COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE MIDWESTERN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: RELATIVE INFLUENCES ON SENIORS’ OCCUPATIONAL AND CITIZENSHIP ENGAGEMENT ORIENTATIONS

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

Educating youth for socially and economically productive adult roles is essential to sustaining a strong, democratic society, and central, many argue, to the role of high school and the mission of public education. Fears that many youth today are inadequately prepared for these roles drives contemporary education reform aimed at enabling students to meet the economic, political, and social challenges of the 21st Century. Despite these noble pursuits, many high school students face enormous barriers in the wake of weakening community social ties without stronger systems of social support extending beyond school walls.

This study examines the efforts of the large, urban Midwestern School District to provide socially productive community-based learning experiences for all of its high school students through community service and work-based internships. Many argue that student participation in community service and work-based learning addresses many occupational and citizenship disengagement risks faced by high school students today especially in higher poverty and traditionally low academically-achieving urban contexts. The principal hypothesis, informed by ecological systems theory, is that social support from adult supervisors and mentors will positively affect students’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations over and above the influence that programmatic experiences provide.
The researcher conceptualizes social support as having a mentor, receiving information about future plans, encouragement, and written and verbal performance feedback in the course of their program activities. Occupational and citizenship engagement orientations are those attitudes or intentions demonstrated by students at the end of their senior year to pursue a career pathway and to engage in future political and civic behaviors. Findings from this study suggest that programmatic experiences alone are insufficient to produce the desired outcomes unless social support for student efforts accompanies them. The Internship Program of the Midwestern District exemplifies the phenomenon of a well-intended educational reform policy that faltered without the necessary formal structures, planning, and knowledge to adequately accomplish their objectives. Increasing capacity for implementing a mandatory community-based learning policy requires adequate systems of social support.

Survey data for this study were collected from all seniors in the district’s 18 high schools (N = 1,741). Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) is applied in a hierarchical regression in four stages. The first stage investigates the influence of community service and work-based internships on the dependent variables. The second stage determines how much variance in the dependent variable is explained sequentially by the social support variables over and above that, which is explained by the program independent variables. The third stage examines the effect of social background characteristics independent of the programmatic elements and social support. The fourth stage investigates the interaction between students’ programmatic experiences and the social support they receive.
Dedicated to my eternal sweetheart, Carol Ann, my loving sons, Mark, William, Samuel, Matthew, and to all the high school students who have ever crossed the threshold of my classroom door
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CHAPTER 1

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING
AND THE NEED FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, in an effort to reform its high schools, the School Board of the Midwestern City Schools, a large urban school district at the center of this study, approved a community-based learning graduation requirement. Through that initiative, known as the *Internship Program*, the school district mandated that high school students at all of the district’s 18 high schools to complete 120 hours of career exploration (i.e., job shadowing, mentoring, classroom activities), internships, and community service. The Internship Program’s 120 hours constitute a Carnegie unit or 1 credit of the district’s 19-credit graduation requirement.

The Internship Program was a policy response to the school district’s crisis situation. Faced with meeting only 3 out of 18 state academic performance standards, a 62 percent high school graduation rate, and a pending rating of “academic emergency” by the state, school district officials and community partners were greatly concerned about improving student preparation for adult work and citizenship in the 21st Century. To address its primary objective of increasing student academic achievement, the school district adopted as one of its goals: “Every graduate will have participated in a meaningful internship during high school.”
District officials viewed “meaningful internships” as providing high school students with a structured means to understand the connection between academic success in school and its influence on future career opportunities. Thus, as the 1998-1999 academic year began, students in the Midwestern District’s high schools were introduced to the Internship Program. At each high school, a coordinator was designated to administer the program and to ensure student participation in its sequence of learning experiences—a Career Connections course in the 9th Grade, community service in the 10th Grade, an unpaid internship in the 11th Grade, and a paid internship in the 12th Grade. By the time students finished their senior year, it was assumed they would have participated in a broad range of community-based learning experiences designed to develop positive dispositions toward occupational and citizenship engagement. This study examines the Internship Program as the Class of 2002 experienced it in terms of its efficacy in promoting positive dispositions toward occupational purpose and civic engagement. Bringing a theoretical perspective, the study also examines the relationship of the social support the students may have experienced as they fulfilled program requirements to their occupational and citizenship engagement orientations at the end of high school.

The Mission of Public Education

Educating youth for democratic citizenship is both the keystone of democracy and the central mission of public education in the United States (Parker, 1996; Dewey, 1940).
Preparation for democratic citizenship, in which schools play a central part, involves youth in an educational process to develop their individual capacities (Barber, 1992; Putnam, 1996). Developing individual capacities includes cultivating those competencies necessary for maintaining strong democratic communities (Barber, 1992). The school “shall be made a genuine form of active community life, instead of a place set apart in which to learn lessons" (Dewey, 1900, p. 27). Schools dispose students to community membership through instilling important community values such as service and self-direction essential to larger society’s future well being (Dewey, 1900). They socialize for citizenship by engaging students in meaningful community experiences (Owens & Wang, 1996).

In educating youth for democratic citizenship, schools are charged with preparing them to assume socially and economically productive roles within a democratic society. Schools accomplish this by assisting youth in clarifying future goals, determining a career orientation, preparing for pro-social participation, and cultivating civic- and occupational-oriented competencies (Cotterell, 1996). Because future career and life-path orientations are critically shaped during the period of adolescence (Cotterell, 1996), American high schools, serving the majority of this population, have evolved around these aims.

Since the early 1900s, comprehensive high schools have offered diverse groups of young Americans opportunities for citizenship education and post-high school vocational preparation along with liberal and college preparatory studies (Steinberg, 1988). Although improving education for the ordinary citizen has long been part of the
American comprehensive high school movement, the demands wrought by recent decades have challenged its effectiveness (Wraga, 1994).

Continuing low academic performance in the face of a rapidly changing global economy, rising fears about future global competitiveness, and trends for political and community disengagement have fueled growing concerns that today’s youth, especially those in urban and typically higher-poverty, lower academically-achieving contexts, are unprepared for socially and economically productive adult roles vital to democratic citizenship and engagement (Steinberg, 1988, Rosenbaum 1996, Putnam, 2000). These concerns have driven educational policymakers and leaders to re-evaluate the capacity of American education, particularly to traditional American comprehensive high schools, to produce adult citizens with “mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself” (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p. 1).

In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education’s National Committee on Excellence issued a report entitled, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*. Arguing that American society and educational institutions had “lost sight of the purpose of schooling,” *A Nation At Risk* called for reform of “our education system in fundamental ways” (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p. 1). In response, a surge of educational reform strategies ensued emphasizing increased expectations, academic performance, and educational attainment for every American child in a high standards, competency-building learning environment (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). However, many contemporary educational reform strategies still remain limited in their mission to
increase high quality academic instruction and learning, despite increased accountability and academic standards.

The Limits of Contemporary Educational Reform

Most contemporary educational reform strategies have taken shape as subject-specific instructional improvements, internal district-wide initiatives, alternative organizational designs, or whole-school operation and system redesign. These strategies emphasize “walled-in” or within-school reform (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, et al., 2004). Of course, these four types are not mutually exclusive, as many schools are implementing two or more of the strategies.

Despite the noble intentions and accomplishments of contemporary education reform models, Anderson-Butcher and colleagues argue that the “walled-in” or “building-centered” improvement strategy has inherent limitations. Although improved academic instruction aligned with systems of rigorous content standards is important, for example, it represents only one pathway to higher achievement for all students. In addition, students must also experience the proper environmental conditions, which stimulate and support motivation and learning (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, et al., 2004).

Outside environment factors influence students’ academic motivation and individual capacity for school success. The larger social context affects what goes on in the varied individual settings of which students are a part (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, Garbarino, 1982). Reform strategies centered in the school building can only have
limited effect since just 9-13 percent of students’ time is spent in school (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2004). Many non-academic barriers occur in families, neighborhoods, peer networks, and community systems (Gephart, 1997; Masten & Coatesworth, 1998; Sampson, 1992). Building-centered education reform strategies tend to be limited because they generally do not engage students, especially those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, deeply enough on external environmental and developmental levels. Internally focused strategies fail to tap external environmental resources essential to academic success and healthy development.

Thus, within school educational reform efforts, as described above, may be too narrow to address the development of modern socially and economically productive adult roles among high school age youth. Driven by elevated expectations and accountability in contemporary education reform, moreover, comprehensive high schools have become criticized for promoting an impersonalized, departmentalized, and evaluative atmosphere inconsistent with developing individual youth needs and capacities (Cotterell, 1996; Pianta, Stuhlman, & Hamre, 2002). Many schools today remain based on “factory” or “warehouse” models in which large numbers of students move from class to class, and teacher to teacher with few opportunities for sustained interaction with caring adults outside of participation in extra-curricular activities (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 17). In such school environments, students are unlikely to experience enough direct adult attachment to assist them in successfully navigating many adolescent challenges and difficulties, leading to decreased academic self-confidence, motivation, and engagement (Braddock & McPartland, 1993).
The inadequate response of schools to youth developmental needs may lead to a “new form of alienation” characterized by “lack of purpose, lack of direction, and difficulties forming career identities, and future commitments” (Conger & Peterson, 1984, p. 607). Such alienating experiences are indeed problematic as increasingly more young people are growing up in socially and economically disadvantaged families and environments where they are likely to experience social isolation, limited access to information, and lack of pro-social modeling (Gephart, 1997; Masten & Coatesworth, 1998; Rhodes, Grossman, & Roffman, 2002). Limited social resources prevent these transitional youth from overcoming the occupational and citizenship disengagement risks increasingly permeating American society. Ironically, without greater attention to youth developmental needs, contemporary education reform potentially reinforces the conditions and circumstances it initially set out to combat.

**Youth Risk for Citizenship Disengagement as Adults**

Well-documented trends for citizenship disengagement among young adults reveal inattention, disinterest, and non-involvement in public affairs and in politically oriented public discourse (e.g., conversations with family members, peers, within the media) (Bennett, 2000; Patrick, 2000; Soule, 2001). Voting among young adults aged 18-24 has gradually declined over the past forty years (National Association of Secretaries of State, 1999; Jankowski & Elder, 2001). A declining young adult voting
pattern also reflects limited political knowledge and fuels fears of waning commitment to community and American democracy.

Despite rising education levels, moreover, the public’s political and civic knowledge has not improved in sixty years (Soule, 2001). Levels of political and civic knowledge are associated with political and civic participation levels (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Putnam’s (2000) analysis of the Roper Social and Political Trends Survey Data (1994) indicates that between the mid-1970s and mid-1990s, fewer Americans participated in the “everyday deliberations that constitute grassroots democracy” (p. 43). Participation in at least one political and community activity, which includes local community organization service, political party participation, signing a petition, public or town meeting attendance, public speeches, writing letters to government officials and newspapers, membership in a civic improvement, and holding or running for political office has declined by 25 percent (Putnam, 2000).

Although Americans today score about as well on civic tests as their grandparents did, Putnam (2000) describes a “rising public alienation from politics and political activity” (p. 46). He further explains the general trend of political and civic disengagement among Americans, despite increasing education levels, since the mid-1960s:

Americans have become 10-15 percent less likely to voice views by running for office or writing Congress or the local newspaper, 15-20 percent less interested in politics and public affairs, roughly 25 percent less likely to vote, roughly 35 percent less likely to attend public meetings,
both partisan and non-partisan, roughly 40 percent less engaged in party politics and, indeed, in political and civic organizations of all sorts. (p. 46).

Even younger Americans, ages 18-31, were found to have been less involved in school-based organizations as high school students, in which participation is closely associated with future civic engagement (Putnam, 2000).

Youth citizenship disengagement is also associated with declining social trust and an increasing sense of public frustration (Rahn & Transue, 1998; Smith, 2000; Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Jennings & Stoker, 2001; Soule, 2001). Mistrust for government and cynicism about its capacity to serve the common citizen is higher among those socially and economically disadvantaged and adversely affects voting and political participation (Michelsen & Hair, 2002).

**Youth Risk for Adult Occupational Disengagement**

The evolution of the modern American and global economy also poses significant challenges to urban youth today who may lack adequate employment-search knowledge, resourceful social ties, and support. Stability in a democratic society is closely associated with citizens’ capacity to achieve economic self-sufficiency, as economic independence precedes one’s ability to demonstrate political maturity (Youniss et al., 2002). Given today’s economic challenges, urban youth are required to become economically
productive and self-sufficient adults capable of adapting to rapidly changing and fluctuating labor markets (Rosenbaum, 1996).

Continuous technological innovations, increased employer demands for higher skills and competencies, corporate restructuring, downsizing, underemployment, real living wage decline, the flight of manufacturing abroad, and gradually weakening labor unions, characterize the turbulent labor market context 16-24 year old young adults face (Sum, Fogg, & Mangum, 2000; U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Outside of low-wage jobs with minimal security benefits, fewer opportunities exist to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency for those without higher education (Rosenbaum, 1996). As inflation has continued to rise faster than the living wage since the 1970s, with the sharpest decline in relative income among those in the lowest quartile, the poor are only getting poorer (Pollin, 2003; Baker, 2005).

Based on data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the decline in inflation-adjusted real earnings since 1981 has particularly affected those with less formal education (-25 percent), no high school diploma (-38.8 percent) compared to those with a Bachelor's or higher degree (-2 percent) (Sum, Fogg, & Mangum, 2000). These economic conditions diminish the capacity for meeting basic family needs and increase the likelihood for family economic distress and harmful youth developmental effects, found to be disproportionate among urban ethnic minorities (Elder, Eccles, Ardelt et al., 1995; Schneewind, 1995; Barrera, Caples, & Tein, 2001). Conversely, being able to meet family economic needs enhances potential for civic and community life participation (Glickman, 1997).
Difficulties for labor market entry and access will continue to rise as the number of 16-24 year olds is projected to increase 21 percent between 1995-2010 (Sum, Fogg, & Mangum, 2000). Two-thirds of this group will be non-whites and Hispanics, who typically have lower formal education levels and limited English proficiency (Sum et al., 2000). Unemployment among 16-24 year olds (-5.2 percent) far exceeds levels among all other age groups. Out-of-school young adults, especially males, face formidable challenges to gaining labor market access without formal education and basic skills (Sum et al., 2000; Sum, Khatiwade, Palma, et al., 2004). Such young adults are occupationally unprepared and likely to “spend the better part of their twenties somewhat adrift and disengaged (Rhodes, Grossman, & Roffman, 2002, p. 17). As occupationally disengaged adults, these individuals are “unlikely to earn a decent living” and “face bleak prospects of dead-end work, interrupted by periods of unemployment, with little chance to climb a career ladder” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991 p. iii).

**Citizenship Engagement Orientation**

A *citizenship engagement orientation* represents the emerging young adult’s skills, and disposition toward influencing public policy directly or indirectly. Such a disposition is based on acquisition of strong social and political beliefs, and the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies, and capacities for active civic participation (Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1994; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999; Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Michelsen, Zaff, & Hair,
Politically and civically engaged characteristics indicate mastery of a full range of democratic citizenship competencies (Flanagan & Faison, 2001). Engaged democratic citizens participate in the electoral process and exhibit political voice. They vote in public elections, align themselves with candidates who represent and further their public interests, including working on campaigns and providing financial support. Engaged democratic citizens manifest a political voice by going to local political or neighborhood meetings, speaking out on issues, contacting officials, working with social action groups, and participating in lawful demonstrations, protests, or boycotts.

In order to develop these citizenship competencies in students, American schools must create opportunities for students to learn and practice them. Toward this end, the National Association of Secondary Principals (2005) recommends educational reform strategies that move beyond high school walls in the form of “real world” community-based learning experiences, including apprenticeships, mentorships, internships, and community service (p. 138). Such learning experiences are thought to assist transitional youth in developing positive orientations toward adult occupational and citizenship engagement. Schools socialize students for life as adults in a democratic society when they purposely link community-based learning experiences to their academic curriculum (Giles & Eyer, 1999). If schools fail to provide such experiences, their efforts in preparing youth for productive adult work and citizenship are likely to be inadequate (Owens & Wang, 1996).
**Occupational Engagement Orientation**

Economically engaged and productive young adults have developed an orientation toward a distinct career or occupational pathway, enabling them to become economically self-sufficient (Röhrle & Sommer, 1994; Orr, 1996; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997, Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). The young person typically accomplishes this transformational process through meaningful work-related learning experiences, achieving occupational goal clarity along with the confidence and capacity to make a career plan (Zeldin & Charner, 1996). Through meaningful work-related experiences, they develop knowledge about the necessary preparation, steps, and skills (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004; Clausen, 1991). Viable employment offers the potential for occupational advancement and the greater economic security contributes to democratic stability (Rosenbaum, 1996; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2002).

**Community-Based Learning**

While *A Nation At Risk* (1983) heralded fundamental educational reform such as increasing course-taking requirements to address American youth occupational and citizenship disengagement concerns, others were arguing for greater constructivist or “learning in context” approaches in education pedagogy (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004, p. 14). Thus, community-based learning became an important contemporary educational reform component as it provides high school students opportunities and social resources for engaging in self-exploration through adult work and community
participation (Owens & Wang, 1996). Many scholars argue that participation in community-based learning programs increases transitional youth orientation toward adulthood occupational and citizenship engagement (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Röhrle & Sommer, 1994; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2002; Michelsen, Zaff, & Hair, 2002; Pearson & Voke, 2003; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 2003; Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004).

Community-based learning encompasses a wide range of educational strategies enabling individualized learning experiences within any segment of the community (Owens & Wang, 1996). The range of community-based learning activities typical within American high schools usually fall into two categories. The first category includes any career exploration, preparation, and development activities (e.g., Experience-Based Career Education, Cooperative Education, Tech Prep, School-to-Work, Job Shadowing, and Youth Apprenticeship), or “work-based learning” (Owens & Wang, 1996; Bailey Hughes, & Moore, 2003, p. 6). The second category includes academically connected community service experiences promoting personal growth and civic responsibility (Owens & Wang, 1996; Poulsen, 1994).

The potential benefits derived from participating in the community service and work-based learning components within the Internship Program drove the school district at the center of this study to require completion of community service and work-based internships (i.e., unpaid internships, paid internships) for all of its high school students.
Recent Developments in Educational Policy

Although many community-based learning elements have existed for decades and some for centuries, school-sponsored community-based learning in American educational policy has undergone an evolutionary process similar to the rest of American contemporary educational reform. As a means for promoting citizenship and work preparation (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004), community-based learning began to be adopted more broadly with a Carnegie Foundation report on American high schools (Boyer, 1983). The report published several recommendations for improving American secondary education. These recommendations followed by federal legislation, galvanized community-based learning’s national legitimacy and initiated widespread local implementation.

Community Service

In their study of high schools, the Carnegie team noted students’ “strong desire to serve others” without an “appropriate outlet for this” interest (Boyer, 1983, p. 203). Responding to this largely untapped altruistic inclination, Boyer and his Carnegie colleagues recommended that schools should increase opportunities for encouraging students to “reach beyond themselves and feel more responsively engaged” by participating “in the communities of which they are apart” (Boyer, 1983, p. 209).

During the high school years, under the Boyer team recommendation, every student would complete a service requirement or a new “Carnegie unit” (i.e., 120 hours of academic contact time spread out over four years), involving volunteer work in the
community or at school (Boyer, 1983). Boyer viewed the proposed service program as breaking “the isolation of the adolescent” and enabling them to “see that they are not only autonomous individuals but also members of a larger community to which they are accountable” (Boyer, 1983, pp. 209-10).

Soon thereafter, The National and Community Service Act of 1990 enabled widespread implementation by providing federal funds to States and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) intended to “expand and strengthen service programs” upon the condition they had “demonstrated experience in providing structural service opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and their communities” (Section 12501). This Act also intended to have an empowering effect especially on low-income youth by preparing them for “future community leadership” (Section 12501).

Distinguishing between student service-learning and community service, the National and Community Service Act of 1990 defined service-learning as a “method” under which students “actively participate” in “thoughtfully organized service” activities connected to the academic curriculum with clearly stated learning objectives which meet specific community needs, foster civic responsibility and allow for student reflection on experiences (Section 12511). School-based community service, mandatory or voluntary, lacks the explicit learning objectives and critical reflection central to service-learning (Green, 1999).

The Midwestern School District’s Internship Program targets the 10th grade completion of the community service component in which students are expected to perform up to 30 community service hours. Defining community service as volunteer
activity within a range of community-related projects, such as volunteering in health care facilities, churches, community organizations, or social agencies, the district seeks to engage students in the community outside of school. The district’s community service requirement, however, does not go as far as the federal legislative emphasis on service-learning.

**Work-Based Learning**

Boyer and colleagues also observed that most students, lacking specific future academic and occupational plans, were inadequately prepared for the transition from high school to college or the workplace (Boyer, 1983). Recognizing the overwhelming workload of the current guidance counseling structures in the public school system, the team raised the question, “Where do students turn for advice as they consider future options?” (Boyer, 1983, p. 131). To compensate, the team recommended that high school students in these transitional years might benefit from increased time with mentors and off-campus apprenticeship experiences.

Federal legislation soon followed in the form of the *Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990*, which mandated integration of vocational and academic skill development into secondary education. According to Bailey and colleagues (2004), this legislation responds to the 1974 Coleman Commission conclusions that young people were too isolated from adults in American schools. To counter this isolation, if exposed to early work-related experiences in their schooling,
these alienated youth would associate with adults and experience greater developmental

Representing a fundamental shift in secondary education from “educating for
occupations” to “educating through occupations,” the Perkins Act nationally legitimized
the growing momentum for increased work-based and academic integration in education
(Bailey et. al, p. 12), a federal revitalization of a truly Deweyian “education through
experience” philosophy.

Four years later, U.S. Congress approved the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of
1994 (STWOA), which not only re-emphasized the Perkins-style integration of academic
and vocational education as viable educational strategies, but required all States to offer
high school students more opportunities for “high quality work-based learning
experiences” (Section 3). The STWOA charges this nation lacks “a comprehensive and
coherent system to help youth acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and information
about access to the labor market that are necessary to make an effective transition from
school to work or education” (Section 2, Part 5).

In order to establish well-structured school-to-work systems as well as motivate
all youth toward post-secondary education and employment, States were directed to
promote improved planning and guidance structures as part of their comprehensive
education reform. Students should be exposed to a “broad array of career opportunities”,
which are “based on individual interests, goals, strengths, and abilities” (STWOA,
Section 3). According to STWOA, this includes greater career awareness and knowledge
about the necessary skills, trends, and opportunities that “assist individuals in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices” (STWOA, Section 4).

Federal legislation and funding, subsequent to the Carnegie Foundation report, have ensured the growth of high school-sponsored community-based learning “from a small dot on the educational landscape to an important place in the educational system” (Shumer & Cook, 1999, p. 3). States have increasingly infused community-based learning programs into education standards and graduation requirements, while establishing implementation guidelines for local school boards (Education Commission of the States, 2001; Shumer & Cook 1999; Skinner & Chapman, 1999; RMC Research Corporation, 2002).

In the 11th and 12th grades, high school students in the Midwestern School District must earn a minimum of 60 hours in out-of-class internships according to their intended career choice or interest. Students are required to earn 30 hours through unpaid internships in the 11th Grade and 30 hours through paid internships in the 12th Grade. The district defines an internship as an “actual first-hand professional experience outside the classroom,” which is designed to “give students an up-close look at the world of work” as well as a “useful link to the market.” It is strongly recommended that students work with mentors who provide one-on-one job training in order to achieve a more intensive job exploration. However, no specific structures are provided to ensure that this happens for all district students.

Although the Internship Program’s emphasis on community service and late high school work-based internships affords district high school students potentially positive
developmental benefits, these efforts seem incomplete without opportunities for social support.

**The Developmental Role of Social Support**

In order to become healthy, constructive adults, all youth need sustained interaction with social support systems comprised of caring adults, family, peers, schools, and community institutions (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995). Social support systems are associated with an increase in preparation for citizenship, personal competence, and self-worth, and they provide important potential social and economic resources. Linking key social institutions (i.e., family, school, community organizations), a cohesive youth-centered social support system restores and strengthens depleted social supports among families and communities where they are lacking (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bö, 1994; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Cauce & Srebnik, 1999; Takanishi, 2000).

Many scholars argue that these resources stem from supportive relationships with adults to the extent they contain informational support (i.e., providing advice, assisting in goal clarification), emotional support (i.e., providing encouragement), feedback (i.e., feedback performance on work-related tasks), and involvement with an adult mentor (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cauce, Mason, & Gonzales, et al., 1996; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996; Sandler & Twohey, 1998). Community-based learning presents opportunities for
the young person to tap into these supportive systems to enable individual development of one’s community membership orientation (Galbraith, 1995; Owens & Wang, 1996)

**Research Focus: The Role of Social Support in School District-Sponsored Community-Based Learning**

In order for high school-age youth to adequately prepare for civic engagement and productive work in a democratic society, it is essential that they develop occupational and citizenship engagement orientations as depicted in the top box in Figure 1.1. The school district Internship Program was created to foster development of these outcomes in district high school students. The box at the lower left frames the programmatic elements

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 1.1: Relative Influences of Internship Program Elements and Social Support on Program Outcomes**

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of the Internship Program, which potentially assists students in achieving occupational and citizenship outcomes. The box on the lower right shows the systems of social support that may influence the efficacy of the programmatic elements as well as contribute to Internship Program outcomes independently. The dotted arrow connecting the lower left and right boxes indicates the possibility of an interaction between programmatic elements of the Internship Program and the social support that the students experience. This research investigates these relationships using data from a large urban school district that requires all high school students to complete the Internship Program in order to graduate from high school.

Previous research indicates that social support in the form of career-oriented advice, encouragement, feedback, and mentoring will enhance participation in community service and work-based internships. Social support is the “value-added” component to programmatic elements that make personalized learning experiences particularly meaningful, affecting the way students prepare for civic engagement and productive work. I expect that programmatic experiences alone are insufficient to produce the desired occupational and citizenship engagement orientations unless social support for student efforts accompanies them. The following section describes the plan for the study.

**Plan for the Study**

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature regarding youth development and social support systems necessary for high school aged youth to become productive pro-social
and engaged adult democratic citizens. Drawing on knowledge pertaining to youth
development, social networks, and social support systems, I propose that educating urban
youth today for democratic citizenship engagement requires a community youth
development systems perspective.

Chapter 3 details the analysis plan for investigating the Internship Program
experiences of 1,741 high school seniors in the Midwestern School District’s Class of
2002 who are the first to graduate with the Internship Program requirement. As part of a
larger evaluation conducted by Ohio State University Professors, Drs. Helen Marks and
Joshua Hawley, graduating seniors were administered a survey questionnaire. First, I
present research questions, my hypothesis, and the complete analytic model for the study.
Next, I describe the construction of measures used in the study. Finally, I describe the
specific analytical approaches I will use to investigate each question and I provide the
rationale for each approach.

In Chapter 4, I present the results of the statistical analyses used to investigate the
research questions and test the hypotheses. I compare the relative effects of social
support and Internship Program experiences on occupational and citizenship engagement
orientations.

In Chapter 5, I examine the Midwestern School District’s implementation
capacity for many of the Internship Program components not achieving their intended
outcomes. I concentrate on district-level and school-level recommendations, which
provide stronger systems of personalized attention and social support for students. I also
consider the educational and policy implications for this study.
CHAPTER 2
HIGH SCHOOLS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT OCCUPATIONAL AND ENGAGEMENT ORIENTATIONS

Good high schools are student-centered (Cohen, 2001). Their caring and personalized learning environments, according to Cohen, assist students in developing an array of skills, attitudes, and dispositions essential to pro-social and productive work in mainstream adult society. The previous chapter characterized comprehensive high schools and contemporary educational policies as insufficient, especially in socially and economically disadvantaged environments, to achieve their missions of education for democratic citizenship missions without tapping systems of social support. Some suggest that American high school students lack occupational and citizenship engagement orientations because their social support systems have diminished (Tietjen, 1994). Among socially and economically disadvantaged urban high school students, in particular, limited access to strong supportive social ties or relationships inhibits preparation for pro-social and productive adult roles.

Interpersonal ties, within functional social networks, offer high school students needed support, resources, and information (Granovetter, 1975; Cotterell, 1996). As part of such networks, caring, pro-social adult relationships can provide these students with a needed “convoy” or delivery system of developmental resources to help promote occupational purpose and citizenship (Cotterell, 1996, p. 1). Ideally, school district-
sponsored community-based learning programs would provide these important convoys. Such interventions are expected to reduce alienation, disengagement, and risk (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For high schools to improve students’ preparation for future occupational and citizenship engagement, they must address disengagement risks and environmental barriers. Central to this effort is an understanding of youth developmental needs and systems, as well as the functions of social support during the high school years.

**Youth Development during the High School Years**

The high school years span one of the most dynamic periods in human development – adolescence. This pivotal transition between childhood and adulthood occurs over three developmental stages: (1) *early adolescence* (ages 11-14); (2) *middle adolescence* (ages 15-17); and (3) *late adolescence* (ages 18-21) (Stroufe, 1988; Hagan & Wheaton, 1993). The high school years likely touch each of these stages when youth make the transition from childhood dependency (i.e., economic, social, emotional) to independent adulthood (Pallas, 1993). Although the transition to adulthood typically indicates completion of formal education, fulltime labor force participation, and parenthood, some studies suggest the mastery of skills, accepting self-responsibility, deciding on beliefs and values, constructing positive identities, and financial independence as equally important indicators (Furstenberg, 2000; Arnett, 2003). Thus, youth development during the high school years involves a series of particular individual transitions and experiences in learning and practicing skills and roles along the multiple
pathways to adulthood (Hogan & Astone, 1986; Johnson, 2000). Experimentation with identity, exploration of options, and the building of competencies are essential and related developmental tasks during this period in the life course (Clausen, 1991).

**Developmental Tasks**

Human developmental tasks in the life course entail acquiring physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral attributes considered as normal or expected of a person for a given age and gender, within the context of a particular culture, society, and time (Waters & Stroufe, 2003). Among these developmental tasks, early adolescents achieve concrete thinking, growing independence in decision-making, and experimentation with new behaviors. They also begin formulating future attitudes toward future citizenship according to experiences and perceptions of being an active part of a larger community (Marks & Kuss, 1999). Middle adolescents continue in developing abstract thought and a sense of identity. Late adolescents, maturing in their development as thinkers and in their personal identity, and seek pathways for the transition from school to work, higher education, independent living, and civic and community participation (Stroufe, 1998; Perkins, 2001; American Psychological Association, 2001; Michelsen & Hair, 2002).

According to these authors, the overarching developmental task in these adolescent stages involves creating stable identities and becoming complete and productive adults. Social interactions in adult settings and gradually attaining levels of independence enhance this process. Adolescents develop identity by exercising emerging cognitive abilities. Discussion of moral and ethical dilemmas or issues in the news with
family, teachers, or peers contributes to this process. During the high school years, young persons must also explore their place or status in the community and the world of adult work through becoming involved in out-of-school and community activities, part-time or summer employment, examining career and educational options, and developing future goals.

**Competence**

Accomplishing the developmental tasks necessary for a successful transition to adulthood requires competence in three main areas: (1) *technical competence* or the ability to perform tasks correctly; (2) *personal competence* or the propensity to act responsibly, draw on self-confidence, and exercise initiative; and (3) *social competence* or the capacity to work with others, follow rules, and participate pro-socially in social settings (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2002). Acquiring an array of competencies increases the potential for high school students to experience a successful transition to adulthood (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Huebner, 2003).

Building competence during the transition to adulthood requires developing the orientations and skills enabling individuals to direct and take charge of their life pathways (Larson, 2000; Huebner, 2003). High school students must acquire those skill sets, attitudes, motives, and abilities for mastering the social environments (e.g., workplace, community) in which they will find themselves (Garbarino, 1985). To assist students in becoming more competent, high schools generally promote opportunities for
career awareness, career development, community membership, and citizenship (Barton, Watkins, & Jarjoura, 1997; Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004).

**Career Development**

Career development during the high school years requires students to gain the skills necessary for employment as well as an understanding of career options and the steps necessary to reach occupational goals (Zeldin & Charner, 1996). Hamilton and Hamilton’s (2002) technical, social, and personal competency development framework explains this process. High school students gain technical competencies by learning the foundational and advanced skills (e.g., reading, writing, computational and technology skills) associated with completing high school, higher education, and employment training. Students need social competence to interact with competent adults and seek information, advice, and feedback concerning occupational interests. Positive interactions with adults contribute to personal competence as students exercise skills to maintain these relationships and clarify their goals and interests.

Experiences that enable high school students to clarify goals and interests increase confidence, motivation, and drive to search and pursue career plans (Clausen, 1991, 1999). According to Clausen, this confidence, motivation, and drive guides students to making appropriate decisions about future adult roles and experiences based on individual goals, values, and strengths. For high school students, making these decisions pervasively shapes occupational aspirations, educational attainment, and future career stability.
Developing and identifying an occupational pathway during the high school years enables students to develop a motivating self-image or vision of the future person they wish to become (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). A focused self-concept buffers the young person against formidable environmental stress or other negative external stimuli that may deter them from pursuit of certain occupational pathways. Instead, they gain employment-oriented skills and information about employment options needed to reach occupational goals. Competency-building experiences that increase motivation and drive for certain occupational pathways during high school enhance self-confidence, self-worth, and identity essential in making a successful transition to adulthood (Zeldin & Charner, 1996). These skills, dispositions, and competencies lead high school students to develop occupational engagement orientations (Röhrle & Sommer, 1994; Orr, 1996; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997; Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004).

**Citizenship Development**

Citizenship development during the high school years involves building civic competence (Zeldin & Charner, 1996). Civic competence refers to the ability, skills, and motivation needed for working collaboratively in achieving collective goals perceived as essential to the larger public good (Flanagan & Faison, 2001). Civic competence also represents an awareness of important social issues and participative dispositions toward future political and civic participation ranging from intentions to vote, engaging in political dialogue, voicing opinions, activism, to working collaboratively with others and
indicators of future volunteer service as adults (Michelsen & Hair, 2002; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003).

Civic competence is developed in three additional important contexts: (1) family; (2) school; (3) and neighborhood institutions or organizations (Hart & Atkins, 2002). Families, especially adult members, influence high school student development through discussing current events as they appear on the media, for example (Oswald, 2000). Since families do not operate in isolation from other contexts, they are important in introducing students to other organizations or networks, which are likely to sustain these orientations (Youniss, Bales, & Christmas-Best et al., 2002). For example, family religious values encourage religious involvement and attendance where young persons, in these settings, gain access to social networks and have the opportunity to cultivate skills (e.g., service, organizing, negotiating, fund-raising, leadership), which are applicable to civic and political life (Scholzman, Verba, & Brady, 1995; Smidt, 1999).

Opportunities to work voluntarily in local associations and institutions build civic skills especially as high school students design and organize activities themselves rather than accept predetermined volunteer roles (Kirlin, 2002). Students are more likely to benefit as they work collaboratively in voicing concerns and reach consensus about social action despite organizational complexities and the multiple, diverse perspectives among participants. Kirlin (2002) suggests that adults enhance such student experiences as they ask challenging questions and provide support and encouragement.

Schools assist students in developing civic competence as they encourage opportunities for civic engagement and related critical reflection in the classroom rather
than assuming students will achieve these same ends as passive recipients of teacher-directed civic knowledge transfer (Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald et al., 2001).

Role of High Schools

High schools, as key socializing institutions in American society, have the potential to enhance youth development or to reinforce its complexities and problems (Coleman, 1993; Furstenberg, 2000). Intentionally creating personalized learning environments for high school students emphasizing interactions, cohesive social networks with intergenerational closure, and a culture of support enhances their development (Marks, 1999). Schools have the potential for these personalized learning environments when they organize for community-based learning programs. Student participation in high school-sponsored community-based learning programs and related interactions with supportive adults enhances socialization processes and the acceptance of shared norms necessary for acquiring social capital (Skocopal & Fiorina, 1999). Community-based learning, as indicated in chapter 1, entails various educational strategies. In the following section I describe these strategies and developmental benefits they are intended to achieve.

Work-Based Learning

High school work-based learning programs in schools come in many forms. Experienced-Based Career Education provides high school students with opportunities to learn about careers and community life through direct interaction with community adults
while earning academic credit (Bucknam & Brand, 1983). *Cooperative Education* emphasizes specific arrangements between schools and employers for vocational course-related and required career developmental experiences oriented toward immediate post-high school employment (Stern, Finkelstein, Stone et al., 1994). *Tech prep* emphasizes career counseling, individualized student planning, and career clusters or pathways to provide high school students direction in their courses (Owens & Wang, 1996). *School-to-work*, according to Owens and Wang, consists of student interest-driven academic learning, career exploration, counseling, a planned program of job training and paid work experiences, workplace mentoring, and other coordinated developmental experiences between the employer and the school. *Job shadowing* entails student visits to work sites for the purpose observing normal workday routines of adults (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). *Youth apprenticeships* involve fulltime workplace learning experiences associated with mentor involvement and skill development (Hamilton, 1990). In a generic way, these learning experiences are considered “internships” (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). As explained in chapter 1, the Midwestern District Internship Program, at the center of this study, features a course related to career exploration and planning (i.e., Career Connections), job shadowing, community service, unpaid and paid work-based internships.

High school work-based learning programs operationalize essential components of youth development during the high school years including: (1) opportunities to experience new roles; (2) occasions for receiving social support (i.e., information, encouragement, feedback); and (3) access to strategic relational networks (Zeldin &
Charner, 1996). Although the general character of comprehensive high schools does not encourage deep occupational exploration, work-based learning initiatives that connect students to schooling and workplace learning environments have a potentially profound effect (Bailey & Merrit, 1993; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2000; Shanahan, Mortimer, & Krüger, 2002). School-sponsored work-based learning programs establish important social networks, which enable high schools to fulfill important social and cultural functions. Through these programs and networks, students can achieve valued, trusted, and recognized productive status in society as they become integrated into the modern economy (Rosenbaum, 1996).

The success of work-based learning experiences depends upon the social support that students receive (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). Students are likely to feel an even stronger connection with supportive adults in the workplace than at school (Steinberg, 1998). Students are more apt to view workplace adults as having valuable information relevant to perceived needs and interests. Students will likely view adults in the workplace as more personal and interested in individual student interests and goals. In any case, work-based learning enables youth to experience generally supportive positive relationships with adults that they would not otherwise have (Wenger, 1998; Hughes, Bailey, & Merchur, 2001; Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). Particularly for ethnic minorities and the economically disadvantaged, early in-school work experiences have proven to be a worthwhile human capital investment by enhancing school relevancy, increasing graduation rates, and producing favorable labor market results for young adults (Sum, Fogg, & Mangum, 2000; Sum et al., 2004).
Community Service

High School community service programs also come in many different forms. On a continuum, they range from volunteer service opportunities, required community service opportunities facilitated by the school, a single service-learning project for credit, to the availability of service learning courses and the view that service-learning is integral to the school’s mission (Education Commission of the States, 1999). Eighty-three percent of high schools offer community service programs, a dramatic change from 1984 when only 27 percent of high schools reported having community service programs (Neuman & Rutter, 1985; Westheimer & Kahne, 2000).

Community service differs from service learning. Student community service is defined as community service activities that are non-curriculum based although they are recognized and/or arranged by the school (Skinner & Chapman, 1999). Community service, according to Skinner and Chapman, may be mandatory or voluntary, generally lacks explicit learning objectives and opportunities for critical reflection, may happen within the school, but primarily takes place off grounds during out-school hours. These activities may be school-wide events, or projects, sponsored by school clubs, organizations, or classes, or be carried out individually. Service learning, in contrast, combines meaningful academically connected community service experiences promoting civic responsibility, and is often a component of an experienced-based educational philosophy (Poulsen, 1994; Shumer, 1994).

Participation in community service as a means for enhancing citizenship development offers many positive developmental outcomes for high school students.
Community service connects students to the community and society, and stimulates personal efficacy, social responsibility, agency, and individual purpose in life (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003; Pearson & Voke, 2003). Community service participants are likely to experience civic development as they experience direct contact with people in need or with issues of inequality or injustice (Youniss & Yates, 1997). Community service involvement also mediates the social background influences of gender, social class, race or ethnicity (Marks & Kuss, 1999).

However, some argue that community service fails to promote civic development (National Association of Secretaries of State, 1999). Despite increasing interest in service involvement high school students, critics argue student participants acknowledge little interest in political and civic affairs as a result of their service or that their service participation has not really made a difference in the community (Melchior, 1998; Blyth, Saito, & Berkas, 1997). There also appears to be some controversy over the link between community service and future political and civic participation as adults. Some suggest that this inconclusive evidence stems from the nature of community service, which emphasizes charitable goals rather than political engagement (Wade & Saxe, 1996). For example, although females are more likely to engage in community service participation, they are less likely to become politically engaged with respect to political knowledge, attentiveness, and interest in various civic discourse venues (i.e., media, newspaper, family discussions) (Nolin, Chapman, & Chaney, 1996; Schlozman, Burns, & Verba, 1997; Jenkins, 2005).
Others argue for the efficacy of community service. According to Michelsen and Hair (2002), participants in school-sponsored community service programs experienced: 1) increased knowledge about the functions of government compared to non-participants; (2) increased attention to news; (3) more knowledge about civic and political issues of local importance; and (4) improved attitudes toward working with others, especially adults; and (5) favorable attitudes toward performing future community service as adults.

The degree of student engagement in these programs and their developmental benefits may depend on the quality of interactions with supportive adults (Pearson & Voke, 2003). Opportunities for high school students to work alongside adults involved in meaningful political, social, and moral causes are most likely to impact student orientations toward citizenship engagement (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003). These experiences are likely to provide high school students with exposure to clear ideological positions upon which they can reflect and that may encourage them to take action. Students become socialized for citizenship as they work collaboratively with adults in community service activities and have such mentoring experiences (Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). Pearson and Voke (2003) suggest that community service is a cost-effective way for schools to achieve these youth developmental benefits during the high school years.

Summary

Opportunities for high school students to engage in school-sponsored work-based learning and community service, as intended by the Midwestern District Internship
Program, provide experience in self-directed learning, exploration, and experimentation with new adult roles and responsibilities, especially at a time in adolescence when a strong sense of self is emerging (Zeldin & Charner, 1996; Cahill & Pitts, 1997). Meaningful community engagement experiences and the supportive relationships they provide tend to bolster confidence, increase competence, and cultivate civic identity (Yates & Youniss, 1997; Michelsen & Hair, 2002). Civic identity is a deeply rooted sense of community membership and belonging, which increases self-worth. Civic identities shaped during this developmental period are likely to persist well into adulthood (Torney-Purta, 1990; Marks & Kuss, 2001). Participation in these programs and the personalized learning environments they foster increases the ability of high school students to overcome disengagement risks and perform a variety of tasks as contributing, productive adults (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000).

Building competency and accomplishing developmental tasks essential to successful adulthood transition is nurtured by access to supportive adults (e.g., parents, peers, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, youth workers) (Clausen, 1991). Adults in these various settings and social contexts, according to Clausen, potentially provide students encouragement, and positive feedback. Both of which confirm and strengthen personal identity. These dynamic and reciprocal relationships between multiple interconnected levels suggest that students are situated in complex developmental systems (Lerner & Perkins, 1999). Enhancing youth development during the high school years requires knowledge of the interdependent systems through which students are
influenced. Examining the ecological systems framework provides insights into tapping and coordinating the resources for maximum student development.

The Ecological Systems Framework

The development of high school students’ positive orientations toward future productive adult work and citizenship does not occur in isolation of their surroundings or of the individuals in these surroundings with whom students interact. A theoretical perspective on the influence of sustained, caring, supportive relationships on positive youth development during the high school years derives from Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1977; 1979; 1989) ecological systems framework. Although not intended to be a theoretical conception, the ecological systems framework is a useful way of “organizing knowledge about multiple social and environmental forces” influencing high school students (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992, p. 2). Understanding these multiple and social environmental forces, and the systems through which they affect students, potentially provides a framework through which interventions may be understood and directed.

High school aged youth are embedded within and influenced by multiple-level interactive systems much like a “nested arrangement of concentric structures” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, p.4, 1989). These structures include the microsystem, the proximal setting or contexts in which individuals live or move (e.g., family, neighborhoods, schools, workplace, small communities); the mesosystem or the
relationships between microsystems or the connections between contexts; the *exosystem* or the experiences in a social setting to, which the individual does not belong but influences what they experience in their immediate context (e.g., for a student, the parent’s job); the *macrosystem* or the “cultural blueprint” underlying the organization of institutions, the assumptions people make about social relations, and the working of the political and economic systems; and the *chronosystem* or patterns of environmental events and transitions over the life course (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Drawing from a biological systems perspective emphasizing the reciprocal relationships between organism behavior and development, the ecology of human development seeks to establish that individuals are part of a larger social system, whereby they and their outside surroundings (i.e., social environment) are mutually shaping influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992). When elements in one system change, elements in other systems react and interact, thus continuously affecting, in one way or another, the individual nested at the center by changes occurring in the environment surrounding them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological systems framework, as Berk observed (1979), has “tremendous applied significance since it suggests that interventions at any level of the environment can enhance development” (p. 26). For the purposes of this study, however, I will examine the potential at the microsystemic and mesosystemic levels where active participation in interpersonal relationships has significant developmental influence (Bronfenbrenner, 2001).
**Microsystems**

Microsystems consist of dyadic and triadic relationships where individuals engage in face-to-face interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992). In these settings, the young person is exposed to activity patterns and role behavior, which they may adopt. In high school, for example, students interact with a variety of individuals such as peers, teachers, coaches, administrators, and other school personnel (e.g., custodians, secretaries, security guards, etc) who very likely value education and the importance of productive adult work and citizenship. Families may provide children with access to social networks, as previously described where the developing young person might gain important experience. Students reared in families with deep mistrust and cynicism toward government, on the other hand, are likely to adopt these negative attributes and act on them (Bennett, 2000). Students working with adults in the workplace or in the community may encounter adults with similar interests and be influenced to adopt their views and to follow similar life course pathways. They may provide students the necessary skills, information, and encouragement to pursue their interests. These enduring patterns of motivation and activity constitute important developmental trajectories (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Developmental problems are likely to occur, however, when microsystems work in isolation from or in opposition to each other, which is especially problematic during the high school years when the number and the complexity of these dyadic relationships continues to expand (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992). Families may not value higher
education, for example, or they may lack the information, skills, and contacts relevant to their children’s future adult interests. Employers may view high school students as “cheap labor”, which are eager to earn extra spending money and therefore will work extra and late hours with little concern for the time needed for their studies. In order to reach high academic expectations, high schools may demand more homework from students living in poverty who are needed by their families to add to the family income. According to Garbarino and Abramowitz, the young person benefits when microsystems work in concert. The formulation of mesosystems explains how such synchrony occurs.

**Mesosystems**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) considers mesosystems as the interrelations between two or more microsystems. Sometimes referred to as a “system of systems”, mesosystems are likely to occur at the entry point where the young person traverses to a new setting from a previous setting (Bronfenbrenner, p. 4). High school students move in between family, school, peers, workplace, religious settings, and other various out-of-school activities. In preparing for adult work and citizenship, they must move into new environments for which many may be unaccustomed, such as higher education, careers, economic independence, parenthood, and community living.

Mesosystems suggest the importance of strong linkages between these settings in order to facilitate smooth ecological transition between them (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). Students, despite their involvement in varied and different settings, develop capacity to cope with different role demands while recognizing how comparable and similar they are.
In high school, for example, students develop various technical competencies (e.g., writing, reading, math, etc.) and social competencies (e.g., following rules, getting along with others) in order to complete their educational requirements. As students have opportunities for linking settings through community service and work-based learning, they are required to demonstrate these same competencies. Through these experiences, high school students are likely to discover the relevancy and importance of school in future adult work and citizenship. Extended time for experiential learning in the community exposes high school students to diverse people in a variety of social and occupational settings (Hurrelman, 1991). Students, according to Hurrelman, need to see more evidence that what they are learning in school applies to other social settings outside school. At the same time, what students learn outside school through community service and work-based learning underscores the importance of their academic program. Such a process is achievable only by “cooperation between the school and the key settings outside (e.g., parents, community, workplace)” with particular emphasis on building the “links between the school and the workplace” (Hurrelman, p. 47).

Internship and community service supervisors are likely to provide career and community information about the steps necessary to achieve desired tasks, and to encourage students to pursue them. Families and school personnel may press students to complete their educational requirements by fulfilling mandated community service and internships. Students performing school community service may recognize the need for future involvement in local neighborhoods and their potential and capacity to participate.
Summary

Social forces acting developmentally on high school students influence the students from within and without their immediate environments. The ecological systems framework suggests the developmental significance of supportive human relationships in new social environments or surroundings. While human relationships may buffer negative environmental influences on the high school student, they may also facilitate integration and adaptation to other positive environments. The various ecological transitions required between the separate life domains of high school students may be strengthened by interventions designed to intentionally interlink them.

Embedded in nested social contexts, high school students are developmentally influenced by a system of social interactions and relationships across interlinked and interdependent multiple layers or settings. The linkages between these settings channel important growth-oriented resources to the individual student (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bö, 1994). These resources include the technical, social, and personal competencies necessary for future occupational and citizenship engagement. Each setting provides high school students essential components of future engagement. The stronger and more complementary the links between settings, the more powerful the resulting mesosystem becomes in influencing development (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992). The likelihood of developmental risk increases, according to Garbarino and Abramowitz, when strong mesosystems do not exist. Students may fall victim to their environmental and structural constraints in the macrosystem.
The Macrosystem: Structural Constraints and Youth Disengagement

During the transition to adulthood, high school students experience many social contexts and are developmentally influenced by the circumstances, opportunities, or limitations linked to each (Hogan & Astone, 1986; Wilson, 1996; Pettit, 1998). Such structural constraints within Microsystems are a by-product of larger social and cultural forces in the macrosystem. These forces represent the behavior patterns, beliefs, customs, and all other products of a group of people (e.g., precedents and laws) that are passed on from generation to another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Berk, 2000). They shape student expectations about work, education, society, and access to resourceful and competency-building social interactions, which may direct the pathways into adulthood (Hogan & Astone, 1986; Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992; Pettit, 1998).

A significant macrosystemic pattern influencing high school students today concerns the continuing erosion and breakdown of community and social ties (Putnam, 2000). For many different reasons (e.g., ecological, technological, social, cultural), families and communities today experience less cohesion and provide high school students less naturally occurring social capital as was once available (Marks, 1999). Some argue that over recent decades the depletion of community and social ties, within industrialized countries, has become extensive enough to warrant concern about future youth well being (Bö, 1996; Takanashi, 2000). Takanashi (2000) explains “the sense of belonging to a community that offers mutual aid and a sense of common purpose, whether it is found in families, schools, neighborhoods, religious places, or youth organizations, has been compromised” (Takanashi, 2000, p. 290).
Without these resourceful community and social ties, separate life domains tend to proliferate in which people become alienated and segregated from one another (Handlin & Handlin, 1971; Bö, 1996). Exemplifying that phenomenon, high school aged youth have become cut off from the adult world as they are relegated to age-segregated peer groups, particularly within schools (Bronfenbrenner, 1973; Coleman, 1974). These trends have increasingly isolated adults from the “daily activities that shape young peoples’ lives (Croninger & Lee, 1996, p. 1). Segregation and alienation from adult society result in detrimental consequences for youth development during the high school years (Hamilton, 2002).

The diminishment of social capital-producing community social ties also impacts today’s traditional social institutions (e.g., family, schools, civic organizations, religious groups). This loss touches youth social ecology and decreases its capacity to provide the support, guidance, and socializing functions necessary for youth development during the high school years (Grubb & Lazerson, 1998; Heath & McLaughlin, 1995; Putnam, 2000). This general community breakdown results in a marked decline in the social ties and resources necessary for productive adulthood (Croninger & Lee, 1996). Limited access to these opportunities increases adolescent alienation and disengagement resulting in mental health problems, social deviance, and low academic performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Coleman, 1974; Bö, 1996).

Macrosystemic patterns such as the erosion of community and social ties accentuate existing youth developmental barriers and limitations. For example, many have described the substantial challenges low socioeconomic status and urban racial and
ethnic minority high school students have in acquiring positive orientations toward work and citizenship (Torney-Purta, 1990; Constantine, Erickson, Banks et al., 1998; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999; Flanagan & Faison, 2001). They often experience less favorable environmental conditions, as discussed in the previous chapter on occupational and citizenship engagement trends. As a result, it is likely that prevailing norms, attitudes, and beliefs, associated with these environments, will be passed on to high school students and modify future goals, aspirations, and expectations.

Students often experience access to caring, supportive adults with pro-social ties, job, contacts, and career-related information differently by gender and social class (Hogan & Astone, 1986; Kasi nity & Rosenberg, 1996; Pettit, 1998; Putnam, 2000). More American youth are growing up in socially and economically disadvantaged families within fragmented, low-structure, low-trust, and impoverished neighborhoods (Bö, 1996; Wilson, 1996; Skocopal & Fiorina, 1999; Rhodes, Grossman, & Roffman, 2002). These social environments often lack the necessary civic institutions (e.g., organizations, church groups, etc.) and citizen recruitment networks to mobilize citizens for political and civic activism and engagement (Zeldin & Charner, 1996; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999; Skocopal & Fiorina, 1999). Less means exist for citizens to adequately address community problems and concerns (Cohen & Dawson, 1993; Flanagan & Faison, 2001).

Neighborhoods with stronger social ties have higher perceptions of vitality. Residents exhibit more trust in fellow neighborhood adults, are willing to engage with others to solve local problems, and experience stronger feelings of security (Cohen &
Dawson, 1993; Skocopal & Fiorina, 1997; Flanagan & Faison, 2001). In more relationally vibrant neighborhoods, adults will more closely monitor the activities of young people, know them, and be mindful of their safety. Neighborhood children are likely to trust these adults and view them as role models.

Where mesosystems of resourceful social networks exist, they play a large role in helping high school students in these environments surmount many barriers to employment (Putnam, 2003). Although urban and racial ethnic minority students, for example, have similar occupational aspirations as other groups, they often demonstrate lower levels of information about available careers and are likely to have lower expectations about what occupations they may achieve (Constantine, Erickson, Banks et al., 1998). Females perceive greater barriers to the development of their career goals than do their male counterparts (McWhiter, 1997).

Strong resourceful mesosystems connect high school students, despite their backgrounds and acquired perceptions, with valuable mainstream employment-related information and contacts (Granovetter, 1973; Kasinity & Rosenberg, 1996; Wilson, 1996; Putnam, 2000). This knowledge promotes greater stability in occupational aspirations (Shu & Marini, 1997). For example, higher SES and GPA students have better experiences in this regard and thus encounter fewer barriers (Clausen, 1991; Rindfuss, Cooksey, & Sutterlin, 1999). For high school students lacking these mesosystemic resources, they fail to understand what types of work are available, the characteristics of jobs, and the necessary education and training requirements for entering various occupations and relevant skills (Csikzentmihalyi & Schneider, 2001). As young adults,
they operate under fanciful, whimsical notions, which disappear under the weight of adult economic realities and pressures.

Many students have high, if not exaggerated and unrealistic, occupational aspirations (Roy & Rosenbaum, 1996). A national study of sixth-graders, for example, reported that 80 percent plan to pursue occupations that require education beyond high school including four-year college or advanced degrees (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). Despite these high occupational aspirations, however, these same young people generally view schooling as not relevant to their career plans. Unrealizable ambition gives way to disillusionment, discouragement, and disaffection as these young persons have limited career knowledge and opportunities to “talk seriously with adults, or each other, about how the present and future connects, how present clues provide insights into future life-styles or careers” (Steinberg, 1998, p. 7). These students likely lack a basic sense of what adult work entails.

To remedy this problem, many scholars have suggested policies and structures designed to give high school students, despite their contextual constraints, more community knowledge, institutional access, job information and contacts (Rosenbaum, 1996; Steinberg, 1998; Putnam, 2000). These interventions entail bridging macrosystemic patterns such as lack of supportive youth social and community ties with stronger mesosystemic linkages and structures. Although high schools students tend not to be aware of these structural constraints, they will continue to the bear their ill effects well into adulthood without intervention (Johnson, 2000).
If positive human relationships are absent or limited in the student’s social ecology because of macrosystemic forces, the lack may be addressed through intervention and improving developmental mesosystems (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992). Ecological systems theory is useful here, as it explains that positive youth development during the high school years may be enhanced by quality relationships with mature and experienced adults who “stimulate and sustain development as long as interconnection in a two person bond remains” (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 4). The quality of socially supportive ties between mircosystems or settings, as suggested by strong mesosystemic intervention, may influence the high school student’s socialization and development (Bö, 1994). To understand the potential for high school-sponsored community-based programs to enhance youth development of positive dispositions toward occupational and citizenship engagement involves examining the role of social support.

**Social Support**

External social support systems facilitate youth development during the high school years (Werner & Smith, 1982, 1989; Masten & Garmezy, 1985). Successful development depends upon positive social interactions with people at multiple levels and systems within the student’s social ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lerner, 1995; Bogenschneider, 1995; Perkins, Borden, Keith et al., 2004). External support systems can be found at school, within families, among peers, and in opportunities to connect
with nonfamilial supportive adults (Smith & Carlson, 1997; Perkins et al., 2004). The influence and availability of external support systems becomes ever more critical for youth during their high school years (Hamilton, 1991; Gottlieb & Sylvestre, 1994; Cauce, Mason, Gonzales, & Liu, 1996; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996).

The drive of high school aged youth to assert greater independence results in the developmental necessity to form more social ties with pro-social adults in networks apart from family, neighborhood, and childhood friendship circles (Gottlieb & Sylvestre, 1994). Pro-social adults are supportive role models who provide guidance and feedback as they supervise young people’s activities especially at critical adolescent developmental transitions (Takanishi, 2000). Supportive relationships with mature, caring, pro-social adults offer instrumental access to educational resources providing education and adult-oriented guidance and encouragement (Takanishi). They provide high school students with advice and skills essential to performing adult roles (Croninger & Lee, 1996).

For students experiencing familial distress, relationships with significant, nonfamilial socially supportive adults, can enhance self-esteem, academic engagement, aspirations for higher achievement, social adaptation and integration into the wider community (Cochran & Bö, 1989; Cotterell, 1994; Gottlieb & Sylvestre, 1994; Scales & Leffert, 1989). Successful individuals, despite experiencing childhood deprivation, commonly point to the beneficial influence of supportive adults who provided advice, encouragement, and assistance (Lefklowitz, 1987; Wilson, 1987; Hamilton, 1990). Socially supportive adults provide high school students with structural supports for
important resources, models, emotional support, and feedback (Pianta, Stuhlman, & Hamre, 2002).

Adult social support during the high school years is vital to students, as decisions concerning educational and occupational pursuits may appear daunting and confusing. Adult support and mentoring is especially critical in environments with patterns of mass social disengagement where fewer opportunities for contact with competent, resourceful role models may lead to unrealistic or limited life choices and opportunities (Smith & Carlson, 1997). The image of adult careers alone does not have enough magnetic pull to motivate most young persons into taking control of their lives without direct involvement and intervention by supportive adults and mentors (Larson, 2000).

**Mentoring**

Mentors assist high school students by serving as an important bridge between their social worlds and the work of adulthood (Croninger & Lee, 1996). Mentoring relationships most often involve one-to-one instruction within a structural setting (Freedman, 1993; Heath & McLaughlin, 1993; Croninger & Lee, 1996). Although interactions with significant, supportive, nonfamilial adults are helpful, it is not until these relationships achieve a mentoring status that student preparation for adult pro-social and productive roles is most effective (LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend et al., 1996; DuBois, Nelville, Parra et al., 2002).

How mentoring in the lives of high school students should be defined has been the source of some considerable debate (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996). However, there are
some common characteristics. Mentors are considered by students to be experienced adults with whom they have a high emotional bond containing deep feelings of respect, loyalty, mutual commitment, and understanding (Barrera, 1986; Hamilton, 1990). To the extent that such adults are perceived as more competent and experienced, they perform an important mentoring function as *challengers* (Hamilton, 1991).

Drawing on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1950), Darling (1991) explains that challenging but supportive adults engage students in new experiences designed to induce internal conflict and disequilibria. Students recognize the disparity between their present knowledge and skills and those required in new situations. While maintaining emotional support (i.e., encouragement), these challenging adults gently nudge the student from one competency level to the next. As students adapt to these circumstances, they replace old ideas, gain mastery of new skills, tasks, and increase in competency (Hamilton, 1990, 1991). In this process, students learn coping strategies to effectively manage their new environment (Darling, 1991). However, Darling cautions that without emotional support, challenging adults “may inhibit the learning and skills through anxiety and fear of failure” (p. 11).

Two additional characteristics distinguish mentoring from merely being attached to someone more skilled, competent, and experienced. These are the *social* and *functional* roles that mentors perform (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996). The mentor’s *social* role refers to the importance of supportive individuals in terms of location and context (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996). Mentors are placed within a specific context in which they are linked to set of resources or knowledge considered valuable or desirable by the
student (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996). In their **functional** role, mentors demonstrate evidence that supportive interactions are taking place by providing the student assistance, information, and opportunities for skill acquisition or access to additional resources (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1996).

Mentors influence student self-efficacy especially where the student perceives similarity or identifies the mentor as a role model (Bandura, 1995). The role model, according to Bandura, may exhibit significant knowledge and skills, but students must decide for themselves whether to accept them. Modeling and vicarious experiences strengthen student self-efficacy to accomplish challenging tasks even though they may have limited personal experiences (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

Mentors increase student self-efficacy through verbal persuasion or providing them feedback and encouragement, thus motivating students to try harder to succeed (Bandura, 1986; Gist, 1987, Wood & Bandura, 1989; Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Student self-efficacy is also influenced by the positive physical arousal they experience, in the form of enthusiasm or excitement, over successfully accomplishing new tasks (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The social support mentors provide addresses fundamental youth developmental needs during the high school years (Sandler, 2001). Mentor social support, according to Sandler, leads to higher self-esteem, coping skills, and greater personal competencies, which strengthen individual identity and resolve that one has a bright future and can make a difference in the world. When high school students achieve this level of development, they manifest a capacity for executing a course of action to reach a desired
goal and exercising the necessary energy and motivation despite challenges, obstacles, or difficulties (Bandura, 1986, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997; Wood & Bandura, 1989). The stronger this capacity becomes, the more likely significant tasks will be accomplished (Stipek, 1993). With this sense of achievement, these individuals become more persistent in their efforts to excel in challenging situations (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

When high school students engage in competency and capacity-building experiences with supportive, competent role models and mentors, they likely experience information, encouragement, and feedback. These experiences assist high school students in articulating career pathways, taking the necessary steps, and feeling a sense of community belonging and membership. The social support high school students receive determines, especially for those limited by environmental circumstances, development of occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.

Building positive orientations to occupational and citizenship engagement in high school students requires “purposely creating environments”, which provide an “array of opportunities” and “constructive, affirmative, and more encouraging relationships” with community adults (Perkins, Borden, & Keith., 2003, p. 6). These environments, opportunities, and relationships enable high school students “to build their own competencies and become engaged partners in their own development as well as the development of their communities” (Perkins et al., p. 6). High schools attempt to socialize students for occupational and citizenship engagement by providing community-based learning programs. These programs seem to provide the personalized learning environments students need for interactions with supportive adults.
High school students will likely experience improved outcomes if developmental experiences are deliberately coordinated between separate microsystems. This intervention by schools in partnership with other microsystems, promotes stronger and more cohesive mesosystemic linkages thereby enabling improved flow of developmental resources to high school students. Increased mesosystemic collaboration and coordination in the form of high school-sponsored community-based learning may be an effective delivery system of resources for youth development of positive occupational and engagement orientations during the high school years. However, the developmental benefits of such delivery systems depends on the social support that students experience. Ecological systems theory also explains necessity of competency-building, supportive social linkages in achieving positive youth developmental outcomes during the high school years. Therefore, education for occupational and democratic citizenship requires high school students to be connected to more supportive adults in educational settings inside and outside of school.

**Summary**

Informed by ecological systems theory, high school-sponsored community service and work-based internships may help students overcome environmental background limitations and structural constraints in acquiring positive dispositions toward occupational and citizenship engagement. The Internship Program seems to provide appropriate theoretical grounding for the school district’s objectives of offering students work-based learning and community service. The Internship Program is intended to
assist high school students in accomplishing developmental tasks essential to successful adulthood transition such as building competencies for occupational and citizenship engagement. Such skills, attitudes, and dispositions, strengthen individual identity and resolve for accomplishing pro-social and productive adult work. In pursuing this study on the impact of the Internship Program on the development of positive occupational and citizenship engagement orientations among high school seniors and the role of social support in that process, I have found important variables whose influence I will examine further. These are described in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3
MODEL, SAMPLE, AND METHODS

This chapter provides the empirical framework for the investigation of the relative influence of community-based learning and social support on high school seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, the subject of this dissertation research. Grounded in the theory presented in Chapter 2, I introduce three research questions and three hypotheses that guide my inquiry into the social support community-based learning participants experience and their relationship to enhancing occupational and citizenship outcomes. I describe the collection of survey data, from which this study draws its sample, and present descriptions and characteristics of the Midwestern district’s high school seniors who constitute the sample. An explanation of how I constructed the measures employed in the investigation follows. The chapter concludes with a review of the methodology and the analytic approach.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

In Chapters 1 and 2, I developed a theoretical rationale for supporting the usefulness of community-based learning programs (i.e., work-based learning, community service) on high school seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement. Because these positive orientations are fundamental to successful youth transition to adulthood, I examined the various systems associated with positive developmental outcomes based on Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems model.

The model suggests the positive role of youth exposure to growth opportunities in multiple and deliberately linked systems of social interaction. The positive influence of such mesosystemic linkages highlights the influential role of socially supportive adults. Community-based learning has the potential to provide these mesosystemic linkages necessary for achieving positive occupational and engagement orientations. This study centers on the relative influences of community-based learning and social support on seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.

The ecological systems model also suggests that relationships exist between the individual and each element of the social system – from the micro- to the macrosystem. The first question examines the potential relationships between the individual and the larger society by looking into their orientations toward work and citizenship as they may be influenced by community service and internships.

- Research Question 1: To what extent, does completion of community service (i.e., early high school, late high school) and work-based internships (i.e., unpaid internships, paid internships) influence high
school seniors’ orientations toward their occupational and citizenship futures?

The ecological systems model implies the necessity of competency-building, supportive social interactions across multiple interlinked settings in a mesosystem for achieving positive youth developmental outcomes during the high school years. Mesosystemic opportunities for experiencing social support in the form of encouragement, information, feedback, and mentoring from caring adults may enhance seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. Participation in programmatic elements also likely results in high school students experiencing social support.

- Research Question 2: How influential is social support in enhancing high school seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations over and above the influence that programmatic experiences provide?

The ecological systems model also suggests students are developmentally influenced by social interactions with separate microsystems or settings (e.g., family, school, work, etc.). Gender, race/ethnicity, SES, G.P.A., and speaking English as a second language may affect participants’ access to career information, encouragement, and motivation to pursue certain occupational pathways. Access to civic discourse, perceptions of neighborhood vitality, and religious observance are characteristics of participants’ diverse family backgrounds, local living conditions, and may be associated with and may impact citizenship engagement experiences and attitudes. Microsystemic
social, academic, and personal characteristics of high school students may influence their orientations toward occupational and citizenship engagement.

• Research Question 3: How much do student background characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, SES, G.P.A., English as a second language, access to civic discourse, perceptions of neighborhood vitality, and attendance at religious services) account for the high school seniors’ orientations toward occupational and citizenship engagement, net of community-based learning and social support?

Based on ecological systems theory and findings in youth development research, I hypothesize that:

• Programmatic elements – community service and internships – will be positively related to seniors’ future occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.

• Social support from adult supervisors and mentors will positively affect students’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.

• The social support high school seniors receive, as part of their community-based learning, will enhance the effect of their community service and internship experiences.

I turn now to the technical aspects of the study, beginning with a discussion of the survey data and why these data lend themselves to a study on the role of social support in school district efforts at young adult occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.
**Data and Sample**

Data for this study were collected in the Spring of 2002 as part of an evaluation of an Internship Program in a large urban Midwestern public school district conducted by Ohio State University professors, Drs. Helen Marks and Joshua Hawley. This project involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection components. Surveys were administered in May 2002 to graduating seniors in the district’s 18 high schools to better understand the experiences of the Class of 2002 with the district’s Internship Program. The project was of interest to the district because the Class of 2002 was the first district class to have experienced the Internship Program during their high school years. To anchor the responses of the Midwestern district students and to compare their responses nationally, some survey items were drawn from the *National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988* and from the *Community Participation and U.S. High School Students* survey (Marks, 2000). Other survey items were created specifically for this study.

**Student Survey**

In the first section, the survey seeks to identify respondents’ general association with the Internship Program. Respondents were asked to identify in which grade they completed specific program elements (e.g., job shadowing, community service, unpaid internships, paid internships), whether they perceived themselves as personally benefiting from involvement, their specific occupational and educational plans, as well as the individuals who have influenced these plans. Next, respondents were queried more extensively about the community service requirement. For example, they were asked
how much of the requirement they completed in the 10th Grade, the type of organizations they were involved in, experiences in discussing, reflecting on, and receiving encouragement for community service participation. The survey also seeks to identify the culture of community service within their schools.

Two sections focus on aspects of the career internship requirement in both the 11th and 12th Grades (one section for each Grade). Respondents explain their internship, how they found out about it, the type of performance feedback received, and specific skill-related activities performed. In a subsequent section, respondents were asked about their experiences with mentors, aspects about neighborhood life, and beliefs and views on community involvement. They describe views toward neighborhood adults, neighborhood conditions, government, politics, access to political knowledge, and intentions to perform future volunteer service and influence public policy.

Finally, respondents were asked to identify various aspects of their social, academic, and family background (e.g., gender, origin, race-ethnicity, religious observance, 12th Grade G.P.A., parents’ education, and household possessions).

The internship coordinators or classroom teachers in each high school administered the student surveys. Sixty-seven percent of the senior class, representing 1,741 students, responded to the surveys. The median response rate by school was 75 percent.
Focus Groups and Interviews

The qualitative portion of this project, also conducted in May 2002, consisted of interviews with a focus group at each high school comprised of 5-8 seniors selected by the building Internship Coordinator. Seventeen focus groups were conducted with 94 percent of high schools participating. Students were interviewed concerning their impressions of the program (e.g., general feelings about the experience, best/worst parts), their specific program experiences (e.g., skills, impact on career goals, future planning), their relationships with adult supervisors and mentors, and academic technical integration.

The Internship Coordinators at 17 of the schools were also interviewed individually concerning their background interests in community-based learning, the structure and organization of the internship programs, program requirements, integration with the formal curriculum, and involvement of community or business partners.

Characteristics of the Student Sample

In this sample of 1,741 students (See Table 3.1), 55.8 percent of the responding seniors are female and 44.2 percent are male. African-American seniors constitute the largest racial-ethnic group (50.4 percent) followed by whites (35 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (6.8%), Hispanic (5.2%), and American Indian (2.6 percent). These figures are somewhat representative of total district wide enrollment percentages during the 2001-2002 school year (See Table 3.2). Total district student enrollment is 48.8 percent female and 51.2 percent male. The district student enrollment comprises 61 percent African
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>District High School Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>1,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>35.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>% American Indian</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA for Core Subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 3.01 – 4.00</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 2.01 – 3.00</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 1.01 – 2.00</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 1.00 or below</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Quartiles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Average</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Average</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Speaks English as a Second Language</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at Religious Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more times weekly</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or three times a month</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a year</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 3.1: District High School Seniors’ Social and Academic Background Characteristics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race-Ethnicity</th>
<th>Midwestern School District Enrollment</th>
<th>Similar Districts in the State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, Non-Black</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
<td>Not Counted</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Black</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Race-ethnicity Comparison between Midwestern District Enrollment and Similar Districts in the State

Americans, 34.2 percent whites, 2.3 percent Hispanics, 1.5 percent Multiracials, 2.2 percent Asians or Pacific Islanders, and .2 percent Native Americans or Alaskan Natives. Similar school districts in the state also share similar racial and ethnic distributions (See Table 3.2). Students report performing well academically with 84 percent having over a 2.01 or better G.P.A and over 51 percent of seniors having better than a 3.0 G.P.A by the end of their senior year (See Table 3.1). Although evidence exists for skewed self-reported GPA inflation, particularly among students in the lowest GPA quartile (Dobbins, Farh, & Werbel, 1993; Frucot & Cook, 1994), the overall use of self-reported cumulative GPAs is highly reliable (Cassady, 2001). The academic success of these seniors may be attributable to their being among the 58.8 percent in the school district who graduated in
Perhaps, these “survivors” were the academically proficient who successfully navigated the high school experience unlike many of their peers who did not.

Over 50 percent of seniors belong to the highest and upper average SES quartiles (See Table 3.1). Over 31 percent of the district’s seniors constitute the lower average SES quartile, which is the largest. The lowest SES quartile is also the smallest with about 13 percent of the seniors. For 10.1 percent of students, English is spoken as a second language.

Seniors report a rather strong religious orientation; with over 42 percent attending religious services 2-3 times a month or more. Over 54 percent read the national news in a newspaper or magazine at least weekly or more. Nearly 70 percent get the national news from television or radio at least weekly or more. More than 40 percent of seniors also discuss political or national issues with household adults at least weekly.

**Theoretical Model**

The theoretical model guiding this study (Figure 3.1) posits the increased effect on high school seniors’ occupational and engagement orientations when students experience social support (i.e., information, encouragement, mentoring, feedback) as they participate in the Midwestern School District’s community-based learning curriculum known as the Internship Program. The model illustrates the sets of variables introduced in three sequential stages of the analysis.
In the first stage, the central elements of the Internship Program -- early high school community service, late high school community service, unpaid internships in 11th Grade, paid internships in 12th Grade -- are introduced as four independent variables. The Internship Program requires students to participate in 90 hours of community service and work-based learning in order to graduate from high school. The Internship Program expects students to complete the community service component, performing up to 30 community service hours, by the 10th Grade. Late high school community service is included in the analysis as the Senior Class in this study may not have completed the community service requirement as expected by the 10th Grade. Students in the 11th and 12th Grades, students are expected to earn a minimum of 60 hours in work-based internships (i.e., unpaid internships in the 11th Grade—30 hours, paid internships in the 12th Grade—30 hours) corresponding to their intended career choice or interest. These relationships are indicated by arrow \( a \) in Figure 3.1. The extent of their influence, independent of any controls for social background, on high school seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, is the subject for this stage of the analysis.

The second stage of the analysis posits a moderating relationship of socially supportive interactions with adults, such as supervisors and mentors, in addition to the influence of programmatic elements. Whether social support enhances seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations is the subject of this stage of the analysis. Student participants experienced occasions for social support in the form of information-sharing, encouragement, mentoring, and school-based and work-based
FIGURE 3.1: Hierarchical Regression Model for the Relative Influences of Internship Program Components and Social Support on District Seniors’ Occupational and Citizenship Engagement Orientations

*a* Includes variables modeled in stage 1.

*b* Includes variables modeled in stages 1 and 2.

*c* Includes variables modeled in states 1, 2, and 3.
feedback from supervisors.

Information-sharing includes discussing career plans with parents and supportive nonfamilial adults (e.g., teachers, counselors, other school personnel). Encouragement is the boost that parents and supportive nonfamilial adults may have provided students during their senior year motivating them to participate in and complete program components. Many students had a mentor who provided personal guidance, including educational and career planning assistance. Many received written and verbal feedback about their internship performance from school-based and work-based supervisors. These relationships are indicated by arrow b.

In the third stage of analysis, various social background characteristics are introduced that are likely to influence Internship Program outcomes independent of the programmatic elements and of social support. Social background constructs may have a direct relationship to district seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, as suggested by arrow c in Figure 3.1.

As indicated by the crossed lines between the stage 1 and 2 variables, the model hypothesizes that social support interacts with programmatic experiences to enhance students’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. In the fourth stage, I test the interaction between the students’ Internship Program experiences and social support.
Measures

Dependent Measures

The dependent variables, *occupational engagement orientation* and *citizenship engagement orientation*, represent the dispositions of the seniors toward productive and democratic citizenship outcomes. Occupational engagement orientation and citizenship engagement orientation were constructed as factors using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. A description of components and psychometric properties of each measure follows.

**Occupational Engagement Orientation.** Occupational engagement orientation comprises a series of five items tapping the seniors’ confidence in conducting a job search, and his or her clarity of career interests and goals: (a) My internship experience(s) helped me decide my career goals; (b) My 12th Grade internship was in field that really interested me; (c) My 12th Grade internship was related to my career goals; (d) My internship experience(s) made me more confident about applying for a job; (e) My internship experience(s) made me more confident about going for an interview. Each of these items had four response choices: (1) Strongly Agree; (2) Agree; (3) Disagree; (4) Strongly Disagree. I recoded the responses in a positive direction: (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree). The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1). Its reliability or internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, is .87.

**Citizenship Engagement Orientation.** Citizenship engagement orientation comprises two separate factors as indicators of *Electoral Process* and *Political Voice*. 
Response codes for both factors are: (1) Probably Not; (2) Don’t Know; (3) Probably Will; (4) Already Have.

A. Electoral Process Indicator. The Electoral Process indicator comprises a series of four items tapping future intentions or past experiences to: (a) Vote in a public election; (b) Give money to a political candidate or cause; (c) Work in a political campaign; (d) Go to a local political meeting. The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1). Its reliability or internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, is .73.

B. Political Voice Indicator. The Political Voice indicator comprises a series of six items tapping past experiences or future intentions to: (a) Write to public officials; (b) Participate in lawful demonstration; (c) Boycott certain products or stores; (d) Work with social action groups; (e) Go to a meeting on a neighborhood issue; (f) Speak out on an issue at a public meeting. The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1). Its reliability or internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, is .87.

Independent Measures

The independent measures included program participation indicators, moderating measures of social support, and measures of student social, academic, and personal background characteristics. Program indicators include participation in early and late high school community service and unpaid and paid work-based internships. Measures of social support include receiving information, encouragement, school-based and work-based feedback, and having a mentor. Measures of social and academic background include socioeconomic status, race – ethnicity, gender, English as a second language,
G.P.A., access to civic discourse, perceptions of neighborhood vitality, and frequency of attendance at religious services. A description of their construction follows.

**Program Variables.** The internship program variables include participation in early high school community service and late high school work-based internships. Each indicator of participation is a dichotomous variable. Each dichotomous variable was constructed from seniors’ responses to survey items questioning them on their various community service and internship activities throughout high school.

A. **Completion of early high school community service.** *Completion of early high school community service* is a dummy variable based on student responses to one survey question. Many completed the community service requirement by the 10th Grade as expected. The first survey question asked respondents when they had completed the community service requirement. The response choices are: (1) 9th Grade; (2) 10th Grade; (3) 11th Grade; (4) 12th Grade. Each of these responses is coded: (1 = Yes, 0 = No), and all the values summed to create a community service measure. I recoded community service values ‘1’ and ‘2’ (Grades 9 and 10) to create the early high school community service ‘1’=Yes, ‘0’=No.

B. **Completion of Late High School Community Service.** *Completion late high school community service* is a dummy variable based on student responses to one survey question. Although community service was emphasized early in high school, for many students this requirement was actually completed throughout Grades 9-12. The first survey question asked respondents when they had completed the community service requirement. The response choices are: (1) 9th Grade; (2) 10th Grade; (3) 11th Grade;
(4) 12th Grade. Each of these responses is coded: (1 = Yes, 0 = No), and all the values summed to create a community service measure. I recoded community service values ‘2’ and ‘3’ (Grades 11 and 12) to create the late high school community service ‘1’=Yes, ‘0’=No.

C. Completion of Unpaid Internships in the 11th Grade. Completion of an unpaid internship in the 11th Grade is a dummy variable based on student responses to one survey question. Respondents were asked whether they had a career internship in the 11th Grade: (1) Yes, I had a paid experience; (2) Yes, I had an unpaid experience; (3) No. I recoded the 11th Grade unpaid internship response options ‘2’ positively and ‘1’ and ‘3’ negatively.

D. Completion of Paid Internships in the 12th Grade. Completion of a paid internship in the 12th Grade is a dummy variable based on student responses to one survey question. Respondents were asked whether they had a career internship in the 12th Grade: (1) Yes, I had a paid experience; (2) Yes, I had an unpaid experience; (3) No. I recoded the 12th Grade paid internship response options ‘1’ positively and ‘2’ and ‘3’ negatively.

Moderating Variables

Information Support. Information support is based on a survey question that asked students to indicate with whom they discussed career plans: (a) Teachers; (b) Guidance or career counselors; (c) Other school staff (such as coaches, secretaries, principals, security guards); (d) Parents or guardians; (e) Classmate or friend. In each
instance that a respondent indicated discussing plans, the indicator was coded ‘1’=Yes, ‘0’=No. *Information support* was created using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1). Cronbach’s alpha for this measure is .66.

**Encouragement During the Senior Year.** *Encouragement during the senior year* is a dummy variable based on four survey questions. Respondents were asked if whether they performed community service or volunteer activity during the school year and the response options are coded ‘1’=Yes, ‘0’=No. If respondents answered “Yes”, they were directed to another question that queried them on how much they agree with the following. (a) A counselor at my school encouraged me to do community service; (b) A teacher at my school encouraged me to do community service; (c) My parents encouraged me to do community service. The response options for each are: (1) Strongly Agree; (2) Agree; (3) Disagree; (4) Strongly Disagree. I recoded the responses (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree).

I created the dummy variable *counselor encouragement* from question (a) above by recoding options ‘3’ and ‘4’ positively and options ‘1’ and ‘2’ negatively. I created the dummy variable *teacher encouragement* from question (b) above by recoding options ‘3’ and ‘4’ positively and options ‘1’ and ‘2’ negatively. I created the dummy variable *parent encouragement* from question (c) above by recoding options ‘3’ and ‘4’ positively and options ‘1’ and ‘2’ negatively. I summed the values of the three dummy variables to and recoded the values ‘1’ or more as ‘1’=Yes and values equaling ‘0’ as ‘0’=No to create the dummy variable *encouragement support.*
Because the dummy variable *encouragement support* refers to only community service or volunteer activity during the current school year, I needed to create another dummy variable to be used in the analyses that restricts *encouragement support* exclusively to the 12th Grade. This was done by including the ‘0’ cases from the dummy variable *community service in 12th Grade* and the ‘0’ cases *encouragement support* as option ‘0’ for the dummy variable *encouragement during the senior year*. Cases from the value ‘1’ in *encouragement support* were coded as ‘1’ for the dummy variable *encouragement during the senior year* to be used in the analysis.

**Feedback Support.** *Feedback support* is measured by two dichotomous variables, *school staff feedback* and *worksite supervisor feedback*. Each dichotomous variable is based on two survey questions asked identically for both 11th and 12th Grade internship experiences. The first of these asks respondents if they received internship performance feedback; the second asks students about the type and source of feedback. School-based feedback and work-based feedback are distinguished below.

A. **Worksite Supervisor feedback.** Respondents were asked whether information was received about how well they were doing at the 11th Grade internship: (1) Yes; (2) No. I recoded response options: (1=Yes, 0=No). Students who indicated that they did receive information about how well they were doing, were asked to mark all of the ways the information was received and students responded: (1) I received a written report from my employer; (2) I received a written report from school staff; (3) I had a meeting with my employer/supervisor about my performance on the job; (4) I had a meeting with
school staff about my performance on the job; (5) Some other way. Students who
selected response options ‘1’ and ‘3’ are coded: (1=Yes, 0=No).

Respondents were asked whether information was received about how well they
were doing at the 12th Grade internship: (1) Yes; (2) No. I recoded response options:
(1=Yes, 0=No). Students who indicated that they did receive information about how well
they were doing, were asked to mark all of the ways the information was received and
students responded: (1) I received a written report from my employer; (2) I received a
written report from school staff; (3) I had a meeting with my employer/supervisor about
my performance on the job; (4) I had a meeting with school staff about my performance
on the job; (5) Some other way. Students who selected response options ‘1’ and ‘3’ are
coded: (1=Yes, 0=No). Work-based feedback was constructed by summing the 11th and
12th response options and recoding: (0=Not at all, 1=Either 11th or 12th Grade, 2=Both
11th and 12th Grade). The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1).

B. School Staff feedback. Respondents were asked whether or not information
was received about how well they were doing at the 11th Grade internship: (1) Yes; (2)
No. I recoded response options: (1=Yes, 0=No). Students who indicated that they did
receive information about how well they were doing, were asked to mark all of the ways
the information was received and students responded: (1) I received a written report from
my employer; (2) I received a written report from school staff; (3) I had a meeting with
my employer/supervisor about my performance on the job; (4) I had a meeting with
school staff about my performance on the job; (5) Some other way. Students who
selected response options ‘2’ and ‘4’ are coded: (1=Yes, 0=No).
Respondents were asked whether information was received about how well they were doing at the 12th Grade internship: (1) Yes; (2) No. I recoded response options: (1=Yes, 0=No). Students who indicated that they did receive information about how well they were doing, were asked to mark all of the ways the information was received and students responded: (1) I received a written report from my employer; (2) I received a written report from school staff; (3) I had a meeting with my employer/supervisor about my performance on the job; (4) I had a meeting with school staff about my performance on the job; (5) Some other way. Students who selected response options ‘2’ and ‘4’ are coded: (1=Yes, 0=No). School-based feedback was constructed by summing the 11th and 12th response options and recoding: (0=Not at all, 1=Either 11th or 12th Grade, 2=Both 11th and 12th Grade). The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1).

Had a Mentor. Had a mentor is a dichotomous variable that is based on a survey question asking whether respondents experienced mentoring in the course of their program activities. Response options are: (1) Yes, every year; (2) For my community service only; (3) For my 11th Grade internship only; (4) For my 12th Grade; (5) No mentor ever. Had a mentor was constructed by recoding response options ‘1’ through ‘4’ as ‘1’=Yes. Response option ‘5’ was recoded ‘0’=No’. Missing cases were also added as ‘Yes’ for those respondents who indicated in a previous survey question that they had discussed career plans with a business mentor.

Social Background Characteristics. The control variables provide measures of seniors’ social, academic, and personal background. These characteristics may affect the
social support students have experienced and orientations toward future occupational and citizenship engagement.

A. Race/ethnicity. The survey asked respondents to identify their race/ethnicity based on the following classification: (1) Asian or Pacific Islander; (2) Hispanic; (3) Black, non-Hispanic; (4) White, non-Hispanic; or (5) American Indian. *Asian or Pacific Islander* is a dummy-coded variable, (1=Asian or Pacific Islander, 0=No). *Hispanic* is a dummy coded-variable, (1=Hispanic, 0=No). *Black, non-Hispanic* is a dummy-coded variable (1=Black, non-Hispanic, 0=No). *White, non-Hispanic* is a dummy-coded variable, (1=White, non-Hispanic, 0=No). *American Indian* is a dummy-coded variable (1=American Indian, 0=No). As previous research recognized the challenges many minority high school students face in developing occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, I used the category of ‘White, non-Hispanic’ as the comparison group. Since ‘American Indian’ was so small, I folded this into ‘White, non-Hispanic’, a dummy variable coded, (1=White, non-Hispanic, American Indian, 0=Asian, Hispanic, and Black).

B. Female gender. *Female gender* is a dummy variable based on the survey item asking respondents to indicate their sex: (1) Male or (2) Female. To create a dummy variable for the responses for female, I recoded the responses as ‘1’=female, ‘0’=male.

C. English spoken as a second language (ESL). *English spoken as a second language* is a dichotomous variable based on one survey question whether the respondent spoke any other language besides English. Response options are coded ‘1’=Yes, ‘2’=No. I recoded the ESL dummy variable, (1=Yes, 0=No).
D. Socioeconomic status (SES). Respondents’ socioeconomic status is a continuous variable based on three survey questions. The survey asked respondents to indicate, separately, how far in school did their mothers (or female guardian) and fathers (or male guardian) go: (1) Did not finish high school; (2) Graduated from high school; (3) Vocational or trade school; (4) Junior or community college; (5) some college; (6) Graduated from college; (7) Master’s degree; (8) Ph.D., M.D., etc.; (9) Don’t know. I recoded these responses: (1=Did not finish high school, 2=Graduate from high school, 3=Vocational or trade school, 4=Junior or community college; 5=Some college, 6=Graduated from college, 7=Master’s degree, 8=Ph.D., M.D., etc.). Mother’s education is standardized (M=1, SD=0). Father’s education is also standardized (M=1, SD=0).

The survey asked respondents to mark which of the following items their families have at home: (a) A specific place to study; (b) A daily newspaper; (c) Regularly received magazine; (d) An encyclopedia; (e) An atlas; (f) A dictionary; (g) A typewriter; (h) A computer; (i) An electric dishwasher; (j) Clothes dryer; (k) Washing machine; (l) Microwave oven; (m) More than 50 books; (n) VCR; (o) Pocket calculator; (p) Room of your own. With each of these items, students were given the following response choices: (1) Have; (2) Do not have. Each of the 16 household possessions was constructed into separate dummy variables coded, (1=Yes, 0=No), and all the values were summed to create a household possessions measure. The household possessions measure is standardized (M=1, SD=0).

Parent’s education was computed from the means of the standardized mother’s education and standardized father’s education measures. Parent’s education is
standardized (M=1, SD=0). All the values of parent’s education and household possessions were summed to the socioeconomic status measure. Respondents’ socioeconomic status is standardized (M=1, SD=0).

D. Grade-point average (GPA). Respondents’ 12th Grade grade-point average (GPA) is a self-reported variable. Students were asked to indicate their grades in core academic subjects: (a) Math; (b) English; (c) Social Studies; (d) Science. Response choices for each of these core academic subjects are: (1) Does not apply to me – I have not taken any classes in this subject this year; (2) Mostly A’s; (3) Almost half A’s and half B’s; (4) Mostly B’s; (5) About half B’s and half C’s; (6) Mostly C’s; (7) About half C’s and half D’s; (8) Mostly D’s; (9) Mostly below D; (10) Does not apply to me – my classes are not graded. For each core academic subject, I recoded the responses into separate GPA scales: (0) Below D; (1) D’s; (1.5) D’s and C’s; (2) C; (2.5) C’s and B’s; (3) B’s; (4) A’s. The 12th Grade-point average (GPA) was computed as the average of all separate core subject grades. The measure is standardized (M = 0, SD = 1).

E. Access to civic discourse. Access to the civic discourse is comprised of a series of three items tapping respondents’ access and exposure to news and information about national political and civic issues through various media, including participation in related discussions with household adults. Respondents were asked how often they: (a) Read about the national news in a newspaper or magazine; (b) Watch the national news on television or listen to the national news on the radio; (c) Talk about politics or national issues with your parents or other adults in your household. Students had the following response options: (1) Almost every day; (2) At least once a week; (3) At least once a
month; (4) Hardly ever. I recoded these responses: (1=Hardly ever, 2=At least once a month, 3=At least once a week, 4=Almost every day). The measure was created using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1) and the Cronbach’s alpha is .71.

F. Neighborhood vitality. *Neighborhood vitality* is comprised of a series of ten items tapping respondents’ perceptions about neighborhood adults and safety. A survey question asked respondents how much they would agree with the following statements about their neighborhoods: (a) If there is a problem in the community, neighbors get together to deal with it; (b) No one in this neighborhood cares much about what happens here; (c) Adults in this neighborhood help each other out; (d) There are adults in this neighborhood that children can look up to; (e) Adults in this neighborhood know who the local children are; (f) You can count on adults in this neighborhood to see that children are safe; (g) You can count on adults in this neighborhood to see that children do not get into trouble; (h) During the day, it is safe to play in the local park or playground; (i) People in this neighborhood can be trusted; (j) The equipment and buildings in the neighborhood part or playground are well kept. Students were given the following response options: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly Agree. The measure was created using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1) and Cronbach’s alpha is .85.

G. Religious attendance. Respondents’ attendance at religious services is a categorical variable which asks respondents to indicate the frequency of attendance at religious services. The response options were: (1) More than once a week; (2) About
once a week; (3) 2-3 times a month; (4) Once a month; (5) Several times a year; (6) Not at all. I recoded the responses in a positive direction (0=Not at all, 1=Several times a year, 2=Monthly, 3=2–3 times a month, 4=About once a week, 5=More than once a week). The measure is standardized (M=0, SD=1).

Methods

In this section, I discuss the basic analytic methods utilized for the study and provide a rationale for the selection of the particular method.

Principal Components Analysis

Principal components analysis is a factor analytic method for reducing a larger set of observed variables into composite scales (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Because the data reduction clusters the variables on a shared latent dimension or construct, the resulting summated scale is more useful and meaningful. To perform principal components extractions of factors, I will use the SPSS factor analysis program with varimax rotation, a procedure that maximizes the variability of the newly created variable or factor. For the factor to be useful as a measure, its eigenvalue, which is a measure of how much variance each successive factor extracts and indicates the strength of its latent root, must be greater than 1.0. A factor loading of .50 or greater is the criterion for retaining items as part of
the factor. To minimize the deletion of cases, I will use pairwise deletion in constructing the factors.

Based on theoretical considerations, I selected a conceptually related set of survey items to construct each factor scale as described above. After checking their internal consistency or Cronbach’s alpha, I constructed the following six factors: Access to Civic Discourse, Perceptions of Neighborhood Vitality, Information Support, Occupational Engagement Orientation, Citizenship Engagement Orientation – Electoral Process Indicator, and Citizenship Engagement – Political Voice Indicator. As explained above, Access to Civic Discourse and Perceptions of Neighborhood Vitality factor scales will be used as control variables for social background. The Information Support factor scale will be used to measure the social support seniors’ experience. Occupational Engagement Orientation, Citizenship Engagement Orientation – Electoral Process Indicator, Citizenship Engagement Orientation – Political Voice Indicator factor scales will be used as program outcome measures.

**Analysis of Variance**

Oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to examine the main effects of categorical independent variables in relation to a continuous dependent variable. Main effects reveal whether the dependent variable differs by different levels or categories of the independent variable. ANOVA tests for the variance in a single continuous dependent variable as it is apportioned across the groups formed by the categories of one or more independent variables depending on the type. Oneway ANOVA tests for
differences between the means of groups that are classified on only one independent variable and where there is only one main effect. For example, one-way ANOVA will allow me to examine mean differences by students’ racial and ethnic background.

Examining the main effect by comparing observed means in group scores tests whether the differences in means is statistically significant. Statistical significance ($p<.05$), indicates there is a 95 percent probability that I will avoid a Type 1 error and reject the null hypothesis correctly (Brown & Melamed, 1990). A type I error occurs when I reject the null hypothesis even though it is true. A null hypothesis is the assumption that there is no true difference between groups or any difference statistically between them due to sampling errors (Ford, 2000). The ANOVAs will be conducted using SPSS (a statistical software package).

**Multiple Regression**

Multiple regression is used to determine the combined and separate effects of two or more independent or predictor variables on a single continuous dependent variable. To determine the relationship of a specific variable to a dependent variable, multiple regression holds constant the other independent variables. This allows for the amount in the variance or change in the dependent variable accounted for by a specific independent variable to be determined. In entering sets of variables (i.e., programmatic elements, social support, background characteristics) sequentially in stages, I will be performing a hierarchical multiple regression. Hierarchical multiple regression is slightly different from regular multiple regression because I personally determine the entry of these
variable sets in stages rather than the computer. Each stage or model will still produce a separate adjusted $R^2$.

The value of $R^2$ is a measure of variability in the outcome accounted for or explained by the model. In multiple regression, a change in $R^2$ statistic is available for each set of independent variables entered sequentially into the analysis. In this investigation, a hierarchical regression model represents those sets of variables introduced in sequential stages (Figure 3.1). Therefore, I will need to examine the significance of the change in $R^2$, which will indicate the extent of contribution to the variance in the dependent variable. Although the adjusted $R^2$ will increase as more variables are entered, it is more useful than the $R^2$ because it intentionally adjusts downward because of the possibility that independent variables will inflate some of the variance by error.

The F-ratio represents the ratio of improvement in predicting the results from fitting the model compared to the inaccuracies that still exists within the model (Field, 2000). When the F-ratio is greater than 1, this indicates that the improvement (or change in $R^2$) due to fitting the model is greater than those inaccuracies. The significance calculated is the exact probability of obtaining value $F$ by chance. When the F-ratio is significant ($p<.05$), this means the final model significantly improves my ability to reject the null hypothesis correctly and to predict the dependent variable’s outcome.

Next, I am concerned with looking for a specific relationship between each predictor variable and the dependent variable. Since the regression model takes the form of the equation containing the coefficient $\beta$ for each independent variable, which
indicates its individual contribution to the model. If the coefficient $\beta$ is positive, there is a positive relationship and, if negative, there is a negative relationship between the predictor and the outcome.

Because these $\beta$ coefficients are measured on so many scales, they must be standardized. This allows them to be measured on the same scale in standard deviation units, with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1. Of course standardized $\beta$ or beta coefficients are compared only within a model and not between them. Each beta coefficient indicates the magnitude in predicting the variance in the dependent variable relative to other beta coefficients within the model.

To test for a significant interaction, in the fourth stage of the analysis, the cross-product interaction term must be entered into the regression analysis. Thus, testing for an interaction (e.g., between an internship and mentoring) is an essential step in estimating unbiased relationships through a regression analysis.

**Summary**

This study analyzes a large urban public school district’s community-based learning policy (the Internship Program) to develop occupational and citizenship engagement orientations by the time students reach the end of their senior year. It investigates the influence of school-sponsored community service participation, work-based internships, the social support students experience, and student social, academic, and personal background characteristics on the development of district high school seniors’ orientations toward future occupational and citizenship engagement. Adult social support
in the form of information-sharing, encouragement, having a mentor, and school-based and work-based written or verbal feedback, according to my hypotheses, will result in increased young adult occupational and citizenship orientations, over and above what community-based learning participation, in the form of community service and work-based internships provides. If experiencing social support accounts for student development of these future orientations, this knowledge will greatly enhance educational policy and practice in environments beset by diminishing socially supportive ties with high school aged youth.

With these analytic components in place, I will now proceed with the analysis. Chapter 4 investigates the impact of the Internship Program on development of high school seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations and the mediating influence of the social support they experience. Chapter 5 discusses the impact of these results in context of district’s high school reform policy aims to increase capacity for becoming productive and engaged adult citizens.
CHAPTER 4

RELATIVE INFLUENCES OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS’ OCCUPATIONAL AND CITIZENSHIP ENGAGEMENT ORIENTATIONS

The Midwestern School District, it is reasonable to assume, intends for those high school seniors who perform the Internship Program’s community service and work-based learning requirements to be disposed to occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. Whether this expectation materializes is a question I investigate in this phase of the study as I evaluate the relationship of completing the programmatic components of early high school community service and late high school unpaid and paid work-based internships to these outcomes.

While engaging in the Internship Program, the seniors interact with many adults at school, at community service or internship sites, and in mentoring relationships. Whether such socially supportive interactions with adults provide a mediating influence on students’ orientations to occupational and citizenship engagement is a second question central to this study. Based on the model and methodology outlined in the previous chapter, I will conduct analyses to investigate these questions. Since the seniors’ social and academic background characteristics have the potential to affect intended Internship Program outcomes, I adjust statistically for their possible contribution. Thus, the analyses control for the following student demographic characteristics: gender, race/ethnicity, SES, GPA, and speaking English as a second language. Since other
student experiences apart from the Internship Program may also be influential on the engagement orientations, the analyses also control for students’ access to civic discourse, perceptions of neighborhood vitality, and attendance at religious services.

Prior to conducting the analyses, I look into the extent of missing data and whether the missing data that may exist are randomly distributed or occur in patterns. Patterns in the missing data would indicate such problems as inadequate representation of students according to social background characteristics or that respondents on a program component compared to non-respondents were systematically more likely to score positively on one or more of the dependent or major independent measures. Pairwise deletion excludes missing cases from analyses in which data on the variables being computed is missing. Thus, pairwise deletion leads to differing sample sizes and the possibility of inconsistency in that each analysis will contain a different set of respondents. Using listwise deletion omits all cases with missing values from the sample. While this approach leads to a reduction in sample size listwise deletion has the advantage of yielding estimates that are unbiased by missing data.

As a first step in the analyses, I will present observed differences on the modeled variables for students who completed community service compared to those who did not and for students who completed unpaid and paid work-based internships compared to those who did not. As these are observed average scores or groups’ unadjusted means, the purpose is to see how the student groups, by their completion or non-completion of each program component, differed from each other on each variable.
The primary analytic technique that I use to investigate the research questions I have posed is a hierarchical multiple regression analysis conducted in three sequential stages. This method allows me to assess the change in the adjusted $R^2$ statistic for each set of variables, over and above the previous set, entered sequentially into the analysis. First, I introduce the programmatic components of early and late high school community service, unpaid and paid work-based internships. Second, I enter the measures of social support in addition to the programmatic components. Third, I introduce the social, academic, and personal background characteristics in addition to the other variables modeled in steps 1 and 2. I examine the significance of the change in the adjusted $R^2$, which will indicate the extent of contribution to the variance in the dependent variable. I present the multivariate results according to each stage in the analysis.

I also test for interactions. Testing for an interaction is an essential step in estimating the effect of programmatic or social support “treatments” on an outcome. An interaction effect occurs when the impact of one variable entered into the analysis significantly is enhanced or diminished through its occurrence with another variable. Including significant interaction terms in the model, controlling for all other variables in the equation, provides a more accurate estimation of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Failing to account for the product term makes this estimation inaccurate as the main effects of the treatment variables are distorted. Because students interact with potentially supportive adults in the course of Internship Program activities (e.g., paid internships and having a mentor), it is possible that the effects of social support are not independent of the program components. I examine
whether interaction effects, specifically, between program components and social support, occur. That is, do program components work differently for those students who receive social support compared to those who do not?

**Missing Data**

In the course of examining the data, I found that all but three of the model variables had missing cases. Out of 1,741 respondents in the original sample, only 602 provided all the responses on the items in the survey questionnaire that I identified for this study. The remaining 1,139 respondents had one or more missing responses. Seven variables (i.e., occupational engagement orientation, electoral process indicator, political voice indicator, school staff feedback, worksite supervisor feedback, GPA, neighborhood vitality) were missing responses from more than 20 percent of the sample. One variable (i.e., occupational engagement orientation) was missing responses from 27 percent of the sample. Since missing data can bias the results of the analysis, I examined whether students with missing data on the model variables differed significantly from those with data.

As the first step in conducting a missing data analysis, I constructed a missing data variable for each modeled measure by coding the indicator ‘1’ if the variable was missing and ‘0’ if not missing. To determine whether the missing data were randomly distributed, I tested whether the differences between the “missing” and the “non-missing” student groups on each measure were statistically significant using oneway Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for continuous variables and cross tabulation for categorical
variables. Because the results indicated that the missing data were not randomly distributed, using pairwise deletion of missing data would result in significant bias in the analyses. I therefore determined to use listwise deletion, a decision that resulted in reducing the analytic sample to 602 cases. While the results of the analyses would be free of “missing data bias”, they would not, however, be generalizable to the Class of 2002 or the Internship Program participants. The advantage is that missing cases will not bias the results of the analyses. The findings represent the results of “pure tests”.

Table 4.1 presents a comparison of students with missing data and the reduced sample with no missing data. The groups differed significantly on many modeled variables. Seniors with full data on the measures significantly scored higher on occupational engagement orientation (OEO) (.21 SD). No significant difference exists between samples for electoral process (EPI) or political voice (PVI) indicator variables.

Seniors with full data were more likely to complete the program components. Twenty-eight percent performed community service late in high school (versus 18 percent with missing data); 48 percent completed unpaid internships in the 11th Grade (versus 31 percent with missing data); 47 percent worked at paid internships in the 12th Grade (versus 38 percent with missing data). No significant differences existed between students with missing data and full data on completing early high school community service.

Seniors with full data received significantly more career information (.25 SD). No significant differences occurred between the student groups on encouragement and having a mentor. Seniors with full data received significantly less performance feedback
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<td>.11</td>
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</tr>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Voice Indicator³</td>
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<td><strong>Social Support</strong></td>
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<td>Received School Staff Feedback³</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td>**</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Vitality²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Attendance²</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ns = not significant ; * p < .05; ** p < .01.; *** p < .001

²Means computed using cross tabulation
³Standardized, M=0, SD=1.

Table 4.1: Missing Data and Non-Missing Data Samples Compared
from school staff (.09 SD) and worksite supervisors (.09 SD). The seniors with full data differed significantly on many social, academic, and personal background characteristics from their peers with missing data. They are from higher SES families (.17 SD) and have more access to civic discourse (.16 SD). The representation of students without missing data was lower for Asians (5 percent compared to 8 percent), seniors speaking English as a second language (7 percent compared to 12 percent), and seniors who are female (52 compared to 63 percent). Significant differences did not exist between samples for social, academic, and personal background characteristics.

In an analysis with results not shown here, I determined that 60 percent of students who constitute this sample were from only five high schools, two of which are alternative high schools drawing students across the city. The remaining three are located in higher-SES neighborhoods relative to other schools in the sample. In order to further examine the SES of students in this sample, I checked the mean differences, using one-way ANOVA between their SES quartiles and the level of their parents’ education and sum of household possessions. Students differed significantly in the parents’ education with the greatest differences occurring between the highest SES quartile and the upper average SES quartile. The level of parents’ education differed significantly between the SES quartiles with the highest mean score in the highest SES quartile and lowest mean score in the lowest SES quartile. Students scored similarly on the index of household possessions by SES quartile, with the highest score in the highest SES quartile and the lowest in the lowest SES quartile. Although these mean differences between the SES
quartiles are significant, the least difference occurs between the highest and upper average SES quartiles.

**Descriptive Statistics**

**Programmatic Participation**

Although early high school community service and late high school unpaid and paid work-based internships were required Internship Program components, students did not uniformly fulfill the requirements. Focus group interviews and interviews with individual high school internship coordinators revealed that despite the program prescription for discrete activities (i.e., 30 community service hours in the 10th Grade, 60 work-based internship hours—30 unpaid in the 11th Grade and 30 paid in the 12th Grade), the seniors were permitted to complete requirements out of sequence and to “count” hours in one area for the hours required in another. To spare the district the public relations disaster of large numbers of students being denied graduation, students were eligible to graduate on the basis of completing most combinations of 90 community-based service or work hours in addition to the 30 hours available for successfully completing the required 9th Grade *Career Connections* course. Based on the latitude extended to these students who were the first class required to participate in the program, seniors may have completed extensive community service but completed very little, if any, work-based internships or vice-versa. However, those students who
reported completing the specific activities in the grades indicated presumably reported their participation accurately.

**Observed Differences**

**The Community Service Requirement.** Although community service was prescribed as an early high school requirement (to be completed before 11th Grade), many students completed the community service requirement in their later high school years. Seniors who completed community service differed significantly in many ways from non-completers.

A. **Early High School Community Service.** Seniors who completed the community service requirement early in high school scored significantly lower on the electoral process (.19 SD) and political voice (.17 SD) indicators (See Table 4.2 Panel I). Perhaps, students who completed community service in these years were not thinking about the political, moral, and social implications of the work in which they were engaged, especially if the project was not personally meaningful or did not address a community need. These developmental tasks may not occur until later adolescence unless students are assisted in choosing projects wisely and in making meaningful connections with larger issues through the process of service-learning. Seniors’ scores on the OEO scale for community service completers were not significant. Early high school community service completers had significantly lower perceptions of neighborhood vitality than non-completers (.19 SD).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Completed Late High School Community Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>NO (N= 322)</td>
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<td>.17</td>
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<td>Electoral Process Citizenship Engagement Orientation&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.14</td>
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<td>Political Voice Citizenship Engagement Orientation&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.11</td>
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<td>Independent Variables</td>
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<td>Social Support</td>
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<td>Received Information Support&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.21</td>
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<td>% Received Encouragement</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>During Senior Year&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>% Had a Mentor&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received School Staff Feedback&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.03</td>
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<td>Received Worksite Supervisor Feedback&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>Social, Academic, and Personal Background</td>
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<td>% African American&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>56.5</td>
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<td>% Female Gender&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Religious Attendance&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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ns = not significant; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

<sup>a</sup>Means computed using cross tabulation

<sup>b</sup>Standardized, M=0, SD=1.

Table 4.2: Occupational and Citizenship Orientations, Internship Program Experiences, and Personal Backgrounds of Midwestern District High School Seniors Completing the Community Service Requirement Early or Late in High School with Those Seniors Not Completing the Requirement.
A smaller proportion of seniors who completed community service during the early high school time frame specified by Internship Program guidelines had a mentor than those who did not (35 percent compared to 46 percent). At this developmental stage, these students may have been more limited in their social ties and, therefore, less experienced or interested in socially interacting with positive nonfamilial adults. It is also likely that students not completing the requirement in their early high school years, but had a mentor, were those who completed the community service requirement at a later time, perhaps through encouragement or assistance from their mentor.

Otherwise, the differences between completing and not completing the community service requirement early in high school, specifically, those who worked at unpaid internships in the 11th Grade, paid internships in the 12th Grade, received other forms of social support (i.e., encouragement during their senior year, had a mentor, received performance feedback from school staff and worksite supervisors) were not significant. No significant differences also existed between early high school community completers and non-completers by any other social and academic background characteristics.

B. Late High School Community Service. Seniors who completed the community service requirement later in their high school years (Grades 11 and 12), scored significantly higher on OEO (.31 SD), EPI (.26 SD), and PVI (.37 SD) scales (See Table 4.2 Panel II). They received more career information from adults with whom they interacted (.49 SD). Students, at this stage, may be thinking more about their career
pathway and, thus, experience a stronger drive for seeking career advice during the early high school years.

Seniors completing the service requirement later in high school received significantly more performance feedback from worksite supervisors (.16 SD). No significant differences existed between late high school completer and non-completer groups for receiving performance feedback from school staff. Late high school community service completers also had greater access to civic discourse but these differences were not statistically significant.

Seniors who fulfilled the community service requirement later in high school come from higher SES families (.33 SD), have higher GPAs in the 12th Grade (.26 SD), and have higher perceptions of vitality of their neighborhoods (.28 SD). Seniors with higher perceptions of neighborhood vitality possibly have more positive experiences interacting with neighborhood adults and, thus, a greater willingness to seek interactions with non-familial adults in at school, the workplace, or at community service sites. It is not immediately clear, however, why seniors with these characteristics waited so long to complete this requirement. Seniors completing the service requirement attended religious services more than their peers who did not (.27 SD).

A higher proportion of seniors completing community service later in high school completed the unpaid internship requirement in the 11th Grade (57 percent versus 44 percent). The differences between late high school community service completers and non-completers for those who completed the 12th Grade paid internships were not
significant. No significant differences existed between late high school completer and non-completer groups for those receiving performance feedback from school staff.

More seniors who completed community service later in high school, compared with their peers who did not, reported having a mentor (51 percent versus 37 percent). As students grow older and assert greater independence, they form more social ties with pro-social adults in networks apart from family, neighborhood, and childhood friendship circles. Students who are more actively engaged in career exploration are more likely to seek out adults in the workplace who will also provide them with performance feedback.

However, the proportion of seniors who received encouragement to volunteer is smaller among those who completed late high school community service than those who did not (6 percent versus 36 percent). Perhaps, these students completed the community service during the junior year and had less need for encouragement. Female students were more highly represented among those who completed their service requirement late in high school than among those who did not (72 percent versus 59 percent). A larger percentage of seniors completing community service later in high school rather than not were also African American, Hispanic, but these differences were not statistically significant.

**The Internship Requirement.** In order to complete the Midwestern district’s internship requirement, students needed to complete unpaid internships in Grade 11 and paid internships in Grade 12. However, as explained above, not all students followed the program requirements as specified. Many may have completed only one type of work-based internship but not the other. I will discuss the differences between seniors who
completed unpaid internships in the 11th Grade and those who did not. I will comment on the differences between those who completed paid internships in the 12th Grade and those who did not.

A. **Unpaid Work-Based Internships.** Unpaid internship participants, on average, scored significantly higher on the OEO index (.23 SD) (See Table 4.3 Panel I). Students who completed unpaid internships may have been particularly motivated to explore a career pathway. Differences in their EPI and PVI scores were not significant.

Seniors completing unpaid internships in the 11th Grade also perceived the vitality of the neighborhoods in which they lived more positively (.20 SD) than those who did not. Why this is the case is not immediately clear. One possible explanation for this difference is that these perceptions may be associated with respondents’ family SES status. Because perceptions of lower neighborhood vitality may be associated with poverty, many students in this context may be unavailable for unpaid work as the family may be dependent on their income from paid work. Compared with the differences between seniors completing and not completing unpaid internships in the 11th Grade, however, family SES is not statistically significant.

The proportions of seniors who had a mentor were greater among students who completed unpaid internships in the 11th Grade compared to those who did not (50 percent compared to 33 percent). Students who complete these unpaid internships may be highly motivated and, thus, have the supportive resources they need. If these students are highly motivated and have more interest in a particular occupation, they will likely find the career advising mentors and the supportive resources they need.
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<th>Paid Internship in the 12th Grade</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Attendance</td>
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</table>

ns = not significant ; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

*aMeans computed using cross tabulation

*bStandardized, M=0, SD=1.

Table 4.3: Occupational and Citizenship Orientations, Internship Program Experiences, and Personal Backgrounds of Midwestern District High School Seniors Completing the Paid and Unpaid Internship Requirements Compared with Those Seniors Not Completing the Requirements

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These attributes may also explain similar interactions with school staff members and worksite supervisors. Seniors who worked unpaid internships received more feedback on their performance from school staff (.23 SD) than those who did not.

The extent of information support did not differ significantly between unpaid internship completers and non-completers. Neither did the proportions of seniors who received encouragement and performance feedback from worksite supervisors differ significantly between groups. Seniors who worked unpaid internships attended religious services more than their peers who did not (.27 SD). The proportions of unpaid internship participants and non-participants were statistically equal within the other social, academic and other personal background characteristics.

B. Paid Work-Based Internships. Seniors’ OEO scores were significantly lower for those completing the paid internship requirement than those who did not (.17 SD) (See Table 4.3 Panel II). A possible explanation is that students may have viewed this paid experience as only a job and not a meaningful exploration of a career pathway introducing them to a potential career option. Seniors’ EPI and PVI scores did not vary significantly between groups.

Seniors who had a paid internship received less performance feedback from school staff (.13 SD). This may suggest that many school staff members may be unaware of these students’ activities in paid internships in the 12th Grade and not as likely to engage in conversations about their work in accomplishments. Perhaps, opportunities to have these types of interactions are more dependent on student motivation for
encouraging them rather than formal organizational structures, expectations, and staff member investment to do so.

This type of supportive interaction appears to occur more at work than at school. Seniors completing the paid internship, however, received more performance feedback from worksite supervisors (.14 SD). No other differences were significant between paid internship completers and non-completers for other forms of social support received. The proportions of students completing paid internships in the 12th Grade did not vary significantly by any other social, academic, or personal background experiences.

**Multivariate Results**

The hierarchical regression analysis, conducted in three stages, begins with the regression of each dependent variable occupational engagement orientation (OEO), electoral process indicator (EPI), and political voice indicator (PVI) on the programmatic components—community service, unpaid internships in Grades 11, and paid internships in Grades 12, and community service. The measures for social support, hypothesized to enhance students’ experience, enter in the second stage. The measures of social and academic background that serve as control variables follow in the third stage. The results of the analyses follow in order—occupational engagement orientation (OEO), electoral process (EPI) and political voice (PVI).
Occupational Engagement Orientation

In the first stage, only unpaid internships in the 11th Grade were significantly related to OEO \( (B = .09, p < .05) \) (See Table 4.4). Completing an unpaid internship in 11th Grade resulted, on average, in a .17 increase seniors’ OEO scores. The proportion of variance explained in OEO, at this stage, was 2 percent (Adjusted \( R^2 = .02, p < .05 \)).

Stage 2 indicated the enhancing influence of most measures of social support on seniors’ occupational engagement orientations. Encouragement during their senior year, being mentored, and performance feedback from worksite supervisors and school staff contributed significantly more to seniors’ OEO scores than the programmatic components in stage 1. Encouragement during the senior year resulted in, on average, a .22 increase in OEO. Having a mentor led to, on average a .36 increase in OEO scores. Receiving performance feedback from worksite supervisors or school staff boosted seniors’ OEO scores, on average, .21 and .15 respectively. Receiving career information did not contribute to seniors’ OEO scores.

Having a mentor had the strongest effect on OEO \( (B = .19, p < .001) \), controlling for all other variables, which exceeded the contributions of performance feedback from worksite supervisors \( (B = .17, p < .001) \), encouragement during their senior year \( (B = .10, p < .05) \), and performance feedback from school staff \( (B = .09, p < .05) \) to the model in this stage. The proportion of variance in OEO explained by this step increased to 8 percent.
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<th>Variable</th>
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<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3</th>
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| N                                            | 602         |           |          | 602         |           |          | 602         |           |          |
| Adjusted $R^2$                                | .02         | .10       | .11       | .02         | .10       | .11       | .02         | .10       | .11       |
| $F$ for change in $R^2$                       | .48***      | 11.73***  | 1.81      | .48***      | 11.73***  | 1.81      | .48***      | 11.73***  | 1.81      |

**Note:** *Standardized variable (Mean=1, SD=0)  * $p < .05$.  ** $p < .01$.  *** $p < .001$

Table 4.4: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Seniors’ OEO Scores
(Adjusted $R^2 = .08, p < .001$). All forms of social support, except career information, enhanced seniors’ OEO scores over and above the influence of the programmatic components.

Access to civic discourse was the only social and academic background characteristic significantly related to OEO in stage 3, controlling for all other variables in the equation. A one-unit increase in access to civic discourse, on average, added .14 to seniors’ OEO scores. Even with the controls in place for social and academic background, having a mentor ($B = .17, p < .001$), receiving performance feedback from worksite supervisors ($B = .16, p < .001$), and encouragement during the senior year ($B = .09, p < .05$) were significantly related to OEO. The explanatory power of the model increased by only 1 percent over stage 2.

**Electoral Process Indicator of Citizenship Engagement Orientation**

Participation in Internship Program activities does not always yield the intended benefits. No programmatic components, introduced in the first stage, were significantly related to seniors EPI scores (See Table 4.5). The Adjusted $R^2$ was only 2 percent. However in the second stage, the social support measures moved salient. Receiving career information, having a mentor and gaining feedback from worksite supervisors and school staff were all significantly related to EPI. Having a mentor resulted, on average, in a .20 increase in seniors’ EPI scores. Receiving feedback from worksite supervisors or school staff improved seniors’ EPI results, on average, .13 and .26 respectively.
However, receiving career information led to a .09 decrease. Students may have determined more to pursue occupational interests over becoming politically engaged.

Opportunities for receiving performance feedback from school staff \( (B = .15, p < .001) \) had the strongest effect on EPI, controlling for all other variables. Receiving feedback from school staff exceeded the relative predictive importance of performance feedback from worksite supervisors \( (B = .11, p < .05) \), having a mentor \( (B = .10, p < .05) \), and receiving information \( (B = -.09, p < .001) \). Late high school community service, in the controls for social support, contributed to seniors’ EPI scores \( (B = .14, p < .01) \). The proportion of variance in EPI explained by this step increased 4 percent (Adjusted \( R^2 = .06, p < .001 \)). Most forms of social support accounted for an increase in seniors’ EPI scores over and above the influence of the programmatic components.

In stage 3, four social and academic background characteristics were significantly related to seniors’ EPI scores. African-Americans had .17 higher EPI scores, on average than other racial and ethnic groups. Males, on average, scored .22 higher than females on average, on the EPI index. A one-unit increase in access to civic discourse, on average, increased seniors’ EPI scores by .19. A one-unit increase in perceptions of neighborhood vitality, on average, resulted in a .10 EPI score increase.

Access to civic discourse had the strongest effect on seniors’ EPI scores \( (B = .19, p < .001) \), controlling for all other variables, followed by perceptions of neighborhood vitality \( (B = .11, p < .01) \), gender \( (B = -.11, p < .01) \), and African Americans \( (B = .09, p \)
Table 4.5: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Seniors’ EPI Scores

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
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<td>Beta</td>
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Adjusted $R^2$  | 0.02   | 0.06     | 0.13     |
$F$ for change in $R^2$ | 3.26* | 7.19*** | 5.78    |

Note: *Standardized variable (Mean=1, SD=0)  **p < .05.  ***p < .01.  ****p < .001

Table 4.5: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Seniors’ EPI Scores
Several other measures, in the social and academic background controls, were also significantly related. They include receiving feedback from school staff \((B = .14, p < .01)\), late high school community service \((B = .12, p < .05)\), and receiving career information \((B = -.08, p < .05)\). The social and academic background characteristics at this stage led to a 7 percent increase in the Adjusted \(R^2\) \((\text{Adjusted } R^2 = .13, p < .05)\).

**Political Voice Indicator of Citizenship Engagement Orientation**

The benefits of community service performed later in the high school years are underscored by this analysis. In stage 1, only the completion of late high school community service was significantly related to seniors’ PVI scores \((B = .17, p < .01)\) (See Table 4.6). The other Internship components (i.e., early high school community service, unpaid internship in the 11th Grade, paid internship in the 12th Grade) were not significantly related. Seniors who completed community service later in high school boosted their PVI scores, on average, .17. The proportion of variance in PVI explained by this step was 3 percent \((\text{Adjusted } R^2 = .03, p < .001)\). Most forms of social support introduced in stage 2 contributed to seniors’ PVI scores. Encouragement during the senior year resulted, on average, in a .22 PVI increase. Having a mentor boosted seniors’ scores, on average, .21 higher on the PVI scale. Feedback from worksite supervisors resulted in, on average in a .12 increase. Performance feedback from school staff raised seniors’ PVI scores, on average, .17. Career information was the only non-significant internship component.
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<th>Model 3</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Note:**<sup>a</sup> Standardized variable (Mean=1, SD=0)  
<sup>p</sup> < .05.  <sup>**p</sup> < .01.  <sup>***p</sup> < .001

Table 4.6: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Seniors’ PVI Scores
Having a mentor also had the strongest effect on seniors’ PVI scores at this stage controlling for all other variables ($B = .11, p < .01$). Encouragement during the senior year ($B = .10, p < .05$), performance feedback from worksite supervisors ($B = .10, p < .05$) and school staff ($B = .10, p < .05$) followed in contributing to the model controlling for all other variables. In the controls for social support, however, late high school community service contributed most to the model ($B = .22, p < .001$). The proportion of variance in seniors’ PVI scores explained by this step increased 3 percent (Adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$). All forms of social support, except receiving career information, enhanced seniors PVI scores over and above the influence of the programmatic components.

In introducing the social, academic, and personal background measures in stage 3, three were significantly related to PVI. Males scored .17 higher on the PVI scale than females. A one-unit increase in access to civic discourse added .20, on average, to seniors PVI scores. A one-unit increase in perceptions of neighborhood vitality resulted in a .11 increase.

Access to civic discourse ($B = .21, p < .001$) contributed most to the model in stage 3, controlling for all other variables. Perceptions of neighborhood vitality provided the second strongest effect among the social and academic background measures ($B = .11, p < .01$) followed by gender ($B = -.09, p < .05$). Even in the controls, late high school community service $B = .19, p < .001$), exceeded the strength of all other social and academic background measures except access to civic discourse. In this step, the Adjusted $R^2$ increased an additional 8 percent (Adjusted $R^2 = .14, p < .001$).
Tests for Interactions

As the ecological framework suggests, the Internship Program’s inherent mesosystemic structure links students to potentially supportive adults in multiple learning environments through community service and work-based internships whether unpaid or paid. As a mesosystemic structure, the Internship Program potentially opens up a system of social support to students as they participate in and complete program requirements. It is possible that seniors’ participation in separate programmatic components enhances or diminishes the social support they experience. Thus, it was necessary to check for interaction effects between all of the programmatic components and social support variables. While the analyses may have investigated the relationship of programmatic elements and social support separately, they have not investigated the possibility that their presence in combination with each other might enhance their relationships to ecological outcomes.

In order to test for significant interactions between the programmatic components and the social support variables in the fourth stage of the analysis, the cross-product interaction terms were entered into the regression analysis. Three were found to be significant. These will be discussed according to their respective regression analysis.

For occupational engagement orientation, the cross-product interaction occurred between students completing an unpaid internship in the 11th Grade and receiving information (See Table 4.7). The interaction resulted in students scoring, on average, .19 higher on the OEO scale and was the strongest predictor of OEO in the model ($B = .14, p < .05$) controlling for all other variables. Access to civic discourse had the second
strongest effect ($B = .13, p < .01$) followed by attendance at religious services ($B = .08, p < .01$). In entering the interaction, the Adjusted $R^2$ increased 3 percent (Adjusted $R^2 = .14, p < .05$).

In regressing EPI on the variables in the model, I checked for interactions but did not find any significant. However, for PVI, I found two significant interaction effects (See Table 4.8). Paid internships in the 12th Grade interacts with having a mentor and significantly affects seniors’ PVI scores ($B = .17, p < .05$). Supervisor feedback also interacts with completing late high school community service ($B = .18, p < .01$) and is also significantly related to PVI. Having a mentor while completing this paid internship increase seniors’ scores .41 on average. Completing community service later in high school while receiving performance feedback from school staff boosts seniors’ scores, on average, .29 on the PVI index. The proportion of variance explained in PVI did not increase by this step in adding in the interaction terms.
<table>
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N = 602  
Adjusted $R^2 = .11$  
$F$ for change in $R^2 = 1.09$

Note: ^aStandardized variable (Mean=1, SD=0)  
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 4.7: Summary of Stage 4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables and Cross-Product Interaction Terms Predicting Seniors’ Occupational Engagement Orientations
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N: 602
Adjusted R²: .14
F for change in R²: .94

*Standardized variable (Mean=1, SD=0)  *p < .05.  **p < .01.  ***p < .001

Note: aStandardized variable (Mean=1, SD=0)  *p < .05.  **p < .01.  ***p < .001

Table 4.8: Summary of Stage 4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables and Cross-Product Interaction Terms Predicting Seniors’ PVI Scores
Summary

Based on the results of a missing data analysis, I determined to use listwise deletion for reducing bias in the analyses. Because so many of the seniors omitted responses to at least one of the variables used in the analyses, the listwise sample was comparatively small. Seniors in this reduced sample differed significantly in their occupational and engagement orientations, completion of program components, the amount of social support they experienced, and in many social and academic background characteristics than the larger sample. Significant differences also separated those who completed the Internship Program requirements and those who did not, especially for internships in Grade 11 and paid internships in Grade 12.

The hierarchical regression analyses conducted to test the questions guiding this inquiry largely indicates that most forms of social support experienced by seniors provided an enhancing effect on their occupational and citizenship engagement orientations beyond their participation in Internship Program activities as predicted. In this process, the value of completing unpaid internships emerged as well as possible problems with the constitution and management of early high school community service. The relative influences of seniors’ social, academic and personal background characteristics were also examined. Given the likelihood that participation in Internship Program components caused seniors to experience social support differently from those who did not, I tested for interaction effects in the fourth stage of the hierarchical regression analyses and found three significant interactions.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss and further examine the findings from these analyses. I will also discuss the implication these findings suggest to district leaders, teachers, and
policymakers. Although these findings based on the reduced sample are not
generalizable to the Class of 2002 or Internship Program participants, they raise many
viable questions for further investigating and potentially improving the Midwestern
District’s Internship Program. Because the Internship Program’s intended outcomes are
also central to the aims of contemporary American high schools, these findings also raise
many questions about the importance of purposely-designed supportive learning
environments, especially for urban high school students.
CHAPTER 5
INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND RESEARCH

American public schools are vital to the sustainability of democracy as they educate students for public life and community membership (Barber, 1997). Students benefit when schools enable them to take part in learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom that can transform their minds and build their personal capacity toward future possibilities (Dewey, 1916). Community-based learning experiences during the high school years intend for students to clarify occupational pathways and forge a path of active citizenship. As a policy response to concerns about preparation for adult work and citizenship in the 21st Century, the Midwestern City Schools established the Internship Program intending to extend the benefits of meaningful community-based learning experiences to all district students. As the first senior class to graduate from the district’s high schools with this community-based learning requirement, the Class of 2002, their program experiences, opportunities for social support, and attitudes toward future occupational and citizenship engagement, became the focus of this dissertation research.

In order to adequately prepare all Midwestern District high school students for adult work and citizenship in the 21st Century, the Internship Program required them to
participate in a range of experiences, which include 30 hours of community service, 30 hours of unpaid work-based internships, and 30 hours of paid work-based internships. Community service, according to the district’s guidelines, should address important community needs, while unpaid and paid internships should be relevant to students’ career interests.

Educating students for adult work during the high school years entails such efforts as assisting them in clarifying occupational interests, making plans, and gaining the confidence to pursue the necessary steps to achieve their goals. Educating students for citizenship entails preparing them to exercise “political voice” so that they may speak out on issues of civic importance, attend public meetings, petition officials, and demonstrate behaviors related to civic activism. By the time they graduate from high school, students should exhibit a willingness to participate in the “electoral process” through voting in public elections, supporting candidates, and obtaining information on political issues.

Given the potential benefits of community-based learning, I expected that Midwestern seniors who completed the Internship Program requirements to report stronger occupational and citizenship engagement orientations than those who did not.

Despite efforts to engage students beyond school walls, the Internship Program was limited in its intended impact. Many seniors did not complete all of the Internship Program components. To avoid a public relations controversy over retaining non-compliant students in the first graduating senior class to have had the community-based learning requirement during high school, students were permitted to count hours where they desired to total 90 hours. Seniors’ participation in programmatic components (i.e., community service, unpaid internships, paid internships) did not yield positive
occupational and citizenship engagement orientations as I expected on the basis of the literature I reviewed.

The Internship Program of the Midwestern School District exemplifies the phenomenon of a well-intended educational reform policy that faltered. Ineffective policies are often implemented hastily and without the necessary formal structures, planning, and knowledge to adequately accomplish their objectives. In the case of the Internship Program, the district advised schools to identify a teacher, usually designated as “on special assignment,” to coordinate the student activities. Each district high school complied by appointing an internship coordinator. However, the presence of an internship coordinator at every high school did not guarantee students similar internship experiences or uniform access to internship opportunities.

Some internship coordinators were more experienced than others in terms of this kind of work with students. Some were also more proactive in establishing partnerships with local businesses and community agencies resulting in a larger pool of contacts. Some schools may have had larger pools of contacts than others because of the strength of existing community partnerships with the school at the onset of the Internship Program. Because of varying school size, some internship coordinators had more students to supervise and related administrative responsibilities (e.g., reviewing student documents, inputting completing hours, signing forms, meeting with students, etc.). Internship coordinators received little clerical assistance except in cases where principals may assign teachers during a “duty” period as part of teachers’ contractual agreement with the district to provide one period of service to the school during the day (e.g.,
monitoring a study hall, the hallways, lunchroom, substituting a class, assisting guidance counselors, etc.).

The locations of schools also varied in terms of proximity to internship and service sites. Because some schools were closer to downtown, and/or nearer to public transportation (i.e., the bus), for example, opportunities for students to participate in community-based learning were more available. In economically disadvantaged neighborhoods with fewer business opportunities, such opportunities were less available. Because of the sprawling nature of the metropolitan area in which the Midwestern District is situated, many large corporations and retail centers are located outside the school district or some distance from where students live. Since many, if not most, must complete Internship Program activities after school, in the evenings, or on weekends, they typically rely on the bus to travel to their community-based learning sites. However, few, if any, bus routes connect the city and outlying corporations or shopping centers. Differences such as these account for varied student experiences with Internship Program activities.

Many important components seem to have been ignored in planning and implementing the Internship Program. How will all students have access to socially supportive adults that provide career advice, encouragement, mentoring, and performance feedback within and outside of school? How will student community service and internship experiences be connected to the academic curriculum? How are students encouraged to reflect on Internship Program experiences and their relevance to academic learning and future goals? How are students guided into selecting community service opportunities that address community needs? How will they be guided into selecting
meaningful internships according to career interests? Will these opportunities occur in a broad range of settings? Will there be opportunities to work with a mentor? How will students be supervised in order to receive adequate performance feedback? To increase their effectiveness, Midwestern district policy makers and leaders, although reform-minded, should be mindful of the broader ecological systems and implications influencing student outcomes.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory (1977, 1979, 1989) provided a framework for examining community-based learning as a policy intervention during the high school years to promote adult work and citizenship. Engaging youth in a broad range of multiple but interlinked social settings (i.e., family, neighborhood, school, community organizations) benefits development. Community-based learning requires high school students to complete community service and work-based internships in a variety of these settings deliberately linked to the school. Ecological systems theory suggests that sustained interactions with socially supportive adults in multiple and deliberately linked systems will enhance youth developmental outcomes such as the occupational and citizenship engagement orientations investigated in this study.

In this chapter, I will begin by addressing the limitations of this study. I will then revisit the research questions and hypotheses guiding this dissertation inquiry and discuss what I have learned from this study. First, I will discuss the relationship between seniors’ participation in the programmatic components of the Internship Program and their occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. Second, using an ecological systems framework, I will examine the role of social support over and above the influence of participation in the programmatic elements. Third, I will explain how much
student social, academic, and personal background characteristics account for high school seniors’ orientations toward occupational and citizenship engagement, net of community-based learning and social support. To conclude, I will discuss the various implications of these findings for educational leadership, practice, and research and make several recommendations for improving the Internship Program in the Midwestern City Schools.

Limitations

As with all studies, this dissertation research has some limitations. First, these findings are limited by the self-reported nature of the instrument used. Surveys were administered in May 2002 to graduating seniors in Midwestern City Schools’ 18 high schools to better understand the experiences of the Class of 2002 with the district’s Internship Program. This survey was completed voluntarily weeks before graduation and it is possible that some did not complete the survey thoughtfully and thoroughly. Sixty-seven percent of the senior class, representing 1,741 students, responded to the surveys. The median response rate by school was 75 percent.

Another limitation of this research involves the large amount of missing data. Of the 1,741 respondents, only 602 provided all the responses on the items of the survey questionnaire. To determine whether the missing data were randomly distributed, I tested the differences between the “missing” and “non-missing” student groups on each measure using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for continuous variables and cross-tabulation for categorical variables. Because the data were not randomly
distributed, I decided to use listwise deletion rather than pairwise deletion, which would have resulted in significant bias in the analyses. Therefore, this decision reduced the analytic sample to 602 cases.

Although this analytic sample is free of missing data bias, they are not generalizable to the Class of 2002 or Internship Program participants. The seniors in the full data sample had higher occupational engagement orientation scores. They were more likely to complete Internship Program requirements. They received significantly more career information, were from higher SES families, and had more access to civic discourse. The representation of seniors in this sample was higher for females, lower for Asians and seniors speaking English as a second language.

Based on the analyses of this full data sample, I identify several potential problems with the Internship Program. Because the sample used in the analyses is not generalizable to the Class of 2002 or Internship Program participants, I may only raise issues and suggestions that district leaders and policy makers should further investigate. However, I have attempted to make several recommendations based on future possible outcomes and assumptions that district findings will coincide with those presented in this study.

A third limitation involves how I have defined citizenship engagement. Although citizenship engagement is specified as two separate indexes of civic participation activities, it is possible it may need to include more. A sense of community membership or cultural relevancy may also constitute seniors’ dispositions toward future civic participation.
Programmatic Components

High school students today confront many challenges to becoming socially and economically productive adults in a democratic society. The contemporary American and global economy increasingly demands a more highly educated, competitive, and skilled workforce. The labor market access of out-of-school 16-24 year-old adults and their future economic stability grows ever more challenging without more formal education, career information, planning, experience, and basic skills especially for urban minorities. Trends signaling the breakdown of community ties inhibit student access to competent, pro-social role models who may provide such career guidance, foster community membership, and civic identity particularly in areas with higher poverty concentrations and patterns of low social commitment (i.e., low political and civic participation, cynicism and mistrust for government).

To address these challenges, contemporary educational reform has employed many strategies typically focused within schools to increase academic expectations, achievements and accountability. However, the external environmental influences, especially among the socially and economically disadvantaged, seem to limit the impact of building-centered educational reform strategies. The limitation of building-centered reform strategies is their failure to account for the larger systems and influences shaping students occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.

The growth of community-based learning policies represents an educational reform strategy for extending student learning beyond school walls by engaging students in potentially enriching multiple settings through student participation in community service and work-based internships. The potential and promise of community-based
learning for improving high school students’ preparation for adult work and citizenship persuaded officials of the Midwestern City Schools to adopt and implement the Internship Program. Because the future participation of high school students in larger society is likely to be influenced by their orientations toward work and citizenship, I was interested in the extent to which the Internship Program prepared students for the future as Midwestern district leaders and policymakers intended. Therefore, I posed the following research question:

- Research Question 1: To what extent, does completion of community service (i.e., early high school, late high school) and work-based internships (i.e., unpaid internships, paid internships) influence high school seniors’ orientations toward their occupational and citizenship futures?

Based on what is known about youth development (i.e., developmental tasks, career, citizenship) during the high school years, I hypothesized that completing the Internship programmatic components was positively related to seniors’ future occupational and citizenship engagement orientations were positively related to completing the Internship programmatic components. I will first discuss the findings on the impact of the community service requirement followed by the impact of work-based learning.

**Community Service**

Seniors’ participation in community service yielded rather mixed results. According to theory, the requirement to complete community service early in high school, i.e., by the 10th Grade seems appropriately aligned with what is known about youth development and the necessary developmental tasks students should accomplish in
early and middle adolescence. Specifically, community service performed early in high school potentially fosters a sense of community membership and civic identity and, thus, enhances citizenship attitudes. However, seniors who completed community service early in high school, as expected by program guidelines, did not report positive political voice (e.g., speaking out on public issues, boycotting certain products, writing to public officials, etc.) and electoral process orientations (e.g., voting in public elections, supporting candidates in political campaigns, etc.), the measures of citizenship engagement. These findings coincide with critics of school-mandatory community service who argue such requirements are unlikely to promote future student interest and participation in the larger civic realm and civic development (National Association of Secretaries of State, 1999; Wade & Saxe, 1996). Although developmentally appropriate, requires community service early in high school may be counter-productive as it undermines students’ interest in future service.

Perhaps these seniors were more concerned about completing the service requirement to “get it done” rather than engaging in service activities that addressed relevant and important community needs. On the other hand, seniors who completed community service later in high school reported positive orientations toward exercising political voice. This finding challenges critics of required community service and supports what has been documented about its civic and political benefits (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003; Pearson & Voke, 2003). Although the impetus for the seniors completing the community service component later than intended by the Internship Program and district leaders was likely the increased pressure to fulfill graduation
requirements, what possibly may account for differences in reported outcomes between them and seniors who completed community service earlier in high school?

Currently, the Internship Program does specify integration of community service activities with the academic curriculum, explicit learning objectives, or opportunities for critical reflection, which are associated with service-learning (Green, 1999). Although such activities may occur in some high school classrooms throughout the school district, academic integration of the community service requirement is not district policy. The “method” of service-learning promotes reflection processes that enable students to focus on the reciprocal relationship between themselves and those who are being served (Stafford, Boyd, & Lindner, 2003). Service-learning compels introspection beyond the personal benefits from serving others to service as a duty or responsibility essential to community membership. Beyond assessing the outcomes of individuals served, students investigate the systemic influences underlying their social circumstances. For example, service-learning involves social analysis of the causes and impacts of structural inequities.

Midwestern District students are required to complete the course Democratic Citizenship 12 in the 12th Grade, which may have been instrumental in fostering personally meaningful connections between their service work, important community needs, and future interest in political and civic activism. The positive outcome experienced by seniors who completed service later in high school may indicate the potential of connecting community-based learning activities with the academic curriculum that likely was not experienced by seniors who completed the requirement early in high school.
Work-Based Learning

Findings on the impact of unpaid and paid internships were also mixed and somewhat surprising in view of the research. Some of these results suggest potential problems in the Internship Program.

**Unpaid Internships.** Completing unpaid internships in the 11th Grade benefits seniors’ occupational engagement orientations (OEO). Although unpaid internships did not benefit seniors’ OEO scores as much as the social support measures, participation in this area seems to afford seniors more opportunities to receive career information and work with a mentor. Perhaps working an internship without pay encourages students to focus on pursuing work opportunities motivated by career interests rather than the extrinsic rewards of having a paid job. Unpaid internships appear to provide students a built-in mentoring relationship that benefits student outcomes.

**Paid Internships.** Completing paid internships in the 12th Grade is not related to seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. These findings should rouse the attention of district leaders especially as this internship requirement precedes graduation and the formal pursuit of occupational plans. Paid internship experiences may not have been as personally meaningful for seniors. Students may have counted after-school jobs as a paid internship although the employment may have been unrelated to their career plans. Consequently, these jobs may not have provided meaningful exploration of career pathways. Internship coordinators may not have assisted seniors in selecting suitable worksites according to their career goals and interests. Worksite
supervisors may not have been aware of the Internship Program paid internship requirement or seniors’ career interests. Thus, supervisors may not have been committed to providing these students mentoring, career information, encouragement or performance feedback. School staff members may also not have known about seniors’ paid internship activities, which decreases the likelihood they were also providing feedback and making connections between students’ community-based learning experiences and classroom learning.

**Ecological Systems and Social Support**

The ecological systems framework informs this study as to the many multiple and interactive systems influencing the social and educational development of high school students. At the microsystemic level, students interact with various settings that include the family, neighborhood, school, church or the work place. Experiences in each of these settings may influence seniors’ attitudes toward occupational and citizenship engagement. For example, some families may discuss and encourage more attention to political and social issues. Students’ pessimistic perceptions of neighborhood conditions and adults may account for unfavorable dispositions toward the efficacy of citizenship engagement. Students may lack positive role models for occupational and citizenship engagement. Through participation with religious groups, students may be involved with community service and are assisted by adults who are motivated to work with youth. Performing well academically may increase self-confidence about pursuing educational
plans according to occupational interests. Students may find a mentor at a job related to their career interest. All district students are not equally exposed to such resources.

Wider social, cultural, political, and economic forces in the macrosystem (e.g., racism, sexism, other forms of discrimination, loss of community, economic downturns, etc.) may also impose barriers on students’ expectations about future employment and civic engagement. The lack of necessary information and encouragement may limit the career choices of some students. Others may have unrealistic career aspirations given their aptitudes and academic background. Potentially, the Internship Program would offer students opportunities to work with an expanded network of supportive adults in the course of completing various Internship Program activities. In a well-developed Internship Program, students would interact with multiple socially supportive adults such as the internship coordinator, guidance counselors, teachers, and supervisors at various community service and internship worksites.

Student embeddedness within a mesosystem provides the basis for social and educational developmental outcomes in high school students. Midwestern City Schools desires to prepare all district high school students for adult work and citizenship, as measured by their occupational and citizenship engagement orientations at the end of their senior year. The Internship Program potentially establishes a mesosystem, which links together student experiences within multiple settings or microsystems. Such mesosystemic structures are not effective unless linkages between microsystems are strong enough to channel the necessary social resources (i.e., career information, encouragement, mentoring, feedback). Strong mesosystemic linkages consist of adults
who provide students these social resources as they interact within multiple systems that benefit youth developmental outcomes.

Of course, not all adults will be equally effective in these roles, but an expanded network of adults in various ecological settings connected to the Internship Program may provide students with a wider base of information, encouragement, mentoring, and feedback necessary for them to pursue adult work and citizenship despite structural and environmental barriers. To investigate the place of social support in the Internship Program, I posed the following research question:

- Research Question 2: How influential is social support in enhancing high school seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations over and above the influence that programmatic experiences provide?

I hypothesized that social support from adult supervisors and mentors would positively affect students’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. I also hypothesized that the social support high school seniors receive, as part of their community-based learning, would enhance the effect of their community service and internship experiences.

Most forms of social support (i.e., encouragement, having a mentor, and feedback from school staff and worksite supervisors) enhanced seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations over and above the influence of the programmatic components. Although program components enabled seniors to experience various forms of social support, completing Internship Program requirements was not as important to their occupational and engagement orientations as receiving social support. Receiving information support, however, did not affect seniors’ occupational and citizenship
engagement orientations. Perhaps, too few formal structures or forums exist to promote and encourage information support.

Despite the findings confirming the benefits of other forms of social support on seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, Midwestern City Schools did not purposely structure or plan the Internship Program for this to happen. For the most part, students were left on their own in this regard. For many students, social support did not occur. This is clearly a limitation of the Internship Program given what is known about the role of social support in youth development and education for adult work and citizenship during the high school years. If schools were to develop formal structures or mechanisms to ensure all district high school students experience opportunities for receiving social support, they would greatly improve the efficacy of their Internship Programs.

The Influence of Social, Academic, and Personal Background

Given the many implications (e.g., access to knowledgeable positive adults, career planning based on aptitude and experience, motivation and interest in political and civic affairs, etc.) student social and academic background characteristics impose on students’ future occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, I considered the following research question:

- Research Question 3: How much do student background characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, SES, G.P.A., English as a second language, access to civic discourse, perceptions of neighborhood vitality, and attendance at religious
services) account for the high school seniors’ orientations toward occupational and citizenship engagement, net of community-based learning and social support?

Seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations were not affected by speaking English as a second language, SES, G.P.A., or frequency of attendance at religious services. Access to civic discourse was the only social and academic background measure to consistently impact seniors’ occupational engagement orientations (OEO), electoral process indicator (EPI), and political voice indicator (PVI) scores in this sample. Students’ “access to civic discourse” includes family conversations about political or national issues and media sources (i.e., newspaper, magazine, televisions, radio) where information about national news was obtained. Prior family conversations and experiences learning about national, political, and community issues may enable students to understand the larger social, political, economic, and moral implications of their involvement in community-based learning activities. These experiences are associated with students’ sense of community membership (Hart & Atkins, 2002; Oswald, 2000), which may affect how these students go about selecting projects that address community needs and are personally meaningful. If discussion about social and political issues contributes to civic engagement, the capacity of service-learning to promote these activities needs to be developed especially within civics/government courses where service-learning may such conversations are integral to advancing course objectives.

Despite higher rates of community service completion among female students, male students were found to have higher EPI and PVI scores. These EPI outcomes are
likely explained by studies documenting females to have slightly less interest in political affairs, information, and electoral process participation compared to their male counterparts (Nolin, Chapman, & Chaney, 1996; Schlozman, Burns, & Verba, 1997; Jenkins, 2005). Less interest in these issues may have determined what types of activities or service projects female seniors became involved in, which may have been less political in nature.

Seniors’ perceptions of neighborhood vitality were also important to EPI and PVI citizenship engagement orientations. Perceptions of the extent to which neighborhood adults collaborate in solving or addressing neighborhood concerns, improve conditions, and promote the safety and well-being of youth, affected seniors’ orientations toward participation in the electoral process more than the experience of participating in community-based learning. These perceptions may also have affected student motivation for the type of community-based learning projects of activities students were involved in. Negative perceptions of neighborhood vitality may invoke increased cynicism and mistrust for government and views about the capacity of citizens to solve problems and influence public policy. This alone, should encourage school-sponsored community-based learning programs to increase student access to socially supportive adults with more positive citizenship engagement perspectives.
What Went Wrong?

Despite the Internship Program’s potential, many programmatic components did not positively benefit seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. The question of why the potential of the internship program failed to materialize bears consideration. What went wrong with what seemed a positive effort to reform students’ experience of school? This section will examine where the Internship Program may have failed to live up to the superintendent’s and school board’s expectations. The ecological systems framework emphasis on providing students formalized structural supports offers valuable insights.

Although the community service programmatic component emphasizes involvement in meaningful work related to community needs, no guarantee or structure ensures that this indeed takes place. While each school building has an internship coordinator who oversees the process and signs off on completed hours, the pressure to make sure students graduate may have caused internship coordinators to permit a wide variety of service projects less conforming to district standards. The pressure to graduate may also have encouraged students to participate only in low-level and easily completed service projects to earn credit and satisfy district graduation requirements rather than achieve any level of meaningful involvement. The school district expects students to participate in projects that address “community needs”. However, interpreting this vague district standard in light of this pressure seems to present internship coordinators with an additional dilemma.
The multiple and conflicting perspectives likely to arise from a vague and loosely interpreted district policy requiring students to serve “community needs” may undermine the Internship Program’s intended value. For example, a student may meet program community service requirements by volunteering as the high school wrestling team statistician because the student believes this was valuable and meaningful community service. Others may pick up a few pieces of trash around the school or deliver papers to the school office for a teacher. Another may engage in a well-planned highly collaborative work project to repair and beautify a neighborhood park, playground or provide tutoring to homeless children. Although all these students may feel good about their accomplishments in completing the task and personally consider their actions as being worthwhile community service, what is the larger community impact? Who is directly benefiting from this service and how does this serve the overall community well-being? This wide variation seems rather controversial, as interpretations over what is considered “acceptable” community service “meeting important community needs” may be completely subjective.

Community service participation in low-level activities may fall short in promoting positive citizenship attitudes. Students may not value such work and not perceive any meaningful connection between the service and the larger social context (Blyth, Saito, & Berkas, 1997; Melchoir, 1998; Wade & Saxe, 1996). On the other hand, citizenship attitudes increase with student participation in higher-level community service activities. Higher level community service activities often require intensive planning, organizing, and performing service activities in collaboration with diverse individuals. Student participation in high-level community service activities leads to increased
political and civic awareness, and access to socially supportive adults (Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Kirlin, 2002; Michelsen & Hair, 2002; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003; Scholzman, Verba, & Brady, 1995; Smidt, 1999; Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald et al., 2001; Zeldin & Charner, 1996).

Possible confusion over what is considered “appropriate community service” may also stem from the lack of supervision, attention, and support students received at school for understanding the Internship Program requirements. It is likely, that students early in high school did not possess the developmental readiness needed to effectively determine quality community service without school assistance, which may also explain why many students did not complete the community service component until later in high school. Without proper guidance, students may not select community service activities wisely. The same lack of attention and support may also account for the lack of paid internship experiences, which enhance occupational and citizenship engagement orientations.

Work-based learning experiences vital to mapping future career pathways should be carefully planned and monitored by school personnel who are knowledgeable about work settings (Brown, 2000; Chadd & Anderson, 2005). Students must participate at worksites truly having educational value (Bailey, Hughes, & Merritt, 1993). Work-based learning activities at these sites must be related to students’ career interests and provide opportunities to work with mentors who will provide guidance and reinforce the relevancy of academic learning. Quality school-sponsored work-based learning programs are also dependent on school coordinators making regular on-site visits, working closely with students in providing guidance, career advice, regular evaluation, feedback, and keeping parents more informed (Iowa Department of Education, 2002). According to the
Iowa Department of Education, school coordinators should be effective at maintaining community partnerships so as to ensure better internship opportunities for district students. Selecting worksites with educational value requires careful attention, supervision, monitoring, and diplomacy. Students need school assistance. However, as the program now stands, it appears internship coordinators have limited capacity to accomplish these tasks.

Efforts directed at improving planning and monitoring of community-based learning activities at meaningful sites with educational value will again require more district investment in internship coordinators and their important supervising role. While investing in additional internship coordinators may be unrealistic in a large, urban district already struggling financially, more internship coordinators could increase capacity to focus on smaller groups of students and more closely monitor and interact with them. Coordinators with close knowledge of students and their projects could communicate accurate information to teachers about students’ community-based learning activities so that teachers might provide relevant connections to academic learning.

The inability of many Internship Program components to affect seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations positively is explained by the district’s lack of implementation capacity. Building adequate capacity involves designing stronger systems of community collaboration, planning, district-level versus school-level span of control, accountability, supervision and guidance to ensure students experience greater personalized attention and social support. To improve the Internship Program’s intended effectiveness, the Midwestern City Schools will need to consider various recommendations.
Recommendations

Based on findings about the Internship Program components, the role of social support, and the apparent limited district and school capacity towards effective community-based learning policy implementation, I offer several recommendations for the Midwestern City Schools to consider. District students need stronger systems of support. Designing stronger support systems for students requires changes at both district and school levels. Although school-level improvements are potentially most influential in enhancing Internship Program student outcomes, district-level changes may concentrate school-level efforts by providing schools the necessary supports, resources, and incentives while holding them more accountable. In demanding greater accountability, the district may extend schools more independence in decision-making about strategies reflective of unique local contexts and needs.

District-Level Changes

The school district has an important responsibility to see that internship coordinators are adequately trained and provided with the necessary tools for working successfully with high school students. Internship coordinators benefit from district training to effectively assist students in matching their career interests to appropriate internship experiences. Internship coordinator training must include how to effectively cultivate partnerships with local businesses and community organizations that will provide students potential service projects, work opportunities, and supportive adults. Internship coordinators will need to know how to communicate effectively with parents, teachers, community mentors, and students as well as manage their multiple, and
sometimes, competing responsibilities. Internship coordinators will need to know how they may devote more time to supervising and monitoring student interns.

Each high school has varying degrees of community ties, access to community resources, and thus, faces different challenges in building partnerships with local businesses and community organizations who will host and mentor student interns and assist in service projects. Strong leadership by the Midwestern City Schools is needed in establishing strong community partnerships especially in local school neighborhoods where such resources may be less evident. In order to search for potential mentors and hosting organizations, regular widespread district-sponsored media marketing campaigns (e.g., television, radio, newspaper, etc.) about the Internship Program are useful, perhaps in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce. This process is complemented by district partnerships with local mentoring programs to train and screen interested mentors. Community partners will likely attract more interested mentors if encouraged by Midwestern to offer employee incentives for participating as mentors. The school district cannot ensure every student will experience quality mentors but it is reasonable to expect them to initiate a collaborative culture wherein these possibilities may be realized. Further details describing such efforts will be provided in a later discussion.

In order to facilitate continuous improvement of the Internship Program, annual school district evaluation of student experiences is necessary using methods and measures similar to this study. There should be a standing district evaluation team to collect data from graduating seniors and distribute results on students grouped by each high school.
The school district must develop a rubric that determines how students select community service projects and work-based learning activities eligible for internship coordinator approval. This useful tool will assist internship coordinators in guiding student selection of activities that satisfy Internship Program requirements and identify appropriate community partners who will provide relevant worksites with educational value and dedicated mentors. Since the results did not support the value of paid internships, the district must allow more student choice about the 60 hours of work-based internships they are required to complete. If students wish to satisfy the work-based requirement by completing 60 hours of unpaid internships, they should be permitted to do so as long as their activities meet district rubric criteria. A district rubric will also assist internship coordinators and students to be highly selective of paid internships.

The Midwestern City Schools targeted student completion of each Internship Program component by specific grades, but this strategy was supported by only some of the data. Community service was most effective when completed later in high school. Paid internships in the 12th Grade were not effective. How individual high schools may accomplish the 30-hour community service requirement and in what sequence should remain completely up to them. Schools must improve in providing the means to accomplish this, which will be discussed in the following section.

In order for the Midwestern School District to provide high schools reasonable flexibility in making decisions about the Internship Program, the school district must establish expectations for each high school. If these expectations are met, the district should allow schools some autonomy over aspects of the Internship Program as well as provide financial incentives to support quality and productive work. Top priorities and
strategies should address student completion of Internship Program requirements, participation in meaningful Internship Program activities, increased community partnerships and access to supportive adults.

Each high school should be required to administer the evaluation instrument designed by the school district and organize a site-based evaluation team to study school-specific results. The school district may choose to set a benchmark, for example, of 80 percent of seniors indicating they received social support and experienced positive occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. As many high schools are located in neighborhoods with varying resources and challenges, it may only be necessary to demonstrate continuous improvement. Schools must be expected to produce documentation indicating what activities and projects were counted toward Internship Program requirements and district criteria established by the activity selection rubric. From these data, a site-based improvement plan should be required by the district and developed for all high schools.

Schools must also be required to give evidence that a system exists for guiding selection of student work-based internships according to career interests. High schools already possess several potential resources conducive to increased staff coordination and student monitoring. The Career Connections course in the 9th Grade assists students in identifying career interests. State requirements require each high school student to complete a Career Passport before receiving a high school diploma. Currently, district students complete their Career Passports once in the 11th Grade and update them once in the 12th Grade. Career Passports include a one-page narrative (i.e., post-high school plan, back-up plan) describing employable skills, strengths, shaping experiences in high
school, and a resume with references. Using such important tools and resources, schools must establish a system of regular communication between teachers and the students in relation to relevant community-based learning activities.

Six high schools already participate in the district’s Pathways to Success initiative, which emphasizes smaller “learning communities” where students share a team of teachers throughout the academic year (i.e., Freshman Success Academy, Career Academies for upper-level students). Students may choose one of six pathways in a college-preparatory curriculum (i.e., Architecture, Construction, Engineering (A.C.E.), Arts & Communications, Business, Health Sciences, Information Technology, Technology, Engineering, & Manufacturing (T.E.A.M.) according to their career interests. Pathways to Success teachers also form Adviser/Advisee programs to assist students in their career interest development. School personnel from the other 12 district high schools will benefit from regularly visiting and studying how these models work for their students.

High schools will likely increase in their compliance with district expectations while encouraged to promote individual creativity when the school district should offers financial incentives. Financial incentives, of course, are contingent upon each high school meeting these district-level Internship Program expectations. A school may wish to use these funds to support further investigation of other effective school models, visits to other schools, professional development for implementing service learning, promoting the Internship Program to a local business (e.g., host a information luncheon), providing transportation to a work site, or purchasing software that enables more effective career interest and internship activity monitoring and communication between internship
coordinators, building staff, and students. Perhaps, with district guidance and community partner financial support, high schools could log into a central database that notifies students and internship coordinators electronically when screened volunteer opportunities come available according to designated student interests and schools. High schools may use this system to improve internal staff monitoring and support of students’ community-based learning activities.

Additional district-sponsored financial awards, stipends, or course waivers to district high school teachers agreeing to integrating service-learning in their classrooms and receive the necessary training also promote compliance and creativity. Outside of what is required for teacher training, appropriate documentation of course service-learning activities and processes is essential before district teachers before receive further awards or stipends.

Given the financial struggles of the Midwestern City Schools, a financial incentives program may become a critical component in encouraging district high schools and the Internship Program to become more personalized, supportive, and relevant to students. Funding sources may come from supportive community partners, which will be examined further in a later section. Indeed, a financial incentives program is a low-budget solution to a potentially capital-producing plan that will likely sustain future district-level and school-level Internship Program activities. As students experience continued meaningful involvement, the relevancy of academic learning is likely to increase resulting in greater school attendance levels and further potential state-level per-pupil expenditures to the school district.
High School-Level Options

Despite district support and increased autonomy for managing many aspects of the Internship Program, high schools still remain the most critical components of influencing successful student outcomes. As long as high schools meet district standards of accountability, they need the flexibility to implement strategies and support systems unique to their local circumstances.

The results of this study indicated the benefits of students completing community service later in high school although, developmentally, it should be encouraged earlier in high school. However, during the 9th and 10th Grades, students and teachers are heavily pressed for classroom learning time and to prepare successfully for the state’s new proficiency exam required for graduation now administered in the 10th Grade. When the Internship Program was designed, the test was administered during the 9th Grade. In order to provide students more assistance in completing community service requirements, high schools may choose to infuse service-learning into the existing curriculum, but delay this until the later high school years when most students and teachers are less encumbered by standardized test preparation. For example, based on the findings of this study and its potential for promoting understanding about civic attitudes and political structures, a school may choose the senior social studies course, Democratic Citizenship 12, as the most effective way to accomplish this.

In this example, given the high level of staff interest, the school would sponsor the teacher’s service-learning training. In addition to service-learning classroom activities (e.g., journals, portfolios, discussions) that encourage deeper reflection and analysis of student service experiences, the school may further elect to require students to
complete a Senior Exhibition (Evanciew & Rojewski, 1999; Steinberg, 1998). For example, a Democratic Citizenship 12 student who volunteers in a neighborhood homeless shelter may elect to do a senior project that discusses their efforts to petition city council for more funding of shelter programs. The teacher’s awareness about this student’s interest and activities may enhance classroom discussions about the structures and functions of local government in a manner that the student finds more personally relevant and meaningful. With this requirement, the student may receive further support, information, and assistance from school and shelter staff beyond normal volunteer activities. These activities likely surround students with more opportunities to find personal meaning in their community-based learning experiences as well enable increased coordination, monitoring, and supervision from more supportive, caring adults.

Additional staff members may be recruited, particularly from an Adviser/Advisee program to provide students the necessary guidance, information, encouragement, and feedback on their service work. They may provide students with the necessary contacts and direction for completing the project tapping local knowledge and expertise. Perhaps student advisers may become part of the Senior Exhibition review committee. Some high schools may expand to include service work related to other core subject areas, where service-learning has been incorporated, and regard the Senior Exhibition as a culminating project of their later high school experience tied to community-based learning. Regardless of the approach, individual high school has the flexibility to make site-based decisions and allocate resources with the best knowledge of personnel strengths and student needs as long as they continue to meet district standards.
With this autonomy, high schools may decide to manipulate daily class schedules to provide students more opportunities to participate in planned community-based learning activities. This may occur during an entire school day or, perhaps, during a class period on a Friday afternoon. The school may have a strong business partner that provides transportation to the workplace where trained employee mentors engage students.

Using such an approach, students may complete a planned service project in the community related to service-learning course work in the upper-level grades. Teachers may use the one class period each week, month, or grading period to engage students in activities about identifying career interests and selecting appropriate internship sites, based on a lesson module prepared by the internship coordinator. Perhaps, students may begin working on components of their Career Passports. Schools may use such time between March and June in the 10th Grade directly after the administration of the state graduation test. Students, for example, could meet with a designated staff mentor as part of the Adviser/Advisee program to discuss these activities. Community mentors may be invited during these scheduled and structured periods to invite students to their worksites as well as provide them with the necessary encouragement, information, guidance, and feedback.

High schools should encourage teacher teaming and Adviser/Advisee programs. The six Pathways to Success high schools already have structures in place such as the Freshman Success Academy and Career Academies that may facilitate this interaction. Groups or “teams” of students are assigned the same core academic teachers. Teachers regularly meet during planning periods, coordinate instructional activities, and provide
necessary student intervention. More high schools should follow the Pathways to Success model. Increased opportunities for more school staff members to become involved in supporting students’ Internship Program activities will likely improve student outcomes and increase internship coordinators’ capacity to focus on other critical elements such as community partnership-building.

Summary

These system changes are intended to provide students more personalized attention and involvement in meaningful community-based learning activities with more potentially socially supportive adults. These recommendations emphasize increased collaboration, accountability, creativity, performance, and data-based decision-making for program planning, delivery, and supervision. Before implementing the Internship Program, the Midwestern City Schools would have benefited from greater planning, evaluation, district-level expectations, guidelines, school-level strategies, community partner support and collaboration. Although we cannot recapture the past, the Midwestern City Schools may shape the future success of the Internship Program by introducing a similarly developed implementation plan addressing these issues in three stages. These stages highlight increased systems of social support, which enhance future occupational and citizenship engagement orientations. These systems must extend beyond school walls and district offices into surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The utility of ecological systems-thinking also frames this implementation plan.
**Stage One: The Macrosystem**

A well developed Internship Program relies on solidarity with key community partners. The district should form an advisory board or steering committee comprised of representatives from several well known area businesses, the local Chamber of Commerce, social service agencies, civic organizations, local volunteer matching agencies, university extension and public school partnership initiatives. To increase the sense of “stakeholdership” among advisory board members, representatives may even be selected from parents of district high school students. They may also include several existing strong partners that have provided support to students in the past.

Besides gaining input, this advisory board provides an essential forum for building a wider base of community support and recognition for program guidelines and objectives. The advisory board is also the key to procuring the necessary financial resources for marketing and sustaining the Internship Program and should be the source of financial incentives to high schools. In addition to providing financial contributions and grants, the advisory board provides access to other local and professional networks where these resources may be available. However, the Midwestern School District should take the lead in establishing this group. Partner trust and commitment will likely increase as the school district is perceived as sincerely and consistently advancing a positive culture of community collaboration.

The school district should also bring together internship coordinators and gain input on improving the Internship Program and intently listen to their concerns. This input is necessary in developing appropriate evaluation instruments. Internship coordinators should receive the necessary training in workshops for building a positive
culture of collaboration in their own communities and driving school-level changes. As part of its community-wide marketing campaign, the Midwestern district must inform high schools of basic district-level responsibilities for the Internship Program and expectations of high schools as well as the financial incentives available for each. The advisory board should also provide high schools with new implementation plan start-up funds to encourage school-level choices.

**Stage 2: Microsystemic Reform and Mesosystemic Linkages**

In the second stage, each high school will need to devise a comprehensive plan for meeting district-level expectations and containing school-level strategies, which should include methods for linking together community youth development-oriented system elements (e.g., schools neighborhoods, workplace, churches, community organizations, etc.). High schools should establish local advisory boards similarly constituted following the district-level model. They should include representatives from neighborhood businesses, churches, social service agencies, civic organizations as well as middle school and elementary school leaders. Many of these representatives may also be parents of students. Middle and elementary schools are valuable “host” sites for student interns and service projects. Local advisory boards may be instrumental in assisting the internship coordinators in identifying local community mentors, service projects, and internship opportunities. They may similarly widen local neighborhood support and knowledge for Internship Program activities and goals.

With adequate training and less constraints, internship coordinators may be instrumental in organizing advisory boards. As liaisons, internship coordinators may
communicate local advisory board input to an internal building committee charged with designing the high school comprehensive Internship Program plan to be submitted to district officials satisfying district expectations. The school’s planning committee may consider various strategies discussed involving the use of structured time, infusion of service-learning, curricular modifications, professional development, Adviser/Advisee programs, school reform models, and technology to improve communication and supervision of community-based learning opportunities matched to student interests.

**Stage 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Feedback**

Although implementation of the revised Internship Program, particularly the school-level changes, will fully be in motion by stage 3, district financial incentives should not yet be tied to any student occupational and citizenship engagement orientation benchmarks for at least two academic years. Schools need time to implement many strategies that may occur in the lower-grades and allow appropriate time before graduating seniors are assessed. However, district- and school-level evaluation teams must be assembled to administer the evaluation instrument and interpret results when they are distributed to the individual schools. This feedback should guide further school-level efforts to improve student Internship Program experiences, the support that they receive, and the future occupational and citizenship engagement outcomes.

In order to accomplish its intended objectives, students will need more personalized attention and social support from school and community adults. Improved community collaboration, district-level changes, expectations and rewards for school-
level improvements and options, will improve district capacity to create and sustain these supportive linkages fundamental to future Internship Program success.

**Returning to the Center**

Despite these recommendations intended to improve the community-based learning experiences of future Internship Program participants, this story must inevitably return to the tragedy of those students currently caught in the grips of a non-responsive school system where many still remain alienated and separated from the benefits of interaction and social supportive adults. At the center of an ecological system, students in this study seemed responsive to efforts specifically aimed at providing them opportunities for receiving encouragement, having a mentor, and receiving performance feedback from supportive and caring adults both inside and outside of school. These opportunities to talk with adults and understand the larger, social, economic, and political contexts around them may invite wider participation in community-based activities designed to enhance preparation for socially and economically productive adult roles. Personalized attention and interest from supportive adults may communicate those norms, values, as well as affirm individual self-worth and identity fundamental to future community membership. Additional research may need to further examine these interactions and outcomes. Although receiving social support enhanced participants’ intended Internship Program outcomes, many students, impeded by insufficient planning and access, were not as fortunate and may likely remain at-risk for future occupational and citizenship disengagement as adults.
Implications for Educational Leaders and Policymakers

The dissertation validates the importance of urban school districts and comprehensive high schools purposely creating systems of personalized, supportive learning environments, which provide “constructive, affirmative, and encouraging relationships” with community adults (Perkins et al., 2003, p. 6). Designing a well-structured community-based learning system will better enable students to build the necessary competencies important to socially and economically productive adulthood as they become engaged partners in their own development as well as the development of their own communities. Stronger linkages energize this system with community partners mutually dedicated to the education of high school students for adult work and citizenship. Improved school and community coordination, partnership-building, and supportive relationships, as suggested by these recommendations, establishes a community support system which more effectively channels social resources essential to preparation for adult work and citizenship during the high school years (Bö, 1994; Cauce & Srebnik, 1989).

The enhancing influence of social support in seniors’ occupational and citizenship engagement orientations suggests the necessity of designing more personalized and supportive learning environments to effectively carry out educational policy initiatives and goals. School district and building-level leaders may accomplish this in the Midwestern City Schools by improving the Internship Program structure to ensure more meaningful community-based learning experiences for all district students. Improving the Internship Program, of course, requires district-level and school-level commitment to
community partnership-building and developing strategies unique to the local school community. However, the school district should set the agenda for these changes.

This dissertation research, using an ecological systems framework, should encourage Midwestern district leaders to more fully consider district capacity for providing personalized attention and social support before implementing its mandatory community-based learning policy for all students such as the Internship Program. This research suggests that the district did not design enough specific structures for ensuring that students had personally meaningful learning experiences and received the social support they needed. A policy that requires participation of all students should provide all students the resources and support they need to be successful. In order to be successful, this research determined that students needed to interact with socially supportive adults to successfully accomplish program objectives. Districts should not go about creating policies without the means to accomplish them. Establishing policies improving the education for all is, indeed, a noble pursuit but they should not be meted out in a compulsory manner without the necessary supports to ensure universal realization.

School district leaders will need to invest time and resources in carefully planning and nurturing the necessary community relationships, which will drive and sustain the Internship Program. Increased building-level autonomy for designing the means to assist students in meeting this district policy requirement may result in varying strategies that makes each high school in the district different. Although, high schools may become more relevant to the needs of their local constituencies, these school-level changes may challenge district efforts to standardize curriculum and instruction. High schools with
different structures, processes, and requirements may erect new barriers to many disadvantaged students with high mobility between district high schools.

District and school-level leaders will also face challenges arising from overlaying a revised Internship Program policy on old district structures. The Internship Program was designed when students were required to complete their graduation test in the 9th Grade. The existing test administered in the 10th Grade, makes school-level decision-making and strategies even more challenging. They may feel constrained by fewer options during the 9th and 10th Grades. They are already pressed improve instruction and student performance on standardized testing and, thus, may not consider the Internship Program a priority. However, school and district leaders must diverge from this single focus, which may actually undermine the original objectives of contemporary educational reform when many students are disengaged and already find school not meaningful or relevant to their future plans. Midwestern district and school leaders must recognize the Internship Program’s complimentary potential to achieve positive educational outcomes.

High school leaders will also need to fully understand the capacities of their unique school contexts. They will need to encourage site-based collaboration and consider staff member strengths, desires, and input. They will need to determine how best to modify existing courses or daily schedules to provide students assistance in identifying career plans, completing Internship Program requirements. They will need to be instructional leaders in providing teachers the necessary professional development and encouragement for making relevant connections between their work and academic learning without losing focus on standardized test preparation.
Understanding ecological systems theory and the role of social support in designing a community-based learning system enables a vibrant, robust, and cohesive approach in educational policy and practice for preparing high school students for adult work and citizenship. In essence, all American high schools should share the occupational and citizenship engagement orientation goals of the Midwestern City Schools. American high schools will achieve greater educational and developmental outcomes if purposely structured by educational policy and leadership to expand student interaction with diverse individuals and developmental experiences the larger community can provide (Hamilton, 1989). Stronger school-community ties recognize that education is a shared community enterprise and necessary for providing extended, enriching learning experiences essential to preparation for socially and economically productive adult roles (Cremin, 1976; Hurrelmann, 1991).

Thus, embracing the ecological systems framework in educational policy and practice provides school leaders an important bridge for overcoming the limits of educational reform in urban socially and economically disadvantaged environments, where conditions do not naturally encourage youth-centered social support and mentoring (Hamilton, 2002). Therefore, in order for schools to overcome system structural barriers that perpetuate adult occupational and citizenship disengagement risks, the design of high schools should include supportive personalized learning environments, an individualized learning plan, and student access to advisors or advocates for each who will advance this plan (National High School Alliance, 2005). Establishing community partnerships to support this vision builds “community capacity—particularly within low income, minority populations that have been traditionally marginalized in civic and school
affairs” (p. 8). The Internship Program seems to be a potential step for the Midwestern City Schools in this direction.

Implications for Researchers

Findings concerning the limited impact of community-based learning participation outcomes should support what is known about service-learning as a more effective strategy than traditional forms of community service programs. Work-based learning may also be viewed in the same light when they fail to deliver meaningful connections to the academic curriculum and classroom learning. This study should also raise further questions about the efficacy of mandatory community-based learning requirements unless school district leaders are willing to invest in the necessary systems of support to sustain and advance such policies as district-level and school-level priorities.

Researchers also gain insight on the valuable role of personalized and supportive learning environments in the education of urban high schools students. This research suggests that without systems changes, traditional comprehensive high schools may be insufficient to address student needs and the demands of the 21st Century especially in environmental contexts where students face many potential barriers with limited social and economic resources.

Further research should be conducted in understanding the role of social support in improving educational outcomes for high school students. How will the knowledge of personalized and supportive learning environments impact the design of high schools to
offer more guidance and support for them especially in socially and economically disadvantaged contexts? For example, do students in the six district high schools implementing the Career to Success Pathways Initiative experience more social support and thus greater occupational and citizenship engagement orientations? How may community resources and community partnerships advance academic goals and enhance the academic curriculum? To what extent may schools effectively manage microsystemic (e.g., family, neighborhood) and macrosystemic (e.g., breakdown of community social ties) influences? Do students with less neighborhood vitality perceptions receive less social support? To what extent are community systems able to provide socially supportive resources essential to preparing high school students for adult work and citizenship? Applying an ecological systems framework and a community systems orientation in educational policy and practice offers many potential solutions to contemporary educational concerns.

**Conclusion**

Midwestern City Schools was right to be concerned about the preparation of their students for adult work and citizenship in the 21st Century. Current political disengagement trends, labor market challenges of academically disengaged young adults, erosion of community social ties, and limited social resources among many students have increased youth risk for occupational and citizenship disengagement. These trends afford American high schools today tremendous opportunities and responsibilities for educating youth for democratic citizenship. Preparation for
standardized testing is not enough. High schools must consciously plug students into wider and more resourceful social and educational developmental systems connecting their worlds within and beyond school walls in order to effectively educate for adult work and citizenship. The ecological systems framework guides this intervention.

District students complete Internship Program requirements interacting with multiple microsystems. Linking community-based learning experiences in these settings with the school creates a potential mesosystem for students. Multiple linkages to supportive adults reinforce mesosystems. However, macrosystemic forces may create barriers. Students benefit from interactions with supportive adults who provide the necessary information, encouragement, mentoring, and feedback to surmount these barriers. Completing some of the Internship Program requirements influenced positive occupational and citizenship engagement orientations, but receiving social support enhanced this effect. Although receiving social support makes the difference, the school district did not purposely plan for this to happen. This should serve as an important lesson for school districts not to implement district-wide policies binding of everyone unless they more carefully examine the interconnecting internal and external support systems necessary to sustain them.

Informed by ecological systems-thinking, the district-level and school-level leaders should purposely design and structure the Internship Program to ensure all students have meaningful, academically relevant, and personalized, supportive learning experiences and environments. Collaboration with community partners, district-level accountability, increased school autonomy, and strategies for personalizing community-based learning will enhance high school student preparation for future adult work and
citizenship by improving access to systems connecting students to supportive adults within and outside school walls. Purposely designing high schools with systems emphasizing more personalized attention and support underscores the value of community partnerships with schools. Schools will likely achieve greater academic, occupational and citizenship engagement outcomes if purposely structured to expand student social interaction with diverse individuals and open them to the developmental experiences the larger community can provide (Hamilton, 1984). Building school-community systems that increase urban district- and school-level attention to personalized and supportive learning environments within and beyond high school walls, appears to be a promising area of inquiry in educational leadership I intend to pursue with much vigor.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

CONSTRUCTION OF MEASURES FOR ANALYSIS

Dependent Variables

Occupational Engagement Orientation: A scale constructed of 5 items using principal components extractions of factors with varimax rotation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My internship experience(s) helped me decide my career goals</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My 12th Grade internship was in field that really interested me</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My 12th Grade internship was related to my career goals</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My internship experience(s) made me more confident about applying for a job</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My internship experience(s) made me more confident about going for an interview</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue                      3.28  
Cronbach’s Alpha of Reliability .87 

N                                    1279  
Mean                                 .00  
Std Dev.                             1.00
**Electoral Process Indicator:** A scale constructed of 4 items using principal components extractions of factors with varimax rotation measuring one aspect of *citizenship engagement orientation*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give money to a political candidate or cause</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in a political campaign</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a local political meeting</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote in a public election</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue                                          2.25
Cronbach’s Alpha of Reliability                      .73

N                                                   1376
Mean                                               .00
Std Dev.                                           1.00

**Political Voice Indicator:** A scale constructed of 6 items using principal components extractions of factors with varimax rotation measuring one aspect of *citizenship engagement orientation*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write to public officials</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in lawful demonstration</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycott certain products or stores</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with social action groups</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a meeting on a neighborhood issue</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak out on an issue at a public meeting</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalues                                          3.60
Cronbach’s Alpha of Reliability                      .87

N                                                   1360
Mean                                               .00
Std Dev.                                           1.00
Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Early High School Community Service</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Late High School Community Service</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Unpaid Internships in the 11th Grade</td>
<td>1532</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Paid Internships in the 12th Grade</td>
<td>1501</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Support Variables

**Information Support**: A scale constructed of 5 items using principal components extractions of factors with varimax rotation measuring one aspect of social support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance or career counselors</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other school staff (i.e., coaches, secretaries, principals, security guards)</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents or guardians</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate or friend</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue: 2.12  
Cronbach’s Alpha of Reliability: .66
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement during the Senior Year</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Staff Feedback</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worksite Supervisor Feedback</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a Mentor</td>
<td>1501</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social, Academic, and Personal Background Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, Non-Black</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Gender</td>
<td>1553</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken as a Second Language</td>
<td>1431</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family SES Standardized</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade GPA Standardized</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>-3.67</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Attendance at Religious Service Standardized</td>
<td>1510</td>
<td>-1.10</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Access to Civic Discourse:** A scale constructed of 3 items using principal components extractions of factors with varimax rotation measuring one aspect of social background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read about the national news in a newspaper or magazine</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch the national news on television or listen to the national news on the radio</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about politics or national issues with your parents or other adults in your household</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue                  1.90
Cronbach’s Alpha of Reliability  .71

N                         1395
Mean                      .00
Std Dev.                  1.00
Neighborhood Vitality: A scale constructed of 10 items using principal components extractions of factors with varimax rotation measuring one aspect of social background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If there is a problem in the community, neighbors get together to deal with it</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one in this neighborhood cares much about what happens here</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults in this neighborhood help each other out</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are adults in this neighborhood that children can look up to</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults in this neighborhood know who the local children are</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can count on adults in this neighborhood to see that children are safe</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can count on adults in this neighborhood to see that children do not get into trouble</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the day, it is safe to play in the local park or playground</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in this neighborhood can be trusted</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The equipment and buildings in the neighborhood part or playground are well kept</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue                  4.94
Cronbach’s Alpha of Reliability .85

N                   1331
Mean                      .00
Std Dev.                   1.00