Reducing the Dropout Rate in Urban Public High Schools

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Research Question

- What are the major factors that contribute to Hartford public high school students continuing their education through until graduation?
- According to the students, is the school system helping to facilitate their resilience?
Significance

- Personal experience in school system and education classes and Trinity
- Increasing attention toward educational issues and policies
- Urban dropout rate is extremely high
- Social and economic consequences for students and community
- Resilience in education being promoted
- *Framing Dropouts* by Michelle Fine
Thesis

- Major factors that contribute to students continuing their education:
  - Relationship between student and adult mentor in school
  - Student’s desire to be successful in life and have a better future
- School system is helping to facilitate student’s resilience
Methodology

- Research at one Hartford public high school
- In-depth interviews
  - Guidance counselor
  - 21st Century Project Coordinator
  - 6 students
Evidence
Reasons School Officials Believe Students Stay in School

- Relationship between student and adult mentor in school
- School is a safer place than student’s home
- Students aware they need an education to be successful
Program that Facilitate Resilience

- Save Our Seniors (SOS)
- Saturday Academy
- Vacation School
- Online Classes
- Formal Tutoring
- Homework Club
- Half-days
- Afternoon School
- Adult Education
Interview Questions

- Have you ever considered dropping out of school?
- What are your plans for the future? Where do you think you would be without a diploma?
- What are the main reasons you stayed in school?
- Who has been the most influential person that has supported you in continuing your education?
- Have any of the following things contributed to your continued education: family, friends, mentor, teachers, guidance, clubs, sports, job?
- Do you feel the school is doing an adequate job of keeping students in school? How can they improve?
Student #1

- 11th grade girl
- Never considered dropping out
- Main reasons for staying in school
  - Better Future, College
  - Mentor
    - 21st Century Project Coordinator
- Believes the school system is facilitating resilience
  - “Students aware of programs”
Student #2

- 12th grade girl
- Has considered dropping out, many times
- Main reasons for staying in school
  - Mentors
    - Guidance Counselor, Attendance Workers, 21st Century Project Coordinator
- Believes the school system is facilitating resilience
Student #3

- 12th grade boy
- Never considered dropping out
- Main reasons for staying in school
  - Sports
    - Football
  - Mentor
    - Football Coach
  - Better Future, get out of Hartford
- Believes the school system is facilitating resilience
  - “It’s the student’s fault, not the school”
Student #4

- 12th grade boy
- Has considered dropping out of school
- Main reasons for staying in school
  - Better Future, witnessed others struggle
  - “Myself”, will be first in family to graduate
- Believes the school system is facilitating resilience
  - SOS Program
Student #5

- 12th grade boy
- Has considered dropping out of school
- Main reasons for staying in school
  - “Myself”
  - Better Future, witnessed brother struggle
- Believes the school system is facilitating resilience
  - “Need to change their attendance and suspension policies”
Student #6

- 12th grade girl
- Never considered dropping out
- Main reasons for staying in school
  - Parental Support
  - Mentor
    - Vice Principal
- Does not believe the school system is facilitating resilience
  - Unfair teachers, bad policies
Analysis

- Close relationship between student and adult mentor and student’s desires to succeed are keeping them in school
- School system is helping to facilitate resilience with programs
- Programs are a solution to the problem, but are they getting at the root of the problem?