choices and decisions related to ECHS safety protocols. A research study focused on safety risk ECHS students could also yield powerful data in terms of cause, effect, and response to interventions. This study could help reveal where and when school difficulties began for these students. These students may also be more willing to be honest in providing answers and feedback relating to their activities on campus because they will not have to protect their “good reputation”. The safety risk students could also provide insight into ECHS interventions that worked and did not work for them. Finally, and most important, the student information on what kept them from being successful could have a great impact on future ECHS planning and how to best serve safety risk students.

The study maintained a focus on local school district leaders at the ECHS level and their communication with their college partners. This included 21 principal safety survey participants and 3 principal case study participants. The case study schools were all located on community college campuses. This was the result of the self-selection process for consideration for participation in the study, via the principal survey and referral. Furthermore, the participants and schools were only located in the Southeastern part of the United States. To get a larger sample of participants, future researchers should pull participants from a wider area to avoid geographic limitations and convenience sampling. Also, a future study design would account for the inclusion of an ECHS four-year college or university partner. Here campus safety comparisons could be drawn between the community college and four-year college or university participants. The study could also examine the campus safety differences between ECHS students who are housed on campuses that have traditional college student living quarters and those who are not.
Local school district safety policies which govern ECHSs are dictated by federal and state laws. For ECHS leaders whose schools are housed on a college or university campus, the navigation of policies and procedures is more challenging because these principals must adhere to federal law, state law, k-12 school district policies, and college policies/procedures. This study focused on how ECHS leaders manage the laws and policies for k-12 schools along with the policies of their college partners. Future ECHS studies should seek to examine how college and/or university partners navigate laws that apply to the k-12 policies that are in place to protect minor school children against their own campus policies. By including the ECHS liaison, campus security, and campus police in the study, researchers will obtain a wider data set for deeper analysis.

Data from this study could help other researchers gain more insight into specific safety concerns on ECHS campuses. The survey questions and interviews in this research study focused on the creation and implementation of safety policies. The level of participation ECHS principals had in attending safety meetings with their college partners and the creation/revision of the school Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was a focus. The final area of emphasis included collecting data how often ECHS leaders had to address safety issues related to ECHS students being on an open college campus with adults. Research studies following this one could address more specific areas of ECHS student safety. Focusing on specific safety topics would reveal data that pointed to the frequency of certain safety policy violations or crimes involving ECHS students. Some of the specific ECHS student safety topics could include leaving campus with unauthorized adults or strangers; having an intimate or sexual relationship with a traditional college student; buying
or selling drugs on campus; being a victim of harassment or bullying; harassing or bullying others; hitting or fighting with other students or adults; skipping high school or college classes; and receiving or sending threatening/inappropriate messages via the internet.

Student data from the case studies in this research highlighted the presence of some mental health issues among ECHS students (a runaway, substance abuse/distribution, threatening internet messages, inappropriate/threatening public display). Additional research in this area would include administrator, counselor, and teacher perceptions on mental health crisis among ECHS students. The study could examine the various types of mental health issues that are present within the student body; how those issues present themselves in terms of behavior; how the issues are addressed; and what the outcomes are. Following this part of the research, the study should look at how the ECHS student mental health issues compare to the traditional college student mental health issues both in the literature and on their specific campus. Finally, what recommendations would counselors and school leaders make to ensure the safety of the student body and the students who need additional help?

**Conclusion**

The topic of student safety is important for every school. In the case of ECHS, school safety is critical because of the school’s location on a college campus and the close proximity students will have with traditional college adults and general campus visitors from the community. This two phase case study examined on how ECHS leaders and their college partners decide upon and implement safety protocols. Phase one of the study included an ECHS Principal Safety Survey. Principals in the Southeastern part of the United States completed the survey online via Survey Monkey.
The survey results revealed that one-third of the principal participants, 33%, have close communication with campus police and use them as their first source of contact in the event of an emergency or incident. In a location related concern, 90% of principals reported having to address safety issues related to high school students being on an open college or university campus (e.g. communication with adults; monitoring student whereabouts; incidents with adults, etc.). In addition, 24% of principals specifically identified ECHS student and college adult interactions/relationships as a primary concern. One principal emphasized her, “Inability to keep younger community college students (esp. those with criminal records or high school dropouts) away from the early college building, facilities, etc.” Another principal pointed out, “We monitor students travel to and from the college daily and ensure locations where [traditional college] students congregate are not frequented by early college students.”

In the decision making process with their college partners, 90% of participating principals reported playing an active role in the creation or revision of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This is a promising data point because the MOU serves as a blueprint of the legal agreement the local public school district and the college or university partner. Furthermore, for 43% of ECHS principals, significant safety incidents on campus related to ECHS student safety led to changes being made in the MOU. On the other hand, implementing MOU safety policies that were not directly aligned with the public school district policy for all schools was an operational reality for 53% of participating principals.

The second phase of the study included case studies of three ECHS principals (two current and one retired). The case study focused on the impact of each principal’s stories as
they related to the location of the ECHS on the college campus; the communication and
decision making processes used between the ECHS leaders and their college partners;
specific incidents and school climate; and significant safety incidents that impacted the
principal’s safety decisions and/or relationship with their community partners. During this
phase of the study, ECHS safety data was gathered during site visits and in-depth interviews
with three principals (one retired), one counselor, and one teacher. Each principal was
interviewed twice. Additional school safety information was also searched and/or obtained
through a review of documents and resources such as the MOU, student handbook, district
student/parent handbook, school district website, school website, and college website.

Results from the case study interviews revealed three emerging themes related to
ECHS student safety:

1. Tracking: Monitoring student movement on campus

2. Issues of age: High school and college-age student interactions

3. Colliding norms: K-12 vs college policies and expectations

These three themes were dominant throughout the principal stories and therefore
revealed major areas where ECHS principals and college partners may focus their collective
efforts to ensure ECHS students safety on the college campus. Each theme highlighted a
different and unique challenge for ECHS leaders. In the two case studies where the principals
had solid working relationships with their college partners, incidents were handled quickly
and efficiently. However, in the case study where the principal and his staff did not have a
consistent, clear, cooperative, or well-defined relationship with their college partners,
incidents were addressed on the ECHS side in isolation. This also included incidents where
policies of both institutions had been violated by ECHS students. Factors contributing to this lack of communication and participation from the college partners may include a lack of clearly established protocols for ECHS safety issues; partner perceptions related to the ECHS students (they are not our responsibility at all); the inexperience of the principal; or past experiences (prior to the arrival of the current principal) that left a negative shadow over the relationship between the local school district and the college. Whatever the cause, it is important for the school and college leaders to come together to work out a viable safety protocols and response plan moving forward. The safety of the entire campus could depend on it someday.

This study contributes to the body of school safety research because the research on ECHSs is quite limited in comparison to other areas in education. Likewise, there is significantly less research specifically related to ECHSs and student safety. This study provides baseline data for ECHS leaders and their college partners to begin assessment and planning sessions around campus characteristics, district and college policies, and student safety needs. There are a myriad of school safety data sources and research studies related to school safety for traditional schools as well as colleges and universities. However, those data and study areas do not speak directly to the unique location, school design, and safety needs that go along with housing high school-aged ECHS students on open college and university campuses with adults. As the demand for opening more ECHSs increases each year across the nation, it will be critical for school leaders and their college partners to plan and prepare for the safety needs of early college students on college and university campuses.
Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Although ECHSs provide powerful opportunities for students to earn a two-year college degree or transferable college credits while still in high school, ECHS leaders must also take specific steps to ensure the safety of their students on college and university campuses. The reported and underreported instances of crime and violence on college and university campuses around the country each year speak to the potential dangers facing ECHS students. If these potential dangers are not addressed and left unchecked, a student’s ECHS experience could end with tragic results. This study underscores those potential dangers and the unique safety needs of ECHS students attending classes each day on open college campuses.

In my experience and research as an ECHS administrator, I have averted, or helped to avert, numerous events with ECHAS students that could have easily ended with the student being severely victimized and/or injured in some way. Over the years, these experiences taught me to be especially sensitive to students that I refer to as safety risk students. ECHS safety risk students are students who come into the college or university setting with risk factors that put them at an even greater risk of being victimized or committing a crime themselves on an open college or university. Typically, these students come to the ECHS program with poor attendance, lower grades, social difficulties, and/or a history of violence or non-compliance with school rules.

Safety risk students, who were unsuccessful as ECHS students, generally also have a higher rate of depression and other mental health challenges. Unfortunately, these students are often targeted by and fall victim to older, traditional college students as well as adults...
who visit the campus often, but are not students enrolled with the college at all. ECHS students are targeted by some dangerous, predatory adults for assault, robbery, drugs (as customers and dealers), and sexual favors, just to name a few. For many students, the ECHS experience is smooth with very little or no experience with the dangerous side of campus life. However, other ECHS students are sought out by, and attracted to, the most dangerous individuals that come and go each day on their college campus. Those safety risk students are the ones that ECHS leaders must work proactively to protect from others as well as themselves.

Effective ECHS safety measures may be established by first developing clear, written policies and expectations with college partners including the liaison, campus police, campus faculty, and campus students. Second, leaders must evaluate and decide upon a fair and effective student application process where unique student needs may be planned for in advance of their arrival on campus. The application process should also include, carefully screening for (and then providing targeted interventions for) safety risk students who are accepted into the ECHS program. The personally designed intervention step for safety risk ECHS students is critical in protecting the health, well-being, and academic success of those students.

Each ECHS leader should also utilize the counselors and mental health resources, both on site and at the district level, to design comprehensive counseling programs that address the unique needs of high schools students who attend classes daily on an open college campus. Many ECHS students in my research and work over the years displayed increasing personal challenges as they became more emerged into college life and
expectations. The greater social and academic demands of college, for many ECHS students, has ultimately led to ongoing struggles with self-confidence, managing appropriate relationships, falling grades, skipping classes, depression, and suicidal ideation. Therefore, in addition to planning safety intervention measures with college partners and school counselors, ECHS leaders must educate and train all students, parents, and teachers in the safety measures and potential dangers that are unique to, or more prevalent on, college campuses (see Table 5.2).
### Table 5.2: ECHS Safety Recommendations for Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECHS Safety Recommendations: ECHS Leaders</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>District Leaders and Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior to first day of school</strong></td>
<td>Safety orientation, Summer camp, Handbook, Signed agreement, and Sign up for campus alert system</td>
<td>Safety orientation, Handbook, Signed agreement, Whom to Contact List, Review of campus and public school resources, Sign up for campus alert system</td>
<td>Safety orientation, Handbook, and Intervention planning for all students and individual ‘safety risk’ students with behavior and/or academic concerns (new and returning students)</td>
<td>Review of ECHS differences and needs with district leaders and college partners (safety, college campus crime reports, school calendar, transportation, testing, facility needs, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily/Weekly/Monthly</strong></td>
<td>Review campus check-in or sign-in procedures and make immediate contact with students who fail to follow safety procedures. Notify parents and request a planning conference for repeat offenses</td>
<td>Communicate with parents regularly about safety and academic concerns with their child. Provide regular general campus updates</td>
<td>Train teachers to monitor students for signs of distress or unusual behavior and how to make a report. Design training with school counselors</td>
<td>Monitor and update student tracking processes and interactions with adults on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester</strong></td>
<td>Meet with all students to review current and updated safety practices/expectations on campus</td>
<td>'Train parents on viewing their child’s online grades and how to note changes in behavior/attitude towards school</td>
<td>Review campus intervention plans and make necessary adjustments with teachers</td>
<td>Review your college campus crime report and make appropriate student safety adjustments. Help design and schedule safety training, and emergency drills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-going Annually</strong></td>
<td>Conduct a student campus safety survey and provide campus safety training sessions for all students</td>
<td>Conduct a parent safety survey and provide campus safety training sessions for all parents</td>
<td>Review campus safety policies/updates with all teachers annually and conduct teacher safety survey</td>
<td>MOU updates, Policy reviews, Safety revisions, and Student application reviews/revisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ECHS leaders and their college partners also need to implement more personalized and purposeful safety training for all stakeholders involved with the program. This includes, but is not limited to parents, students, teachers, campus police, school district personnel, college/university faculty, and college/university students. For example, ECHS leaders must be sensitive when addressing the challenge of designing effective parent education programs. ECHSs target first generation students who are underrepresented in the college going population. Therefore, the parents of these students may not be as comfortable or knowledgeable when it comes to navigating school policies and expectations. At ECHSs, the challenges for first generation parents are compounded when college expectations and policies are added to the ECHS program and school district expectations and policies for their children. The bottom line is, parents don’t know what they don’t know. Therefore, it is the responsibility of both the ECHS leaders and college partners to regularly and systematically inform and educate the parents of ECHS students.

The first step with ECHS parent education programs is to present school safety information where and when it can be thoroughly presented and explained. Oftentimes, in our age of technology, parents and students are simply told where information may be accessed online. With the ECHS program, it is vital that the major, applicable school district policies are presented and explained along with the college policies that will have the greatest impact for students and parents. Even if it is only one page, parents should leave with a tangible reminder that the ECHS leaders take student safety seriously and want them to be well informed (this will also increase the comfort level of parents who do not have internet
access or may not be computer savvy). Safety policies should also be provided in both English and Spanish for families with those needs.

For ECHSs, there are always areas where college policies and school district policies do not align. This means ECHS leaders and their college partners must come together and decide on specific occasions where one institution’s policy may trump the other. Following those key decisions, parents and students must be made aware of the policies and specific ECHS accommodations prior to the start of school. Students and parents should also be educated on how to make an informed decision about college campus safety and the ECHS program during informational open houses prior to the student application period (most ECHSs are application schools).

Kathleen Baty (2011), reflected on the research of reporter, Lisa Collier Cool and other investigative reporters who compiled an article for Reader’s Digest outlining college safety measures in a tool called the Safety Preparedness Index. The point of the index was to highlight elements that parents and students should look for when considering a college or university. In that same vein, ECHS parents and students should carefully look at both the ECHS college campus features as well as the ECHS program itself to make sure that they are comfortable with both before making a final decision. The key findings from the index on page 25 that are most applicable to ECHS students (who do not reside on the college or university campuses) are identified below. Next to each index finding, I have also added specific ECHS elements that parents and students should look for, or inquire about, when they are researching a prospective ECHS program on a college or university campus:
• Number of college students overall (is there a plan for acclimating ECHS students to college courses and traditional college students over time)

• Parking lots on campus are monitored by security cameras (does the school provide specific ECHS policies and expectations related to student drivers on campus)

• Number of blue-light emergency phones on campus (student, parent, and staff training is provided for all safety processes and procedures)

• Students must show ID to enter library

• There is a freshman orientation program (there is a similar ECHS orientation that focuses specifically on college resources, policies, and safety)

• There is a discussion of personal safety at student orientation, including drugs, alcohol, and crime (similar, appropriate discussions/presentations are provided for ECHS students)

• The college has an emergency response plan (ECHS emergency response plan and college plan are aligned)

• The college has a mass emergency notification system (ECHS students and parents are trained on how to register for the system)

• The college has an emergency lock down plan (ECHS leaders and college partners plan and conduct emergency drills together)

• The college has its own police department with an adequate number of full-time police officers (ECHS programs also have an assigned SRO or School Security Investigator to meet their specific security needs)
The campus police officers carry firearms (ECHS students and parents have an opportunity to receive campus safety information from and meet the campus police officers)

As a final combined step with students and parents, prior to the first day of school, ECHS students and parents should be required to sign an agreement acknowledging receipt of the policies and expectations that apply to all ECHS students. The agreement, at a minimum, should include key school district and ECHS expectations (attendance, academic support, academic probation, dress code, student conduct, appropriate communication with adults on the college campus, and due process). In addition, the agreement should include key college policies and expectations that have a greater impact with ECHS students such as the attendance policy, grading policy, communicating with instructors, campus resources, and campus emergency numbers and procedures (see Table 5.3).

College partners and ECHS leaders should also work together, as much as possible, in planning for and conducting emergency drills as well as incident investigations that include ECHS students and traditional college students or college property. To assist with ease of interpreting conflicting or misaligned policies between the local school district and the college, each ECHS should have an assigned SRO (School Resource Officer). At many ECHSs, the school relies on the college campus police or security department to protect their students; however, the presence of an SRO, who only focuses on the early college students’ safety, would go a long way in preventing campus safety issues similar to the ones uncovered throughout this case study research.
### Table 5.3: ECHS Safety Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECHS Safety Recommendations: College and University Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Liaison</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior to first day of school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily/Weekly/Monthly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-going Annually</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Safety prevention measures at the ECHS level should always include structured training for all students, teachers, parents, and college faculty and staff. Combined and individual training sessions each semester, would help to build communication between local school district employees and college personnel. Likewise, safety training for both sides would illustrate the commitment to ongoing collaboration that exist between school district and college leaders. Various training sessions would be led by partner teams including any combination of campus police, college liaison, college counselors, school counselors, school nurse, teachers, and ECHS leaders. Results from this safety case study and my personal experience as an ECHS administrator for over eight years, led to the development of the ECHS safety training list below as well as the safety guidelines in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. Specific ECHS safety training sessions for students, staff, parents, and college partners (at various times throughout the year) should include some combination of one or more of the following elements (depending upon individual campus needs):

- Explanation of the college campus safety measures and emergency numbers
- Combined lockdown, fire drill, and severe weather exercises
- Combined emergency preparedness planning including campus evacuation procedures
- Review of the college campus crime report and how to read it
- Review of areas where ECHS students may study, eat, collaborate, or socialize on campus
- Student tips on how to properly interact and communicate with various adult groups on the college campus (with role playing scenarios)
- Mental health resources (local school district and college)
- Tips on how to recognize a predator on campus, how to quickly locate a safe zone, and how to make a report
- Basic self-defense techniques for teens and adults
- How to report a crime (past or potential crime) on campus (multiple methods)
- Online safety resources and information on using tip lines and hot lines after hours (for immediate needs related to feelings of suicide, depression, violence, etc.)
- Conclusion of each session with participant feedback of current session, suggestions for future sessions, and suggestions for other areas of safety improvement

For students, the ECHS experience can be a wonderful, rewarding opportunity that opens up a lifetime of educational and personal benefits. Likewise, the establishment of proper ECHS safety preventions and interventions will make these great programs even better for the high school students who attend classes on an open college campus each day. Students must be educated on what their college campus vulnerabilities are and how to best protect themselves. Previously reported statistics within this study clearly reveal that recurring incidents of crime and violence are alive and well on open college and university campuses across the nation. Therefore, it is up to the ECHS leaders, college partners, and local school district leaders to put a foundation in place that will adequately protect vulnerable, and sometimes naïve, ECHS students from some of the negative and dangerous adult influences they will come in contact with on the college campus.
School leaders have a responsibility to openly address the potential college campus
dangers that many ECHS students have faced and will face again as long as these programs
exist. At the same time, ECHS leaders and their college partners should be united, confident,
and passionate about how they have planned to fully address any potential campus dangers
ECHS students may face. With the cooperation of students, parents, teachers, and college
partners, a well-developed ECHS safety plan will help promote a positive school climate,
student cooperation, and peace of mind for all adult stakeholders.

Of course, there are no guarantees with any safety program; however, consistent,
preventative measures do go a long way in helping to prevent student injuries and save lives.
Jeanne Cleary and her peers were not warned about the troubled classmate who ultimately
took Jeanne’s life. Out of that tragedy, the Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security
Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act was born (Janosik and Gehring, 2003). This act now
exist to help protect other student on college and university campuses from falling victim to
crime and violence. However, it is not enough to hand students and parents a campus crime
report. This information is a tool that should be used to develop a balanced safety program. It
is more important than it has ever been before to implement the changes I have mentioned as
a proactive means to protect this younger generation of ECHS students who are fast
becoming a major part of the college-going population. With the knowledge, information,
resources, training, and support that ECHS leaders and college partners have at their disposal,
the time to act is now. No school leader should wait for another Jeanne Cleary case.
Epilogue

As I started on my research journey, my first goal was to take an in-depth look into how ECHS leaders and their college partners decide upon and implement safety protocols. The literature on ECHSs supported the growing need for and success of such programs. The early college model has a noteworthy record of success in terms of student graduation rates; students who go on to attend four-year colleges and universities; and students who successfully master a skill or trade to enter into the world of work. By targeting students who are underrepresented in the college-going population (first generation students, economically disadvantaged students, and minorities), ECHSs expose many capable high school students to a college education that they may not have had otherwise. In turn, these students will positively impact their families, their communities, and the nation’s workforce.

To the contrary, I found literature related to ECHSs and the topic of student safety to be nearly non-existent. Therefore, with the issue of k-12 and college safety on the rise, I felt that a program that incorporated a high school program (grades 9-13) onto a college or university campus could face some unique school safety issues; and if that were the case, how did the school leaders and their college or university partners address those issues? In addition, I wanted to know if the safety needs or issues at ECHSs were campus specific or were the major school leader safety concerns universal? Likewise, because ECHS students have close interactions with traditional adult college students every day, I wanted to know if this posed any significant concerns for school leaders? I was also curious about students who may struggle at the ECHS level due to a lack of maturity and/or appropriate decision making
skills to successfully navigate the college environment. Are there critical untold stories of the ECHSs?

To obtain the answer to my questions, I used case study research design. I distributed an electronic ECHS Principal School Safety Survey to principals in the Southeastern part of the United States. I also conducted document and electronic resource reviews that included the schools’ handbooks, MOUs, websites, district websites, and college partner websites. Finally, I conducted in-depth interviews and site visits with three ECHS principals (one retired), one counselor, and one teacher. The ECHS principals were interviewed twice. All ECHS case study participants had community college partners and were housed on the campus of a community college within their school district.

Upon analyzing the survey, documents, and interview data, I discovered that the overwhelming majority of ECHS leaders and their college partners faced similar challenges related to ECHS student safety. This included difficulties in the areas of safety protocol implementation. The ECHSs and their college partners all had written safety policies and protocols in place from each institution; however, there was not always a clear understanding of how incidents would be handled, who would be in charge, or who would take the lead. I was quite surprised that this type if planning was not a standard practice for all ECHSs and their college partners.

Feedback and case stories from the participants revealed striking similarities that fell under one of three themes: tracking: monitoring student movement on campus; issues of age: high school and college-age student interactions; and colliding norms: k-12 vs college policies and expectations. As the themes revealed themselves within each story, I began to
realize just how unique the student safety concerns are for ECHS leaders and their college partners. I also had an answer to my initial questions: my major safety area questions were indeed a significant concern for ECHS leaders across the board. On a traditional k-12 campus, these safety themes would not be an issue at all, with the exception of tracking students who skip class and/or have truancy issues. I also began to realize why addressing ECHS student safety issues was not reported as a top priority by the study participants despite the reality that safety was a top and consistent concern for them.

Although each participant and study site had recurring student safety issues, each incident appeared to be treated as an isolated incident. In other words, recurring incidents were not treated as uniform, regular safety concerns that needed to be formally addressed to seek an effective solution to the problem. In most cases, the ECHS leaders incorporated their own safety policies and expectations to control and monitor ECHS student behavior. As I expected, in the majority of cases, the college partners were supportive of the processes ECHS leaders put in place. Additionally, most college partners actively supported the principals by monitoring ECHS student behavior and locations when they were out-and-about around the college campus. This type of active partnership benefits everyone, not just the school leaders and their students.

I was however, taken aback by one ECHS where the positive partner relationship and student safety support was lacking. It seemed that the college partners were extremely hesitant to have any dealings with the early college students when it came to safety violations on campus. The one exception came when an ECHS student displayed behavior that could have posed a threat to the campus as a whole, adults, staff, and ECHS students alike. I would
hope that any ECHS leader in this situation would be able to get support in having a conversation with their college partners to build positive relationships and establish safety response protocols that everyone can agree upon. This may keep a small problem from quickly becoming a catastrophic one in the future.

As an ECHS assistant principal (the only administrator on one of two campus sites for the school), I am well aware of the unique safety concerns facing ECHS leaders each day. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work with principals and college partners who make student safety a priority. Nevertheless, in an environment where ECHS students are emerged into the college world, there are bound to be some events that must be addressed. When those events happened, the power of the positive partnership quickly tuned what could have been a large case into a smaller one. What I did not know was the extent to which my daily experiences were shared by other ECHS leaders.

From this study, I have learned the ECHS leaders who took student safety seriously and addressed issues head on had fewer recurring safety issues and better relationships with their college partners. Those principals also devoted more caring, compassionate, and intervention resources focused on the safety risk students on their campus. Finally, the more successful ECHS principals in the area of implementing effective safety protocols, created a positive school climate where students and staff alike felt a sense of shared respect, belonging, and value. On the opposite end of the spectrum, ECHS leaders who seemed to have more student safety difficulties were those principals who were less experienced as ECHS administrators, or had less administrator experience in general; took a less proactive approach to addressing safety issues on the college campus; failed to hold all students
accountable for safety policy or code of conduct violations; failed to create a positive school climate of mutual respect and shared decision making; and/or inherited poor partner relationships from the previous leadership and did not know how to effectively address the problem.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how ECHS leaders and their college partners make decisions about and implement safety protocols. This research journey has had a great impact on my outlook on ECHS safety and school safety in general. This topic has always been a passion of mine, but now I have a greater realization of the importance of protecting ECHS students on a college campus from both those who may seek them out as targets as well as from their own poor decisions. For all of the major themes uncovered in this study, the best way to address each one is through a collective effort with ECHS leaders coming together with their college partners to make critical decisions in a timely manner. For the majority of ECHS students, with regular coaching and appropriate support systems, success is around the corner. For some other students, the safety risk students, the ECHS environment will prove to be too much too soon. For those students, it is imperative that effective systems for application, admission, intervention, counseling, and alternative education plans/locations be put in place before tragedy strikes.
REFERENCES


Bachman, R., Randolph, A., & Brown, B. L. (2011). Predicting perceptions of fear at school and going to and from school for African American and white students: The effects of
school security measures. *Youth and Society, 43*(2), 705-726.

doi: http://dx.doi.org.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/10.1177/0044118X10366674


Targeted News Service Retrieved from

http://search.proquest.com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/docview/1534520071?accountid=12725


169


http://urbanedjournal.org/archive/Vol.%205%20Iss.%202%20Order%20Schools/Articles/Article_2_In%20the%20Face%20of%20Danger.html


The colleges with the best campus security. (2014). Retrieved from 


http://search.proquest.com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/docview/213086049?accountid=12725


http://search.proquest.com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/docview/213067450?accountid=12725


Georgia's early college initiative. (2014). Retrieved from

http://www.gaearlycollege.org/aboutus


Gray, R. H. (2014, April, 15). Ranking colleges on safety won't protect students, but this checklist will. *Campus Safety Magazine, 2*, 1-10.


Theses Full Text. (304832615). Retrieved from

http://search.proquest.com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/docview/304832615?accountid=12725


Teachers College Press.


Retrieved from


Evaluation and Program Planning, 35(2), 269-272. Retrieved from


Appendix A: Email to Request Participation in the Early College Principal Survey

My name is Lisa G. Reid and I am a doctoral student at NC State University. I am conducting a study that seeks to understand and examine how ECHSs leaders and their college partners plan and prepare safety protocols for ECHS students on the college/university campus. The research will also address, what role state laws, district policies, and college/university policies play in how ECHS leaders address student safety issues. You have been selected to participate in this study because you are an ECHS principal. Your participation is vital to helping me conduct this study to assess ECHS leaders’ decisions about and implementation of safety protocols. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and is not a work requirement. I hope to receive broad participation in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the timely issue of ECHS student safety. Upon completion of the study, the results will be made available to project participants.

There are potentially three steps to this study. This first step is a brief online survey. You will be asked at the end of the survey to indicate your interest in participating in the focus interview. The second step is a focus interview for up to 6 selected ECHS principals in Southeastern United States. The focus interview will take approximately one hour. Finally, the third step, for up to three selected ECHS principals and participants, is a case study interview and site visit which will take approximately 90 minutes. Participation in the case study interview would include a personal interview, a site visit, and the submission of documents. A copy of the survey questions are provided below along with a link to the live, electronic survey. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need further assistance please contact Lisa G. Reid, at the following email address: reid2012@nc.rr.com. I may also be reached by phone at 919-435-1961.
Would you be willing to participate in a focus group, in person or via telephone, related to ECHS student safety?

*If you answered yes above, please provide the following contact information:

Name:

Phone number:

Email address:

*Please attach a copy of your school’s MOU to this survey.

Interview Protocol: After the Survey

- Thank you for your participation in the ECHS Principal Survey.

- Survey data will be collected, coded, and analyzed immediately following the specified deadline date for participant completion.

- Consent forms will be emailed to participants who are selected for the focus interviews. Principals for the focus interviews will be selected from survey participants who work in the Southeastern part of the United States and indicate an interest in participating in the focus interview.

- Following the interview, principals may also recommend a few staff members who would have a working knowledge of the safety issues in their school. I will select the interview participants who will be contacted from the list provided.
Appendix B: ECHS Principal Focus Interview Protocol

Thank you for your participation in the ECHS Principal Focus Interview. My name is Lisa G. Reid and I am a doctoral student at NC State University. I am conducting a study that seeks to understand and examine how ECHSs leaders and their college partners plan and prepare safety protocols for ECHS students on the college/university campus. The research will also address, what role state laws, district policies, and college/university policies play in how ECHS leaders address student safety issues. You have been selected to participate in this study because you are an ECHS principal or your principal has provided your name as a possible participant. May this interview be recorded? The focus interview will take approximately one hour. The final step of this study, for up to three selected ECHS principals and participants, is a case study interview and site visit which will take approximately 90 minutes. Participation in the case study interview would include a personal interview, a site visit, and the submission of documents.

Thank you for returning your signed consent form. No one outside of the research study will have access to the raw information you provide in the interview. In the writing of the study findings, school location, participant names, or school names will not be used. Confidentiality will also be a top priority throughout the research study process. Call or email me at any time with questions.

May I record your responses to the interview questions at this time? Let’s begin.

Focus Interview Questions

1. What student safety issues do you deal with on a regular basis on the ECHS campus?

2. Describe what role state law, district policy, and college/university policy plays in your decisions/actions related to student safety.

3. What policies are currently in place on your campus to address ECHS student safety?

4. What role dose the MOU play in addressing student safety issues on your campus? Explain.
5. Describe any professional development or training that is provided for ECHS teachers and college instructors related to ECHS student safety?

- Thank you for your participation in this focus interview.
Appendix C: ECHS Principal Interview Protocol

Thank you for your participation in the ECHS Principal Interview and site visit. My name is Lisa G. Reid and I am a doctoral student at NC State University. I am conducting a study that seeks to understand and examine how ECHSs leaders and their college partners plan and prepare safety protocols for ECHS students on the college/university campus. The research will also address, what role state laws, district policies, and college/university policies play in how ECHS leaders address student safety issues. You have been selected to participate in this study because you are an ECHS principal. May this interview be recorded? The interview and site visit will take approximately one hour.

Thank you for returning your signed consent form. No one outside of the research study will have access to the raw information you provide in the interview. In the writing of the study findings, school location, participant names, or school names will not be used. Confidentiality will also be a top priority throughout the research study process. Call or email me at any time with questions.

May I record your responses to the interview questions at this time? Let’s begin.
Appendix D: ECHS Principal Interview Guide

Case Study Interview and Critical Incident Question

RESPONDENT: ECHS Principals

College or University Partner: ______________________

Length of time with ECHS program ______________________

Length of time in education: ______________________

1. How was the MOU created for your school? Who was/is involved in the revisions/updates of the MOU?

2. As an ECHS principal, how do you balance State, district, and college/university policy? Which one typically takes priority?

3. How are school law and college/university policies applied when responding to specific incidents involving ECHS students on campus?

4. When do you work with your college/university partners on incidents related to ECHS students? What is the protocol? Is it formal or informal?

5. How are ECHS student safety protocols communicated on your campus (students, parents, teachers, and partners)?

6. When communicating safety protocols and expectations, are state laws, district policies, or college/university policies highlighted?

7. Specifically, are incidents between ECHS students and traditional adult college students handled primarily through enforcing/referencing state law, district policy, or college/university policy?

Critical Incident Question (The Principal’s Story)

Describe your most significant campus event related to ECHS student safety.

• Thank you for your participation in this research study.
Appendix E: Consent Form for Participants

North Carolina State University

INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: Strangers in the house: How Early College High Schools and their college partners ensure student safety.

Researcher: Lisa G. Reid, under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of how Early College High School (ECHS) leaders and their college partners decide on and implement school safety protocols. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. If you wish, a copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher named above.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to examine how ECHSs and their college partners decide on and implement safety protocols.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online ECHS Principal Survey related to school safety. Following the survey, a few participants (approximately 6) will be selected to participate in an ECHS principal focus interview. Principals will be selected from those who express a willingness to participate in a principal focus interview. Finally, a small group of principals will be selected for participation in case study interviews and site visits. Following the principal interviews, other ECHS and/or college/university partners may be selected for interviews.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study.

Benefits

Aside from adding to the body of knowledge about ECHS school safety, participants may enjoy reflecting upon their work in this area and expressing their own opinions.
Confidentiality

The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely on a computer and in a file cabinet of which only the researcher has access. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Compensation

You will not receive anything for participating.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Lisa G. Reid at reid2012@nc.rr.com.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919.515.4514).

Consent to Participate

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject’s Name (printed) ____________________________ Date ____________________

Subject’s signature __________________________________________

E-mail Address ____________________________ Telephone ____________________

Investigator's signature ____________________________ Date ____________________
Appendix F: Early College Principal Survey

Early College Principal Survey

Directions: Rate how often you have to address each of the following student safety areas on your campus. Rate your answers (1-6 for each question) based on the frequency of occurrence.

1. Creating (writing and/or publicizing) school safety policies
   Never       Yearly       Semester       Monthly       Weekly       Daily

2. Implementing (enforcing/interpreting) school safety policies
   Never       Yearly       Semester       Monthly       Weekly       Daily

3. Creation/Revision of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
   Never       Yearly       Semester       Monthly       Weekly       Daily

4. Addressing school incidents or safety issues that brought about changes in the MOU
   Never       Yearly       Semester       Monthly       Weekly       Daily

5. Implementing MOU safety policies that are not directly aligned with public school district policy for all schools
   Never       Yearly       Semester       Monthly       Weekly       Daily

6. Addressing conflicting public school policies and college policies on student safety and discipline
   Never       Yearly       Semester       Monthly       Weekly       Daily

7. Participation in safety planning sessions/meetings with college/university partners
8. Addressing safety issues related to high school students being on an open college/university campus (i.e. communication with adults; monitoring student whereabouts; incidents with adults, etc.)

9. In incidents related to student safety on the early college campus, do you deal with campus policy or the law first? Explain.

10. What is the biggest policy or legal issue you have dealt with related to student safety on your campus? Explain.
Appendix G: Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This is an agreement by and between [redacted] Community College and [redacted] Early College High School on the premises, procedures, and operations of the [redacted] Early College High School located adjacent to [redacted] County Campus.

Facilities

1. [redacted] agrees to provide space for the Early College program with [redacted] on a space available and scheduled basis with the understanding that [redacted] courses/classes have first priority on scheduling. [redacted] may use all classrooms specified in this agreement for weekend and evening programs. Appropriate schedules are to be coordinated with and through the Early College High School Principal, College Liaison, and the senior administrator on the [redacted] County Campus. [redacted] College Liaison will have a private office in [redacted] and all other office assignments for Building 4 are to be submitted to the senior administrator of the [redacted] County Campus for review with [redacted] Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs prior to occupancy and any changes thereto after initial review.

2. [redacted] agrees to provide minor renovations to our facilities for the Early College. However, [redacted] may have to cover costs of renovations in part or in whole, depending on the extent of the requested renovations.

3. [redacted] and [redacted] agree that the Early College space may be needed by [redacted] for evening classes. [redacted] agrees to maintain and keep the space in accordance with a college environment for higher learning. Issues such as posters, bulletin boards, displays etc. must be in agreement with [redacted] standards of classroom and facilities presentation.

4. Infrastructure needs, electrical power, local area networks, [redacted] firewalls, phone systems etc. are to be maintained in coordination/collaboration with [redacted] staff and facilities managers. Any and all specific requirements will have to be reviewed and approved by [redacted] staff working on and maintaining. [redacted] specific equipment/facilities will be billed to [redacted] on a monthly basis as may be required. Rates for billing will be as follows and updated annually:

- Facilities Technicians: $20.00/hour
- IT Technicians: $16.00/hour
- Facilities Manager: $26.00/hour
- IT Manager: $50.00/hour

5. [redacted] County Schools agrees to pay a prorata cost of facilities operation for the high school portion of the Early College High School. This cost will be reviewed annually and will be set on or before July 1 each year. The rate when determined will be established on a cost per square foot.

[Redacted] EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Rev. Date: May 22, 2013 (July 11, 2008) – PAGE 1

221
6. The Principal working with the Vice President of Finance and Operations and County Campus senior administrator will determine a drop-off pick-up location for the ECHS students and parents and communicate the locations/procedures to parents of the ECHS students. This plan is to be reviewed annually.

7. Other costs—will be responsible for the costs of all supplies, materials, and other associated costs for the operation of the Early College High School.

8. will follow the schedule for the classes, and school closings, etc., i.e., when the college is closed for inclement weather and/or holidays, Early College high school classes will not be held.

Student Fees

Fees

County Schools and/or will be responsible for the following fees:

Grades 9-10: Technology Fees and Insurance
Grades 11-13: Technology Fees, Student Activity Fees, Campus/Access Security Fees, Insurance, and other course fees as required by a particular area of program

The fee structure for these fees will be the same rate as all students. Fees are set annually by the Board of Trustees and are subject to change at any time.

Books

County Schools will provide required college textbooks/material for each course for all students taking courses. The college liaison will provide the staff with a list identifying the total number of early college students enrolled by course prefix each semester, along with a Booklist Report identifying the required textbook material by course. The booklist report will identify textbooks that may be purchased through the bookstore. is not responsible for the acquisition, storage, and distribution or collection (to and from students) of textbook/material purchased by County Schools and/or

Security

1. will be responsible for providing security for the Early College when and if the level of security provided by the college is not at a level deemed necessary for Early College students.

2. County Early College High School staff will be responsible for developing, maintaining, and communicating with Crisis Management Coordinator a plan for procedures on how the Early College will coordinate and operate with the college administration in a crisis event. The Early College Principal must report no later than
April 1 of each academic year any changes to the Early College's Crisis Management Plan.

3. [Redacted] County Early College High School students must at all times follow [Redacted] policies and procedures.

Administration

1. Early College Principals may attend College meetings as necessary or as requested by [Redacted].

2. [Redacted] and [Redacted] agree to develop process(es) by which students are identified who need remediation early before moving into the 11th grade and taking heavy loads in college courses. [Redacted] and [Redacted] also agree to develop an exit point for students that have demonstrated difficulty with the college curriculum. A college transcript is a permanent record and poor performance may impact a student's financial aid and other aspects of academic performance potential scholarship opportunities, at later times in their college experience.

3. [Redacted] President and [Redacted] County School's Superintendent agree to meet annually during the spring semester to review and discuss progress and plans for the Early College program.

Students

1. Early College students are subject first to [Redacted] student policies and procedures while on campus and enrolled in [Redacted] courses and programs. However, student conduct and appeal procedures for [Redacted] will be overarching while Early College students are on [Redacted] campus. When there is a student issue or concern that [Redacted] administration believes is not in the best interest of [Redacted] the student in question may be suspended or expelled by [Redacted] or will be asked to be reassigned to another [Redacted] County High School site. Student appeals by [Redacted] students on decisions made by [Redacted] administration are subject to the decision of the [Redacted] President, whose decision will be final.

2. In the event that special classroom accommodations become necessary, the college liaison, the high school counselor, and the college special needs coordinator should meet to discuss and implement a plan of services. [Redacted] will be responsible for all services and accommodations for classes taught by its instructors, while [Redacted] will be responsible for services and accommodations for classes taught by its instructors. It must be noted that colleges must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These requirements, documentation, and ultimately the accommodations, may differ from public school I.D.E.A. requirements and accommodations.

[Redacted] EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Rev. Date: May 22, 2013 (JULY 11, 2008) – PAGE 3
3. Scheduling of college courses for the [redacted] will be jointly coordinated by the campus dean and college liaison. [redacted] students pursuing associate degrees may be required to take courses online and/or at other [redacted] campuses at night, day, evening, or weekends.

[redacted] Staff

When instances develop where [redacted] personnel issues may arise that interfere with [redacted] fulfilling its mission, inappropriate behavior or other nonprofessional issues as deemed by the College, the President of the College may ask that such [redacted] personnel be reassigned to another [redacted] County School site. In such cases and resulting appeals, the decision of the President of [redacted] will be final.

[redacted] Force Majeure

Neither party will be liable under this Agreement for any loss or damage of any nature that is incurred as a result of any failure or delay in performance that is, in turn, caused by circumstances beyond its reasonable control. This includes, without limitation, any failures or delays in performance caused by lack of available production facilities, strikes, lockouts, labor disputes, fires, acts of God or the public enemy, riots, interference by civil or military authorities, compliance with the laws, orders or policies of any governmental authority delays in transit or delivery on the part of transportation companies, failures of communication facilities or sources or raw material, destruction of a party's relevant facilities, or any other condition beyond the party's reasonable control. This clause will not excuse, however, a party's obligation to pay money due hereunder to the other nor extinguish any obligations owed among the parties that arose prior to the event of force majeure.

[redacted] County Schools

By: [redacted] Superintendent, [redacted] County Schools

Date: [redacted]

[redacted] Community College

By: [redacted] President

Date: [redacted]