The Out-of-School Learning Landscape: A Pathway to Self-Determination and Career Discernment for Adolescent Youth

by

Pamela J. Petro-Ott

Bachelor of Science, University of Pittsburgh, 1984

Master of Business Administration, Drexel University, 1986

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the.

School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2020

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This dissertation was presented

by

Pamela J. Petro-Ott

It was defended on

June 29, 2020

and approved by

Kevin Crowley, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty, Professor of Learning Sciences and Policy, Sr. Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center

Jennifer Russell, Chair and Assoc. Professor, Educational Foundations, Organizations & Policy

Cynthia Tananis, Assoc. Professor, Teaching, Learning and Leading, Founder Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity

Dissertation Advisor: Kevin Crowley, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty, Professor of Learning Sciences and Policy, Sr. Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center

The Out-of-School Learning Landscape: A Pathway to Self-Determination and Career Discernment for Adolescent Youth

Pamela J. Petro-Ott, EdD

University of Pittsburgh, 2020

The Out of School Learning landscape continues to be an emerging ecosystem of learning, particularly for the adolescent population. While the focus for elementary school-aged youth has often been on after-school programming offering safety, supervision, and homework help, research has indicated that this approach is not equally successful for the middle- and high school populations (Mahoney, Parente, & Zigler, 2009).

This dissertation builds on an examination of peer-reviewed literature pertaining to the unique needs of adolescent youth. Research on advances in the understanding of adolescent development and the theories of self-determination and career discernment were of specific interest. This literature review was used to develop a study of the Out-of-School Learning landscape programming available to youth aged 13-19 within the geographic boundaries of a capital city school district in South Carolina that is both socioeconomically and racially diverse. The study used a combination of semi-structured interviews of community leaders, surveys of parents, and an artifact analysis of program materials. Together these data provide a snapshot of opportunities available to adolescent youth, as well as identify content and geographic gaps that make the Out-of-School Learning landscape less accessible to this demographic at a time when it could be most beneficial.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Preface

The field of Education has come to be identified as either “In School”, “Out of School”, or “After School”. “In School” for the purposes of this research is that learning which occurs during the “School Hours” offered at either the Public, Private, Parochial, Charter, or other institutions of K-12 education. “Out of School” and “After School” are used interchangeably and represent learning that occurs outside of these traditional “School Hours” regardless of location. The terms “formal” and “informal” have also been used to denote classroom and non-classroom settings. This research focuses specifically on those learning experiences of the Adolescent population typically comprised within the 6-12th grades.

Following a twenty-year career in Human Resources specializing in Compensation, Job Design, and Performance Evaluation, I find myself having been blessed greatly by my Lord and Creator. He has given me loving and exceptional parents, family, friends, faculty, community and business associates that have supported me throughout my life and helped me to grow as an individual and professional. He has created institutions of learning: Saint Paul’s Cathedral Elementary and Middle School, Sacred Heart High School, the University of Pittsburgh, and Drexel University that have created a life-long learner, passionate and dedicated to our most vulnerable, sometimes forgotten, and most certainly under-valued population that is our future. For Him and His creation, I am most thankful as I embark on this next chapter of my life.

1.0 Introduction

At a time when youth development is so very critical (Banks et al., 2007; Overton, 2010), our school counselor resources intended to guide and nurture the adolescent into adulthood are at a national average of 430 students to each counselor (NCES data 2018-2019). The ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association is 250:1 (American School Counselor Association, 2020).

Although one might hope that resources outside of school could fill this gap, the Forum for Youth Investment, a recognized national thought leadership organization working to change the odds for young people and their readiness for college, work, and life by age 21, provides evidence to a similar lack of resources outside of the school environment (Figure 1) (Gaines, Allen, Patel & Logan, 2017).

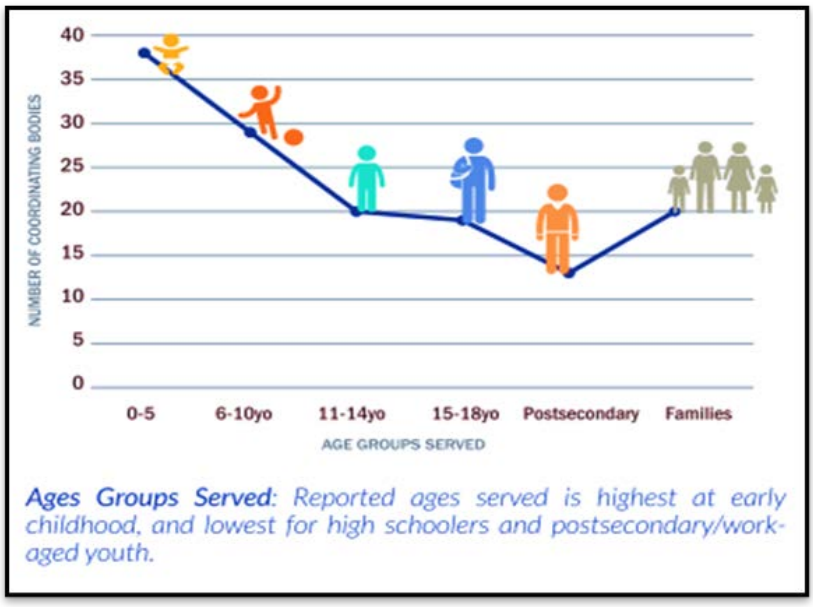


Figure 1: Forum for Youth Investment 2017 State Policy Survey

In this national survey, forty different state organizations reported on the focus of their programs and support services by age groups most served. Unfortunately, the adolescent population (aged 13–19) was found to be the least served. Programs, typically relevant to this age group that focus on vocational and civic development, were equally not the focus for these organizations (Gaines, et.al., 2017).

Without many options for guided exploration or skill building, the adolescent who is beginning to feel his/her awkwardness is left alone at a most vulnerable time (Fischhoff et al., 2001; Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2001; Parker, 2010; Overton, 2010). Aside from the obvious biological and psycho-social changes, adolescence is a critical stage in the development of personal and interpersonal skills affecting the growth of the individual for many years to follow (Halpern, 2006; Ryan, Patrick & Helen, 2001; Ryan, A.M., Shim, S.S., Makara, 2013).

Given awareness of the criticality of learning and support systems, why does there appear to be limited resources available to assist this demographic, aged 13-19, in their journey to adulthood? Akiva and Horner (2016), associate lack of programming for the adolescent population with their decreased attendance at available programs. They posit a lack of participation demonstrates a lack of interest, which then results in lack of funding. Their findings suggest that successful programs with this demographic offer diverse and varied purposeful content (Akiva & Horner, 2016). This is in contrast to the typical programs for elementary youth with a traditional focus of safety, supervision, and studying. McNeely & Blanchard (2009) support this position and relate it to the complex nature of adolescent development. Couched in the Five C’s (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring) of the positive youth development framework, they argue for more community-centric versus system-wide programming that facilitates this

development. This distinction is critical when applied to program development because the needs of individual communities within a school district, very much like Richland One, can be, and often are, vastly different. Because of these differences, the needs of the individuals within communities are different, and the identity-facilitating tools helpful to the adolescent may be different. When programs are constructed in a top-down manner for delivery to a larger audience, the nuances that address the unique concerns of the smaller audiences often get overlooked and potentially under-valued (Doloi, 2018). Decision-making at this higher system-wide level, even with check-points of stakeholders along the way, are not as grounded in the needs and interests of the smaller communities within the system and thus require a more collaborative approach to planning and decision-making "to ensure a balanced outcome and optimize social value creation" (Doloi, 2018, p. 5).

Of greatest significance to this research is the work of Dawes and Larson (2011) which goes beyond attendance to examine psychological engagement in program activities and how that process occurs. In a longitudinal study of 100 (55 girls) ethnically diverse youth aged 14-21, they found that programming can become intrinsically engaging when program activities and goals are integrated with those of the youth in three areas: Learning for the future, developing competence, and pursuing a purpose. By creatively constructing programs to allow for greater authentic engagement, they were able to facilitate the youth's personal connection to these goals. Similarly, a study by Deschenes, Little, Grossman, and Arbreton (2009) that involved 198 middle school students found supporting evidence for adjusting program design elements to meet adolescent developmental needs. These processes are also described by Ryan and Deci (2000) in Self-Determination Theory where competence, autonomy, and relatedness align to create learning experiences that are intrinsically motivating.

In the Out-of-School Learning environment, which encompasses all that time outside of the classroom, there is great opportunity for youth to grow through a myriad of experiences. This dissertation explores the use of these learning environments as a setting for facilitating career discernment and self-determination among adolescent youth aged 13-19 and examines the research on programs constructed in alignment with supporting intrinsically motivated engagement.

1.1 Problem Statement

Within the state of South Carolina, the average student counselor ratio is 351:1 (NCES data 2018-2019). It is one of few states that recognizes the significant contribution counseling can have in the lives of its students with legislation mandating student counseling ratios. The South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), passed in 2005, calls for the ratio of student counselors to be 300:1, places Career Development Specialists in the schools, and requires reporting of various elements being measured under the "Personal Pathways to Success" program.

Here in 2020, 15 years after its passage, students remain challenged to make decisions among the many choices they face as graduation approaches (Hammond, et. al., 2014). Research has shown that the concurrent factors of community resources and socioeconomic status contribute to the effectiveness of school counselors ability to impact students' development (Parzych & Chiu, 2019). Richland One school district is the sixth largest in the state of South Carolina with a high school graduation rate around 82 percent (Spotlight Richland One, 2019). One hundred percent of these students receive free lunches given the high poverty rate of 73 percent (Alvarez & Marsal, 2017). It is located in the Columbia South Carolina metropolitan area, and consists of nine Middle Schools, seven High Schools (and one career-center), and covers approximately 450 square miles

with approximately 11,200 students in attendance. Students live central to city and county amenities, and along many bus routes providing public transportation. Student-to-School Counselor ratios are no higher than 305:1 in this school district.

Within the geographic boundaries of the district are a variety of community resources to include the Parks and Recreation systems, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, Churches, Libraries and Museums that have the potential to offer programs year-round and supplement the work of the School Counselor in facilitating adolescent development and particularly, self-determination and career discernment.

To understand the Out-of-School Learning landscape in this geographic area, I mapped currently available programs, of any kind, offered to the adolescent youth demographic. To confirm awareness of these programs and begin to understand the role these programs play in the development of adolescent youth, a group of five community leaders and five parents were interviewed and surveyed, respectively. Program artifacts, both digital and hardcopy were examined for program content. The findings from this landscape study are intended to inform the adolescent youth Out-of-School Learning landscape in this locale.

The following inquiry questions were to guide this research:

1) What Out-of-School Learning programs for adolescent youth, aged 13-19, are located within the geographic boundaries of the Richland One school district attendance zone? Where are they located and who is providing them?
2) To what extent are programs designed to lead the adolescent to greater knowledge of self (self-determination), thus preparing them to discern a career prior to graduating high school (career discernment)? Are community leaders and parents aware of this focus?

3) What do community leaders and parents see as the needs, gaps, and challenges for the adolescent youth Out-of-School Learning ecosystem?

1.2 Research Objective

The goal in examining the Out-of-School Learning landscape in this district is to begin a community conversation on how programming for the adolescent population aged 13-19 can be structured to facilitate career discernment and self-determination. I would eventually like to see these conversations with community leaders, parents, and the youth themselves, benefit from the data I have collected in this landscape study. I would like to use the data to spark discussion around how this one ecosystem in South Carolina could possibly better support the work of our school counselors and facilitate the objectives of the state's EEDA legislation related to the Personal Pathways to Success program. These discussions would be in the spirit of Melaville, Berg & Blank's (2010) notion that informed and engaged citizens create strong and growing communities.

2.0 Literature Review

To more fully understand the research conducted around the Out-of-School Learning landscape specific to adolescent youth and their engagement in programming, a systematic review was conducted of peer-reviewed research. This included a focus on the critical elements of program design that support intrinsically motivated engagement, which has been shown to be key for adolescents given that it is often their personal choice to attend programming (as compared to parent-directed attendance with elementary youth).

To begin, I will highlight some of the literature on positive youth development. I will then jump to the relatively new research on the development of adolescent executive brain functioning facilitated by *functional* MRI technology and the emerging field of Educational Neuroscience research. Finally, I will explore the research around self-determination theory and career discernment theory to better understand how facilitating experiential learning in these areas during adolescence may be enhanced simply by taking advantage of the timing of brain development naturally occurring during this period and identified by this emerging field (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006).

2.1 Positive Youth Development

Several factors bear consideration in the development of programming for youth. First is the recognition that for many years the focus of such programs was on prevention. Not until research commissioned by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1996, was there

a review of youth development program efficacy (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2002). The resulting concepts identified in this research led to targeted age/grade-appropriate programming focusing on personal skills, agency, and an enabling environment. Teacher training in classroom management and instruction followed, as did training for parents in supportive academic and behavior skills.

While many models of youth development have impacted the design and implementation of programs over the years, most practitioners are in agreement with what are known as the Five C's: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Compassion or Caring. The roots of this approach, and that of others, have been influenced by the research work of psychologist Eric Ericson (1902-1994). His eight-stage model of human development and critical assets is summarized by the Mentoring Resource Center of the U.S. Department of Education (2007) as including:

- Trust, which is linked to positive emotional relationships with caring adults
- A strong sense of self-sufficiency
- Ability to exercise initiative
- Confidence in one's ability to master skills and navigate one's world
- A well-formed sense of personal identity
- A desire to be productive and contributing for future generations
- The ability to experience true intimacy
- A strong sense of personal integrity (p. 2)

In his seminal work, *Toward a Psychology of Positive Youth Development*, Professor Reed Larson shared his perspective on the need to focus on initiative, intrinsic motivation, and structured voluntary activities to engage youth. While the focus in developmental psychology has historically

been on correcting problem behaviors, his research explores the benefits of programming with a foundation built on engaging youth initiative. He argues that such activities result in a significantly more positive life trajectory into adulthood and thus should have an “equivalent status to schools” (Larson, 2000, p. 178).

In a later study, Larson and his colleagues developed an instrument to “assess the rates of learning experiences in youth activities related to initiative, identity exploration and reflection, emotional learning, developing teamwork skills, and forming ties with community members” (Hansen & Larson, 2003, p. 25). They called it the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) and found that different youth activities offer distinct patterns of learning experiences. Service, faith-based, community, and vocational activities were reported to be frequent contexts for experiences related to identity, pro-social norms, and links to adults. Sports were a frequent context for those related to identity work and emotional development” (Hansen & Larson, 2007).

2.2 Adolescent Brain Development

For many years, researchers have consistently reinforced the criticality of adolescence as a stage in the development of personal and interpersonal skills affecting growth of the individual for many years to follow (Ryan, A.M., Shim, S.S., Makara, 2013; Ryan, Patrick, & Helen, 2001; Halpern, 2006). During the review of literature, the most striking and unique complexities of adolescent development was presented in more recent behavioral research which has included neurological brain imaging (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Homer et al., 2019). This is significant because until the development of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), non-invasive human brain research was not possible. As research using this technology has developed, so has

behavioral research conducted in concert with *functional* MRI technology. Researchers can now visually observe changes in executive brain functioning while a person is engaged in a specific task being studied. While findings regarding growth of white matter, non-linear decreases in grey matter density, and other technical findings are beyond the scope of this research, what is pertinent to this dissertation research is the shift occurring in understanding issues around youth vulnerability, decision-making and risk-taking (McCrory, Gerin, & Viding, 2017). Because of this technology, data-driven analysis on changes in the brain, like the synaptic reorganization that occurs during puberty, have been documented. We now are beginning to understand why the "adolescent brain is more sensitive to experiential input/learning and social cognition during this time" (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2016, p. 307). As behavioral science research on brain functioning continues to expand, it is expected that shifts in what we learn, when and how we learn, will be made to take advantage of these "sensitive periods for enhancement with experiential input" during certain periods of brain development (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2016, p. 307). I ask you to pause for a moment on those words, "experiential input" (p. 307), as I had, and wonder what delivery methods might look like to benefit the individual during adolescence.

Because of these developments, an emerging field of Educational Neuroscience has evolved (Miller, 2005) particularly as related to curriculum design (Watagodakumbura, 2017) and creative learning or meaning making (Anderson, 2018). While beyond the scope of this dissertation, understanding such new findings creates an awareness of the complexity of development occurring in adolescence aside from the obvious biological and psycho-social changes, and challenges us to examine youth engagement with awareness to new advances in supporting fields of study.

2.3 Self-Determination Theory

A seminal piece by Drs. Ryan and Deci (2000) describes Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as an approach to human motivation and personality. They posit "a person's inherent psychological needs coupled with one's evolved inner resources form the basis for self-motivation and personality integration. These needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness when recognized, allow the facilitation of innate personal growth and greater sense of self" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). The individual's intrinsic motivation that directly impacts engagement is unlocked.

Viewed through this lens of intrinsic motivation where competence is defined as skill level developed through environmental interactions, it is possible to understand how increasing one's competence would meet an inherent positive psychological need. Moreover, competence and autonomy "are inextricably linked, such that feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless accompanied by a sense of autonomy, or, an internal perceived locus of causality" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). Structured experiences like those in schools offer beneficial effects of meeting one's inherent need to interact socially and belong (Raufelder, Regner, Drury, & Eid, 2016). Ryan and Deci are clear to point out that social context for these elements, a sense of belonging or relatedness, is a critical factor which may either facilitate or impede the successful integration of these needs (2000).

As programs in the Out-of-School Learning landscape for adolescents are designed, it appears that this research together with Dawes and Larson (2011), among others, would suggest that youth are likely to become intrinsically engaged if programs were designed to focus on their future, facilitate their learning the process of career discernment, while learning more about themselves and how they want to impact their lives and the world in which they live. Programs

focused on youth's personal connection to activities and goals suggests increased engagement with the potential for lasting impact.

In SDT, competence, autonomy, and relatedness are layered with situational and social context. This is similar to the approach taken by the PEAR Institute (Partnerships in Education and Resilience) as they measure effectiveness of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs through their Dimensions of Success (DoS) tool. The DoS tool allows Out-of-School Learning program administrators the opportunity to evaluate STEM programming for student engagement, social-emotional development, and academic/content-specific understanding (Mathur Shah, Wylie, Gitomer, & Noam, 2018). Similar to the concepts presented in SDT, the DoS factors assess the learning environment and context, the degree to which the cognitive work and meaning-making are being done by the participants (autonomy), the depth and quality of the learning content (competence), and the degree to which youth voice is demonstrated and encouraged (relatedness). The use of the DoS tool has been recognized throughout the United States and Internationally with successfully validated results and offers an approach to program assessment that is both developmental and incorporates psychological and education perspectives (Mathur Shah et al., 2018).

As part of my dissertation work, I trained on, and became certified in, the use of the DoS tool to evaluate youth programming. Although I did not directly use this tool to conduct dissertation research, the experiences I had evaluating programs in Pennsylvania and South Carolina were useful in developing a sense of how development and self-determination theory play out in the context of programming for youth.

2.4 Career Discernment Theory

In December 2018, the Executive Office of the President of the United States put forth a five-year strategy for America's STEM education. It outlines a nationwide collaboration to ensure our "global leadership position in STEM literacy, innovation, and employment" (National Science & Technology Council, 2018, p. v). Technology is an ever changing, fast changing sector of the global marketplace (Conley, 2018). "Today's students will compete in a technological, diverse, multi-cultural world and must be prepared to thrive in this futuristic environment. Therefore, it is vital that today's pedagogy produce lifelong learners, who can succeed in a global pulpit" (Bayram, 2019, p. 150).

These are just two of many perspectives influencing information on careers that are shaping choices for today's adolescent. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has hastened our attention to much needed increases in our healthcare workforce and related fields supporting medical care and research. We will continue to have our constructs of careers as we know them challenged by other global economic factors and new technologies and therefore must attend to the concept of career development (Arthur and McMahon, 2018). As our high school students work toward completing their Individual Graduation Plans (IGP), awareness of the myriad of career options available can be mystifying (Beaufort County SC School District, 2019-20). In South Carolina, the IGP is a tool used to facilitate the identification of career interests and track course requirements and completion throughout the high school years. The process to be used is outlined in The South Carolina Comprehensive School Counseling and Career Guidance Model (South Carolina Department of Education, 2018) and is required by EEDA legislation. For many students this may be the only time they spend discussing their options with school counseling staff.

By far the most impactful research in the field of vocational/career choice is that of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Brown, Lent, Telander, & Tramayne, 2011). This theory speaks to the interplay of cognitive ability, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations, as related to performance goals and attainment. On a broader level, these can be described as career interests formulated through experiences, academic and work performance, persistence, and self-understanding regarding those interests and performance results (Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D, & Hackett, 1994). Since initially published, research on SCCT has been replicated in many independent and meta-analyses throughout the world. Dr. Brown's most recent focus on the critical interventions for successful career and guidance counseling has led to research findings which inform the profession on five primary ingredients for successful interventions (assuming the existence of a meaningful learning environment in which they occur) (Brown & Roche, 2016; Lent, Ezeofor, Morrison, Penn, & Ireland, 2016). These interventions include the following:

1) Writing down specific goals or behavioral interventions desired to be achieved through the career process.
2) Paying attention to each goal as individually written and the elements of the goal.
3) Ensuring the model or framework being used is followed throughout the career process.
4) Using the career/occupational information that is out there, and process it thoroughly and regularly.
5) Attend to providing support to the student's choices which may include working to address barriers, but focusing more on providing and attending to the support needed.

This last item was mentioned as critically lacking in on-line-only counseling programs, since such programs for the most part lack facilitation and discussion of any depth. Dr. Brown's research has consistently indicated intervention success of SCCT is heavily context-centered in a

facilitated meaningful environment (Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D, and Hackett, 1994; Sheu et al., 2009). This might lend support to offering career discernment work in programming that would occur in the Out-of-School Learning environment.

3.0 A Landscape Study of Out-of-School Learning Programs for Adolescent Youth

3.1 Inquiry Description

The inquiry questions for this dissertation were:

1) What Out-of-School Learning programs for adolescent youth, aged 13-19, are located within the geographic boundaries of the Richland One school district attendance zone? Where are they located and who is providing them?
2) To what extent are programs designed to lead the adolescent to greater knowledge of self (self-determination), thus preparing them to discern a career prior to graduating high school (career discernment)? Are community leaders and parents aware of this focus?
3) What do community leaders and parents see as the needs, gaps, and challenges for the adolescent youth Out-of-School Learning ecosystem?

Perspectives of community leaders and parents were obtained through interviews and surveys respectively, to ascertain their knowledge of the Out-of-School Learning landscape and their perceptions. I initially had intended to construct a sample of professionals from formal education, however, due to the onset of the Corona virus COVID-19, requests initially made to the Richland One School District leadership to interview a sample of High school Principals and School Counselors were denied. The intent to capture direct perspectives of formal educational professionals on programming for students could not therefore be fulfilled. To supplement the data collection representative of the school perspective, I chose a two-pronged approach which included emailed surveys to parents with children in Middle and/or High School and an artifact analysis of

the school website counseling page, and other pages associated with school-sponsored activities, clubs, and other programs (in-school, after-school, and out-of-school to include summer camps). Together, these elements collectively informed this qualitative analysis.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

3.2.1 Program Mapping

Mapping the programs was done to create a visual artifact of the learning landscape. With this tool, several critical elements could be investigated to include program locations' relative distance to schools, public transportation, and residential communities to name a few. Google Maps was primarily chosen for its accuracy (street address and GIS identifiers) and regular updating by Google Inc.. In addition, several features of the Google Maps software offered significant information not otherwise provided. For example, its "Street" function allows for visual exploration of the area surrounding the pinned sites. Its functionality (linking to Facebook and other social media sites, or as embedded code on websites), and familiarity to the targeted audience provide ease of use. Pinned sites are identified by name and location, and links to websites are provided through the Google Maps software, as well as photos and in many cases phone numbers likely to be associated with the site, all making the map user-friendly.

To begin the mapping, the district boundaries were drawn based on attendance zones by street indicated on the district's website. This allowed for the measurement of the boundary area and visual inspection of items pinned to the map. With the boundary in place, middle and high schools were then located and pinned, followed by the city and county park locations, as well as

county library branches. These were followed by the private/parochial high schools and universities that provide camps and other programs specific to adolescent youth. YMCA locations serving the district were also pinned even though two of three exist outside of the district's boundary. They were included to provide visibility to the location's proximity with nearby district Middle and High schools. Finally, other community providers such as the local museums, zoo, and independent program providers were identified with their locations pinned provided they offered programming to youth aged 13-19.

A successful mapping of programs was completed based on communicated "intention" of future program offerings, however it is likely not fully inclusive of all possible programming for this demographic and is therefore considered a baseline benchmark for further inquiry.

3.2.2 Community Leaders in the Out-of-School Learning Environment

To obtain non-school, or Out-of-School Learning perspectives, I interviewed five community leaders. Three of the five leaders interviewed for this research were from organizations that serve a broad audience. They included MEBA, the Midlands Education and Business Alliance, the United Way of the Midlands, and Homeless No More. Each was chosen for their position as established and recognized organizations impacting the demographic area of study. The remaining two community leaders were direct program providers serving the population aged 13-19. This included the Richland County Library system and the Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands. An artifact analysis was also completed on material obtained from each of these sources and included both physical and digital marketing communication material related to programming.

These semi- structured interviews with community leaders were conducted in their location of business practice and lasted from approximately 45 to 60 minutes. An introductory email

together with the interview questions was sent before the scheduled meeting to allow for reflection and preparation (Appendix B). Three of five interviews were recorded and later transcribed. In one case the recording failed, and the other occurred over the phone where recording was not possible. In all cases, the interviewer took notes.

3.2.3 Parents of Children Attending Richland One Middle or High School

The survey of parents with children in the district was constructed in similar form to the semi-structured interview questions used with the community leaders, and contained a section for definitions of select terms (Appendix B). The survey was constructed in Word and attached to an email sent to each parent. The parent was to complete their response and return via email. Although a phone number for the researcher was provided for questions and clarity, it was also a choice for responding. Five parents were chosen based on:

1. Willingness to complete the approximately 45-minute survey,
2. Knowledge and competent use of the computer, Word documents, and email access,
3. Had children who currently attended a Middle- or High- school within the Richland One school district.

Keeping in mind that this method was in response to the district's decision to halt research during COVID-19, time was of the essence. Finding parents to meet the above criteria was challenging. I constructed a sample of convenience by starting with parents of my own children's friend group that might take part while still meeting the above requirements. Because I knew the sample would be small and not representative of all demographics in the district, I was particularly attentive to seeking a representation of race, sex, and economic diversity. This process resulted in:

One male and four females; two of five of African American descent; all from very different socio-economic backgrounds; and all but one with a college degree.

3.2.4 Program Artifacts

Program artifacts were obtained from community leaders representing the Richland County Library, Boys and Girls Club, and the County Parks and Recreation. These hardcopy materials were examined to locate programs designated for our demographic aged 13-19, and to document content while looking for connections facilitating adolescent self-determination and career discernment.

Digital artifacts from school and district websites were examined to identify content for after-school clubs and activities. School webpages associated with the school counseling function were explored for comprehensiveness and material used to provide information on the career discernment process. Elements facilitating self-determination in the programming were noted.

3.3 Limitations

Due to COVID-19, this qualitative research lacked the insight of the Richland One School District Principals and School Counselors. Using artifact analysis of programs within the schools, while beneficial to understanding and identifying programs, by no means supplants the richness of information that would have been gleaned through a personal interview. Additionally, their perspectives regarding student needs, gaps, and challenges could not be explored. These perspectives, while lacking in this research and considered a limitation, is an area of future inquiry

when restrictions to all research at public schools are lifted. Limitations with the artifacts include reliance on 2019 published material and planned programs as well as the accuracy and currency of information in digital format.

Again, because of social distancing and stay in place requirements, personal interviews with parents was not possible. While potentially phone interviews could have been conducted, when given the choice of written response to survey questions, all five parents preferred the written form. Limitations to this response format include: Follow-up questions that would normally allow for a deeper dive into comments was prohibitive. Clarity that would most certainly be sought in interviews was limited to a brief follow-up email with scattered response resulting.

Finally, this research did not include participation of the students themselves. While the method provided an initial review of the adolescent Out-of-School Learning landscape, I believe directly engaging these older youths would have likely provided much richer information.

4.0 Discussion of Findings as Related to Inquiry Questions

To address the first question in this study, I will examine the map which was created to inform the landscape. This will be followed by a discussion of community leader and parent findings, used to provide information and understanding of program perspectives, and the degree to which they believed that programs facilitated self-determination and career discernment. These data are supplemented with program artifact findings in both digital and hardcopy form. Together with a discussion of gaps and needs within this Out-of-School learning landscape, as shared by our community leaders and parents, the second and third inquiry questions are addressed.

4.1 Map

The map offers insight to potential programming within the school district boundary, but represents only those programs that were identified through marketing artifacts, parent surveys and community leader interviews. The programs are considered active and verified to the extent that they were conducted during the 2018-19 school year, 2019 summer, and have indicated that they will resume their program offerings once all ‘Stay at Home Orders’ have been lifted by the Governor of South Carolina amid the COVID-19 restrictions. The map is shown below, and in a close-up version in Appendix A.

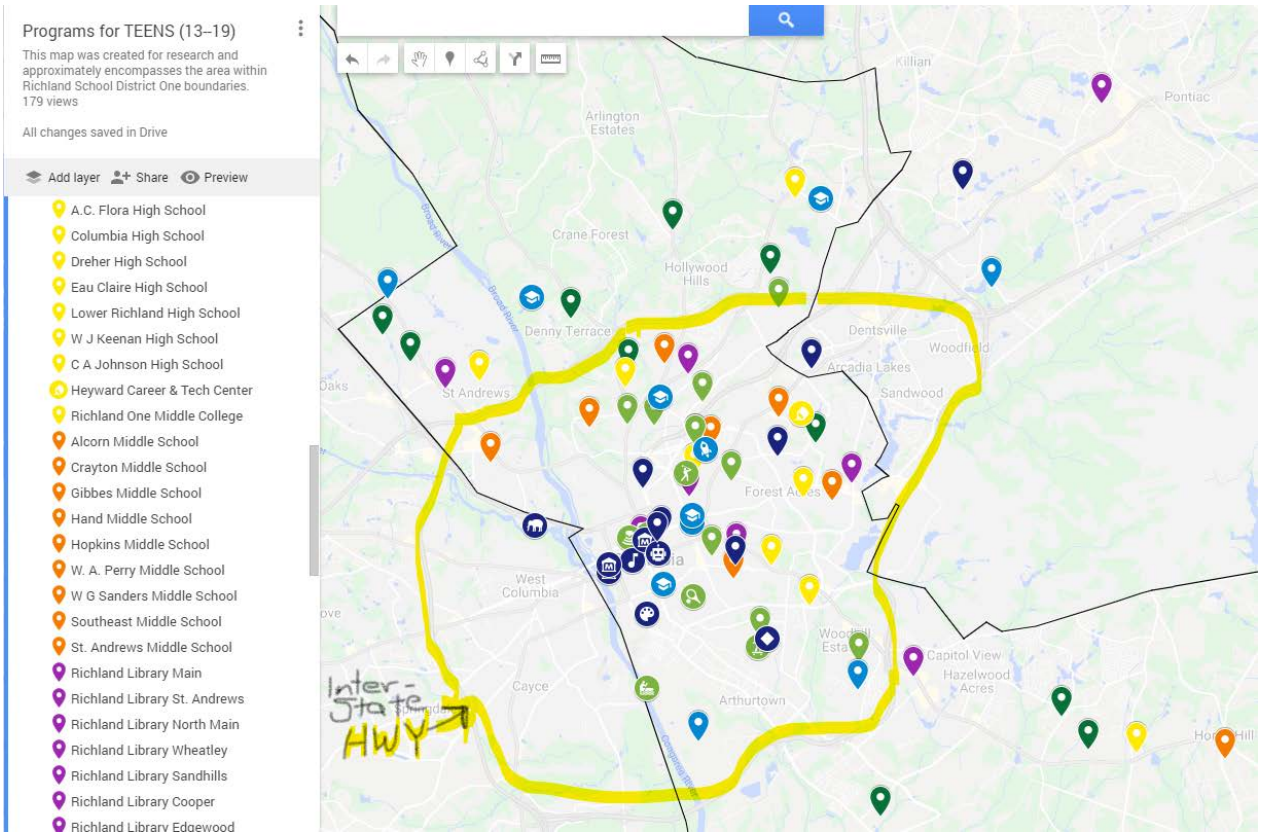


Figure 2: Distribution of Out-of-School Learning Resources Across the Richland One School District

When examining the map, it is best to first identify the location of the high schools (yellow) and middle schools (orange). Doing so will allow you to set a landmark in the map and begin an understanding of proximal distancing. Additionally, it provides recognition to the schools themselves that often offer rich and diverse programming. I have indicated the Interstate Highway boundary which becomes critical as we consider program location and transportation needs.

Next, County Parks and Recreation centers (dark green) and City Parks (light green) were an enormous part of the area's programming with physical marketing communication material reaching deep into the community at various public access points, and a well-developed internet presence. This was followed by the Richland County Library branches (purple).

Finally, private and parochial schools, colleges and universities offering programs (light blue) together with various other community programs (dark navy blue).to include the Columbia City Zoo, Columbia Museum of Art, the State Museum, EdVenture Children's Museum, Boys and Girls Club (teen program), YMCA, and church programs.

While visually presented here, the linked version of the google map affords greater understanding, more information, and an opportunity to personally experience the interactive map. https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=18jorRANmRPbkkJWKdqrlBwn3UEOjliFY&ll=34.017893689063214%2C-81.05438919570315&z=11

At this time, it is worth noting the location of Lower Richland High in the lower-right, southeast corner of the map, and Keenan High in the upper-right, or northeast corner of the map. Both schools are located in areas challenged by transportation issues and proximity to any programming offered outside of the school. As a result, the students are left with the clubs and activities offered by the school in the after-school hours. Any summer programs that could possibly be offered at these schools, or those that may have been offered in the past, were not included in this mapping. However, given their locations, consideration should be given to using these facilities for future programming of Out-of-School Learning opportunities. Equally unknown at this time is whether Keenan High has any established relationship with the Midlands Technical College that is proximal (light blue pin). Such relationships could potentially help foster a rich Out-of-School Learning landscape that facilitates self-determination and career discernment.

Columbia High, located in the upper-left, northwest corner of the map is somewhat isolated from the other high schools in the district by its location outside the highway boundary, and on the opposite of the river which typically acts to divide county lines. This area however, is an exception, and thus considered part of Richland, not Lexington, county. It is an area challenged by blight and

is home to the state's correctional institution for Juvenile Justice. However, a new community park with a recreation center and several amenities has been upgraded and supported with county parks programming. It is limited in its offerings, as are the programs offered by the re-designed and re-modeled public library nearby.

Together, these three high schools, Lower Richland, Keenan, and Columbia are the most challenged in the district given their locations.

4.2 Artifacts

4.2.1 School Artifacts

School activities and clubs in the Richland One district are often rich and diverse. From Robotics and Ultimate Frisbee, to Mock Trial events with local government representatives, each High school has several choices available to their students. Should one not exist, student interest in starting a club is frequently supported and facilitated with teacher guidance, as exampled by the most recent addition of an E-Sports league at one High school. Recognition of student voice in this way visibly supports student self-determination. Whether through the diversity of school program offerings, the choices students themselves decide to engage in, or the school environment, there are potential opportunities which facilitate self-determination and career discernment.

A number of academic programs with challenging coursework for those eyeing careers requiring higher education are offered. Advanced Placement (AP) classes in Chemistry and Microbiology, English, Math, and World Geography and Economics provide the student many varied experiences. Additionally, some of the schools are distinguished as International

Baccalaureate (IB) schools offering capstone curriculum resulting in an IB degree. Students desiring to pursue this course can petition the district to attend a school for specific programs such as this, giving access to all students in the district. Again, as in the area of student activities and clubs, curriculum available to students, and their freedom to choose coursework are factors that support self-determination and career discernment.

Through JROTC in various military branches, students can explore protocols of this career choice or elect to participate solely for structured leadership experiences. Youth Leadership Institute, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, and Beta Club offer personal growth and leadership experiences through mentors and service learning. What becomes challenging for students however, is that not all programs are offered at all schools. Without access to a range of programs at their school or in nearby community settings, not all students will have similar experiential opportunity for personal growth and self-determination.

The school district's Career Center where welding, drafting, automotive repair, and other complementary hands-on programs are offered are similarly challenged with access issues. The location of this center, coupled with the coursework schedules throughout the day, place students in the position of having to choose an academic or career track as early as freshman year in high school in order to participate. This was reported as a concern in the 2013 technical report on the longitudinal study of the Personal Pathways to Success initiative, which was authorized by the state's EEDA in 2005, as well as in the responses of parents in this dissertation study (Hammond, et. al, 2013, p. 92, p. 116). A blended learning approach is challenged by transportation and scheduling issues. Additionally, apprenticeship opportunities available to the career center students are not equally offered to those on the academic track. Areas of opportunity such as this are critical at this time in the process of adolescent self-determination and career discernment as

many students are ill-prepared to make this choice that early. A wrong choice here can frequently lead to future unnecessary costly financial mistakes. Facilitating this process can be a significant challenge to school counseling staff.

This particular point was an area clearly identified as an issue in both the parent survey findings and the community leader interviews which we will examine more fully below. Parents whose children want these hands-on experiences expressed frustration with their inability to participate. Community leaders, who know the value of the career center programs and apprenticeships, see the lack of diverse student attendance in these programs as an expression of parental lack of support. This is clearly a disconnect in perspectives and an opportunity for clarification and connection. A re-examination of coursework scheduling and coordinating, particularly in light of the research on adolescent developmental needs and the benefits of experiential learning, may be warranted.

The below table shows the diversity in offerings by each of the District's High schools as listed on their school activities webpage. Examples of school-based positive youth development programs include Sports, Arts, Music and Band, Journalism and many others offered at all schools in the district. Research on the significance of these programs indicate these are solid opportunities to practice and test skills as well as develop self-knowledge (Curran and Wexler, 2017). What is critical to note at this juncture is that for many students entering Middle school who have been engaged in these sports and arts programs in Elementary school solely based on their interest, they now find themselves in a position of being rejected from the school team as this is often their first experience in having to try-out. How they experience this process of trying-out for the school team is an area of opportunity for personal growth often left to the adult caregiver without knowledge of alternative community programs that would allow the adolescent youth to remain engaged in

an activity of interest and enjoyment. By having community programs and their representatives present to recruit these students, it would allow the student additional time to self-determine their interest and abilities. Perhaps linking school and community programs that welcome students at all levels and abilities would allow greater opportunity for the adolescent to become more fully self-determined and engaged in a healthy activity longer.

Table 1: Summary of Richland One High School Programs

High School	Student Count	Programs
Columbia	729	AVID, JROTC, Sports, Band, Journalism Club on website, etc.
Dreher	1154	AP, PLTW Engineering, JROTC, Sports, Band, Long list of Clubs on school website
EauClaire	634	AVID, JROTC, Sports, Beta Club, etc.
A.C. Flora	1413	IB, AP, JROTC, Band, Long list of Clubs on school website, Many Career Planning Resources on website
C.A. Johnson	432	AVID, JROTC, Sports, Band, Jobs for America's Graduates, Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen, Youth Leadership Institute, HEEP Internships for Seniors, Clubs on website
Keenan	691	JROTC, Sports, Band, PLTW Engineering/ Project REAL, Robotics, Leadership Career Magnet Programs and Long list of Clubs on website
Lower Richland	1219	IB, AP, PLTW Engineering, JROTC, Sports, Band, Long list of Clubs on school website

This list of school clubs and activities are traditionally considered after-school programs as they are sponsored by the school and/or district. They comprise just one part of the evolving Out-of-School Learning landscape. While discussed in more detail in the parent survey findings, it is worth noting here that these are the programs the parents identified as Out-of-School Learning programs. There appears to be an opportunity for discussion on clarifying the types of programs available within a learning landscape, which is clearly changing (Russell, Kehoe & Crowley, 2017).

Turning now to the High School webpages addressing student counseling as a visible artifact supporting student success with career discernment, we must first recognize that developing a keen ability in this process is a skill that will be utilized throughout one's adult life (Brown, et al., 2011). The process of self-determination is a life-long process that continues to evolve as the individual grows and experiences life (Banks et al., 2007). In South Carolina, as was mentioned in the introduction, the state legislature recognized this with the passing of the Education and Economic Development Act in 2005. Demonstrated support for this legislation was also given with commitments to evaluate progress through the Department of Education, defining job functions of school counselors, and through monetized funding. While it has been an enormous undertaking with progress being made, it has occurred relatively slowly. This is evidenced by the school counseling webpages seen by students and others viewing them. Upon visiting each within the district, there are clear differences. The below figures are snapshots of a sample of these sites which show a spectrum of information provided.

From the very basic information on the far left at Lower Richland High, to Keenan with more information and last, Columbia High with about the same information, however perhaps more visually appealing.

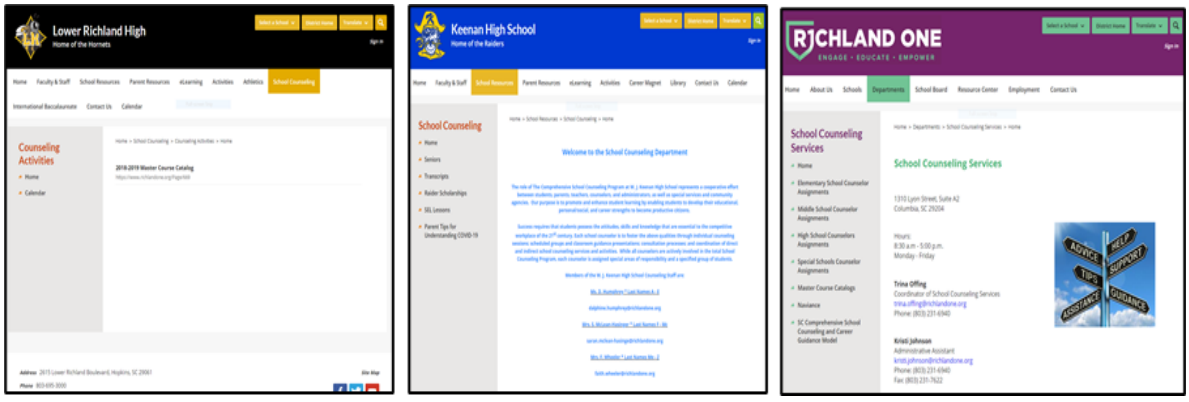


Figure 3: School Counseling Webpages for three Richland One High Schools

The information contained on each of the three pages include basic contact information for school counselors. Information on topics of college and career readiness, problem-solving skills, and other resources to aid students in their journey is sporadic and inconsistent even though *all* students have access to the same resources at each school within the district as well as resources provided at the state level and accessed through the South Carolina Department of Education website https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/.

When these three separate High school sites are compared to the student counseling webpages of one high school, AC Flora, it would appear that this school has a much more comprehensive student counseling program.

In the below examples, the AC Flora High school leads its students through a process of scaffolded topics similar to the career discernment process one would experience in a facilitated process of discovery. This distinction is important because it provides a starting point for students not knowing where, or how, to begin. While a more critical review of the site's pages reveals many areas of potential improvement, what is more important to this research are the differences in information provided to the students which exist among the high schools within the same district.

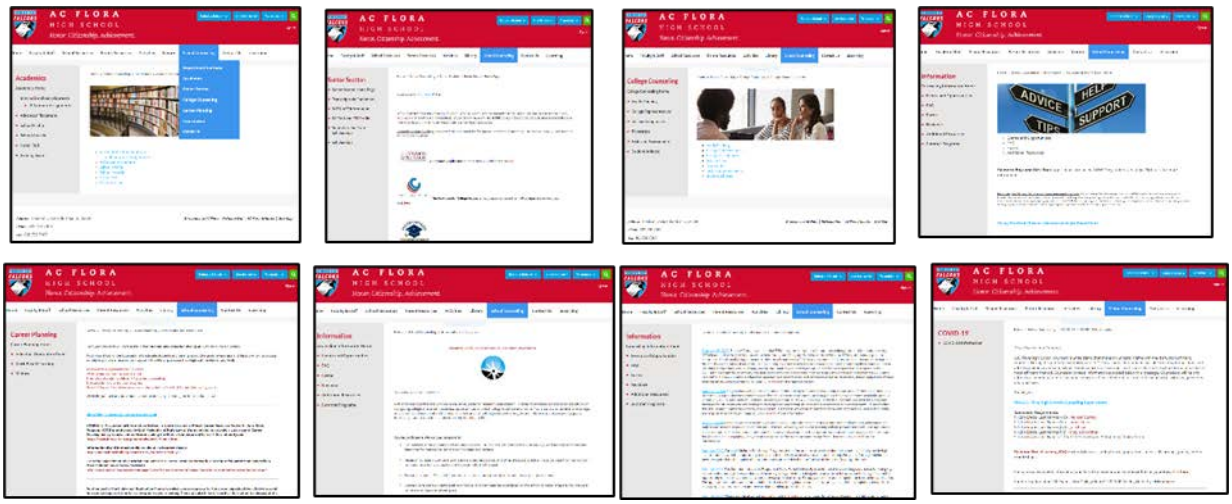


Figure 4: AC Flora High School Counseling Webpages

The career discernment process can be seen as complicated (Lent, et al., 1994). Furthering that complication with inconsistent and exceptive information is unnecessary and likely confounds the already confused student. This is further exemplified in the snapshot on the second row, third from left, which illustrates the school's information regarding summer program offerings for their students. It is possible that one could infer that these programs, since on the AC Flora site, and not on the other High schools in the district, are strictly for the AC Flora students. However, upon further inspection of each program, it is clear that they are open to all students throughout the state.

Similarly, with the snapshot on the second row, second from left, which references "Naviance". Naviance is a college and career "guidance" software program that offers rich and comprehensive information to facilitate college and career discovery and discernment. It offers many interactive features designed to be engaging with links to videos on various careers, self-assessments, and templates for goal-setting, resume and cover letter writing. The primary website portal is shown in the below figure

Figure 5: Naviance Website Portal

While AC Flora High clearly identifies this software, provides the portal link, and directs students on username and password access, none of the three High school counseling sites in the first set of webpage artifacts mention this software. At this point it is imperative to know that the

district makes it accessible to *all* teachers, students, and parents. The value of this singular tool is not fully communicated to students, parents, and others looking at school webpages.

These examples demonstrate the variety and lack of consistent communication of resources available to students within the Richland One district. Upon examination of the SC State Department of Education website, there are even more programs available to all students within the state not mentioned or linked to any of the individual High school websites. Regardless of one's position on the identification of the Internet and Websites as true artifacts, it is clear that when it comes to searching for information, especially summer programs and the like, it is the first place to which many people turn. With education required to be on-line at this time, we are now, more than ever, engaged in the Digital age. These findings demonstrate what students are seeing and how their experiences might vary.

4.2.2 Community Program Artifacts

4.2.2.1 Parks and Recreation

Of all providers with adolescent programming for ages 13-19, within the geographic boundaries of Richland One school district, the City and County Parks and Recreation (light green and dark green map pins, respectively) were identified as places where programming, sports, and social interactions occur most frequently. Community Centers located within many of these parks are easily accessible to students and its community residents. There are specific centers with programming focused on the arts, computer literacy, tennis, golf which are noted on the map. Programs at these locations, while often sporadic, target the needs and interests of the community being served and are offered by contractors who have been vetted by City and County staff.

Photos of program offerings published in “GamePlan” are illustrated below and represent a sample of those available to teens. While programs specifically focused on career discernment are not among the offerings on these pages, many of them do foster self-determination.

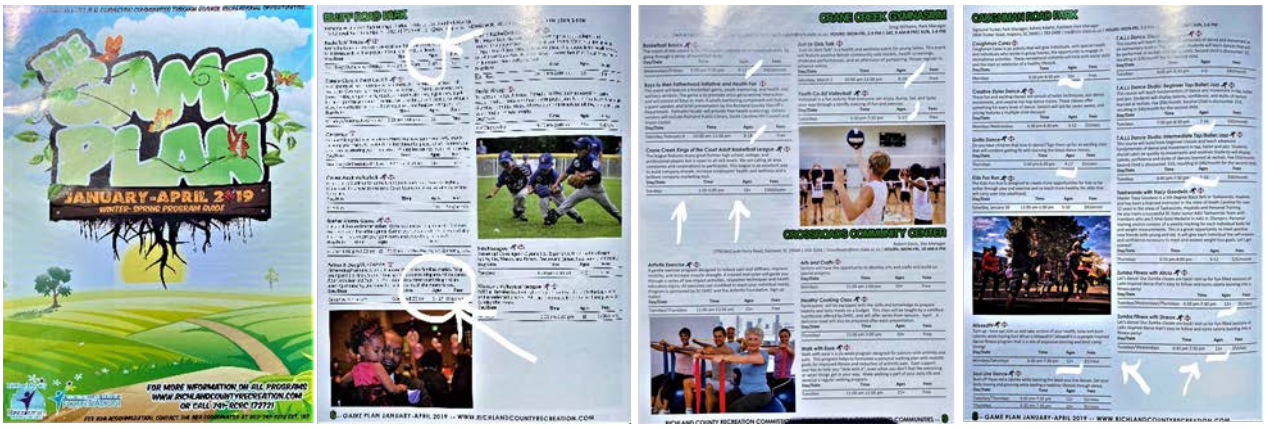


Figure 6: Richland County Parks & Recreation GamePlan

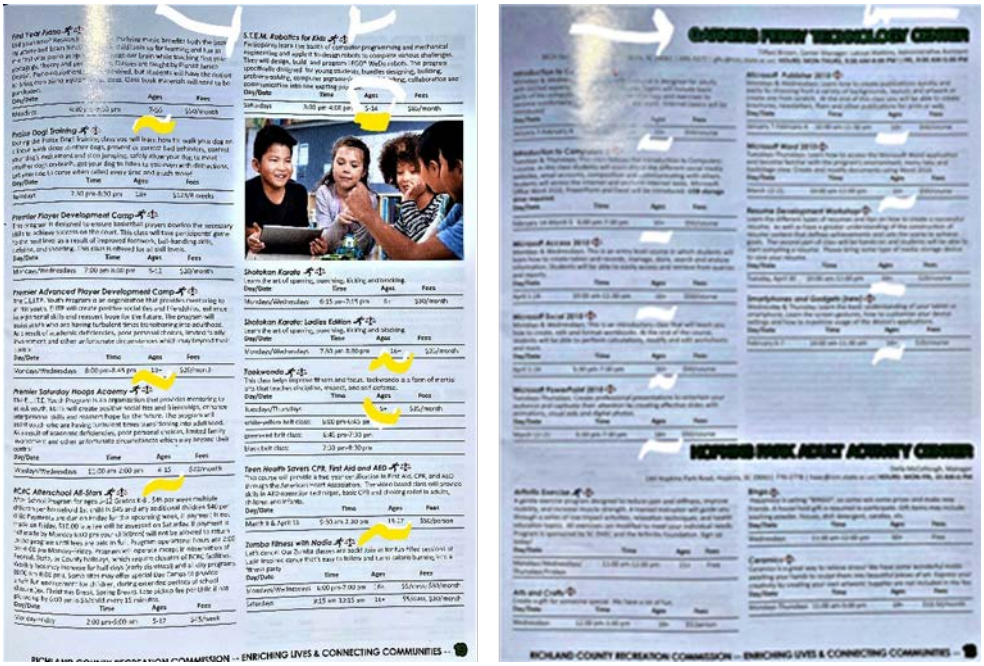


Figure 7: GamePlan, continued

Because of their community-centric locations, space available, and amenities, the City and County Parks and Recreation are prime organizations with great potential for Out-of-School Learning program development. With the support of local government and supporting organizations, they have the potential to flourish and provide rich opportunities for building citizenship among adolescent youth by engaging them in community volunteerism (Augustine and Thompson, 2020). Supplementing these efforts with programs that offer mentors, direction in the career discernment process and awareness of life-changing opportunities, the City and County Parks and Recreation organizations can become an integral part of the area's Out-of-School Learning landscape. Additionally, because of their strong sports programs, if integrated more closely with the schools and timed with school-tryouts, those not making one team could easily be picked-up by another team at that time. This would allow Middle school youth additional opportunity by extending their time playing sports and engaging longer in healthy activity which they enjoy.

4.2.2.2 Richland County Library

While many library branches (purple map pins) are located along public bus route lines, many are also within walking distance of the various Middle and High schools. As a result of major renovations in 2019, each library location has a designated 'Teen Space'. While the size of the space may vary by branch, it is staffed with a teen librarian and does not allow elementary school-aged youth into the designated area. Areas such as this are supported in the research on Teen services for Libraries (Booth, H. and Jensen, 2014). Richland County Library has also created a partnership with the Richland One Middle and High Schools called 'ConnectED'. With this relationship they have linked 13,902 students to a library account which allows them full access to all resources at each of the branches, to include all online services, all by using their School ID.

With this link, teachers and students, through their school-provided laptops, can access all the Richland County Public Library system has to offer. Examples of the ConnectED program, summer learning challenge and other teen program artifacts are presented below.

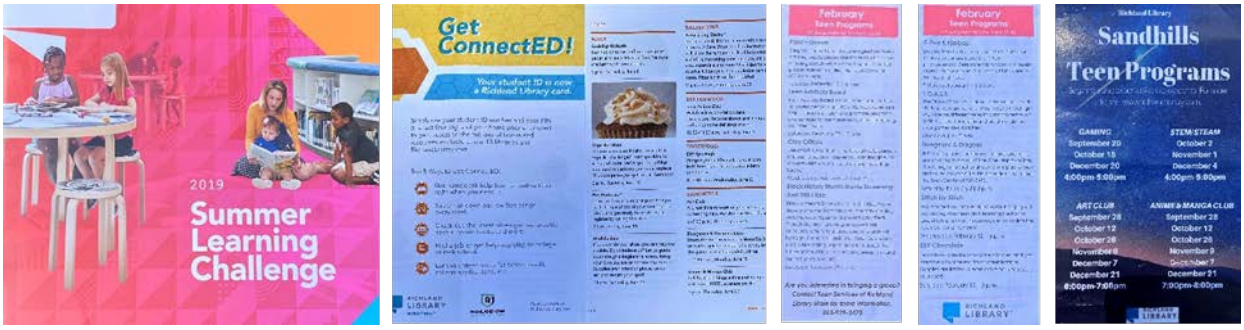


Figure 8: Richland County Public Library Artifacts

The Richland County Library system of thirteen branches provides the most regular programming and available space specific to teens. “We offer weekly clubs at some of our locations that engage the teenager. They include Animae, crafting, a Teen Advisory Board, and gaming is very popular”, noted our community leader in the interview. “All of our programming is free and with the newly redesigned work spaces and rooms available, the students are also able to gather for various interests of their own design.” This is a significant statement supporting self-determination which was followed by an equally critical comment, “Making awareness! That’s our biggest hurdle.” Creating awareness among this demographic regarding opportunities available to them is a challenge also voiced by the parents in the survey findings.

4.2.2.3 All Other Community Programs

Many of the private and parochial schools (light blue pins) within the Richland One geographic boundaries offer content rich programming for ages 13-19 however, typically at what might be considered too high of a cost for the average Richland One student where poverty is at

73 percent. While some scholarship money is available, it is limited. They are also challenged by their location as they are not typically reached by public transportation.

The Challenger Learning Center (light blue map pin) is similarly suffering transportation issues during the summer months. While a partner of the Richland One school district, and hosting one of the richest aviation and space content programs in the entire state, the district does not offer transportation during the summer to these wonderful summer camps that include programming through grade 12 that is structured to facilitate both self-determination and career discernment.

The interactive google map was prepared to show the location and ages of programs that also include the following (dark navy-blue map pins): Columbia City Zoo, Columbia Museum of Art, the State Museum, EdVenture Children's Museum. Many of these locations offer summer employment opportunities for high school youth which support both self-determination and career discernment. Interestingly, the Richland County Sheriff's department also offers sports and leadership summer camps within the district run by their staff. Intended to create a positive community presence and an opportunity to develop positive police relationships in the neighborhoods served, it is possible self-determination and career discernment are facilitated through these programs as well based on the artifact material examined. Observation of the program would be required to assess this more fully.

The location of the one Boys and Girls club offering teen programming is conveniently and centrally located near the football field used by two of the High schools and four of the Middle schools. The location is prime given its proximity to the City's Skateboard Park (light green map pin) and other amenities within walking distance. However, as noted in our community leader interview findings, participation has suffered with the loss of specific programming designed for our demographic. For the few in attendance, it has become a place to 'hang-out'.

4.3 Community Leader Interview Findings

MEBA is an outgrowth of the South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (2005) and works to provide resources and partnerships to both business and educators to "lessen the disconnect between what our schools are preparing our students for and what business and industry needs." While they offer Leadership Symposiums to students periodically, and provide developmental opportunities for educators, one of their most successful programs targeted parents in the workplace. Your Child is Number One, allowed MEBA staff to present employment facts and educational trends, such as their data on "Hot Jobs of the Future", to parents and caregivers during their break periods at work. "Unfortunately, the mindset of our parents is that their children have to go to college". "They don't know what opportunities are out there because they've been told for so long that everyone has to have a four-year degree." For the students wanting to attend the Heyward Career Center in the Richland One school district, transportation and scheduling issues were identified as barriers for the students to take part in various skilled-trades coursework both by the parents in the survey as well as here in this interview. Conflicting perspectives regarding these issues exist however, and would be best addressed with further inquiry. MEBA has long worked to facilitate career discernment and provide awareness to the job opportunities that exist through apprenticeships and technical training. However, "now more than ever, success with any of the tech-prep programs resides with the parents who are a perceived roadblock within the district". "I know there are a lot of programs out there that are helping our students, but can we do a better job? Absolutely. And, we can start by marketing our programs right and re-vamping them to be attractive to our students".

While four of five community leaders interviewed mentioned the programs of the Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands, it is interesting to note that there is only one operating program

for adolescents aged 13-19 within the school district boundaries. Once the interviewees were informed of this, many of the references to these programs were followed by “I guess I’m not really that familiar with that many teen-oriented programs”. Most of these leaders indicated they felt the majority of teens in the community were directed to “play sports as a means to keep the kids off the streets”. One program provider who found success with teen programming noted that “once our volunteer partner pulled out and stopped coming, our teens stopped attending. I think we’re down to three who come on a regular basis just to hangout.”

As previously mentioned, Richland County Library offers regular and diverse programming for adolescent youth. Our interview contact noted, “We typically have programs offered in many different areas they can explore. Our most successful program was one in entrepreneurship designed with different tracks like handicrafts/fiber works, food service, music, drawing and book making.” Last offered in the Summer of 2018, and funded by a grant, it brought in field experts to facilitate each of the program tracks. “It allowed skills-based experiential learning for ten youth in each of four tracks. It was smaller numbers, but it had HUGE impact!” Finally, it was noted that the Library offers approximately 20 paid internships to high school and college students each year. Various volunteer opportunities also exist to provide employment experience in addition to the career services and programs offered by library staff.

Another community leader with over 16 years of working with at-risk youth stated that any development programs with costs associated with them were unlikely to be attended. “Those high-schoolers are going to be babysitters in their family, or they’re providing a paycheck and don’t have a lot of free time, nor is it a priority in their household, especially in a district that is 73 percent poverty.”. “Even if a teenager comes to their parent and says I really, really want to do this, and the parent is in crisis, they’ve got to convince the parent to let them go.” She felt strongly

that it goes back to the parents. “You’ve got to get to the parent. Whether by educating them about programs and why they’re important, or even better if they offer a stipend.” “Without a stipend involved, we’re coming from a place of privilege if we think a program is going to work.”

Below is a summary table of programs mentioned specifically in the community leader interviews. Outside of these larger, traditional better-known programs, the community leaders did not express any awareness. How each program meets the needs of our demographic was discussed only in the broader context of positive youth development and “keeping kids off the streets” or “with mentors offering a positive influence”, as stated in two of the interviews. Elements of self-determination, career discernment and other adolescent developmental specific needs, were either weak or without mention in all interviews. At this time, it is unclear why this would be the case as a deeper dive was not possible given the duration of interview time.

Table 2: Summary of Community Leader Interviews

Community Leader	Program Mentioned	Gap/Need
1	EdVenture Children’s Museum	Life 101: How to do laundry, sew on a button, change a tire and the car’s oil, Parent Engagement.
2	Boys & Girls Club Midlands, Cities in Schools, Riverbanks Zoo, Youth Corp., Girl & Boy Scouts	Transportation; Coordination of Programs
3	Boys & Girls Club Midlands, Sports, Freedom Prgm at WA Perry, Summer Soar Middle Schools, Urban League jobs with City of Columbia Parks	Transportation, Career Programs, Parent Engagement, Programs with a Stipend
4	Boys & Girls Club Midlands	Program focused on Teens specifically
5	Boys & Girls Club Midlands, YMCA, Library Programs at Branches	Transportation

The community leaders placed a greater emphasis on transportation issues related to program attendance, lack of coordination between programs, and the need for increased marketing to create awareness of programming. On these needs, all community leaders agreed.

The interviews of community leaders, while limited, offer a baseline of information on the ecology of adolescent programming, school-to-work initiatives, and career readiness. MEBA, a longstanding organization with established alliances between educators and businesses provided a perspective on key stakeholders needs. Meeting these stakeholder needs is being challenged however by limited financial resources in a very similar way as with the school counselors. The demand and volume for needed support and information is far greater than that at which it is funded. The literature supports funding as a critical limitation in programming, so much so that it was specifically not considered in this research (Moellman, 2004; Schneider, Broda, Judy, & Burkander, 2013; Wright, Holstead, & Hightower-King, 2010). Regardless of program funding levels, our children are becoming adults. What kind of adults they become; the literature suggests will probably be a product of their environment.

4.4 Parent Survey Findings

Increased communication of program availability both in and out of school was the primary topic achieving consensus among parents and community leaders alike. Five parents with children currently attending the Middle and High Schools of Richland One school district, of various ethnicity, sex, and socioeconomic status replied to the parent survey. All parents voiced concern over their lack of awareness of program availability and the lack of awareness they perceived their adolescent to have as well. The most interesting finding in the parent surveys was the

predominance of their identification of activities sponsored by the schools in the district as Out-of-School Learning programs exclusively. Only one parent made mention of programs not sponsored by the schools. This finding supports the lack of awareness and much needed communication of programs that do exist for this demographic within the Out-of-School Learning landscape, as after-school activities are just one element of the landscape's potential. It also suggests the potential need for creating awareness on the potentiality of learning pathways generally which would allow an opportunity to build upon the state EEDA legislated program, Personal Pathways to Success.

Across the board all parents mentioned sports as a primary activity either available to, or participated in, by their teen. They supported their child's engagement in sports because they felt it gave them experiences in teamwork that is required by today's workplace environment (career discernment). None of the parents felt their child to be particularly athletic, but all agreed sports were a positive influence on wellness, academics, time management, and relationship skills, all of which can be considered supportive of self-determination.

Two of the five parents specifically identified church outreach programs that involved community volunteer activities and offered adolescent youth an opportunity for leadership in mentoring younger children participating in the program. These programs did have an element of community service to them which was of particular interest to several parents who agreed there needed to be more such opportunities, and on a more regular basis. As described by the parents of participating children, these programs were structured to provide support of autonomous decision making and the learning experience itself was facilitated by a caring adult which increased their competence over the course of involvement in the program. Without using the word, self-determination, that is what they described.

Much like one of our community leaders mentioned in an interview, two of five parents mentioned in the survey that their children either had a paying job babysitting or were needed to watch younger siblings at home. The distinction between a paid babysitting job and babysitting one's siblings should be made as the adolescent's autonomy in engaging in the "babysitting" is likely to be different in each of the situations. In either case however, the experience is beneficial to the development of youth and will aid the self-determination process.

A comment from one parent spoke directly to "students interested in learning a skilled trade in order to improve their employment options before graduating high school". "Because of scheduling academic classes required for college admissions, they're excluded from the tech classes even as an option." This same parent said they "should be offered outside of school hours which would allow for additional student participation. It has the added benefit of offering a safe, supervised afternoon activity for students." This parent supported her student and expressed strongly that "the classes need to be marketed to all academic, racial, and socioeconomic student populations to avoid the perception that the programs are for a certain group of kids or only for kids in nearby neighborhoods." In this case, the parent was not the road block as was indicated in the community leader interviews. Both parties did agree however, that experiential learning of this nature is beneficial to facilitating self-determination and career discernment during adolescence. Given these observed differing perspectives, there appears to be a gap worth addressing.

It should be noted that this final theme also appears to be complicated by perceptions as identified in this research. Perceptions of parents, educators, students, and various community leaders regarding skilled trades training is a valid concern. While our community leaders saw the parents as not wanting their child to take part in "tech training curriculum" due to societal stigmas associated with not attending college; the parent perception was the presentation of the program

as one “for kids in certain neighborhoods who aren’t going on to college”. It should be pointed out here that scheduling and transportation issues associated with participating in such programs do in fact prohibit these programs from “not being open to all student populations”. In this school district researched, there appears to be location and program specific issues possibly within the control of the district that might address this. However, because the “perception factor” exists to a heightened degree, an assessment specific to addressing this would be necessary for greater understanding.

Overall, the parent survey participants agreed that program fees and transportation are an issue, regardless of where they are offered, or what the program focus might be. And, mostly, where siblings existed in the household, the expectation was that watching the siblings would supersede program participation by their older teen. These positions were equally supported by all of the community leaders interviewed.

When asked about career discernment, work-life skills and what they would like to see for their students, one parent summarized it best, “programs that promote broadening the student’s perspectives on the world around us stopped in elementary school…there’s no interaction to educate them on those important things, places or facilities within the real world and their communities to show them where they could contribute. There needs to be more diverse programs, and more opportunities for community service.” Overall, there was consensus on opportunities existing that allow for learning responsibility and teamwork, considered by one parent as the “intangible components preparing them for adulthood”. Parents identified “employability skills”, cooking, and generally “just more diverse programs that are organized well” needing to be available to these students. As one community leader agreed, “we need them to go through a Life 101 class that prepares them to live financially on their own.”

Every parent in some way spoke to need in more and better communication, guidance, and assistance with reaching their students and helping them become successful productive adults. Comments like, “there’s only one guidance meeting a year, and it’s all about testing.” “We need more mentoring and intensive planning to help us parents, help our kids”, voiced another parent. A third parent said, “there’s no liaison between the student and programs out there (in the school), a lot of times they never get connected.” Parents felt accessibility was limited by student awareness and lack of visual or physical presence of programming. As stated by one parent, “it’s left up to the kids to somehow find out about these things.” Parents indicated their support was important, but acknowledged they knew even less about what all was available to be able to help their student.

Work based learning, internships, job shadowing, and other career-discernment activities were items specifically addressed in the parent survey and either left unanswered, noted by the parent that they were not aware of any, or that they “heard something about a job-shadowing day, but nothing more”. From these parent findings it is clear there is interest in supporting their student, however, perhaps due to a lack of understanding of the learning landscape and specifically, the Personal Pathways to Success program, they are not quite sure what they can do.

5.0 Summary Discussion

This research was an initial examination of the Out-of-School Learning landscape for the adolescent population aged 13-19 within the capitol city of South Carolina. While not exhaustive, it provides a starting point to reflect on how the learning and developmental needs of adolescents are being met and the areas of opportunity for their growth.

What has clearly emerged from this research is the need to define what comprises the learning landscape for this demographic. Distinguishing between the elements of the Out-of-School Learning environment in terms of the different benefits provided by school-based activities and clubs during the after-school hours, work-based learning programs available with area employers, and programs offered through city and county parks and recreation, to name a few, is not something parents, nor even some community leaders, are prepared to do at this time. There is a knowledge gap that requires a process of informing. Knowledge and deep awareness of the developmental needs of the adolescent demographic, coupled with an understanding of the possibilities that exists in the Out-of-School landscape needs to be advanced within this community. Adults are important brokers for youth seeking programming even at this age when the choice of attending is often theirs to make. Adult awareness of this landscape that supports the developmental needs of adolescents, is a necessary step towards a strong ecosystem of Out-of-School Learning.

Second, it appears the conceptual framework of Learner Pathways is not fully developed, communicated or taught, and thereby understood by the students for them to effectively create and plan their High school experience. How curriculum, school clubs and activities, and other work-based learning and out of school informal experiences provide a pathway for career discernment

and self-determination has not been made clear to students or parents. It seems that the learning landscape, particularly beginning in middle school, is changing without full parental understanding of how. “My sons tell me that field trips pretty much ended in elementary school”, said one parent. This theme of parental knowledge warrants further consideration regarding how, and in what ways parental knowledge is limited, why it is limited, and how the communication gap can be closed to facilitate a better and more informed community.

A similar observation was made during examination of the community leader data. While questions were not directed specifically to their understanding of the Learner Pathway conceptual framework, or more specifically the EEDA’s Personal Pathways to Success program, it is equally unclear at this time what the level of understanding is among key community stakeholders. Whether or not expectations have been set and/or understood regarding the role community leaders and programming could play in facilitating awareness of the legislation’s framework and its effective functioning within the learning ecosystem as a whole. This was not considered as part of this research and appears to be an open question for further inquiry.

Looking to the literature on Social Cognitive Career Theory and Self-Determination, and specifically the impact of environmental context of individual life experiences, we may begin to understand the time demands placed on student counselors tasked with career guidance. Working to address these unique individual considerations, even with the assistance provided by the Individual Graduation Plan tool, these professionals are not positioned to guide the individual student to hands-on experiential learning opportunities outside of the school. Learning for their future and finding programming facilitated by supportive adults attending to the needs of the individual engaged in self-discovery is challenging, particularly when you do not know what you are looking for.

Finally, the artifact analysis has made apparent the need for coordinated planning and design of the district's High school career guidance webpages. As currently constructed and maintained, the counseling programs and services do not appear to be as equitably and effectively implemented in all schools in the district. While some differences may exist among the schools, the EEDA legislation has made clear the direction and goals it is designed to achieve in the Personal Pathways to success program. The tools to be used by counselors, students, and others are district-wide, and the communication should therefore be managed in a singular place to ensure consistent and current communication to all students. Vast differences as identified in the artifact analysis should not exist. This is particularly relevant in times where on-line learning and access to information is a primary source as was the case during this Covid-19 pandemic. Another concern in this area relates to the absence of any identification of regular student training in the area of career discernment, or identification of steps to use in the process and how the tools fit into each of the steps. Perhaps a calendar could be constructed with times for student's to be trained on the use of the Naviance tool, or how the IGP can be used as a map for a career pathway, or how clubs, activities, work or volunteer experiences all aid in the discernment process. The webpages appeared to be absent of such information, and were not particularly appealing or engaging. This is unfortunate as the career discernment process is one that should be filled with excitement, curiosity, and the desire to explore one's dreams, particularly at the age of adolescence.

It is clear from this inquiry that many detailed questions can and should be asked to understand and meet the much-needed information requirements of all stakeholders within in the middle and high school years. Working to close the communication gap identified here would be of significant impact. For this reason, an explorative dialog with stakeholders, which should include the adolescent students and their parents/caregivers, is considered a worthy undertaking in

documenting the learning landscape as it relates to this demographic and research topic. While not much has specifically addressed the potentiality of summer learning programs, it is clearly an area worth exploring as a time to be structured with programming filling a definite need in this community (Augustine, C. H., McCombs, J. S., Schwartz, H. L., & Zakaras, L., 2013). Given this study, there appears to exist an opportunity for collaboration on adolescent youth programming (Chung & McBride, 2015; Dimmitt, 2003; Dolle, Gomez, Russell, & Bryk, 2013; Russell, Kehoe & Crowley, 2017; Wiewel & Guerrero, 1997).

5.1 Next Steps

Career Pathway models and the counseling structure supporting them have documented evidence to their success in their ability to inform and transition students from secondary education to careers and college (Stipanovic, Stringfield, & Witherell, 2017; Sundell, 2010). In 2018, with renewed focus and energy, the South Carolina Department of Education reconstituted the Coordinating Council charged with oversight and ensuring the effective implementation of the EEDA legislation. In 2019, this Council organized into four subcommittees focused on specific priority areas identified in the EEDA. Two of these subcommittees are particularly relevant to this dissertation research and include: (i) At-risk students, Comprehensive Guidance and IGPs; and (ii) Industry Soft Skills and Credentialing. In their year-end report to the Governor (Spearman, 2019), the Council "adopted as its priority, the removal of any impediments to the robust implementation of the IGP protocols" (p. 3). Recognizing the need for improvements in this area and the benefits of student-led planning meetings (Lexington Middle School) as well as virtual conferencing platforms that engage working parents, this first subcommittee has better defined action plans

(Spearman, 2019, p. 6). The second subcommittee focusing on the development of workforce ready students through expanded apprenticeship programs was challenged by the state's businesses to develop students with critical workforce soft skills: Being on time to work, working well with others and doing so reliably and independently (p. 4). This is an area echoed by both parent and community leaders in this study. Consistently, industry leaders indicate the criticality of these so-called soft skills. While the Council is looking to develop and implement curricula to address this industry requirement, this study provides evidence to the need for community Out-of-School Learning programs that are experientially-based to effect this change in behavior and understanding of its students.

Through this reconstituted Council's work, actionable measures have been taken and a renewed commitment to the legislation has been made and documented (Spearman, 2019). The EEDA's mandates are clear and its identified objectives can be met equitably with measurable success. However, once again, as evidenced in this study, communication has not been fully effective to the parent and student-level. Parents reported the IGP as "the paperwork for class scheduling they (the students) get at their once a year meeting". Yet, this paperwork is part of a much larger successful framework with much greater potential in the growth and development of our students.

It is my goal to share these findings with the study participants in two separate group meetings (community leaders and parents). Using this study, in conjunction with the December 2019 EEDA Coordinating Council Report, I hope to build interest in community engagement in support of the renewed dedication of the Department of Education to this legislation and present the Out-of-School Learning landscape as a tool and partner in achieving greater measurable success in these two targeted subcommittee areas.

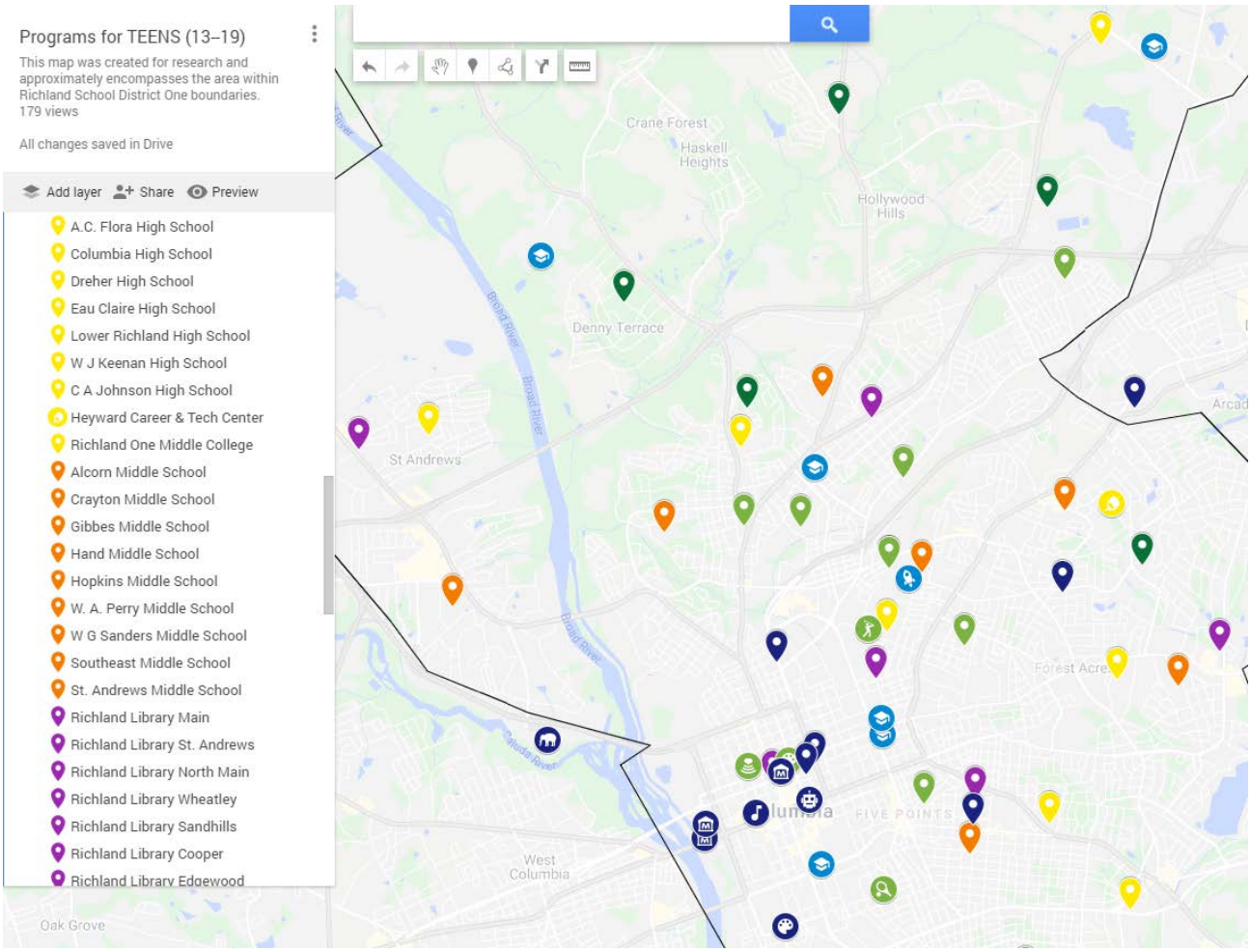
5.2 What a Dialog Advancing These Data Might Look Like

Three potential venues have supporting missions that might benefit from this dialog. They include: The Central Carolina Community Foundation through their “On the Table” community talks, One Million Cups-Columbia, and City Planning Officials – specifically the Neighborhood Council. I envision discussions with these three separate groups happening in one of two ways: With this study’s community leaders present at a single meeting of all groups, or, separately without the community leaders. The sole purpose of this dialog would be information sharing and interest assessment.

Keeping in mind that the school district was not directly engaged in the study due to their limiting research, I would like to find an appropriate avenue for engagement and information sharing. Networking will be completed to identify a path which will facilitate dialog on both the EEDA and this study as related to the Out-of-School Learning environment for adolescents. From there, it is hoped that a subsequent partnership with the school district might be explored.

Similarly, with the parent survey participants, I would like to convene them for a sharing of this study’s findings, check for an awareness of EEDA legislation and goals, and seek their input on next steps with the parent population and thoughts on building community awareness. I would also like to entertain a discussion on their perceived success of On-line learning due to COVID-19 during this past school year, and identify what they believe the needs of their students to be going forward into the summer months. It is quite possible that this group could lead to a larger convening of parents in a series of information sharing community events. I believe the key to a successful dialog in creating awareness is an initial fluid structure and informal sharing of similar interests, goals, and objectives attended with an open mind.

Appendix A : Richland One Mapping



Appendix Figure 1: Close-up bounded by Columbia High School top-left corner yellow and Lower Richland bottom right

Appendix B : Interview/Survey packet

Adolescents After-School: A Pathway for Career Discernment and Self-Determination
Interview Questions

1. ***Can you please tell me what OSL programs you are personally aware of that currently serve our Middle and High school students in Richland One: (****Expected Result: Inventory & Geographic Mapping of Existing Programs)*
    a. ***Prompts:***
        i. ***Address:***
        ii. ***Contact Person & Phone:***
        iii. ***# students served:***
        iv. ***Costs:***
        v. ***Program Availability (days/times/holidays/summer):***
        vi. ***Program Affiliations (School/Church/Boys&Girls Club/Y-prgm/Scouts/Parks&Rec, Library, Museum, etc.):***

2. *What's happening NOW****: Can you share your thoughts on how you see these OSL programs supporting the social-emotional growth of our adolescent community? Facilitate self-determination? Career discernment?*** *(Expected Result: Summary Detailed Descriptions of Existing Programs identified above)*
    a. ***Prompts:***
        i. ***What is happening in the program?***
        ii. ***Services provided to students?***
        iii. ***Role of adults?***
        iv. ***Workplace tours, shadowing experiences?***
        v. ***Physical space characteristics?***
            1. ***Are there collaborative learning spaces and/or maker-spaces?***
        vi. ***Available learning tools: VR, laptops, wi-fi?***
        vii. ***Curriculum for career discernment, work-ready interaction skills (social-emotional learning), work-life skills?***

3. *What would you LIKE TO SEE****: Given your experiences with the Middle and High School students specifically, what do you consider the needs, gaps, challenges to be within the Richland One School District community:*** *(Expected Result: Inventory of Community Leaders Perceptions with Interviewer Summary)*
    a. ***Prompts:***
        i. ***Should be addressed, that aren't***
        ii. ***Are currently being addressed, but….***
        iii. ***Limit programming in the Out-of-School Learning Eco-System of Richland One***
        iv. ***What could be done to improve the number of such programs for the teens of Richland One***

Summary Characteristics Across all Identified Existing OSL Programming for Adolescent Youth within Richland One School District

Self-Determination Theory Elements Addressed for Engagement:

a. ***Competence:***

- **Opportunity to explore and test abilities/skills repeatedly**
- **Frequency of use of Learning Tools**

b. ***Autonomy:***

- **Role of Adults?**
- **Available learning tools: VR, laptops, wi-fi**
- **Exercise of Personal Choice**

c. ***Relatedness/Belonging:***

- **Physical space characteristics? Are teens separate from Elementary youth?**
- **Collaborative learning spaces and/or maker-spaces?**
- **Regular attendance**
- **Availability of program: dates/times**

Learning for the Future: Career Discernment Elements Addressed for Engagement:

- **Curriculum for career discernment**
- **Work-ready interaction skills (social-emotional learning)**
- **Work-life skills?**
- **Services provided to students? Interviewing skills, resume help**
- **Workplace tours, shadowing experiences?**

Appendix C : Literature Review Summary

Study	Sample	Methodology/Analysis	Findings
Akiva, T. and Horner, C.G. (2016). Adolescent motivation to attend youth programs: A mixed-method investigation.	141(47 girls) with mean age of 16.6 and 88% identified as African American, participants in a neighborhood-based urban adolescent program. 34 were subsample of face-to-face interviews.	Questionnaires were distributed on multiple days over a 2-month period taking approximately 15-20 minutes for completion and assessed different aspects of participation, program motivation for attendance, attendance frequency and duration. Exploratory factor analysis completed resulted in three scales – content, staff, and peers. From this qualitative data was gathered via interviews and coded using cluster analysis to investigate patterns for continued attendance.	Program content was consistently indicated as the primary factor for initial and continued attendance followed by Staff and Peer participants. In review of interviews, program content was further defined as fun, allowed for personal growth or learning something new, and how it kept them from getting into trouble. It was an opportunity to separate themselves from negative environments and be with people doing fun things, making them feel good about themselves.
Dawes, N. P. and Larson, R. (2011). How youth get engaged: Grounded-theory research on motivational development in organized youth programs.	100 (55 girls) ethnically and socioeconomically diverse youth with a mean age of 16 and a participant of one of 10 selected programs operating as part of a required school service project.	Participants were involved one of 10 programs considered to be “diverse high-quality programs” (McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman, 1994). Face-to-face interviews were conducted at three intervals to examine engagement levels over time and assess where shifts in engagement occurred relative to changes in programming. The analytic technique of “examining turning points” within a program over time allowed the identification of “consequential shifts” in experienced engagement levels. This theoretical perspective is grounded in three motivational theories: Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; and Csikszentmihalyi et. al, 1993.), Interest (Hidi, 2000; and Hidi & Renninger, 2006.), and Self-Determination (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000.).	Among the 44-youth reporting increased engagement/motivation, 38 explained the change in a way that fit the operational definition of forming a personal connection as defined by the researchers. Three types of personal connections were identified: Learning for the Future (Rickman, 2009.), Developing a Sense of Competence (directly related to work of Deci & Ryan), and Pursuing Purpose (reference to Damon, 2009 and King & Roeser, 2009).

Deschenes, S., Little, P., Grossman, J., & Arbreton, A. (2009). Participation Over Time: Keeping Youth Engaged from Middle School to High School.	Of 198 Middle & High school OSL programs in six cities, 28 programs had the same youth attending for 12 or more months. (18 school-based, 10 community-based). (14 focused on middle school, 8 on high school, and 6 on a combination), (50%+ programs in existence for 5+ years; 23% were the only program in the area). Most served older youth exclusively and had 100 or more youth in their program (51 percent female) with 87 percent eligible for free lunch. Participation rates were 60% min and 79% average.	Using adolescent developmental theory as a theoretical framework, programs found to have high participation rates among adolescents over an extended period of 12 months or more and considered to offer developmentally appropriate activities, practices, and strategies designed specifically to successfully engage older youth over time were identified. Assessments were then made on engagement levels as the program changes were adapted to adolescent development changes.	Two distinct levels of middle school developmental groups were identified: 6th and 7th grades, and 8th (already gearing up for high school). Within these middle school grades, youth program focus was on fostering peer relationships, providing opportunities to address their curiosity, and autonomy and challenge within a framework of structure and routine helping them feel safe and supported. Within the high school context, the older adolescents' focus was on content knowledge, greater responsibility and leadership opportunities allowing for meeting set expectations and experiencing accountability. These mechanisms were identified to make them feel "compelled to continue" their participation. Planning for the future, addressing "what's next" was focus of interest. Prior program participants who had "moved on" into adulthood could return as mentors and "give back". A community atmosphere was fostered in the programs which allowed for autonomous support from adult facilitators. Other elements of SDT contributed to engaged and returning teen participants.
(Ferguson, Kasser, & Jahng, 2011). Differences in life satisfaction and school satisfaction among adolescents from three nations: The role of perceived autonomy support.	322 adolescents from Denmark (99: 67 female), South Korea (125: 23 female), and the United States (98: 66 female) all born in the country where assessed and attended public schools considered to be of middle-class income located with close access to a large city.	The theoretical perspective focuses on SDT and Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological model of child development which asserts that well-being is influenced by environmental issues at the macro- and micro- system levels. The conceptual framework focus is on adolescent behavior relative to perceived autonomy support from authority figures within each of three government structures (defined by the level of controlling behaviors). A subset of 18 questions from the Perception of Parents Scale (College-Student Scale; Robbins, 1994) was used in the design of a self-reporting	The cultural/social ecological impact relative to a key variable of SDT, autonomy support, was examined within the context of a country's social system design. That is, if the design of the social system is controlling, the level of perceived autonomy support by adolescents will be diminished. It was found that students from countries with "individualistic" and "horizontally" structured governments (Denmark) perceived greater autonomy support from authority figures, and students from "collectivistic" and "vertically" structured countries (South Korea) perceived less. This has relevance to the design of OSL programs seeking to psychologically engage adolescents to exhibit intrinsic

		questionnaire to measure the participants' perceived autonomy support from their parents. Life satisfaction was assessed using seven items about overall quality of life from SLSS (Huebner et al., 2003). Data from all questionnaires were statistically analyzed and correlated with the student's national background using Path model testing (AMOS v.16, Arbuckle, 2008).	motivation in their activities. It is also cautionary to OSL programs receiving students from more controlling social systems or nations to understand the impact this may have on the student's perceived autonomous support, and hence impact their level of psychological engagement.
Gnambs, T., & Hanfstingl, B. (2016). The decline of academic motivation during adolescence: An accelerated longitudinal cohort analysis on the effect of psychological need satisfaction.	600 adolescents (286 girls) aged 11 -16 from 52 secondary schools across rural and urban localities in Austria. All major Austrian school types were included.	Researchers assessed four motivational styles using both the German Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Gnambs & Hanfstingl, 2014), and a modified version of the Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Ryan & Deci, 2000) on two measurement occasions. Satisfaction of three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, of SDT were measured. Statistical analysis was performed using Accelerated Longitudinal Design (ALD) and Latent Growth Modeling (LGM) to establish a growth trajectory over time.	Correlations between all measures were calculated and summarized. "As expected, intrinsic motivation was negatively associated with age, indicating a decline in motivation through adolescence". "After controlling for need satisfaction, intrinsic motivation remained fairly stable throughout adolescence or even increased slightly." Varying needs satisfaction levels showed a direct correlation to the levels of intrinsic motivation.
Parker, A. K. (2010). A Longitudinal Investigation of Young Adolescents' Self-Concept in the Middle Grades.	78 middle school adolescents in their 6^{th}-8^{th} grade years at a school chosen for its diverse socio-economic and ethnic back-grounds.	Data gathered using the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale measuring six domain specific aspects: behavior, intellectual status, physical attributes, anxiety, popularity, and happiness & satisfaction. A repeated measures survey design allowed for data analysis over multiple collection intervals (each year in middle school) assessing changes.	"With the exception of the happiness and satisfaction scale, young adolescents experienced increases in the self-perceptions of their intellectual status, physical attributes, popularity, and behavior immediately after transition into middle school followed by a decline across the middle grades." (p. 9)

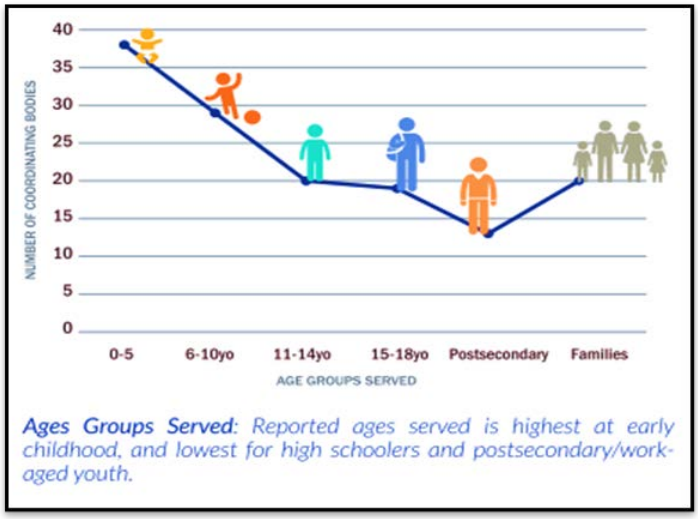
1 This review of the literature does not claim to be exhaustive, but identifies strong citations that spoke to the key criteria being researched.

Appendix D : TEENS: A Learning Pathway Challenge

The South Carolina State Legislature renewed its focus on measuring the performance of the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) as evidenced by a recent report to the Governor. [1] Motivated in part by this, I conducted a study of the Out-of-School Learning landscape for the adolescent demographic within the attendance boundaries of the Richland One school district. My study identified experiential programming opportunities that might facilitate the achievement of the Personal Pathways to Success program and help support the characteristics established in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Five main findings of that study and recommendations are summarized in this report.

THE STUDY

Historically, programming for teens has been scarce, perhaps due to greater focus of local governments on youth under the age of 12 (Figure 1).[2] Our region is no exception. As the peer-reviewed research literature suggests, program planning for this demographic is unique and structurally different than programming for elementary youth.[3]



Appendix Figure 2: Forum for Youth Investment 2017 State Policy Survey

---

[1] Spearman, M. M. (2019). *State of South Carolina Department of Education, Education and Economic Development Act Coordinating Council Report*.

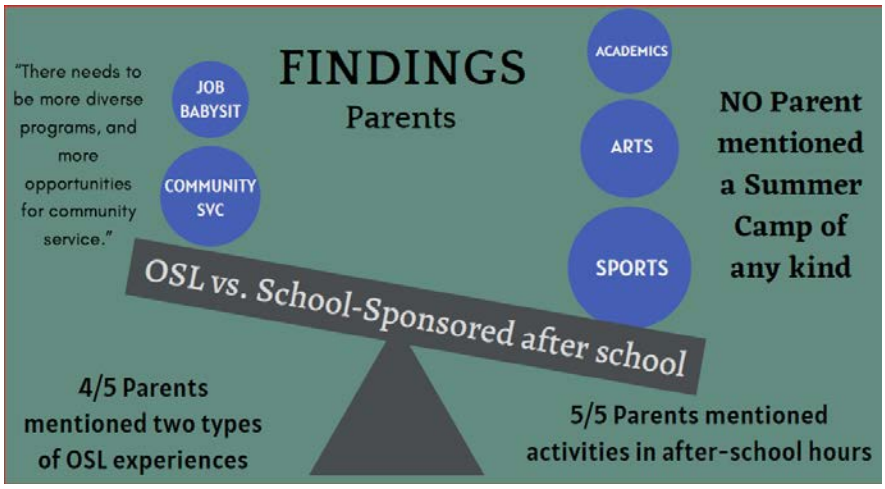
[2] Data appearing in a 2017 national state policy survey conducted by the Forum for Youth Investment (Gaines, Allen, Patel & Logan, 2017).

[3] (Akiva & Horner, 2016; Dawes & Larson, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000)

Richland School District One, located in the capital city of South Carolina is a racially and socioeconomically diverse area of approximately 450 sq. mi., seven high schools (one career center), nine middle schools, and approximately 11,200 students in grades 6-12. The study included interviews with community leaders and a diverse group of parents with adolescent children currently in attendance in the district, as well as a landscape study that resulted in an interactive Google map of programs available to youth aged 13 to 19 years old. Finally, school website artifacts and other program marketing material were examined.[4] It is with this initial data, the significant findings of internationally recognized researchers [5] and their years of studying adolescent engagement, that I hope to inspire greater inquiry to the needs of our teens when engaging in strategic planning and decision-making around their learning landscape.

FINDING #1: After-School, School-Sponsored programs are the primary focus of most programming for adolescent youth in this region.

Figure 2 summarizes how the parents of this study view the current Out-of-School Learning landscape. Across the board all parents mentioned sports as a primary teen activity, followed by arts and academics, *ALL* of which are "School-Sponsored" programs and activities. Parents supported their child's engagement in sports because they felt it gave them experiences in teamwork that are required by today's workplace. None of the parents felt their child to be particularly athletic, but all agreed sports were a



Appendix Figure 3: Parent Survey Findings

[4] It is important to note that while school district personnel were in the original design of this study, all research was halted by the district due to the onset of COVID-19.

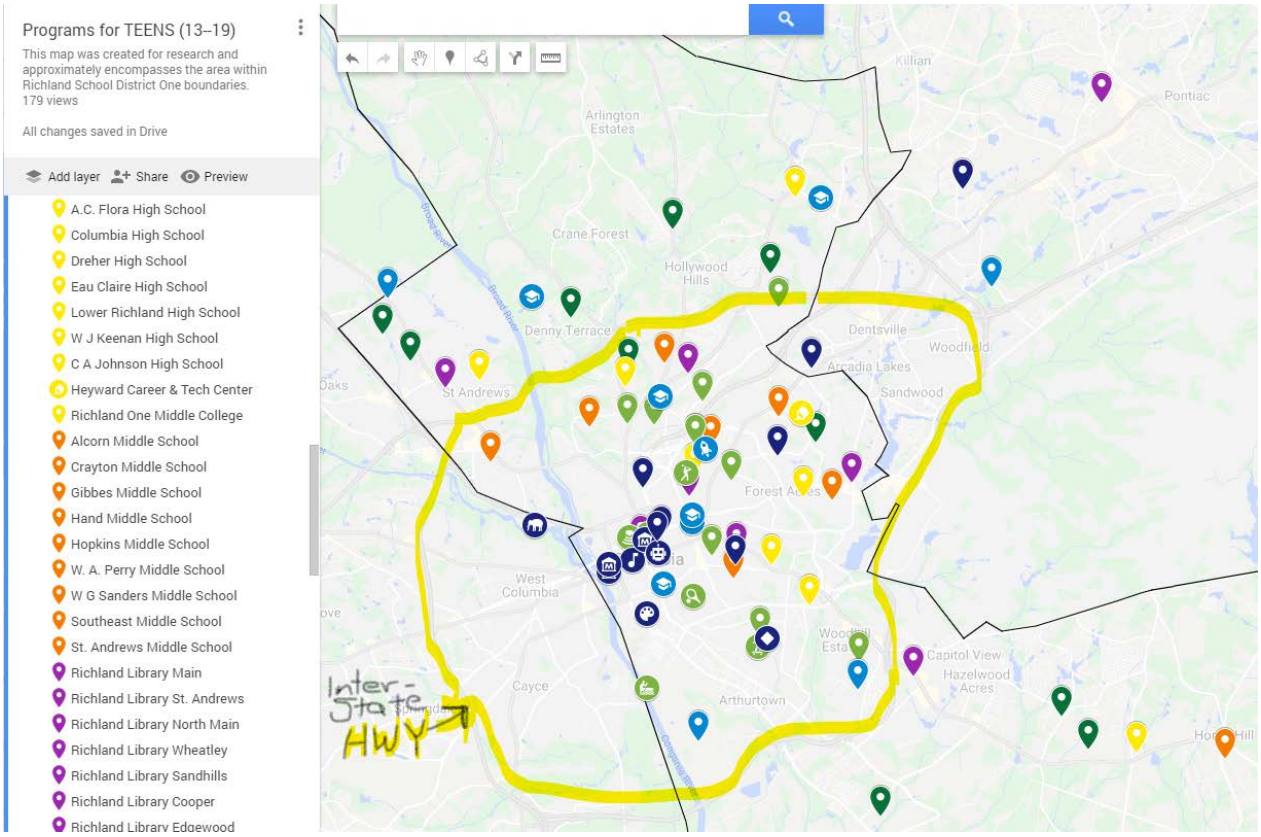
[5] See Bibliography of Dissertation titled, "The Out-of-School Learning Landscape: A Pathway to Self-Determination and Career Discernment for Adolescent Youth", Petro-Ott (2020).

positive influence on wellness, academics, time management, and relationship skills. Similarly, interviews with community leaders indicated that they felt the majority of teens were directed to "play sports as a means to keep the kids off the streets". Outside of these School-Sponsored programs, community leaders and parents alike were challenged to identify any Out-of-School Learning opportunities within this area other than community service, watching siblings, or babysitting.

FINDING #2: Need for more Community-centric Programming.

An interactive Google map created for this research is shown below (Figure 2), and with a linked version here.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=18jorRANmRPbkkJWKdqrlBwn3UEOjliFY&ll=34.017893689063214%2C-81.05438919570315&z=11



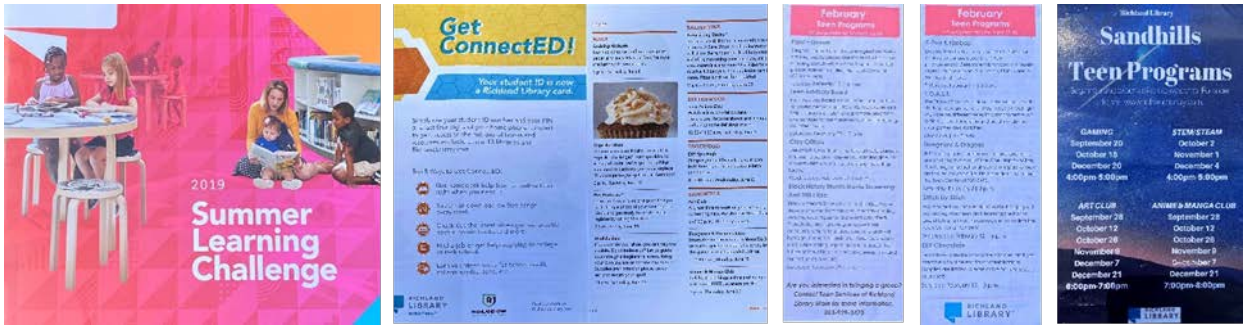
Appendix Figure 4: Distribution of Out-of-School Learning Resources Across the Richland One School District

When examining the map, it is best to orient by first identifying the location of the high schools (yellow) and middle schools (orange) and then the interstate highway boundary. These landmarks provide a sense of distance and transportation challenges.

The County Parks and Recreation centers (dark green) and City Parks community centers (light green) which are strategically placed, provide a variety of programs and may have even greater opportunity to become a rich ecosystem of learning, especially for our adolescent demographic who typically feel a sense of welcomed belonging having grown up in the community where they are located. However, there is not clear evidence that they are providing sufficient relevant content for the adolescent demographic to support the successful development of the South Carolina Graduate. Given their community-centric locations, space available, and amenities, they are prime organizations with great potential for rich Out-of-School Learning program development and opportunities for building citizenship and engaged adolescent youth.[6]

Next, because of their strong sports programs, if integrated more closely with the schools and timed with school-tryouts, the city and county sports programs together with the YMCA, could easily "pick-up" students for their teams should they not make the "school team". This would allow Middle and High school youth additional opportunity by extending their time playing sports and engaging longer in a healthy activity which they enjoy. This type of coordination is supportive of strong brokering practices and community collaboration.

Equally strategically located are the thirteen branches of the Richland County Library system (purple). Already designed with "Teen Spaces" and supported by "Teen Librarians", these facilities offer incredible opportunity with supporting research demonstrating success with this



Appendix Figure 5: Richland County Public Library Teen Program Artifacts

[6]Augustine and Thompson, (2020).

demographic.[7] In partnership with the Richland One Middle and High Schools through the 'ConnectED' program 13,902 students have full library access with their School ID however, program utilization, effectiveness and results measurement leave opportunity for improvement. "We offer weekly clubs at some of our locations that engage the teenager. They include Animae, crafting, a Teen Advisory Board, and gaming is very popular", noted our community leader in the interview. "All of our programming is free and with the newly redesigned work spaces and rooms available, the students are also able to gather for various interests of their own design." "Making awareness! That's our biggest hurdle." Creating awareness among this demographic regarding opportunities available to them is a challenge also voiced by the parents in the survey findings.

The map also shows the location and ages of programs offered at other venues (dark navy-blue map pins) and include the following: Columbia City Zoo, Columbia Museum of Art, the State Museum, EdVenture Children's Museum. The location of the one Boys and Girls club offering teen programming is conveniently and centrally located near the football field used by two of the High schools and four of the Middle schools. This prime location is near the City's Skateboard Park (light green map pin) and other amenities within walking distance. While four of five community leaders interviewed mentioned the programs of the Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands, it is interesting to note that there is only one operating program for adolescents aged 13-19 within the school district boundaries. However, as noted by one community leader, "once our volunteer partner pulled out and stopped coming, our teens stopped attending. I think we're down to three who come on a regular basis just to hangout." Once our community leaders were informed of this, many of the references to these programs were followed by "I guess I'm not really that familiar with that many teen-oriented programs".

[7] Booth, H. and Jensen, (2014).

FINDING #3: Need for greater coordination and use of specific communication tools that facilitate brokering throughout the systems.

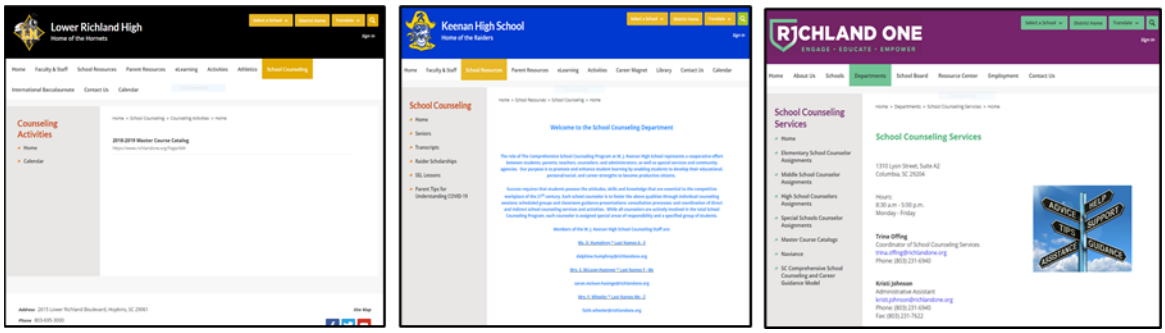
Across all data points in this study was a high need for more and better communication. Every parent spoke to this need whether regarding the school guidance counseling process, assistance with reaching their students and helping them become successful productive adults, or even with awareness of the variety of school programs and activities, not to mention those outside of the school. One parent said, “there’s only one guidance meeting a year, and it’s all about testing.” “We need more mentoring and intensive planning to help us parents, help our kids”, voiced another parent. “There’s no liaison between the student and programs out there (in the school), so a lot of times they never get connected”, said a third. Parents felt accessibility was limited by student awareness and lack of visual or physical presence of programming. As stated by one parent, “it’s left up to the kids to somehow find out about these things.” Parents indicated their support was important, but acknowledged they knew even less about what all was available (both in and out of school) to be able to help their student.

One community leader interviewed indicated, “we can start by marketing our programs right and re-vamping them to be attractive to our students”. The Richland County Library, with their vast array of successful communication methodologies felt, “Making awareness! That’s our biggest hurdle.” This was particularly challenging to understand as they employ many of the latest technologies.

FINDING #4: School Counseling website pages provide varied and inconsistent information among the High schools, and is not scaffolded to facilitate the goals of EEDA and the career discernment process.

In the absence of the physical presence and interaction with a school counselor, given school closures during the pandemic, information delivery to the students via their on-line learning environments became especially pertinent. Upon examination, there appeared to exist significant variations in the extent to which they communicate services offered. Information on topics of college and career readiness, problem-solving skills, and other resources to aid students in their journey is sporadic and inconsistent even though *all* students have access to the same resources at each school within the district. Given the goals of EEDA legislation, this could well be a barrier to successful implementation of the Pathways to Success Program.

In none of the schools' information, was there clear information or examples of how to appropriately use the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) tool to build a learning pathway of both coursework and After-School, or Out-of-School Learning opportunities and programs. Parents reported the IGP as "the paperwork for class scheduling they (the students) get at their once a year meeting". Yet, this paperwork is part of a much larger successful framework with much greater potential in the growth and development of our students.[8]

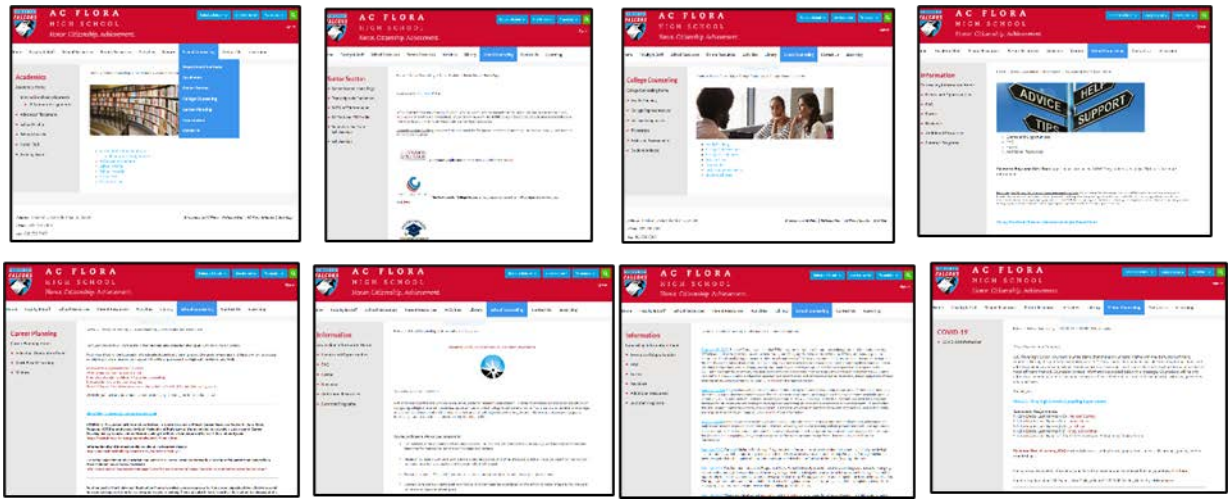


Appendix Figure 6: School Counseling Webpages for three Richland One High Schools

The below figures are snapshots of a sample of these sites which show a spectrum of information provided. From the very basic information on the far left at Lower Richland High, to Keenan with more information and last, Columbia High with about the same information, however perhaps

[8] (Stipanovic, Stringfield, & Witherell, 2017; Sundell, 2010)

more visually appealing. The information contained on each of these three pages includes basic contact information for school counselors.



Appendix Figure 7: AC Flora High School Counseling Webpages

In contrast, AC Flora's website suggests a more comprehensive student counseling program. In the below examples, this High school leads its students through a process of scaffolded topics similar to the career discernment process one would experience in a facilitated process of discovery. This distinction is important because it provides a starting point for students not knowing where, or how, to begin. While a more critical review of the site's pages reveals many areas of potential improvement, what is more important to this research are the differences in information provided to the students which exist among the high schools within the same district. The career discernment process can be seen as complicated.[9] Furthering that complication with inconsistent and exceptive information is unnecessary and likely confounds the already confused student.

[9] (Stipanovic, Stringfield, & Witherell, 2017; Sundell, 2010)

FINDING #5: The Use and Strategic Purpose of the Heyward Career Center

A critical resource, the Heyward Career Center programs, do not appear to be reaching everyone who is interested and would benefit from the programming. Additionally, there appears to be a disconnected understanding around the disparate use by students that exists between parents of eligible students and community providers which might suggest further consideration.

A comment from one parent spoke directly to "students interested in learning a skilled trade in order to improve their employment options before graduating high school". "Because of scheduling academic classes required for college admissions, they're excluded from the tech classes even as an option." This parent supported her student and expressed strongly that "the classes need to be marketed to all academic, racial, and socioeconomic student populations to avoid the perception that the programs are for a certain group of kids or only for kids in nearby neighborhoods." Academic coursework requirements for college preparatory work and the related scheduling of those courses prohibit the ability of those college-bound engineering students from receiving "hands-on" skills training that might make them better prepared for the application of college courses or, assist the student in making a better choice in the direction of their career, i.e. a move to a technical apprenticeship program and career.

Although this is clearly an issue, it is possible that another dynamic might be at play as evidenced by the community leaders who felt strongly that the views and support of the parents were the potential barrier to a more diverse student population engaged in the courses offered at the Career Center, "Now more than ever, success with any of the tech-prep programs resides with the parents who are a perceived roadblock within the district". In this case, the parent was not the road block as was indicated in the community leader interview. Given these observed differing perspectives, there appears to be a gap worth addressing. Both parties did agree however, that experiential learning of this nature is beneficial during adolescence, as does the literature.[10] One parent said, "those programs should be offered outside of school hours which would allow for additional student participation". This suggests an interest in a more blended experiential learning environment.

[10] Blakemore & Choudhury, (2006).

IN SUMMARY:

When asked about career discernment, work-life skills and what they would like to see for their students, one parent summarized it best, "programs that promote broadening the student's perspectives on the world around us stopped in elementary school…there's no interaction to educate them on those important things, places or facilities within the real world and their communities to show them where they could contribute. There needs to be more diverse programs, and more opportunities for community service." Overall, there was consensus support for opportunities that allow for learning responsibility and teamwork, considered by one parent as the "intangible components preparing them for adulthood". Parents identified "employability skills", cooking, and generally "just more diverse programs that are organized well" needing to be available to these students. As one community leader agreed, "we need them to go through a Life 101 class that prepares them to live financially on their own."

It is clear that these findings have helped generate emerging questions which could be used to further assess the health of the learning ecosystem that supports our adolescent population. Perhaps a more collaborative approach in evaluating the learning landscape supporting our adolescent youth could be facilitated.[11] The ideas and voices of this collaborative group would surely help push the community forward in better supporting the needs of our adolescent population and preparing them as productive and contributing citizens within our local workforce. Programming outside of the school that engages business partners and the community become even more critical to examine as collaborative efforts are deemed most promising in achieving large-scale success.[12] While not much has specifically addressed the potentiality of summer learning programs, it is clearly an area worth exploring as a time to be structured with programming filling a definite need in this community.[13]

---

[11](Chung & McBride, 2015; Dimmitt, 2003; Dolle, Gomez, Russell, & Bryk, 2013; Frederico & Whiteside, 2016; Russell, Kehoe & Crowley, 2017; Wiewel & Guerrero, 1997)

[12] (Augustine, C. H., McCombs, J. S., Schwartz, H. L., & Zakaras, L., 2013; Chung & McBride, 2015; Dimmitt, 2003; Dolle, Gomez, Russell, & Bryk, 2013; Russell, Kehoe & Crowley, 2017; Wiewel & Guerrero, 1997)

[13]Augustine, C. H., McCombs, J. S., Schwartz, H. L., & Zakaras, L. (2013).

Please direct inquiries to DrPetro.Ott@gmail.com

Photo credits to: Aberdeen.com and Stock Photo

Bibliography

Akiva, T., & Horner, C. G. (2016). Adolescent motivation to attend youth programs: A mixed-methods investigation. *Applied Developmental Science*, 20(4), 278–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2015.1127162

Alvarez & Marsal. (2017). *South Carolina Department of Education School District Efficiency Review*.

American School Counselor Association. (2020). *Student-to-School Counselor Ratio 2018-19*.

Anderson, R. C. (2018). Creative Engagement: Embodied Metaphor, the Affective Brain, and Meaningful Learning. *International Mind, Brain, and Education Society and Wiley Periodicals, Inc.* 12(2), 72-81.

Arthur, Nancy and McMahon, M. (2018). *Contemporary Theories of Career Development*. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7zw8d3.11

Augustine, C. H., McCombs, J. S., Schwartz, H. L., & Zakaras, L. (2013), *Getting to Work on Summer Learning.* Rand Corporation.

Augustine, C. H., and Thompson, L. E. (2020). *Getting Support for Summer Learning: How Federal, State, City, and District Policies Affect Summer Learning.* Rand Corporation.

Banks, J. A., Au, K. H., Ball, A. F., Bell, P., Gordon, E. W., … Zhou, M. (2007). *Learning in and out of school in diverse environments*. Retrieved from http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm

Bayram, S. (2019). Designing learning-skills towards industry 4.0. *World journal on educational technology: Current issues*. 11(2), 150-161. https://doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v11i1.3978

Beaufort County School District, Instructional Services Department, Individual Graduation Plan, 2019-20. http://beaufortschools.net/cms/one.aspx?portalId=170925&pageId=16907440

Blakemore, S. J., & Choudhury, S. (2006). Development of the adolescent brain: Implications for executive function and social cognition. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, Vol. 47, 296–312. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01611.x

Booth, H. and Jensen, K. (Ed.). (2014). *The Whole Library Handbook: Teen Services*. American Library Association.

Brown, S. D., Lent, R. W., Telander, K., & Tramayne, S. (2011). Social cognitive career theory, conscientiousness, and work performance: A meta-analytic path analysis ☆. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79, 81–90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.11.009

Brown, S. D., & Roche, M. (2016). The Outcomes of Vocational Interventions: Thirty (Some) Years Later. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 24(1), 26–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072715579666

Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2002) Positive youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs, *Prevention & Treatment*,5(15).

Chung, S., & McBride, A. M. (2015). Social and emotional learning in middle school curricula: A service learning model based on positive youth development. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 53, 192–200. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.04.008

Conley, D. T. (2018). The New Complexity of Readiness for College and Careers. *Preparing Students for College and Careers*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315621975-2

Curran, T., & Wexler, L. (2017). School-Based Positive Youth Development: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Journal of School Health*, 87(1), 71–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12467

Dawes, N. P., and Larson, R. (2011). How youth get engaged: Grounded-theory research on motivational development in organized youth programs. *Developmental Psychology*, 47(1), *259-269.*

Department of Education, S.C. (2018). *The South Carolina Comprehensive School Counseling & Career Comprehensive School Counseling and Career*.

Department of Education, U.S., Mentoring Resource Center (2007). *Understanding the Youth Development Model.*

Deschenes, S., Arbreton, A., Little, P. M., Herrera, C., Grossman, J. B., Weiss, H. B., with Lee, D. (2010). *Engaging older youth: Program and city-level strategies to support sustained participation in out-of-school time.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

Dimmitt, C. (2003). Transforming school counseling practice through collaboration and the. Use of Data. *Professional School Counseling*, 6(5), 340-349.

Dolle, J. R., Gomez, L. M., Russell, J. L., & Bryk, A. S. (2013). More Than a Network: Building Professional Communities for Educational Improvement Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In *National Society for the Study of Education* (Vol. 112).

Doloi, H. (2018). Community-Centric Model for Evaluating Social Value in Projects. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, *144*(5), 14. https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)

Dotterweich, J. (2015).*Positive Youth Development 101*. Broffenbrenner Center for Translational Research, Cornell University.

Ferguson, Y. L., Kasser, T., & Jahng, S. (2011). Differences in life satisfaction and school satisfaction among adolescents from three nations: The role of perceived autonomy support.

Journal of Research on Adolescence, 21(3), 649–661. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00698.x

Fischhoff, B., Nightingale, E. O., Iannotta, J. G., Children, B., Behavioral, D., & Sciences, S. (2001). Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability. In *Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability*. https://doi.org/10.17226/10209

Frederico, M., & Whiteside, M. (2016). Building School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Developing a Theoretical Framework. *Australian Social Work*, *69*(1), 51–66. https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/0312407X.2015.1042488

Gaines, E. (2017). *2017 State Policy Survey : Child and Youth Policy Coordinating Bodies in the U . S . Summary of Findings*. (December). Retrieved from www.forumfyi.org,

Gnambs, T., Hanfstingl, B. (2016). The decline of academic motivation during adolescence: An accelerated longitudinal cohort analysis of the effects of psychological need satisfaction. *Educational Psychology,* (36)9, 1691-1705. doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2015.1113236

Halpern, R. (2006). *Confronting "the big lie": The need to reframe expectations of after-school programs*. Erickson Institute.

Hammond, C., Drew, S. F., Griffith, C., Cathy, W., Swiger, C. M., Mobley, C., … Daugherty, L. (2014). Programs of Study as a State Policy Mandate: A Longitudinal Study of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success Initiative. *National Research Center for Career and Technical Education*, (April), 469.

Hansen, D. M., & Larson, R. W. (2007). Amplifiers of developmental and negative experiences in organized activities: Dosage, motivation, lead roles, and adult-youth ratios, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology,* 28, 360-374. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2007.04.006

Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., & Dworkin, J. B. (2003). What Adolescents Learn in Organized Youth Activities: A Survey of Self- Reported Developmental Experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13(1), 25–55. Retrieved from http://youthdev.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Hansen-Larson-Dworkin-2003-What-Adolescents-Learned-in-Organized-Youth-Activities.pdf

Homer, B. D., Ober, T. M., Rose, M. C., Macnamara, A., Mayer, R. E., & Plass, J. L. (2019). Speed Versus Accuracy: Implications of Adolescents' Neurocognitive Developments in a Digital Game to Train Executive Functions, *International Mind, Brain, and Education Society and Wiley Periodicals, Inc.*, 13(1), 41-52.

Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. (2001). *Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability: Concepts and Measurement*. National Academy Press.

Larson, R. W. (2000). Toward a Psychology of Positive Youth Development. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 170–183. https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X,55.1.170

Larson, Reed; Hansen, David; Walker, Kathrin (2005). Everybody's gotta give: Development of initiative and teamwork within a youth program. Found in *Organized Activities As Contexts of Development : Extracurricular Activities, after School and Community Programs*, edited by Joseph L. Mahoney, et al., Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D, and Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career, Academic Interest, Choice and Performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45, 79–122.

Lent, R. W., Ezeofor, I., Morrison, M. A., Penn, L. T., & Ireland, G. W. (2016). Applying the social cognitive model of career self-management to career exploration and decision-making. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 93, 47–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.12.007

Mahoney, J. L., Parente, M. E., & Zigler, E. F. (2009). Afterschool Programs in America: Origins, Growth, Popularity, and Politics. *Journal of Youth Development*, 4(3), 23–42. https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2009.250

Mathur Shah, A., Wylie, C., Gitomer, D., & Noam, G. (2018). Improving STEM program quality in out-of-school-time: Tool development and validation. *Science Education*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.21327

McCrory, E. J., Gerin, M. I., & Viding, E. (2017). Annual Research Review: Childhood maltreatment, latent vulnerability and the shift to preventative psychiatry - the contribution of functional brain imaging. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 58(4), 338–357. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12713

McNeely, C. & Blanchard, J. (2009). *The Teen Years Explained: A Guide to Healthy Adolescent Development.* John Hopkins University Press.

Melaville, A., Berg, A. C., & Blank, M. J. (2010). *Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship*. Coalition for Community Schools.

Miller, K. J. (2005). Executive functions. *Pediatric Annals*, 34(4), 310–317. https://doi.org/10.3928/0090-4481-20050401-12

Moellman, L. W. J. R. (2004). Civic Spaces: Retooling Public Libraries to Attract and Engage Teens after School. *Afterschool Matters*.

National Center for Education Statistics (2018-19).

National Science & Technology Council, C. on S. E. (2018). *Charting a Course for Success: America's Strategy for STEM Education*. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp.

Overton, W. F. (2010). Life-Span Development. *The Handbook of Life-Span Development, Vol. 2*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470880166.hlsd001001

Parker, A. K. (2010). A Longitudinal Investigation of Young Adolescents' Self-Concepts in the Middle Grades. *Research in Middle Level Education,* 33 (10), 1-13.

Parzych, J. L., & Chiu, M. M. (2019). *Measuring the Impact of School Counselor Ratios on Student Outcomes*. American School Counselor Association Research Report.

Raufelder, D., Regner, N., Drury, K., & Eid, M. (2016). Does self-determination predict the school engagement of four different motivation types in adolescence? *Educational Psychology*, 36(7), 1242–1263. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2015.1008405

Richland County School District One (2019). *Spotlight Richland One.*

Russell, J. L., Kehoe, S. & Crowley, K. (n.d.). (PDF) Linking in and out-of-school learning. In *In K. Peppler (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Out-of-School Learning*, 1–5.

Ryan, A.M., Shim, S.S., Makara, K. A. (2013). Changes in Academic Adjustment and Relational Self-worth Across the Transition to Middle School. *Youth Adolescence*, 42, 1372–1384. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-9984-7

Ryan, Patrick, A. M., & Helen. (2001). The classroom social environment and changes in adolescents'. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(2), 437–460

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Schneider, B., Broda, M., Judy, J., & Burkander, K. (2013). Pathways to college and STEM careers: Enhancing the high school experience. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2013(140), 9–29. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20076

Sheu, H. B., Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., Miller, M. J., Hennessy, K. D., & Duffy, R. D. (2009). Testing the choice model of social cognitive career theory across Holland themes: A meta-analytic path analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76, 252–264. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.10.015

South Carolina Dept of Education. (2020). Work-Based Learning Annual Report. *Proviso 1A.5 (SDE-EIA: Work-Based Learning)*, (Submitted to the South Carolina General Assembly), 12.

Spearman, M. M. (2019). *State of South Carolina Department of Education Education and Economic Development Act Coordinating Council Report*.

Stipanovic, N., Stringfield, S., & Witherell, E. (2017). The Influence of a Career Pathways Model and Career Counseling on Students' Career and Academic Self-Efficacy. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *92*(2), 209–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2017.1302217

Sundell, K. (2010). *Programs of Study: Year 2 Joint Technical Report By the Programs of Study Joint Technical Working Group*.

Watagodakumbura, C. (2017). Principles of Curriculum Design and Construction Based on the Concepts of Educational Neuroscience. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(3). https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n3p54

Weil, M., Reisch, M. S., Ohmer, M. L. (Ed.). (2012). *The Handbook of Community Practice.* Sage Publications

Wiewel, W., & Guerrero, I. (1997). Long-Term Collaboration--Building Relationships and Achieving Results Through a Neighborhoods Initiative Program: The Resurrection Project. *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum*, 8(3), 123–134. Retrieved from https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/GCP-98-1-collaboration.pdf

Wright, A., Holstead, J., & Hightower-King, M. (2010). *After School Programs for Older Youth: Challenges and Promising Practices*. Retrieved from http://wiafterschoolnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Older-Youth-Lit-Review.pdf